

PHILOLOGY, RHETORIC AND LITERARY CRITICISM  
IN THE STUDY OF "I'JĀZ"  
DURING THE 4TH CENTURY A.H.

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ABSTRACT

Fourth century studies of I'jāz and their role in the development of Arabic literary theory of criticism are the main concern of this attempt, the general theme being an assessment of the evolution of the views expressed in this connexion. The period chosen for investigation is the culmination of a series of earlier stages pioneering these studies.

Before dealing with fourth century studies of I'jāz, consideration is given to some of the earlier attempts in that direction, especially of the third century, as it was these which laid the foundation for later studies. In the latter century also this branch of study emerged primarily as an independent topic in Qur'ānic studies. Some of the other theological questions which led to later controversies are also considered.

From a purely literary standpoint, in addition to the early commentators' efforts, two outstanding authors—al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah—also expressed strong opinions on the subject, though not necessarily under that title, and who greatly inspired later studies, have been chosen as representative of that century.

Towards the end of that century, and when I'jāz became a stabilized topic in Qur'ānic studies, attempts are made to investigate the actual term itself and also the factors which directly affected fourth century studies.

Few of the great controversies of the early fourth century have survived, but much can be reconstructed through the views directly inherited by the succeeding generations.

The four authors with whom we shall be mainly concerned are; al-Rumānī, al-Khattābī, al-Bāqillānī and al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār. The first two in their terse treatises dealing directly with the literary aspects of the problem, the latter, both eminent theologians, covering a much wider field, both theological and literary.

For most of these four, new materials are used, often revealing new dimensions to their conception of the problem.

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PREFACE

"As for the question of I'jāz itself, indeed much has been said about it, which is considered by the theologians and those who are in the pursuit of religious matters enough and sufficient. I do not think they have any more to add to it; hence they should seek the study of rhetoric (Balāghah) so as to achieve a religious end, aiming at the perfection of people's belief in the Qur'ān and its celestial nature." \*

Was I'jāz a purely literary question or was it a theological controversy or perhaps an amalgam of them both ?

The obvious fact that the idea of I'jāz concerns in the first place a religious work in which the consideration of the role of language is of fundamental significance thus inextricably entwines both the form and the content.

The question of whether the religious realization fostered the literary aspect of the idea, and if so whether there were achievements outside this influence in the Arabic literary theory of criticism and rhetoric, is the theme of the following inquiry.

The specific period chosen for this investigation is the fourth century A.H., the tenth A.D., and the works of four distinguished authors are the basic material with which we shall be mainly concerned.

A more protracted introduction to this period and the principles underlying those studies shall be considered later on. Meanwhile, before approaching those studies, their authors and the literary achievements they engendered, it is necessary that an attempt should be made to assess some of the studies preceding them and some of the historical circumstances which led to the study of I'jāz in the fourth century, particularly the endeavours of the third century scholars.

Almost two and a half centuries of Qur'ānic literary history had elapsed before the emergence of I'jāz as an independent branch of study, during which time certain developments in Arabic literature resulting in achievements in this field, were rapidly evolving. Some of these were based mainly on the study of the text of the Qur'ān itself, others concerned secular literature. Nonetheless, in both fields

varied inquiries into the unique status of the language of the Sacred Book are apparent.

In contrast to this, the fact of the Qur'ān's pre-eminence as a religious document was bound to create theological controversies, not only with regard to its teaching but also its nature - created or eternal.

The literary aspect is our main concern, especially the literary theory of criticism and rhetoric and the fact that one of the major functions of criticism is interpretation, which enlarges and purifies the understanding of a literary work, or indeed enables us to judge of its excellence, necessitates that we look first at some of the early branches of Qur'ānic literature - and especially the oldest, interpretation or Tafsīr. Although this latter is itself a sign of an evaluating judgement, we shall look into it as a means of approach of the early endeavours and some of the achievements made, and also the attitudes of their authors toward the interpretation of the Qur'ān by means of current literature.

The influence of those early attempts and their author's immediate and immense effects we shall trace further in our exposition of the studies which followed them, particularly those of al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah, under whom they developed further still.

The latter scholars' pioneering efforts represent to us by far the earliest stages of the study of I'jāz, albeit under different titles, in fact some of the headings occurring in those studies (i.e. the idea of Nazm or style) became one of the two literary aspects of the study of I'jāz in later centuries.

From those studies also fourth century scholars benefitted a great deal, either as sources of information or as additional evaluations.

Turning to the other side of the problem, the theological aspect, one of the perennial questions which occupied theological schools throughout the third century, and far beyond, was the question of the creation of the Qur'ān; which not only brought to a head the realization of some literary devices but also created a certain theory which accompanied the chapter of I'jāz for many centuries thence,

the theory of al-Sarfah.

Early in the third century, factors which gave rise to Qur'ānic studies were a mixture of internal (within the Muslim community) and external elements. But in the second half of the third century certain heretical and sceptical movements were developing and in the heretical writings of those movements such tenets as miracles, scriptures and prophethoods were severely attacked. The resultant criticisms launched at them were clearly the direct causes which initiated the study of I'jāz and which ultimately became integral facets in it.

These early steps in literary or theological fields, either alone or in combination, feature in the general background of the study of I'jāz

Finally, a word should perhaps be said about the fourth century authors' material. Although of most of them a work on I'jāz or other branch of Qur'ānic study has long been known and published—indeed some of the authors were known for nothing else but their works on I'jāz until comparatively recently, as in the case of the author, al-Bāqillānī—We have been fortunate enough to find new materials from most of them, which will, we hope, shed new light on their achievements with regard to the chapter on I'jāz.

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N :

- i- The early studies of Tafsīr and I'jāz
- ii-The " Creation of the Qur'an " and I'jāz

i) The Early studies of Tafsīr and I'jāz.

Tafsīr, interpretation or commentary, is the richest field of Qur'ānic literature, if only because this wide-ranging branch of study employed a vast multitude of Arabic humanities as a means of illustrating the sacred book. Yet a considerable length of time passed between the establishing of a canon of Arabic linguistic and literary sciences, as such, and the early attempts in Qur'ānic exegetical studies.

This situation, which fundamentally affects the later study of I'jāz, deserves our attention, particularly to see if, in the infancy of this branch of study, it had by any means applied any form of the current literature as a method of interpretation.

Ibn Khaldūn in his 'Muqaddimah', while introducing Tafsīr as a branch of study, claimed "It should be known that the Korān was revealed in the language of the Arabs and according to their rhetorical method. All Arabs understood it and knew the meaning of the individual words and statements."<sup>1</sup>

The statement that all Arabs understood it....etc, loose and nebulous as it appears, seems to have provoked some modern scholars to question its appropriateness and logicality,<sup>2</sup> and also in some measure to question how Ibn Khaldūn was unmindful<sup>3</sup> of it when later on, in fact, on the same page, he stated the necessity to the prophet of explaining certain passages, "He used to explain certain passages in the Qur'ān

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1. 'Muqaddimat ibn Khaldūn', p. 383-4, Trans. Franz Rosenthal, vol. 2, pp.433.
  2. Aḥmad Amīn, 'Fajr al-Islām', vol. 1, p. 135.
  3. Amīn al-Khulī 'Manāhij al-Tajdīd etc.' p. 272-3.

as it said "So that you may explain to the people that which was revealed to them," even more he added, "he used to explain the unclear statements (in the Qur'ān) and distinguish the abrogating statements from those abrogated by them and to inform men around him in this sense."<sup>1</sup>

It may be asked what was the reason for Ibn Khaldūn's statement? Was it because he was under the impression that Tafsīr as a systematic branch of study was not essential because of the purity of the language among the early generations of Islām; or was it that he found substantiation in some tradition which propounded that the prophet did not explain except a few verses (Āyahs<sup>2</sup>) and further the indifferent attitude, taken by some contemporaries of the prophet and the following generation, towards Tafsīr.

However vague and misleading the statement made by Ibn Khaldūn at the opening of his chapter on Tafsīr and whatever trust he had in the early Arabs' capability of understanding the Qur'ānic text, it is evident that there existed a certain form of explanation although the terms which were applied by Ibn Khaldūn may be different. These forms, however, later became known as traditional Tafsīr, of which Ibn Khaldūn himself has this to say, "These (explanations) were transmitted on the authority of the men round Muḥammad and were circulated by the men of the second generation after them on their authority."<sup>3</sup>

1. 'Muqaddimah', trans. vol. 2, p. 433.

2. See 'al-Mabānī', p. 183. 'Two Muqaddimas to the Qur'ānic Sciences', ed. Arthur Jeffrey, also Ibn Juzayy, 'Tashīl', p. 9.

3. 'Muqaddimah', trans. vol. 2, p. 444.

The foundations of Tafsīr it has been noticed<sup>1</sup> were disjointed and unsystematic. As a coherent branch of knowledge it was initiated, according to some authorities,<sup>2</sup> by al-Farrā' (d.207), although other references suggest that there had been earlier attempts, long before that time, at complete exegetical studies.<sup>3</sup> However, from Yāqūt alone one learns that Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 207?) had started his work entitled 'Majāz al-Qur'an in 188 A.H.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier consideration of the study of I'jāz as an isolated topic began for the first time towards the end of the third century A.H., but it may be inappropriate to assume any relation between the early exegetical works on Tafsīr and I'jāz. But if what we may understand, in the following pages, as I'jāz is the weighing and comparison of the Qur'anic text against Arabic literary production, perhaps the matter requires reassessment.

Goldziher, in his learned chapter on various Qur'anic readings, in 'Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung' Leiden 1920, directed attention to the Qur'an text itself and the various forms of reading as

1. B. Carra de Vaux, E.I. vol. 4, pp. 603-4.
2. Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', Fluegel ed. p. 66, Cf. Aḥmad Amin, 'Duḥā al-Islām', vol. 2, p. 141. The author despite the indecisiveness of al-Nadīm's statement seems to accept it.
3. Eg. Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī in his introduction to 'Jāmi' al-Bayān' narrated that Ibn 'Abbās (d.68) had dictated a complete version of Tafsīr vol. 1, p. 31, lines 5-7, (Bulāq, edn.) Also for the Tafsīr of the Mu'tazilite 'Amr. b. 'Abī' which he took from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 116) see Ibn Khallikān, 'Wafayāt', (De Slane edn.), p. 535. Also for the perhaps partial Tafsīr of 'Atā' b. Dīnār (d. 126) see Ibn Hajar, 'Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb', vol. 7, p. 198-9.
4. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', Margoliouth edn. vol. 7, p. 166, vol. 3, p. 63.
5. P 1 the Arabic trans. Ali H. 'Abd al-Qādir, p. 1, Cairo, 1363/1944 reads

"والمروحة الأولى لتفسير القرات واثناة التي بدأ بها تترك في القرات  
نفسه، وفي نصوصه نفسها، وببارة أوضح في قراءته في هذه الأشكال  
المختلفة نستطيع أن نرى أول محاولة للتفسير."

initiatory steps towards Tafsir. "Die primitivste Stufe der Koranas ihre Keimhaften Anfänge Stellen sich uns in der Konstituierung der Textes selbst dar." This statement indicates two aspects: as to the first the author has little to contribute, but the second he pursues in detail.

The exposition of the Qur'ān by its own text, i.e. explanation of the obscure and concise structures by more lucid and detailed verses, had been acknowledged by earlier scholars<sup>2</sup> as the correct and most suitable method of interpretation.

This method occupied a considerable position in what became known as 'Traditional Tafsir', of which a great many examples can be seen in the books of Hadith; to mention only two, 'Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim',<sup>3</sup> particularly in the chapter entitled 'Fadā'il al-Qur'ān', and in Bukhārī's 'Ṣaḥīḥ' in the chapter 'Bad' al-Khalq'.<sup>4</sup> More examples can be found. From the 'Muwaṭṭa' of Mālik we have taken this short extract as an example. Under the title 'Kalāla inheritance' he recorded the following:

"Mālik related from Zayd b. Aslam that, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had asked the Messenger of God, may God bless and save him, about the Kalāla, the Messenger of God, may God bless and save him, said, "It will suffice thee concerning the question to seek the verse which was revealed in summer at the end of the Surah of al-Nisa' (IV/177)."<sup>5</sup>

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2. See, Ibn Taymiyyah, 'Muqaddimah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsir', pp. 24-5.
  - 3-4. Both books were combined, Bukhārī's see vol. 7, p. 2. etc., and Muslim's printed on the margin, vol. 5, p. 82, etc. Cairo, n.d.
  5. Mālik, 'al-Muwaṭṭa', p. 192, Tunis, 1280. (The place of publication is given in Brockelmann sup. 1/297)

#### Note.

To this direction of interpretation can also be added the short glossary selected and compounded, from authentic sources, by Ahmad b. Alī al-Muqarī, which was attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, in which words are used in several interpretations, illustrated by quotations from the Qur'ān. See B.M. Ms. Or. 3912, fol. 41-9, and Brockelmann sup. 2, p. 984.

In the course of his elaboration of the second theme Goldziher makes reference to the pioneer efforts of Theodor Noldeke in this field,<sup>1</sup> which for a dearth of material is even<sup>now</sup> still largely unexplored. Referring to Zamakhsharī's commentary, on pp. 46-7<sup>2</sup> the author noticed that he had recorded a certain reading for a specific word in Surah II/177, while the philologist al-Mubarrad had wished it to be read differently. But Ibn al-Munīr in his supra-commentary on Zamakhsharī's rejected the new reading, stating that in the various established forms of reading there is a type of I'jāz.

Similar remarks on the reading are made by Suyūṭī, who when writing of strange commentaries (chap. 79) with reference to a certain reading wrote "... and this reading conveyed a different meaning from that which the popular reading gives, this contributes to Qur'ānic I'jāz."<sup>3</sup>

Such casual remarks as those of Ibn al-Munīr and Suyūṭī, later in time as they were, contribute little to the question, at least directly. It may also be noted that scholars of later centuries had even attributed the characteristics of I'jāz to the cryptic letters found at the opening of certain chapters.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Short notices are to be found in the translated version of his article on the Qur'ān by J.S. Black, 'Sketches from Eastern History' pp. 54-5, for further notes and comment see also A. Jeffery:-
    - a) The English introduction to 'Materials for the history of the Qur'ānic' text.
    - b) 'The Qur'ān as a scripture', pp. 1-7, See also for comment on the German scholars contribution to the subject, Paul Kahle, 'The Qur'ān and the Arabiyya 'in the 'Ignace Goldziher Memorial volume' pt. 1.
  2. Arab. translation, see also Zamakhsharī 'Kashshāf', vol. 1, p. 218, and ibn al-Munīr's comment on the margin of p. 217.
  3. Suyūṭī, 'Itqān (Calcutta edn.) vol. 2, p. 221.
  4. Ibn Kathīr, Commentary, vol. 1, p. 38.

At this stage it would perhaps be rewarding for our purpose to have a closer look at the earlier steps of Tafsīr and in particular the previous endeavours at explaining the Qur'ān's text with the aid of current literature, especially poetry. We will try to examine Ibn 'Abbās's approaches in this direction, but before doing so it may be as well to visualise the prevailing attitude.

Should the Qur'ān be explained with the aid of poetry? This was the question of which Suyūṭī culled the answer from Ibn al-Anbārī, who recorded that many of the Prophet's companions and the succeeding generation adopted a positive attitude to this problem although the orthodox opposition saw in such attempts a danger of the relegation of the status of the Qur'ān to the advantage of poetry.<sup>1</sup>

It is found in the Traditions however that a man asked the Prophet about the most preferable of Qur'ānic sciences and the Prophet replied that, it was its language "Arabiyyati-hi" and should be sought in poetry.<sup>2</sup>

During the days of 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, it is also recorded, that once while he was in the pulpit a man asked what was the meaning of the word "Takhawwaf" in Surah XVI/47, as the narrative went 'Umar was nonplussed, then a man from Hudhyl answered,

"Takhawwaf" means to us "Tanaqqas", and he quoted the poet's saying:-

تَخَوَّفَ الرَّحْلُ مِنْهَا تَامِكًا قَرْدًا : كَمَا تَخَوَّفَ عَوْدَ لِنَبْعَةٍ لِسَفِينِ

E.W.Lane translated it so,

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1. Suyūṭī, 'Itqān', p. 281.

2. Ibn 'Atiyyah's Introduction, ed. A. Jeffrey, p. 261

"Her saddle abraded from a long and high compact hump like as when the piece of skin used for smoothing arrows has abraded from the bark of a rod of the tree called: الشَّيْبَةَ " 1

then 'Umar commented,

" O people cling to your pre-Islamic poetry for therein you will find exposition of your book." 2

In a similar vein it has been ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās that he said, " Poetry is the register of the Arabs, if a point in the Qur'an , which God revealed in Arabic, becomes obscure to us we should refer to the register of the Arabs to seek its meaning therein." 3

Or in another context:-

"If you require an explanation of the strange words in the Qur'an, seek it in poetry, for poetry is the register of the Arabs." 4

To Ibn'Abbās a commentary was attributed, but judging by the the views of earlier scholars only little authenticity can be attached to it, to quote only the words of the eminent Imāms, al-Shāfi'ī<sup>5</sup> and Ibn Hanbal<sup>6</sup> is sufficient to minimise this Tafsīr which al-Fayrūzabādī attributed to Ibn 'Abbās.

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1. E.W.Lane quoting Ibn Manzūr, the author of 'Lisan al-'Arab' who ascribed the poetry to the poet, Dhū al-Rummah, comments ".....or not he but some other poet, for it is ascribed to several authors." Arabic -English Lexicon, vol. 1, p. 823. Cf. 'Lisān', footnote, vol. xiii, p. 210; 'Aghānī', vol. v, p. 157, for further discussion.
  2. Al-Shatibī, 'al-Muwāfaqāt fī Usūl al-Sharī'ah' vol.2, pp.87-8.
  3. Suyūtī, Itqān, Calcutta edn. p. 281.
  4. " 'Muzhir', vol. 2, p. 302, 3ed edn.; Itqān, vol.1, p.119.
  5. " 'Itqān', vol. 2, p. 225, Cairo edn.
  6. " Ibid. vol. 2, p. 188.

to Ibn 'Abbās

The former Imām asserted "Of the sayings ascribed only about one hundred are accepted as authentic" in connection with Qur'ānic exegesis.<sup>1</sup> The latter also claimed, "What is left of Ibn 'Abbās's commentary is but an isolated passage, which is not even worth travelling for"<sup>2</sup> being mindful of the fact that Ibn Hanbāl's residence was at that time in 'Irāq and the passage was said to exist in Egypt. Such statements seem quite contrary to what had been admittedly ascribed and attributed to Ibn 'Abbās.

An initiatory critical attitude towards the chain of transmitters (Isnād) was taken during the lifetime of these two contemporary imāms. Tafsīr, for so long inextricably entwined with the study of Hadīth, was extracted as an independent study. The need was felt to examine the chains of authority, because of the tremendous increase in non-conventional commentaries used in support of certain schisms. The attitude was made more apparent by Ibn Ḥanbal, who in criticizing the study of Tafsīr, along with other subjects,<sup>3</sup> declared them to be unverified, with no basis (Uṣūl) i.e. not possessing a strongly linked chain of transmitters. As H. Birkeland noted, "In his time claims made to Isnāds by orthodox traditionists were not consistently applied to Tafsīr. Nor have they in later times to the same degree as they have in ḥadīth and fiqh."<sup>4</sup>

In the case of the philologist Fayrūzabādī (d.817) and the commentary he attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, the critics of the Isnād have shown their

1. Suyūṭī, 'Itqān', vol. 2, p. 225.

2. Ibid. vol. 2, p. 188.

3. Z.D.M.G. vol. 44, p. 419.

4. H. Birkeland, 'Old Muslim opposition against interpretation of the Korān', p. 17.

mistrust of its chain of authority,<sup>1</sup> Further if we compare only one of the rhetorical figures repeatedly applied in this Tafsīr, namely Hysteron and Proteron (Taqdīm and Ta'khīr),<sup>2</sup> with such a reliable source as Ṭabarī one finds that while the former ascribed it directly through his chain of authority to Ibn 'Abbās, the latter only used it by way of analogy.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn 'Abbās's awareness and familiarity with the history of the Arabs, their annals and poetry, was recognised in numerous bibliographical works;<sup>4</sup> his approach to interpretation of the Qur'ānic text, through the medium of poetry, was the natural outcome of this background. A great volume could be composed from the many anecdotes scattered liberally throughout several exegetical works and literary references,<sup>5</sup> but this could only be achieved by a keen and laborious comparative study of such texts, at least to justify the third century observations and denials, some of which we have already noted. These apparently can hardly be reconciled with the masses of fragmentary Tafsīr imputed to Ibn 'Abbās, even those which have reached us via reliable authorities such as Ṭabarī and Zamakhsharī in their commentaries. His trend of employing poetry as a method of explanation, or to be more precise as an emphasis for his explanation, was merely the seeking of confirmation from the Arabs' literary heritage.

1. Muh. Hussain al-Dhahabī, 'al-Tafsīr wal-Mufasssīrūn,' vol. 1, pp. 81-2.
2. See pp. 80, 244, 273, 291, Cairo edn. 1317.
3. Ṭabarī, Commentary, vol. 2, p. 419.
4. Eg. Ibn Sa'd, 'Tabaqāt', vol. 2, p. 376, also Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 'al-Istī'āb', vol. 1, p. 374.
5. Al-Mabānī, 'Muqaddimah', pp. 198-9, ed. A. Jeffery, also al-Zarkashī, 'al-Burhān', vol. 1, p. 292.

Suyūṭī alone, however, in 'Itqān'<sup>1</sup> recorded the hundred questions of the Kharijite Nāfi' b. al-Azraq for which Ibn 'Abbās had extracted explanatory instances from poetry. The format in which they appear without fail in 'Itqān' is the following: The questioner, or Ibn al-Azraq, would require the meaning of a certain word in a certain verse of the Qur'ān. In reply Ibn 'Abbās gave first the meaning of the question in prose, whereupon the questioner would ask again if the Arabs were aware of this, "Indeed", would answer Ibn 'Abbās, and proceed to emphasize his reply by reciting a verse or so from established poetry. I have chosen only three as examples:

i) The word in question being 'Wasīlah' from Surah, V/38

"O ye who believe, fear God and carve the means of approach Him." After the meaning had been given in prose and after the usual question as to the Arabs familiarity with such, he replied, quoting the poet, 'Antarah,

"Verily, men seek means to thy favour,

If they take thee, thou shouldst blacken thine eyes with kohl and tint thy fingers"<sup>2</sup>

إِنَّ الرِّجَالَ لَهْمُ إِلَيْكَ وَسِيلَةٌ : إِنْ يَا خُذُوكِ تَكَلِّى وَتَخَضَّبِ

ii) For the word 'Fa'ajā'ahā' in Surah, XIX/23,

"And the pangs of childbirth drove her unto the trunk of the palm tree. She said, "O would that I had died 'ere this and become a thing of nought, forgotten."

The confirmatory verse from poetry was from the poet Hassan b.

1. vol. 1, pp.121-134, Cairo edn.

2. Dīwān, ed. Amīn al-Khūrī, p.13.

Thābit.

"Verily, we had forced a strong attack (upon you)

'til ye sought refuge in the mountain's foot"<sup>1</sup>

إِذْ شَدَدْنَا صَدْقَةَ صَادِقَةً فَأَجَانَاكَمِ ابْنِ سَفْحِ الْجَبَلِ

iii) As for the word, 'wa-lā-tadhā' in Surah, XX/119,

"Verily, thou shalt not thirst , nor shalt thou be smitten by the sun.",

according to the author's of 'Itqān', Ibn 'Abbās quoted a verse from 'Umar Ibn Abī Rabi'ah's famous poem, 'Min Āl Nu'm' in verification,<sup>2</sup>

"She perceived a man who, as the sun rises high, faces the smiting heat, and at night endures the cold in his limbs"

رَأَتْ رَجُلًا أَسَا إِذَا تَشَمَّسَ عَارَضَتْ : فَيَضِي وَأَمَّا بِالْعَشَى فَيُخَصِّرُ

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From the death of Ibn 'Abbās in the second half of the first century until the last decades of the second century, little poetry was used to contribute to the interpretation or analysing the Qur'ānic text. Some of Ibn 'Abbās's pupils emulated his method<sup>3</sup> but they failed to attain his standard because of a strong movement of resistance which became overwhelmingly predominant. The illumination of the Holy Book by means of ancient Arabic poetry was regarded as a detrimental and mundane personal view (Ra'y). This attitude was characterised by persistent adhesion to the Traditions and the

1. Diwan, ed. H. Hirschfeld, (London, 1910) No. XI, 1.3; ed. Barquq, (Cairo, 1929), p. 302.

2. In both 'Aghānī' (vol. 1, pp. 71-3) and 'al-Kāmil' of al-Mubarrad (ed. W. Wright, ch. 49, pp. 571-2), this story is told differently. While Suyūṭī gives it as an example, both these references give it as if Ibn 'Abbās was bored with Nāfi's questions and wanted to liven the proceedings. Mubarrad however, at this particular verse (p. 572) added by way of explanation the Qur'ānic verse to give the meaning

3. Cf. 'Ikrimah, who when asked about the word Zanīm in Surah LXII/14

avoidance of sound reasoning in regard to Tafsīr.

The origin of this austere and pious attitude can be traced to the early days of the first caliph Abū Bakr who when asked about a certain verse, XIV/85, said, "What sky could shelter me, what earth could carry me, should I dare to interpret the Qur'ān with my personal opinion."<sup>1</sup> A similar attitude was attributed to the second caliph 'Umar.<sup>2</sup> Ibn 'Abbās himself, despite his piety and forthrightness, was not wholeheartedly applauded on this issue. Some of his contemporaries did not always approve of his conclusions, Ibn 'Umar once remarking, "I used to say I disliked Ibn 'Abbās's ventures in interpretation."<sup>3</sup>

This response was, to an even greater extent, the general view adhered to by the generation of the subsequent century, such pious men as, 'Ubaydah b. Qays (d. 72),<sup>4</sup> Ibn Wā'il (Shaqīq b. Salamah, who died during the governorship of Ḥajjāj),<sup>5</sup> Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94),<sup>6</sup> Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 106)<sup>7</sup> and al-Qāsim b. Abī Bakr (d. 108)<sup>8</sup> and perhaps several others. Many explanations were given for these attitudes, but the one common factor in all these references, in this movement, was

1.2. al-Mabānī, Introduction, p. 183.

3. Ibn Ḥajar, 'al-Iṣābah', vol. 2, p. 324, Suyūṭī, 'Itqān', Calcutta edn. p. 10.

4. Ibn Sa'd, 'Ṭabaqāt', (Beirut edn.) vol. 6, p. 95.

5. Ibid. p. 100

6. Ibid. vol. 5, p. 137. Ibn al-Musayyib however, seems to enjoy listening to poetry, op. cit. p. 133, in which he visualised the Arab characteristic, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Nahwiyyīn, p.8.

7. Ibid. vol. 5, p. 200.

8. Ibid. vol. 5, p. 187.

(contd.)

3. cited:

ذَنِيمٌ لَيْسَ يُعْرَفُ مِنْ أَبِيهِ : بَعِي الْأُمِّ ذُو حَسَبٍ نَيْمٍ  
while the master Ibn 'Abbās had chosen;

ذَنِيمٌ تَلَاعَاهُ الرَّجَالُ زِيَادَةً : كَمَا زِيدَ فِي عَرْضِ الْأَدِيمِ الْأَطَارِيعِ

the strong religious feeling<sup>1</sup> which restricted them, to which may also be added the unity of the study of Tafsīr and Hadīth.

The question arises, what of philological studies in this devout and religious atmosphere? "Arabic philology grew out of the study of the Qur'ān, so that Arabic grammar to an even greater extent than Hebrew grammar has accommodated to the language of the scripture" was the remark of A. Jeffrey.<sup>2</sup>

It was first and foremost for the sake of correct reading of the Qur'ān that the urge was felt for constructing rules to eliminate errors in reading. This indispensable requirement thrust the observation of grammatical phenomena directly into prominence.<sup>3</sup> This, however, is manifest in the pioneering attempt of the founder of Arabic grammar, Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (d. 69).<sup>4</sup> In the course of the second century these characteristic phenomena became more expansive and developed, culminating in "The Book" of Sībawayh (d. 188).<sup>5</sup> In it a vast number of Qur'ānic verses were investigated.

Towards the end of the second century and the beginning of the third the grammarian-philologists nevertheless embarked even more noticeably on dealing with the Qur'ānic texts of various categories; perhaps the most remarkable are:

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1. See, Ṭabarī, introduction, vol. 1, p. 89, Ibn Kathīr, introduction p. 6, and Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Muqaddimah, p. 263.
  2. 'The Qur'ān as scripture'. p. 4.
  3. External factors are given by I. Goldziher, see 'Arabic literature during the Abbāsīd period', Trans. by J. Somogyi, Islamic culture. vol. 31, p. 292, 1957.
  4. Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī, 'Akhbār al-Nahwiyyīn al-Basriyyīn', p. 5,
  5. Ibid.

Majāz al-Qur'ān (lit. the metaphor in the Qur'ān),  
 Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān (the meanings of the Qur'ān),  
 and Gharīb al-Qur'ān (the peculiar words and constructions  
 in the Qur'ān).

For these studies Ibn al-Nadīm<sup>1</sup> amongst others has listed several authorities, the bulk of which, unfortunately, are still untraceable.

Whether therefore these varied efforts were originally composed as works of grammar, philology, or even for that matter, literary criticism, seeking support in the sacred Book, or whether they were mainly and specifically works of Tafsīr explained by means of grammar and philology,<sup>2</sup> the question as A. Khūlī<sup>2</sup> has noticed, with regard particularly to some of them, has not been satisfactorily resolved by scholarship.

We can only hope to glance at them in the perspective of some early scholars to see in which category they were placed.

The intense zeitgeist of the age, apparent as we have noticed, in the conventional attitudes of the scholars of Tafsīr also infected strongly the greatest philologists of the day. The philologist al-Aṣma'ī (d. 216) for example, appears from many a source<sup>3</sup> to have possessed an extremely reticent stand toward Tafsīr. In one event it has been reported that he was asked about the meaning of certain verse in the Qur'ān (Surah, XII/13), "He smote her with love". After a pause he gave the emphatic reply this is from the Koran."<sup>4</sup> The contention in this case being, perhaps

1. 'Fihrist', pp. 51-3.
2. 'Manāhij al-Tajdīd' pp. 105, 109-112, with regard to Abū 'Ubaydah's 'Majāz al Qur'ān' the author has dealt with the views of; al-Ḥakandarī, Tāhā Husain, Ibrahīm Muṣṭafa and Aḥmad Amīn.
3. e.g. Ibn al-Anbārī, 'Nuzhat al-Alibā' p. 170; Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, Tran. De Sane Vol. 3, p. 383, Suyūṭī, 'Bughyah', p. 313, Khaṭīb 'Ta'rīkh Baghdād', vol. 10, p. 415, No. 5576.
4. Zarkashī 'Burhān', vol. 1, p. 295.

the word Shaghafahā. But despite his negative attitude toward Tafsīr, however, he surmounted the difficulty by quoting an ancient Arabic saying concerning some people who had wished to sell their slave-girl, when somebody said:-

"Do you intend to part with her when she is extremely desirable to you (Shighāf)?" He thus managed to extricate himself from straightforward interpretation.

This episode may reveal more about Asma'ī's position toward Tafsīr.

"Abu Obaida, having been informed about <sup>that</sup> (Abu Said) al-Asma'i blamed him for composing the Kitāb al-Majaz, and that he had said: "He speaks of God's Book after his own private judgement." ~~He was~~ Informed when and where he gave lessons, and, on the day mentioned he mounted his ass, rode up to the circle of scholars, dismounted and after saluting al-Asmai sat down and conversed with him. On finishing he said:

"Tell me Abu Said!

What sort of thing is bread?"

The other answered, "It is what you bake and eat."

There!" said Abu Obaida, "You have explained the Book of God after your own private judgement," for God, may his name be exalted, has said, in repeating the words of Pharaoh's chief baker, "I was bearing on my head a loaf of bread."

Al-Asmai replied: "I said what appeared to me true and did not (mean to) explain the Koran after my private judgement." On which Abu Obaida replied: "All that I said and which you blamed me for appeared to me true and I did not (mean to) explain the Koran after my private judgement."<sup>1</sup>

This obstinancy prevented him not only from explaining the obscure expression in the Qur'ān, but also from explaining the meanings of Hadīth.<sup>2</sup> Yet the position held by Asma'ī is somewhat weak, for although he was a Sunnite of orthodox belief, during a period of time in which the rationalist views began to coagulate, if tentatively, from their ethereal

1. Ibn Khallikān, Wafyāt vol. 8, p. 122, Gottingae 1840 Tran. by De Slane vol. 3, p. 390.
2. Ibn al-Anbārī, 'Nuzhat al-Aliba', p. 170.

forms, he would repent/<sup>that</sup> perchance he "erred", or, as we have noticed, would reply, "So, but I do not know what may be its signification in the Koran and Sunna."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the truth may be about Aṣma'ī's restrictive piety, with good reason one is inclined to assume that the main factor was a form of jealousy or rivalry between scholars or as Yāqūt demonstrated,<sup>2</sup>

"The chief reason which withheld Aṣma'ī from interfering with Tafsīr was but 'hypocrisy and obstinacy' towards the fact that Abū 'Ubaydah had outstripped him with regard particularly to this field."

\* \* \* \*

From the opposition of Aṣma'ī, it is clear that Abū 'Ubaydah's work meant nothing but a new form of interpretation. Many similar attitudes like that of Aṣma'ī were at variance ~~with~~ Abū 'Ubaydah's new approach of interpretation. But before proceeding let us present this work. It has been reported ~~often~~<sup>that</sup> Abū 'Ubaydah related the following:—"Al-Faḍl Ibn al-Rabī' sent to me at Baṣra, to go and see him so I set out," our interest in the episode lies in this passage, bearing in mind that we are in the presence of Faḍl.

"A well-looking man in the dress of a Kātib (sic) then came in, and al-Faḍl made him sit down beside me and asked him if he knew me. On his reply that he did not, he said to him: "This is Abu Obaida, the most learned man of Basra; we sent for him that we might obtain some benefit from his learning."

1. Ibn Khallikān, op.cit.

2. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 3, p. 22.

"May God bless you!" exclaimed the man.

"You did well!" Turning then towards me he said: "I have been longing to see you, as I have been asked a question which I wish to submit to you." I replied, "let us hear it." "The (Koran which is the) word of God;" said he, "contains the passage:

"The buds of which are like the heads of demons. Now, we are all aware that, in promises and threats, the comparisons which are made should refer to things already known; yet no-one knows what a demon's head is like." To this I replied: "God spoke there to the Arabs in their own style; have not you heard the verse of Amro al-Kais."

"Will he kill me, me whose bed-fellows are a sword and (arrows) painted with azure (steel) like unto the fangs of ogres?"

Now the Arabs never saw an ogre, but as they stood in awe of such beings, they are often threatened with them!"

Al-Fadl and the man who questioned me approved of this answer. On that very day, I took the resolution of composing a treatise on the Korān, in explanation of this and similar difficulties with every necessary elucidation!<sup>1</sup>

This then is the circumstance which encouraged Abū 'Ubaydah to undertake his great work. From the example which the book's story itself reveals it is clear that the author's attention had been drawn to a recognition of the obscurity of certain expressions in the Qur'ān. In his introduction,<sup>2</sup> however, he made clear that his work would not serve a profitable

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1. Ibn Khallikān 'Wafayāt', trans.

2. 'Majāz al-Qur'ān,' p. 8.

purpose to an understanding of the earlier Arabs. After a short philological treatment of the terms Qur'ān, Surah and Āyah, he exemplified about forty different features of speech as modes of expression in which the Arabs conveyed their meaning.

Early as they were, before the establishment of a rhetorical canon, these terms and their identification, or rather strict characterization, became, as we have noticed, in some way more problematic if not downright misleading. Although the concord which some of the terms found, at least in some respect, with others in the later established rhetorical categories,<sup>1</sup> controversies have arisen in both classical<sup>2</sup> and modern<sup>3</sup> studies, regarding particularly the word Majāz to show that this aspect is only a case of parallelism and that no inter-relationship existed between the two.

The conclusion reached as to the former thesis, at least by the more recent studies,<sup>4</sup> is to take the term Majāz (The Way) in its literal meaning and endow it with no analogic value whatsoever. For them the author had provided a multiple of meanings, eg; Tagdīr, meaning by implication, Ta'wīl, the explanation of the meaning of that which is ambiguous, Gharīb, unfamiliar, Ma'na, meaning, or even Tafsīr.

As a work of Tafsīr, as it has in preference been classified, the method maintained throughout the book was to explain the meaning of the selected verses by others similar in sense, then, as far as he was capable, he would emphasize this by reference to Arabic literature. It

1. Muhammad Z. Sallām, 'Athar al-Qur'ān etc.' p. 44.
2. Ibn al-Qayyim 'Mukhtasar al-Sawaqi' al-Muḥriqah etc.'. p. 3.
3. Tāhā Husain, 'Dhikra Abī al-'Alā', pp. 108-9.
4. 'Majāz al-Qur'ān' introduction, pp. 17-18.

it is not clear however, whether or not Abū 'Ubaydah was enthusiastic on the application of Tradition as a means of interpretation, for it is found that, in the whole of his book, he used only fourteen Ḥadīths.

Comparing Abū 'Ubaydah's work with the atmosphere in which it was produced, to see if he was influenced by any particular school of thought, the situation becomes ~~a~~ paradoxical. It has been reported that he was a Kharijite<sup>1</sup> ~~contrary~~wise that he was a Qadarite<sup>2</sup>. In either ~~case~~ the references ceased to call him a Sunnite.

Defending this phenomenon of interpretation he put it quite bluntly as being in the spirit of the desert Arab's philosophy,<sup>3</sup> to be taken or left at will, he cared little therefore, for those who objected to it. It may be noticed that this was the prescribed method, which was later in the century, ~~in some~~ means, strongly valued by Mu'tazilite scholars. Yet although the Mu'tazilite ideas began to flourish profusely at the beginning of the third century and in spite of the report that we have just mentioned, which claimed that the author had some inclination towards the Qadarite (the early name of the Mu'tazilah) doctrine, it is difficult for us to vouch that his work was written under the influence of Mu'tazilite ideaology.

Other philological attempts emanated thence under the title 'Ma'anī al-Qur'ān' on which, according to some authorities,<sup>4</sup> it has been

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1. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 3, pp. 164, 165.
  2. al-Yazīdī, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Nahwiyyin', p. 199.
  3. Ibid., p. 194.
  4. Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', Cairo ed. p. 52; Suyūṭī, 'Bughyat', p. 395.

reported that Abū 'Ubaydah himself had written a book; if this should prove to be true one would assume that his conception of the terms Majāz and Ma'ani were somewhat different.

It is obvious, however, that in the list presented by Ibn al-Nadīm<sup>1</sup> the remarkable number of scholars who embarked on this topic were in fact philologist-grammarians, as at that time, in this field, it is difficult to distinguish between the two occupations. Thus it seems that this topic stimulated a great deal of interest, the beginnings of which can be traced as far back as the early decades of the century. For we find among the works attributed to Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā', instigator of the school of Mu'tazilīh, a book which carries the same title 'Ma'ani al-Qur'ān.'<sup>2</sup>

According to some authorities, however, it also seems that this topic, by the turn of the century, had become even more popular, so that even some women discussed aspects of it. Ibn Taghrī Bardī recorded that Fatimah al-Nisābūriyyah, (d. 222) used to speak of Ma'ani al-Qur'ān.'<sup>3</sup>

On consideration it is obvious that all these various attempts, regardless of their earlier consequences, of which we are as yet still ignorant, and despite the disapproval of some eminent scholars ~~of~~ their fellows' methods in this aspect,<sup>4</sup> had nonetheless been made possible as

1. Ibid. p. 51-2.

2. The completion of 'K. al-Fihrist', Vienna Oriental Journal, vol. iv, p. 211, also Cairo edn. p. 1.

3. 'al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah', etc. vol. 1, p. 666.

4. It is difficult to establish a basis on which Farrā' attacked Abū 'Ubaydah's new method of interpretation, to the degree of expressing the wish to whip him, (cf. Ibn al-Anbārī, 'Nuzhat al-'Aliba'), when the self-same method he adopted was in many cases identical with that of Abū 'Ubaydah's. Farrā' lived in the court of Māmūn and was a teacher of his sons and it is also reported that he was a Qadarite, Whatever the stimulant of these attacks, they were prompted in no small way by current intellectual impetus.

the strong religious piety, which for so long had restrained many from approaching Tafsīr, seemed no longer to be a stifling influence. The strong reactionary movement, personified in the school of Mu'tazilah, who not only themselves freely interpreted the composition of the Qur'ān but by so doing they affected, rather provoked or forced, the pious orthodox in some degree to abandon their restricted and negative attitude towards Tafsīr and apply similar techniques in their own arguments; this however did not necessitate the abandonment of traditional methods by some of the orthodox, who prolonged their arguments into later centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the previous two centuries witnessed the vacillating progress of Tafsīr, during which time it is seen that the scholars shook off their reticence of interpreting the Qur'ān's text, although even greater controversies were to reach the light in the course of the third century.

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1. It is of some interest that in such an extreme traditionalist as the Imām Ibn Hanbal one hears of his using the term Majāz. His application of the term, as explained in later centuries, (Ibn al-Qayyim, 'Mukhtaṣar al-Sawā'iq al-Mursalāh' etc. vol. 2, p. 2.) was that he used the term not as the antithesis of reality, but in the mere literary meaning of the term, as we have noticed did Abū 'Ubaydah.

ii) The Creation of the Qur'ān  
and I'jāz

The greatest characteristic of the third century A.H., the ninth A.D., was that it reflected the youth and vitality of an era epitomised as the 'Golden Age' of Arabic literature. This period witnessed an unprecedented revival in all branches of art and science, among which was the re-emergence of scholastic theology, under the protection of official sanction, from the enforced obscurity it had undergone in the previous century.

Emancipation of theological views, which had begun a century earlier, now advanced with the revitalising contact with Greek philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In the first three decades of this century the inextricable controversies inherent in the dogmas of that zealous, apologetic sect of Islām, Mu'tazilah (the Se'ceders, perhaps better known as the people of the divine unity and divine justice), reached their culmination. Among the problems which perplexed them was the question of the creation of the Qur'ān. What effect did this theological dispute have upon the literary question of I'jāz? This is the problem at issue.

A brief sketch of the main development of the theory of the creation of the Qur'ān would perhaps not be amiss.

The renowned al-Ja'd b. Dirham, tutor of the last Umayyid caliph, Marwān II, was the first to declare that the Qur'ān was created, although it has been reported that the doctrine was formulated and written on

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1. cf. W.H. Patton, 'Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Miḥna', footnote 1, p. 51.
  2. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Kāmil', vol. 7, p. 79.
  3. Ibid, cf. also Aḥmad Amīn, 'Duḥā al-Islām', vol. 3, p. 163.

even before Ja'd's time,<sup>1</sup> the dogma being reported as having been inspired by Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

The philosophical mood in which Ja'd developed this doctrine, as explained in later centuries, was the denial of the attributes of God and although of the exact argument of his rejection little is known, it is apparent that the question of the Divine qualities of God troubled and stimulated him a great deal.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that his views on the creation of the Qur'ān led subsequently to al-Ja'd's denial of its literary qualities, vis. I'jāz. Could this be verified it would establish an earlier relationship between the two questions than has hitherto been propounded.

Denial of God's attributes and the question of the creation of the Qur'ān were among the doctrines delegated to Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d.128) from al-Ja'd. Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā, founder of the school of Mu'tazilah and contemporary of Jahm, had views on the denial of the attributes of God which were not fully developed, according to al-Shaharistānī,<sup>5</sup> maintaining only the denial of two eternities. Jahm however went much deeper in his rejection of the attributes of God, affirming that it was not permissible that the Creator should be described in the terms by which his creatures are described, as that would lead to anthropomorphism.<sup>6</sup> With regard to the attribute 'speech' Jahm found it as great a

1. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Kāmil', vol. 7, p. 79.

2. Ibid, cf. also Aḥmad Amin, 'Duḥā al-Islām', vol. 3, p. 163.

3. Ibn Kathīr, 'al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah', vol. ix, p. 350.

4. M.S. al-Rāfi'ī, 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān' etc., 2nd edn. p. 183.

5. 'Milal wa al-Niḥal', on margin of Ibn Ḥazm's 'Fisal', p. 57.

6. Ash'arī, 'Maqālāt', vol. 2, p. 589.

paradox as did later Mu'tazilite thinkers. Deny it he did not among the other attributes nor could he accept of its eternity. The conclusion he arrived at was that the names ascribed to God were finite metaphors (transitory), which statement may confirm his views on the creation of the Qur'ān.

The terms applied by Ibn Taymiyyah, in describing Jahm's explanation of the attribute speech, was that God did not speak in actuality but the ascription of speech to Him was only a metaphor. The term metaphor in this context is not in the sense of analogy, but as an alternative for transience. The question may arise, on what basis did Jahm apply the term metaphor? The history of metaphor in Arabic literature, as recorded by Ibn Taymiyyah in his 'K. al-Imān' is "The division of speech into 'reality' and 'metaphor' that became popular in the fourth century, was in progress in the third century, I know not of its existence in the second century, unless that it was used towards the end of it."<sup>1</sup> It can be seen from this statement that Ibn Taymiyyah is definite about the condition of metaphor in the fourth and third centuries, but his allusion to the second century is extremely vague, therefore doubt may be cast on Jahm's ignorance of the application of metaphor, even though in its infancy.

So much is clear: ~~that~~ Jahm was not only troubled by the attribute of speech, per se, which led him to emphasize al-Ja'd's idea of the creation of the Qur'ān, but was also anxious to avoid any suggestion that gave rise to anthropomorphism as expressed in many verses in the Qur'ān.

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1. Damascus, 1961/1381, p. 74.

He could not accept these expressions at face value, nor could they conveniently be ignored, therefore the only possibility for him was to endow them with an allegorical nature. Can this be counted as an application of metaphor?

Returning to Ibn Taymiyyah, in the above mentioned work he states that metaphor was introduced into Arabic literature by the Mu'tazilites and other theologians of their ilk.<sup>1</sup> In another work some enlightenment may be gained regarding Jahmite opinion on the verses of the Qur'ān which testify that God has spoken, he records that they explain this act metaphorically.<sup>2</sup> This, however, may be taken to concern the later Jahmites, while Jahm's own views, on the appellations of God, are found later in the same work thus, that he refrained from applying names or any other description to God except in metaphor.<sup>3</sup> This is confirmed by al-Baghdādī, who, while discussing Jahm's views on Jabr, affirms that he only ascribes actions, even to men, metaphorically.<sup>4</sup> Thus it appears that Jahm's allegorical interpretation laid the foundation though theologically, for the literary men of succeeding centuries.

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In the early decades of the Abbasid dynasty strict orthodoxy severely limited the activities of the innovators and free-thinkers, forcing them to practise their views in secrecy.

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1. 'al-Rasā'il wa al-Masa'il', vol. 3, p. 27.
  2. 'Al-Fark bain al-Firak', p. 199; and also the summary of the same work by al-Rasini, ed. by P. Hitti, p. 128.
  3. A. S. Tritton, 'Muslim Theology' p. 47.
  4. 'Wasiyyat Abū Hanifah', translated by A. Jeffery in 'Reader on Islām' p. 343.

It has been recorded that the Imām Abū Ḥanifah (150/767) was the first to teach that the Qur'ān was created, although he afterwards withdrew his opinion.<sup>1</sup> In his will he testified, "We confess that the Qur'ān is the speech of Allah-exalted be he-uncreated, that it is His revelation and what He has sent down. It is not He, but neither is it other than He, but in a real sense it is one of His attributes."<sup>2</sup> From this it may be assumed that during the closing days of Abū Ḥanifah there must have been some discussion over the question of the creation of the Qur'ān.

After the death of Abū Ḥanifah his disciple Abū Yūsuf assumed his role and continued his teaching. One of Abū Yūsuf's students, Bishr Ibn Ghayyāth al-Marīsī, as has been recorded repeatedly, taught openly that the Qur'ān was created.<sup>3</sup> Such effrontery led the Caliph al-Rashīd to proclaim "I have heard that Bishr al-Marīsī said that the Qur'ān is created; now verily, if God give him into my hand, I will kill him in such a way as I have never yet killed anyone" upon which Bishr remained hidden for about twenty years'.<sup>4</sup>

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During the reign of Ma'mūn and his successors Mu'taṣim and Wāthiq, the school of Mu'tazilah and its teachings became overwhelmingly pre-

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1. A. S. Tritton, 'Muslim Theology' p. 47.
  2. 'Waṣīyyat Abū Ḥanifah', translated by A. Jeffery in 'Reader on Islam' p. 343.
  3. al-Khatīb 'Ta'rīkh Baghdād', vol. 3, no. 3516, p. 56./Ibn Khallikān 'Wafayāt', vol. 1-7, pt. 2, p. 10;/Dahabī, 'Mizān al-I'tidāl', vol. 1, p. 150,/ Qurashi, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah', p. 165. Baghdādī makes this the reason however for Abū Yūsuf's desertion of al-Marīsī.
  4. Maqrīzī, 'Khuṭaṭ', p. 3, trans. W. M. Patton p. 48. 'Ibn Ḥanbal and the Mihna'.

dominant. Ma'mūn, it has been recorded, not only favoured the Mu'tazilah, to the exclusion of all other sects, but also wrote books and treatises himself, in defence of their principles.<sup>1</sup> Many reasons have been cited to account for this tendency, among which are; the current patronage of Greek philosophy,<sup>2</sup> al-Ma'mūn's intense interest in theology, for which he had had a thorough training<sup>3</sup>, the restrictive atmosphere of the orthodox school or the influence of some strong personalities,<sup>4</sup> for example his chief judge Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād and his teacher Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf. These and perhaps other political factors contributed to his adoption of the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān<sup>5</sup>, in 212, although his support of the principles might have been considered long before.<sup>6</sup> After much deliberation in 218 he decreed that the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān must be accepted universally among Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

Al-Ma'mūn, however, died soon after this pronouncement and was succeeded by al-Mu'tasim who as one of his first acts instigated an inquisition (Mihnah) against the orthodox, which was continued in some degree by the following Caliph, al-Wāthiq .

The strength of the success of the inquisition

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1. Ibn al-Murtadā, 'Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah', ed. S.D.Wilzer, p. 123.
  2. Subkī, 'Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah' vol. 1, p. 218.  
Cf. Carl Brockelmann, 'History of the Islamic People' Eng. Trans. p. 126
  - 3&4. Damirī, 'Hāyāt al-Hayawān al-Kubrā' vol. 1, p.72.
  5. Tabarī 'Annales' vol. 10, p.1099; Ibn al-Athīr, 'Kāmil' vol. 6, p.188; Suyūti, 'Ta'rīkh al-Khulafā' p.205.
  6. Cf. Ahmad Amīn, 'Duhā al-Islām', 3ed.edn. vol. 3, p.162.
  7. Suyūti, 'Ta'rīkh al-Khulafā' p. 137; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah, vol.1, p.643.

by these three Caliphs lay in the support of that influential character, Ahmed Ibn Abi Duwā'd, the chief judge, and the energetic thinkers of the school of Mu'tazilah in their sixth and seventh generation.<sup>1</sup>

The Mu'tazilah, who seemingly demonstrated diverse views towards the attribute speech, were immovable in their attitudes on the creation of the Qur'ān; holding that as the attribute speech,<sup>2</sup> and consequently the Qur'ān, consists of commands, prohibitions, interrogations and narration, each of which is a different reality and separate specific entity, thus being inadmissible in a single eternity and impossible for them to accept.<sup>3</sup> Thus in such a dialectic atmosphere, all intellectual energy was directed towards the theological problem of the creation of the Qur'ān and "the question of I'jāzu al-Qur'ān must have been either pushed aside or discussed only as a subsidiary to the big question",<sup>4</sup> this perhaps might not be the case as discussion of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and its literary aspect were still in an embryonic stage and were perhaps initially induced by the question of the creation of the Qur'ān.

A connecting link, between the problem of the creation of the Qur'ān and two of its subsidiary aspects, its miraculous nature and I'jāz, may be afforded by two eminent Mu'tazilites, Mu'mmar Ibn 'Abbād al-Sulamī (220/835) and 'Isā Ibn Ṣabīḥ al-Murdār (226/841). The former utterly rejected miracles and the latter, after much tribulation over

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1. Murtadā, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah', p. 44, 71.
  2. Shahrīstānī, 'Milal', vol. 1, pp. 51, 72, 82, 98, 102, 115, 193.
  3. Shahrīstānī, 'Nihāyat al-Iqdām', ed. Guillaume, pp. 289, 290.
  4. Abdu al-Aleem, 'Islamic Culture', vol. 7, p. 231.

the Qur'ān's creation, arrived at a denial of its superior literary qualities. Mu'mmar, according to Baghdādī,<sup>1</sup> with the rest of the extremist Mu'tazilah denied <sup>that</sup> all accidents (A'rād) ~~from being~~ <sup>were</sup> created by God, saying that he only created the substances (Jawāhir). He alone reached the conclusion, however, that even miracles are not the decree of God, as he only creates the substance and it is the substance itself which formulates accident. Yet further he states that there is no miracle in ~~the being of~~ a substance; the only miraculousness is in the extraordinary performance of that substance, (lit. bodies Ajsām). In other words Mu'mmar rejected the signs of the prophets on the ground that they are accidents and thus not creations of God.

Murdār (the monk of Mu'tazilah) on the other hand, in keeping with other unconventional views prevalent at the time, a severe oppression having been put on orthodoxy, held the radical view of repudiating the literary merits of the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of the reign of the caliph Wāthiq the momentum of the inquisition faded and gradually became obsolete. This was even more pronounced after the debate, on the creation of the Qur'ān, between the judge Ibn Abī Duw'ād and the Sunnite theologian 'Abd Allah b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq, in the presence of Wāthiq, in which the judge was defeated.<sup>3</sup>

With the assumption of Mu-tawakkil to the caliphate in 232, the inquisition came to an end. After a short delay, in 234<sup>4</sup> he declared

1. 'Uṣūl ad-Dīn', p. 177.

2. Shahrīstānī, 'Milal', vol. 1, p. 88, and also al-Sama'ānī, 'K. al-Ansāb', D.S. Margoliouth facsimile, f521a.

3. Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Muntazam fī al-Ta'rikh' vol. 4, B.M. Ms. Or3004.

4. Suyūṭī, 'Ta'rikh al-Khulafā', p. 38. Damīrī, 'Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān', vol. 1, p. 77-8.

that the Mu'tazilite doctrine was a heresy and returned to the traditional faith. While Ma'mūn was so enthusiastic in his conviction as to have written books defending the dogmatic principles of the Mu'tazilah Mu'tawakkil, on the contrary, assisted in the production of a work entitled 'The Book of Religion and Empire' by Ali Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. 250), designed to reinstate and uphold the views of the orthodox, after the sufferings they had undergone in the previous fourteen years 218-252. This work, however, has been ~~described~~<sup>described</sup> as being one of the earliest studies of I'jāz if not the first,<sup>1</sup> though unsystematic. In the sixth chapter the author counts the Qur'ān as being among the miracles of the prophet, he emphasized further the point that rhetoric is a sign of prophetic office; stating "When I was a Christian, I did not cease to say in accordance with an uncle of mine who was one of the learned and eloquent men among Christians, that rhetoric was not a sign of prophetic office on account of its being common to all nations. But when I waived tradition and customs, and broke with the promptings of habit and education, and examined the meanings of the Kur'ān, then I found that the question was as its holders believe it to be."<sup>2</sup> This

1. G. E. von Grunebaum, 'A tenth century-document of Arabic literary theory and criticism' The sections on the poetry of al-Bāqillānī's I'jāz al-Qur'ān, translated and annotated. Introduction p.xvi, also footnote 12,
2. The Arabic text ed. Mingana, p. 44-5, English trans. Mingana, p.50. Also the introduction of the same work, pp. i-xxi. For further details on the author and his works, cf. E. G. Browne, 'The History of Tabaristan', p. 43, London. 1905/D.S. Margoliouth, on 'The Book of Religion and Empire' from the proceedings of the British Academy, 1930, M.Z. al-Ṣadiqī, Introduction of 'Firdaws al-Ḥikmah', Berlin, 1928, B.M. ms. Or. 41.

eulogy, a comparison of the Qur'ān and the other revealed books, is far from the literary criticism which compared the Qur'ān's composition with the Arabic literary heritage, that was begun in the third century and became increasingly more elaborate in succeeding centuries.

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Theological and literary studies were in a nebulous state, literary works frequently having a theological bias. Specialisation as such was non-existent and authors wavered individually between all branches of knowledge.

Two theories seemed to be connected with the studies of the composition of the Qur'ān, a static one which put forward the view that God prevented the Arabs from producing the like of the Qur'ān which afterwards became known as al-Sarfah; and an active theory, that later became the definitive study I'jāz, which proceeded to compare the Qur'ān's style with other Arabic literature. Sometimes the two were combined however to form a composite theory. The first of these theories was assumed to have been invented by Nazẓām, which having been taken for granted by historians might be worthy of a reappraisal.

Nazzām and the theory of al-Sarfah

The trend towards philosophy called to the aid of religion is perceived to a great extent in the speculative theology (Kalām) by which a class of theologians found themselves compelled to supplement the teaching of the Qur'ān by philosophic demonstration,<sup>1</sup> even though the latter ostensibly seemed to contradict the religious text.

It is, however, recognizable in the attitude of the philosopher-theologian Ibrāhīm Ibn Sayyār al-Nazzām (231/845-6?) with regard particularly to his theory of al-Sarfah. Nazzām had the credit among historians, especially heresiographers, of having made extensive use of Greek philosophical doctrine. It also recorded that he read the books of philosophy and incorporated their teachings with the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately as a great number of Mu'tazilah controversial treatises have disappeared or were wilfully destroyed, leaving no trace,<sup>3</sup> reconstruction of their views is extremely hazardous. "It seems however, Nazzām's writings are lost <sup>that</sup> except fragments have been preserved mainly in the works of his pupil al-Jāhiz."<sup>4</sup> Added to these are the explanatory and scrutinizing discussions of Nazzām's idea of the fourth and succeeding centuries. Nevertheless modern studies seem to suggest that Nazzām's own supporting and definitive views, on his theory of al-Sarfah are not to be found elsewhere except for three short notices

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1. Judah Halleri's 'Kitab al-Khazari'; trans. from the Arabic by Hartwig Hirschfeld, pp. 2-3.
  2. Shahrastāni, 'Milal' p. 67.
  3. Robert Durie Osborn, 'Islam under the Kalifs of Baghdad', pt. 1. ch. 3, p. 148.
  4. H. S. Nyberg, E.I. vol. 3, p. 895.

incidentally mentioned by al-Jāhīz in the works 'Ḥayawān' and 'Hujaj al-Nubuwwah.'<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in the first half of the third century, there is perhaps little hope of illumination on the theory of al-Sarfah from Nazzām's general philosophical attitudes and the school of Mu'tazilah.

First of all let us define the idea of al-Sarfah as it has reached us. Literally the word al-Sarfah means 'prevention' or 'diversion'; but the implication as presented at different times and in various sources<sup>2</sup> is that the composition and the beauty of the Qur'ān's

1. Abu Radaḥ 'Ibrāhīm Ibn Sayyār al-Nazzām etc.' pp. 36-7.

2. It is worth noticing how diversely the idea of al-Sarfah was recorded by scholars between the third and sixth centuries, but fourth century examples except for that of al-Ash'ari we shall deal with later.

- (i) al-Jāhīz (d. 255) for instance produced it thus, "Nazzām and his followers had alleged that the Qur'ān was true revelation, but it's composition is not a proof (for prophecy)".  
'Rasā'il al-Jāhīz,' edn. Sandūbī p. 148.
- (ii) al-Ash'ari, (d. 321) "The miraculous element in the Qur'ān is what it tells about the inconceivable things, but as for it's composition and verbal arrangement it was feasible for worshippers to produce it's like had not God prevented them."  
'Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyān,' by H. Ritter, vol. 1, p. 225.
- (iii) al-Baghdādī, (d. 429) "The fifteenth heresy (of Nazzām) is the composition of the Qur'ān and beauty of the literary arrangement of its words do not show the miraculous character of the prophet, nor are they a proof of reliability of his claim to prophecy. The proof of his reliability lies only in what the Koran contains regarding the manifestation of unknown things. As to the composition of the Koran and the beauty of the literary arguments of it's verses; verily the worshippers are capable of the same, and even of what is more beautiful than this, in composition and literary arrangement."  
The translation is from 'Moslem Sects and Schisms' of Baghdādī's 'Fark bain al-Firak' by Kate Chambers Seelye, pp. 148-9 cf. Muḥ. Badr edn. of 'Fark bain al-Firak,' p. 114.

literary arrangement does not show the miraculous character of the prophet, nor is it a proof of the credence of his claim to prophethood. The only miraculous element according to al-Nazzām is what the Qurʾān contains about the unknown things, the recording of events that happened in the past, and those to come in the future. ' Had not God prevented the Arabs from producing a composition like that of the Qurʾān they might have written it's like or even surpassed it as literature.

This theory produced a range of controversies in the study of Iʿjāz particularly in the fourth and later centuries, as we shall see.

(contd.)

- (iv) al-Shaharistānī, (d.584) "The miraculous attributes of the Qurʾān are, what it relates about things that happened in the past; or those to come in the future; averting the opposition towards it, and by making the Arabs nescient of the urge to produce it's like, although he permitted that they might produce a surah of it's like in eloquence, in rhetoric and in composition." Ijī, however in the eighth century used most of these examples in his book 'al-Mawāqif.' see. Sharḥ al-Mawāqif of Ijī (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad) (756) by ʿAlī Ibn Muḥammad (Zain al-Dīn) al-Jurjānī, Constantinople, 1239/1824, p. 557-561, and the special version of al-Ilāhiyāt wa al-Samʿiyyāt wa al-Tazy-āl' p. 197-201. Lipsia, MDCCCXLVIII.
- (v) After Ijī, however, and by one of his commentators, the idea of Ṣarfah was sometimes interpreted by both definitions, the Muʿtazilite noted above and that of the Shiʿaite ascribed to al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍa (cf. Ibn Kamāl Pāshā, 'Risālat, Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān B.M. Ms. Or 5965 f. 122b.

There were comparatively few scholars who supported it, albeit from different viewpoints, while the majority were opposed to it.

Although many references suggest that the idea of al-Sarfah was the creation of Naẓẓām, in the third century, some modern studies<sup>1</sup> claim that it was merely the re-emergence of the theory of an earlier Mu'tazilite thinker, Waṣīl Ibn 'Aṭā' (d.131) even though there is lack of contemporary evidence.<sup>2</sup> It is apparent that the subject of al-Sarfah is not contained among the theses of Waṣīl.

It may be argued that the idea of al-Sarfah may have been inspired by the fertile dāialectic atmosphere of the school of Mu'tazilah particularly between the years 218-233, which saw the peak and decline of the officially sponsored question of the creation of the Qur'ān.

The problem, as we have noted, emerged fundamentally from the attitude of the Mu'tazilah<sup>3</sup> towards the attributes of God, including of course that of 'speech,' as all the sect propounded the idea of it's finiteness. Consequently this might have led Naẓẓām to form his argument thus:- The Qur'ān is transient, therefore it can not be a proof

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1. cf. Hifni M. Sharaf, in his two works (A) 'The Study and editing of "Ibn Abi al-Isba' al-Misri's (585-654) 'Badi' al-Qur'an', p. 35. (B) His short survey entitled ..... Nazm al-Qur'an, No. 22, p. 8. The writer in his first work refers twice to 'Lisān al-Mizan' of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī (d.852) he only mentioned "the Indian edition, 1329", making no reference to the page number! There is no indication in vol. 1, p. 67, under the name of Naẓẓām to the statement, nor under the name of Waṣīl, vol. 5, p. 214-215, published in 1331. The statement may be recorded somewhere in one of the six volumes of Ibn Hajar who recorded Waṣīl as an unbeliever and Naẓẓām as a Zindīq!  
cf. also 'Mizan al-I'tidāl' of Dhahabī (673-748) vol. 3, p. 267, who was copied more or less verbatim by Ibn Hajar regarding Waṣīl, in which there is also no mention of Naẓẓām.
  2. see A. J. Wensinck, E.I. vol. 4, p. 1127-1128.
  3. cf. Muḥammad Zaghāl Sallām, 'Athar al-Qur'ān fī Tatawwur al-Naqd al-ʿArabi, 1st edn. etc. p. 69.

either of God or his prophets.

Endeavouring to establish a foundation for the study of al-Nazzām's rational theses on al-Sarfah it is surprising to find that, "two tendencies dominate his thought, the zeal for strict monotheism and zeal for the Qur'ān, which compelled him to set aside any other source of teaching and ethics."<sup>1</sup> Enthusiasm for the Qur'ān can be observed in his rejection of arguments based on analogy or general agreements of the Muslim community as of no validity to him.<sup>2</sup> He was also mistrustful of Traditionists (Ahl al-Ḥadīth) and frequently and bitterly rebuked them.<sup>3</sup>

Was it a mere philosophical hypothesis that led him to al-Sarfah? al-Jāhiz recorded that "Nazzām's weakness in his thinking was that he made an assumption then developed it to a positive conclusion, forgetting that it was originally only a hypothesis."<sup>4</sup>

In our attempt we may try to look at the theory of al-Sarfah in Nazzām's philosophical standpoint under two main topics, both of which bear close relation to our subject. Firstly his attitude towards miracles in general and secondly his views on the intellectual capabilities of man.

It is evident that the school of Mu'tazilah had little confidence in the miracles of saints;<sup>5</sup> for the reasons given by al-Baghdādī,<sup>6</sup>

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1. H. S. Nyberg, E.I. vol. 3, p. 892.
  2. al-Jāhiz, 'Ḥayawān', vol. 2, p. 230, vol. 6, p. 343.
  3. Abū al-ʿĀs 'Intisār' op.cit. Ibn Hajar, vol. 1, p. 67.
  4. al-Jāhiz, 'Ḥayawān', vol. 2, p. 83.
  5. Baghdādī, Uṣūl al-Dīn', vol. 1, p. 175, 1st edn.
  6. Ibid. p. 175. (Also recorded Nazzām's rejection of another miracle).

that these would conflict with those of the prophet; and also because there was scant contemporary evidence of the miraculous power of gifted persons, during the period. Some of them seemed to reject them completely however making no distinction between miracles of prophets or saints.<sup>1</sup>

As for Nazzām, apparently he only rejected a specific miracle ascribed to the prophet, namely that of the cleaving of the moon; his rejection being recorded by Ibn Qutaybah,<sup>2</sup> al-Baghdādī<sup>3</sup> and al-Shahristānī,<sup>4</sup> all of whom showed this to be connected with Nazzām's intolerance towards the veracity of Ibn Mas'ūd, who recorded the event, rather than disbelief of the miracle itself. Therefore, it could hardly be said that the idea of al-Sarfah sprang from his disbelief in miracles, as even al-Jāhiz demonstrated Nazzām's acceptance of supernatural action.<sup>5</sup>

With reference to his doctrine about man's intellectual capacity it can be noticed that Nazzām esteemed man's mental potential to the point that, "Intelligence alone is sufficient to guide men to knowledge of the Creator, even in the absence of prophets or scriptures."<sup>6</sup> This perhaps led him to conduct his argument on strictly scientific and non-traditional lines.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Ibid. p. 177.

2. Ibn Qutaybah, "Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth" p. 25, 30-1.

3. Baghdādī, al-Fark bain al-Firak vol. 1, p. 144.

4. Shahristānī, Milal p. 40. cf. Abu Raḍah footnote, p. 165.

5. Jāhiz, Hayawān vol. 4, p. 25-6.

6. al-Shahristānī, 'Milal', vol. 1, p.674.

7. cf. H.A.R. Gibb, 'Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume', part 1, p. 152.

Al-Ash'arī, regarding the Mu'tazilah's views on man's ability, showed that the school was divided into two main streams of thought over the question. The sect as a whole adopted the idea that, "Man is capable only of undertaking a thing that is within his physical power, recognised or not, while Nazzām alone and unconditionally declared that man was capable of anything conceived in his mind!"<sup>1</sup>

Insofar as contemporary references are concerned it seems that Nazzām's notion of al-Sarfah was turned from a mere philosophical hypothesis, as had been shown by Jāhiz and Ash'arī, to a complete denial of the stylistic quality of the Qur'ān according to al-Baghdādī and the scholars of later centuries.<sup>2</sup>

So far it is clear that Nazzām's theory does not show any more objection to the stylistic merit of the Qur'ān, than showing the possibility of man's producing it's like, although this is a direct contradiction of the text itself.<sup>3</sup>

The censure by al-Nazzām of Ibn Mas'ūd for excluding two Surahs from his text of the Qur'ān, was recorded by Ibn Qutaybah in the third century; thus, "Did he not then judge by their wonderful composition, that was styled on the Qur'ān's inimitable pattern, which incapacitated the eloquent men from producing it's like."<sup>4</sup> This can be taken as evidence that al-Nazzām greatly admired the composition of the Qur'ān.

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1. al-Ash'arī, 'Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn', vol. 1, p. 239.
  2. cf. the footnote on an earlier page.
  3. e.g. Surah XVII/88.
  4. Ibn Qutaybah, 'Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadith', p. 26.

Furthermore another Mu'tazilite, al-Khayyāt, writing in the late third century,<sup>1</sup> while engaged in proscribing Ibn al-Rāwandī's books and allegations against the Mu'tazilah, ascribed the first statement made by al-Jāhiz that the Qur'ān was not a proof of prophethood, to al-Nazzām.<sup>2</sup>

### Jāhiz and the term al-Ṣarfah

Before approaching the views of al-Jāhiz on the composition of the Qur'ān, which appear fragmentally in various accessible sources, it may well be worthy of notice how he approached the idea of al-Ṣarfah.

Jāhiz at any rate was the only authority of the relevant period and was perhaps the first to ascribe the theory of al-Ṣarfah to Nazzām, even if only by allusion. We have not so far, however, as much evidence to venture that the idea was created by Nazzām himself as the ambivalent attitude of Jāhiz would have us believe. In support of this are other references of the same century, two of them, namely Ibn Qutaybah and Khayyāt, both seem to rid Nazzām from such an accusation. Thus we may try to unravel the problem in the light of the relationship between the teacher, al-Nazzām and his pupil, al-Jāhiz.

There is no doubt that Jāhiz had once great admiration and devotion for his master Nazzām, as is shown in the statement made by him in the book 'Ḥayawān' concerning him, "But for the theologians the common folk of all nations had perished; but for the Mu'tazila the common

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1. H. S. Nyberg, Introduction to Intiṣār', p.18.

2. Albert N. Nader, al-Intiṣār', p. 28-29, cf. Nyberg, p. 27-28.

folk of all (Muslim) sects had perished; though I do not say but for Ibrāhīm (al-Nazzām) and his disciples the rank and file of all Mu'tazila had perished I do say that he opened for them ways and revealed things of great advantage and profit,"<sup>1</sup> and another source reputed Jāhiz as writing, "The ancients say; in every thousand years there is a man who has no par, if this be true, the man should be Abū Ishāq al-Nazzām"<sup>2</sup>

Jāhiz, although in the field of theology, acknowledged leader of a Mu'tazilite school, was first and foremost a writer as has been recorded by many authorities,<sup>3</sup> A noticeable factor in his writing however, is his instability<sup>4</sup> and also a strong tendency to waver erratically between extremes, in his points of views.<sup>5</sup> These

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1. Jāhiz, 'Hayawān', vol.4, p.206, .The English translation used is by A.S.Tritton, 'Muslim Theology' p.79; also 'Hayawān' vol.2, p.207.
  2. Ahmad b. Yahyā al-Murtadā, 'Dhikr al-Mu'tazilah' ed. T.W. Arnold, p.29.
  3. Al-Maltī, 'K, al-Tanbīh etc. p.30.
  4. Ibn Qutaybah, 'Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Hadīth' pp.71-8; Paul Kros, 'Epite de Beruni, p. 213.
  5. Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī, in his refutation of al-Jāhiz's 'K. al-'Uthmāniyyah' published with the 'Rasā'il of al-Jāhiz' Cf. particularly CH.7, p.38.

inclinations perhaps contributed to the reasons for his bitter attacks on Naẓẓām and his students, after he had broken his ties with their circle.

Within Naẓẓām's philosophical framework, particularly with regard to his view on the capabilities of man's intellect, there is ample room for the theory of al-Sarfah, but surely not in the garbled form that was recorded by later hostile heresiographers.<sup>1</sup>

Frequently schisms took place in early Muslim sects resulting in many cases in the establishment of new schools and teachings. The Mu'tazilah were not excepted from this tendency and disputes were habitual among them, even before the sect was weakened by the renaissance of the Sunnites in 233.<sup>2</sup> Jāhiz altercated bitterly with Naẓẓām and his following over certain issues<sup>3</sup> and the former acclamation and devotion turned to deprecation and disparagement. We have seen already how he discredited Naẓẓām of his rational thoughts,<sup>4</sup> and further in his book 'Khalq al-Qur'ān' (The creation of the Qur'ān) Jāhiz maintained,

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1. The so often quoted fifth century definition of al-Sarfah by Baghdādī for instance, seems to have been a confused view supplemented by other Mu'tazilite attitudes. It is obvious that Baghdādī not only recorded the statements made by theologians of earlier centuries, even including that of Ash'ari, but added to these the view of another third century Mu'tazilite Murdār ('Fark', p. 151, cf. Jār Allah, 'al-Mu'tazilah' p. 139.) who said that "People are capable of excelling the composition of the Qur'ān." Baghdādī's enmity to Naẓẓām was such that he stated ('Fark', p. 144) that "If it had not been for fear of the sword Naẓẓām would have been shown the heresy of the Brahman (people who deny prophethood)." Perhaps this conclusion of Baghdādī was reached after consulting three Sunnite works by Ash'ari which were primarily to discredit Naẓẓām as a believer: also books and again Bāqillānī's 'Ikfar al-Muta'wilin, ('Fark' p. 155)
  2. cf. al-Ash'ari, 'Maqālāt', vol. 1, p. 155-278, also Zuh'dī H. Jār Allah, 'al-Mu'tazilah', p. 180, 'The eclipse of the Mu'tazilah'.
  3. Abū al-Husain al-Maltī, 'K.al-Tanbih wal-Radd 'Ala ahl al-Ahwā' wal-Bida', Edn. S. Dederling, p. 30.

"This book will demolish many heretics including Naẓẓām and those who follow him, who disbelieve in the divinity of the Qur'ān, denying any merit in its composition."<sup>1</sup> Moreover in another work 'al-Masā'il wal-Jawābāt' (Questions and Answers) he also devoted a certain chapter to attacking Naẓẓām and his companion, pointing out disputations over many issues, particularly their insistence on al-Darūrāt, the intellectual necessities for the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not the chief exponent of the theory of al-Sarfah was Naẓẓām, for which there is little convincing evidence from the third century itself, it seems that it was Jāhiz who adopted and developed, if not created, the term. The indication seem to be that Jāhiz was overwhelmed by the influence of his master Naẓẓām when he first adopted Sarfa, but, if we may trust a later authority<sup>3</sup> in stating that the last work of Jāhiz was al-Ḥayawān, we find him confirming, in the sixth volume, "We are of the belief that Sarfah is present in all these matters,"<sup>4</sup> among which he included the prevention of the Arabs from producing the like of the Qur'ān with regard to its literary arrangement.

We may therefore, justifiably try to trace the development of the idea and application of the term Sarfa in the works of Jāhiz. It seems that he had taken a preliminary step before reaching the term al-Sarfa.

4. See page 44. (Contd. from previous page)

1. Jāhiz, 'K. Mukhtārāt Fusūl al-Jāhiz', fol. 122a, BM. Ms. Or. 3158, and also 'Rasā'il al-Jāhiz', ed. Sandūbī p. 148.

2. Ibid, vol. 176b, and vol. 180a and b.

3. Ḥusari, 'Jam' al-Jawāhir', p. 160. Jāhiz, 'Ḥayawān', vol. 4, p. 69. Ḥārūn's introduction of Jāhiz's 'Ḥayawān', p. 24-27.

4. 'Ḥayawān', vol. 6, p. 85.

In his book 'Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwah', he applied synonymously the verb Mana' (to prevent) to convey the same meaning in reference to some of the second century views that emanated from the movement of Zanadiqa. He wrote, "A chapter concerning their prevention from opposing the Qur'ān and their disability of doing so, and what had prevented (Mana'ahum) them from that was what had deprived Ibn Abi al-'Awjā', Ishāq Ibn Talūt and al-Nu'mān Ibn al-Mundhr from doing so...."<sup>1</sup> and who were all Zanadiqs. Mention of al-Sarfah might also have been made in his other controversial work entitled 'K. al-Radd 'Ala Man Alḥad fi Kitāb Allah.'<sup>2</sup>

The application of the term Sarfah and the use of it became more frequent and definitive as we reach Jāḥiẓ's book 'al-Hayawān'. He used it more than once while attacking the Dairrites (those who abjured the miracles of the prophets). In the chapter entitled 'The question of the Hoopoe' he recorded a number of prophetic episodes; namely those of Solomon, the Queen of Sheba and the Hoopoe, Joseph and Jacob, the Exodus and the Arabs and the Qur'ān, in all these he relied on Sarfah for his argument.<sup>3</sup> He also stated that, "Unless it is Sarfah which God bestows in the hearts of his beloved, and unless it is the Will of God to make conscious or ignorant whomsoever He chooses, there can be no harmony between, nor integration of people."<sup>4</sup>

From these it seem clear that if he was not the creator of Sarfah, he had at least intense faith in the theory, But transcending all his opinions was his great admiration for the composition of the Qur'ān.

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1. 'Hujaj al-Nubuwwah', EM. Ms. Or. 3138, and 'Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ', p. 145
  2. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam' ed. Margoliouth, vol. 6, p. 77.
  3. see, vol. 4, p. 77, Ibid, p. 87, 89-90.
  4. Ibid, p. 91, Hārūn edn.

CHAPTER III'JĀZ AND SOME OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LITERARY THEORYDURING THE THIRD CENTURY A.H./ NINTH A.D.

- a) Jāhiz's contribution in the light of Abū 'Ubaydah's  
'Kitāb al-Majāz'
- b) After Jāhiz- Ibn Qutaybah on I'jāz

Jāhiz and the composition of the Qur'ān

Much has been written about 'Amr b. Bahr al-Jāhiz, but judging by the number of subjects in which he was conversant and his literary output, a great deal remains to be said; for the added reason that a great number of his works are still missing.

In theology Jāhiz was the founder of a school that bore his name and in the literary sphere he was a pioneer of Arabic rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> We shall however, confine ourselves to his views on the composition of the Qur'ān, as it is from these that studies of I'jāz in the fourth century received their inspiration. Jāhiz wrote several works on the Qur'ān the contents of most of which are still unknown, except their titles mentioned by himself in other works or referred to briefly by scholars of succeeding centuries, for example:-

- (A) 'Masā'il al-Qur'ān.'<sup>2</sup>
- (B) 'K. al-Radd 'Ala Man alḥad fī K. Allah'.<sup>3</sup>
- (C) 'Āy al-Qur'ān'.<sup>4</sup>
- (D) 'Khalq al-Qur'ān'.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately the main work entitled, 'Naẓm al-Qur'ān' (The composition of the Qur'ān) is still missing.<sup>6</sup> The book achieved a certain notoriety among later scholars,<sup>7</sup> but found strong support from the Mu'tazilites;

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1. see, Sayyid Nawfal, 'al-Balāghah al-'Arabiyah fī Dawr Nash'atihā', p.170.
  2. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 6, p. 77.
  3. Ibid.
  4. 'Ḥayawān', ed. Hārūn, vol. 3, p. 76.
  5. Three chapters can be found in BM. Ms. Or. 3158, vols. 121a-128b.

Khayyāt ranking it high amongst Jāhiz's vindicatory works,<sup>1</sup> and Zamaksharī appears to have been inspired by it, mentioning it in the introduction to his commentary, 'Kashshāf.'<sup>2</sup>

While al-Jāhiz refers to his book as 'al-Ihtijāj li-nazm al-Qur'ān,' later bibliographers recorded only the name 'Nazm al-Qur'ān.'<sup>3</sup> Was it the same book with two different titles? It seems from Jāhiz's own evidence that there was only one book, 'al-Ihtijāj li-nazm al-Qur'ān', written for al-Fath b. Khāqān and received by him with bad grace.<sup>4</sup> Yet in the introduction to 'Hayawān', which was presented to Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt, he suggests that he also sent him a copy of 'al-Ihtijāj', which was accepted in like manner.<sup>5</sup> Yāqūt reserved only the title 'Nazm al-Qur'ān', mentioning that there were three copies of it.<sup>6</sup> The different title recorded by the later bibliographers would therefore, appear to be merely an abbreviation of the original title.

Notwithstanding the loss of many of Jāhiz's works, an insight can be gained as to his views on the composition of the Qur'ān by reconstructing them from his existing works.

(contd.)

6. Criticizing Ibn al-Nadīm for being ill-informed of Jāhiz's work, Hartwig Hirschfeld in 'A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to E.G. Browne on his 60th Birthday Cambridge, 1922, p. 202, with reference to the British Museum ms. Or. 3138, erroneously suggested that "He also mentioned (p. 33) an article في نظير التفريات (Fi Nazm al-Qur'ān) which is perhaps identical with No. IX of the ms. في خلق القرآن (Fi Khalq al-Qur'ān) In the second folio which is numbered in the ms. 122a (lines 15-16) Jāhiz stated that although he had written an epistle on the composition of the Qur'ān, his recipient wished him to deal with the creation of the Qur'ān, which is precisely what the ms. states.
7. cf. Baqillānī, 'I'jaz al-Qur'ān', an introduction, p. 11.

(Contd.)

1. 'Intiṣār', p. 25. Beyrouth edn.
2. 'Kashshāf', vol. 1, p. 3.
3. Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', edn. Flugel p. 33; Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 16, p. 76.
4. B.M. Ms. Or. 3138, vol. 122a.
5. 'Hayawān', vol. 1, p. 5., also S.I. p. 244.
6. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 6, p. 76.

Professor G. Von Grunebaum, presumably encouraged by Brockelmann,<sup>1</sup> noticed in his introduction,<sup>2</sup> while dealing with the beginning of the study of I'jāz and in reference to Jāhiz, "He does entitle the first chapter of his Sihr al-Bayān, ms. Köprülü 1284, vol. 3b: fî ba'ḍ mâ nataqa bihi 'l-Qur'ân al-karîm min al-kalâm al-mûjiz al-mu'jiz." The work referred to does not in actual fact belong to Jāhiz,<sup>3</sup> therefore no reliability can be placed on it.

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(1) G.A.L., Sup. 1, p. 244, no. 60.

(2) 'A tenth century document of Arabic literary theory and criticism' p. XVI, foot-note 16.

(3) In a microfilm copy of this same ms. it is found to be possessed of two different titles; on the top of the first leaf it reads 'Al-Ījāz wal-I'jāz', compiled by Abū Mansūr 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad al-Tha'ālibī, the author's name can be read only with some difficulty. Underneath this the other title reads 'K. Sihr al-Bayān ... etc., by 'Abd Allah al-Jāhiz. Suspicion is aroused by the ignorance of the scribe of the real name of al-Jāhiz, of which he only recorded the first two letters. ('M).

In the margin there is also, penned by a different hand, 'K. Sihr al-Bayān li 'Abd Allah al-Jāhiz'.

This work, judging by its language on the one hand and by comparison with the several other copies, both printed and in manuscript, on the other, undoubtedly belong to al-Tha'ālibī. Of this work and particularly the first chapter there have existed hitherto three printed copies:-

- (a) Published with a Latin translation and annotation by J.J. Valeon, Lugduni, Batavorum, 1844, with the following title 'K. Fihī Ahāsīn kalīm al-Nabī'. In subtitling it the scribe added "It is either the original, K. al-Ījāz fī al-I'jāz or a summary of al-Tha'ālibī".
- (b & c) The full ms. of the Köprülü version (1284), to which Von Grunebaum was referring, was published among other epistles, including an abridgement of al-Jāhiz's 'al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn' Constantinople, 1884/1501. (cf. Cairo edition, 1897, entitled, 'al-I'jāz wal-Ījāz' edited by Iskandar Aṣaf.
- (d) The B.M. also has preserved a Ms. of Tha alibi's 'K. Nawādir al-Hikam etc., of which the first chapter is entitled 'Fī ba'ḍ mâ nataqa bihi al-Qur'ân etc. Despite the aberrations in the ms. and inaccuracy in the editing of the printed versions, they are all more or less in agreement with regard to this chapter.

In the extant works of Jāhiz however, particularly in his outstanding works 'K. al-Hayawān' and 'K. al-Bayān wal-Tabyīn', the author frequently deals with a variety of rhetorical and critical facets of the Qur'ānic text. It would appear as if he were confined in these contrived interludes by aptness to the colourful and multifarious zoological and literary subjects he embraced. The prevailing impression that Jāhiz's statements leave on the reader's mind is that he was writing in a controversial if not altogether polemic mood.

It takes a considerable length of time for a single idea to develop into a dogma. From the early stages the circumstances which elevated the theory of I'jāz to a specific literary topic, whether extraneously or from within the community itself, often emerge as a challenge and riposte in both its literary and theological aspects. While the savant adhered tenaciously to his point of view, his rival would try even more fiercely to denounce it, thus side by side there existed arguments, sharp and bitter at one time, flat and repetitive at another.

As a theologian in a century seething with religious thought, Jāhiz to a great degree seems to have established, if not laid the foundations of dialectical and controversial issues which in later centuries, when the studies of I'jāz reached their zenith, were used as models and adapted for use,<sup>1</sup> or criticized and belittled,<sup>2</sup> by the various schools of thought.

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(1) 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāmi, 'Dalā'il al-I'jāz', p. 298.

(2) Bāqillāni, 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān', p.7.

Although it may be observed that Jāḥiẓ did not employ the term I'jāz per se, the whole idea was quite vivid to him; instead he used the infinitive 'ajz in his arguments discussing the Qur'ān's composition, in the course of which he also adopted other theological terms.<sup>1</sup>

In 'K. al-Nubuwwāt' (Book of Prophethoods),<sup>2</sup> generally known as 'Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwah', he broadly explored the theological, that is the miraculous aspects of I'jāz. The theme of this book discounts the significance of a prophet in favour of the form in which a prophet's authenticity may be established. The crucial point of the book is its reliance on the oral evidence of the Prophet Muhammad and its power to convince the sceptics.

In favour of the oral evidence Jāḥiẓ brings this presupposed argument:

"If it is said that the evidence (for prophethood) is invalid unless humanity as a whole is incapable of producing its like, it being supernatural, as in, the raising of the dead, the walking on the water, parting the sea, producing fruits out of season, giving the beasts speech, feeding the multitude from the mite and whatever is of supernatural invention, which can only be performed by God Almighty, therefore as for the oral evidences which emanate from the worshippers, by them adopted and through them transmitted, they cannot be taken as substantiation for proof in this instance is what, but beyond human capability?"<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Eg. He sometimes writes of "The proofs, evidences and signs of prophethoods", 'Ḥujaj al-Nubuwwah' p. 118-9. Similarly, "God has granted him the evidences of his mission and signs of a prophecy", Bayān, vol. 3 p. 231.

(2) The name is given by Jāḥiẓ 'Ḥayawān', v. 6. p.50, al-Jurjānī, 'Dalā'il', p. 298.

(3) Ibid. p. 136.

To this Jāhiz replies:

"We do not maintain that oral evidence, as such, is a valid proof but the handing down of it is evidence and the descent is not a creation or a fancy of the people."

Jāhiz, to give the essence of his long thesis, after many argumentative twists, in conclusion states that if the oral evidence renders humanity from producing its like, that would ascertain its validity.

With regard to the composition of the Qur'ān he argued thus:-  
 "For if an Arab reads a short or a long Surah (from the Qur'ān) to one of the eminent orators or eloquent men, they would realise from its composition, words and nature, that they are incapable of producing its like. Further if he challenged with it even the most eloquent Arab, his inability to produce the like of it would become manifest, not only as regards one letter or two, or a single word or two." <sup>2</sup>

He continues however, to add that single words and phrases like those of the Qur'ān:-

"Praise be to God" and

"God is sufficient for us ! Most Excellent is He in Whom we trust" etc.,

are naturally within the reach and capability of anybody, but an endeavour to compose from these sentences and words anything approaching the quality of the Qur'ān, seems to Jāhiz impossible. <sup>3</sup>

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- (1) 'Hujaj' p. 136  
 (2) Ibid 120  
 (3) Ibid p. 120.

Before examining in detail some of Jāhīz's literary points it is perhaps necessary to establish, though in brief, the factors and motives which guided his attempts in this field. Conditions were auspicious for great religious controversies both from within the society itself, as manifest in the variety of schisms arising, and from without, as a result of closer contact with a mixture of races and creeds. These very factors with some modification were to clash again and again, against orthodoxy throughout the following centuries.

#### A. Shu'ūbiyyah and Zindīqism

Notwithstanding the fact that both terms Shu'ūbī and Zindīq are of an overlapping significance throughout centuries,<sup>1</sup> during the relative period their roles seemed to be mainly that while the former is distinguished as a racial and in some measure a political struggle between Arabs and non-Arabs, mainly Persians, the latter is characterized as a heretical and sceptical tendency in the religious manner. Yet they were in many ways closely associated, so that a sharp line of demarcation could at most be only approximation.

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(1) For the application and development of the term 'Zindīq' see, Von Kramer, 'Contribution to the History of Islamic Civilisation', trans S.K. Bukhsh, pp. 100-7: E.G. Browne, 'A Literary History of Persia', vol. 1, pp. 159-60: Louis Massignon, E.I. vol. 4, pp. 1228-9; Ahmad Amin, Farj al-Islām, p. 128, by the same author, 'Duha al-Islām, vol. 1, pp. 145-68. For the term Shu'ubi see, Von Kramer, op. cit. p. 80 sqq: Browne, op.cit. p. 269 sqq: also H.A.R. Gibb in his learned sociological chapter in 'Studies on the Civilisation of Islam', pp. 62-72: Ahmad Amin, Duha al-Islām, 5th edn. vo. 1, chptr. 3, pp. 56-80.

Whether the Shu'ūbiyyah as a whole or in part "took religious aspects involving heresy and Zindīqism", as has been suggested,<sup>1</sup> or whether the reverse was true and Zindīqism totally or partially branched off the former movement,<sup>2</sup> the intimate relationship between the two can no doubt be seen.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the motivation, racial, political or religious, investigation of which is beyond the sphere of this work, may have been, one result is apparent, that the literary wrangle between the supporters of Arab supremacy and their opponents was carried on on a large scale.

Among other authors it was Jāhiz in this century, who took the burden for the defence, or justification, of the Arab heritage against the Persian claim to equality, even superiority. The literary controversy engendered by this friction resulted in a great output and is the only indication we have of the bulk of the argument so far. Perhaps the question of most concern is whether these ideological skirmishes stimulated criticism of the Qur'an's composition. But to such a question it would be appropriate to examine the likelihood of any previous such attacks.

If "The anti-Arab polemic of the secretaries reached its climax in the first half of the third century",<sup>4</sup> the works or views which the

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(1) P. Hitti, 'History of the Arabs', 6th edn. p. 402.

(2) Cf. 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Min Ta'rikh al-Ilhād*, pp. 23-4, with reference to Tāhā Husain's 'Hadith al-Arbī'.

(3) A good example can be found in what Jāhiz recorded with reference to the Zindīq, Yūnus Ibn Abī Farwah, *Hayawān*, vol. 4, p. 448, and Ibrahim Ibn Ismail, 'Rasā'il al-jāhiz', ed. J. Jabr, where the two terms are fused.

(4) See, H.A.R. Gibb, *op.cit.* p. 66.

pro-Arab writers began to criticize, or reflect upon, were by then nearly a century old. From a Shi'ite source, if the authenticity of this work is accepted, there was a treatise by one of Jāḥiẓ's contemporaries<sup>1</sup> dealing with a writer of Persian descent who was reputed to have been a Zindīq and who endeavoured to oppose the Qur'ān, or at least compose a similar work.

Fourth century sources also throw light on that particular period of the mid-second century, as seen in the 'K. al-Aghānī' of Abū al-Faraj where he deals with two of the poets who belong to these movements. The first episode was propagated by Bashshār ibn Burd (d. 167/783) against Hammād 'Ajrad, who in a moment of anger, when the people deserted his circle to listen to a Qur'ān reciter, said, "Why did they desert me? By God, what I am saying is better than what he is saying".<sup>2</sup> Strangely enough Bashshār himself, who despised Hammād, was reported by Abū al-Faraj as having, in a moment of joy, lauded one of his own poems over Surah 59.<sup>3</sup>

In Jāḥiẓ's own works, however, although it has been suggested that he was the first to tackle the problem of Zindīqism and Shu'ūbiyyah,<sup>4</sup> yet again the loss of several of his major works,<sup>5</sup> particularly that

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(1) The, Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860). S.L. Poole, 'Muhammadan Dynasties' p. 102.

(2) 'Aghānī', vol. XIII, p. 77.

(3) Ibid, " p. 87.

(4) Muhammad N. Hijab, 'Mazahir al-Shu'ūbiyyah fi al-Adab al-'Arabi etc.' p. 432; also Browne, op.cit. vol. 1 p. 268.

(5) These works are mentioned in Hayawān, (i) al-'Arab wal-'Ajam, 1/5: (ii) al-'Arab wal-Mawālī, 1/5: (iii) 'al-Surahā' wal-Hujana', 1/4.

Entitled 'Shu'ūbiyyah',<sup>1</sup> in which he claimed to have made a thorough assessment of the movement, bedevils investigation.

Professor H.A.R. Gibb in a general analysis of the conflict between the two civilisations, writes thus,

"A new civilisation is not created in a day, and the conflict between the Arab tradition and the Persian tradition went deep down to the roots. The issue at stake was no superficial matter of literary modes and fashions, but the whole cultural orientation of the new Islamic society - whether it was to become a re-embodiment of the old Perso-Aramean culture into which the Arabic and Islamic elements would be absorbed, or a culture in which the Perso-Aramaen contributions would be subordinated to the Arab tradition and the Islamic values."<sup>2</sup>

Jāhiz while in agreement with this statement stresses the religious aspect:-

"The enmity might have been on account of zealous racialism, as the bulk of those who doubted Islam were of Shu'ubite stock,"

in analysing this he added:-

"To dislike a thing is to dislike the people who brought it about or belong to it and also to hate that language (Arabic) and that island (Arabia.)"<sup>3</sup>

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1. This work is mentioned in 'K. al-Bukhala', Van Vloten edn., p. 262.
  2. H.A.R. Gibb. Op.cit. p.66.
  3. 'Hayawān', ed. Hārūn, vol. 7, p.220.

Examining Gibb's approach specifying locality, time and class of Shu'ūbiyyah (the secretaries) however, where he states:-

"It seems to me entirely erroneous, however, to interpret their attack on the Arabs as in any sense a Persian nationalist movement. During the second half of the second (eighth) century, Persian resistance (if nationalism is too strong or misleading a term) had repeatedly displayed itself in Khurasan and the northern provinces of Iran in risings which were not only anti-Arab but also anti-Islamic. There is nothing to suggest that the secretaries as a class were sympathetic towards these movements; all the presumptions, indeed, are to the contrary."<sup>1</sup>

it is found that he is at variance with Jāhiz, who in dealing with the etiquette of writers (in which he includes secretaries) states,

"He, the writer, (secretary) would begin first and foremost by attacking the composition of the Qur'ān, endeavouring to exterminate its eloquence by pointing at its contradictions, furthermore he would <sup>flaunt</sup> parade his <sup>own</sup> elegance and mannerism by denying the Traditions and repudiating their values."<sup>2</sup>

However indicative and revealing these words may seem as regards the Shu'ūbiyyah in general, and the class of secretaries in particular, it is important to beware of such generalisations. It is safer

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1. H.A.R. Gibb, op.cit. p.66.

2. Jāhiz, 'Dham akhlāq al-Kuttāb', ed. J. Finkel, pp. 42-3

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to assume, perhaps, that the truth of the matter lies somewhere between the two statements. In the light of this, two classes of Shu'ūbiyyah should be distinguished. Those who disparage the Arabs, both as a race and the creed which they propagated, whether in the vicinity of Basrah and Kufah or in the outlying provinces, whether subversively under duress or openly; and those who detested the Arabs but held no ill-feeling towards the scripture, some of their studies being even of more value than those of the Arabs themselves. In this last class Jāhiz' own master Abū 'Ubaydah should be acknowledged.

In this respect the position of the celebrated creator of prose, 'Abd Allah ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 145 A.H.) may be worthy of note. He was often acknowledged for the elegance of his style and to him were attributed, by later bibliographers, all works of Zindiqism of that time. "The Khalif, al-Mahdī ibn al-Mansūr sometimes said: I never found a book of Zindikism which did not owe its "origin to Ibn al-Muqaffa'" reported Ibn Khallikān.<sup>1</sup> In a later Shi'aite source the story of his hostility towards Islām in general and the Qur'an in particular received more popularity.<sup>2</sup>

On the claim that he had written a work in which he endeavoured to oppose the Qur'an, the sole reference to which is by the Shi'aite Imām al-Qāsim, modern scholarship regarding its authenticity reflects two points of view, Those who consider it to be ~~true~~<sup>do so</sup> on the basis

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1. Ibn Khallikān, 'Wafayāt', ed. Wüstenfeld, (Arabic text), vols.1-7, De Slan's trans. vol.1 pp.434-5 no. 186.
  2. Tabarsi, 'al-Thitijaj', pp. 193-4 (partly on margin).

that, firstly, <sup>q</sup> the suspect religious stand <sup>for</sup> which <sup>he</sup> became known, ~~of~~  
~~him~~, and secondly, <sup>f</sup> the scanty references found in the work of the  
 Zaydī Imām, al-Qāsim.<sup>1</sup> The other group of scholars doubted it on  
~~grounds~~ ~~also~~ also. They were dubious in the first place of the  
 authenticity of the work of the above-mentioned Imām, and also  
 regarded as evidence the ignorance of earlier bibliographers and  
 other literary references of such a work. Perhaps even a third  
 group can be found.<sup>2</sup>

Be that as it may, before attending further to either of these  
 views, let us re-examine some of the references to this argument  
 in the work of the most important transmitter, Jāhīz.

It was not that Jāhīz was unfamiliar with the literary status  
 of Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup>, nor was he unaware of his writings, nor for  
 that matter was he ignorant of the works of other Zindīqs or  
 Shu<sup>c</sup>ubis.<sup>3</sup> He may indeed be acknowledged as one of the earliest  
 of the rare authorities on the man as well as his work. He has given  
 us in his remaining works a fair judgement on Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup>'s literary

1. 'al-Radd 'Ala al-Zindīq al-La'īn', ed. M. Guidi.
2. A conclusive summary of the varied views is made by 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, 'Min Ta'rīkh al-Ilhād....', pp. 4-8. For Ahmad Amīn's view see 'Duhā al-Islām', vol.1, p. 253.
3. "Jahidh had without doubt the genuine books of the Manichaeans before him; in all probability in Arabic translation. How very much known the doctrines of the Manichaeans then were and what attention they received is best shown by the fact that two such important writers as Jahidh and Ibn al-Nadim (the author of the Fihrist) expressly mention them and the former indeed compares the Manichaean religion with Christianity and Judaism." Von Kramer, 'Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilisation', Trans. S.K. Bukhsh, p. 101. Cf. also E.G. Browne, op.cit., vol. 1 p. 268.

accomplishments,<sup>1</sup> not only as an appraisal but in a true critical sense, as it can be seen that he deals also with his literary defects.<sup>2</sup>

Considering Ibn al-Muqaffa's educational and tutorial merits Jāhīz presented of him a picture of a singular and refined master of his age, yet he equally unveiled his weaknesses in theology, he wrote.

"Among the most eloquent and accomplished teachers was Abd al-Allah b. al-Muqaffa, nicknamed Abū 'Amr. He was a client of the family of al-Ahtam and the foremost orator as well as author and translator. He was the inventor of good writing and a pioneer of historical narration, generous, chivalrous and handsome. He used to exercise theology (Kalām) but he knew nothing about it, and although his transmission of theological theses was precise, he was equally unable to distinguish between misconception and trustworthiness."<sup>3</sup>

The account given by the later Ibn Khallikān (d.618 A.H.), however, is somewhat of an overestimation of the true position and in some degree similar to that recorded by Ibn al-Nadīm some three centuries earlier on Zindīq movement.<sup>4</sup> It would appear from the

1. 'Ḥayawān', ed. Hārūn, vol. 2, 330. 'Bayān,' vol. 1, p.115.
2. Ibid, vol. 3, p.132. Ibid vol. 1, p. 208, vol. 3, p.29.
3. B.M. Mss. Or. 3138, ff. 15b-16a. This passage was translated by Hartwig Hirschfeld, 'A volume of Oriental Studies', p.207. But the translation is defective.
4. As noticed by Louis Massignon, "In the Fihrist ed. Flugel p.338, Ibn al-Nadīm has given a very heterogenous list of Zindīqs (the value of which is sometimes overestimated, it is rather imaginative)" E.Ā. vo. 4, p.1220.

The fact that whoever deviated from the orthodox teaching was bound to be labelled Zindīq has perpetuated this overestimation: as observed by Von Kramer, "Even the caliph Ma'mun is mentioned by the author as a Zindīq, but it is indeed to be taken in the sense that he was not absolutely orthodox." (op.cit. p.103)

comment of the former that both Jāḥiẓ and Ibn al-Muqaffa' held a similar viewpoint,

"Notwithstanding the eminent merit of Ibn al-Muqaffa , he was suspected of Zindikism, and al-Jahiz related that he, Muti Ibn Iyas and Mahya Ibn Ziyad were persons the sincerity of whose religious sentiment was doubted; and one of the learned on hearing this, said: How is it that al-Jahiz forgets to count himself?"<sup>1</sup>

It can be assumed, in comparing the two texts, that Ibn Khallikān's source of information in this last case was Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 356 A.H.), but the question is from which work of Jāḥiẓ did Abū al-Faraj in his turn get his information? Although on this occasion, unlike some others,<sup>2</sup> he did not reveal his source, by looking at the list given by Jāḥiẓ in 'Hayawān' (vol. 4, pp. 447-8, 451-2) and comparing it with that in Aghānī (vols. XVI, pp. 148-9, and XII, p. 81) the indication is not only did he quote it verbatim from Jāḥiẓ but but also added the name of Ibn al-Muqaffa' to the inventory . Jāḥiẓ, even when giving himself the opportunity, however, as noted earlier, while dealing with the theory of al-Sarfah, omitted mention of the name of Ibn al-Muqaffa' amongst other Zindīqs who attempted to match the Qur'ān.

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1. Wafayāt, Wüstenfeld edn. No. 182; De Slane trans. vol. 1, p. 434-5.
  2. Cf. Aghānī, vol. III, p. 24.

## B. Commentators and others

The other factor which contributed to Jāhiz' consideration of the composition of the Qur'ān was the erroneous and legendary interpretation inflicted on certain verses by many of the commentators. In some cases he adopted the embittered and deprecating standpoint of his master al-Nazzām regarding them, "Do not attend to many of the commentators of the Qur'ān, though they would offer their explanation to the rank and file, and endeavour to provide answers to their questions; for the fact is that the majority of those commentators are of no authority nor have they a sound basis in these attempts, they merely stimulate the public curiosity by their strange and mysterious explanations."<sup>1</sup> Having mentioned some of the suspect names he next cited examples of their inappropriate expositions in both the Qur'ān and the Traditions. What he deplored most of their activities was the conjuring of the unfamiliar and legendary in the imagination of these commentators. Such criticism would sometimes appear in satirical form.<sup>2</sup>

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1. 'Ḥayawān', ed. Hārūn, vol. 1, p. 343.

2. Eg. the epistle, twice repeated in 'Ḥayawān', vols. 1/146; 5/347-8. "Some of the commentators and folk-tale collectors asserted that when the people of Noah's Ark were troubled by the mouse (many mice) God caused the lion to sneeze and out flew a couple of cats, a male and female, the former emerged by the right nostril, the latter by the left, therefore the cat is similar to the lion, but a new problem emerged on account of the cat's ordure, Noah was requested to ask for more help. He was told order the elephant to excrete a pair of pigs which solved the predicament of the smell of the cat's ordure, so observed they, the similarity between the pig and the elephant. Kaysan on hearing such nonsense exclaimed, "So that couple of cats should surely be acknowledged the Adam and Eve of all cats!" Abū 'Ubaydah replied to him, "Do you know that to every creature there is an Adam and Eve."

This group of commentators apart, the rest may be classified under three main divisions:

- (i) Those mentioned in passing, belonging to no specific sect or schism, he referred to them thus, "Some of the people opposed to the verse so...", or "The refuter said....", or "It has been rejected...." etc.<sup>1</sup>
- (ii) Those who belong to a certain sect and who hold an unsympathetic view to one of the Mu'tazilite principles as in Jāḥiẓ's quotation of the verses, LVI/56, XVI/29, XXXIX/71, which in his opinion were clear evidences against the position held by the Kharijites<sup>2</sup> who denied one of the Mu'tazilite tenets, namely the Manzilah bain al-Manzilatayn, the indifferent state of mind conceived by the Mu'tazilah with regard to some sinners. Similarly he recorded the Jahmites<sup>3</sup> and other's interpretations of the verses XXXIII/72, XXXIV/10, II/74.
- (iii) The sect often mentioned by Jāḥiẓ, the Zāhirites (Exteriorists). They were so called because they understood the word of the Qur'ān in its plain literal sense and rejected the Ta'wīl or allegorical interpretation, to which other sects, particularly the Mu'tazilah, resorted in certain cases. Yet Jāḥiẓ may refer to this group without mentioning its name, as in, "Those who refrain from any form of allegory and cling to the literal meaning of the word and oppose the Majāzāt."<sup>4</sup>

1. 'Hayawān', vol. 4 pp. 100, 103, 164, 197, vol. 7, p. 242, also 'Bayān', edn. Ḥarūn, vol. 1, p. 265.

(2-3) Ibid. vol. 4, p. 278, 287.

4. Ibid. vol. 7 p. 50; see also GAL (Arabic trans.) vol. 3, p. 103.

Some of Jāhiz's Rhetorical Assessments

Majāz (Tropical use of words).

The study of Majāz throughout Jāhiz's work may be examined in the light of the intimate and devoted relationship between the grateful al-Jāhiz and another of his tutors, Abū 'Ubaydah, to see whether this rhetorical figure was elaborated further under his guidance. Previously it has been noticed that the term was loosely used by Abū 'Ubaydah to cover as wide a range of meaning as its literal sense (the way) permitted, also transposing it with other terms and allegorical figures.

Jāhiz seemed to have a rare regard for his master's scholarship and acknowledged it in such epithets as, "There was no Kharijite nor any other who was more enlightened in all branches of Arabic humanities than Abū 'Ubaydah."<sup>1</sup> He distinguishes him also among other philologist scholars whose circles he attended;<sup>2</sup> likewise he often repeated in both 'Ḥayawān' and 'Bayān' such references as, "I was informed by Abū 'Ubaydah', or, 'Abū 'Ubaydah recited this for me."<sup>3</sup>

Thus it is no surprise when Jāhiz twice in 'Ḥayawān' followed the critical approach of his master while discussing the characteristic of Tashbih (simile) in the verse, "It is a tree that issueth from the bottom of Hell, the fruit thereof resembleth the heads of devils." It was because of the reported interpretation of this verse that Abū 'Ubaydah was goaded to compose his work 'al-Majāz.'<sup>4</sup> The only difference

1. 'Bayān', ed. Hārūn, vol. 1, p. 347.

2. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 23-4.

3. Eg. Ibid, vol. 3, p.265, 'Ḥayawān', vol. 1, p.471, vol. 5 p. 555.

4. This statement is not recorded in the extant edition of this work.

in circumstances of approach was that in Abū 'Ubaydah's case the questioner was one of the writers, whereas Jāhiz was struggling over a new interpretation attached to the verse by some ill-informed commentators, who chose to interpret the "devils heads" as a certain unpleasant looking tree that grew in the Yemen.

To advocate that Jāhiz was inspired by his master's learning can be supported by the many references he made to him, although it is Jāhiz himself who rejects his interpretation of certain verses, lamenting Abū 'Ubaydah's absentmindedness.<sup>1</sup>

What then was Jāhiz's conception of Majāz? The definition given to the term in his works may be deduced from one of his theological discussions in support of the question of the creation of the Qur'ān, repudiating the position of the Sunnites on this issue. He argued, "It should be admitted that the Qur'ān is created in reality not by means of metaphor (Majāz), nor by the concessions of the philologists."

في الحقيقة دون المجاز وتوسع أهل اللغة  
In a similar argumentative manner he referred to the possibilities of the exploitation of homonymity in expressing certain ideas.<sup>2</sup>

From these indistinct definitions it would appear that the function given to the term Majāz, in Jāhiz's opinion, is not in fact far removed from that already maintained by Abū 'Ubaydah, that is, a way of expression beyond the strict limitation of individual words, but it must be

1. With reference to the verse "And the (Tribe of) Thamūd he spared not." LIII/51, Jāhiz noticed that, "Abū 'Ubaydah had interpreted this as affecting the majority of them and not a general statement. Having sought an excuse for him, Jāhiz denounced strongly his interpretation on the basis of another verse, LXIX/8, which makes no exception. 'Bayān', vol. 1, p.187-8.
2. Ḥujaj, p. 150, Ḥayawān, Sāsī Edn. vol. 5, p. 123.

remembered that the rigid and full classification of terms and figures of speech was yet far off. It was however this very fluid and indeterminate state which prepared the way for further developments.

The apparent discrepancy between these two generations seems to be that while in Abū 'Ubaydah's work the term Majāz is frequently interchanged with other terms, for example, Tafsir, Ta'wil and Gharib, Jāhiz, although he avoided such blatant confusion, presents us with an entirely different, but nonetheless more puzzling, state of critical and rhetorical terminology as, Tashbih, Isti'arah, Mathal and Badal as well as Majāz which were often combined while dealing with the style of the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup>

Despite all these ambiguities, Jāhiz's contribution to the study of Majāz appears more vigorous and exhilarating. In one event he defended the application of Majāz against the indifferent attitude, without any justification, held against it.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, in his selective study, Abū 'Ubaydah appears to have overlooked, or reflected little upon, many verses which Jāhiz pursued in exhausting detail. An example of this approach is found in his treatment of the verb Akala (to eat) and the noun of the same verb and its application in the Qur'an, to which Abū 'Ubaydah contributed nothing.<sup>3</sup>

The extent of Jāhiz's contribution can be seen in the following quotations. He starts thus,

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1. C.f. Z. Sallām, 'Athr al-Qur'an,' p.48.
  2. C.f. 'Hayawān,' vol. 1, p.339, where Jāhiz repeatedly makes such remarks as "This should be explained by means of Majāz", or, "The clarity of the meaning nobody disregards save those ignorant of Majāz."

"These same men said, God has made covenant with us,  
that we believe not any Messenger,

until he brings to us a sacrifice devoured by fire." (III/183)

commenting, "Surely God, exalted be He, has spoken to the Arabs but in their own language." To illuminate this statement he quoted from Arab poetry wherein the verb 'to eat' is used figuratively. Here is a selection of some of the verses he used:-

(i) That of Auḥ ibn Ḥajar, depicting the toils of a persistent climber to reach a pool of water at the top of a mountain,

وَقَدْ أَكَلْتُ أَظْفَارَهُ الصَّخْرَ كُلًّا      نَحَايَا عَلَيْهِ طَوْلُ مَرَقٍ تَوَضَّعًا  
EATEN

"His finger-nails were eroded by the rocks, but however

(ii) Or that of the Kharijite poet, Mirdās ibn Udah.

وَأَدَّتِ الْأَرْضُ مِنِّي مِثْلَ مَا أَكَلْتُ      وَقَرَّبُوا الْحِسَابَ إِقْسِيْدَ أَعْمَالِي  
وَأَدَّتِ الْأَرْضُ مِنِّي مِثْلَ مَا أَكَلْتُ      وَقَرَّبُوا الْحِسَابَ إِقْسِيْدَ أَعْمَالِي

"The earth shall return that absorbed of me.

And for fair judgement my deeds shall be brought near."

In the subsidiary chapter more examples are quoted. From the Qur'ān verse IV/10,

"Consume the unlawful."

His comment ran, "This description is applicable to them (the takers) though they spend these sums on drinking, clothing or riding animals and do not spend a single dirham in the way of eating."

Moreover, he quoted from the verse IV/10 also:‡

"They do swallow fire into their bellies."

(contd.)

3. Cf. Abū 'Ubaydah, 'Majāz', vol. 1, p.117, 322, 340.

His comment on this reads, "And this is another form of Majāz." For emphasis he culled from Abū Nuwās those verses in which he described time and wine:-

أَكْرَهُ اللَّهْرُ مَا جَسَمَ مِنْهَا ÷ وَتَبَقِيَ مُصَاصَهَا ، لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْهَا

"Time corrodes that useless substance,  
and remains the pure essence, well preserved."

The last example he quoted was that which he attributed to Duhmān al-Nahrī:<sup>1</sup>

سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ أَنْاسٍ أَكَلُوا ÷ شَرِبَ اللَّهْرُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَكَلَهُ

"She asked about some people who were vanished,  
Time had eaten and drunk its fill of them."

His estimation of the whole analysis is confined in the remark, "And all these are different and all are called Majāz."<sup>2</sup>

Strangely enough all these extracts were assembled in two chapters under the combined heading 'Tashbih and Majāz'; adding to the confusion however, the author also presented us with a few more names at the opening of the subsidiary chapter thus, "They are also called Mathal and Ishtiqaq". Thus we are left with a problem. Had Jāhiz displayed these terms generously without stressing the point of some of them, as his master had done, the matter might just as well have been resolved by guesswork, but an odd thing is that he seems to have touched on some of the specific characteristics that received more attention in later days. Here

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1. This has been reported in other sources as being the work of al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī. See Hārūn, foot-note (1) 'Ḥayawān', vol. 5, p.28.
  2. Ibid, p.28.

perhaps, before pointing to some of these aspects that were dealt with, it would be best to establish what was the relation of the rest of the terms, both in regard to Majāz and to each other.

For the first half of this question it is evident that Majāz was the pivot on which the rest of the terms revolved, albeit in a more limited circle, which became known as rhetorical studies, than that of Abū 'Ubaydah, who tried to cover a wider range of lexicographical and grammatical ground.

The second half of the question can best be answered, perhaps, by pointing to the significance of these terms as they occur in the available works of Jāhiz.

(i) Mathal (Parable)

Within the nebulous structure of Majāz in Abū 'Ubaydah's work a separate identity for Mathal cannot be found, however, when dealing with the verse XIII/16 he refers to it merely as "The Majāz in this case is that of Amthal,"<sup>1</sup> which can be interpreted as the parable in the general sense. But when dealing with the verse XXXIX/43, his remark would indicate that he also conceived it as a form of Tashbih (simile).<sup>2</sup> In some other cases he showed no such discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

"The Mathal, said Jāhiz, "is the utterance of an Arab, but the Arab authorities can only be trusted for their grammar (Raf' and Nasb)"<sup>4</sup> in other things they can be either right or wrong." By this, of course,

1. 'Majāz', vol. 1, p.323.

2. Ibid. vol. 2, p.116.

3. Ibid. vol. 1, pp. 333-4.

4. 'Ḥayawan', ed. Ḥarūn, vol. 1, pp. 150-1.

he was referring to proverbs in general. From the several examples he cited Mathal may be interpreted as Tashbih, or a branch of it, for it carried some of its elements.<sup>1</sup>

On treating the verse,

هُمْ سَاعِدٌ، لَدَهْرٍ، الَّذِي يَنْتَقِي بِهِ

"They were the Arm of Time,

In which refuge is found,"

he commented, "This is Mathal, which the narrators called the Badi' (the new)," which it seems embraced the third branch of Arabic rhetoric.<sup>2</sup>

### (ii) Tashbih (Simile)

The roots of this term are deep indeed, if the scholastic theology of the Mu'tazilah is taken into account, in which the general intellectual trend had from its early stages emphasized that any form of anthropomorphic complement which occurred in the Qur'an, as in verses where God's hand, face, throne, etc., are mentioned, should be countered with lexicographical and symbolic devices for fear of conflict with dogmatic adherence. From thence the structure of future argument was laid. Of the exact circumstances, however, little is known to us.

Being a literary and rhetorical phenomenon it was well known to Jahiz and his contemporaries, as has been noticed, and as the ~~consequent~~ <sup>consequent</sup> parts of the simile, 'Mushabah' and 'Mushabahbihi' were consequently maintained in criticizing the style of the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

1. cf. Ibid. 1, p. 228, 259, 270, 290; vol. 4, p. 190, 301; vol. 3, p. 267, 383.

2. 'Bayan', vol. 4 p. 55.

3. S. Nufal, 'Al-Balagh al-'Arabiyyah', p. 139.

Jāhiz, continuing the point of his being under the influence of his master Abū 'Ubaydah, reported from him some of the less subtle instances of Tashbīh while comparing the horse to several other animals; as for the more subtle forms of Tashbīh, as we have noticed earlier, he twice discussed the comparison of devils' heads, expounding the problem further in one instance.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the numerous quotations from poetry and the Qur'an<sup>2</sup> and the considerable observations, as of comparing two objects in one verse,<sup>3</sup> Jāhiz championed the study of Tashbīh by his serious and scrupulous treatment of Wajh al-Shabah or the point of similitude. In his opinion this signifying element should be more explicit and perspicuous in the Mushabbah bihi than the Mushabbah. On this principle he criticised, or rather reported the criticism, inflicted upon Abu Nuwās's verse,

كأنها إذا خرسَتْ جادِمٌ      بين ذوى تمئيدٍ مطرِقُ

"When it is silent, it is as a guilty man,

Speechless at the mercy of his prosecutors"

- 
1. "Truly people have never seen a devil in any form or shape, but as God has instilled in all people's minds the most ugly, detestable and monstrous picture of the devil's image, it has therefore become their habit to refer to it as an example of hideous things in life." 'Hayawān', vol. 4, p. 39.
  2. E.g. 'Hayawān' vols; 1/211, 272; 3/239; 4/166, 241, 264, 250; 5/25; 6/179, 185, 354, 'Bayān' vol. 1, pp. 222-4.
  3. 'Hayawān', vol. 3, pp. 52-3.

Here Jāhiz has noticed that there are two objects compared with two different ones as in Imru'al-Qays's verse

"As if the hearts of birds, soft and dry in their nests  
Resemble the jujube-berry and the decaying chaff.

كأن قلوب الطير رطباً ويابساً      لدى وكرها، أمّتابٍ والحشَفِ نالٍ

As the poet compared the quietness of the dwelling place to that of a guilty man, in the critics view it should be the reverse. With this precedent Jāhiz tackled the problem of Wajh al-Shabah in the Qur'anic verses (VII/175-6)

" And recite to them the tidings of him to whom  
We gave Our signs, but he cast them off,  
and Satan followed after him, and he became  
one of the perverts.

And had We willed, We would have raised him up  
thereby; but he inclined towards the earth  
and followed his lust. So the likeness of him  
is as the likeness of a dog; if thou attackest it  
it lolls its tongue out, or if thou leavest it  
it lolls its tongue out." <sup>1</sup>

Jāhiz, in justification, began first by completing the reading of this verse thus,

"That is that people's likeness  
who cried lies to Our signs." <sup>2</sup>

This had been overlooked by the rival faction, who had pondered over the seemingly odd comparison, and also on the fact that the verb Yalhath (to pant) is in the wrong position, for a dog can only pant as the result of intense heat or severe thirst.

Jāhiz continued emphasizing the position of the disbelievers as he saw it, that despite their having confirmatory signs from their messengers, they

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1&2. A.J.Arberry, 'The Koran Interpreted', vol.1, p.192.

repeatedly rejected them. The point of similitude being that of the keenness of the dog which, to achieve its ends, will employ strenuous efforts but, when they have been attained loses interest.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the following thirty years, al-Mubarrad (d.285 A.H) seems to have held a similar position, noticed by professor von Grunebaum thus:-

" It appears that only during the 9th century did criticism of the artistic qualities of the Koran come to be considered more and more improper for the true believer. Cf. the interesting passage, Kāmil, p.485, where al-Mubarrad (d.898) is at pains to refute a critic's objection to Koran 37.63, an objection- the Muṣabbah bihi ought not to be less but more familiar than the Muṣabbah which the critic alleges is not the case in the impugned verse- which, otherwise, is entirely consonant with the accepted principles of Arab literary criticism" 2

(iii) Isti'ārah and Badal

The interrelation of Tashbīh and Isti'ārah seems to have been intrinsic in the studies of Abū 'Ubaydah and Jāhiz . It would appear, however, that despite hints made by the former which might shed light as to his awareness of the function of Isti'ārah,<sup>3</sup> he often treated it to the point of expressing it by means of Tashbīh .

Jāhiz following the course of his master, although he penetrated deeper in his analogical efforts towards Isti'ārah , also resorted to the same conclusion.

Although in his work, 'Majaz al-Qur'ān' Abu 'Ubaydah sought refuge in the term Majāz, as it had been the main idea in the book, and by so doing avoided such terminology as Isti'ārah, it did not

1. Hayawān, vol.2, pp.15-7.

2. 'A Tenth Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory ...p.xiv, footnote no. 7.

3. Sayyid Nufal, 'al-Balāghah al-'Arabiyyah.....' p.85.

however, indicate that he was totally unfamiliar with the term, if only in its simplest form, that is the borrowing or substitution of one word for another. In 'K. al-Naqa'id' he even adopted a derivation from the same root for it in his treatment of Farazdaq's verse:-

لَا قَوْمٌ أَكْرَمُ مِنْ تَمِيمٍ إِذْ غَدَّتْ بِـ عَوْدٍ النِّسَاءِ يُسْتَرْنَ كَالْأَجَابِ

"There were no people as generous as the Tamim, whereon such a

day

Women with children were driven as a herd of antelopes."

Of the word 'Awadh al-Nisā' he argued that it meant those who are accompanied by their children. The word 'Awadh was originally used for she-camels attended by their young, but the Arab had transferred the word by way of Isti'ārah to indicate women and children, he added however, "This is very popular".<sup>1</sup> This popularity was perhaps due to the intermingling of Tashbih and Isti'ārah as in the treatment of the verse:-

مَنْعُوا التُّوَدُ بِأَرْضِ ذِي كُوَيْبٍ

"They protected the territories with a star-spangled cloud"

which he treated as Tashbih, but which could also be classed as Isti'ārah. Whatever the significance of the last statement, often, in 'K. al-Majāz', that which later on was shown as Isti'ārah, was considered by him either as Majāz as in the verse XXV/23,<sup>3</sup> or left undistinguished as in the verses IV/48<sup>4</sup> and LV/42.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ibid, and 'K. al-Naka'id, vol. 1, p. 275, ed. A.A. Bevan.
2. 'Naqa'id, vol. 2, p. 971.
3. 'Majāz', vol. 2, pp. 73-4.
4. Ibid. vol 1, p. 129.
5. Ibid. vol. 2, o. 266.

Yet again from another poem by the same poet, al-Farazdaq:-

والحاسبين، والوحشى ليأخذوا : نزع، لركى، ودمنا، والإشبار

" Holding back their herd until dusk, to partake of

The sparse water in the trough and the foulest remains."

The word Dimnah he commented, " was used to signify the clay and the little water which was left at the bottom of the well, but here it is Musta'ār (borrowed), for the word originally meant a refuse dump of ashes and manure.....<sup>1</sup>"

Jāhiz, on the other hand, with regard to the verse:-

وطقت سحابة قنشاها : تكي على عراسها عينها

"And a cloud still spread over the ruined place,

Lamenting over the deserted courts with tears"

commented thus," The poet has used the word 'Ayḥāhā' with reference to the cloud and the rain as the weeping of it, by way of Isti'ārah,<sup>2</sup> that is by way of naming an object by means of the name of another, if it takes its place."

More examples of this kind are to be found in 'K.al-Hayawān'.<sup>3</sup> In treating the Qur'ānic verse XX/20, " It was a serpent gliding", the argument was that the word Tas'ā (to walk) in the Arabic text, does not suit the serpent which can only slither. Jāhiz retorted that there had been far too many poets who attributed walking to snakes and other things which did not possess legs, and even if this were not so it should still be resolved by means of Tashbih and Badal. Further

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1. 'al-Naqā'id' ,vol. I, p. 324.
  2. 'Bayān' ed: Harūn, vol.I, pp. 152-3.
  3. 'Hayawān', vol. II, pp.280-4.
  4. Ibid. vol. IV, p. 273.

to this he cited the verses :-

LVI/56, "This will be their welcome on the Day of Judgement." <sup>1</sup>

XIX/62, "Therein they have food by morn and evening." <sup>2</sup>

XI/49, "And those in the Fire say to the guards of hell." <sup>3</sup>

The underlined words in his view can only be interpreted metaphorically.

Jāhiz, as has also been noticed, <sup>4</sup> may indulge in some rhetorical details over the characteristics of Isti'ārah, <sup>5</sup> as when regarding the lizard. The legend about this creature being that it is so cunning that it keeps a scorpion next to its tail in its lair which stings the hand of any aggressor. This is taken by the Arab poets as the epitome of malice. In the verse of Ma'n b. Aws:-

أَلَا مَنْتَ لِمَوْلِكَ لَا يَزَالُ كَانَهُ      صَفَاً فِيهِ صَدْعٌ لَا يَأْتِيهِ شَاعِبٌ  
تَدَبُّ ضَبَابٌ الْخَشَّ تَحْتَ ضُلُوعِهِ      لَاهِرٍ أَلْدَى مِنْ قَوْمِهِ بِالْحَقَارِ

"Lo ! Who would be for a man who ever remains

(Irreparable), as a broken rock,

In his bosom creep the lizards of malice,

Harbouring scorpions for his generous folk."

The poet here parallels the malice lurking in the man's bosom and the spreading of its effect throughout, with the lizard, he therefore calls that malice 'lizard'. <sup>6</sup> In the Qur'ānic verse quoted above (XI/49) Jāhiz argues that Hell has nothing to lose and no one wishes to enter, but there are angels engaged in the position of guards they are therefore given this name.

1. Ibid. vol.4, pp.273-278.

2. 'Bayān', ed. Harun, vol.1, p.153.

3. Sayyid Nufal, op.cit. p. 146.

4. 'Bayān' vol.1, 153.

5. 'Hayawān' vol.6, pp.65-6.

6. Ibid, p.66.

(iv) Kināyah and Ishtiqaq

Philologists were well acquainted with Kināyah long before its recognition as a rhetorical formula, as clearly shown by the statement by Abū 'Ubaydah that Yūnus, who died in 182 A.H., had claimed that Abū 'Amr (d. 154 A.H.), in consideration of the word 'bowed' in the Qur'anic verse X<sup>XVI</sup>/4, "If we will, we can send down on them from the sky a portent, so that their necks would remain bowed before it," argued that the word in question was not a qualifying attribute to the word 'necks' but is the adjective of the Kināyah which adjoins the word 'necks'. The Kināyah here is but the word 'their'. In this sense however, it has been maintained by Abū 'Ubaydah himself in a number of cases to indicate only the pronoun.<sup>1</sup> Yet what is more important is what is emphasized in later times in rhetorical studies, which was the substitution of names and attributes for those rather unpleasant and disgraceful words, not mere metonymy, which was not ~~totally~~ ignored by Abū 'Ubaydah as can be seen in his treatment of the verses, V/6, VII/21, and V/7.<sup>2</sup> His contemporary Farrā' followed in the same way.<sup>3</sup>

Bearing this last in mind, what in the course of the following fifty years was Jāhiz to say? It has been noticed that he sometimes held contradictory views on certain issues, perhaps Sarfah was one of them. With regard to Kināyah he seems to furnish us with such a discrepancy. In one instance we can see him begin his enquiry into the subject with an open attack which would appear to be the cessation of the role of Kināyah. He started by holding to contempt those who affected

1. 'Majāz al-Qur'ān', vols. 1, p. 24, 174; 2, p. 82.

2. Ibid. vol. 1, pp. 128, 155, 212.

3. See Z. Sallām, 'Athr al-Qur'ān ..' p. 53.

what may be called 'Artificial gravity', which restrained them from using certain sets of words, on account of such words being crude or vulgar. On the principle that for every condition there is a certain formula of words he argued that "It is inappropriate or ingenuine to seek for Kināyah<sup>1</sup> for if the word to be discounted is of no merit, why was it created in the first instance?" He did not therefore support certain interpretations of the verses V/76 and XXXI/21 when they were explained by way of Kināyah.<sup>2</sup>

As well as this negative attitude towards Kināyah, Jahiz also seems to permit its conventional role, which had already been established by the philologists, and for the same reasons.<sup>3</sup> Yet it appears that the idea frequently conveyed in this term was not far from Ishtiqaq (derivation or invention of completely new words), which occurred to him in the words Munāfiq (dissembler), Tayammum (permission for using clean sand instead of water as a means of ablution), Mukhadram (a person whose life fell within both the period of paganism and Islām) and many others which did not exist before Islam.<sup>4</sup> By this way of Ishtiqaq Jāhiz also arrived at another rhetorical formual Tawriyah (equivocation) which seems to have been known during the period as Kināyah<sup>5</sup>.

(v) Ijaz

On the subject of contrast between Ijaz (conciseness) and Itnāb

1. 'Ḥayawān', ed. Harun, vol. 3, pp. 40-3.

2. Ibid. vol 1, p. 344.

3. As an example for this, he gave, among others, the word (n.) 'Qahab' (cough or lead) to indicate profligacy or the money thus earned, 'Ḥayawān, vol. 1/134. Also the set of words adopted for the places of convenience, "Khalā", Madhhab, Makhraj, Kanīf, Ḥush, and Mirḥaḍ, all of which would indicate how they (the Arabs) were extremely cautious in avoidance of baseness, meniality, vulgarity or slander. "Ibid, 3/295.

or Fudūl (superfluity) a considerable chapter could be written from the many remarks scattered throughout Jāhiz's works, extolling the former to the peak of eloquence and sublimity and denouncing the latter ~~to~~ monotony and emptiness. This would perhaps summarise Jāhiz's attitude toward the whole subject.

In one case he sees in concision a common ground which all rhetoricians indiscriminately <sup>praise</sup> ~~merit~~ and value highly, whereas superfluity is condemned and strongly detested. This latter he accepted with the proviso that ~~in some cases~~ verbal prolongation and extravagance had their uses in certain circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

In modification of the term Ijāz, Jāhiz wrote, "Conciseness or Ijāz does not necessarily mean economy of letters or words, for a chapter may exhaust a scroll of paper and yet still be called concise. What is important, in truth, is to omit irrelevances, which may confuse the whole issue if not subject it to complete ambiguity."

The rest of Jāhiz's argument can be divided between appraising Ijāz and consolidating his comments with a variety of literary specimens from prose and poetry.<sup>3</sup>

A remarkable statement in his study relating to conciseness parallels a psychological approach when he demonstrated thus, "There is no doubt,

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1. C.f. His epistle 'Al-Balāgh wal-Ijāz', BM MS. Or. 3158, f.219b-220b. This work was mistakenly re-Arabised in the recent Arabic translation of Brockelmann as 'Al-Balāgh wal-I'jaz', G.A.L., S.I.P. 244, no. 58, trans. al-Najjar, vol. 3, p. 120, no. 58.
  2. 'Ḥayawān', vol. 1, p. 19, ed. Harūn.
  3. 'Ḥayawān', vol. 1, pp. 72, 76, 90-4, vol. 6, pp. 7-8. 'Bayān, ed. Harūn, vol. 1, p. 99, 107, 149, 155, 174, Some of the examples are repeated in both works, c.f. 'Bayān', vol. 1, p. 150. 'Ḥayawān', ed. Sāsī, vol. 3, p. 23.

to me at any rate, that human minds are more receptive..... of short speeches, even if in the longer ones there exists some merit."<sup>1</sup>

In consideration of the style of the Qur'an the sad fact emerges once more of the loss of his major opus, in which, as is evidenced by his references to it, he seems to have dealt critically with several verses; "I wrote a book in which I had assembled verses from the Qur'an, aiming at making familiar the values of conciseness and omission<sup>2</sup> over extravagance and superfluity and also to know the merit of Isti'ārāt (metaphors). Had you read it you would have observed their concision and the accumulation of a multitude of meanings in a few words."<sup>3</sup>

This statement was followed by a few verses for exemplification; they would however shed some light on Jāhiz's conception of Ijāz,

(a) That which describes the wine of Paradise in the verse LVI/19:-

"No headache shall they feel therefrom, nor shall their wits  
be dimmed."

commented Jāhiz.

"These two words (verbs) contain all that is a fault with the wine of this world."<sup>4</sup>

(b) and the verse of the same chapter LVI/33, which describes the fruits of Paradise:-

1. 'Ḥayawān', vol. 6. pp. 7-8.

2. Ibid. Omission used as an alternative for Ijāz.  
C.f. 'Bayān', vol. 2. pp. 279-82.

3. This is addressed to Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Zayāt.

4. In another context he also remarked on the same verse, then he lauds the wine of Paradise in the short speech, ".... as though it has been said no intoxication nor a wine merchant". See his chapter on homosexuality, B.M. Ms. Or. 3138, f.15, a/b.

"Neither out of each nor yet forbidden,"

similarly he added,

"In these two words (adjectives) is revealed all the meanings imaginable."

For more examples he referred us to his missing work.

Alternatively the term Hadhf (omission) is used by Jāḥiẓ instead of Ījāz; sometimes the terms are joined together to form a single heading, as at the beginning of a comparatively long chapter in 'Bayān', volume 1, p.276-83, under the composite title "The concised and omitted". After much delay he referred to it at the opening of another chapter as "From the omitted", volume 2, p. 271, wherein after his short introduction, "Some of the speeches direct the hearer immediately to the speaker's meaning", he cited the verses, XXII/2, XX/74, XIV/17, XIX/62,<sup>1</sup> for example.

Jāḥiẓ may not in fact, mention either of the terms, yet his illustrations can be understood but in the nature of them, as can be noticed in the chapter in which he dealt with the virtues of silence, in the verse which concerns the prophet David.

"We made his kingdom strong and gave him wisdom and decisive speech."

Wrote Jāḥiẓ.

"The word 'Wisdom' indicates intellectual efficiency, equanimity or forbearance, width of knowledge and righteousness in judgement, whereas by decisive speech he was endowed with precision in brevity,

1. 'Bayān', ed. Harūn, vol. 2, p. 281.

the exp<sup>osition</sup> of ambiguity and infallibility of decision."<sup>1</sup>

### The Qur'ān and rhymed prose

The question of rhyme and rhythm, or for that matter poetry as a whole, and its appearance in the Qur'ān seems to have engaged both ancient and modern critics. In the Qur'ān's own text it is emphatically stated more than once that it is not a work of poetry.<sup>2</sup> During Muḥammad's lifetime, when, in conspiratorial circumstances, it was mooted to one of his outstanding contemporaries to denounce, at the imminent annual gathering of the Arab tribes, ~~that~~ the new prophet was a poet, he declined thus,

"No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms and metres."<sup>3</sup> This statement concerns in part the person of the new prophet and also to an even greater extent the actual composition of the Qur'ān. When considering the verdicts of modern critics on this issue, strangely enough all possible angles of approach seem to have been covered.<sup>4</sup> Some of them selected, among others, the Surah Abū Lahab (CXI) as an example

1. Ibid. vol. 1, p. 200, Cf. also Z. Sallām, 'Athar al-Qur'ān', p. 92.

2. Cf. Surahs XXXVI/69, CXIX/41, XXVI/222.

3. 'The Life of Muḥammad (Sirah of Ibn Hisham)' Trans. by A. Guillaume, pt. 2, p. 121.

4. Cf. William Warren, 'The Open Court', vol. XII, no. ii, pp. 641-3. Nov. 1899, who opens his verdict thus, "Few English readers of the Koran realize that it is a book of poetry, and that its rhyme and rhythm have immensely helped its currency in all lands where the Arabic language is spoken."

Zakī Mubārak, ('al-Nathr al-Fanni fī al-Qarn al-Rābi', vol. 1, pp. 38-9) contrariwise, while approaching the probabilities of pre-Islamic prose, concluded that the composition of the Qur'ān can be taken as a unique example of that prose. Tāhā Husain, 'Min Hadīth al-Shi'r wal-Nathr', pp. 31-2, on the other hand put it thus, but you know that the Qur'ān is not prose yet it is not poetry either! "

of poetry in the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

Jāhiz, earlier in the third century A.H. also dealt with the same surah; his view will give an idea of the earlier discussion of the question, which became much more prominent in the fourth century. The argument he developed thus, "To those who claim that in the Qur'ānic verse, "Perish the hands of Abū Lahab and perish he" (Tabā<sup>b</sup>t yadā Abī Lahab wa-tab) XI/I, and in the tradition, "Art thou anything but a toe covered with blood? What has happened to thee has been in the way of God," (Hal anti illā iṣba'un damiti wa fi Sabilī Allāhi Mālaqiti), there is a form of poetry because its rhythm is in agreement with the prosodical metre Mustaf'ilun Mafa'ilun, the answer is that if you consider peoples' speech, oratory and correspondence you will find numerous examples of Mustaf'ilun Mustaf'ilun and Mustaf'ilun Fa'ilun but no one on earth would claim such unintentional prosodical facts as poetry. Further if a seller calls for his wares, "Who would buy aubergines"<sup>2</sup> (Man yashtari bāzinjān), surely he has spoken in the metre of Mustaf'ilun Maf'ulāt,<sup>3</sup> but can it be considered that such jargon is a form of poetry while the caller himself was oblivious of the fact? Such rhythm is likely to be found in all forms of speech." Jāhiz it seems considers that the casual occurrence of prosody in speech does not elevate it to the level of poetry which is to him in the first place thorough knowledge of prosodical metre in the presence of the intention to create poetry.

1. R.A.Nicholson, 'Aliterary History of the 'Arabs' p.160.

2. 'Bayān', vol. 1, p. 288-9.

3. Or "Ādhhabū bi ila al-tabīb wa-qulū qad iktawā" (Take me to the doctor and say: he has been cauterised) produced the rhyming prosodical metre:  
<sup>3</sup> Fa'ilatun Mafa'ilun twice.

84

AFTER JĀHIZ

The Sunnite traditionalists who were under political suppression, over the question of the creation of the Qur'ān, during the reigns of al-Ma'mūn and his successors, Mu'tasim and Wāthiq, in circumstances similar to their degradation emerged once more during the reign of Mutawakkil. Throughout the reigns of the first three caliphs Mu'tazilism not only became fashionable but the official religion.

It was direct from the Mu'tazilite circles, or by studying their works, that some scholars who were adherent traditionalist Sunnites, assimilated much of the Mu'tazilite literature and when they turned against the Mu'tazilah and condemned them they had a thorough insight into their works and dialectical methods. Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), the Sunnite traditionalist, set an example long before al-Ash'arī, but the difference between the scholars is that of the professional theologian al-Ash'arī on the one hand, and on the other the man of letters Ibn Qutaybah.

Of all the influential Mu'tazilite authors, it is evidently Jāhiz who influenced Ibn Qutaybah<sup>1</sup>, not so much as a theologian, as the two differ considerably in this respect, but more as a man of letters.

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(1) See Ishāq Musa al-Huseine, 'The Life and Works of Ibn Qutayba', pp. 13-14.

In effect Ibn Qutaybah may be considered one of the earliest critics of Jāhiz's literary output.<sup>1</sup>

### Ibn Qutaybah and I'jāz

From the extant works, likewise those reported of Ibn Qutaybah, it is beyond question that he dealt, as Jāhiz had before him, with various Qur'ānic subjects ranging from its exegesis, reading and grammar<sup>2</sup> to its Gharīb or explanation of rare expressions, as well as the question of the creation of the Qur'ān. Of the last two topics, however, only some of his studies have survived in one form or another.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) "Of all the characteristics he is strongest in this: he makes trifles great and great things trifles. He can defend the opposite propositions with equal dexterity. Now he will fight with the Shiāhs on behalf of the party of Othman and now against the Othmanites and the Sunnites for the Shi'ites. Now he will exalt Ali and yet again lay him low .... His writings are full of jokes and fun to attract youths and wine-bibers. He ridiculed tradition." From 'Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadīth', p. 71. A. Mez. the Renaissance of Islam, Eng. trans., p. 204.
- (2) For these works see S.A. Saqr's introduction to K. 'Ta'wil Mushkil al-Qur'an', pp. 24-25, Nos. 38, 33, 29.
- (3) Summaries of 'K. Gharīb al-Qur'an' together with K. Ta'wil al-Mushkil were made by Ibn Mutarīf al-Kinānī (d. 454/1062) with the title 'K. al-Qurtayn'. With regard to the question of the creation of the Qur'an, although it has been reported that he made an independent treatise (cf. Saqr (op.cit), p. 25, No. 42) we find in some of his extant works however that it engages a good portion of (a) 'K. al-Ikhtilāf fī al-lafz', see p. 50 sqq. (b) 'Risālat al-Radd 'Ala al-Mu'tazilah', S.O.A.S. photo-copy p. 35 sqq. In this treatise the compiler appeared to have freely quoted and added some of the later Ash'arite theologians, cf. p. 42.

Before dealing with his appraisal of Majāz (the trope) in 'K. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān'<sup>1</sup> an inquiry into his conception of the idea of I'jāz may be important to us, to see whether his grasp of the question was more advanced than that of his contemporaries and their predecessors. Further, in the preceding decades some of the Mu'tazilite leaders had expressed some doubt about miracles generally and more particularly, as noted earlier, some of them had sought explanations of the miraculousness of the Qur'ān by other means than hitherto for generally maintained.

Moreover, during Ibn Qutaybah's lifetime some of the elements which had provoked scholars before him seemed to have spread widely from their heretical and speculative sources aiming at the defamation and the uprooting of such matters as miracles, prophecy or religion altogether.

(1) Edited by S.A. Şagr.

Among the works ascribed to Ibn Qutaybah two titles invite our attention and give some indication of his conception of the idea of I'jāz, at least in its theological concepts. Such works as :

- (a) 'K. Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah'<sup>1</sup> (signs of prophecy) in which it may be assumed that he upheld a similar position to that of al-Jāhiz in his 'Hujaj al-Nubuwwah' (the proofs of prophecy). Yet his conclusion must have necessarily been different from that of the Mu'tazilite al-Jāhiz.
- (b) 'K. Mu'jizāt al-Nabi'<sup>2</sup> (the miracles of the prophet) which undoubtedly must have dealt considerably with the Qur'ān.

His conception of the idea of I'jāz is prominent at the opening of 'K. Ta'wil al-Mushkil', from a theological standpoint as well as a literary phenomenon. With respect to the former, as generally perceived by Muslims, the greatest miracle of Islām is the Qur'ān, and also in the conception that - as observed in the history of divine revelation - God has always granted miracles to his messengers in the form best adapted to the requirement of the age. This is clearly emphasised by Ibn Qutaybah at the opening of his second introduction<sup>3</sup> - the literary conception of the idea is obvious also from the opening of the book and the whole is an attempt to justify it.

(1) Saqr, introduction (op.cit.), p. 24, No. 34.

(2) Ibid, p. 25, No. 39. According to A.Z. al-'Adawī ('Uyūn al-Akhbār' introduction, vol. 4, p. 25, No. 13), both works might have been identical, but one might assume that the latter work was composed when attacks on miracles were one of the current topics.

(3) p. 10.

'K. TA' WĪL MUSHKIL AL-QUR'ĀN'

A brief outline

As a whole the book was designed to disentangle stylistic problems involving the language of the Qur'ān as clearly indicated by its title. But from which angle should such difficulties be tackled, rather on what criteria ?

Philology was fundamental to all humanities, and philologists' and grammarians' well-established attitudes towards poetical documentation were the sole basis upon which any sound literary judgement must be decided. Thus it was inevitable that any attempt of the nature of 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān' was bound to compel its author to investigate a vast area of linguistic studies, dealing with various aspects most of which had been dealt with at one time or another independently by philologists and grammarians alike.

Ibn Qutaybah's book contains both the rules which were drawn from protracted fields, as well as the application or the exercise of them on the Qur'ān's style.

The book, however, is remarkable in the sense that some of the rules and criteria moulded therein were adopted by a good number of critics in the fourth century in their quest to establish the basis of literary criticism.

The chapter which contributed to this end is that entitled al-Majāz (the trope) which we shall deal with in some detail, but before doing this it would be appropriate to give a general picture of the rest of the contents.

### Introduction

(a) p. 1-9. In the first introduction the idea of I'jāz has been emphasised clearly by the author. The few examples he demonstrated represent a man of outstanding literary merit and a thorough understanding of the style of the Qur'ān.

(b) p. 10-18. In the second introduction, having once more emphasised the idea of I'jāz as in the parallel drawn between the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and other prophetic miracles, he devoted the rest of this introduction to the realisation of some of the characteristics of the Arabic language. It would appear that besides the traditional view towards language which became doctrinal in the case of the Qur'ān, current political circumstances had a strong bearing on it. Among the characteristics of Arabic Ibn Qutaybah enumerated the status of oratory, the Arabic alphabet, I'rāb - the correct location of the vowels by which the position of a word in the sentence is designated, or the change of the meaning according to the inflection of vowels - derivation, the role of poetry or the register of the Arabs, and finally the Majāz, of which he cited several divisions.

### Polemic Chapters

In the first of four chapters following immediately after his introductions, pp. 19-26, he recorded four types of the current criticism against the Qur'ān: the different readings, grammatical mistakes, contradiction and the consimilar or verses whose meanings are not apparent in their words.

To each of these he devoted a single chapter (pp. 27-75). Some of the points he made in the first refuting chapter (pp. 25, 29, 62) were explored further in the chapter on Majāz. The chapter which deals with contradiction we shall see in more detail in the chapter immediately following Ibn Qutaybah.

To these chapters may also be added that in which he deals with the mysterious letters at the opening of some of the Qur'an's surahs, pp. 230-239.

After this last, Ibn Qutaybah embarks on dealing with selective verses (the problematic) in thirty eight chapters. pp. 240-339.

#### Subsidiary Lexical and Grammatical Chapters

In the last three chapters Ibn Qutaybah deals mainly with what may be described as lexical and grammatical analysis of many words that occurred in the Qur'an :

(I) A word denoting several meanings (homonym) pp. 342-394.

Under this heading he demonstrates forty different words, pointing out the various meanings that can be expressed by such words. In the case of most of them he begins by giving the origin of each word, then moves to the various meanings that it carries; with a keen interest in its occurrence in the Qur'an. To select only one as an example and another reason is its figurative characteristic, we may choose the word Mathal p. 378. He treated it as :

(a) Mathal meaning 'the same'; you say this is Mathal 'the-like of a thing', and Mithlu-hu as you say, Shabah or 'the like of a thing' etc.

From the Qur'ān he quotes two examples, one of them is the verse XXI/41,

"The likeness of those who chose other patrons than God is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh<sup>unto</sup> herself a house."

(b) Mathal also denotes warning as in the verse XLIII/56,

"And we made them a thing past, and an example for those after (them)."

(c) The picture or the epithet, as in XLVII/15,

"The likeness of the Garden which those who keep duty (to God) are promised therein rivers."

In the last example it signifies the function of the particle of similitude.

(II) Exposition of the particle of meanings and their like of indeclinable verbs. pp. 396-426.

Here he demonstrates thirty three particles with indeclinable verbs as Kāda, Halumma Ta'āli, Lāt, Hāti, pointing out the meaning of the particle and verb and their grammatical function, e.g. Ruwayd-an meaning 'gently', Ruwaydaka meaning 'grant sometime' as in the verse LXXXVI/1,

"So respite the unbelievers; delay them awhile."

If it is not preceded by the verb 'Amhil it then means Mahlan, to delay.

It is always used in the diminutive form, denoting the imperative mood, but contrary to this it has been used in poetry as in:-

"As though it was like him who walks gently."

كَأَنَّهَا مِثْلُ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلِ

(III) Interchange between particles. pp. 426-432.

The particles here signified as Hurūf al-Sifāt which are only those known as 'the particle of attraction' or annexation or connection which produce the genitive inflection.

e.g. Fī (in) assuming the position Alā (on or upon) as in the verse XX/71 :-

"And I shall crucify you (fī) on the trunks of palm trees" or as in the poem :-

"They had crucified al-'Abdiyy (fī) on a trunk of a palm tree. May Shayban not sneeze but with a cut nose."

وَهُمْ صَلَبُوا الْعَبْدِيَّ فِي جَذَعِ نَخْلَةٍ  
فَلَا عَطَسَتْ شَيْبَانَ إِلَّا بِأَجْدَعَا

In the second introduction in which Ibn Qutaybah outlined some of the characteristics of Arabic language, he observed among them:-

"The Arabs have the tropes in their speech, which means the various ways and forms of expression. Among these are :

<u>Isti'ārah</u>	=	metaphor	
<u>al-Tashbih</u>	=	simile	
<u>al-Qalb</u>	=	transposition	
<u>al-Taqdīm</u>	=	prepositive	} Hysteron/proteron
<u>al-Ta'khīr</u>	=	postpositive	
<u>al-Hadhf</u>	=	omission	
<u>al-Tikrār</u>	=	repetition	
<u>al-Ikhfā'</u>	=	imperceptibility	
<u>al-Izhār</u>	=	plainness	
<u>al-Ta'riq</u>	=	obliquity	
<u>al-Ifsāh</u>	=	clarity	
<u>al-Kināyah</u>	=	metonymy	

Mukhāṭabat al-Wāhid Mukhāṭabat al-Jamī' = allocation of the singular as the plural

" al-Jamī' Khitāb al-Wāhid = allocation of the plural as the singular

" al-Wāhid wal-Jamī' Khitāb al-Ithnayn = allocating the plural and singular as dual.

al-Qasd bilafḥ al-Khuṣūs li-ma'nā al-'Umūm = the substitution of the particular to the general and vice versa."

These figures of speech are by no means exclusive, further divisions and sub-divisions are to come.

In all these stylistic qualities the Qur'ān is revealed. Ibn Qutaybah stressed strong accent on this chapter, hence it is his opinion, that no translation can preserve such qualities unchanged, and that no people have extended the use of Majāz as the Arabs did.<sup>1</sup>

'Bāb al-Qawl fī al-Majāz',<sup>2</sup> or a chapter concerning the trope, is the most important in 'K. Ta'wīl al-Mushkil', for in it the author set forth the criteria by which he rules his analyses of the problematic queries into the language of the Qur'ān. The first impression such a heading calls our attention to is a work not only with the word Majāz in it as a chapter or a series of chapters, but the work as a whole entitled 'Majāz al-Qur'ān'. There was no personal contact between the two authors, indeed Ibn Qutaybah was born three years after the death of the author of 'K. al-Majāz'. No doubt Ibn Qutaybah studied at the hand of some of Abū 'Ubaydah's pupils; to mention only one, al-Jāhīz, but on the question of al-Majāz, in literature generally and the Qur'ān in particular, the attitude of Jāhīz towards it and the conception of Ibn Qutaybah differ fundamentally.

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(1) The idea expressed here has been quoted by Ibn Fāris (d. 395/1004) as noticed by the editor in his 'K. al-Sāhibī' (footnote (1), p. 16) who referred to Ibn Qutaybah as "Some of our learned said ....". Ibn Fāris's views, or rather Ibn Qutaybah's, has been discussed by Professor J.H. Kramers in his remarkable lecture The Language of the Qur'ān. See *Analecta Orientalia*, vol. 2, p. 164.

(2) pp. 76-229.

It has been often noticed in some modern studies that Ibn Qutaybah was greatly influenced by Abū 'Ubaydah. The reference, of course, is to the former's 'K. Ta'wīl al-Mushkil', considered in respect to the latter's 'K. al-Majāz'. Up to a point the observations are justified but how far reaching and deep was the influence, and was it 'K. al-Majāz' only or other works of Abū 'Ubaydah that influenced Ibn Qutaybah? To attempt to give fuller replies to such questions would necessitate a thorough comparative study based on the two men's works. Indeed, other scholar's works of the period would be involved.

With regard, however, to the two works in question, it is obvious that the motive which induced both authors in their undertakings, though chronologically distant, were of similar circumstance; both were endeavouring to correct misunderstandings about the language and the style of the Qur'ān. Yet the prevailing method and even the titles under which they dealt with the subject are totally different; while for instance Abū 'Ubaydah in his selective study follows all the chapters of the Qur'ān in order, Ibn Qutaybah, on the other hand, in a more restricted measure selects from only thirty-eight chapters in a completely random way. On numerous occasions he picks verses to demonstrate his lexical, grammatical or figurative arguments, or where a stylistic difficulty involves the meaning.

The influence of 'K. al-Majāz' is enigmatic, for although it is apparent in the text of Ibn Qutaybah's work reference to or quotations from Abū 'Ubaydah have been made in ten<sup>1</sup> places, there is no mention of a specific work of Abū 'Ubaydah's. At one time his information came to him through oral transmission via one of Abū 'Ubaydah's pupils.<sup>2</sup> In seven out of the remaining nine his analyses, to a large degree, correspond to those of Abū 'Ubaydah<sup>3</sup>, the rest however seems to have been taken from Abū 'Ubaydah's other works or by means of other information.

On the merit of the evidence of the disclosed references made by Ibn Qutaybah himself, Abū 'Ubaydah's influence in 'K. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān' is of no striking distinction but it is just as likely to have been the influence as any other philologist and grammarian or commentator ~~generally~~, such authorities as Sībawayh, Kisā'ī, Farrā', Aṣma'ī and several others<sup>4</sup> were quoted or disapproved of as frequently as Abū 'Ubaydah.

(1) Cf. pp. 15, 38, 100, 152, 178, 198, 279, 372, 406, 436.

(2) "It was recited for me by al-Sajistānī from Abū 'Ubaydah", p. 100. The account given has also occurred in 'K. al-Majāz' cf. vol. 1, p. 411.

(3) Cf. 'K. al-Majāz', 1, 411; 2, 38; 1, 379; 1, 16; 2, 253; 2, 300.

(4) These he called the people of knowledge and literature, with whose works he was familiar. Such as: al-Aṣma'ī, Abū Zayd, Abū 'Ubaydah, Sībawayh, al-Akhfash, al-Kisā'ī, Farrā', Abū 'Amar al-Shaybānī; the learned among the readers of the Qur'ān and the commentators. See 'Makhtalaf al-Ḥadīth', p. 95.

To look more closely at the influence of Abū 'Ubaydah's 'Majāz' on the work of Ibn Qutaybah's under consideration, two aspects need to be realised, first the text as a commentary, and second, and most important, Abū 'Ubaydah's introduction wherein a list of thirty eight figures of speech and grammatical remarks are enumerated.

In respect of the first, however, it is noticeable that the selections provided by Ibn Qutaybah from thirty eight chapters of the Qur'ān in disorder, or any other verse he picked to illustrate a point, differ from those which appeared in Abū 'Ubaydah's work, in that a verse, or as is often the case, a word from it, is illustrated in one work and totally disregarded in the other, but also in that where their choices coincide the conclusions reached are considerably at variance.<sup>1</sup>

Further, while the general tendency in Abū 'Ubaydah's 'K. al-Majāz' is towards grammatical, philological and syntactical analyses, with a wider range of poetical documentation, Ibn Qutaybah, shows more inclination towards the general traditional exegesis, and often authenticates his analyses with well-established commentators' views, as he makes clear at the end of his second introduction.<sup>2</sup>

(1) As an example - comparing the longest chapter in the Qur'ān Surah II which comprises 286 verses, in both works - we find Abū 'Ubaydah deals with 160 verses wholly or in part. Ibn Qutaybah in his book deals with 78 verses. Although it is found that in 53 verses both authors have quoted or selected from them, in well over half of this figure what has been considered by one author with regard to a verse or a word or words from it, is completely disregarded by the other. In the remainder a lexical or grammatical similarity is often noticeable, but their conclusions are varied.

(2) p. 18.

Indeed among these commentators alluded to, Abū 'Ubaydah is undoubtedly included, but for the reason mentioned by Ibn Qutaybah that is the omission of the Isnād (the chains of authority), particularly those which are well established, his sources would have easily been traceable. Ibn Qutaybah also reveals that he expands and further explains commentators' views adding his own interpretation to that which hitherto had not been reflected upon, as far as language permitted.

Turning to Abū 'Ubaydah's introduction, many have inclined to the view that here lies the sole inspiration for the driving influence behind Ibn Qutaybah's tropic study. ~~Ascribing~~ ~~to~~ Ibn Qutaybah's effort ~~through~~ the medium of this introduction would be difficult to uphold. Let us rather consider the thirty nine listed figures - be they grammatical or of speech - with regard to those demonstrated by Ibn Qutaybah. Ibn Qutaybah divided his chapters on trope into six main sections, subsequently subdividing them further.

(1) The first chapter and the most important, Isti'ārah (metaphor) is not among the figures demonstrated by Abū 'Ubaydah and we shall see soon who was most likely to have inspired Ibn Qutaybah in this respect.

(2) The second chapter, al-Maqlūb (the transpositioned) is also not in Abū 'Ubaydah's list, <sup>of</sup> the studies which influence Ibn Qutaybah again will be seen.

(3) Concerning the role of omission and conciseness, although some aspects of this are mentioned in Abū 'Ubaydah's list<sup>1</sup>, yet the term had long been used in grammatical circles, particularly in 'The Book' of Sībawayh who died 180 A.H.<sup>2</sup>

(4) Circumstances which prompted the study of repetition during Ibn Qutaybah's life added more and more to it than the mere grammatical observation, further it is Jāḥiẓ who might have inspired Ibn Qutaybah rather than Abū 'Ubaydah.

(5) As for Kināyah (metonymy), the term did occur in Abū 'Ubaydah's introduction,<sup>3</sup> but it was confined to a purely grammatical function.

(6) In the sixth and last section, the incongruity between words and meanings, he deals with twenty-eight terms, several of which occurred in Abū 'Ubaydah's introduction, but it is characteristic that the subject as a whole was well-trodden by grammarians' schools, Baṣrah and Kūfah, and perhaps Aṣma'ī was most likely to have guided Ibn Qutaybah in this respect, particularly his work entitled "Mā Itafaqa lafzuhu wa Ikhtalafa Ma'nāh."

It would seem, however, in the light of the foregoing observations, that whatever other work or works by Abū 'Ubaydah may have influenced Ibn Qutaybah in his demonstration of Majāz in particular, 'Kitāb al-Majāz' was of no serious impact.

(1) 'Majāz', vol. 1, pp. 9-10.

(2) Cf. 'Kitāb Sībawayh', Hārūn ed., vol. 1, pp. 211-212.

(3) 'Majāz', vol. 1, p. 15.

### The Trope - Majāz

At the end of his second introduction and also at the opening of his chapter on the trope, Ibn Qutaybah emphasised the fact that most of the analysts' errors occurred when tampering with the

mistakes { (1) 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', pp. 75-6 committed  
 (2) Ibid, p. 76.  
 (3) 'The Bible', Genesis 2, v. 3.  
 (4) 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', p. 77.

mistakes in their analyses of its Ibn Qutaybah's survey seemed to be confined not only to Arabic and Islamic literatures, but to some degree his observations and wide readings extended so far beyond as to reflect on biblical literature, at least that which had been rendered into Arabic, where we find certain passages from both the Old and the New Testaments were considered. For instance, "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."<sup>3</sup>

The word 'rested' perhaps because of its anthropomorphical implication can not be admitted as it stands and the following interpretation must be called for at least in Arabic.

"The origin of the word rest (Istirāḥah) is the result of struggling with something that wearied and fatigued you, therefore you require rest. The meaning therein was transferred, and the word used to signify the finishing or ending. You say: "We have rested (Istarāḥna)" from your requirement and ordered it, "meaning we have finished with it."<sup>4</sup>

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- (1) 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', pp. 75-6.  
 (2) Ibid, p. 76.  
 (3) 'The Bible', Genesis 2, v. 3.  
 (4) 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', p. 77.

Another point Ibn Qutaybah calls the attention to in the abuse and misapprehension of the function of the trope is twofold and can be realised in the light of the teachings of two different schools, the Mu'tazilites and another sect or sects; but what must be considered here is that Ibn Qutaybah was not in the least conducting a theological argument,<sup>1</sup> but theology and theologian dialectic must necessarily be conducted within the framework of the language and additionally through language they strived to support their principles and beliefs.

The Mu'tazilah in supporting many of their dogmas leaned heavily on figurative interpretation and analogy, particularly in such principles as the speech of God and the will of men.

To prove that God did not speak in reality the Mu'tazilah claimed that wherever the words Qawl and Kalām (utterance) occurred in the Qur'ān they should not be upheld in their literal sense, therefore they should be interpreted analytically as when is said: "The wall said" and "say by your head"; what is obviously meant here according to them is only the 'inclination', the word 'say' is superfluous.

In verses as:-

"And when We said unto the angels: prostrate yourselves before Adam" (II/34) the imperative which implies utterance in their opinion is but an inspiration.

(1) This is clear as he demonstrated in 'al-Ikhtilāf fī al-lafẓ' p. 12. "I did not go in most of my arguments against them beyond the way of languages - As for Kalām (speculative theology) it is not our business - And in my opinion most perished because of it and by forcing religion to yield to the logic of analogy.

And in:-

"And it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that God should speak to Him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a Veil, or (that) He send~~th~~<sup>th</sup> a messenger, to reveal what He will by His leave." (XLII/51).

Revelation is here interpreted as inspiration. And of His saying to Heaven and Earth:- "Come both<sup>of</sup> you, willingly or lothn." They said: "We come, obedient," "(XLI/11). They argued that God did not say nor did they; how could He address a non-existence? This however means 'to be' and they have been."

To support this argument they quoted from ancient poetry the verses of the poet, al-Muthaqgab al-'Abdī speaking on behalf of his she-camel:-

"She says: when I spread out the fore-girth to fasten it upon her -

Is this to be for ever his way and mine ?

Is the whole of time to be unloosing and binding-on of gear ?

Will he never spare me, or save me (from being utterly worn out)."<sup>1</sup>

She did not say a word in all this, but as the poet saw that she was in a situation of exhaustion and overwhelmed by fatigue he assumed that if she were to speak she would have said as he described of her.

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(1) 'The Mufaḍḍaliyāt', ed. and trans. C.J. Lyall, vol. 1, p. 586, vol. 2, p. 231.

Or as the other said:-

"My camel complained to me against the long night journeyings."

The camel did not complain, but the poet told of its numerous journeys and its weariness and concluded that if it were to speak it should complain of what it had endured.<sup>1</sup>

"It is apparent to whoever is familiar with language that such words as Qawl and Kalām are used figuratively."

By this statement Ibn Qutaybah commences his literary retort. He did not deny, nor would anybody, that such words are often ascribed metaphorically to animals or objects. The reality of the actual utterance none would think of. In this respect Ibn Qutaybah even penetrated deeper to explore what later on became known as the imaginative metaphor; that is to say when we imagine, in an inanimate thing, admonition or exhortation we may personify it and say of it, 'it tells and says'. e.g. "You are admonished by silent graves."

وَعَصَاكَ أَجْدَاتُ صُمْتُ

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(1) A further example is the verse of 'Antarah:

"And he twisted round to the spears, impart upon his breast. And complained to me, sobbing and whimpering." (A.J. Arberry, trans. 'The Seven Odes', p. 183). The underlined word received similar analysis.

e.g. "I stood there at evening, while the place gave no clear answer, To the questioner, save only a secret word."

The dwelling utters never a word to the questioner, but the manifest circumstances are most revealing to the whole situation, as though they gave a secret word.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah's second point was to establish the criteria on which a sound judgement must be reached when we speak of Majaz. He calls our attention to the following rules which must be observed.

- (a) The verbs used in the trope include the infinitives.
- (b) That they also must not be emphasised by repetition.

You say metaphorically: the wall wants to fall.

but not the wall wants to fall (with) a strong wanting.

In exercising these rules on the Qur'ān's style, two verses which the Mu'tazilites for dogmatic convenience interpreted metaphorically can no longer be used thus:-

- (1) "And God spoke directly to Moses." (IV/164).

The Maṣḍar or, as grammatically termed, the absolute object, (Takliman), or as in the translation, directly, in the light of the second rule cannot be illustrated in a figurative sense (Majāz).

- (2) "The only words We say to a thing, when We desire it, is that We say to it 'Be' and it is." (XVI/40).

In this example both rules are present.

(1) 'Awf al-Khazra', see 'The Mufaḍḍaliyāt', trans. C.J. Lyall, vol. 2, p. 349.

With regard to the question of Qadar (predestination) - a term with which, at one time the Mu'tazilite's name had been associated - and in the light of the second principle 'Adl (righteousness) the Mu'tazilites upheld the belief that man is responsible for his acts, and on his free will his ultimate destiny depended. Reconciliation of this belief with such a Qur'ānic verse as:-

"He will <sup>lead</sup>/astray any or guideth whoever He will," (XVI/93) and others like it, presents a great difficulty, metaphorical interpretation therefore became a necessity to avoid such obvious contradiction. In the case of the above quoted verse they offered these interpretations:-

(1) Both 'astray' and 'guideth' signify merely calling or declaring them thus but they are not <sup>to</sup> be taken in any factitive sense.

(2) Others interpreted them as estimative, and 'astray' in particular was rendered to the sense of "to ascribe to <sup>going</sup> astray ~~verb~~"

Ibn Qutaybah though dealing with this at some length in his other works,<sup>1</sup> is conducting his discussion here on a grammatical basis. He argued that the measure Af'al is never used as declarative or estimative, for this the language used the measure Fa'al.

(1) See 'Tāwīl Mukhtalif al-Hadīth', pp. 80-81.

Several examples of misreading of the Qur'ān and poetry in these two measures were then discussed. His discussion also brought about interesting points with regard to the Arab conception of predestination even long before Islām.

The extremist views of the Mu'tazilah were, in effect, met by other immoderate rivalling views on the part of some of the Sunnites, who over the same question without any reservation upheld the opposite attitude. Both in Ibn Qutaybah's opinion were wrong. <sup>1</sup>

There was also a third party who dislodged the role of Majāz totally, on the grounds that it implied untrue statements. This party seemed to have been the Zāhirite sect whose founder, Dāw'ūd al-Zāhirī<sup>2</sup> (d. 270/883) was instructed in Tradition by one of Ibn Qutaybah's own tutors, Ibn Rāhawayh (d. 238/852).

The narrow view of this sect, as seen by Ibn Qutaybah, was unrealistic for, in fact, if the trope was untrue most of the speech could be deemed false expression.

(1) See 'al-Ikhtilāf fī al-Lafz', pp. 19-20, 45-46.

(2) See Ibn Khallikān, 'Wafayāt', ed. Muḥī al-Dīn vol. 2, pp. 26, 246.

Metaphor - Isti'ārah<sup>1</sup>

There was no emphasis in the studies of Abū 'Ubaydah on this term, nor was it included in the tropical terms he demonstrated at the opening of 'K. al-Majāz', though some of his analyses in other works, as noted earlier,<sup>2</sup> may have some bearing on its function.<sup>3</sup> The author whose works evidently appear to have guided Ibn Qutaybah in his attempt was al-Asma'ī, particularly his chapter on 'metaphors'.<sup>4</sup> From the ample material cited therein Ibn Qutaybah was able to classify them or form them in certain categories.

To Ibn Qutaybah Isti'ārah seemed the first and most important chapter of tropical use, if only because it was and still is the most frequent figurative device used in the language.<sup>5</sup> His first observation was:

"The Arabs (Tasta'īr) borrow or substitute a word for another when its signification is caused by, annexed or similar to another." In these three words he summed up the elements that permit to its adoption.

(1) pp. 102-141.

(2) cf. 'Isti'ārah', in the studies of Jāhiz in the previous chapter.

(3) Bāgillānī, 'I-jāz al-Qur'ān', p. 108 also refers to Abū 'Ubaydah's study of Isti'ārah.

(4) See Asma'ī, 'K. Fa'altu wa 'Af'altu', B.M. Ms. Or. 1478, fols. 29a - 43a.

(5) cf. p. 101. Also it is notable that Ibn al-Mu'tazz made his first chapter in 'K. al-Badī', ed. I. Kratchōvsky p. 3 sqq. on Isti'ārah.

To illustrate this further he cited:-

(a) "They say to the plants (Naw), rain; for by rain they grow." "And the rains (Anwā') of these endowing clouds dried up,"

وَجَفَّ أَنْوَالُ السَّيَابِ الْمُرْتَزَقِ  
وَجَفَّ أَنْوَالُ السَّيَابِ الْمُرْتَزَقِ

meaning the vegetation dried up.

(b) They call the rain 'sky' because it descends from above, as in the saying:-

"We ceased not to tread upon the rain (the sky) until we came to you",<sup>1</sup>

or as the poet<sup>2</sup> said:-

"When the clouds descend in rain on the land of other people we pasture therein our herds, though they be wrathful."

(c) They also say: The earth laughs when it gives forth; for it shows the beauty of vegetations and blossoms with flowers as the laughter shows his front teeth.

Ibn Qutaybah's analytical demonstration is shown in the anonymous proverb:-

"I experienced from so-and-so hardship."

لَقَيْتُ مِنْ فُلَانٍ عَرَقَ الْقِرْبَةِ

That is to say, hardship and distress; the reason being that as the bearer of a water-skin becomes exhausted by the act of carrying, so that his forehead perspires, thus the sweat caused by his toil is substituted or borrowed to signify difficulty.

(1) See Asām'ī (op.cit.) fol. 29b.

(2) The poet is Mu'āwiyah b. Mālik. 'Muffaddaliyāt', trans. by C.J. Lyall, vol. 2, p. 296.

Having thus shown some of the reasons that allow for the formation of metaphor, Ibn Qutaybah devoted the rest of this chapter to analysing examples from the Qur'ān, often illustrated by quotations from poetry. His reflection appeared to have inspired some of the fourth century critics.<sup>1</sup> It would be sufficient to see his method in the following:-

(1) "On the day when the leg shall be bared." (LXVIII/42)

The commentator's explanation being that it tells of great calamity. Ibn Qutaybah's metaphorical analysis runs "The reason being that when a man encountered a difficult task requiring of him a struggle in his earnestness he would gird his garment up his leg. The word 'leg' here is merely borrowed or substituted for calamity."

(2) "And in like manner We disclosed them (i.e. the youths of the cave to the people of the city)." (XVIII/22)

The word (A in the Arabic text literally means 'made to stumble upon') in this context means 'made them known'. The reason for this is that when a person unexpectedly stumbles on something, he looks at it until he knows it. The word Ithār is borrowed for ~~discovery~~ and recognition. People say:  
 "Never found (Athartu Alā) so-and-so with evil".

(1) cf. 'Askarī, 'al-Šina'atayn', pp. 268-275.

Furthermore, in dealing with some of the many examples he demonstrated, Ibn Qutaybah came to realise the implication of metaphor with other terms, particularly simile and metonymy, which in later studies became popular under such headings as comparative metaphor and metonymical metaphor.<sup>1</sup>

For example, his analysis of the poet's verse:-

"And like the robe of the son of Bid with which he protected his people, and stopped the road to those that travelled along it".<sup>2</sup> His terminology here is but that of metonymy, also in the other poet's<sup>3</sup> verse:-

"Thy brother and mine in the valley of Nusair

There was not beside us any man of Ma'add,"

i.e. Myself and you.

(1) cf. Sakkākī, 'Miftāh', p. 179. Also Sa'ad al-Dīn al-Taftazānī, 'Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'ānī', p. 405.

(2) The poet is Tha'labah b. 'Amar, trans. C.J. Lyall, 'The Mufaḍḍaliyat', vol. 2, p. 197.

(3) Bashāmah b. al-Ghadīr, Ibid, vol. 2, p. 37.

## The Role of Metaphor and Hyperbole<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the verse, "And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved" (XLIV/29) two tropical interpretations were observed; to some it appeared to contain a form of 'omission', that is to say with the ellipsis of the prefixed noun, the 'people' of the heaven and the earth ...; to others, with whom Ibn Qutaybah seemed to identify himself, it represented a metaphor in the sense that the Arabs when wishing to express their deep regret towards the death of a great personage, they made the sun blacken, the moon <sup>to</sup> eclipse, the wind and heaven and earth <sup>to</sup> weep for his death, the reason being no other than an intensification of the calamity. This is a conventional trend well observed and a popular tone of expression.

By some philologists this tendency in poetry was deemed unpraiseworthy, on the grounds that it is immoderate and exceeding the limit. Contrarily, Ibn Qutaybah saw in it but an allowable form of expression since the language had adopted it. The rest of this chapter was devoted to further examples.<sup>2</sup>

(1) "There is something adolescent about hyperboles for they express things violently .... its vehemence, however, does not suit men of mature years." Aristotle, On Style, trans. M. Grube, 1413b.

(2) From poetry he quoted such examples as Imru' al-Qays's verse:-

"There was nothing like the day I passed (perturbedly) at Qudar, As though my friends and I were upon the horn of a dust-coloured antelope." i.e. in extreme anxiety and restlessness. From prose, they say "He has properties as wide as the sun casts its rays and as the wind travels." etc., etc.

In the Qur'ān, noticed Ibn Qutaybah, such hyperbolic language when used with the verb Kāda (well nigh), (e.g. LXVIII/51, XIX/90) if the verb is not mentioned it is concealed, e.g. "And the hearts reached to the throats." (XXXIII/10).

The Transpositioned - al-Maqlūb<sup>1</sup>

If on the whole Majāz, or the figurative use of words, has been sought for a fuller elucidation or sublimation of the meaning above and beyond the limitation of the literal sense of words, al-Maqlūb, (the transpositioned) at first sight proves to be a perplexity, for in it language is not borrowing remote words or images to emphasise or intensify the intended sense but for the same reason, it is simply using the opposite word.

If for instance 'a' is the contrary of 'b' for all the values of 'b' denominating one by another or implying a word to connote them both, this undoubtedly is bound to produce a scale of dubiety between any of the two points or the significance of either word. To the experts the criterion seemed to be psychological rather than logical, in that the crucial point of definition has become the idea of the context.<sup>2</sup>

(1) pp. 142-161.

(2) This conclusion is reached by Ibn al-Anbārī, see 'K. al-Addād', ed. Abū al-Fadl, pp. 2-3, Kuwait, 1960.

This peculiarity of ambiguousness in the language had occupied Arab philologists long before Ibn Qutaybah's time,<sup>1</sup> as it did also his contemporaries and the succeeding generations, particularly fourth century scholars, at which time some works were devoted to its complete abandonment,<sup>2</sup> but others enlarged upon the subject further and critical reflections were made on previous studies<sup>3</sup>.

In this chapter Ibn Qutaybah does not record materials and observations of earlier philologists but classified them under certain headings with regard to the meanings.

(1) Describing a person or a thing by his or its counter epithet.

(a) To avert from evil and wish well in calling the stung person (Salīm) safe, the thirsty (Nāhil) that he may find water and the calling of the wilderness (Mafāzah), a place of safety.

(b) To intensify or exaggerate the epithet, as in calling the sun (Jawnah) black or black ringed with red to denote its brightness, or calling the crow, one-eyed denoting its sharp sight.

- (1) The subject is better known as al-Addād (words expressing contrary meanings). Maqlūb is one of three topics often discussed in the books on Addād (as can be seen in the introduction of al-Sajistānī. "The reason which caused me to compare it (i.e. his 'K. al-Addād') is that we found them (the Arabs) abundantly using Addād and Maqlūb in their language." 'Addād', p. 72, ed. 'A. Haffner. In addition to works by Asma'ī, Qutrub (d. 206/821) ed. Hans Kafler, Islamica, vol. V, pp. 243-281), Sajistānī, Ibn al-Sakkīt, Sāghanī whose works were together ed. by A. Haffner (o.p. cit.). See also Suyūṭī, 'Muzhir', vol. 1, p. 397.
- (2) Ibn Durstawayh (d. 347/958) composed a word entitled 'Obsolence of Addād'. Suyūṭī op.cit., p. 396.

(c) For mockery or a joke as in calling the black white or vice versa. This in the Qur'an occurred in the verse describing the attitude of the people of the prophet Shu'ayb:-

"Lo! Thou art the mild, the guide to right behaviour"

(XI/27).

(2) Denoting two opposites by the same name.

This is the subject of 'addād' and from the extant materials, particularly of his tutor al-Sajistānī who had his information directly from such authorities as Aṣma'ī, Abū 'Ubaydah and others, Ibn Qutaybah may differ from some of these authorities, yet later studies on the same subject may differ from him.<sup>4</sup>

Here, however, he culled such examples as:-

Sarīm<sup>1</sup> (black) describing both morning and night as in, "And in the morning it was as if plucked", (LXVIII/20) or such as:

Sufdah, for both light and darkness<sup>2</sup>,

Sāriḫh, the crying for help and the helper himself<sup>3</sup>,

Zann, for both certainty and doubt<sup>4</sup>,

Jalal, for great and trifling<sup>5</sup>,

Warā', before and behind<sup>6</sup>.

3 & 4 (cont.)

Cf. Ibn al-Anbārī, (d. 327/938), severely criticised several philologists, particularly Ibn Qutaybah on several words. See Kuwait ed., pp. 93-5, 186-7, 226-8, 307-8, 341-2.

(1) - (6) Compare the following works on Addād.

Qutrub, 'Addād' (op.cit.), pp. 266 (139), 246 (5), 273 (176), 244 (3), 246 (4), 255 (95).

## (3) Hysteron Proteron.

Pre-positive may be explained by post-positive or vice versa. Another form of transposition. Ibn Qutaybah quotes at length from poetry to explain this feature in language. The formulae he often used after each example "The poet wants to say .... but" or "the right way he should have said this is this", for example:-

"I have become frightened until my fright could not be more than that of a mountain goat seeking refuge at Dhī al-Maṭārah"<sup>7</sup>.  
The right way he should have said this is this:-

"Until the fright of a mountain goat could not be more than mine."

From the Qur'ān several examples are ~~quoted~~ <sup>quoted</sup>:-

e.g. "Then he drew nigh and came down", (LIII/8)

i.e. "Came down and drew nigh.

Man was created of haste". (XXI/37)

i.e. Haste was created by man.

(4) Mistaken Transposition.(1) - (6) cont.

Asma'ī, 'Addād' (op.cit.), pp. 54 (41), 35 (43), 53 (84),  
42 (34), 9 (6), 20 (24).

Sajistānī, Addād (op.cit.), pp. 105 (145), 86 (114), 105  
(146), 76 (107), 84 (112), 82 (111).

Ibn al-Sukkit, 'Addād' (op.cit.), pp. 195 (328), 189 (316),  
208 (368), 188 (315), 167 (281), 175 (296).

Numbers between brackets show the number of the word on the page.

(7)

وَقَدْ خِفْتُ حَتَّى مَا تَرِيدُ مَخَافَتِي ۖ عَلَيَّ وَعَلِيَّ فِي ذِي الْمَطَرِ عَاقِلٌ

For reasons of poetic licence, for the sake of the rhyme or metre, a poet may learn to use such a device. e.g.:-

نَحْنُ بَنُو أُمِّ الْبَنِيانِ أَلَا ذُرِّيَّةُ

"We are the sons of the mother of the four."

According to some authorities the number was five but the rhyme made four. Or that:-

"It was a duty that you have said.

As adultery has been the punishment of stoning."

What the poet wished to say was that stoning has been the punishment of adultery.

With regard to the verse II/171 and XXVIII/76, Ibn Qutaybah rejected the views of some philologists presumably, Abū 'Ubaydah<sup>1</sup>, and in refuting them found support in Farrā's interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

### Omission and Conciseness<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah's main appraisal of omission and conciseness is notable in:-

(a) classification under certain topics of the ample material and remarks scattered in various philological works, although he himself was sometimes at variance with their train of thought, which led him to disagree with some philologists' and grammarians' interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Although this is the terminology used by Abū 'Ubaydah in 'Majāz' (vol. 1, pp. 12, 63-4) it appears in Ibn Qutaybah's to denote other rhetorical figures of speech. Cf. pp. 148, 228.

(2) p. 157.

(3) pp. 162-179.

(4) cf. his disagreement with Farrā', p. 169, with other grammarians, p. 170.

(b) that his classification was of such importance that it was wholly adopted by fourth century critics, particularly Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī.<sup>1</sup> Further, some of his remarks particularly concerning the obscurity of the meaning in the case of conciseness was expanded in one of these later studies of Iʿjāz that of al-Rummanī, as we shall see later.

Omission, noticed Ibn Qutaybah, occurred in the following:

(1) The ellipsis of the prefixed noun and the substitution of the complement (the postfixed noun) in its position.

e.g. "And the calf was made to sink into their hearts." (II/93)

i.e. The love of the calf ....

(2) The infliction of a verb on two objects, to one of them the verb is suitable, as to the other the appropriate verb is concealed.

e.g. "I fed her with straw and -- cool water."<sup>2</sup>

i.e. and gave her to drink ....

or as the other poet said:-

"I saw thy husband in the battle field

hanging upon him a sword and -- spear."

i.e. and bearing a spear.<sup>3</sup>

(1) cf. 'Sināʿatayn', pp. 181-185.

(2) عَلَفْتُهَا تَبْنًا وَمَاءً كَأَنَّهَا

(3) The ellipsis of the complement (condition or otherwise) for the sake of brevity and on the assumption that the hearer is cognizant of it.

e.g. "Had it not been for the grace of God and his mercy (.....) and that God is clement, merciful." (i.e. Ye had been undone). (XXIV/20)

Abū Dhu'ayb said:-

"For her sake I disobeyed the heart, to whose command I am obedient. I know not whether it has been wise to seek her ...."

i.e. or whether it has been misguided.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Ellipsis of a word or two words:-

"And as for those whose faces have been blackened, it will be said: Disbelieved ye after your (professed) belief."

The underlined words are not in the Arabic text.

(5) The ellipsis of the complement of the oath (the replicative), when in the succeeding text there is indication of it.

e.g. "Qāf, By the glorious Qur'ān. Nay, but they marvel that a warner of their own hath come unto them; and the disbelievers say: this is a strange thing: when we are dead and have become dust (shall we be brought back)?" (L/1-3).

(3) cont.

Another version of this verse is: يَا لَيْتَ زَوْجِكَ قَدْ غَدَا : مُتَّقِلًا سَيْفًا وَرُفْحًا  
 "Would that thy husband had gone hanging upon him as word and bearing a spear." cf. Lane's Arabic English Lexicon, vol. 2, p. 2557.

(1) عَصَيْتُ إِلَيْهَا الْقَلْبَ إِلَى الْأَمْرِ : سَمِعْتُ فَا أَدْرِي أَلَيْسَ طَلَابُهَا ؟

(6) The ellipse of the particle lā

e.g. "God makes clear to you, lest you go astray" (IV/176)

This is often used in the case of oath - as in Imru' al-Qays's verse:

"And I said: By God I will ever remain at your dwelling  
Even though (your people) will strike off my head and limbs."

(7) The reference to something that has not previously been mentioned,

e.g. "Until the Sun was hidden behind the veil." (XXXVIII/32)

The word sun is not mentioned in the text prior to this.

(8) The ellipse of the preposition

e.g. "And Moses chose from his people seventy men." (VII/155)

What he termed the omitted epithet is but the preposition (from)..

### Repetition and Superfluity<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah in dealing with repetition and superfluity avoided using the term Itṅāb (prolix style) which had been adopted by Jāḥiz, using instead a combination term 'repetition and prolongation'. To the latter he made reference in one of his polemic chapters<sup>2</sup>, The former, though its position in language had been noticed by earlier philologists<sup>3</sup>, during Ibn Qutaybah's time seemed to have been the subject of much argument concerning the repetition of tidings and stories in the Qur'ān, which led Ibn Qutaybah to deal at some length at the opening of this chapter in explaining the reasons that allowed such repetition.

(1) pp. 180-198.

(2) cf. p. 62.

(3) cf. Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, 'al-Sināʿaṭayn', pp. 193-4.  
Also Khaṭṭābī, see chapter on Khaṭṭābī.

Considering repetition as a stylistic phenomenon and also to justify the forms of repetition which occurred in certain chapters in the Qur'ān (e.g. LV, CIX), he made reference once more to the fact that the Qur'ān was revealed in the language of the Arabs and in accordance with their method of expression, which included both repetition and conciseness as the circumstance demanded.<sup>1</sup>

(a) Repetition of the form

The reoccurrence again and again of identical words or phrases is for no other reason than that it enhances the compositional impressiveness, as in the verse:-

"NO indeed, but soon you shall know, Again no indeed, but soon you shall know." (CII/3+4)

In prose as well as in verse, forms or words are often repeated, e.g. as one may say:-

"Quick ! Quick ! "

or "Shoot ! Shoot ! "

From poetry the author cited :-

"How many a fortune you used to have

How many, how many and yet how many how many ! "

كَمْ نَهْمَةٍ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ : كَمْ كَمْ وَكَمْ وَكَمْ

another poet said:-

"Could you not have asked the hosts of Kindah

On the day they fled whither whither ? "

هَلَّا سَأَلْتَ جُمُوعَ كِنْدَةَ يَوْمَ وَلَوْ أَيْنَ أَيْنَا

the poet, 'Awf b. al-Khari' said:-

" And Fazārah was well nigh consumed by our fire,

Well-deserved Fazārah, well deserved Fazārah !"

(1) See p.16.

وَكَاذَتْ فَرَارَةَ تَضَلَّ سَبَا فَأَوْحَى فَرَارَهُ أَوْحَى فَرَارَهُ

Sometimes they wished to emphasise the epithet but they disliked repeating a word twice, therefore a letter in it may be changed for variation, e.g. 'Atshān Natshān

(b) Idea

The meaning also can be repeated in two different words for the sake of intensification and variety of wording, e.g. some one may say:-

"I require good communication (goodness, affection) and ask you to refrain from straining the relationship."

He is not saying more than repeating one idea.

Dhū al-Rummaḥ (the poet) said:-

لَمَاءٌ فِي شَفَتَيْهَا حَوَّةٌ لُحْسٌ فِي اللِّسَانِ وَفِي أُنْيَاهَا شَتَبٌ

repeating several words in the first hemistich in describing his beloved's lips, though the first word itself (dark-lipped) carries the idea.

In the Qur'ān this occurred in such a verse:-

"Therein is fruit and date-trees and pomegranates"(LV/68)

Redundant letters

In this he notices the overflow of some particles:

e.g. Lā when the speech is including denial:

e.g. "What hindered thee that thou didst not fall." (VII/12)

Metonymy- Kināyah

The term Kināyah in 'K.Ta'wīl al-Mushkil' is synonymous with Ta'riḍ. (intimation) and Tawriyah (equivocation).

(1) Cf. 'Ta'wīl al-Mushkil', p.204:

(2) Ibid. p.210.

In 'K.Majāz al-Qur'ān', Abū 'Ubaydah used it to signify to a large degree the pronoun and the relative pronoun.<sup>1</sup> Al-Jāhiz treated it as a rhetorical term at one stage, but at another he severely criticised the role of Kināyah. We notice that in 'K.Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', Ibn Qutaybah, before demonstrating some of the examples that illustrate its importance as a style of expression, shows some of the criticism which might have lent weight to its recognition both grammatically as well as a way of expression.

(1) The Shu'ubiyah had been deprecating the Arabs for such names as "the father of" and "the mother of" and ascribed to them an acid taste for such a choice.<sup>2</sup>

(2) The Mu'tazilite al-Nazzām, from a legal standpoint -i.e. its application in divorce cases- condemned its validity.<sup>3</sup>

(3) A third party - the so-called- Muslims, presumably the Zāhirite sect- in interpreting the Qur'ānic verse XXV/28 and with regard to a specific word in it, accepted nothing but its literal meaning.<sup>4</sup>

(4) The Rāfidah, on the other hand, in favour of their own dogma, imposed metonymy on the same verse.<sup>5</sup>

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- (1) 'K,al-Majāz', introduction, p.15. Also al-Farrā', 'K.Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān,p. 335.  
 (2) 'Ta'wīl al-Mushkil', p.201.  
 (3) 'Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Hadīth', pp.22-3, also al-Baghdādī, 'al-Farq bayn al-Firaq'; p. 145.  
 (4) 'Ta'wīl al-Mushkil' , p.202.  
 (5) Ibid.

Kināyah, argued Ibn Qutaybah, is of various kinds and different places. In that which became known as a grammatical term he observed that when addressing a man as "the father of" you are indicatively distinguishing him when writing to or corresponding with him, since common means often agree, or for the purpose of esteeming him highly, for by thus doing old age and experience are implied.

Ta'riḍ or Kināyah as a means of expression, Ibn Qutaybah saw in it an essential characteristic of the Arabic language which was often employed. By so doing the sense intended is delivered in a more elegant and better form than plainness and straightforwardness. Indeed the man who expressed himself in everything in open terms was not praiseworthy.<sup>1</sup> The term Ta'riḍ seemed to be taken from the Qur'ānī verse II/235.

Among the numerous examples he cited from the Qur'an is the verse XXXVIII/22 "Behold, this my brother has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one ewe . So he said, "Give her into my charge." and he overcame me in argument."

The ewes and the following ewe is used metonymically to indicate women as in the poem:-

بِأَسَاءَةٍ مَا قَضَى لِمَنْ حَلَّتْ لَهُ : حُدْمَتِ عَلَى وَلِيَّتِهَا الْحَرَمِ

"O sheep, what game for him to whom she is lawful

To me forbidden, o would that she were not so."<sup>2</sup>

The reference is to a slave-girl of whom, for neighbourliness sake, the poet dare not take advantage.

(1) Ibid., p. 204.

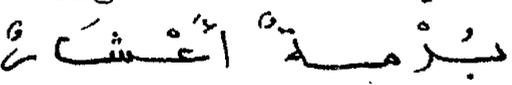
(2) Ibid., p. 206.

Incongruity between words and meaning<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Defamatory unintended malediction  
 e.g. "Perish man! How unthankful he is." (LXXX/17)
- (2) Anathematization of wonder, when one hits the point in words or action.  
 e.g. Imru' al-Qays describing a brilliant archer.  
 such  
 "And he is/a shot that his victim, does not go away to die.  
 What aileth him? May he not be numbered among his people".  
 (فَهُوَ لَا تَنْفِي مَيْتَهُ) مَالَهُ لَا عُدَّ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ
- (3) The agreement of verbs in both the main and subordinate clause<sup>2</sup>, but with different indications.  
 e.g. "The guerdon of an ill deed is an ill like thereof",  
 (XLII/40) the former indicating mistake and the latter punishment.
- (4) The occurrence of speech in the interrogative while denoting ~~the~~ subpositive statement.  
 e.g. "And what is that in thy right hand, O Moses?"  
 (XX/17)
- (5) Interrogative for wonder.  
 e.g. "Whereof do they question one another? Of the awful tiding". (LXXVII/1-2)

(1) pp. 213-229.

(2) To use the term 'replicative' he would require prosthesis, which is not the case in all example he shows.

- (6) Interrogation for warning.  
e.g. "What! do you come to male beings, leaving your wives that your Lord created for you ?" (XXVI/165)
- (7) The imperative used for threatening.  
e.g. "Do what ye will." (XLI/40)
- (8) The imperative for instruction (as in the case of divorce).  
e.g. "And call to witness two just men among you." (LXV/2)
- (9) The imperative for allowance.  
e.g. "And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land." (LXII/10)
- (10) Imperative for obligation.  
e.g. "Pay the poor due." (II/43)
- (11) The general for the particular.  
e.g. "And the poets, the perverse follow them." (XXVI/224)  
i.e. not all the poets.
- (12) The plural form used to signify the singular and the dual.  
e.g. "And let a party of believers witness their punishment."  
(XXIV/2)
- (13) Describing the plural as a singular.  
e.g. "And furthermore the angels are his helpers." (LXVI/4)  
The last word is singular (Zāhir)
- (14) The singular signifying the plural.  
e.g. "We bring you forth as an infant." (XXII/5)
- (15) Describing the singular with the plural.  
e.g.  A cooking pot  
broken into ten pieces.

- (16) The extension of a verb to two subjects when it belongs only to one.  
 e.g. (with regard to the story of Moses and Joshua)  
 "And when they reached the point when the two (seas) met they forgot their fish." (XVII/62) (according to commentators the one who forgot was Joshua).
- (17) The confinement of a verb to one (subject or object) while it includes two.  
 e.g. "But when they spy some merchandise or pastime they break away to it." (LXII/11)
- (18) Addressing the present in the form of the absent.  
 e.g. "Till, when ye are in the ships and they sail with them with a fair breeze and they are glad therein." (X/23)
- (19) Addressing the absent as present.  
 e.g. "Mercy upon me, that Khālid's freshness and Your face's brightness have been buried in the reddish sand. Your face is his face, i.e. Khālid's."
- (20) Addressing a person with something while it is meant for others.  
 e.g. "When He created you from the earth." (LIII/32)  
 The address is to mankind, the meaning refers to the creation of Adam.
- (21) The use of the imperative form for the singular, the dual and the plural in the form of the dual.  
 e.g. "(And it is said): Do ye twain hurl to hell each rebel ingrate." (L/24)  
 The form is Alqiya and the command for all the fire keepers.

- (22) The addressing of the singular in the form of the plural.  
e.g. "He saith: My Lord! send me back." (XXXIII/99)  
Arji 'ūn is the form.
- (23) The continuation of speech, as though it is said by one person but it includes another.  
e.g. "She said: Lo! Kings, when they enter a township ruin it and make the mighty among its people humble - Thus will they do." The last phrase is not hers.
- (24) The use of the verb in the form of past tense to denote the substantive or the future.  
e.g. (a) "They said: How can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy." (XIX/29)  
(b) "The commandment of God will come<sup>2</sup> to pass." (XVI/1)
- (25) The object in the form of Fā'il.  
"He will live a pleasant<sup>3</sup> life." (CI/7)
- (26) The form Fa'īl for Muf'il.  
e.g. "The originator<sup>4</sup> of the heavens and the earth." (II/117)
- (27) Fa'īl for Fā'il<sup>5</sup>.
- (28) Fā'il for Maf'ūl  
e.g. "Lo! His promise is ever sure of fulfilment<sup>6</sup>." (XIX/61)

This last is very rare.

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- (1) The word here is:- Kāna  
(2) The word here is:- Ata  
(3) The word here is:- Rādiyāh  
(4) The word here is:- Badi'  
(5) The word here is:- Hafiz. There is no example quoted from the Qur'an.  
(6) The word here is:- Ma'tiyya

CHAPTER III

THE TERM I'JĀZ

HERETICAL AUTHORS WHOSE WORKS INFLUENCED THE STUDIES  
ON I'JĀZ IN THE FOURTH/ THE TENTH CENTURY:

THE TERM I'JĀZ  
AND THE FACTORS WHICH FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECTED  
THE STUDIES OF I'JĀZ IN THE 4TH CENTURY

"We shall again and again find the earliest senses of a word flourishing for centuries despite a vast overgrowth of later senses which might have been expected to kill them." <sup>1</sup>

Long before the term I'jāz itself came into the focus of thought and became the subject of intense and protracted reflection, consequently acquiring new characteristics which in their turn gave a new aspect to the detailed science of Rhetoric from the fourth century onwards which were based upon it, discussion and important reflections on its nature had occupied many scholars as we have seen in the studies of Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah. In the present chapter we shall look to some of the significances attached to the term as well as the factors that determined fourth century studies.

Root and Derivation

The root 'Ajz has been defined by lexicographers by way of its opposite Hazm (firmness of mind).<sup>2</sup> This root generally indicates the sense of backwardness and similar meanings have been derived from it.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) C.S. Lewis, 'Studies in Words', pp. 10-11.  
 (2) See Ibn Fāris, Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah, vol. 4, p. 232, al-Sāhib b. 'Abbād, 'K. al-Muḥit fī al-Lughah', B.M. Ms.Or. 12898, fol. 14b, Ibn Sīdah, al-Muḥkam, vol. 1, p. 179.  
 (3) Al-Bustānī, 'Muḥit al-Muḥit', vol. 2, p. 1341.

The perfect forms of this root are the verbs ʿAjaza or ʿAjiza both signifying: weakness, the rear of someone or something. Further derivative forms designate for example: backwardness, inability or incompetence, the incapacitation, the riding on the rear of an animal or its hinder parts, to outstrip, old age etc.

The form from which the term Iʿjāz (the infinitive) and Muʿjizah (the active participle feminine) are derived is the verb Aʿjaza (to frustrate power, ability, skill or endeavour.)<sup>1</sup>

In pre-Islamic poetry this verb occurred in the sense of inescapability and according to Ibn Manzur Iʿjaz itself used to express the meaning of to outstrip.<sup>2</sup>

However, neither the word Iʿjāz nor Muʿjizah have occurred thus in the Qurʾān, although several other derivations of the same root have occurred in both the Qurʾān<sup>3</sup> and in Tradition<sup>4</sup>, yet in all applications the meanings therein go no further than their literal sense, i.e. disability, lack of power, old age, and more characteristically, inescapability.

- (1) Lane's 'English-Arabic Lexicon', vol. 1, p. 1960.  
cf. Dimān al-ʿAshā ed. R. Geyer, p. 146.
- (2) Ibn Manzur 'Lisān', Bulag ed. vol. 7, p. 236. For the philologist al-Azhari (d. 370/980) the author of 'Tahdhīb al-Lughah'. See, Ibn Kamāl Pāshā, 'Risalah fī Tahqīq al-Muʿjiz' B.M. Ms. Or. 5965 f. 109a.
- (3) E.g. "Am I not able to be as this raven and so hide my brother's naked corpse." (V/31) also (VIII/59), (LXII/12)  
"A barren old woman", (LI/29) also (XI/72), (XXXVII/135), (XXVI/171)  
"But those who strive against Our revelation challenging (Us)" (XXII/50) also (XXXIV/5), (XXXIV/38).  
"As they were hollow trunks of palm-trees!" (LXIX/7), -(LIV/2)  
"And we know that we cannot escape from Allah in the earth, nor can we escape by flight." (LXII/12), (XXXV/44), (XLVI/32), (IX/2,4), (VI/134), (XI/20), (XXXIX/57).

Up to the last decades of the third century there are no clear signs indicative of a previous application of its usage. In a very much later philological work, and works, on technical terms we meet with two very distinct definitions:-

- (1) "An event at variance with the usual course (of nature) produced by means of one who lays claim to the office of a prophet, in contending with those who disacknowledge (his claim), in such a manner as renders them unable to produce the like thereof."
- (2) "Al-I'jāz in speech is to convey the meaning by a way that is more eloquent than other ways."<sup>1</sup>

Each of these definitions denotes clearly a different stage in the development of the application of the term. While the former represents the earliest theological definition, which in fact, is a definition of the term Mu'jizah, the latter shows it at a later stage when it became solely a rhetorical term.

It seemed that the term Mu'jizah was utilised before I'jāz, this latter gradually gaining pre-eminence especially in the literary field.

- (4) cont.  
cf. 'al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li-Alfāz al-Hadīth', ch. 23,  
p. 136, Brill ed. (1956).

- (1) Another theological definition runs:-  
"An event breaking through, or infringing, the usual course (of nature), (أَمْرٌ خَارِفٌ لِمَا دَاخَرَ) inviting to the good and happiness, coupled with a claim to the prophetic office, and intended to manifest the veracity of him who claims to be an apostle of God." From Lane's 'English Arabic Lexicon', vol. 1, pp. 1961-2.
- (2) al-Sharīf, al-Jurjānī, 'al-Ta'rifāt', 'Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi', vol. 10, p. 70 also ed. G. Flugel, p. 32. See also Bustānī, 'Muḥīt', al-Muḥīt, p. 1342.

Al-Shahristānī writing about an earlier Kharijite sect, al-Ibādiyyah, whose leader 'Abd Allah b. Ibād flourished during the reign of the last Umayyad caliph Mu'awwān II (d. 132 A.H.) noticed:-

"Some of them had maintained that it is possible that God may create a messenger, and demand that people should follow what He revealed unto him. It is not incumbent on him to show a miracle (Mu'jizah). Nor is it necessary for God to create a proof or declare a miracle (Mu'jizah).<sup>1</sup>

It is questionable whether the word Mu'jizah in this context had been used by the earlier Ibadis who flourished before 132 A.H. or only used by the later Ibadis, or whether it was mere interpretation by al-Shahristānī.<sup>2</sup>

(1) 'al-Mihal wal-Nihal', ed. Badrān, p. 246.

(2) Similarly in some of the fourth century studies entitled 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah' (Signs or proofs of prophecy) the term I'jaz itself is used to interpret events and reactions which occurred during the prophet's lifetime. cf. e.g. Abū Nu'aym, 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah', B.M. Ms. Or. 3012, fols. 4a sqq. also al-Bayhaqī, 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah', B.M. Ms. Or. 3013, fol. 111a, also Māwardī a work of the title 'A'lām al-Nubuwwah', being acknowledged the most rewarding on this matter, c.f. Hāji Khalifa, 'Kashf al-Zunūn', vol. 1/427, No. 1173.

Whichever possibility might have been the actual fact it is impossible to decide conclusively. However if we accept al-Baghdādī's accounts, it seems that during the first thirty years of the third century such Mu'tazilite leaders as Ma'mar<sup>1</sup> (d. 220), Murdār<sup>2</sup> (d. 226) and Naẓẓām<sup>3</sup> (d. 231), also the Shi'aite Hishām b. al-Ḥakam<sup>4</sup> a little later, used the term Mu'jizah (p. Mu'jizāt) in their discussions of some of the principles, particularly those of 'accident' and 'substance', as we have noted earlier. Yet Baghdādī's usage of such terms is liable to the same questioning of whether he was interpreting their attitudes or whether in fact they used to argue in such terminology.

Nonetheless, from the surviving literature of the second century the term Mu'jizah itself was no doubt in use, though not necessarily in connexion with the idea of I'jāz or any of the arguments related to it.<sup>5</sup> In the early writing of the third century when authors were concerned with the question of I'jāz the term ʿAjz (difiability) and Mu'jizah (Miracle) were utilized in certain discussions which were of some bearing on the problem of miracles or religion generally, particularly in the studies of such outstanding Mu'tazilites as al-ʿAllāf, al-Naẓẓām, ʿAbbād and Hishām. <sup>6</sup>

(1) Al-Baghdādī, 'Uṣūl al-Dīn', p. 177.

(2) 'al-Farq bayn al-Firaq', ed. Muḥī al-Dīn, p. 165.

(3) Ibid, pp. 143, 149.

(4) Ibid, p. 68.

(5) cf. Ibn al-Muqaffa', 'al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr', ed. Kurd ʿAlī, Rasā'il al-Bulaghā', p. 9.

(6) For the former cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, 'al-Mughnī', vol. XVI, p. 387. For Naẓẓām see his epistle concerning the

However from the extant works of Jāḥiẓ, who rightly has been acknowledged as the father of the problem of I'jāz in both the theological and literary aspects<sup>1</sup>, the following points are perhaps worthy of consideration:

(1) Up until his time there had been no serious attempts at accumulating or writing on such subjects as the proofs and signs of prophecy or the reality of miracles.<sup>2</sup>

(2) That the early discussions during Jāḥiẓ's lifetime which <sup>he</sup> witnessed and recorded, the term which was much in use, was the term Hujjah as is clear from the controversies demonstrated by Jāḥiẓ. In fact, the definition which later passed into the term Mu'jizah had been used for it in some form or another.<sup>3</sup>

(3) Also among the various terms as Āyah, Burhān, Hujjah, used to indicate the vocation of a prophet, the word 'Ajz itself is clearly included.<sup>4</sup>

(6) cont.

abrogation of religions ed. Louis Cheikho, pp. 68-70. For the latter two cf. Bāqillānī, 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', vol. VIII, f. 21b where in connexion with discussion over the accident and substance both of them declared the Mu'jiz in the time of the Prophet was Gabriel and not the Qur'ān.

(1) cf. Ibn Kamāl Pāshā, 'Risalah fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān', B.M. Ms. Or. 5965, fol. 120a.

(2) 'Mukhtārāt Fusūl al-Jāḥiẓ', B.M. Or. 3138, fol. 90a, b.

(3) Ibid, fol. 108b sqq. This reads:- "The sign or the proof (Hujjah) is not a true proof until it incapacitates humanity and breaks through the ordinary course of things."

(4) Ibid, 108b, 109a.

### Prophecy, Miracles and I'jāz

With the exception of Ibn Ḥazm, who entitled his chapter I'jāz al-Qur'ān<sup>1</sup>, in many of the standard works on theology and also in the introductions of commentaries<sup>2</sup>, the theme in which I'jāz is often discussed normally begins in this constant order, the proofs of prophecy, the reality of miracles, the I'jāz of the Qur'ān. Literary discussions in these works are very brief and we need not go here into detail about the definition and the number of conditions which occurred in them.

In the studies of Jāḥiẓ and Ibn Qutaybah we have alluded to some of the factors that caused them to write their studies. External factors mainly emerged from the struggle between Arabs and non-Arabs as in the movements of the Daharite, the Shu'ūbiyyah and Zindiqism, and internal factors resulting from the bitter conflicts between the different sects, as for example in the case of Jāḥiẓ's attacks against some of the traditionalists and commentators; Ibn Qutaybah who was also moved by the same external factors that stirred Jāḥiẓ, was internally defending the theses of traditionalists against the extremist rationalist views.

(1) 'Fisāl', vol. 3, pp. 15-22.

(2) See e.g. (1) Shahrīstānī, 'Nihāyat al-Iqdām', ed. A. Guillaume, Chs. XIX and XX, pp. 417, 446 sqq., also 'Milal wal-Niḥal' (for the Ash'arite views), pp. 168-9. (2) Baghdādī, 'Usūl al-Dīn', Chs. VII and VIII, pp. 153, 169 sqq. (3) Imām al-Ḥaramayn, 'Irshād', Cairo ed., pp. 302 sqq., pp. 349, 353, also 'al-'Aqīdah al-Niẓāmiyyah', pp. 47 sqq. (4) The commentator al-Qurtbī, 'al-Jamī' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān', vol. 1, p. 61 sqq.

Now the second half of the third century witnessed new heretical movements, which left their trace in Ibn Qutaybah's studies, though he with his anti-theological attitudes made no reference to them. From the controversies of these movements it would appear clearly that fourth century studies of Iḳjāz, from a theological standpoint, were but battling against these views, and perhaps urged them to the elaborated literary studies. Two such remarkable authors would give us a better idea.

### I. Ibn al-Rāwandī

In many a work on Kalām, particularly that of al-Khayyāt, as well as biographies, the name of the most controversial personality in the history of Islamic theology is perhaps Abū al-Husain Aḥmad Ibn Yahyā Ibn al-Rāwandī<sup>1</sup> (d. ?), who<sup>is</sup> often associated with heretical as well as speculative theological problems, many of which shocked his contemporaries and their successors. Despite, however, his universal notoriety and the multiplicity of his works<sup>2</sup>, accounts and details about his life and activities are scarce and differ considerably, even contending over the year in which he died.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Besides this name, Ibn al-Rundī and al-Riwindī are also reported, cf. Khayyāt, ('Intisar', and Ibn al-Jawzī (a) 'Talbis Iblis', Delhi ed., pp. 159-60, (b) 'Muntazm', vol. 6, pp. 99-105.
- (2) "The books he composed amount to about one hundred and fourteen", Ibn Khallikān, 'Wafayāt', trans. De Slane vol. 1, p. 76.
- (3) The various and confused biographical details concerning Ibn al-Rāwandī's life and controversies have been discussed at length by both H.S. Nyberg (in his brilliant introduction to 'K. al-Intisār', pp. 22-46) and 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawi

His works and alarming controversies subsequently engaged many of the prominent and outstanding theologians of the main three sects (Sunnite-Ash'arite, Mu'tazilite and Shi'aite) who took considerable pains to refute them<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes his embittered quarrels extended far beyond the sphere of theology, involving grammarians and men of letters alike.<sup>2</sup>

It was those works and their counter-challenges or refutations which reverberated throughout the fourth century and doubtless with others of their calibre contributed largely to the rapid development of the study of I'jāz, at least in its purely theo-philosophical essence.

(3) cont.

(Min Ta'rīkh al-Ilhād fī al-Islām, pp. 157-188 and elsewhere) Due to the disagreements among historians and heresiographers alike who differ considerably, the former after weighing the pros and cons has favoured the year 298 or 300 A.H. for the year in which Ibn al-Rāwandī died. Badawī, on the other hand after discussing Nyberg's assessments concluded a preference for the year 250 A.H. It is obvious that the matter is still in need of fresh material for a decisive date.

- (1) For the Mu'tazilite refutations of Ibn al-Rāwandī's works see Ibn al-Nadīm, The completion of 'Fihrist', Vienna Oriental Journal, vol. 4 (1890), pp. 223-4, 'Fihrist', ed. Flugel, pp. 174, 237. In addition to the investigations of Nyberg and Badawī see also al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Mughnī', vol. 16, pp. 9, 27, 389-94. Also by the same author 'K. Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidina Muḥammad', S. Köprülü, Ms. No. 1575, Fols. 23b, 162a, 416 and in several other passages. For the Shi'aite authors' refutations see 'Fihrist' (op.cit.), p. 177, Muḥammad Bāqir, 'Rawḍāt al-Jannāt', vol. 1, p. 28; Ibn Shahrashūp, 'Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā', p. 7. For the Ash'arite see Ibn 'Asākir, 'Tabayin', pp. 129, 131, 135. Ash'ari has also reported several of Ibn al-Rāwandī's ideas in both vols. of 'Maḡālāt', see e.g. vol. 1, pp. 140, 143, 149, 159; vol. 2, pp. 332, 388, 58.
- (2) For the refutations of grammarians and men of letters see those of Mubarrad and Ibn Drustuwyh (d. 430/1038), 'Fihrist' (op.cit.), pp. 62-3. For Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri's remark. 'Risālat al-Ghufrān', ed. Bint al-Shāti', p. 410.

### Motivation

In his early life, we are told, Ibn al-Rāwandī was a man of a good behaviour<sup>1</sup> - which would indicate that he was a person of certain conventional or adopted beliefs, whatever may have been thought by other sects than that to which he belonged - reserved and shy, but above all merits he was a man of remarkable genius in theology; such that very few or indeed none of his contemporaries had achieved his status.<sup>2</sup> Then suddenly he plunged headlong into a deep heretical abyss. What was the reason behind this ?

The rise and fall and for that matter the embittered quarrels of rival sects are a natural enough phenomenon, but those of Ibn al-Rāwandī present us with one of the most complex trials in the whole history of Islamic theology. A trial remarkable in that the prosecution consists of the whole Mu'tazilite and Sunnite-Ash'arite sects, temporarily forgetting their differences to put on a united front in condemning Ibn al-Rāwandī and the defendants themselves, the Shi'aite split into two camps as to the validity of the case. It was also remarkable in that it occupied the three sects in a common effort to refute those heretical works for nearly two centuries.

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(1) 'Fihrist', V.O.J., vol. 4, p. 223; al-'Abbāsi, 'Ma'āhid al-Tansis', vol. 1, p. 106. The origin of both references was 'Mahāsīn Khurāsān' of al-Balkhī.

(2) Ibid.

Some of the reasons given for Ibn al-Rāwandī's heretical attitudes and subsequent expulsion are very vague<sup>1</sup> and little can be inferred from them. Others, however, link his name with heretical movements which could be traced as far back as the second century<sup>2</sup>, and each of which seemed to have been the inspiration of the next, but this again seems quite unlikely when it is learned that Ibn al-Rāwandī disagreed bitterly over certain principles with the last man in this chain, Abū 'Isa al-Warrāq (d. 247 A.H.) and broke his connection with him<sup>3</sup> according to al-Sharīf al-Murtadā.

There still remain three motives for his waywardness given in various sources:

(a) that his knowledge was greater than his intellectual capacity.<sup>4</sup>

(b) Poverty.<sup>5</sup>

(c) That he wished to achieve a certain office among the leading rank of the Mu'tazilah, the sect to which he belonged first, but his attempt had been thwarted and the school as a whole turned against him or he against them.

(1) Ibid, particularly Ibn al-Nadīm.

(2) Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī, 'al-Imtā' wal-Mu'ānasah', vol. 2, p. 20; 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Tathbīt', fol. 168a.

(3) 'Al-Shāfi', p. 13.

(4) In accordance with Balkhī quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm and 'Abbāsī (op.cit.).

(5) Ibn al-Murtadā, 'Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah', ed. S. Diwald Wilzer, p. 92.

The last explanation given seems to be of the most significance and it would permit an understanding as to why he turned towards the Mu'tazilah's greatest rival, the Rāfiḍah sect. To facilitate his acceptance Ibn al-Rāwandī wrote for the Rāfiḍah one of his serious attacks against the Mu'tazilah entitled 'al-Imāmah', a tenet of faith most essential to them<sup>1</sup>, in which he appeared to have severely criticised the Mu'tazilites principles in general as well as more specifically their leaders. It seemed that Ibn al-Rāwandī was wholeheartedly received by his new allies, and it is no surprise to read that a party or a section of the Rāfiḍah carried his name.<sup>2</sup> The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, insisted on seeking help from the authorities for his execution, which necessitated his mysterious escape, and forced him into hiding until his death.<sup>3</sup>

The conflict between Ibn al-Rāwandī and the Mu'tazilah motivated either by ambition or some other cause had led him too far in his attack, to such an extent that even the Shi'aites<sup>4</sup> had to disapprove. Paradoxically enough he himself, according to some reports, was not happy about it and began to retract some of his earlier works.<sup>5</sup>

(1) Khayyāt, 'Intisār', p. 102.

(2) al-Isfīrā'īnī, 'al-Tabsīr', p. 90; Ash'arī, 'Maḡālāt', vol. 1, p. 121.

(3) Ibn al-Murtadā, 'Tabāḡāt al-Mu'tazilah' (op.cit.), p. 92.

(4) al-Sharīf al-Murtadā, 'al-Shāfi', p. 13.

(5) Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', V.O.J., vol. 4, pp. 223-4.

### Three Heretical Works

Apart from al-Khayyāt's 'Intisār' which is a refutation of a refutation, other fragmentary negations and references are made in most cases to three of Ibn al-Rāwandī's heretical works, which have contributed largely to the study of I'jāz.

These works are:

- (1) 'K. al-Zumurrud' or 'al-Zumurrudah', (The Emeralds or An Emerald).
- (2) 'K. al-Farīd', (The Unique).
- (3) 'K. al-Dāmigh', (The Irrefutable)

Opinions expressed in each of these works were undoubtedly among the powerful factors that engendered the question of I'jāz in the succeeding decades of the fourth century and perhaps throughout the following ages, and refutations of them earlier in the century inspired works of authors at the end of the century, particularly in the case of the judges al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār who are scrutinised later.

- (a) 'K. al-Zumurrud(ah)'

A diatribe on prophecy.

Either because of his ambitious bid for leadership, reported by the Mu'tazilite Ibn al-Murtadā,<sup>1</sup> or because of his writing of this book, reported by the earlier al-Khayyāt,<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Rāwandī was expelled from the sect of the Mu'tazilah. The principal idea of the book had been a reproach of prophecy by way of vehemently attacking the prophetic signs or miracles, particularly the Qur'ān.

- (1) 'Tabagāt al-Mu'tazilah', (op. cit), p. 92.
- (2) Khayyāt, 'Intisār', pp. 2-3.

"Among his books", wrote Khayyāt, "was a book known by the title 'al-Zumurrud', In it he mentions the signs of the prophets; like those of Abrahām, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. He reproached their signs and alledged that they were false, and those who had worked them were impostor wizards; the Qur'ān was the writ of the unwise and in it there were contradictions and impossible utterances."

The prevailing attitude among the Muṭazilah in describing this work was also held by the Sunnite-Ash'arite. Unlike them, however, it is noticeable that some of the apologist Shi'aites, comparing him with Jāḥiẓ, endeavoured to free Ibn al-Rāwandī from all heretical involvements that occurred in his works on the grounds that he was merely a reporter.<sup>1</sup>

The confutation which provides us with most quotations from 'K. al-Zumurrud' so far, is that of the Shi'aite author, Dā'ī al-Du'āt Hibat-Allah Ibn Abī 'Imrān al-Shirāzī (d. 470/1077).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Such an attempt was made by al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044) a contemporary of the refuter, who after showing the motive behind Ibn al-Rāwandī's provocative attacks to have been solely caused by the Muṭazilah's unfair treatment and ill-speaking of him, admitted that nobody would be inclined to think he was right in the allegations, whether he had believed them or not. On the other hand, al-Murtaḍā was of the opinion that Ibn al-Rāwandī's views were not worse than those of Jāḥiẓ. If the opponents (mainly the Muṭazilah) should blame Ibn al-Rāwandī, Jāḥiẓ must be admonished first. In short, what al-Murtaḍā was arguing is representation of heretical thesis does not necessitate that the author thereof is an adherent.
- (2) The text together with the refutation edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, 'Min Ta'riḫ al-Ilḥād', pp. 79-98, the segments of Ibn al-Murtaḍā quoted by the refuter are separately recorded on pp. 99-109. For further details on the author of the refutation see p. 157 sqq.

Some Heretical Aspects in 'K. al-Zumurrud'

Prophecy and Reason

The first major idea propounded in this refutation and which is subsequently often referred to in almost all theological writings in later times, is unsubstantiated hearsay, the consequences of which, however have doubtless affected specifically the study of I'jāz from a literary concept.

It begins with a puzzling dilemma reported by Ibn al-Rāwandī of the Brahmins, who were asserted by him to have upheld that reason is the greatest providence of God to his creatures; and by which God himself and his benefits become known. It argues therefore that if a prophet were to confirm what had already been approved or disapproved of by reason, there would not be need for him, for reason alone is sufficient guidance; subsequently the mission itself is a mistake. But if he comes with that which is unacceptable to reason, there is then no obligation for us to acknowledge his prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

In either case according to these premises, the prophet is superfluous.

Many questions can be, and indeed have been, asked; who were the Brahmins<sup>?</sup> and how did Ibn al-Rāwandī come to know of their conception of prophecy and reason? Or was the whole affair merely a vehicle for his own ideas; as reported of him he used to fabricate heretical theses and when asked denied or ascribed them to various kinds of sects<sup>2</sup>. Were the Brahmins the scapegoat in this case ?

(1) Ibid, p. 80.

(2) Murtadā, 'al-Shāfi', p. 13.

Such questions can only be answered with some degree of certainty through a thorough/<sup>an</sup> understanding of the ancient Brahmins' religion on the one hand, and its perception by earlier Muslims on the other, a matter of which little is known.

Dr. 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī in his detailed comment, pp.136-157 has endeavoured to answer these questions, in which he has emphasised twice (pp. 139, 155) the disparity between Ibn al-Rāwandī's report and the Brahmin attitude to prophecy.

Badawī's discussion appears to be based fundamentally on the declaration of the best of Arab authority on Hindu religion and ethics, al-Birūnī, who in the preface of his well-known work 'Tahqīq Mā lilhind Min Maqulah' writes:-

"Everything which exists on this subject (i.e. Hindu religion) in our literature is secondhand information which one has from others, a farrago of materials never sifted by sieves of critical examination."<sup>1</sup>

This observation by Birūnī of earlier Arab authors' information about the Hindu religion may be true, save the very few authors he himself mentioned as exceptions, and of whose works we know nothing. Nonetheless, the information he himself provided on the subject of the attitude upheld by the Hindus, or certain sects of them, towards prophecy - were they to be true or not - are highly suggestive and would give a clue to how some of the Hindu or Brahmin views on prophecy infiltrated in some form or another into the Muslim world. At the same time, if we consider him to be the sole authority on Indian affairs, we may be able to detect the farrago he called our attention to.

In Chapter X which is entitled, 'On the source of their religion and civil law, on prophets and on the question whether single laws can be abrogated or not', we read the following: "Such was the case with the Greeks, and it is precisely the same with the Hindus. For they believe that their religious law and its single precepts derive their origin from Rishis, their sages, the pillars of their religion, and not from the prophets." The same passage concludes, "Therefore they can dispense with prophets, as far as law and worship are concerned, though in other affairs of the creation they sometimes want them."

If, however, one accepts al-Birūnī's own statement at face value, the superimposed element in Ibn al-Rāwandī's argument seems to be the subordination of the claim of 'reason' he put into it, so as to strengthen his argument against prophecy. And this would not be difficult to explain if we consider his earlier training in the school of Mu'tazilah itself, where such leaders as Murdār<sup>2</sup>, Naẓẓām<sup>3</sup> and Bishr b. Ma'mar<sup>4</sup> had upheld the attitude that if a man is conscious and not mentally deficient he should know the creator by means of reasoning and inference; an attitude which never attempted to do away with prophecy, as, principally speaking, the school as a whole held that a rational view of divine grace makes prophecy a necessity. So it would seem that in either case Ibn al-Rāwandī was more a representative than originator.

(1) cont.

'Al-Birūnī's India', trans. Edward C. Sachau, Preface, vol. 1, p. 6.

(1) Ibid, pp. 106-107.

(2) Shahrīstānī 'al-Milal wal-Nihal', ed. Badrān, p. 104.

(3) Ibid, p. 85.

(4) Ibid, p. 95.

Moreover, from the above-quoted paragraph of al-Birūnī, the following passage reads:-

"Further, no law can be exchanged or replaced by another for they use the laws as they found them"<sup>1</sup>, it would appear to have been paraphrased by Ibn al-Rāwandī, if we interpret it as: 'Speech (law) has been dictated by the ancestors ascending through the centuries till eternity.'<sup>2</sup>

### Miracles Generally

The Makhārīq<sup>3</sup> (conceits or trickeries) are manifold and some of them are difficult to comprehend and far too subtle to be perceived by physical senses. Although they have been transmitted through a small number of men for whom it was quite possible to concur in lies.<sup>4</sup>

Miracles as understood in this statement are not only rejected on the grounds that they are fake events, but also rebutted from the standpoint of historical tradition. Ibn al-Rāwandī launched his attack primarily against the authorities who were said to have witnessed them and those who relegated them, or in other words no testimony or tawātur was to him sufficient evidence to establish them. Accordingly he denied scornfully several of those miracles ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>5</sup>

(1) 'Al-Birūnī's India', vol. 1, p. 107.

(2) 'Min Ta'rikh al-Ilhād', p. 94.

(3) From the various derivations of this word perhaps the following are the most likely to be intended here: (a) artificial, or a thing made of twisted rags with which boys play. (b) One who exercises art in the argument of affairs. For further derivative forms see E. Lane, 'Arabic-English Lexicon', vol. 1, p. 720.

(4) 'Min Ta'rikh al-Ilhād', p. 86.

It is no surprise that we find the Mu'tazilite leaders of the fourth century, although admitting other miracles besides the Qur'ān, did not hold them as convenient evidence against their opponents, an attitude which appears to have been upheld in particular by Abū Hāshim in his refutation of the 'K. al-Imāmah' of Ibn al-Rāwandī.<sup>1</sup>

In his chapter concerning other miracles besides the Qur'ān (vol. 16, pp. 407-423) al-Qādi 'Abd al-Jabbār reported the following:

"It had been related to Abū 'Isa al-Warrāq and Ibn al-Rāwandī in that (the reference being to the physical movement of the tree) and other miracles which we shall deal with, were of a certain dubiousness. They said that if one is in no position to read other people's minds, nor to command a view of their customs and circumstances in various times and distant places, nor able to comprehend various forms of trickeries and discern between them and matters which are genuine, nor the nature of substances and their distinguishing properties, so as to apprehend what is probable and what is not, that which people achieve by means of trickeries and what is impossible for them, how can one contradict miracles which are based on violation of natural phenomena in some form or another. Such prodigies are in the power of all men equally but some have performed them through trickeries<sup>2</sup>, and it is not necessary for them to be apparent and, therefore, comprehensible, any more than the property of the magnet, and such substances ... nor is it necessary if they are to be known that they should establish their miraculousness.

Similarly, all the wonder in the world of talismans and such like, which no intelligent being should deny ... can yet be claimed as a sign of prophecy."

The underlined passage seems to have been one of the major factors which incited the Sunnite al-Bāqillānī to write 'K. al-Bayān', concerning the differences between miracles, the gift of saints, trickeries, divination, and magical spells.

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(5) cont.

Such miracles as the poisoned roasted shoulder of mutton, the assistance of angels on the day of Badr, the flight to Jerusalem, and many others. See Ibid., pp. 105-107.

(1) 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Mughnī', vol. 16, pp. 152, 414.

(2) Ibid., p. 411.

## Inspiration and the Qur'ān

The distinguishing characteristic of a prophet being that he is an inspired person or endowed with certain revelations whose office is restricted to interpreting them, Ibn al-Rāwandī saw in this that there is no real advantage for the prophet; for in his opinion inspiration is a common privilege among all men. But if a prophet's knowledge was due to Tawqīf<sup>1</sup> (divine acquaintance with language) this again is not acceptable to reason.<sup>2</sup>

The fate of the Qur'ān together with the rest of the scriptures can be envisaged from the trend of the above argument. Yet Ibn al-Rāwandī although he devoted his last work to discrediting the Qur'ān, as will be seen, in 'K. al-Zumurrud' he raised one of the questions which required further discussion in the fourth century. He argued that it is possible that an Arab tribe was more eloquent than other tribes, and that a certain number of that tribe was more eloquent than the rest as a whole, and a certain person from that number was more eloquent than that number ... until he concluded, supposing the Qur'ān's eloquence outstripped that of the Arabs, how could it be applied to the non-Arabs (ʿAjām) who did not know the Arabic language, and what evidence had he (the prophet) for them.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Tawqīf, inspiration, is the opposite term to natural development. The question of language being the inspiration by God, as many Sunnite scholars interpreted the verse "And He taught Adam all names" (II/31) or a merely conventional phenomenon as maintained by the Mu'tazilah, appeared to have engaged theologians long before Ibn al-Rāwandī's time as in the case of Abbād Ibn Sulaymān, but the question received further discussion among philologists, theologians and sufis in the fourth century, cf. Suyūti, 'Muzhir', vol. 1, pp. 7-24.
- (2) 'Min Ta'rikh al-Ilhād', p. 94.
- (3) Ibid, p. 87.

II. 'K. al-Farīd'

A diatribe on the person of the Prophet Muḥammad.

The main idea of this work, as often reported, was a reproach of the person of the Prophet Muḥammad. Such a work could hardly have passed without stirring provocation among the zealous Muslim sects, nor without involving the Qur'ān in some way or another. In the first instance its refutation was inevitable; in the school of Muḥtazilah alone two distinguished protagonists took the trouble to refute it. They were Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī<sup>1</sup> (d. 332/933), whose father before him<sup>2</sup> had refuted many of Ibn al-Rāwandī's works, and al-Khayyāt<sup>3</sup>, the author of 'al-Intiṣār'. Unfortunately, none of these refutations are now available in full except for a very short extract from the former's refutation quoted by Ibn al-Jawzī<sup>4</sup> which happened to be only the opening of al-Rāwandī's work.

Nonetheless, it would appear that Abū Hāshim's refutation greatly inspired al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābadī later in the century<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the Ash'arite judge al-Bāqillānī seems also to have benefited from the confutation of the founder of the school al-Ash'arī, of Ibn al-Rāwandī's<sup>6</sup> works.

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(1) Ibn al-Murtadā, 'Tabaqāt al-Muḥtazilah', p. 92.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', V.O.J., vol. IV, p. 224.

(4) 'al-Muntazam', vol. 6, p. 101 for further quotations, taken presumably from Ibn al-Jawzī. See H. Ritter, 'Der Islam' (1929), vol. XIX, pp. 283-4.

(5) cf. 'Mughnī', vol. 16, p. 9.

(6) See Ibn 'Asakir, 'Tabayīn', p. 131 (two works), pp. 129, 135 (three works).

The passage recorded by Ibn al-Jawzī reads:

"The Muslims argue for the prophecy of their prophet with the book which was brought forth for them and by which they were challenged, and which they could not rival." Then he continued, "To them it should be said that you are mistaken and overwhelmed with bigotry in your hearts; tell us then, supposing anyone should allege to any of the ancient philosophers the like of your claim about the Qur'ān and produce the evidence of the veracity of Ptolemy and Euclid in their allegations (for prophecy) is that ... <sup>1</sup> Euclid had brought his book and claimed that people could not rival it, could this then establish his prophecy?"

### III 'K. al-Dāmigh'

A diatribe on the Qur'ān.

This was the last work of Ibn al-Rāwandī, according to all biographical accounts which he wrote while in hiding and a few days after the completion of which he died. If the biographical details can be trusted on this, what was recorded in the 'Fihrist' ~~is~~ that Ibn al-Rāwandī himself had written a retraction of this work<sup>2</sup>, would be highly improbable.

(1) The omitted word (Ṣāhib) in Ibn al-Jawzī's quotation does not make sense, its omission is no surprise in Abū al-Fidā's quotation (See Der Islam (op. cit.) p. 284. It is also noticeable that although the sentence begins in the dual case it finishes in the singular, i.e. Euclid.

(2) 'Fihrist' (the discovered part), M. Th. Houtsma, V.O.J., vol. 4, p. 224.

It is evident that this work not only disturbed theologians, but also caught the attention of men of letters such as Abū al-  
 'Alā' al-Ma'arrī, who himself was reported to have endeavoured  
 to rival the Qur'ān. He wrote:

"As to Dāmigh, I think it turned the head of him alone who  
 composed it and claimed for it an impious succession ..., but  
 this man (Ibn al-Rāwandī) is like dried-up gossamer. The  
 scandalous fact that it is famous for its oaths indicates a  
 weakness of mind on the part of its author."<sup>1</sup>

Among the theologians, however, the Mu'tazilite leader Abū  
 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/915) refuted it<sup>2</sup> with other works by  
 Ibn al-Rāwandī, so did al-Khayyāṭ.<sup>3</sup> Ash'arī, the step-son of  
 al-Jubbā'ī and the founder of the Ash'arite school is also  
 reported to have refuted it.<sup>4</sup>

In conjunction with the fragments quoted by Ibn al-Jawzī  
 directly or indirectly from al-Jubbā'ī's refutation,<sup>5</sup> further  
 fragments from the same work are found in the recently edited  
 work of al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>6</sup>

(1) R.A. Nicholson, J.R.A.S. (1902), p. 355.

(2) Ibn al-Nadīm, (op. cit.), Ibn al-Murtadā, 'Tabaqāt al-  
 Mu'tazilah', ed. S. Diwald-Wilzer, p. 92.

(3) Ibn al-Nadīm (o.p. cit.)

(4) Ibn 'Asākir, 'Tabyīn', p. 131.

(5) 'al-Muntazam', vol. 6, pp. 102-104.

(6) cf. 'al-Mughni', vol. 16, pp. 389-394.

The diatribes in both quotations can be classified under two types:

- (a) Short sharp cynical comments inflicted on certain passages or the general sense in certain verses extending often far beyond the texts to the wisdom of the Author Himself. This is particularly noticeable among the fragments quoted in Ibn al-Jawzī. To select three at random:

"Lo! the devil's strategy is ever weak" (IV/75)

Com. What weakness is this! When it caused Adam to be exiled (from Paradise) and lowered many people!

"It is assuredly given to thee neither to hunger therein, nor to go naked." (XX/118)

Com. But he endured them both!

Com. He destroyed the tribe of Thamūd for a she-camel, what is the value of a she-camel? (cf. VII/73-8)

- (b) In the remainder of Ibn al-Jawzī's quotations (about ten) and those of al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, the theme generally, as above, emphasises that there is some contradiction in the meanings of certain verses. This, in the quotations of 'Abd al-Jabbār, takes a new turn by transferring a verse or verses from a certain surah, completely ignoring the context.

For example:

XLV/17	in contradiction to	XVIII/46 and XVI/108
XLII/44	" "	XVI/63
IV/75	" "	LVII/19 and XXVII/24 <sup>1</sup>
II/29	" "	LXXIX/30 <sup>2</sup>
L/38	" "	XLI/8-12
XVIII/110	" "	XVII/85

The single example which has some literary bearing is with regard to the verse "Naught is as His likeness" (XLII/11), which he treated with equal contempt. It is contradictory because the annexation of the particle of similitude 'as' (Kāf) to the word Mithl implies affirmation of similitude. The negation 'naught' on the other hand, implies the reverse, for it is improbable that there is none as His likeness alike when at the same time he is like his likeness.<sup>3</sup>

The argument sprang from the function of the particle of similitude, which it has been argued is here only a particle of emphasis rather than that of similitude.

(1 - 2) cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, (op. cit.), p. 102.

(3) 'Mughnī', (op. cit.), p. 389.

## II. al-Rāzī

The other author whose heretical views determined<sup>1</sup> the study of I'jāz in the fourth century was the famous physician, Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyā al-Rāzī (d. 311/923). The resemblance between his ideas and those of Ibn al-Rāwandī are apparent, the only difference between the two men would seem to be that the motive in Ibn al-Rāwandī's case was of a personal grudge against people and sects which demonstrated his free-lance status<sup>2</sup> as his defenders maintained he was but a mouth-piece for heretical views.

In Rāzī's case the argument professed is more that of a scientist than a mere heretic or a speculative theologian. Futhermore, considering his idolatry of ancient philosophers he appears to be more of an original turn of mind.

### Reason

In the rudimentary drift towards rationalism among the generations immediately preceding Rāzī an attempt had been made, for good or bad, to strengthen religious dogma by means of philosophical measures. Rāzī, unlike them and in spite of his strong belief in the Deity, marked a new phase by his attempt to eradicate religion and its appurtenances and approach Truth, as he perceived it, by means of a different medium or as he analytically puts it, a short cut.<sup>2</sup>

(1) 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Tathbit, fol. 293b.

(2) cf. 'Abd al-'Alīm, Islamic culture vol. vii, p. 232.

(3) cf. Orientalia, vol. v, p. 367, xiv (p. 144-6).

Instead of the vain apology advocated by one of the most important biographers,<sup>1</sup> of Rāzī, however, in which he endeavoured to cast doubt on the authenticity<sup>2</sup> of a philosophical work or works ascribed to Rāzī, it would appear that a specific work or even works <sup>by him</sup> were known, ~~or that~~, at least a fragmentary refutation from a personal discussion with him has survived.

The views expressed in these fragments, which are also supported by the refuter himself at the opening of his work, have appeared in one of Rāzī's books,<sup>3</sup> However unorthodox and heretical they might have been, <sup>they</sup> are quite harmonious with Rāzī's philosophical thesis. It was for such obvious reasons perhaps that Rāzī's philosophical writings were suppressed and never universally acclaimed.

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- (1) cf. George S.A. Ranking, 'The Life and Works of Rhazes', 17th International Congress of Medicine (1913), History of Medicine, Section XXIII, p. 237 sqq.
- (2) The author believes that a work of the title 'Iyūb al-ʿAwliā' (The Faults of Saints) which has been ascribed to Rāzī, if it exists at all, was perhaps composed by one of Rāzī's malicious enemies and attributed to him so as to soil his reputation. Rāzī was certainly superior to indulgence in such affairs. Some of those who disparaged Rāzī and sought to defame him and publicise his heresy, as for example the Egyptian, ʿAlī Ibn Rudwān and others, called the book 'Makhārīq al-Anbiyā' (The Impostures of Prophets). See 'Uyūn al-Anbā', vol. 1, p. 320.
- (3) The Shiʿaite Ismāʿilī Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī (d. 322/926), extracts from his 'K. Aʿlām al-Nubuwwah' ed. by Paul Kraus, Orientalia vol. V, pp. 38-56 also 358-378. These extracts have also been republished among other segments of Rāzī's philosophical writings, Cairo (1939), vol. 1, pp. 295-313. Yet it is not clear whether the work refuted was 'Fī Naqḍ al-ʿAdyān' as has been shown by P. Kraus, E.I. vol. 3, pp. 1134-5, or 'Makhārīq al-Anbiyā' as favoured by ʿAbd al-Rahmān Bādawī, 'Min Taʾrīkh al-Ilhād', p. 201. From both titles, however, the idea of prophecy was under strong attack.

Although Rāzī so highly and overwhelmingly acknowledged ancient philosophers, there is no doubt that through their inspiration he stood tenaciously to the claim of reason in his search of Truth, to such an extent that he became incredulous of traditional religions. To him reason alone and nothing else was the guidance and above any claim of inspiration. This persuasion led him consequently to forsake a series of intertwining subjects, each progressing towards the other, e.g. miracles, scriptures, prophecies, religions, etc. which appeared to him unimportant. Only reason was sufficient to illuminate the way to Truth. "By it we have achieved even the knowledge of the Almighty our creator, the most majestic of all we have sought to reach and our most profitable attainment."<sup>1</sup>

In this attitude of mind we find in the fragments that are quoted in Abū Hātim al-Rāzī's refutation, that whereas the principal idea attacked by Rāzī was that of prophecy and whereby other ideas are bound to be touched upon, the first debate by Rāzī, the physician, opened with the vital question:

"Whence did you procure as necessary for God that He should assign certain people with prophecy without others; favour them to the rest of the people; and made them guides for them and made the people in need for them?"

(1) A.J. Arberry, 'The Spiritual Physick of Rhazes', Chapter 1, p. 2. "Of the Excellence of Reason".

The question was also qualified further by another:

"How did it become acceptable to you that the wisdom of God should choose such a fate for men and incite some against others, emphasising enmities between them, engendering wars which thereby people perish?"<sup>1</sup>

In the course of this debate and in the following meetings (pp. 44, 46, 54) several philosophical ideas were engaged on, such as the wisdom of God, the inequality of men's intellect, the perpetuation of the prophetic mission, as one side of the argument wished to maintain and the difference between the ancient schools of philosophy. The discussions also led to the criticism of Rāzī's five co-eternal principles by which he aimed to silence the Dahrite who denied the creator, e.g. the united soul, the primeval atom, absolute and eternal duration. The last debate disintegrated in a rather unpleasant way, as scorn and slander were flung from both sides while some of the audience were maliciously rejoicing at Rāzī Ibn Zakariyā's humiliation.

Thus the case remained after these preliminary discussions until the second part of the extracts from Abū Ḥātim's refutations was published, where we are faced with the serious attacks of Rāzī against prophecy. But it is almost inevitable, as noted above, that in trying to confine such a subject other intrinsic matters are bound to be involved in the cycle.

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(1) *Orientalia*, vol. V, p. 38, 1 (pp. 1-24).

Although the chief idea in Rāzī's allegation is to prove the fallaciousness of prophecy, repeatedly emphasised by the refuter,<sup>1</sup> Rāzī begins by attacking indiscriminately the outstanding traditional religions, which had been transmitted from one generation to another via the ecclesiastical leaders, who were ironically described by him as 'the billy goat-bearded' who had abandoned free thinking and investigation and solely and idly clung to the legacy passed down to them from their predecessors, refuting all questions as to its veracity, which had grown out of sheer superstition and false narratives.

The bases of Rāzī's attack on traditional religions were, it would appear, founded on two main charges:

(a) That they are based on the mindless investing with authority of religious matters, or Taqlīd, regardless of any rational investigation.

(b) That they have been supported with power, as we read in the long quoted passage:-

"We have seen the reliance of the Muqallidīn on the veracity of their adherences founded on the acceptance of their predecessors, and the glorification of their leaders, and the multiplicity of their assistants (meaning by this, the refuter interprets the people of Islām)<sup>2</sup> - then Razi continued:

(1) Ibid, pp. 360, V (p. 45); pp. 56, I (pp.1-24)p pp. 363, VIII (pp. 52-53).

(2) Ibid, pp. 367, XIII (pp. 138-9).

"If this is to be true because of these reasons it must also be in the case of the Jews, the Christians, the magians and other faiths since their causes in that are but like those of the Muslims. Likewise if it was only because of triumph and conquest then religions above mentioned held similar positions to that of Islām, such as the domination of the Christians in Rome, the Jews in Khazar,<sup>1</sup> the Magians in some parts of the mountains (of Persia) the Manichaens in China, the Turks and Brahmins in India and the domination of the Muslims in 'Irāq, Hijāz, Damascus and Khurāsān etc. That Christianity is true in Rome, false elsewhere, Judaism is lawful in Khazar, heresy elsewhere, and Mazdaism was true during the days of the Khosrau and false to the Islamic nation. If that is to be the case a thing (a religion) must be both true and false, this is but a contradiction."<sup>2</sup>

(1) For geographical detail see Yāgūt, 'Mu'jam al-Buldān', ed. F. Wüstenfeld, part 2, pp. 436-7.

(2) Views of a similar nature were held by David Hume (1711-76) in his Essays on miracles, as he maintains there can never be adequate historical evidence for such events:-

"It may be added as a fourth reason, which diminishes the authority of prodigies, that there is no testimony for any, even those which have not been expressly detected, that is not opposed by an infinite number of witness; so that not only the miracle destroys the credit of testimony, but testimony destroys itself. To make this the better understood, let us consider that, in matters of Religions, whatever is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China, should, all of them, be established on any solid foundation. Every miracle therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions, (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct proof is to establish the particular system to which it is attributed; so has it the same force, to overthrow every other system. In destroying a rival system, it likewise destroys the credit of those miracles on which that system was established; so that all the prodigies of different religions are to be regarded as contrary facts;

### Scriptures

Contradiction pure and simple is the strongest point in Rāzī's criticism also against sacred scriptures. Not only contradictory with regard to one another<sup>1</sup> but also within themselves. Certain passages from the 'Torah', the Gospels and other scriptures at variance with each other and the Qur'an have been discussed and we need not go into detail here.

### Miracles

Unfortunately the refuter did not record Rāzī's arguments or attacks on miracles in full which would have helped considerably in forming a better idea. He wrote:

"His chapter on miracles which he composed in the form of question and answer, and in which he attempted to weaken the proofs of those who maintain miracles for prophets, and in which he advanced a feeble argument, we need not bother about."<sup>2</sup>

(2) cont.

and the evidences of prodigies, whether weak or strong, as opposite to each other".  
Essays and treatises on several subjects, (MDCXCIII), vol. 2, Section X of Miracles, pp. 136-7.

(1) Orientalia, vol. V, pp. 363, VIII (pp. 52-53) one of the passages reads:-

"Now let us look at the claim of the people - meaning by this the prophets - and see its contradictions" adding "Jesus claims to be the son of God; Moses claims to have no son; Muhammad claims to have been created as the rest of mortal people; Mānī and Zoroaster disagree with Moses and Jesus and Muhammad over the eternal and the infinity of the universe and the cause of Good and Evil. Mānī, on the other hand, disagrees with Zoroaster over the dual property of the universe and its nature. Muhammad claims that Christ was not killed whereas both Jews and Christians disagree with him and claim he was killed and crucified.

(2) Ibid, pp. 368, XV (pp. 152-4)

Nonetheless, Abū Ḥātim did mention some of the important points in Rāzī's allegations which mainly reflect on the Qur'ān and on a small scale on the other miracles ascribed to Muḥammad. Of the latter's prodigies it would appear that the main criticism on which he based his argument was that regarding the credibility of the testimony of the actual eye-witnesses and those to whom it was only hearsay.

Another point he seemed to have made for the eradication of miracles which can be inferred from the refutation was that the like of such miracles reported of prophets had also been reported of those who did not claim prophecy such as; tight rope dancers, prestidigitators, soothsayers, magicians and jugglers, etc. This particular remark seemed to have stirred the protagonist al-Bāgillānī, later in the fourth century to write at length concerning it as we shall see later.

The Qur'ān: On the one hand, to the rest of other scriptures, Rāzī's criticism is that they can be regarded as contradictory works. In this respect the passages which are quoted from the Qur'ān among those from the 'Torah' and the 'Gospels' and other scriptures, in all of which his criticism of the passages is that all subscribe to the idea of an anthropomorphic nature for God. For example the Qur'ānic verses XX/5, CXIX/17 and XC/7.<sup>1</sup>

(1) Ibid, pp. 364, IX (pp<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 92-93).

On the other hand, being a book and the incontestable and standing miracle to the Muslims, Rāzī argues that if a book is to teach people any branch of science or knowledge; and if for such merit it can be regarded as a miracle, many books would have this right to be so. He strongly puts this as:-

"I swear that if a book should be a proof, the books of the elements of geometry and Almagest (Ptolemy's famous work on astronomy) which guides to the understanding of the celestial sphere and astronomy, the books of logics and those of medicine which help in restoring bodies; should therefore have been more of a proof than that which is useless in attaining either good or harm (meaning the Qur'ān)".<sup>1</sup>

As for the claim of I'jāz in its literary sense which is based fundamentally on certain passage in the Qur'ān (e.g. II/24) He argues thus:-

"You have claimed that the miracle is standing and present - which is the Qur'ān, you say who denies it should bring forth its like", then he said,

"If you mean by this the ways in which speech is counted for superiority we shall bring for you a thousand of its like from the utterances of eloquent men, the chaste, the rhyme-makers and the poets, with composition more chaste than it in wording and more concise in meaning, more eloquent in delivery and expression and more likely in rhyming".<sup>2</sup>

(1) Ibid, pp. 370, XVII/(p.p 186-7).

(2) Ibid, pp. 370, XVI (p. 185).

CHAPTER IV

THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO I'JAZ IN THE FOURTH  
CENTURY A.H./ THE TENTH A.D.

General Introduction

GENERAL INTRODUCTION1. The Tenet

"Thus," noticed J. H. Kramers, "it becomes a tenet of Islam to consider the language of the Koran perfect and inimitable; on this fact we are amply informed by an almost too copious literature."<sup>1</sup>

The realization of the tenet noticed above may well be traced as far back as the earliest days of the revelation itself. To assess the impact of the Qur'an and its pervasion of Arabic thought and letters in a vast epoch of history, wherein, characteristically enough, the foremost loyalty of a man, superseding all others, was to his religion.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, though every sacred book, just because of its sanctity, is certain to make a deep impression on the cultural life of the community which verses it, the place of the Qur'an in Arabic culture is unique and it is sufficient to note in respect of the literary field the obvious fact that far too many branches of Arabic literature grew basically out of the study of the Qur'an or were influenced directly by it. The multitude of literary studies alone which were engendered by and surrounded the Qur'an's own text and the variety of literary subjects which were ever increasing in volume throughout

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1. In his essay, 'The language of the Koran', 'Analecta Orientalia', vol. 2, p. 152.

2. See E. G. Grunebaum, 'Medieval Islam', revd. edn. pp. 1-2.

the second and third centuries is evident merely by a look at the fourth-century bibliographical work of Ibn al-Nadīm<sup>1</sup> or such later works as 'K. al-Burhān' of al-Zarkashī and 'al-Itqān' of al-Suyūṭī.

Although all such branches of linguistic studies, referred to in the aforementioned sources, are of different significance in their own right, they show nonetheless one aim in common. They all attempt to elucidate and explore the supremacy of the language of the Sacred Book, its unmatchedness and its inimitability. In other words, though the term I'jāz itself had not been adopted for this specific usage, nor yet implemented as a significant topic or branch of study until upwards of the fourth century, the idea as such had long been entertained. Yet it was these branches of philological, grammatical, syntactical and stylistic studies which were the main sources, in later times, of the study of I'jāz once it assumed its significant title, as well as those of other literary studies. The unity of the end and the multiplicity of the means, however, resulted sometimes in confusion over certain definitions and terms.

## 2. The Fourth Century

Disregarding the many characteristics of the cultural and literary life of a century depicted in some of the modern studies as the renaissance period of Islām,<sup>2</sup> and confining ourselves to the field of

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1. 'Fihrist', ed. Flugel, pp. 34-8.

2. Eg. A. Mez, 'The Renaissance of Islam'.

Qur'ānic studies, particularly to the issue which is our main concern - I'jāz -, it is clear that the fundamental aspects of it were well-defined in the studies of the third century. There was on the one hand, the dogmatic concept of the Prophetic mission and on the other, the literary phenomenon the Qur'ān, the sole proof of that dogmatic conception. This is the universally acknowledged view among the Muslims. Small wonder therefore at the multiplicity of the literature inspired by or surrounding it.

As for I'jāz which had <sup>become</sup> an independent branch in the field of Qur'ānic studies by the beginning of the fourth century, <sup>it</sup> was seemingly accompanied simultaneously by two different approaches in the third century; a dialectical or theological approach and an anti-theological method. It was, however, the theologians who contributed in more detail than others. In the fourth century these two approaches were also prevalent.

Although by the beginning of the fourth century I'jāz had emerged as an independent topic in the field of Qur'ānic studies, the idea as such was by no means confined to these studies. The idea was touched on in other fields of study, some connected with the Qur'ān itself others not. <sup>Two</sup> approaches are perhaps worthy of note.

#### i) Exegetical Works

Tafsir undoubtedly was and still is one of the richest fields of Qur'ānic literature, and by the year 306 A.H. in which the first author to devote a whole work to I'jāz, al-Wasīṭī, died, al-Ṭabari's (d.310) commentary had achieved wide acclaim. The title of this work alone

'Ja'mi' al-Bayān' may signify a literary tendency, indeed the idea of I'jāz as such is well propounded in the introductory chapters therein,<sup>1</sup> moreover from his elaboration on the first chapter in the Qur'ān the essence of the idea is well defined.<sup>2</sup> On the whole although there are ample examples of lexicographical and grammatical analysis, throughout this commentary,<sup>3</sup> defining the multitude of subjects reflected upon, I'jāz, per se, may well be realized in the author's remarkable introductions and his reflections on the verses in which the challenge by the Qur'an is stated.

Tabari's contemporary commentators, to judge by extant fragments of their works and from references made to them, like Tabari, also touched on the question of I'jāz, in the introductions to their works<sup>4</sup> and when reflecting on the verses of the challenge.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Vol. 1. pp. 1-15.
  2. Ibid, e.g. pp. 66, wherein he emphasized the concepts of eloquence and style.
  3. In an index on language and grammar Mahmūd M. Shākir has listed considerable material worthy of study itself, cf. e.g. Shākir's edition, vol. 1, pp. 604-614, vol. 2. pp. 600-11.
  4. It would seem that Abū 'Alī al-Jabbā'ī (d. 303) had discussed several theological aspects of I'jāz in the introduction to his commentary . Cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Mughnī' vol.XVI, p.397.
  5. See al-Zajjāj's (d.311) commentary on the verses of the challenge B.M. ms. Or. 2848, ff. 2b, 55a&b, 224b.

They were perhaps unlike him in the sense that while he was, for the first time, collecting material for traditional exegsis, in their case their theological and linguistic persuasions no doubt dominated their efforts.

Throughout the century other commentators appeared, some of them wrote a special treatise on I'jāz, as in the case of the commentator al-Rummanī, and as the idea was widely embraced we find other commentators also contributing to it, covering vast aspects of its literary as well as its theological literature.<sup>1</sup>

In the later centuries, however, the discussion of I'jāz became a common chapter in the introductions of many commentators, in some cases it became the general theme of a whole work on Tafsīr as in the case of al-Zamaksharī.

#### ii) A biographical approach

Another approach which flourished during the fourth century was a purely biographical one. The main sources of this method were the early accounts of the Prophet's life given in the books of Sirah and Traditions. The early generations of the Mutakalimūn had begun to manipulate some of these accounts in their dialectical systems of proofs and counter-proofs, in an endeavour to ascertain the prophetic mission of the Prophet against the rising opposition. From these early studies emerged such works as 'Hujaj al-Nubuwwah' and 'Al-Hujjah fī Tathbit al-Nubuwwah' of al-Jāhiz, early in the third century, as has been seen.

1. See. Al-Qummi's (d. 387) commentary printed on the margin of Ṭabarī's commentary, when he reflects, for example, on twenty divisions of Majāz alone, see vol. 1, p. 39, or discusses the various ways of I'jāz from a theological standpoint, Ibid pp. 182-9.

Throughout the fourth century, although the Mutakalimūn's approach was well maintained by some of their successors,<sup>1</sup> another group who differed considerably from them, began to contribute to this chapter.<sup>2</sup>

The titles which this faction initiated differed slightly from those of the Mutakalimūn. Among them are such titles as 'A'lām al-Nubuwwah' and 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah'. To the former contributed such authors as Abū Ḥatim al-Rāzī (d.322/926) and in later times al-Māwardī (d.450/1058), whose work was considered by some authorities in later times to have been by far the best in this respect.<sup>3</sup> To the latter title al-Ash'arī himself is reported to have contributed, indeed a work bearing the same title is ascribed to him.<sup>4</sup> Among the surviving contributions, however, are works by such authors as Abū Sa'id al-Wā'iz (d.407/1016),<sup>5</sup> Abū Nu'aym (d.430/1038)<sup>6</sup> and Bayhaqī (d.458/1066).<sup>7</sup>

1. Eg. 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Tathbit Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidina Muḥammad'.
  2. H.Kh., 'Kashf al-Zunūn' vol. 1, p. 427, No.4173, 'ʿIlm Amārat al-Nubuwwah'.
  3. Ibid.
  4. See Ibn 'Asākir, 'Tabayin Kadhib al-Muftarī...'. Damascus: edn. p.136
  5. Although a work entitled 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah' was ascribed to him, there is a work by him entitled 'Sharaf al-Nabiyy' (BM.ms. Or. 3014) in which a long chapter (15) deals with miracles.
  6. Published in three parts. (Hyderabad, 1320 A.H.) but it lacks an important part of the introduction, cf. the BM.ms. Or. 3012 f.4b.
  7. A short extract with translation was made by K.U.Nylander (Uppsala, 1891). For part one see also BM. ms. Or. 3013.
- \* Works by the title "Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah" were also attributed to two of al-Khaṭṭābī's tutors; al-Naqqāsh (d.351 ah) and al-Shāshī (d.365a.h). See Suyūṭī, Tabaqāt al-Mufasssirin, No.92, p.29 and No.109, pp.36-7.

This approach on the whole contributed little to the study of I'jāz, as one of the contributors distinctly made clear that it differs from that of the Mutakallimūn and solely is concerned with the scattered traditions about the Prophet's life.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. I'jāz and the theologians

The fourth century historian al-Mas'ūdī once observed, "People had disputed over the composition of the Qur'ān and its I'jāz, it is not our purpose to give a description of the theses of the different people or record an account of controversialists, hence this is a book of history and not a book of inference and speculation."<sup>2</sup> Another historian who lived towards the end of the fourth century and witnessed further development during his day, considered the whole question of miracles as irrelevant to the requirement of the age.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Mas'ūdī, who died in 346/956c, was clearly observant of the embittered and devastating views of a very important generation of theologians to whom were indebted those who were active towards the end of the century, and it is more likely that his reference was to al-Jabbā'ī's family, the father, Abū 'Alī (d. 303/4/915), the son, Abū Hāshim (321/933) and the stepson al-Ash'arī

1. cf. Abu Nu'aym, (op. cit.) f. 4b.

2. 'Murūj al-Daḥab', ed. by M.M. 'Abd al-Ḥamid, vol. 2, p. 186.

3. See 'The history of Ibn Miskawih' (d. 421/1030) ed. Leone Caetani, who wrote;

"... and for this reason itself I do not consider the miracles of the prophets - God's blessing be on them - and what have been accomplished for them of politics, for the reason that the people of our time do not gain experience from them in their lives affairs."

(d. 324/935c) and the former's pupils, among whom was al-Wasitī.

Although to some of these authors themselves works on I'jāz are ascribed, what is important to note is their influence on the later followers, who often refer to them.

I'jāz being the predominant occupation of the theologians, it is perhaps a curious fact that although all major schools of theology, the Sunnite-Ash'arite, the Mu'tazilite as well as the Shi'ite of the fourth century, were without exception adherent to the belief in the inimitability of the Qur'an or its miraculousness, they nonetheless differed considerably in their interpretation of this conception,<sup>1</sup> both from a theological as well as a literary standpoint. To this diversity of opinion was undoubtedly due the richness and protractedness of the chapter of I'jāz to a degree that even this diversity of opinion itself was discussed as to whether

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1. The Sunnite-Ash'arite al-Bāqillānī noted;  
 "All Muslims (al-Ummah), have indiscriminately agreed that the Qur'an is inimitable, but they differ in the way it is so."  
 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', vol. XII, f. 8b, also 'I'jāz', p. 446 and 'Intisar' (Summary), f. 70b.  
 The Mu'tazilite al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār expressed the same observations;  
 "When thus it has become a well-established fact to all Muslim savants (that the Qur'an is inimitable) they disagree in which way it is inimitable." 'al-Mughnī', vol. 16, pp. 242, 316.  
 A later Shi'ite author al-Quṭub al-Rāwandī confirmed the above views thus;  
 "Know that although all Muslims have agreed on the permanance of the Qur'an, as a proof of the prophethood and the veracity of the mission, the Mutakalimun differ in the way that the Qur'an is inimitable." 'al-Khara'ij wal-Jawa'ih, published with two other Shi'ite works, p. 269.

it would affect the validity of the claim of I'jāz itself.<sup>1</sup>

Although the number of points demonstrated to designate the stylistic inimitability of the Qur'an had been extended by the middle of the fifth century to twenty points, which can be seen in al-Mawārdī's (d. 450/1058) work,<sup>2</sup> the points which appear to have occupied and dominated the studies of I'jāz during the second half of the fourth century, both from a theological and literary standpoint, were seven. Yet, these seven were variant when compared with those which had been recorded in comparatively earlier studies, the earlier al-Rummanī and al-Khaṭṭābī with the later al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār. Moreover, in as much as they differed in their significance, they also varied in their acceptance, from the mere acknowledgement of them all<sup>3</sup> to the preference of one or more in particular. Even the literature concerning them varied from the mere listing of them<sup>4</sup> to the devotion of a single chapter or even

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1. 'Abd al-Jabbār, 'Mughnī', vol. XVI, p. 317; Bāqillānī, 'al-Hidāyah', vol. XIII, ff. 8b-11a; 'I'jāz', pp. 446 sqq.
  2. 'A'lām al-Nubuwwah', ch. XI, pp. 40-51.
  3. Al-Quṭub al-Rāwandī, (op.cit), p. 269, commented after enumerating them, 'If we say all these seven points are points of I'jāz, without preference, this would be better.'
  4. See al-Rummanī 'al-Nukat (Thalath Rasā'il)', p. 69.

one or several volumes to each.<sup>1</sup>

Further, despite the bitter and fierce wrangling of one school with another over a certain point, contention in fact existed over all points, a marked transfer of support of certain points occurred among the various schools, some of which, as shall be seen later - particularly with regard to the idea of al-Şarfah - had been of Mu'tazilite origin, be it al-Nazzām or al-Jāhiḡ.

By the end of the fourth century a distinguished Mu'tazilite al-Qādi 'Abd al-Jabbār strongly repudiated the conception of al-Şarfah, meanwhile it was supported by eminent Ash'arites and Shi'ites. Al-Şarfah, at any rate, is in essence a negative attitude, however its conception by the later distinguished Shi'ite scholar al-Sharīf al-Murtadā and other Ash'arite doctors may differ from that attributed to al-Nazzām.<sup>2</sup>

In considering the rest of the points put forth to signify I'jāz, they may be viewed in two different stages; those which were enumerated or reflected upon by the early al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭabī and those recognised later in the studies of al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār.

In the first period we find that both al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭabī made reference to;

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1. Particularly in the studies of al-Bāqillānī, as we shall see later.
  2. For al-Murtadā's conception of al-Şarfah see Mhh. Bāqir, 'Bihar al-Anwār' vol. 6, unpaginated.

- 1) al-Balāghah (eloquence)
- 2) al-Sarfah (prevention)
- 3) the foretelling of future events.

The first point alluded to in al-Khattābī's treatise, instead of its psychological and historical tendency, depends mainly on the point of the challenge.

- 4) the challenge, on the other hand, and
- 5) the inability to rival the Qur'ān.

These latter two were recognised by al-Rummānī alone. In the later studies of al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār, though they did not include them among the seven points of I'jāz, both contributed towards them at considerable length.

- 6) the infringement of the ordinary and the natural laws.

This was al-Rummānī's sixth point and incorporated in the definition of the term Mu'jizah by al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār.

- 7) the comparability of the Qur'ān with other prophetic miracles.

This was the last point mentioned by al-Rummānī. Although reference is made to it in all the studies of I'jāz, it was not however recognised as a point of I'jāz as such.

In the second stage we find that the first three points mentioned by both al-Rummānī and al-Khattābī were pursued in over-elaborated detail, and for the last four points mentioned by the former alone, were substituted four different points.

- 1) The old question of the creation of the Qur'ān, which had been occupying theologians for the previous two centuries or so produced a new element in the discussion of I'jāz. The old charge was levelled at the Sunnite-Ash'arites, who were of the belief that the Qur'ān was not created, from which their rivals appeared to deduce that the Qur'ān is inimitable because it is eternal or an imitation of the eternal speech of God. This in effect compelled Bāqillānī, in most of the works that have survived, to write in defence of the Ash'arite position.<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, his rival, took advantage of this, to them, ~~anadmitted~~ point, to criticize the Ash'arites.<sup>2</sup>
- 2) The second point which developed during this period was the congruity of the Qur'ān's teaching with logical premises.<sup>3</sup> With such rational overtones the Mu'tazilite origin would seem obvious, but in fact it was the view indulged in by the Ash'arites of Khurāsān. Al-Bāqillānī, however, felt it his duty to direct them or discuss the unsound principle on which it had been founded, in his book on principles.<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār on the other hand regarded it as the view of the lawyers, grammarians and philologists.<sup>5</sup>

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1. E.g. 'Hidāyah', vol. XII, ff. 18b-21a; vol. XIII, f. 1b; 'I'jāz' p. 395; 'Tamhid', ed. McCarthy, p. 239.  
 2. 'Mughnī', vol. XVI, pp. 318-322.  
 3. Ibid. p. 329; 'Hidāyah al-Mustarshidīn', vol. XII, ff. 17a-18b.  
 4. See 'I'jāz', p. 70.  
 5. 'Mughnī', vol. XVI, p. 330.

3) The third point, the disappearance of contradiction and difference in the text of the Qur'an, was but derived from the interpretation of a certain verse in the Qur'an (IV/82), "... If it had been from other than God they would have found therein much incongruity." It would also seem to have been the view held by the Mu'tazilite 'Abū 'Alī al-Jubba'ī and his son Abū Hāshim early in the century.<sup>1</sup> Neither 'Abd al-Jabbār nor al-Bāqillānī denied it, but they did not admit it as a point of I'jāz.

4) Eloquence and composition, whether advocated jointly or with preference of one over the other, of all the points demonstrated to signify I'jāz or the inimitability of the Qur'an, remained the crucial points of the studies of I'jāz throughout the fourth century. Here we shall sketch briefly the preferences and tendencies among the various schools, leaving aside greater detail until we come to these studies.

A) Eloquence (al-Balāghah)

The emphasis on eloquence as a means to signify the inimitability of the Qur'an had been initiated by such eminent Mu'tazilites as Abū 'Alī and his son Abū Hāshim by the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> These views we shall meet in the study of 'Abd al-Jabbār. Their opponent, and contemporary of 'Abd al-Jabbār,

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1. Ibid. p. 338

2. 'Mughni', vol. XVI, p. 197 sqq.

the Ash'arite al-Bāqillānī, however, declared that those who advocated eloquence among the Mu'tazilah were not successful in their definition of it,<sup>1</sup> but this of course was only a biased opinion by an opponent, for by the middle of the fourth century al-Rummānī, the Mu'tazilite made eloquence the sole issue in his treatise from which al-Bāqillānī himself flagrantly and unacknowledgingly borrowed at length, as he did also from other Mu'tazilite authors with regard particularly to this point as we shall see later.

Eloquence was also the theme elaborated in al-Khaṭṭābī's disquisition. By the end of the century, though the majority of the Shi'ite school appeared to have supported the new attitude of al-Sharīf al-Murtadā towards al-Ṣarfah, some of them like al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), favoured eloquence.<sup>2</sup> Finally eloquence was the main thesis of 'Abd al-Jabbār.

#### B) The composition (al-Nazm)

The mere fact that al-Jāhiz's missing work and those of al-Wāsitī, Ibn Ikhshīd and al-Balkhī, all of whom were Mu'tazilite, were entitled or sub-titled 'Nazm al-Qur'ān' (the composition of the Qur'ān), would perhaps underline the fact that the conception of composition was more appealing to them or that they conceived the inimitability of the Qur'ān in its composition. This is also confirmed for us in the studies of their rivals, the Ash'arites<sup>3</sup>

1. 'Hidayat al-Mustarshidīn' vol. XII, f. 9a.

2. See Muḥammad Bāqir, 'Bihar al-Anwār', vol. 6, (no pagination), see chapter on I'jāz.

3. "Some of the Qadarites", writes al-Bāqillānī, ('Hidāyah' vol. XII, f. 9a), "considered I'jāz to be in the composition which contains the correct meaning but did not consider eloquence and the nobility of diction." See also 'I'jāz' pp. 7, 377.

and the Shi'ites.<sup>1</sup> But this was not by any means the generally professed view of the Mu'tazilites as a whole. Al-Rummanī in the mid-fourth century emphasized it and the Shāfi'ite al-Khaṭṭābī contributed towards it in some detail. By the end of the fourth century the Mu'tazilite 'Abd al-Jabbār only accepted it resentfully as a subsidiary point to his main thesis which gave prominence to eloquence. Meanwhile composition gained a new protagonist, the Ash'arite al-Bāqillānī.

#### 5) A Missing chapter

We cannot proceed very far in any discussion of the question of I'jāz without reference to al-Jāhiz. His work 'Naẓm al-Qur'an' (the composition of the Qur'an), which was accessible to such scholars as al-Bāqillānī towards the end of the fourth century, in all probability had been popular towards the end of the third century and quite likely influenced such Mu'tazilite scholars as Muhammad b. Yazid (or Zayd) al-Wāsiṭī. If al-Jāhiz's work meant little or nothing to al-Bāqillānī, the Ash'arite-Sunnite theologian, although the idea of composition was his main conception of I'jāz, to al-Wāsiṭī, who in a way may be considered a contemporary of al-Jāhiz and was himself a Mu'tazilite of great fame, the situation was quite different. Yet although al-Wāsiṭī was a distinguished Mu'tazilite and his work bears the same title, in part, as that of

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1. According to al-Quṭub al-Rāwandī, 'al-Ḥawa'ij wal-Jarāih', p. 269, this was the accepted view of the majority of the Mu'tazilah.

al-Jāhiz, considering the differences between the various factions and schisms of the school of Mu'tazilah alone during the second half of the third century, it is possible that the differences between al-Jāhiz and al-Wāsiṭī were even greater over the question of I'jāz. The fact, however, that we find the later Mu'tazilite, al-Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbār, a contemporary of al-Bāqillānī, praising both al-Jāhiz and al-Wāsiṭī, proves neither that al-Wāsiṭī was influenced by al-Jāhiz nor he himself by either of them, and his own attitude toward the idea of composition being that of reluctant acquiescence perhaps indicates that though the subject or the title was treated by various Mu'tazilite scholars their views were different.

It was, however, during the fifth century that al-Wāsiṭī's work received a wider popularity, strangely enough at the hand of an Ash'arite-Sunnite scholar, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078), who wrote two commentaries, a long and a short one, on the same work.<sup>1</sup> Further, the fact that among the pupils of al-Wāsiṭī was Ibn al-Ikshid (d. 326/937), who likewise composed a work by the title of 'Nazm al-Qur'ān',<sup>2</sup> and who happened to be the tutor whose name is closely linked with another scholar, al-Rumḡānī, as we shall soon see, who promoted the study of I'jāz in the fourth century.

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1. H. Kh. 'Kashf al-Zunūn', vol. 1, p. 351, no. 917.

2. Fihrist, ed. Flügel, p. 38.

The idea of the composition of the Qur'ān, at least the works thus entitled appears to have engaged other scholars of the third-fourth century also, yet none of their works are known to us.<sup>1</sup> From all this it can be seen that the chapter on the composition is still largely missing.

#### 6) The century of the specialists

From a general literary stand point it has been rightly suggested that the fourth/tenth century was the century of the specialists in the literary field - more particularly of literary theory - who abandoned generalization.<sup>2</sup> If however such a pioneer work as the 'K. al-Badi' of Ibn al-Mu'tazz is to be taken into consideration, the initiative in this respect must have been taken well over a quarter of a century before even the fourth century began. Hence Ibn al-Mu'tazz's new approach was primarily an endeavour to abandon both philologists' and grammarians' analyses and to set the new basis for the literary theory which was consequently applauded by the most outstanding critics of the fourth century.

The second half of the third century witnessed two important movements, in both the field of literary study as well as in the field of Qur'ānic study. In consideration of the former the time was ripe for critics of poetry and prose to inaugurate the criteria on which the literary output should be evaluated, a

1. Such names as the Traditionist, Ibn Abi Dawūd (d. 316/928), see, Ibid p. 233, also 38; the author and rhetorician, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (322/934), Ibid, p. 138; Yāqūt, Mu'jam, vol. VII, p. 11.

2. G. von Grunebaum, J.A.O.S. LXI, p. 57.

tendency which was by no means altogether new. What characterized it most was perhaps that it evoked a new approach and arrangement of the efforts accomplished in the previous decades. Although the traditional bases of criticism - mainly philology and grammar - were the main tools employed for the task, one notices a gradual shift of emphasis in the field, ~~was~~, for instance, in the case of the two great masters, Tha'lab (d. 291/903) and al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), whose major works were either wholly philological in the case of the 'K. al-Faṣīḥ' of the former, or, as in the 'K. al-Kāmil' of the latter, which is a compound of philology, grammar as well as stylistic discussion.<sup>1</sup> Apart from these major works they left also short treatises reflecting exclusively on such topics as 'the meanings of poetry',<sup>2</sup> 'the rules of poetry' and eloquence.<sup>3</sup> It was these pioneer attempts which we have reason to believe paved the way for the aforementioned authors' pupils, such as Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Qudāmah ibn Ja'far, and their successors, although in the case of Qudāmah, non-Arabic elements, however slight, must be taken into account. The curious fact is however that neither of the famous pupils seem to have acknowledged their indebtedness to either of the aforementioned masters and each claimed that his own work was the first

1. Among the works attributed to Tha'lab there is a treatise entitled 'Ma'āni al-Shi'r'. See 'Fihrist', Flugel edn. p. 74.

2. 'The rules of poetry' of Tha'lab, was edited by C. Schiaparelli, 'Acts du Huitieme Congres International des Orientalistes', (Leiden 1891), pp. 183-211. To al-Mubarrad also a work of the same title, 'Qawā'id al-Shi'r', is ascribed, see 'Fihrist' (op. cit) p. 59. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. VII, p. 144.

of its kind.

As for the Qur'ānic studies, for the first time I'jāz emerged as an independent branch of study or as a new topic. The question which faces us here is, how much, rather how little, do we know of those early studies of I'jāz?

The straightforward answer is, so far nothing, if only because none of them are available to us and even worse neither are the commentaries made on some of them.

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(contd.)

3. Although Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist' (op. cit.) p. 59. <sup>and</sup> [Yāqūt (op. cit.) vol. VII, p. 144, recorded a work entitled 'al-Balāghah' in the list of al-Mubarrad's works, of which nothing so far is known, there appeared to have survived a short treatise which originally was an answer to a question on the eloquence of prose and poetry, discovered and edited by G. von Grunebaum, 'Orientalia' 1941, p. 373 sqq.

CHAPTER VS H O R T E R W O R K S

-1-

AL-RUMMĀNĪ  
 (Abū al-Hasan 'Alī Ibn 'Isā )  
 296/384 A.H.= 908/996A.D.

" But had 'Alī Ibn 'Isā left anything  
 for us to contribute ?" \*

Being the answer of al-Sāhib b. 'Abbād  
 (385/995) to the question as to  
 whether he would write a commentary on  
 the Qur'an.

\* Ibn al-Murtadā, al-Munyah wal-  
 Amal, ed. T. W. Arnold, p.65,  
 Hyderabad, 1316 A.H.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

The Man

The original account of al-Rummānī<sup>1</sup> is presumably that handed down by his contemporary Ibn al-Nadīm, the author of 'al-Fihrist'.<sup>2</sup> From his first account it is clear that all later biographers<sup>3</sup>, directly or indirectly, drew their information, with an additional and critical assessment. Ibn al-Nadīm stated that he was born in Baghdād, <sup>that</sup> his family originated ~~from~~ <sup>and that</sup> Sāmarrā, ~~he~~ was a celebrated master of a variety of literary arts; a grammarian, lexicographer, jurist as well as a commentator. In addition to this the rest of the biographers declare his tutors in grammar and philology to have been Ibn Durayd and Ibn al-Sarrāj and others. In scholastic theology he was educated by the band of Ibn al-Ikhshīd, which can also be inferred from Ibn al-Nadīm's account<sup>4</sup>, and amongst his pupils they declare Abū al-Qāsim al-Tanukhī and Abū Muḥammad al-Jawharī. This is the general portrait given of him, but perhaps we should look more closely at some individual comments on his attributes for further enlightenment.

- (1) On this 'Nishah' wrote Ibn Khallikān (Wafayāt, No. 446; De Slane trans. vol. 2, pp. 242-3) "Rummānī may possibly signify a seller of Rumman or pomegranates, but it may also serve to designate a native of Kasr ar-Rumman, a well-known castle at Wasit. A great number of persons have received their surnames for one or the other reasons, but which of these it was that procured it for Abu al-Hasan is not specified by as-Samāni". The fact is however that al-Sama'ānī did specify it, "Among those who originated from Kasr al-Rumman were Yaḥya b. Dinār and the grammarian Abū al-Hasan, i.e. Rummānī" Cf. f. 258b, also Ibn al-Athīr, 'al-Lubāh', vol. 1, pp. 475-6; Yāqūt, 'Muḥjam al-Buldān', vol. 3, pp. 66-7; Ibn Hajar, 'Tabṣīr al-Muntabih', BM. ms. Or. 3056, f. 20b; Dhahabī, 'Al-Moshtabih', ed. B. de Jong, p. 229.
- (2) Fihrist, Cairo edn. pp. 94-5.

The Grammarian

The conventions of grammar were greatly enhanced by the addition of a new dimension to their scrutiny by al-Rummānī, who in his study combined logic with grammar. As an innovation it was greatly misunderstood and consequently condemned by his contemporaries and although his output was copious his reputation as a grammarian was much impaired. The verdict of his rivals was that this new approach was completely irrelevant to the traditional studies of grammar or at the very least impossible to benefit from.

His contemporary the grammarian Abū Alī al-Fārisī (d.370) said of him, "If grammar is what al-Rummānī says, we have none of it; but if grammar is what we say, he has none of it".<sup>1</sup> Six centuries later, Suyūṭī, commenting on this remark, pronounced, "I say grammar is what had been conceived by al-Fārisī; since people never extend its boundaries to mingle with those of logic. It has ever been so since the time of the earliest pioneers; al-Khalīl and Sibawayh, and their contemporaries, and the generations that followed".<sup>2</sup>

3 & 4 (cont.)

(3) To name only a few: Sama'ānī, 'al-Ansāb', f. 258 b; al-Qiftī, 'Inbāh al-Ruwāt', Abū al-Faḍl edn. vol. 2, No. 476, p. 292; al-Khatīb, 'Ta'rīkh Baghdād', vol. 12, pp. 16-7; Ibn al-Anbārī, 'Nuzhat al-Alibbā', p. 390, Suyūṭī, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasirīn', p. 24, No. 74d, Ibn al-Imād, 'Shadharāt al-Dhahab', vol. 3, p. 109.

(4) Fihrist, Cairo edn., p. 246.

(1) Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 5, p. 281.

(2) Ibid. Suyūṭī, 'Bughyah', p. 344.

Al-Rummānī's resolution to analyse grammatical problems through the medium of dialectical premises made of him, "The grammarian who was never understood by his contemporaries".<sup>1</sup> His most devoted pupil Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī ( d.400/1009 ) related the following illuminating story, "I saw a man from Marw in the circle of the grammarian Abū 'Alī. The man asked him about the differences between Man, Mā, Min and Mimmā; there upon Abū 'Alī dealt at great length with the problem, dividing and explaining the particles, drawing the line between each and the other, illustrating these by various examples and finally attaching to each its grammatical rules and conditions. Alas ! All this fell on stony ground, the man neither understood nor yet could visualise the solutions. He requested therefore more clarification and further analysis. Abū 'Alī repeated once and yet again but the results were similar. This repetition bored him and his patience was exhausted, then he said: "O man, it is my duty to explain to people and those who are not half asleep, but it is beyond my capability to make animals, dark or fair, understand. A man like you could not understand after all this effort? Please go into another circle perhaps some other time."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Ibid. Iḥṣān al-Anbārī, 'Nuzhat', p. 390.

(2) Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 5, pp. 282-3.

Whatever may be inferred from this solitary anecdote and however ignominiously Rummānī, in his endeavours to co-ordinate logic and grammar, was mirrored in the eyes of his contemporaries, particularly al-Fārisī,<sup>1</sup> justification of his methods is unnecessary in this investigation. But despite the seeming difficulty and fruitlessness of his new approach it was ever a fixed epithet of him, "The Grammarian al-Rummānī" or "Shaykh al-‘Arabiyyah". This mastery produced thirty works<sup>2</sup> over half of which were commentaries on grammatical studies by the most outstanding authorities of Arabic grammar :- works by such men as Sibawayah, Mubarrad, Māzinī, Akhfash, Ibn al-Sarrāj and others.

#### The Theologian

In his early life al-Rummānī frequented the circle of the Mu‘tazilite master, Ibn al-Ikhshīd (d. 326/937)<sup>3</sup>.

- (1) Cf. Two important modern studies.  
 (A) That of ‘Abd al-Fattāh Shalabī on ‘Abū ‘Ali al-Fārisī’ who reduced al-Fārisī’s judgement to a personal vendetta against al-Rummānī, having no bearing on the literary aspect of grammar and logic. He also tries to free Rummānī from a like accusation and proves in his argument that it was Fārisī who mixed his grammar with logic to a greater degree. pp. 588-612 and particularly p. 597, 610-11.  
 (B) That of Māzin al-Mubārak, ‘al-Rummānī al-Naḥwī’, pp. 78-85, in which the contrary is proclaimed. See also pp. 223-40.
- (2) A list of his works in grammar is compiled by Māzin al-Mubārak (in the above mentioned work.) pp. 387-92. See also Sa‘īd al-Afghānī, ‘K. al-‘I‘rāb Abyāt Mulghizah
- (3) Ibn al-Nadīm, ‘al-Fihrist’, p. 246.

The relationship between the master and his pupil being so well-established that some of the biographers<sup>1</sup> surnamed him al-Ikhshīdī, in deference to his master. Ibn al-Ikhshīd had been the pupil of al-Wāsiṭī, who as we have seen earlier initiated the study of Iḥjāz, or at least co-ordinated it under that name, indicating, perhaps, that this newly formed branch of study passed over from al-Wāsiṭī to al-Rummānī by way of the master Ibn al-Ikhshīd, who in his turn also dealt with the subject under the heading of 'Naẓm al-Qurʾān'<sup>2</sup>, the familiar title used by Jāḥiẓ nearly a century earlier.

This continuity among these scholars places the problem squarely within the framework of the Muʿtazilah theology, and while the future seemed to promise further elaboration of the old questions - the provision of new answers to the current problems - al-Rummānī paradoxically, judging from some references<sup>3</sup>, presents us with an enigma emanating initially from the irreconcilability of his avowed Muʿtazilah doctrine with his alledged sympathetic participation in Shiʿism. Was he, as a link from his master, a Muʿtazilite proper, or was he in addition to this a Shiʿite?

It is unfortunate, however, that none of his phenomenal literary output<sup>4</sup> in theology is so far traceable, whereby a clear insight could have been gained as to his true adherence. But let us try to form an opinion from the material presented in various other sources.

- (1) Suyūṭī, 'Bughyat', p. 244; al-ʿUmari, 'Masālik al-Absār', quoted by M. al-Mubārak in 'al-Rummānī al-Naḥwī', p. 53.  
 (2) Ibn al-Nadīm, op.cit, p. 57.  
 (3) Suyūṭī, 'Tabaqāt al-Mufasirīn', p.24, No. 74d. ʿUmari, as above.

The version given by his contemporary Ibn al-Nadīm, the author of 'al-Fihrist', gives no indication as to his participation in Shi'ism, in fact it proves the contrary.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the account given by al-Rummānī's own pupil Abū al-Qāsim al-Tanūkhī<sup>2</sup>, sets forth his leaning and sympathy towards Shi'ism.

A compromise between these two differing contemporary accounts might lead us for the moment to believe that until the year 377/987, when Ibn al-Nadīm completed 'al-Fihrist', al-Rummānī was purely a Mu'tazilite, after which, in the closing years of his life, he inclined towards Shi'ism. But this is highly improbable as we know that the grandfather<sup>3</sup> al-Tanūkhī had died long before al-Rummānī in 342/953, therefore his leaning towards Shi'ism must have been known long before that time and Ibn al-Nadīm was completely ignorant of this fact.

4 (cont.)

- (4) Over sixty works were attributed to him in this respect, a list of which was compiled by Māzin al-Mubārak in 'Al-Rummānī al-Naḥwī', pp. 100-3.
- (1) Ibn al-Nadīm, 'The completion of al-Fihrist', p. 6, wherein it is found that al-Rummānī the Mu'tazilite was trying to convert his neighbour, the Shi'ite poet al-Sariyy al-Raffā, to Mu'tazilism.
- (2) al-'Umarī, as previously quoted.
- (3) There were three Tanukhīs, the grandfather, the son, and the grandson, all of whom were known by the name 'Abū al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī', see Yāqūt, vol. 5, pp. 301, 332, vol. 6, p. 251. The son is reported to have been a Mu'tazilite-Shi'ite; Cf. Ibn Shākir al-Kutbī, 'Fawāt al-Wafayāt', vol. 2, p. 86.

The first inference made by M. al-Mubārak in 'al-Rummānī the grammarian' is not quite true, as he asserted that the claim of al-Rummānī to Shi'ism was first propagated by the late al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) who was followed by al-Dāwūdī (d. 941/1534)<sup>1</sup>. Suyūṭī's own statement is preceded by the introductory words "al-Qiftī said"<sup>2</sup>, but this latter can not be supported from al-Qiftī's (d. 644/1246) work 'Inbah al-Ruwāh'.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Dhahabī, however, who died in 748/1347, nearly a century and a half before Suyūṭī, reported that al-Rummānī was a Mu'tazilite-Rāfiḍī, he added, "From al-Rummānī's own day until our present time Rafḍ rejection, a branch of Shi'ism and Mu'tazilism have been joined hand in hand together".<sup>4</sup>

(1) al-Rummānī al-Naḥwī, p. 59.

(2) Suyūṭī, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasirīn', quoted above.

(3) ed. Abū al-Faḍl. See vol. 2, pp. 292-6, No. 476.

(4) 'Mizān al-I'tidāl', vol. 2, pp. 2, 35, No. 1825. The connection is also stressed by al-Maqrīzī (Khuṭaṭ, vol. 3, pp. 296, 304) who noticed "Scarcely ever is it found a Mu'tazilite who is not a Rāfiḍī, except for few".

This statement is particularly important, as the intimate association between the sects is verified by another of al-Rummānī's contemporaries, al-Maqdisī (d. 391/1000) who noticed the amalgamation of the two sects in several provinces<sup>1</sup>, a contributory factor to which was the decline of the Mu'tazilite strength under duress, since the reign of Mutawakkil well over a century before, coupled with the transfer of the political and cultural life of the Islamic state to the hands of the Buwayhids in 334/945, when Bāghdād was reduced to the status of a provincial capital and Shi'ism triumphantly marked a new phase throughout the century from North Africa to the borders of eastern Persia. Despite this coincidence of circumstances, added to whatever has been recorded, it is hard to establish al-Rummānī's participation in Shi'ism on solid ground.

One of the indicative documents supporting his participation may have owed its origin to the fact, as reported, that he wrote a work entitled 'al-Imāmah'<sup>2</sup>, a well established tenet of Shi'ite theology. But even then his views seem to have disturbed some of the Shi'ite authors. Such a one was his own pupil, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (known also as Ibn al-Mu'allim) who strongly rejected the book and refuted it.

(1) 'Aḥsan al-Taḡāsīḥ,' De Goeje edn., pp. 238, 493.

(2) For such authorship one finds misleading information by the author of 'al-Dhari'ah fī Taṣānīf al-Shi'ah', who also acknowledged the Mu'tazilite al-Wāsiṭi, as a Shi'ite, probably on the strength of his also having written a book called al-Imāmah', See p. 917.

Al-Ṭūsī the Shi'ite commentator was also dissatisfied with some of his ideas, as can be inferred from such a remark as, "This however is contrary to al-Rummānī and his Mu'tazilite ilk".<sup>1</sup> The difference was not literary but dogmatic.

A final word on Rummānī's participation in the study of logic is perhaps due to his devoted pupil, Abu Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī<sup>2</sup> which clears much of the obscurity enveloping the man, "As for 'Alī ibn 'Isā, he was a man of high rank in grammar, theology, philology and prosody, as well as logic - for which he was censured. Nonetheless, he did not follow the path of the founder of logic. Nay he individualized a new skill and showed a great proficiency."

#### The Commentator

The disapprobation which Rummānī's literary activities excited among scholars, reported by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,<sup>3</sup> did not cast doubt on his stature as a commentator, perhaps for the reason that his work in this field appears to have gained a masterly reputation which was applauded for the effective contribution it made to the study of Tafsīr.

The Shi'ite al-Ṭūsī found it among the best of rare commentaries of the time even more than that of the great al-Ṭabarī<sup>4</sup>.

(1) 'al-Tibyān', vol. 2, pp. 357-8.

(2) 'al-Imtā' wal-Mu'ānṣah', vol. 1, p. 133.

(3) 'Al-Basā'ir wal-Dhakhā'ir, pp. 140-141.

(4) Cf. His commentary, 'al-Tibyān', Introduction, vol. 1, p. 1, also; al-Sharīf al-Murtadā's, 'Āmālī', vol. 2, p. 305.

The Mu'tazilite al-Zamakhsharī, as recorded<sup>1</sup>, even went so far as to mirror Rummānī's approach. The author himself regarded his work as, "My commentary is like a garden, all desirable fruits can be gathered therefrom"<sup>2</sup>, alluding presumably to the multitude of literary sciences he employed therein. We have already noted at the opening of this chapter the laudatory acknowledgement of the eminent al-Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād.

### Qur'ānic Sciences

Beside his commentary, biographers also attributed to him a number of other works on the Qur'ān most of which carry as part of the title the phrase '.... concerning Qur'ānic science'. The rest deal with 'Gharīb' and 'Alifāt'<sup>3</sup>.

- (1) Ibn Taghrī Bardī, 'al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah', vol. 2, pt. 2, No. 2, p. 54.
- (2) Al-Qiftī, 'Inbāh', vol. 2, No. 476, p. 295.
- (3) Ibn al-Murtadā, 'al-Munyah wal-Amal' (Arnold edn.), p. 65.

Rummānī's commentary and 'Kitāb al-Jāmi'

One of the perplexing problems confronting the student dealing with Rummānī's work is the various titles given to this particular book. Were there two different works as suggested by the two alternative titles,<sup>1</sup> or was it in fact only one book known by two alternative titles? The author himself gives the name of a work of commentary as 'al-Jāmi' (The Comprehensive) as did some of the biographers, the only difference being that while he called it 'al-Jāmi lī 'Ilm al-Qur'ān' the biographers give the names 'al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr' or 'al-Jāmi' fī al-Tafsīr'. One perhaps should not worry about the phrase Lī 'Ilm al-Qur'ān as the majority of the author's other works on commentary seem to carry it.<sup>2</sup>

Qiftī, however, who took the trouble to record the works of Rummānī almost in their entirety, records it as did the author himself as 'Kitāb al-Jāmi' lī 'Ilm al-Qur'ān',<sup>3</sup> which may also strengthen the case of there being only one book known by two different titles, that which the author himself had chosen, and was recorded by al-Qiftī, and because it was not more than a commentary other biographers called it Tafsīr.

The word Jāmi' itself seems to have been put in different order sometimes, as in the case of the biographer, Ibn al-Murtaḍā who instead of attributing it as a qualifying epithet to the book, as did a good number of biographers, assigned it to the author himself, calling him "Alī al-Jāmi', in all good faith.

(1) Cf. M. al-Mubārak, 'al-Rummānī al-Nahwī, pp. 93-7.

(2) Qiftī's, list of Rummānī's works, 'Inbah ..., vol. 2,

(3) Ibid.

(4) 'Al-Munyah wal-'Amal', p. 65.

No. 476, p.295.

Apart from biographers who mentioned the name only as Rumṁānī's Tafsīr<sup>1</sup> the rest fell to choosing between the names; 'al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr'<sup>2</sup> or 'al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr'<sup>3</sup>, in both cases al-Tafsīr and al-Jāmi' were identical and interchangeable. At last Ibn al-Isḥāq al-Miṣrī closed the rift between the two names, as can be inferred from his statement, "It is Rumṁānī's commentary entitled 'al-Jāmi'".

We have been fortunate enough to see two portions<sup>4</sup> of these hypothetically two works in which it is noted that the methods are alike, which would reassure us that they are not but one.

From the unique manuscript, in the Bibliotheque Nationale, of part seven (Arabe 6523), which begins at verse 55 in Surah 3 and continues until verse 12 in Surah 4, it can be inferred that this 'magnum opus' comprised approximately sixty big volumes, as this part seven alone, containing 190 folios, covers only the first half of ~~part~~ part four of the Qur'ān.

- (1) Eg. Ibn al-Anbārī, 'Nushat...', p. 390; Suyūṭī, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn', p. 24, No. 74, also 'Bughyah', p. 344; Yāqūt, Mu'jam, vol. 5, p. 281.
- (2) Ibn al-Athīr, 'al-Kāmil', vol. 9, p. 74, Ibn al-Jawzī has chosen the word al-Kathīr instead of al-Kabīr, unlike others, referring perhaps to the authors many works in this field or perhaps it could be because of another form of misreading or misprint, see 'Muntazam', vol. 7, p. 176, and Ibn Taghrī Bardī, quoted above.
- (3) See also Ibn Sīdah, 'al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ', vol. 1, p. 13. The 'Index General des Manuscrits Arabes, de la Bibliotheque Nationale', p. 61, Paris, 1953, as well as Brockelmann, Sup. 1/175, recorded the word 'al-Jāmi'' this word is not found, however, in the title folio of this volume itself, cf. f. 2a, all that is found is, 'Tafsīr of Rumṁānī' or (Vol.) VII of Tafsīr al-Rumṁānī.
- (4) For the portion entitled 'al-Jāmi'' see M. Mubārak (op.cit) pp. 94-5.

The method, already alluded to, characteristically utilises a tutorial form of question and answer, in the majority of cases, and embraces a great range of grammatical, lexical and dogmatic subjects as well as explanations of the divergent schools of reading and occasionally deals with the relation between the verses themselves. From a critical viewpoint it employs a large number of rhetorical figures throughout. To list only a few as examples: Majāz, Tashbīh (metaphor, simile f. 117a; Ījāz (conciseness) 15b, 22a, 108a; Tajnīs (paronomasia) 5b; Taṣrīf (variation) 60a; Kināyah (metonymy) 18a; Majāz (tropical use of words) and Haqīqah (~~literal use~~) 76b, 82b, 19a, 81b; Mathal (parable) p. 187b, etc.

The portion reproduced below may be taken as a typical example of the method - from the Qurʾān, verse III/117.

"The likeness of that <sup>which</sup> they expend in this present life is as the likeness of a freezing blast that smites the tillage of a people who wronged themselves, and it destroyed that;"

He begins with the question, "It may be asked, what is the implicatively omitted word so as to complete the parable as a proper simile? The answer is that the virtually omitted word is the word Ihlāk (devastation), as though it is said, "The likeness in devastation of that which they expend is as the devastation of a biting icy wind ... etc. The word devastation (at the beginning of the sentence) is omitted or spared because the rest of the sentence implied it, although it should be assumed for clarity of meaning,

and also because the parable is in origin a simile, wherein both objects of comparison should be presented (i.e. The Mushabbah and Mushabbah bihī), but if, however, <sup>a</sup> ~~statement~~ is ~~defined~~ ~~with~~ indicative implication (Dalālat al-Taḍmīn) it would permit for such omission as would <sup>be</sup> restrictive of the circumstantial state (Dalālat al-Hāl)

Furthermore, there is another approach in analysis, that is to say, the likeness of that which they expend is like the harvest devastated by wind, in which case the comparison is between their expenditure and the wind-devastated harvest".<sup>1</sup>

Having dealt with other words lexically, he continued to enquire further, "But it may be asked where is the parable? The answer is in the similitude which becomes as popular as a proper noun." This point he explores further, "When devastated harvest reaches such popularity it becomes an example for the expenditure resulting in calamity and suitable for similitude."

These two endeavours demonstrated by the author in interpreting this verse would indicate that the relation between simile and parable was still considered inseparable,<sup>2</sup> as it had been in the third century, particularly in the studies of Jāhīz, as was seen earlier. Despite the great effort the author displayed in analyzing it in the first place as a proverb, he was running, in fact, against the definition he set for the proverb.<sup>3</sup>

(1) F. 78b.

(2) In the fifth century they were considered as two separate categories. cf. 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjānī, 'Asrār al-Balāghah', ed. Ritter, pp. 84-8.

(3) See also his definition of parables on f. 8b.

But he relied on analogy to substitute for the missing part (i.e. the Mushabbah bihī). In the second analysis he made less effort. Analogy, in later times, became the only distinguishing feature between the two categories.<sup>1</sup>

'Kitāb al-Jāmi‘' on the other hand may be considered one of the earliest commentaries concerned with rhetorical approach. In this Rummānī can be taken as one of the early pioneers, long before Zamakhsharī in his 'Khūshshāf', and it has been rightly enumerated in the list of works which in later times promoted the studies of Balāghah.<sup>2</sup>

(1) Jurjānī, as above.

(2) Ibn Abī al-Iṣbaḥ al-Miṣrī, 'Taḥrīr al-Taḥbīr'. p. 88.

'KITĀB AL-NUKAT FĪ I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN'.<sup>1</sup>

All that is known to us about this book is that it was written at the request of a dear friend or pupil, who made it clear that it should be brief and without unnecessary discourse. Of those who mention it, none do more than list its name,<sup>2</sup> or quote from it anonymously. Rummānī commences immediately by pointing out that the niceties (Nukat) of I'jāz consist of the following seven facets :-

1. The relinquishment of opposition, despite the compelling urge and deepest desire for it.
2. The universal challenge.
3. Al-Şarfah.
4. Al-Balāghah (eloquence).
5. The true foretelling of future events.
6. The violation of the customary.
7. The quality, as of miracles.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) This was published for the first time in Delhi by 'Abd al-'Alīm in 1934, under the title 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān'. The edition used here is by M. Khalafallah and M.Z. Sallām, with other treatises on I'jāz, called 'Thalāthah Rasā'il' etc. pp. 69-104 by the title 'al-Nukat fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān'.
- (2) Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist', ed. Flugel, p. 64; Yāgūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 5, p. 281 recorded it under 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān'; Qiftī, 'Inbāh', pp. 2-295 and Ibn al-Isbā'ī, 'Badi'ī', pp. 5, 39 recorded the full name.
- (3) See p. 69; also M. Khalafallah, 'Two fourth century A.H. approaches to the study of I'jāz' 'Bulletin of Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, vol. VIII, p. 15, 1954.

The principal idea of the book, which occupies the major portion of it, is eloquence. The rest, however, to which he devoted only the last four pages, is of a more doctrinal and theological nature; notable among them is the theory of al-Sarfah.<sup>1</sup>

### Eloquence or Balāghah

Balāghah being the principal idea of the book, Rummānī began first by dividing it into three main categories, the most excellent, the mediocre and the lowest. To the first he assigns the composition of the Qur'ān, the real Mu'jiz, or inimitable. The literary production of the men of letters is placed in the other two categories.

This is the general layout, but his penetration into the subject is even more remarkable as he seems to have cared little for the conventional definition set previously.<sup>2</sup> "Eloquence", he argued, "is not merely the understanding of the idea spoken, an idea may be comprehended equally by two different persons, one of whom is a most eloquent man while the other is inarticulate ('ayy), nor is it a mere transmission of meaning into any form of words, a noble idea may be wrapped in a unpleasantly vulgar form or an artificially repulsive word. The essence of eloquence" he concluded, "is the communication of meaning to the heart in the best possible form of verbal expression".<sup>3</sup>

(1) p. 101.

(2) Cf. Jāhiz, 'Bayān', vol. 1, pp. 113-15, 161, 220, etc.

(3) 'Nukat', p. 69.

Although this is his very concise definition, as circumstance required of him, in 'K. al-Nukat', it is by no means his last word on the matter. Al-Huṣarī<sup>1</sup> (d. 413/1022), in more than one instance, and Ibn Rashīq<sup>2</sup> (d. 463/1070) have both quoted even more elaborate definitions from al-Rummānī's other studies, presumably his commentary 'al-Jami' lī 'ilm al-Qur'ān' to which he referred his questioners for further discussion.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) 'Zahr al-Ādāb', vol. 1, p. 118, here quoted the same definition as in 'K. al-Nukat'; on the same page there is more about eloquence and eloquent men. On p. 108 are thorough details concerning both prose, particularly the Qur'ān, and poetry.
- (2) 'Umdah', vol. 1, p. 162, Ibn Rashīq's quotation differs from that of Huṣarī and which indicates an earlier work by Rummānī.
- (3) p. 95.

After the definition had been given he divided eloquence into the ten following figures of speech:-

- |      |                   |   |   |
|------|-------------------|---|---|
| (1)  | <u>Ījāz</u>       | = | conciseness   |
| (2)  | <u>Tashbīh</u>    | = | simile  |
| (3)  | <u>Isti'ārah</u>  | = | metaphor  |
| (4)  | <u>Talā'um</u>    | = | Harmony or concordance of sounds                              |
| (5)  | <u>Fawāsil</u>    | = | rhythm of the end of Qur'ānic verses                          |
| (6)  | <u>Tajānus</u>    | = | paranomasia or the homogeneous grouping of words and meaning. |
| (7)  | <u>Tasrīf</u>     | = | variation of the use of words derived from the same root.     |
| (8)  | <u>Tadmīn</u>     | = | implication   |
| (9)  | <u>Mubālaghah</u> | = | hyperbole   |
| (10) | <u>Bayān</u>      | = | clarity of meaning  |

These were his divisions which were followed by further scrutiny<sup>1</sup>.

1. Ījāz (Conciseness)<sup>2</sup>

Ījāz was described by Rummānī as, "Economy of speech using the minimum of words, without falling short of accomplishing the entire sense." He added further, "if an idea can be expressed in many words and equally well in a few, the latter is what is meant by Ījāz".

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(1) Ibn Rashīq however quoting perhaps an earlier work by Rummānī, recorded only eight figures, three of which are not to be found in 'K. al-Nukat', these are Nazm (composition), Mathal (parable), and Mushākalah (likeness).

(2) pp. 70-4.

This is the definition he has given in 'K.al-Nukat',<sup>1</sup> after which he divided it preliminarily into :-

- a) Hadhf = Omission  
 b) Qisar = Contraction

The former is the elimination of a word (from a phrase or sentence) because there is another word, or words, which direct the understanding to it, or because it is indicated by the general context, whereas the latter is the construction in speech of a multiple meaning in a few words without the omission of any. For the former he cited the following Qur'ānic verses as examples;

(i) " Ask the town-ship where we were" , (XII/83)

he commented thus; the omitted word is the pre-fix, al-Mudāf, that is to say 'people', On the verse

(ii) " If only a Qur'ān whereby the mountains were set in motion, or the earth were cleft or the dead were spoken to....., (XIII/33) he observed that the omission of the correlative, al-Jawāb, in a like instance is even more eloquent than if it were maintained, because with omission a new avenue for imagination is opened, whereas if it were mentioned one is confined to the diction therein.

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(1) Both Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī (d.466/1073) and Ibn Rashīq (d. 463/1070), have admired and acknowledged Rummānī's definition. The former quoted, no doubt, 'K.al-Nukat' (see Sirr al-Fasāhah, pp.197-9), Ibn Rashīq, on the other hand, who seems to have consulted another of al-Rummānī's works noted that that which had been categorised as 'al-Qisar' by al-Rummānī, was treated by rhetoricians (Ahl al-Sinā'ah) as Musāwāh (lit. equality) and that named as Hadhf (omission as a part of Majāz (tropical use of words) see, 'Undah, vol.1 p.167.

With regard to the function of the second type of conciseness al-Qiṣar he noticed that there is even more subtlety than in Hadhf, although the latter itself was a difficult task, for here the situation requires knowledge of the right position for the omission, where it is appropriate and where it is not.

Having demonstrated with a few examples from the Qur'ān, this kind of omission, and stated its abundance therein, he made a comparison between the verse (II/179) "There is life for thee in the law or retaliation," and the proverb, "Killing is the best cure for killing." His critical remarks are,

(A) The Qur'ānic verse is more meritorious than the proverb, both in eloquence and conciseness, for it conveys the contents of the proverb and even more besides. Apart from being the decree of God it professes the idea of justice in the word 'retaliation', it also expresses the desirable objective in the word 'life'.

(B) From a viewpoint of conciseness, while the proverb contains fourteen letters the verse comprises only ten.

(C) The artificial repetition causes the proverb to be monotonous and to descend below the high standard of good eloquence.

(D) His last remark, which in later times provoked some theorists to further discussion, is that there is a discord in the proverb's letters which render it difficult in utterance, it runs, "The vocal movement of sound from the letter 'Fā' to the letter 'Lām' is easier than the transference from the 'Lām', in the proverb, to the letter 'Hamzah'; similarly the vocal movement from the letters 'Ṣād' to 'Hā' is easier in comparison with that from 'Alif' to 'Lām' in the proverb".

The rest of Rumṁānī's remarks may be summarised as the following.

(A) Conciseness in single and disconnected phrases, as that of Alī,

"The merit of any man is what he does best."

Although elegant in isolation, they are too short to make a ruling for, unless committed to a short composition.

(B) He also compared the difference between conciseness and frugality with that between prolix style and superfluity.

(C) He returns to the further division of conciseness, perhaps due to his indulgence in dialectic, thus,

(a) That which is confined to producing only the core of a sentence, the understanding being taken for granted, which is more agreeable to logical sciences,

(b) that which is not so limited nor confined to any certain subject.

(D) His final division of conciseness was,

(a) That achieved by the shortest route,

(b) that which is straight to the point, without divergence,

(c) and that which expresses utility in a fitting and not ugly form.

These three remarks and the example that follows them seem to have been a direct extract from Aristotle's device :

"The following suggestions will help to give your language impressiveness. (1) Describe a thing instead of naming it: do not say 'circle' but that surface which extends equally from the middle every way.

To achieve conciseness, do the opposite - put the name instead of the description. When mentioning anything ugly or unseemly, use its name if it is the description that is ugly, and describe it if it is the name that is ugly."<sup>1</sup>

Rummānī converted the 'circle' example to the imperative phrase, 'quick', instead of 'move quick move'. He also seems to have made some use of the second device.

His last word was the provision of four short definitions, one of them became very popular in later studies.

## II. Tashbīh (Simile)<sup>2</sup>

"Tashbīh is the association between two things, providing that one of them can<sup>be a</sup> substitute for the other by perception or intuition, therefore simile can be expressed either in the strict verbal sense or by means of conception". Rummānī analysed the example he offered, "Zaid strong like a lion", as a verbal form of simile and also laid stress on the particle of similitude showing that the combination of the conception of such resemblance, on the one hand, and the verbal expression on the other, form thus the simile.

(1) 'Rhetorica', W.R. Roberts trans. 1407b. lines 25-30.

(2) Pp. 74-9.

There is no indication as to whether Rummānī was referring, in any way, to the condition wherein the particle of resemblance is omitted, as the author of 'Athar al-Qur'ān ...' (2nd edn. p. 238) has inferred. In all examples of this chapter he gives neither a single instance of such omission nor speaks of it. Further, as will be seen in the following chapter, the elimination of this particle is to him one of the two main differences between simile and metaphor. In this respect it is obvious that Ibn Sinān differs from Rummānī.<sup>1</sup>

"The conceivable form of simile is the comparison between two things which belong to the same genus, whereas the intellectual simile concerns only abstracts". Then he expounded two forms of simile. He calls the first 'Simile proper' and the second 'Eloquent simile', also defined as, "The emergence from obscurity to lucidity by means of the particle; and the most elegant form of expression".

(1) Şırr al-Fasāḥa, pp. 100-111.

Four results could be achieved, in Rummānī's opinion by the application of simile :-

- (1) Bridging the gap between inconceivable things and those which are perceptible.
- (2) The emergence of that which is not customary and habitual to the status of custom and habit.
- (3) The emergence of the unintuitive into intuitiveness.
- (4) Strengthening of the weaker epithet.

In the light of these points he demonstrated seventeen instances from the Qur'ān. The following, as an example, is the first.

"As for those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert. the thirsty one supposeth it to be water till he cometh unto it and findeth it naught". XXIV/39. His analysis, which involved the first achievement of simile, is thus, "The simile here brings forth the imperceptible into conceivability. Both cases have the common factor of false illusion enhanced by keen desire and great need". As an aside he observed the possibility of replacing, although not in the Qur'ān, the word 'thirsty one' with the word 'beholder' and although it is in his opinion eloquent, it falls far below the image which the Qur'ānic word creates of the 'thirsty one' who is more desirous.

### III. Isti'ārah (Metaphor)<sup>1</sup>

For an assessment of Rummānī's contribution to the study of Isti'ārah it would be rewarding perhaps, to quote from the comprehensive and illustrative footnote of Professor G. E. von Grunebaum,

"The treatment of the isti'ārah in connection with that of haqīqa proper, and majāz, the tropical use of words, is one of the most brilliant achievements of Arabic theory. It would seem, however, that it was only in the 11th century that the study of the metaphor - later made into a chapter of the 'ilm al-bayān, the second part of Literary Theory - really came into its own. Al-Bāqillānī apparently took little or no notice of the discussion of the isti'ārah going on around him. Al-ʿAskarī (Sin, p. 205), ar-Rummānī, p. 10, Alī al-Jurjānī (d. 1001), the author of the Wasāta, Ibn Jinnī (d. 1002) (cf. Wasāta, p. 40, ʿUm̄da, 1, 239-241 and ʿAsrār, p. 326) Ibn Fāris (d. before 1005; cf. Muzhir, 1, 157, 16, 17) offered definitions just as Ibn al-Muʿtazz had done in his day."<sup>2</sup>

Rummānī's situation was that of the 4th/10th century, during which period the study of metaphor, as can be seen in other relative studies,<sup>3</sup> was still intermingled with other figures of speech. Nor was it just confined to the stage of definition it had reached at the hand of Ibn al-Muʿtazz in the previous century although his definition had been maintained intact it had been much expanded and refined.

(1) Pp. 79-87.

(2) 'A tenth century document ...' p. 6, footnote 43.

(3) Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, 'Sinaʿatayn', p. 268.

Rummanī's definition of it runs, "Metaphor is the transposition of an expression to a signification different from its original import for the sake of lucidity" His next point was clarification of the relationship between simile and metaphor (Tashbīh and Isti'ārah) which appeared to him to be that, in the former there is no transference of words, the only change is the insertion of the particle of similitude, whereas in the latter, transposition of actual words must take place.

- He then demonstrated the three main elements of metaphor,
- (1) Musta'ār = the borrowed or transferred word
  - (2) Musta'ār la-hu = the borrowed for
  - (3) Musta'ār min-hu = the borrowed from

The other remarks he made are as follows. "Every elegant metaphor is a conjunction between two things having a meaning in common, as in the case of simile". Here he repeats once more the difference between metaphor and simile. His last remarks are, "The elegant metaphor should possess lucidity, that which cannot be achieved by the proper use of words; and it should also have its origin in the text of the language". As an example of this he cites an extract from the Mu'allagah of Imru' al-Qays, describing his horse as "The chain of wild game". Finally he reached his original intent, by illustrating verses from the Qur'ān. To take only one as an example, XXI/18 "Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it doth break its back and lo ! it vanisheth".

He interprets it thus: "Both words 'hurling' (qadhf) and 'vanishing' (damgh) are used metaphorically (Musta'ār or borrowed), which is more eloquent. In the proper sense this means the overcoming of falsehood by righteousness, which abrogates it. But the metaphorical usage of these words is more eloquent, because the application of the word hurling implies vigorous subjugation ..... as also did the word vanishing".<sup>1</sup>

And so runs his method in over forty examples; indicating the metaphor, stating what the proper sense would require, and why the metaphorical use is more eloquent.

#### IV. Talā'um (Harmony)<sup>2</sup>

Talā'um, is simply defined as the opposite of 'Tanāfur' (discord), or rather the cohesive arrangement of letters in the composition. Accordingly the composition is divided by Rummanī into three categories :-

(a) The incongruous or the worst form of harmony, as the alliteration of the following head rhyme,

وَقَبْرُ حَرْبٍ بِمَكَاتٍ قَفْرٍ      وَ لَيْسَ قَرُبُ قَبْرِ حَرْبٍ قَبْرٌ

"Harb's grave, solitary in a wild place,

And nearby there is no other grave".

The Arabic words can hardly be repeated three time consecutively without causing the reader to stutter.

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(1) p. 82.  
(2) pp. 87-9.

(b) The medium form of harmony, as in the verses of Abū Ḥayyah al-Nūmayrī,

دَمَّتْني وَسِوَرُ اللهِ يَتَفَّ وَيَبْنِيهَا  
عَشِيَّةَ آدَامَ الْكِنَاسِ رَمِيمِ  
أَلَا دُبُّ يَوْمٍ لَوْ دَمَّتْ رَمِيمَتَهَا  
وَلَكِنْ عَلَيَّ بِالضَّالِّ قَدِيمِ

"On the Eve of Aram al-Kinas, she smote my heart with love,  
Though the veils of God were drawn between us,  
On many a day I smote her as she had done me,  
But alas ! my days of combat are over".

(c) His consideration of the Qur'ān's composition to be the peak of harmony, raised a controversy, the content of which we shall later see. Rumḡānī, however, relies totally on the individual's taste in this matter. He is indebted to al-Khalīl's notices on discord also.

The merit of harmony seemed to him as the beautification of speech for the hearer, the easiness of pronounciation and the clarification of the meaning so that it could be easily understood.

Having established the difference in origin of various sounds, he divided them into the guttaral, the sibilant and those in between. He confirmed that harmony in arranging letters derives from the use of a proportionate arrangement of sounds throughout this scale.

V. Fawāsil (Rhythmic phrasing)<sup>1</sup>

"The form of prose composition should neither be metrical nor destitute of rhythm ..... on the other hand unrhythmical language is too unlimited ..... Prose, then, is to be rhythmical, but not metrical, or it will become not prose but verse".<sup>2</sup>

It is questionable whether these remarks of Aristotle were ever attended to by Rumḡānī. Had it been so, his opinion might have been different. But apart from such remarks relevant to the Greek language, although they may have been of some use to the actively flourishing rhymed prose writers of the fourth century A.H., the contention over rhymed prose in the Qur'ān was, as had been, a problem more of a theological source than a literary one.

Jāḡiḡ, in the third century, wrote at length, defensively, on the Qur'ān's composition as being of a metrical nature, he said little however of the occurrence of rhymed prose. His last word on the subject, regarding its prohibition, was "The reason for the prohibition of rhymed prose, in particular, - though it has less formality than poetry - was that the soothsayers, who had been very influential and who were consulted by the people, employed it ..... So they said it was abhorrent, as the people were still influenced by the pre-Islamic tradition of paganism; but as this has long passed and disappeared so has the abhorrence."

(1) Pp. 89-91.

(2) Jāḡiḡ 'Bayān', vol. 1, pp. 289-290. Cf. also A. Mez Renaissance of Islam Engl. trans. p. 240. 1937.

(3) 'Rhetorica', trans. W. Roberts. Book III/VII, 1408b.

In the course of the following hundred years, or so, two theological attitudes were established, that of the Ash'arite school, who denied the occurrence of rhymed prose in the Qur'ān, and other theologians who confirmed its existence.<sup>1</sup>

The theory of Fawāsil appears as a middle path between those two extremes, though it deplored the rhymed prose theory, it strove to maintain a clear distinction between rhymed prose and rhythmisation.

To avoid a seeming confusion by particularising what was the nature of letters made for rhythmic <sup>phrasing</sup> ~~theory~~, Rummānī defined it loosely as, "Joint letters at the end of intersections (Maqāṭi', pauses) in speech to facilitate a better understanding". And more from piety than from a reserved critical viewpoint he added "All rhythmic phrasings are eloquent and all rhymed prose is defective." This, as will be seen later, was his weakest conclusion; his reasoning, which was sound enough but not complete, ran, "Because rhythmic phrasing follows the meaning, whereas rhymed prose is an end in itself, regardless of the meaning."

(1) Bāqillānī, 'I'jaz', Introduction, p. 86 sqq.

After the presentation of some examples of rhymed prose and the origin of the word Sajc (rhymed prose) had been given, he divided rhythmisation as it appeared in the Qur'ān into :-

(a) That in which the ending letters (of words or phrases) are homogeneous, for which he cited as examples the verses, XX/1 etc., LIII/1-2 etc.

(b) The other form in which the ending letters are not quite congenial but are close in articulation, as in the letters M and N<sup>1</sup> in the verse I/1.

The importance of rhythmic phrasing is that it punctuates division in speech and makes it more lucid. Particular credit was given to rhythmic phrasing without full compatibility. Finally the author compared the lucidity facilitated by rhythmic phrasing with that of rhyme in poetry, in which it is not compatible, the reason being that poetry does not reach the standard of prose.

#### VI. Tajānus (Paronomasia)<sup>2</sup>

Tajānus, Tajnīs or Mujānasah, the last two forms occurred respectively in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's<sup>3</sup> and Qudāmah's<sup>4</sup> treatments of the poetic style. It is obvious, however, that Ibn al-Mu'tazz was inspired in his attempt by the works of the previous century, especially those of al-Khalīl and al-Aṣma'ī, Qudāmah, on the other hand, although in general terms he referred to some earlier scholars, did not specify particular names.

(1) Modern phonetics show them as, M, a voiced bi-labial nasal consonant, N, a voiced post-dental nasal consonant.

(2) Pp. 91-2.

(3) 'K. al-Badi', ed. Kratchkovsky, p. 25.

In prose Rummānī's approach, although in principle not far from the poetical studies of the previous century, is not far removed from the remarks and definitions put forward by Aristotle, who differed only in emphasizing the position of each word in the phrase or clause,<sup>1</sup> this was not necessary to Rummānī, as its occurrence in Arabic is infrequent. Rummānī laid stress on the difference in meaning of the two words constructed in parenthesis.

Having defined Tajānus as the application of two words of the same root, he divided it into, Muzāwajah and Munāsabah.

Muzāwajah (lit. pairing) would occur only in requital or reciprocal cases, as in the verse III/54, "And they (the disbelievers) schemed and God schemed (against) them and God is the best of schemers."

"So let no man act foolishly against us,

Or we shall exceed the folly of the foolhardiest".<sup>2</sup>

Munāsabah (lit. adequacy) occurs where the two words are of the same root, but their meanings are totally different, as in the verse IX/179,

"Then they turn away, God turns their hearts".

Here the words are of the same root Ṣarafa, but while the former indicates their refraining from worshipping of God, the latter refers to the (diverting) of their hearts from doing good.

4 (cont.)

'K. Naqd al-Shi'r', ed. Bonebakker, p. 97.

(1) Cf. 'Rhetorica', Book III/9, (1410a) trans. W. Rhys Roberts.

(2) 'The Seven Odes', trans. A. J. Arberry, p. 209.

Ibn Rashīq, quoting from other of Rummanī's works, gives more details and further divisions.<sup>1</sup>

### VII. Taṣrīf (Variation)<sup>2</sup>

The author's observations here concern two aspects,

(a) That of the several forms derived or declined from a single common root, which denote various meanings. For instance the infinitive Mulk from which the following, and perhaps many more, are derived : possessor-Mālik-, king-Malik-, God's Kingdom-Dhū al-Malakūt-, slave-Malik-, possession-Tamlik-, restraint-Tamāluk-, goods or property-Amlāk-, taking possession of a thing-Tamaluk- and bondman-Mamlūk etc.

(b) The other form observed is in the repetition of the stories in the Qur'ān, e.g. that of Moses, which is mentioned in Surahs, VII, XX, XXVI and others. Such repetition is in his opinion of various merits.

### VIII. Tadmīn (Implication)<sup>3</sup>

"The fact of implying without expressing plainly the involved meaning by means of noun or epithet".<sup>4</sup>

(1) See 'Umdah', vol. 1, p. 228.

(2) pp. 93-4.

(3) pp. 94-5.

(4) pp. 94

This is more of a lexical definition than a rhetorical one. Rummānī's technical or rhetorical classification of this term is perhaps conveyed in the phrase, "Implication, as a whole, is another form of conciseness, whereby specification in people's utterance are dispensed with".<sup>1</sup>

There are two types of implication,

- (1) That which is indicated by the actual word
- (2) That which is indicated by analogy

For the former he gave as an example the word 'created', which would indicate a creator; and also any form of active noun which implies a passive participle and vice-versa. He divided it further,

(a) That which is necessitated by construction of utterance as in the epithet 'Known' etc.

(b) That which is implied by the meaning of an expression,

(i) as the necessity in the epithet 'Murderer' implies a murdered person,

(ii) or by habit or custom as in a seller calling "al-Kurr sixty", i.e. A Kurr (a measure of weight) for sixty dinars.

The latter is also a form of conciseness, but only <sup>with</sup> regard to God's speech, whereby each verse in the Qur'ān contains a form of implication.

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(1) p. 95; von Grunebaum, 'A tenth century document etc.', p. 118, footnote 1, who classed it as a sub-category of Ijāz.

It seems, however, that as the author himself referred his questioners to his work 'al-Jāmi' li 'Ilm al-Qur'ān', he had turned to mere commentary, as would appear from his analysis of the verse "In the name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful."

IX. Mubalaghah (Hyperbole)<sup>1</sup>

"The intensification of meaning by way of changing the roots of words for further clarity". This is roughly the author's definition. The third century conception of Hyperbole, particularly in the attempts of Ibn Qutaybah, noted Z. Sallām, recognized it as a part of the study of Metaphor and Simile.<sup>2</sup> This attitude, however, might indicate that there had been a certain familiarity with Aristotle's Rhetoric, as could be inferred from such remarks as, "Successful hyperboles are also metaphors",<sup>3</sup> or, "The phrase like so-and-so may introduce a hyperbole under the form of simile".<sup>4</sup>

(1) pp. 96-7.

(2) Athar al-Qur'ān, 2nd edn., p. 24.

(3) Aristotle, 'On Style', trans. G.M.A. Grube, p. 96.

(4) Aristotle, 'Rhetoric', trans. W.R. Roberts, Book III/9, 1413a.

Although Rummānī's analyses of the instances he cited for Metaphor involve Hyperbole,<sup>1</sup> he did not itemise any particular relation between Hyperbole and Metaphor in this chapter; instead, however, he demonstrated the forms in which hyperbole would occur, in the following six points.

(a) That which occurred in the different derived forms, as in the conjugational forms Fa'lam, Ficāl, Fa'ul, Mif'al, Mif'āl etc.

(b) The substitution of the specific form by the general as in the verse, XI/102, "And he created all things."

(c) The over-emphasized predication, as in the sentence, "The King comes", meaning only the great army of the King, from the Qur'ān he quoted verse LXXXIX/22, "And thy Lord shall come with angels rank by rank".

(d) The application of the form of the impossible instead of the probable, as in verse VII/40, "Those that cry lies to Our signs and wax proud against them - the gates of Heaven shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle".

(e) The application of speech in doubtful forms, as in verse XXXIV/24, "Lo ! we or you are rightly guided or in error manifest".

(f) The omission of the complements or correlatives, as in the verse VI/27, "If thou couldst see when they are set before the fire ... "

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(1) Cf. his chapter on Metaphor, pp.82, 81.

X. Bayān(Clarity of meaning)<sup>1</sup>

In this last sequence, Rummānī demonstrated less originality and placed more reliance on earlier studies of diction, particularly those of Jāḥiẓ and Aristotle. From the former he summarised the five divisions of indication generally (i.e. speech etc.), using only four; wording, allusion, circumstance and sign, omitting the fifth.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear, however, that Rummānī was thoughtless in including almost all Jāḥiẓ's categories, given for indication generally, as a means to clarity, unless it is to be understood in a wider sense than merely verbal.

The category which interested him most was, of course, 'Speech', which he followed in some detail, yet in the course of his analysis he appears most reliant on Aristotle's rules of right diction, contracting the comments in some cases and embroidering them in others.

His definition ran,

"Bayān or clarity, is the bringing of that (diction) which differentiates between things, one and another, in understanding.<sup>3</sup> This seems to be a deduction made from Aristotle's definition, "... and let us define the excellence of style to be lucidity",<sup>4</sup> or as another translator has put it, "Style to be good must be clear".<sup>5</sup>

(1) Pp. 98-100.

(2) Jāḥiẓ, 'Bayan', Hārūn edn. vol. 1, p.76.

(3) Ibn Rāshiq, from another work by Rummānī, has also quoted the following definition, "Bayān is the bringing forth of the meaning to the mind immediately". 'Umdah', vol. 1,

(4) Aristotle, 'On Style' (1404b) trans. Grube, p.68. P.169 ff.

(5) Aristotle, 'Rhetoric' (1404b) trans. Roberts.

Aristotle continued thus, "As to prove this by the fact that speech which fails to carry a plain meaning will fail to do just what speech has to do".<sup>1</sup> This theme was improvised upon further by Rummānī, after the insertion of Jāḥiẓ's division, following up with the definition that speech is of two kinds; that which renders things clear, and worthy of the name Bayān, and that which fails to do so, which is nonsensical random. After the presentation of a couple of well known examples of bad expression, he proceeds to enlarge upon this statement of Aristotle, "It must be appropriate, avoiding both mean<sup>n</sup>ess and undue elevation",<sup>2</sup> thus, "The perfection of diction in speech is of various levels, the highest of all is that which contains such qualities as; good expressions and well proportioned composition, so that it will be appreciated by the hearer, easy to utter and soothing to the senses". His last comment is nought but that of Aristotle, though mildly expressed, "It should also be appropriate, avoiding mean<sup>n</sup>ess and undue elevation".

(1) Aristotle, 'Rhetoric', (1404b) trans. Roberts.

(2) Ibid.

The next step taken by Rummānī is even more revealing of his pursuit of Aristotle's approach. He continued thus, "Bayān (diction) in speech can be achieved either by noun, adjective or from the composition without noun or adjective". By this last he is referring to the implication understood from the context, to which he also added that of derivative implication. Aristotle's statement is, "Current nouns and verbs<sup>1</sup> make for clarity". The difference here seems to be that, while Aristotle's line of discussion falls to the comparison of nouns and verbs with other words, Rummānī speaks of indicative circumstances.

The last remark of Rummānī, divergent as it is from that of Aristotle is even more suggestive of his reliance on the latter.

(1) The note of the translator is of some importance in this case. "Nouns here include adjectives as in Poetics 20. By nouns and verbs Aristotle usually means words generally" trans. Grube.

Was it then, a result of misunderstanding, due to a defective translation, or was it a critical challenge made by Rummānī in opposition to the conceptions of some of his contemporaries? The former would appear to be the case, as the shadow of Aristotle has fallen across the majority of Rummānī's reasoning throughout this chapter. They are in agreement over their concern for poetry, they originate at the same point, but the conclusions reached are divergent. Aristotle's remark is, "The diction of poetry could hardly be called low, yet it is not suitable for prose".<sup>1</sup> Rummānī's conception, taken in the light of the first theory runs, "The claim that the composition of poetry had been exhausted by the previous works is not true, for the faculty of composition is inexhaustable".

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(1) 'The Rhetoric of Aristotle', a trans. Sir R.E. Jebb, p. 147  
Cambridge, 1909.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RUMMĀNĪ TO THE STUDY OF THE FIGURES OF  
SPEECH BETWEEN THEIR INSPIRATION BY ARISTOTLE AND THE  
REVALUATION OF THE LATER ARAB THEORISTS.

## I

"The problems of Greek influence," wrote I. Kratchkovsky, "particularly in regard to the effective part played by Aristotle's Poetics was more intricate."<sup>1</sup>

The contention raised by this intricacy begins, perhaps, when one is faced with the claims made by both Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Qudāmah Ibn Ja'far in their important pioneering works in this field. Both alleged in their short prefatorial notices<sup>2-3</sup> what may be interpreted as originality in their attempts.

(1) 'K. al-Badī', Kratchkovsky edn. intro. p. 2.

(2-3) Ibid. pp. 2-3, 'Naqd al-Shi'r, Bonebakker edn. p. 1.

On the face of it, however, circumstances of accessibility to Aristotle's work in Arabic - however little is known about the exact state of translation during the lifetime of the above named authors - coupled with occasional similarities, in their treatment of a good number of the figures of speech, to those of Aristotle, might cause us to believe that there had been some influence or inspiration, as propounded in some of the modern studies.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the fact that some of these figures and their functions had long been familiar to earlier Arab philologists and theoreticians, of whom there is no record as to their acquaintance with Aristotle's works, or, for that matter, Greek philosophy in general, combined with the weak and unstable standard of translation, reported by the scholars of the fourth century, produced another side of the argument.<sup>2</sup>

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- (1) M. Mundūr, 'al-Naqd al-Manhajī ...' pp. 43-7, indicates that some of the definitions and analyses of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, on the figures of speech, have been extracted from those of Aristotle, others from earlier Arab theorists. In one instance he comments, "It would appear to us that Arab theorists of the third century understood Aristotle's categories of the figures of speech; they only differed in translating and ascribing the terms to the appropriate function, which explains their disagreement in naming them (p. 46) A. S. Bonebakker, 'Nagd al-Shi'r', intro. p. 36, also writes, "The 'Nagd al-Shi'r' shows Qudāma to have been influenced by the idea of Greek philosophy, this conclusion can be drawn from his own statements and from internal evidence."
- (2) H. Ritter (Intro. to 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's 'Asrar al-Balāgha', p. 4) begins his inquiry into Ibn al-Mu'tazz's 'K. al-Badī' and the possibility of foreign elements in it, thus, "Nothing about Greek rhetoric is mentioned in the book of Ibn al-Mu'tazz ..... Thus Ibn al-Mu'tazz quotes no Greek but only Arabic ..... On the other hand it is easy to see that most of his figures are to be found in early manuals of ancient rhetoric."

Granted that an influence or inspiration by Aristotle's work had taken place, yet another question faces modern scholarship, which is, what particular works of Aristotle were most likely to have been used by Arab rhetoricians ?

While Kratchkovsky, noted above, lays stress on the role played by Aristotle's 'Poetics', Tāhā Husain, on the other hand, prefers to give the credit to the 'Rhetoric', and even to a specific part of that.<sup>1</sup>

## II

In Rummānī's position, nonetheless, the situation was entirely different, here there is no room for the claim of originality, Therefore attention need not be paid to the influence <sup>on him</sup> of Greek philosophy in general, which can be taken for granted, as it has been well publicized, especially the impact of Greek dialectic on his grammatical analyses.<sup>2</sup>

(1) Introduction to 'Naqd al-Nathr', p. 19.

(2) 'Abd al-Fattāh Shalabī ('Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī etc.' p. 589) went as far as to suggest that in his book on letters, 'K. al-Hurūf', Rummānī followed the pattern set by Aristotle in a book of the same name. This is quite within the bounds of possibility, needing only substantiation.

What should be given more attention here is, perhaps, the possibility of an influence or inspiration from Aristotle's two major works in this field, the 'Poetics' and 'Rhetoric', and which of them was more likely to have guided Rumḡānī in the treatise under consideration. It would appear that the difficulty, at that time seemed to be in the attitude of scholars towards translations and translators of Greek philosophy and science into Arabic. Views expressed then are revealing, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, for instance, lamented the emasculation of Hellenistic philosophy, through its tortuous journey, thus, "Provided that the translation from Greek into Hebrew, from Hebrew into Syriac and from the latter into Arabic - which had obviously diluted the essence totally - (was correct), and provided that the meanings of the Greek reached the Arabs with its brilliant diction, its unmatched variety and its wide range; wisdom might have come to us in pure style, complete, not deficient".<sup>1</sup>

Rumḡānī, himself, appears to have recorded a fully detailed discussion concerning a contemporary translation of Aristotle's 'Poetics'. This translation, evidently the oldest surviving, tells us even more of the standard of translation.<sup>2</sup>

(1) 'K. al-Muqāyasāt', ed. Sandūbī, p. 253.

(2) The translation of Bishr Ibn Mātta, edited by D. S. Margoliouth, London, 1887, For the works of al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sīnā, see, 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, 'Fann al-Shi'r', pp. 149-158, 161-198, 201-205.

The criticism, reported by Rummānī, was not, in fact, levelled at the poetic translation, in particular, but more at the slight ability of the translator himself and his crude command of the languages he was translating from and into.<sup>1</sup> Whatever further discussion these remarks might conjure and however much more substantiation may be found in the surviving translation, summary or commentary of Aristotle's Poetics, we find no trace of this work in Rummānī's present treatise.

But leaving the obviously uninspiring 'Poetics' aside, the work which most convincingly seems to have influenced Rummānī was Aristotle's 'Rhetoric', and in particular part three of that. Yet again the translation of this presents us with a problem. The surviving translation was compiled thirty-four years after the death of Rummānī,<sup>2</sup> which makes it impossible for him to have benefited from it, but the compiler has this to say,

(1) The discussion which was recorded by Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī ('al-Imtā' wa al-Mu'ānsah', vol. 1, pp. 107-129) was quoted by Yāqūt also, ('Mu'jam', vol. 3, pp. 105-124, 1927). Prof. D. S. Margoliouth has also translated it into English, (J.R.A.S., 1905, pp. 111-129). Below are the relevant lines from this translation, regarding translations of Greek into Arabic.

"If we grant that the translation is veracious and not fallacious, straight and not crooked, literal and not free, that it is neither confused nor inaccurate, has omitted nothing and added nothing, has not marred the sense of the general and the special, or indeed of the most special and the most general - a thing which is impossible, which the nature of language and the character of ideas do not permit ...." or on another occasion,

"How then can you rely on any work which you know only by translation?"

(2) See D. S. Margoliouth, 'Semitic Studies in memory of Rev. Dr. Alexander Kohut', Berlin, 1897, "On the Arabic version of Aristotle's Rhetoric", p. 376.

"This book is not very useful and has not often been studied, therefore one does not find a correct copy or a person interested in its correction. I have found a very bad copy in Arabic and another less corrupt and have relied in copying this on the second copy. Whenever I found a fault in the second copy I collated it with the other one; if I found it correct I adopted its meaning, if I found it also faulty, I took recourse to a copy in Syriac".<sup>1</sup>

The translation in Syriac, however, was the last resort of the compiler and he was forced to accept it whatsoever its condition. His report, on the other hand, is reassurance that there had been during Rumānī's lifetime, whatever their validity, a translation or translations. From Ibn al-Nadīm's indecisive statement<sup>2</sup> it can also be gathered that there had existed a translation even long before that time.

(1) See 'K. al-Khatabah', ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, p. 254  
Trans. in the J.R.A.S. by S. M. Stern, 1956, p. 31.

(2) 'Fihrist', Cairo edn., p. 349.

Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, as noted before, has clearly shown his master, Rummānī adapted Aristotle to his own use. The sequence of his statement would indicate that it was only with regard to his dialectical<sup>1</sup> and grammatical studies. So much so that this treatise is a great justification of Abū Ḥayyān's observation. Despite the fact that Rummānī drew on Aristotle's genius, it was by no means blindly; it reflects that he was extremely selective and exploited only those rules which were suitable to his purpose, at least as far as the contemporary translation permitted.

With very few exceptions it contains all the figures of speech, though arranged unsystematically, touched on in Aristotle's Rhetoric (Book 3 On Style).<sup>3</sup> Yet though the forms were maintained, his demonstrations in the majority of cases are quite divergent from Aristotle's rules.

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(1) For his scanty usage of dialectical terminology see, pp. 73, 74, 78, 94, 103.

(2) Among other terms of which he made no use in this treatise is Antithesis (1410a), Ibn Rashīq, however, quoted admiringly from Rummānī's other works a definition for Antithesis (Tibāq) in the framework of Aristotle, ('Umdah', vol. 1, p.7) Another category abandoned in this treatise is that of Parable (Mathal), though, again elsewhere, his viewpoint is similar to that of Aristotle (1413a).

(3) The chapters as they occurred in Rummānī's treatise and their equivalent in Aristotle's 'Rhetoric'. The three divisions of eloquence by Rummānī at the opening of this treatise are perhaps were drawn on the pattern of Aristotle's three divisions of speech at the opening of book three, 1403a. It would appear that Rummānī took no notice of Aristotle's triple ramification of eloquence, 1414a. The contents are in any case totally different.

1. Conciseness, Rummānī, in this chapter seemed to have made use only of Aristotle's devices on, 1407b, no. 1 and to some degree 1416b. as well as 1419a.

2. Simile, 1406b.

In the first and last chapter it has been seen how closely he paraphrases some of Aristotle's devices. Moreover in his chapters on metaphor and simile it can also be seen how much he owed to Aristotle, in the following remarks :

Considering the simile proper, Rummanī's demonstration and the various divisions are quite independent. The only parallel to Aristotle's remark "Similes are useful in prose as well as in verse, but not often, since they are of the nature of poetry"<sup>1</sup> is perhaps Rummanī's notice "And in this chapter (i.e. Simile) poets excel one another considerably and it also parades the eloquence of eloquent men".

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3 (cont.)

3. Metaphor, 1404b, 1405a/b, 1411a/b, 1418a.
4. Harmony, This has no exact equivalent but there similar remarks in Metaphor and Appropriateness, 1408a/b, / might have lead to it. <sup>which</sup>
5. Rhymed Prose, 1408b - 1409a. It is quite coincidental with regard to this topic, and in a different chapter that Aristotle had condemned the language of Soothsayers "Soothsayers speak of their subjects in general terms" ... assimilating it to the game of odd and even ...", he added, "all these causes of ambiguity are alike and so, when we have no such object as that mentioned, we should avoid ambiguity", (Rh. III, 1407b trans. Jebb, p. 157). This would perhaps have held little interest for Rummanī as they were traditionally condemned by Islām.
6. Paranomasia, 1410a & b.
7. Variations of Style, 1413b.
8. Implication, as a part of conciseness.
9. Hyperbole, 1413a.
10. Right Diction, 1404b.

(1) 'Rhetorica', Book III, 3, 1406b. Trans. Roberts.

The difference between simile and metaphor, as noticed by Aristotle, was a trifling one "The Simile also is a Metaphor; the difference is but slight<sup>1</sup>". After illustrating some examples he concluded that "All these ideas may be expressed either as similes or as metaphors; those which succeed as metaphors will obviously do well also as similes, and similes, with the explanation omitted, will appear as metaphors."<sup>2</sup>

This last was emphatically adopted by Rummānī; as the omission of the particle of similitude was to him the most distinguishing feature between simile and metaphor.

Rummānī's definition of metaphor was much the same as that which occurred in Aristotle's 'Poetics' (1487b) which was perhaps the only thing he took from the 'Poetics' the reason for this was presumably because Aristotle had referred to the 'Poetics' for the definition of metaphor and further discussion.<sup>3</sup> But although Rummānī quoted the definition he cared little for the actual categories which followed it in the 'Poetics'.

From 'Rhetoric', Rummānī appears to have paraphrased the following, "Metaphor, moreover, gives style, clearness, charm and distinction as nothing else can".<sup>4</sup>

(1) 'Rhetorica', trans. W.R. Roberts, book III/4, 1406b.

(2) Ibid. book III/4, 1407a.

(3) Ibid. book III/2, 1405a.

(4) Ibid. book III/2, 1405a.

Rummānī again put it as follows: "Eloquent metaphor enriches the diction with<sup>o</sup> lucidity which can not possibly be gained by the use of proper words."

Also Aristotle's remark "Further, in using metaphors to give names to nameless things, we must draw them not from remote but from kindred and similar things, so that the kinship is clearly perceived as soon as the words are said."<sup>1</sup>

This seems to have been summarized by Rummānī as "Each eloquent metaphor is the companionship between two things with meaning in common, which acquires clarity for one another, as does the simile". Likewise Aristotle's rule "Metaphors, like epithets, must be fitting, which means that they must fairly correspond to the thing signified: failing this, their inappropriateness will be conspicuous."<sup>2</sup>

Rummānī seems to have reduced it to "Every metaphor must correspond to a certain fact in the proper sense."

III. The role of Rummānī's present treatise and its influence, on both his contemporaries and the generations that followed, was profound. Among his contemporaries, Bāqillānī<sup>3</sup>, for example in his 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān', reproduced it almost verbatim, another, Abū Hilāl al-Askarī<sup>4</sup>, freely quotes from it.

(1) 'Rhetorica', trans. W.R. Roberts, book III/2, 1405a.

(2) Ibid. book III/2, 1405a.

(3) 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān', pp. 396-416.

(4) 'al-Sinā'atayn', pp. 175, 240, 268, 270-1.

Of the later generations Ibn Rashīq<sup>1</sup> highly esteemed some of the figures of speech used and, with modifications, accepted others, as also did Ibn<sup>Alī</sup>/al-Isbā' al-Miṣrī<sup>2</sup>. Two later rhetoricians, however, were provoked by certain expositions, Ibn Sinān and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

Ibn Sinān's revaluation of some of the categories of Rummanī

In the following (5th/11th) century, Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī made an approach to re-examine some of the aspects of Rummanī's definition and divisions of the figures of speech. It is obvious that he had access to both the treatise under consideration and 'K. al-Jāmi'.<sup>3</sup> He confirmed, praised and, with a little adjustment, accepted Rummanī's viewpoints, for instance with regard to the studies of 'Conciseness'<sup>4</sup> and 'Metaphor'<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, he criticised, corrected or vehemently deplored the inconsistency or the illogicality of other categories, offering new possibilities as justifying definitions; or he dismissed them altogether, seeking other means whereby I'jāz can be established or justified. Two categories meet with such disapproval.

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- (1) 'al-'Umdah', vol. 1, pp. 162, 167, 169, 182, 195, 201, 228, vol. 22, p. 7.
  - (2) 'Badī' al-Qur'ān', pp. 5, 17, 39.
  - (3) 'Sirr al-Fasāhah', p. 145.
  - (4) Ibid. p. 199.
  - (5) Ibid. pp. 110-111. On considering the difference between Simile and Metaphor, although he maintained both Rummanī's

differential remarks he ascribed to him only the first i.e. the omission of the particle of similitude.

(a) Talā'um (Harmony)

After having quoted approximately the entire contents of this chapter, in which both definition and classification are assembled, he summed the matter up as being, "innacurate and the division unsound."<sup>1</sup> Rummānī's statement that the Qur'ān had occupied the prime position in his triple division of Harmony, whereas the rest of the Arabic language fell into the medium and low levels, is, in Ibn Sinān's opinion, random and incorrect, for speech in this respect is only harmonious or discordant. He particularizes further by sub-dividing the former into the more harmonious also and the latter into more discordant also. Accordingly Ibn Sinān also justified that there is no great difference between the Qur'ānic style, as such, and the correct diction of the Arabic language, consequently he referred Rummānī's conclusion to mere illusion or sheer ignorance.

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(1) 'Sirr al-Fāṣāhah', pp. 91-4.

But in this contention which line of argument was Ibn Sinān to pursue? The irony of the situation lies in the way in which he arrived at a solution to the question of I'jāz, in which he found no satisfaction in a literary or philological basis, as his general attitude would have us believe. He disposed of them altogether to take refuge in the theological aspect of the problem; that is to say he found that he had to recourse to the theory of al-Ṣarfah which, as has been seen earlier, was recognised as perfectly valid by Rummānī himself, among the seven categories he set forth for I'jāz and about which he said very little, presumably because of its theological bearing. The core of the contention of Ibn Sinān with Rummānī, after weighing the pros and cons, rests in the fact that there is, in his opinion, no difference between the composition of the Qur'ān, as such, and the rest of the correct Arabic language.

Regarding discord, wherein Rummānī had been inspired by the work of the philologist al-Khalīl and wherein he laid much stress on cohesion and disunity according to the distance or proximity of vocal tune, he favoured a temperate attitude to the construction of the letters of each word.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sinān, on the other hand, although he agreed that there were preferable letters for good style<sup>2</sup>, regarded that which was rejected by Rummānī as unsuitable, in his opinion was more advanced.<sup>3</sup>

(1) 'Sirr al-Faṣāḥah', pp. 91-2.

(2) Ibid. p. 21.

(3) Ibid. pp. 60-1. He drew a parallel between the distance of vocal sound and the impact of colour on the eyes, for the more disparate the chroma of colours the more pleasing and attractive are they,

(b) Fawāṣil (Rhythmic phrasing)

The other category which met with Ibn Sinān's disapprobation was Rummānī's reflection on Rhythmic phrasing in the Qur'ān's style. Before Rummānī's time, however, and after, this question had always been avoided by specific scholars and certain schools of theology, as noted earlier. In his turn Rummānī dare not but follow the conventional attitude by reviving the theory of al-Fawāṣil or rhythmic phrasing.

Ibn Sinān, who seemed to be aware of the cause of the alienation of this question, as well as of the fact that there is a clear distinction between Sajʿ (rhymed prose) and Fawāṣil, divided the latter into compatibility of the endings of words or clauses and to agreement of sound as between letters, M.N. etc., in much the same vein as Rummānī. The first division in his opinion can be classed as rhymed prose. Yet it was Rummānī's general statement, "All rhymed prose is defect and all rhythmic phrasing is eloquence", which provoked Ibn Sinān. In his opinion this was not necessarily so, as rhymed prose and rhythmisation are bound to be of good quality as well as bad and should therefore be criticized intrinsically.

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## 3 (cont.)

e.g. the distinct difference between black and white. As an example he selected the word ʿAlam, demonstrating his argument further. Here the letter 'Hamzah' is a guttural, the 'Mim' is a labial and the 'Lām' is in between or a liquid letter. Ibn Sinān's standpoint, convincing as it is, was challenged, in the 6th century by another theoretician Diyāʿ al-Dīn Ibn al-Athir cf. 'al-Mathal al-ʿAṣṣā'ir', p. 114.

The essence of Ibn Sinān's argument appears to be that camouflaging the problem under different names for the sake of respectability is no solution to this problem. The fact of the matter seems to be that it is immaterial that the Qur'ān contained rhymed prose. Assuming himself to be faced with interrogation as to why, rhymed prose being of such great merit, the Qur'ān was not completely composed in it, he should answer that the Qur'ān is nothing but a revelation in the language of the Arabs, in their traditions and their customary expressions; therefore as rhymed prose occurred in their speech on occasions, it ~~was~~ not an innovation that appeared in the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

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(1) Ibid. pp. 164-6.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1208-9), after the studies of the figures of speech had been established by such scholars as 'Abd al-Qāhīr al-Jurjānī, discovered that the definition of Metaphor offered by Rummānī, which had been adopted by eminent scholars of the 4th/5th centuries, even by Ibn Sinān, was defective on four points.

- (a) That it should include every form of tropical usage (Majāz lughawī)
- (b) That it should indicate that any transference of nouns is a metaphor.
- (c) That the mistakenly used word can be considered as a metaphor.
- (d) That it does not include the imaginative metaphor.<sup>1</sup> \*\*

Ibn <sup>Abī</sup> al-Isbā'ḥ, quoting Rāzī's four remarks, agreed with him on the thought it to be a point for consideration.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Hamzah al-'Alawī (749/1348) also confirmed Rāzī's comments on three points, only excluding point (d), but unlike Ibn <sup>Abī</sup> al-Isbā'ḥ, he accepted the third point unreservedly.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) 'Nihāyat al-Ljāz fī Dirāyat al-I'jāz', B.M. ms.
- (2) 'Badī' al-Qur'ān ', p. 17. Or. 6495, f. 40.
- (3) 'al-Tirāz', 1/199, quoted by the editors of Rummānī's treatise, in their appendices. p. 166.

\*\* For the first three points of Rāzī see 'Abd al-Qāhīr, 'Asrar al-Balagha', ed. Ritter, p. 437, lines 9-12; p. 377, lines 15-16; p. 252, line 1, ff; 253 lines 3-6.

CHAPTER VIS H O R T E R W O R K S

-2-

AL- KHATTĀBĪ

( Abū Sulaymān Hamd Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ibrāhīm )

319/388 A.H. = 931/998 A.D.

"Khattābī is said to have been the first to fix the three main classes of tradition, Proper (Sahih), Good (Hasan) and weak (Da'īf)" \*

\* 'The Renaissance of Islam',  
p.194.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUNDName and Descent

Four years or so after the death of Rummanī another scholar, who also promoted the studies of I'jāz in the fourth century, died. As a scholar and scholastically he was of a different persuasion and background; his reflections on and treatment of I'jāz were in a different temper.

As an introduction, though in brief, it is, perhaps of some relevance to consult initially the account given of him by his most eminent and admiring friend Abū Manṣūr al-Thā'ālibī<sup>1</sup>, the author of *Yatimat al-Dahr*. Thā'ālibī's biographical notes though terse are nonetheless revealing, and seem to have paved the way for a considerable number of later biographers. Yet despite the veracity and inspirational role of these notes, in the eyes of some biographers they appeared at error in considering the imputation of an alternative name given to Khaṭṭābī.<sup>2</sup> The circumstances, however, were thus, Thā'ālibī was merely perpetuating the example of Abū 'Ubayd al-Harawī.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) The mutual friend-ship between the two men mirrored, in fact, what may be called a mystical devotion and yearning observed for one another, as can be inferred from their poetry acknowledging their sincere attachment. See eg. Baghdādi, 'Khizānat al-Adab', vol. 1, pp. 282-3.
- (2) See: Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 82; Subkī, 'Ṭabaqāt', vol. 2, p. 218; Dhahabī, 'Tadhkirat al-Huffāz', 2 ed. vol. 3, p. 209; also by the same author, 'K. Ta'rikh al-Islām', B.M. Ms. Or. 48, f. 208a. (The events of the years 350-400, A.H.). Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā', B.M. Ms. Add. 7356, f. 33a.
- (3) Ibn Tāhir al-Silfī's commentary on Khaṭṭābī's introduction for 'Ma'ālim al-Sunan', ed. Ṭabbākh Appendix vol. 4, p. 379.

Nor yet was it any inconvenience to Khaṭṭābī himself, who was quite aware of this slight alteration of his first name and bore no grudge or ill-feeling for it.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect involving Khaṭṭābī's name was of a genealogical nature, to wit, the claim that he was a descendant of the family of the second caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and which had not been confirmed without doubt by a certain group of biographers. Yāqūt,<sup>2</sup> for instance, seemed to have it on the authority of both Tha'ālibī<sup>3</sup> and Harawī, who were Khaṭṭābī's contemporaries and pupils. Other biographers fell into two categories, those who doubted it for lack of authenticity<sup>4</sup> or because it was not affirmed to them and others who took it for granted.<sup>5</sup>

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- (1) With regard to the right name and the adapted one Ibn Khallikān recorded the following:- "Some persons have been heard pronounce Abu Sulaiman's name of Hamd as if it were Ahmad but in these they are wrong. Al-Ḥākim b. al-Bayy says "I asked a native of Bust, the doctor Abu al-Kāsim al-Muzaffar Ibn Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad, whether Abu Sulaiman's name was Ahmad or Hamd, some persons having said it was Ahmad, to which he replied that he heard Abu Sulaiman himself say "Hamd is the name by which I was called, but as people wrote Ahmad I gave it up." De Slane trans. vol. 1, p. 476. See also Yāqūt, op.cit., and Ibn al-'Imād, S.Dh., vol. 3, p. 128.
- (2) 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 81.
- (3) There is no such reference in Tha'ālibī's 'Yatimah,' Yāqūt's account therefore had to be taken from elsewhere and mistakenly ascribed to Tha'ālibī.
- (4) Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb' (fol. 202b), quoting other biographers, genealogically linked Khaṭṭābī's name among other persons of the family of 'Umar the first. Subkī (op.cit) gave a similar account, but added, "Nonetheless, this relationship was not confirmed". Dhahabī, 'Ta'rikh al-Islām', stood on the same ground as Subkī. Ibn Khallikān summed the matter up by saying "God knows best", Wafayāt, pt. 2, p. 158. no. 206. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Lubāb', vol. 1, pp. 378-9, rather vaguely put it, "He was related to his grandfather", to be sure, but which ?

From the account given by Tha'ālibī, as well as the majority of other biographers, emerge, though variably, the distinguishing attributes of Khaṭṭābī; that he was a man of letters<sup>1</sup>, a jurispudent,<sup>2</sup> a philologist,<sup>3</sup> a traditionist and author as well as poet. Such scholarly qualities were enhanced by the virtues and merits of asceticism, piety and generosity.<sup>4</sup>

### The Traditionist

Of all the fine scholarly attributes which were assigned to Khaṭṭābī it is eminently clear that the most predominant was his contribution to the study of the Traditions, to which scholars still sue for authority. He was primarily a traditionist, but in so calling him it will be understood that he was not in any sense of that group of traditionists whose work was merely collecting Traditions, though he was called by some biographer al-Ḥāfiẓ, his sole function in this field was an exegetical one. In this respect however, he employed a multiplicity of philological and critical as well as legislative literature. Although he was rightly nick-named "the Voluminous Author",<sup>5</sup> such an

(5) (cont.)

Of these biographers, see, Abū Tāhir al-Silfī, 'Tabbākh's appendix, vol. 4, pp. 379-80, Baghdādi, op.cit., Suyūṭī, 'Bughyah', p.239.

- (1) Tha'ālibī, 'Yatīmah', vol. 3, p. 231 sqq.
- (2) Ibid, also Ibn Khallikān (op.cit), Ibn Qādī Shubhah (op.cit.), Ibn Khaldūn, 'Muḡaddimah', trans. F. Rosenthal, vol. 2, p.59.
- (3) Ibid wherein Tha'ālibī has compared him with the philologist Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām.
- (4) Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb,' (fol. 202b) recorded that he used to spend his earnings on his good and closest friends.
- (5) Ibn Makula; 'al-Kāmil', ed. al-Yamanī, vol.3, p.114.

epithet can only be understood in the context of his Traditional exegesis. Fortunately the bulk of his studies are extant and can therefore, be studied at first hand. Such works as:

- (a) 'Sharḥ Ma'ālim al-Sunan'<sup>1</sup>, a well-known selective commentary on the Kitāb al-Sunan of Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/887-8).
- (b) 'Gharīb al-Ḥadīth'<sup>2</sup>, a masterly study on Tradition, described by the biographer Yāqūt as "A most enjoyable and useful book, in which the author touched on matters that hitherto had been overlooked by Ibn Qutaybah and Abū 'Ubayd in their works".<sup>3</sup>
- (c) 'Sharḥ al-Bukhārī'<sup>4</sup> sometimes being known as 'A'lam al-Sunan'<sup>5</sup>
- (d) 'A'lam al-Ḥadīth'<sup>6</sup>

These are his famous exegetical works, he also wrote

- (e) 'K. Iṣlāḥ Ghalat al-Muḥaddithīn'<sup>7</sup>, (Correction of Traditionists' mistakes)
- (f) 'K. al-'Uzlah'<sup>8</sup>, sometimes known as 'Al-I'tiṣām'

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- (1) All biographers have mentioned this work, see also G.A.L. 1/161, Supp. 1, p. 275. It has been published so far twice, first by Shaykh Muḥammad Rāghib al-Tabbākh, in four parts. Cairo edition was by A.M. Shākir & H.M. al-Faqih, In 8 pts.
  - (2) For Mss. see G.A.L. Supp. 1/275.
  - (3) Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 82. Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Al-Nihāyah', B.M. ms. Add. 23426 f. 3a.
  - (4) Yāqūt, op.cit. vol. 2, p. 82. Ibn Khallikān, pt. 2, p. 158, no. 206, G.A. L.S. 1/261.
  - (5) Yāfi'ī, 'Mirāt al-Janān', vol.2, pp.435-6.
  - (6) Sam'ānī, op.cit. G.A.L. Supp. 1/165.
  - (7) The work was edited by 'Izat al-'Attār
  - (8) Published by the same man in 1937.

In the former of these last two works Khaṭṭābī was initiating a critical approach, according to the editor of this book, in which the author dealt with a hundred and fifty traditions which were somewhat deficient, either misread or involving philological or grammatical mistakes.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the latter work Khaṭṭābī even objectively employed tradition to a specific topic, 'Uzlah (Solitude or detachment), wherein he manipulated tradition for and against his argument. It would appear that he demonstrated similar arguments in his undertaking 'Al-Ghunyah 'An al-Kalām wa Ahli-hī' or (Dispensing with theology and theologians).<sup>2</sup>

Among his other accessible works are the following:

- (g) 'Sharḥ al-Ad'iyah al-Ma'thūrah' (Exposition of traditional prayers).<sup>3</sup>  
 (h) 'ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth'.<sup>4</sup>

Of the works ascribed to Khaṭṭābī and of which only the names remain, there are: 'Tafsīr al-Lughah', mentioned by Subkī<sup>5</sup>; 'K. al-Shujāj'<sup>6</sup>; 'K. al-ʿArūs'<sup>7</sup>; 'K. Sha'n al-Du'ā'<sup>8</sup>; 'K. Sharḥ Asmā' al-Rabb 'Azz wa Jall'<sup>9</sup>; 'K. Sharḥ Da'āwāt Abū Khuzaymah'<sup>10</sup>; 'K. al-Jihād'<sup>11</sup>; 'K. Ma'rifat al-Sunan wal-Āthār'.<sup>12</sup>

(1) See 'K. al-ʿUzlah', p. 5.

(2) Subkī, 'Ṭabaqāt', vol. 2, p. 218.

(3) For Ms. see G.A.L.Supp. 1/275.

(4) Ibid. Perhaps he may have meant 'A'lām al-Ḥadīth' as recorded by Yāqūt, vol. 2, p. 81.

(5) 'Ṭabaqāt', vol. 2, p. 221.

(6) Ibn Khallikān, Göttingen edn. pt. 2, no. 206, p. 158.

(7) Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 81.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid. Others recorded it as 'Sharḥ Asmā' Allah al-Ḥusnā'.

(10) Ibid.

(11) Hājī Khalīfah, vol. V, p. 71.

(12) Ibid. vol. V, p. 633.

His contribution to the science of Tradition appears also to have been that he was one of the first men to inaugurate the first three classifications of Tradition, i.e. Ṣaḥīḥ (Sound), Ḥasan (Good or mediocre) and Da'īf (Weak).<sup>1</sup> From this embryonic attempt further developments were achieved at the hands of his pupils, notable among whom were al-Ḥākim ibn Abī al-Bayy<sup>2</sup> and Abū 'Ubayd al-Harawī.<sup>3</sup>

### Khaṭṭābī

Ḥamd (or Aḥmad) b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khaṭṭābī was born at Bust in 319/931. The most oft quoted date seems to be the most genuine.<sup>4</sup> Nothing much is known to us about the early life at his birth place, before he set off on his wide travels. It would appear, however, from his later recollections that he reserved a strong dislike for it. Its humid tropical climate would have been cause enough,<sup>5</sup> but the reason given for his journeys was his insatiable quest for knowledge, particularly for Traditions.<sup>6</sup>

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- (1) See A. Mez. 'The Renaissance of Islam, p. 194.  
 (2) (d. 405/1010) for some account of his life and works see J. Robson, 'An Introduction to the Science of Tradition', p. 1 sqq.  
 (3) (d. 401/1014) The author of 'K. al-Gharībayn'.  
 (4) While Yaqut and other biographers agree upon it Ibn al-Athīr in 'al-Lubāb', vol. 1, pp. 378-9, puts it as two years earlier. There is no date given in Sam'ānī's 'K. al-Ansāb', the source of Ibn al-Athīr. Ibn al-Jawzī, on the other hand, 'Muntazam', vol. 6, p. 397, no. 672, puts it thirty years ahead, i.e. 349 A.H. but this was proved to be a mistake by others, e.g. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 81; 'Suyūṭī', 'Bughyah', p. 293; Subkī, 'Ṭabaqāt', vol. 2. p. 218.  
 (5) See Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam al-Buldān', vol. 2, pp. 170-1.  
 (6) Tha'ālibī, 'Yatīmah', vol. 3, p. 231; Yāqūt (op. cit.); Muḥammad Bāqir, 'Rawḍāt al-Jannāt', vol. 2, p. 242.

In his own words, however, he ascribes his real suffering at his birth place to what he called 'Adam al-Shakl' or the lack of an understanding, sympathetic friend.<sup>1</sup>

There is no clear indication as to where he settled first; some have mentioned<sup>ed</sup> Makkah<sup>2</sup>, others Baghdād or Irāq<sup>3</sup> generally or the town of Baṣrah<sup>4</sup> in particular. Of the Persian towns, he spent a long time in Nisābūr<sup>5</sup>, Mā Warā' al-Nahr<sup>6</sup> and other of the neighbouring towns.<sup>7</sup> In all these towns he was instructed in some branch of literature or another, noticeably Tradition, at the same time he had his own pupils.<sup>8</sup>

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- (1) Tha'ālibī, (op. cit.) from which the others have taken their accounts.
  - (2) Where he studied Tradition at the hands of : Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābī (378/988), jurisprudence in the care of : Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī al-Kabīr (d. 365/975), 'Alī Ibn Abū Hurayrah (d. 345/956) and other Shafi'āite doctors.
  - (3) His tutors in Tradition and literature generally, as listed by Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. 2, p. 83 were: Ismā'īl al-Ṣaffār (d. 341/956), Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid (d. 344/955), Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Najjār (d.?), Abū 'Amr al-Sammāk (d. 344/955), Makram al-Qādī (d. 345/956), Ja'far al-Khuldī (d. 348/959).
  - (4) Here he studied under Abū Bakr b. Dasah (d. 346/957), see Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh al-Islām BM. Ms. Or. 48 fol. 208a; Ibn Nuḡṭah, al-Taḡyīd Fī Ruwāt al-Sunan, B.M. Ms. Or. 836, fol. 88b.
  - (5) At Nisābūr biographers mentioned Abū al-'Abbās al-Aṣam (d. 346/957) as his solitary tutor, his residence was long and he seemed to have composed a good deal of his work there (c.f. Dhahabī, op. cit.).
  - (6) There are no specific names of tutors given.
  - (7) Such towns as e.g. Ghaznah, Sajistān, and Balkh etc.
  - (8) For a comprehensive list of his pupils see Yāqūt, op. cit. Dhahabi, op. cit. and above all Abū Tāhīr al-Silfī in his commentary on the introduction of 'Ma'ālim al-Sunan', ed. Ṭabbākh, Appendix of vol. 4, pp. 379 sqq. noticeable among them Hākim, Abū 'Ubayd al-Harawī, and al-Sijazī.

For some insight into Khaṭṭābī's ethical and educational training, especially in jurisprudence, it will be noticed that a good number of his tutors were deeply influenced by the mystical life which was a feature of the fourth century<sup>1</sup>, if indeed, they were not themselves leaders of certain groups of mystics.

The fact that he had been instructed in jurisprudence with the guidance of eminent Shafi'āite scholars such as; Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī, Abū 'Alī b. Abū Hurayrah and others of their ilk appears to have cultivated in him a neutral attitude in his judgement which was a general characteristic of the school as a whole<sup>2</sup>. The neutrality is noticeable in Khaṭṭābī's own remarkable introduction to his commentary of 'Ma'ālim al-Sunan', as he appeared to have condemned the indifference and bias held by the Hanafite and Mālikite doctors as well as the extremists of his own school.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) To name only a few who were connected with the term "Zāhid", anchoretic, obstemious or mystic, as it designates several of Khaṭṭābī's tutors, e.g. Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid, for the epithet Zāhid see Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb', 267b. For his tutor Ja'far al-Khuldi who had been a pupil of the famous mystic al-Junayd and who had been the Shaykh of the mystic of Baghdād, see al-Khatīb, 'Ta'rīkh Baghdād', vol. 7, p. 226, No. 3715; Sullamī, 'Ṭabaqāt al-Sufiyah', ed. Shurībah, pp. 427 ff. Also for the life of Abū Sa'īd b. al-A'rābi ibid. 434. For an account of the mystical life of al-Aṣam and al-Saffani, see Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb', f. 42a, 43a and 353b.
- (2) "al-Shāfi'ī" observed Haffening "may be described as an eclectic who acted as an intermediary between the independent legal investigation and the traditionist of his time." E.I. (1) vol. 4, p. 253.
- (3) See India Office Ms., Delhi, Arabic, 311. Fol. 2b.

The vast materials gathered in 'K. al-'Uzlah' and the fragments that exist of the author's own poetry depicts for us a man who led a life of solitude particularly amongst his own kinfolk of Bust. Perhaps the quotations below would help to explain his penchant.

"And in solitude there is safety from disdain particularly in a town like Bust".<sup>1</sup>

"I am happy in my solitude and have stuck to my home,  
My joy had therefore become permanent, and happiness has increased;  
Fortune has tried (taught) me, but I mind it not,  
For I have taken a refuge, and am neither visited nor do I visit,  
And I shall not ask while I am alive  
How the horses gone? Or has the amir mounted his beast?"<sup>2</sup>

"It is not the pain of absence, but the lack of a sympathetic friend,  
Which is the greatest affliction a man can endure.  
I am a stranger to Bust and its people, yet here I was born,  
And here my kinfolk dwell."<sup>3</sup>

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(1) From 'K. al-'Uzlah', p. 40.

(2) Damirī, 'Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā', vol. 1, p. 386.  
Trans. A.S.G. Jayakar, vol. 1, p. 717.

(3) 'A history of Arabic literature', by Clement Huart,  
p. 223.

Comparatively this small treatise ranks among the shortest works of Khattābī, if not the shortest of them all. Not only this but it also appears to have been unknown to the earlier biographers who recorded Khattābī's life as well as his other works. It was first recognised perhaps by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī<sup>2</sup>, followed by Tāshkuprī Zādah<sup>3</sup> who both aptly summarised it in part.

Thus obscurity and unawareness on the part of the earlier biographers have lead Dr. Abdu al-Aleem of India to suggest that it might have been a section of a multiple work by Khattābī covering a serious and wider topic.<sup>4</sup> Although this suggestion seems to have taken no account of what Suyūṭī, Tāshkupri Zādah and Hājī Khalīfah<sup>5</sup> had to say, on the other hand, the other manuscript which was published at Cairo six years after Dr. Abdu al-Aleem's first publication of Khattābī's treatise is reassurance that the treatise was, in fact, an independent work; to judge not only by its title page and the opening and ending but also by the chain of its transmitters.<sup>6</sup>

Further it is no surprise that the treatise is of such brevity, nor yet, as has been reasoned by Dr. Abdu al-Aleem, is it surprising that it has escaped the attention of the earlier and famous

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- (1) The work was edited for the first time by Dr. Abdu al-Aleem from the Leiden (MDCLIV Cod. 955 (1) Wern.) Ms., Muslim University, Aligarh, India, (1953/1372). The edition used here was edited by M.Khalafalla and M.Z.Sallām, based on the Egyptian Library Photocopy from the original Ms. in the Siddiqiyah Library (Tangiers), Cairo, 1959, pp.19-65.
- (2) *Iḥqān*, vol. 2, pp.134-41, 134.
- (3) 'Miftāh al-Sa'adah' vol.2, No.275, p.357. See also GAL.sup.1/275.
- (4) Introduction, p. (D.)
- (5) 'Kashf al-Zunūn' vol.1, p.351.
- (6) See Cairo edition p.11 and the first facsimile.

biographers, such as al-Tha'ālibī, Yāqūt and Subkī for none of them, or others, claimed to have registered Khattābī's works in full. Indeed most of them have left us after listing some of the author's most outstanding works and sometimes minor ones, the remainder covered by the usual phrase '...etc.' or 'and others besides'.<sup>1</sup>

If Rummānī by his short treatise on I'jāz was honouring the request of a dear friend or a pupil, Khattābī claims no such excuse; but from his terse prologue it can be inferred that his motivation in this attempt was the reverberating discussions and the increasing literature on the question of I'jāz during the preceding and immediate centuries, which compelled him to reflect on this problem.

It is not quite certain at which date the author commenced or finished his work. A rough indication can be deduced from the chain of transmitters which occurred in the Cairo edition. Thus as the last man in the chain of authorities was Abū al-Hasan 'Alī b. al-Hasan al-Sijzī<sup>2</sup> who had it from the author himself, and who was a native of Sijistān, the treatise may have been dictated while Khattābī's residence was there, for he stayed several years there and in neighbouring towns, where he wrote most of his works.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) This goes without exception for all biographers whom we have mentioned on previous pages including Ibn Khallikān, Subkī, Yāqūt, Dhahabī etc.
- (2) Unfortunately I have not been able to find any biographical information which might have been of some enlightenment on the present treatise apart from mere mention by al-Samā'ānī, 'Ansāb' facs. fol. 291b.
- (3) See the commentary on the introduction of 'Ma'ālim al-Sunan' by al-Hāfiz Abū Tāhir al-Silfī who was one of the transmitters of the present treatise, being an appendix of M.R. al-Tabbākh's first edition of 'Ma'ālim al-Sunan' vol. 4, p. 379 sqq.

Theological Discourses

" Much had been said in former times, and much is still being said on the question of I'jāz , and although men have expressed all kinds of opinion, they are far from offering a satisfactory resolution. The reason for this is that it is impossible to recognise the nature of the inimitability of the Qur'ān or to see the way to exploring it." <sup>1</sup>

Thus, Khattābī commenced his treatise. It would appear characteristic of him that he was justifiably in the habit of making a thorough survey of the subject under consideration, as can be seen in his other prefaces, <sup>2</sup> by reflecting on previous attempts, if any, before offering his own.

A great influence on the problem of I'jāz was without doubt the theological factor, and in all attempts whether the contribution was great or small, it is a fact that all the authors of the fourth century had recourse to it. As for Khattābī who in one single work openly declared his resentment of theology and theologians alike and dispensed with them both, nothing much can be expected <sup>3</sup> in that respect. He did, however, review some of the current

(1) P. 19.

(2) See e.g. Ibn al-Athīr, 'al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Hadīth', B.M. Ms. fol. 2a; al-so 'Sharh Ma'ālim al-Sunanī', India Office Library, Ms. (Delhi, Arabic, 113), the introduction.

(3) It has been reported by al-Subkī (Tabaqāt, vol. 2, p. 221) that Abū al-Muzaffar al-Sam'ānī was appreciative of Khattābī, saying "Not every reason (Sabab) is a cause ('Illah) but it is the other way round. Nor is every proof (Dalīl) a cause but the reverse is true."

Having pointed out to the shortcoming of such a categorisation Subkī remarked " This cannot be accepted from Khattābī for although his status in other branches of literature is high, theology is not his profession."

theological argument, shared indiscriminately at one time or another by theologians or known only and approved of among a certain school, or specific sect of it.

The first point demonstrated by Khattābī, in his brief theological discourse, corresponds almost with what may be termed a psychological approach<sup>1</sup> when he discusses the presupposition "That it had been implanted in the peoples' minds that the Qur'ān is inimitable, and by no means were they capable of producing its like."<sup>2</sup>

In his opinion the unreason of such hypothesis was that it is unnecessary to acquire a further proof beyond the existing fact of the Qur'ān from the time it was revealed up to his time. In addition there was the nature of the challenge embodied in the Qur'ān, the rebuke and the deprecation of a nation of great poets and orators, who had been described as the most argumentative and who, had it been within their capability to meet the challenge in words, would not have resorted to disastrous methods and harsh ways.

Secondly, the theory of al-Sarfah which, as seen earlier, was forwarded and upheld by some of the Mu'tazilites in the third century, and was still popular, though with less enthusiasm, as noticed in Rummānī's stand. By the turn of the century it had also been considered by some of the outstanding Shi'ite scholars.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) W.M.Watt, writing about the position of al-Bāqillānī and his defence of the miraculousness of the Qur'ān noticed "It is, even from the European point of view, a strong argument, though the European might want to express the conclusions to be drawn from it in more psychological terms" Islamic Philosophy and Theology (1962) p. 109.

(2) P. 19.

(3) Cont.

The Sunnite- Shafi'ite Khattābī saw in it a weak argument if only because it contradicted the obvious meaning of the Qur'ānic verse XVII/88.

Thirdly, the attitude of those who sought to explain I'jāz by what the Qur'ān foretold of future events was not in fact dismissed out of hand by Khattābī<sup>1</sup>; in his opinion such an argument could only be valid in respect of certain verses in the Qur'ān, but it cannot stand as a general rule.

These are some of the theological aspects which the author reflects upon at the opening of his work, later on we shall meet another theological aspect (Mu'āradah, opposition or the producing of a rival text), which he turns to a fruitful literary discussion, but now we may turn with the author to his major topic.

#### E L O Q U E N C E

This is the theme which dominates the remainder of the treatise. The author explained as follows:

" Others declared that the Qur'ān's inimitability lies in its eloquence. Those were the majority of scholars ( or as he calls them 'Ahl al-Nazar' a term which imparts a theological bearing) Yet, in explaining the nature of it they encounter real problem from which they find it difficult to disengage themselves." He asserts that this claim had been generally adopted as taken for granted, or as an overwhelming assumption without supporting it by

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(3) Cont. For al- Sharīf al-Murtadā's 'K. al-Sarfah', see Tūsī, 'Fihrist', ed. A. Sprenger and others, p. 219; also 'Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'' of Ibn Shahrashūb, ed. A. Eghbal, p. 62, No. 465.

(1) Cf. M. Khalafallah, 'Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University, vol. VIII, p. 13.

evidence or full knowledge. If however, they were asked to define the unmatched eloquence which particularises the composition of the Qur'ān, and the characteristic which distinguishes it from the rest of eloquent speech, they would answer that it is impossible to specify it or yet to identify with any obvious feature by which we may know how the Qur'ān is different from other speech. It can only be comprehended, somehow, by those who are deeply versed in knowledge, when they hear it.<sup>1</sup>

This argument stresses the effort on the senses and on taste and feeling, and is therefore, still unacceptable as an explanation. It claims, however, that in speech there are sometimes certain elements of sweetness in the hearing, and pleasantness that comforts the soul, which cannot be found elsewhere and yet there is no comprehensible reason for them.

It would appear that this argument had gained a certain vogue among scholars. It had been, for example, strongly held by the Shi'āite commentator, al-Qummī (d.378/938) who defended it as follows:

"The matter of I'jaz is wondrous, it can be recognised, but it is impossible to describe."

He drew an analogy to "the right metre in poetry and the beauty of a face which can only be conceived through good taste".<sup>2</sup>

In later centuries al-Sakkaki (d.626/1228) adopted the same argument adding "And taste can be obtained or cultivated through a dogged service of the sciences of eloquence." Yet he continued,

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(1) Pp. 21-22.

(2) His Commentary, 'Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān' p. 68.

" Yes, eloquence has many veiled faces. Perhaps they can be unveiled, ( that is through constant study.) But for I'jaz itself the matter is different. " <sup>1</sup>

This argument, despite its literary exemplification <sup>2</sup> to ascertain its validity, was not recognised by Khattābī as sound; on the contrary he maintained that a thorough investigation would lead to the conclusion that if speech is endowed with such qualities as sweetness, pleasantness, beauty and resplendence that distinguish it from other forms of writing and therefore moves the hearts and affects the souls, there should necessarily be reason to allow for such a verdict.

Investigation, however, leads to the conclusion that there is no external reason for this, therefore it is intrinsic. This provoked this classification.

" The species of utterance are different, they are distinct in respect of eloquence and their scales of lucidity are far apart." <sup>3</sup>

Having described each individually he classified them as :-

- a) The sublime "al-Balīgh" which is stately and terse. This is the highest and noblest grade of speech.
- b) The perspicuous "al-Fasīh" which is immediately attainable. This is middle of the road and most just.
- c) The easy style "al-Jā'iz". This is nearest to common speech.

(1) 'Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm', p.196. Sakkākī appears to have been greatly dependent on al-Qummī's remark, differing only in the conclusion he arrived at. See also Abdu al-Aleem, Islamic Culture, vol. VII, pp. 223-4.

(2) The example is the finding out by the poet al-Farazdaq of three lines given by Jarir to Dhu al-Rumma to insertion in his poem which begins:

(3) Pp.23-4.

كَلِمَتِ عَيْتَاكَ مِنْهُ لَمْ يَخْرُوجْ : عَنْهُ الرِّجْعُ ، اَمْتَنِي بِعَطَايَا

These are the three categories of the praiseworthy types of speech. One notices here that Khattābī's divisions of speech are in some respects different from those of Rummānī.

In his opinion the characteristic feature of the language of the Qur'ān is that it has partaken of each of these distinct divisions in a harmonious manner, thus it attains sublimity and sweetness. And by being so, he observed, in considering each of these qualities individually, they are like antithesis to each other, because sweetness is the result of easiness whereas sublimity deals with subtlety in speech. Thus, coherently, they are assembled in the Qur'ān, being its distinguishing feature.

In some of the recent studies the assertion has been made that Khattābī was the first Muslim scholar who studied I'jāz on a systematically scientific basis.<sup>1</sup> But perhaps the greatest characteristic of his treatise is that it shows his ability to manipulate a literary argument to expose the futility of another argument.

#### Words, Meanings and Composition

The first two aspects of this triangular problem, i.e. words and meanings or forms and matters,<sup>2</sup> were not, it is evident, a new basis for discussion or estimable evaluation among the literary critics of the fourth century, perhaps long before that, particularly regarding the language of poetry; sometimes however in the third century critics were poets themselves.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Cf. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Khatīb, 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān' vol.1, p.155.

(2) The question of words and meanings has been discussed in some detail by Na'īm al-Himsī in a series of articles, see 'Majallat al-Majma' al'Ilmī al-'Arabī' vol. 24, pts.3,4; vol.25, pts.1,2.

(3) Cf. G. von Grunebaum, J.A.O.S. vol. LXI, p. 55.

During the third century and with prime interest in the Qur'ān's composition, the third side of that triangle evolved, i.e. the idea of composition, occurring as an independent topic, or segment of it., in works by al-Jāhiz and al-Wāsiṭī to whom we have already alluded.

Further, early in the fourth century the same topic continued to inspire other writers such as ; Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d.322/934), Ibn al-Ikhshīd and al-Ḥasa b. 'Alī b. Nasr.<sup>1</sup>

Although we possess none of their works yet in one of the extant works of al-Jāhiz some of his arguments are found with regard to the former two topics.

The tendency which lauded the form over the matter, vigorously expressed by al-Jāhiz<sup>2</sup> in the third century, was supported by some of the outstanding literary critics of the fourth century.<sup>3</sup> Until then it had been fashionable, but the reverse was true in the fifth century when it was diminished if not extinguished at the hand of such critics as 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d, 471/1078) and others. To such an end, moderate views were held by men like Khaṭṭābī which might eventually have contributed to that demise.

How did the question of words and meanings arise in the first place ?

"It seems that the theory of the supremacy of the Qur'ān," deduced A.EL-Kott,<sup>4</sup> must have helped fundamentally to create this

(1) See Ibn al-Nadīm, 'al-Fihrist' ed. Flügel, pp. 38, 138.

(2) 'Hayawān', ed. Sāsī, vol 3, p.41; (ed. Ḥarūn, vol. III, pp. 131-2)

(3) Cf. al-'Askarī, 'al-Sinā'atayn' pp.57-8; 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jurjānī, 'al-Wasāṭah' p. 167.

question, to justify the claim of the Qur'ān to be supreme and inimitable, the theologians faced with the question 'was the supremacy due to its meaning or diction ?' and the answers followed the differing opinions similar to those which arose in poetry."<sup>1</sup>

Although this seems to have been the situation, the fourth century critical attempts sometimes drew very near to bridging the rift between those two prevailing attitudes, as in the case of Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (d.395/1004) who presented his 'K. al-Sina'ātayn' as an explanation of the particular science by means of which I'jāz is recognised.<sup>2</sup>

#### Khattābī's conception of the Question

The strong tendency to favour words over meanings which was based on al-Jāhiz's theory that meanings are strewn in everybody's way and what really matters is diction, which had been adopted by some of the outstanding literary critics of the fourth century was now faced with a new challenge from Khattābī which became even more elaborate and strengthened in the succeeding century.

His endeavour could better be described as a fair evaluation, hence he did not appear strongly or discriminately in favour of one argument or the other, yet there is a slight bias towards meanings and composition.

The question as conceived by Khattābī concerned not only words and meanings but a tripartite problem comprising words, meanings

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- (1) El-Kott.A.H.A.K., 'Al-Muwāzanah Bayna Abī Tammām wal-Buhturī' a thesis presented for Ph.D. degree, London University(1950) part 1, pp.131-2.  
 (2) 'Al-Sina'ātayn' pp.1-2.

and composition.

" Speech" he demonstrated " is merely founded on these three things:

Lafz Hāmīl, (i.e. words or utterance which carry the meaning.)

Wa Ma'nā bihi Qā'im, (i.e. meaning or content carried by the utterance.)

Wa Ribāt lahumā Nāzim, ( i.e. a regulating tie on which both words and meaning are assembled, the composition.)

As this is the mainstay of his latter argument perhaps a closer look should be taken at each one separately, in the light of the style of the Qur'an as conceived by the author.

### I. Words

" Words are the vehical of meanings"<sup>1</sup>, thus point out Khattābī, on the inter-dependence of the two, leaving for the moment the inter-relation between them and the third component or 'the string which held them together', the author leads in some details about words alone.

The chief point here, to which he endeavoured to bring attention, is the distinguishing characteristics of words which many people tand to care little about. He wrote :

" In speech there are words close in their meanings, many people think they are identical ..... but as they are perceived by philologists their significance is quite seperate; for although such words do share the expression of some meaning; yet they have their own individualities."<sup>2</sup>

The theme being of anetymological nature this prompted the author to a lengthy logomachy in which he exemplified some of the subtle

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(1) P . 24.

(2) P . 26.

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differences between verbs,<sup>1</sup> nouns,<sup>2</sup> syntax,<sup>3</sup> adjectives,  
prepositions,<sup>4</sup> particles,<sup>5</sup> etc.

It was for this reason that he also observed that many of the old generation declined to comment on the Qur'ān for fear of misconception or misrepresentation, although they were well-versed in language and religion; he recalled particularly the attitude of the philologist al-Asma'ī which has been mentioned earlier.<sup>6</sup>

And also for the same reason he cited the Tradition "Read the Qur'ān with 'I'rāb' and look after strange words."<sup>7</sup>

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- (1) Both verbs 'Alima and 'Arafa mean 'to know', yet one can say: 'Araftu Allah but not 'Alimtu Allah, unless one is intending to add an adjective, viz. 'Alimtu Allah 'Adlan (I have known God is just) etc.; for the grammatical reason that while the former requires only one object the latter requires two. Further reasoning was given also. As an example he quoted for the difference the imperative Uq'ud and Ijlis for which he cited the famous inter-change between the grammarian al-Nadr b. Shumayl and the Caliph al-Ma'mūn. On his return from Marw, Nadr came to visit the Caliph, as he greeted him the Caliph invited him to sit down, saying: 'Ijlis', to which Nadr answered, "I am not laying upon one side so that I can 'Ijlis' (i.e. to sit up from a reclining position) "How would you say it then?", enquired the Caliph of him, "Uq'ud", replied Nadr...
- (2) Shuhh and Bukhl (miserliness) some have asserted that 'al-Bukhl is the deprivation of someone's right which is unjust and 'Shuhh is the bitterness felt by the Shahīh at having to pay back, or having taken from him another's due. In another context the reverse is the correct definition.
- (3) As for example the difference between Na't and Sifah.
- (4) Of prepositions, perhaps the phenomenon is universal.
- (5) The difference between the affirmative particles Na'am (yes) confirming a previous statement and that of Bala (yes) but as an affirmative answer to a negative question, or affirming a negative proposition.  
Or as the differences between the demonstratives Dhāka (for a nearer object) and Dhālika (for one farther away) etc.
- (6) See earlier on p. 15 sqq.
- (7) For further discussion over this Tradition which has been based on new materials, see Paul Kahle, I. Goldziher Memorial Volume, part 1, p. 163 sqq.

Un-familiar Words

During Khattābī's time , despite the increase in literature on "Gharīb al-Qur'ān" <sup>1</sup> ( the unfamiliar words in the Qur'ān ), the criticism strangely appears to be that the Qur'ān had used few unfamiliar words as opposed to the familiar ones.<sup>2</sup> As a rebuttal of this opinion Khattābī has this to say:

"To the claim of paucity of unfamiliar words in the Qur'ān in comparison with the popular and familiar, unfamiliarity is not what we require for eloquence; on the contrary, unfamiliar words often occur in the speech of the vulgar, untamed and coarse Bedouin who adhere to such oddity and use such strange language which is not counted eloquent." <sup>3</sup>

He noticed as an example the word "long" which can be expressed in sixty different forms, the bulk of which are gruesome and ugly, e.g. Qāq, Tūt, 'Ashannaq, etc. which rhetoricians forwent.<sup>4</sup>

II. Meanings

" In seeking eloquence as an explanation for the inimitability of the Qur'ān, we do not" argued Khattābī, " restrict ourselves only to words of which speech is composed without taking into consideration the meanings therein." <sup>5</sup>

Here, in contradiction to the current theory that meanings are scattered in everybody's way and diction attains more

- (1) See for the works written on the 'Gharib al-Qur'ān' Ibn al-Nadīm, 'Fihrist' ed. Flügel, p.35.  
 (2) Pp.31-2.  
 (3) pp.33-4.  
 (4) Cf. e.g. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jurjānī, 'Wasāṭah' p.22.(5)p.32.

importance, Khattābī equalised them perhaps giving superiority to the former. He said:

" As for the meanings which are imparted in words, the effort of discovering them is most grueling, hence they are the results of the intellect, the fruits of understanding and the offspring of thoughts." <sup>1</sup> or in other words:

" Meanings, undoubtedly, are what the intellect cites as being superior." <sup>2</sup>

Meanings, within the context of this treatise, which were no doubt the sole preoccupation in the author's mind and which were determined by the nature of the Sacred Book are primarily nought but those which deal with the unity of God, glorification of His attributes, Omnipotence, that which guided people to His obedience, in constructing them as to His worship by instituting that which is lawful, forbidden, allowable, etc. <sup>3</sup>

Yet, further discussion on the idea of meanings which fell largely on the incongruity of forms and contents in certain verses or individual words in the Qur'ān, led consequently to some literary and etymological observations.

The first and the last would perhaps be fair examples. The first example the author demonstrated was a reply to an attack on the the verse

" And the wolf devoured him" ( XII/17)

The charge was laid that the word Akala (to eat ) does not

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(1) p. 33.  
 (2) p. 24.  
 (3) p. 25.

meticulously serve the meaning intended here, or at least is not what the philologists would prefer to use . The most agreeable and correct word, especially in describing the action of the beast is the word "Iftarasa" (to prey); as the former word is general and can be used to describe any animal devouring indiscriminately.

The argument being on such an obviously etymological ground, the philologist Khattābī argued thus:

" Iftarasa with regard to the action of a beast means killing only, since the root Fars means ' breaking or crushing of the neck'!"<sup>1</sup> To justify the application of the word as it occurs in the Qur'ānic verse, through an interpreting eye, he argued:

" For fear of being asked for any remains, Joseph's brothers claimed that the wolf had eaten him up, Akalahu , The application of the word Akala would rid them of the necessity of any proof. If the word Iftarasa were used, "devouring" in the full sense would not be understood"<sup>2</sup>

This may go well with the interpretation of the Qur'ānic story, but the philologist, Khattābī, led the discussion further, to ascertain the application of the word Akala to cover all beasts of prey.

From Ibn al- Sikkit he reported the Arab saying:

" The wolf ate the sheep or the goat and left of it nothing." <sup>3</sup>

أَكَلَ الذِّئْبُ الشَّاةَ فَاتْرَكَ مِنْهَا تَامُورًا

(1) p.37; the English translation of the root "Fars" is from E.W. Lane, 'Arabic English Lexicon', Book I, part 5, p.2366.

(2) P.37.

(3) Eng. Trans. by, E.W.Lane, op.cit. vol.II, p.98.

Also one of the poets<sup>1</sup> said:-

" A man who is not like a wolf to his kin, as soon as he sees a drop of blood on his mate he devours him. "

فَقِيَ لَيْسَ لِأَبْنِ الْعَمِّ كَالذِّبِّ إِذَا رَأَى : بِصَاحِبِهِ يَوْمًا دَمًا هُوَ آكِلُهُ

Or that of another?:-

" Abū Khurasha, if you have supporters of a host, thou vauntedst thyself against me, Vaunt not thyself, the year of dearth has not devoured my people."<sup>3</sup>

أَبَا خُرَاشَةَ - أَمَا أَنْتَ ذَا نَقِيرٍ : فَأَنْتَ قَوْمِي لَمْ تَأْكُلْهُمُ الصَّبِيحَ

From tradition he also quoted, " The beast(lion) devoured me", and the grammatically faulty example أَكَلُونِي الْبِرَاعِيَّةُ "The fleas devoured me."

The other verse we have chosen as another example of al-Khattābī's demonstration, is the verse:-

"Whosoever seekth wrongful partiality therein", (XXII/25) wherein the criticism had been that the letter, Bā in the word Bi-Ilhād was inserted here for no justifiable purpose.<sup>4</sup> In refuting this he argued from an historical viewpoint this time, he also reflected on valuable critical approaches. He argued first, the letter Bā often occurred in the language of the earlier Arabs in which the Qur'an was revealed, though such peculiarity was very rare in that of the latter generations.

And for this historical factor he reported from other authorities that the language in which the Qur'an was revealed was that of the

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- (1) It has been ascribed to the poet, al-Farazdaq in some of the references, sometimes to the poetess, Zaynab bint al-Tathariyyah. Cf. editors' footnote(2) on p.37.
- (2) The poet is Khaffaf b. Nudbah, c.f. also footnote(1) p. 38.
- (3) The translation is partly by M.S.Howell, 'Classical Arabic Grammar', Pt.1, p.32; C.f. Lane, 'Arabic English Lexicon, vol.1, pp.93-4
- (4) P.35.

Arabs of the Prophet's time which was greatly different from that of the present day.

Some scholars express the view that the language of the earlier Arabs was preserved and well-kept until the days of the Umayyads, when it was partly weakened.

This also was marked from the lamentation of such great philologists as Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' who used to express his grief and regret that people who were able to appreciate and comprehend the poetry of the pre-Islamic period and the Mukhadramīn or to write similar poetry had all perished.

It was for this reason, continued al-Khattābī that experts do not refer to modern poets such as Bashshār b. Burd, al-Hasan b. Hān' Di'bil and al-'Attābī and others of their like, who are very capable of excellent poetry, but instead they refer to the pre-Islamic poets for the fact that in later times the language had very much changed.

The point the author was leading to here is, in short, this; it is totally erroneous and incorrect to reject or condemn a classical literary product on the basis that it is not appreciated or understood by the age in which one lives.

After such remarks were given Khattābī returned to the point in question in the verse, arguing that the letter "Bā" was an otiose often used in old Arabic without altering the sense as in the poet's saying:-

نَضْرِبُ بِالسَّيْفِ وَنَرْجُو بِالْمَسْرِجِ

"We smite with the sword and we hope for the removal of grief" <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>

(1) The poet is al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī, see Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam al-Buldān' ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. 2, p. 909; also 'Tāj al-'Arūs', vol. 2, p. 77.

(2) Lane, 'Arabic English Lexicon', vol. 1, p. 143.

Or as the other poet<sup>1</sup> said:-

"They are the free women, who wear no veil, their eyes are dark  
they do not read the Surahs."<sup>2</sup>

هِنَّ الْحَرَائِرُ لَا رِبَاتٍ أَخْمِرَةٍ : سَوْدُ الْمَجَاجِرِ لَا يَقْرَأْنَ بِالسُّورِ

### III. Composition.

Although critical evaluation on composition had long been expressed before and during the fourth century, so far only the names of these works are extant. Owing to this lacuna, evidence of the exact contents of these works is hard to find or to prove whether Khattābī, who at the opening of his treatise implies certain familiarity with them, has benefitted from them. Whether this is so or not the little he has said, however, can be taken as it stands.

It was not the first or the last time he touched on this idea of composition, similar remarks are to be found in some of his earlier works.<sup>3</sup>

Here, after the importance of eloquence is demonstrated, his first statement deals with this topic. He wrote "The pillar of eloquence... is the placing of each individual word contained in the sections of the speech in its specific and appropriate place; hence if words are misplaced this will result either in the undermining of the sense, which ruins the speech, or the veiling of its splendour which leads to the deprecation of eloquence."<sup>4</sup> He described it as "a string

(1) According to al-Jāhiz, Hayawān, ed. Hārūn, vol. 3, p. 667, this verse has occurred in the poetry of al-Qattāl al-Kilābī as well as in the poetry of al-Rā'ī al-Numayrī.

(2) In some editions the word Akhmirah reads Ahmirah (donkeys)

(3) "Composition" he noted "gather together the association of words and their different rules; whereas meaning organise and situate them." Sharh Ma'ālim al-Sunan ed. Tabbakh, vol. 1, p. 110.

(4) p. 26.

which fastens words and meanings together".<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he analogised it to 'dressing'.<sup>2</sup> On its importance and the difficulties lying ahead he said; "As for the formation of composition, the need for skilfulness and dexterity is most urgent, hence they control both words and meaning, link the different parts of speech, so that a lucid image is depicted in the intellect."<sup>3</sup>

It is an acknowledged fact that 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī was among the very few who transformed the Arabic theory of rhetoric and criticism into its final shape;<sup>4</sup> particularly in his renowned works; 'Dalā'il al-I'jāz' and 'Asrār al-Balāghah', wherein the idea of words, meanings and composition play major parts. It is perhaps questionable whether such a celebrated master was in any way indebted to Khattābī.

Although there is no clear evidence to establish 'Abd al-Qāhir's familiarity with Khattābī's treatise the fact that both men were adherents of the Shāfi'aite rite, on the one hand, and the fact that most of the transmitters of Khattābī's treatise were natives of such countries as Sajistān, Isfahān and Zinjān, on the other, would persuade us to assume that in Jurjān, the native town of 'Abd al-Qāhir, where he spent all his life without leaving,<sup>5</sup> the treatise had also been circulated.

### The Figures of Speech

Unlike Rummānī, Khattābī made little use of the figures of

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(1) P.24.

(2) P.32.

(3) P.33.

(4) Cf. M.Khalafallah, 'Journal of Near Eastern Studies' (1955), pp. 164 sqq-

(5) See A.A.al-Badawi, ' 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī ', p.16.

speech or the forms of *Badī'*; yet, in most of the figures reflected upon and to which he arrived by merely controversial routes he showed even less originality.

In his treatment of conciseness, *ījāz* for instance, his analysis paralleled closely certain remarks in *Rummānī's* treatise.<sup>1</sup> Unless it had been a common view shared by many of the fourth century literary critics, it must be assumed that *Khattābī* was acquainted with this particular work of *Rummānī*.

Moreover, his remarks on metaphor "Metaphor is in some circumstances more eloquent than the proper use of words", is not far from one of *Rummānī's* conclusions on the same subject.<sup>2</sup>

Apart, however, from very casual observations on hyperbole<sup>3</sup> and simile<sup>4</sup> the figures which did not occur in *Rummānī's* treatise, but nevertheless had been dealt with in the third century studies, particularly that of *Ibn Qutaybah* (d.276/889), who in his turn appeared to have strongly inspired<sup>5</sup> *Khattābī*, was repetition. In the treatise being considered, however, *Khattābī* was virtually summarising *Ibn Qutaybah's* chapter on repetition.<sup>6</sup>

The discussion which arose over the repetition throughout two Surahs in the *Qur'ān*, namely '*al-Rahman*' (the Beneficent, IV) and

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- (1) Cf. p. 47 in this treatise with pp.71-2 in *Rummānī's* of the same application.
- (2) Cf. p.40 with *Rummānī's* on p.79.
- (3) Pp.40-41.
- (4) P. 36.
- (5) Particularly in '*K.Gharīb al-Hadīth*', See *Ibn al-Athīr*, '*al-Nihāyah*', vol. 1, p.7.
- (6) Cf. *Ibn Qutaybah*, '*Tā'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*', pp.182,185-6 with *Khattābī's* on p. 48.

'al-Mursilāt', (the Emissaries, LXXVII) where in the former the verse

"Which is it, of the favours of your Lord that you deny?";

and in the latter the verse

"Woe unto the repudiators on that day", are several times repeated. This prompted Khattābī to distinguish between two kinds of repetition.

a) That which is unfavourable which contributed nothing to the idea being expressed previously, it is therefore mere tautology.

b) The other kind is exactly the opposite, and is needed to emphasise the meaning, especially in important matters.

He compared the importance of repetition to that of conciseness.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate this he cited some passages from prose and poetry; among the verses he quoted was that of the poet, 'Abīd b. al-Abras:<sup>2</sup>

"Did you ask the armies of Kindah ,

on the day when they fled whither,whither?"

هَلْ سَأَلْتَ حُبُوعَ كَيْدَةَ يَوْمَ وَلَوْ آتَيْتَ أَيُّنَا

and that of Muhalhil b. Rabī'ah<sup>3</sup>

"O people of Bakr raise for me Kulayb (from the grave),

O people of Bakr whither whither do you flee?"

يَا بَكْرُ انْتَرُوا لِي كَلَيْبًا يَا بَكْرُ أَيُّنَا انْتَرُوا

In justification of the repetition in the two mentioned Surahs, for the former he argued " Here God speaks to both mankind and Jinns

wherein He enumerates the various graces which He creates for them,<sup>4</sup>

- (1) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', p. 182. This point reads "And it is customary of them (the Arabs) to use repetition to emphasise the meaning and conciseness for brevity."
- (2) 'Sinā'atayn' p. 194.
- (3) 'Aghānī' vol.5, p.59.
- (4) Ibn Qutaybah's words read " In this Surah God has enumerated his graces and He reminds His worshippers of His benefits....so that they should comprehend His grace and affirm it" op.cit.pp.185-6.

whenever a chapter is mentioned He renewed their obligation and required a just return." Of the latter Surah, " It deals with the condition of the Day of Judgement and its terror, the threat being preceded before each stage for emphasis, so that there would be no excuse for ignorance."

The argument on the former Surah brought forth the question with regard to the verse " There will be sent against you, both heat of fire and flash of brass and ye will not escape"(LV/35) which is followed by " Which is it, of the favours of your Lord, that you deny?"

Where is the grace here, when all that is mentioned is the threatening by the flames of fire and the overshadowing smoke ? " The grace of God," he argued " lies in this warning and caution against punishment, so that it should be avoided; in contrast with His promised and announced reward for their obedience to Him, so that they should desire it and be anxious to obtain it"

He concluded that a knowledge of a thing becomes affirmed by contrast with its opposite, as in the verse of the wise poet:

"Even though Time's misfortunes, inflict their sorrow upon you, it is, yet, this very sorrow which tells you of their benefits"

وَالْحَادِثَاتُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْ بَوَسْمًا : فَهُوَ الذِّعَابُ أَنْبَاءُ كَيْفَ نَعِيمِهَا

The last discussion in this treatise was provoked chiefly by two charges:

- a) That the Arabs might have produced the like of the Qur:ān but it has not been passed down or was wilfully hidden or else destroyed .
- b) That some of them did, in fact, endeavour to produce something

in the proximity of some of the short chapters in the Qur'ān , notably among them Musaylamah and others,<sup>1</sup>

These being the claims, the author dealt with them both at some length, but it is not our intention here to pursue them in detail. The latter assertion, however, which he expounds further than the former in his treatment of some of the examples<sup>2</sup> ascribed to some of the above-named, in the light of the three principles he mentioned for eloquence and of which he had spoken earlier.

From a rhythmical point of view his discussion ran in some respects very close to that of Rummānī.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, his analysis of some of the examples, quoted below, also employed further criteria from a comparative literary viewpoint. His discussion in many respects attunes with a common theory that was very much in vogue among the literary critics of the century, particularly those who were his contemporaries: that is to say al-Sariqāt, plagiarism in literature or the borrowing by one poet from another poet's words, meanings, etc.

Khattābī introduced his argument thus :-

" The way for him who wishes to compete (ʿĀrad) with another in an oration or poetry, is to create a new diction enhanced equally with fresh meaning; contending with his rival's diction vieing with his ideas, so that a final judgement may be established. Such rivalry

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(1) The other names he mentioned are: Abū al-Yanbuʿī, Abū al-ʿIbar and al-Tirimmāh.

(2) Such as " O frōg croak as it pleaseth thee, neither the water art thou muddying , nor a water seeker art thou indisposing." Or that " Hast thou not seen how thy Lord did with the pregnant? He hath brought forth from her the soul which runnet between peritoneum and bowels."

(3) Cf. p. 51 with Rummānī's on p. 90.

cannot, of course, be achieved by infringing on his rival's composition by cutting from it or by merely padding its words or changing them around." <sup>1</sup>

...Mu'aradah or producing a rival text" he continued to explain further, "can be accomplished in one of the following."

"A person competing against another in poetry, an oration or a debate while in the process striving to exceed his rival in what he produced by way of new description, lucidity, etc." <sup>2</sup>

Here Khattābī furnished a series of examples of compositions between ancient as well as early Islamic poets, adding his own analytical comments to most of them or confirming it with the opinion of other poetry authorities, as Muhammad B. Sallām al-Jumhī and others.

Such rivalries as those when each opponent was trying to produce the best description of the subject, e.g.

Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqamah b. 'Abdah (on the horse).

" " " al-Hārith b. al-Taw'am, (on similar topic).

" " " al-Nābighah, (on the night).

Al-A'shā and al-Akhtal (on wine).

If Mu'aradah had been an ancient criterion for judging poetry, Muwāzanah (comparison between poets' works) was a comparatively contemporary basis for judgement. Khattābī in this treatise calls attention in this way to a third criterion, which ranks between the two above-mentioned bases. There are poets who have no rival on certain topics, such as the description of certain things and objects, e.g. horses, wine, wild game, ruins, remains and the

(1) P. 53

(2) Ibid.

wilderness.

The well-known formula - so and so is most excellent of poets in the description of this subject and that- should not in Khattābī's opinion deter us from comparing one poet who excels in one field with another who in his own right is the most outstanding in a totally different field. The criterion here affirmed by Khattābī is that, despite different motives and subjects a comparison can also be drawn between poets on the basis of depth, profundity and perfection.

Nevertheless, this was perhaps necessary for Khattābī to demonstrate, in order to clarify, above all things, the basis on which attempts at producing a rival text can be considered. In the light of this statement of his, al-Khattābī proceeded to consider a few of Musaylamah's attempts at producing rival text to the Qur'ān. One of these examples is the following

" Hast thou not seen what thy Lord did with the pregnant? He hath brought forth from her the soul which runneth, between the peritoneum and bowels".

" The first mistake" commented Khattābī " perpetrated by this ignorant man is that he used the word "Fa'al" which is used in the context of revenge when he meant mercy as he says: "Hast thou not seen what thy Lord did with the pregnant woman". This expression is only used for punishment and such like as in the Qur'ānic verse" Hast thou not seen what thy Lord did to the masters of the Elephant ? " (CV/1) <sup>1</sup>

The right way to put it so as to express this sense is to say

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(1) P. 63. The author has quoted further examples.

" Hast thou not seen how thy Lord graciously treated (Latafa) the pregnant woman ?", or better still, " How (thy Lord) conferred upon her (His grace)", or such expression."

His saying " He hath brought forth from her a soul which moves, between the peritoneum and the bowels", It is but a poor imitation or theft from the Qur'ān's verse "He is created from a gushing fluid that issued from between the loins and ribs." (LXXXVI/7).

Khattābī not only thinks that the author of this piece had mistaken the identity and sense, but according to the anatomists of the day, he was also in a physiological error.

#### An Aesthetic Conclusion

In conclusion the author focussed attention in a picturesque way on a factor which, as he observed, had been over-looked by many people, he wrote:

"An important fact about I'jāz, which had been overlooked by most people, save the very exceptional individuals, is the impression it has on the hearts and its effect on the soul. There is no composition be it in verse or prose, which when it falls on the ear instils into the heart, at times, such a sense of rapture and sweetness and at other times, awe and impressive dignity, so that the souls rejoice and the hearts are gladdened. Having received a portion of it, they become overawed, so shaking with palpitation, overwhelmed with such fear and anticipation as would cause the skin to crinkle and the hearts to be disconcerted.<sup>1</sup> It forms a barrier between one's self and one's hidden thoughts and firm beliefs."<sup>2</sup>

(1) "That" wrote M.M. Pickthal, in his forward to his translation, p VII "inimitable symphony, the sound of which moves men to tears and ecstasy."

(2) P.64.

THE TWO MOST OUTSTANDING THEOLOGIANS

- 1- Al-Bāqillānī
- 2- Al-Asadabādhi

INTRODUCTION

AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ AND 'ABD AL-JABBĀR AL-ASADABĀDHĪAND THE CHAPTER OF I'JĀZ

The Sunnite Ash'arite al-Qādī (the judge) al-Bāqillānī and the Mu'tazilite al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār were two of the most outstanding and celebrated judges of the second half of the fourth/tenth century. From the scanty- often repeated- biographical accounts of their lives they seem to have had several parallel characteristics. Both, for instance, held the post of judge during their life, both were eminent theologians and leaders of their particular school. Both lived in reigns of Caliphs whose sympathies, if not their commitments were towards the third party, the Shi'ites which was the greater antagonist to them both, and although if they had or shared any opinion in common it was their attacks against the Shi'ah, both authors traditionally and in principle held similar contempt for one another.

Being contemporaries both were acquainted with the statesman and scholar, al-Sāhib ibn 'Abbād who appeared to have been the source of information <sup>1</sup> at one time or another to them both, as well as the patron of 'Abd al-Jabbār. It would seem however that had it not been for the Wazīr, al-Sāhib, choosing for 'Abd al-Jabbār the town of al-Rayy for his jurisprudential post, both judges were likely to have encountered each other in open debate, as can be inferred from al-Bāqillānī's activities against both the Shi'ite<sup>2</sup> and the

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1. For al-Bāqillānī's information by Ibn 'Abbād see 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān pp. 334, 345, 390, 425; for 'Abd al-Jabbār see Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah' vol. II, p. 315.
  2. Cf. particularly Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī, 'al-Muqābasāt' p. 44.

Mu'tazilite <sup>1</sup> leaders. This geographical factor however did not prevent either from refuting the other's work or a work belonging to a leader of either of their rival schools.<sup>2</sup>

A more important characteristic which distinguishes both judges is undoubtedly their copious and prolific writings, of which we shall see more later. From their surviving works, in full context or in part, both authors impress indeed astonish us, with their fantastic output, by their protracted contribution to the chapter of I'jāz, to say nothing of their contribution to other aspects of Qur'ānic studies and theology in general.

From a purely literary and historical viewpoint both authors were of great importance, if only because both often echo the views of many of their leaders and their schools, early in this century or that preceding it.

Finally the most striking point of resemblance between these two men is evidently the way in which both handled the question of I'jāz, more especially from a theological standpoint, and the method or technique they adopted in their arguments. But although

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1. Cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, 'Ahkām al-Qur'ān', ed. M. al-Bijāwī, vol. 3, pp. 445-6. In fact, in his extant works al-Bāqillānī is to be found disputing with them over this or that principle.
  2. Among the works of al-Bāqillānī is one entitled 'The refutation of the Refutation'; this is likely to have been a refutation of 'Abd al-Jabbār's refutation of al-Ash'arī's 'K. al-Luma'; see 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' vol. XI, f. 13b.  
For further refutation of 'Abd al-Jabbār of al-Ash'arī's views cf. e.g. 'K. al-Muhīt bil-Taklīf' of 'Abd al-Jabbār, Cairo edn. (1965) pp. 52, 186-7, etc.; also 'al-Mughnī' vol. VII p. 4.

their handling of the subject bears a great resemblance the conclusions reached are of necessity different, due to the obvious fact of their training and theological backgrounds. In this respect it is noticeable that many of the topics and issues reflected upon in al-Bāqillānī's 'Kitāb Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' and 'Kitāb al-Intisār' parallel closely many of those occurring in 'Abā al-Jabbār' 'Kitāb al-Mughnī'. The former however is more advanced in his literary discussions and analyses than the latter.

As for the method or the technique used by both authors nothing is new, the method of questions and answers, or " If anyone asks... .., the answer is.....", had long been in use, particularly by the theologians.

The stereotyped formula " If anyone asks etc." is itself highly suggestive of hypothetical nature for these questions, A problem arises however, were all such questions introduced by this formula, hypotheses adapted to induce discussions, or were they in fact questions which had actually been forced?

The answer seems to be an amalgam of both. There were no doubt real issues involved which consequently brought about these questions, but whether they were constructed from the objection of an opponent or opponents or a mental deduction of a likely argument inherent as a corollary of the point at issue, is hard to say.

The most peculiar thing about these questions is that they identically occur in rival studies, which suggests that either one was elaborating on the theme of the other or that these questions were current among contemporary learned circles.

CHAPTER VII

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A L - B Ā Q I L L Ā N Ī

(Abū Bakr Muhammad Ibn al- Tayyib)

d. 403 A.H. = 1013 A.D.

"It was, then fitting that the name joined at last in tradition, with the final form of that system, should be that of a controversialist. But this man, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, the Qādī, was more than a mere controversialist. It is his to have contributed most important elements to an put into fixed form what is, perhaps, the most fantastic and daring metaphysical scheme, and almost certainly the most thorough theological scheme, ever thought out." \*

\* D.B.Macdonald, 'Development of Muslim 'Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory', p.200, Lahore, 196

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUNDEarly biographers and modern scholarship

To three of the early biographers- al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī<sup>1</sup> (d.463/1070), al-qādī 'Iyād<sup>2</sup> (d.544/1149) and Ibn 'Asākīr<sup>3</sup> (d.571/1175) - we owe almost all that is known about al-Bāqillānī's life and works. The former who was a boy of six or seven when al-Bāqillānī died, was evidently the main source of information of the other two as well as many others of the later generations of biographers who were directly or indirectly dependent on his accounts.<sup>4</sup> The importance of the second biographer, 'Iyād, lies in the first place in the fact that through him a comprehensive though incomplete list of al-Bāqillānī's works was handed down to us. Ibn 'Asākīr's accounts, on the other hand, especially those given in his section on al-Bāqillānī, are of the least significance, since they are in the main dependent on al-Khatīb's material, but the importance of Ibn 'Asākīr's work as a whole with regard to al-Bāqillānī is unquestionably the fact that in it he provides us with valuable details concerning the second and third generations of the Ash'arite doctors who were al-Bāqillānī's contemporaries- tutors or pupils.<sup>5</sup>

From these works combined, few facts appear to have been known about the outward life of al-Bāqillānī<sup>6</sup> which can be summed up in the

(1) Ta'rikh Baghdad, vol.5, pp.379-383, No. 2906.

(2) Tartīb al-Madārik.... The author's account on al-Bāqillānī is an extract appendixd to the first edition of 'K.al-Tamhīd' (1947) pp. 249-259.

(3) 'Tabyīn..' pp.217-226.

(4) More particularly al-Sam'ānī (Ansāb ff.61b-62a) who as is well known was the summarizer of al-Khatīb's history, and who inspired such authors as; Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Khallikān and Ibn al-'Imād.

(5) Cf. eg. pp. 177, 178, 216, 244, 248, 256, 273.

(6) This Nisbah is to al-Baqilla (beans) and designates the seller of such vegetable food. For its derivation see Sam'ani (op.cit.) Ibn Khallikān, 'Wafayāt' vol. 7, p.7, No.619.

following:

He was a native of Basrah who resided at Baghdād . He was the most outstanding Ash'arite theologian during his life, unequalled by any predecessor or successor,<sup>1</sup> as well as a Mālikite judge.<sup>2</sup> Having been introduced to the court of 'Adud al-Dawlah, he served on one occasion as his ambassador to Byzantium.<sup>3</sup> A noticeable feature in that political embassy were the theological discussions between al-Bāqillānī, the Emperor and the learneds of Byzantium, in which the question of miracle was predominant. The rest of the details, however, are scattered anecdotal fragments on the man's piety, his works generally, or how he used to write them, some of his controversies,<sup>4</sup> the mention of those by whom he was instructed in one branch of study or another<sup>5</sup> or those who were instructed by him<sup>6</sup> and finally the fixing of the date of his

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- (1) Thus noticed Ibn Taymiyyah, see, Ibn al-'Imād, Sh.Dh.vol. 3, p.16
- (2) Yāqūt, Mu'jam, vol.2, p.105, gives the name of 'Ukbara as the town in which he used to practise. But Ibn Farhūn the author of 'al-Dibāj' has ascribed even the leadership of the Malikite school to al-Bāqillānī. See p.244.
- (3) For further detail on al-Bāqillānī's embassy, see Ibn al-Athīr, 'Kāmil' vol.IX, pp.11-12; al-Rudhrawī, Dhayl Tajarib al-Umam' vol.3, p.28, Eng. Trans.vol. 3, p.23; Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntazam' vol.7, p.265. Also by the same author 'K. al-Adhkiyā' p. 88. Eng. Trans. 'An Embassy from Baghdād to the Emperor Basil II' by H.F. Amerdroz, (J.R.A.S.) 1914, pp.915-933.
- (4) For some of al-Bāqillānī's debates with the leaders of various sects, see in addition to the three main sources Ibn al-'Arabī, 'Ahkām al-Qur'an' ed. al-Bijāwī, vol.3, p.1445; al-Sifdī, al-Wafī, vol.3, p.77, No.1150.
- (5) Such as:- Al-Abharī (d.375/984), the leader of the Mālikite school, the Traditionist, al-Qatī'ī (d.368/978), al-Shirāzī (d.371/891) who instructed al-Bāqillānī in Usūl, Abū Ahmad al-'Askarī (d.382/992) in literature and among the pupils of al-Ash'arī who taught al-Bāqillānī Ibn Mujāhid al-Bāhili.
- (6) Among them the mystic al-Sullmī (d.412/1021), the poet, al-Sukkrī and several others.

The fact that all the fragmentary accounts found in the aforementioned main sources or others have been introduced and discussed in introductions and appendixes<sup>1</sup> in some of the recent editions of al-Bāqillānī's works makes it superfluous on our part to reflect on them any further.

In addition to the editing of some of the author's works modern studies have also been made on the man's writings on literary criticism, theology and politics<sup>2</sup>, some of which we shall see later.

The aspect of the order in which al-Bāqillānī's known works were produced being of prime importance to us, we shall look into the work of one of these latter who also made an attempt in this direction.

R.J.McCarthy is, no doubt, one of the few contemporary students of al-Bāqillānī who have undertaken some considerable and remarkable studies of his life and works as a theologian. In some of his prefaces, for instance, he endeavours to cast some light on an approximate date, rather an age, when the author, al-Bāqillānī might have written his 'Kitāb al-Bayān'. The conclusion reached was that al-Bāqillānī was at a very advanced age when he commenced that particular work. Yet, despite all the factors enumerated by the editor in support of this assumption, it still appears far from convincing.

The factors observed by Dr. McCarthy are :

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- (1) See 'Tamhīd', Cairo edn. pp.1-31 also pp.241-273; Beyrouth edn. pp.19-30; A Tenth Century Document....p.xiii; I'jāz, pp.19-75; Insāf, pp.8-12.
- (2) The latest of these studies was 'The Political Doctrine of al-Bāqillānī' by Yusuf Ibish, concerning the theory of al-Imāmah<sup>as</sup> expounded in al-Bāqillānī's K. al-Tamhīd, Beirut, (1966), American University of Beirut, Oriental Series, 44.

(1) The fact that al-Bāqillānī's mention of his 'K. al-Tamhīd' in 'K. al-Bayān'<sup>1</sup> should necessarily prove that 'K. al-Tamhīd' must have been composed before it. True, but the question thus posed is when was 'K. al-Tamhīd' written? For further discussion the editor refers us to his own edition of 'K. al-Tamhīd' and in particular p. 29 of the Arabic introduction. This page will be considered later on.

(2) The mentioning of "al-Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allah rahimahu Allah". On this last prayer Dr. McCarthy, in one of the footnotes in his thesis<sup>2</sup> makes this comment following his name ( i.e. al-Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allah of Qayrawān): "If the phrase is al-Bāqillānī's, the work (i.e. 'K. al-Bayān' cannot be earlier than 386 or 396".

(3) "There is something else" noticed Dr. McCarthy, "with regard to the author's (al-Bāqillānī's) style -- I mean the obtuseness and lack of clarity in some of the sentences, also the slight ambiguousness or extreme brevity in the case of some arguments as well as the disparity of the latter with the methodology mentioned by the author at the opening of his book. For all of these, I feel that 'K. al-Bayān' was the work of a man of very advanced years and perhaps because of this, al-Bāqillānī could not have finished what he promised at the end of the text of this book".<sup>3</sup>

These are the factors which lead the editor to suggest that al-Bāqillānī's 'K. al-Bayān' was the work of an aged man. Let us now examine

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(1) Cf. e.g. p. 88, McCarthy ed.

(2) Part 2, p. 274, Footnote (2)

(3) Cf. 'K. al-Bayān', Arabic Introduction, pp. 19-20

these factors in the light of the material made available to us by Dr. McCarthy himself.

Considering the first observation from which we are referred to p. 2 of Dr. McCarthy's own edition of 'Kitāb al-Tamhīd', leaving aside the question of 'K. al-Bāyan' for the moment, in the light of one of the foot notes (10) which reads: "I have neglected the question of the date for this book (i.e. al-Tamhīd) because I cannot see any solution for it; and also because we do not know the exact date of al-Bāqillānī's birth.", it seems that any further conclusion is brought to a dead end for all of al-Bāqillānī's works, save by means of other information.

Commenting on al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's report, the editor writes: "We read in the bibliography of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ that al-Bāqillānī had composed 'Kitāb al-Tamhīd' for 'Aḍud al-Dawlah's son when the author was a 'Shāb' (by definition, a young man under 34). "As for 'Kitāb al-Tamhīd' in its present form which appears in the manuscripts, it is not in my opinion a work of a Shab".

In affirmation of this the editor argues the fact that al-Bāqillānī's mention of six of his own works, some of them voluminous, (quoted in foot note 9) in it led him to conclude: "Therefore, I am entitled to think that 'Kitāb al-Tamhīd' in its present form is either a work of a 'Kahl' or it was revised at such a period of age, but the original had been written while he was a 'Shāb'."

The last alternative offered by the editor, however, is not only unsound for lack of confirmation, it did not, in fact, go far beyond what has been suggested already by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ. Yet if 'Kahlhood' starts, b

definition, at the age of 34, one cannot see why such a work could not have been written before this age. The six works can be reduced to only four<sup>1</sup> which need not have been a hindrance, since it has been reported that the man used to write about thrity-five pages a night, or in another report, when his works were counted and divided between the days in his life, they averaged ten pages per day.<sup>2</sup> The four works, big or small, therefore, in the light of either report, by a simple mathematical calculation, could have been written at a relaxed pace in the span of a single year.

Nonetheless, of all al-Bāqillānī's works that have reached us so far, 'K. al-Tamhīd' is perhaps the only work to which an approximate date may be given. The work as we are informed by al-Qādī 'Iyād<sup>3</sup> was written at Shirāz for the sake of the young prince, the son of 'Adud al-Dawlah, Abū al-Kijār Samsām al-Dawlah, who died (388/998)<sup>4</sup>. The duration of Samsām al-Dawlah as a prince in Persia was nine years and eight days.<sup>5</sup>

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- (1) According to the editors of 'K. al-Tamhīd', Cairo edition, p. 258 (notes and comments) footnote (4), 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidin' is mentioned in 'K. al-Tamhīd' itself. They refer us to p. 259 of their edition. This is undoubtedly a mistake. The phrase from which they inferred this reads: "Fi Ghayri Hadha al-Kitāb Bi-mā Fīhi Tabṣīratun lilmustarshidin" is more of a general prayer tone than specifying a particular Hidāyat al-Mustarshidin. For such expression, cf. also his 'K. al-Intiṣār', vol. 1, fol. 3b. Moreover, if 'K. al-Tamhīd' is mentioned in 'K. al-Hidāyah' (cf. e.g. vol. VIII, f. 17b) how can the reverse be true? The other work is 'Sharh al-Luma' which is not mentioned in 'al-Tamhīd' itself, but in al-Qādī's 'Iyād's biographical notes which can mean that it was written after or at the same time as 'Tamhīd'.
- (2) See 'Tamhīd', Cairo ed. p. 245.
- (3) Ibid. p. 250.
- (4) Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, 'Kāmil', vol.X, p. 14.

The book therefore must have been written during that period. The location of the nine years and eight days is not very difficult to find out. We know from the same source cited above<sup>1</sup> that the father of this prince, 'Aḍuḍ al-Dawlah, died in Baghdād in 372/982. This date is important for it also marks the new reign of the young prince Ṣamsām al-Dawlah as the chosen successor of his father at Baghdad. The nine years and few days must fall sometime before that date, i.e. 372-363, when both father and son were at Shirāz. If, however, 'Aḍuḍ al-Dawlah entered Baghdād and settled in 367<sup>2</sup> 'K. al-Tamhīd' must necessarily have been written sometime before that date and in all probability between the years 367-363.

To return to 'Kitāb al-Bayān' and with regard to the same point, doubt has been cast over the prayer "raḥimahu Allah" by the editor himself in his translation of the book. Yet the date of the death of the man in question is not quite settled.

The third factor which falls greatly on al-Bāqillānī's style, appears to the editor to be lacking certain qualities in some sentences. This may have been good ground for assessment, but Dr. McCarthy at one time made it clear that "I make no claim at all to any competence in criticising al-Bāqillānī's literary expression.<sup>3</sup>".

Yet the desire to prove that al-Bāqillānī was an old man when he wrote 'K. al-Bayān' accounts for some of Dr. McCarthy's emphasis on his

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(1) Ibid. vol. IX, pp. 15-16.  
 (2) Cf. op. cit. vol. VIII, p. 506.  
 (3) Thesis, part 1, p. 294.

style, which might equally have proved that he was a young man who was not maturely disciplined in the writing of his thoughts.

As for the extreme conciseness in 'K. al-Bayān', perhaps the reason given in al-Bāqillānī's own introduction is a good enough explanation. Here is Dr. McCarthy's own translation of it: "And now that we have learned that you have described the very great need for an explanation of (p. 276) the doctrine on the various aspects of this subject and of the principle norms concerning it, done in a concise and abridged form."<sup>1</sup>

The editor's last conclusion is that al-Bāqillānī did not finish what he promised at the end of his book, perhaps because of age. Whatever the reason may be, it seems to be drawn at some haste, comparable to that of the editors of the first edition of 'K. al-Tamhīd' who once accused al-Bāqillānī of not fulfilling a promise which he made on p. 97, lines 13-14.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to Dr. McCarthy's discovery of fuller manuscripts of 'K. al-Tamhīd', we find that the asserted broken promise was after all honoured as the discovered part in Dr. McCarthy's edition completes the missing chapter<sup>3</sup>.

However, it would, in the last analysis, seem to be futile to attempt to establish the age of an author in the knowledge that the work on which we are basing our assumption is incomplete.

Finally, though age is naturally accounted for, it did not seem to inhibit al-Bāqillānī totally in his vocation as an author and writer, for

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- (1) Thesis, part 2, pp. 275-6.  
 (2) Cf. Notes and comments, the Egyptian edition, p. 260.  
 (3) Cf. 'Tamhīd', McCarthy edition, Chapter 35, pp. 341-4.

up until the year 402/1012, one year before his death, the man was in a position to dictate books.<sup>1</sup>

And for a last word about 'K. al-Bayān' and the assumption that it might have been his last work which he could not complete, who else but al-Bāqillānī himself, who twice mentioned it in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'<sup>2</sup> a work which is noted for its thoroughness and vigorous style, 'K. al-Bayān' must necessarily have been written before it.

Al-Bāqillānī's works as evidenced by himself.

It is to be hoped in this brief chapter that we shall reproduce, within the limit of possibility, a short list of al-Bāqillānī's works from within, that is to say those which were mentioned by the author himself. It is by no means an exhaustive list, nor is it the main intention to compile such. Its main purpose is aimed at serving us with a somewhat rough, semi-chronological order, indicating at least the relation between the material so far available.

The rather gross shortcomings of the initial list of al-Bāqillānī's works, drawn up by al-Sadfi in the late fifth or early sixth century, containing the titles of thirty-nine works,<sup>3</sup> were first noticed by his own pupil, al-Qādī 'Iyād who transcribed the list from his master's handwriting. Al-Qādī 'Iyād in his turn added a further ten titles<sup>4</sup> to the original list, bringing the total figure to forty-nine titles. The fact

(1) See al-Qādī 'Iyād's biographical notes, Tamhīd, Cairo edn. p.245, particularly the report related by Abū 'Imrān al-Fasī.

(2) Cf. vols. VII, fol. 7a, line 14 also fol. 14a, line 18; XVII, fol. 13a, lines 13-14, fols 15b-16a, lines 19 and 1.

(3) See Tamhīd, Cairo edn. pp.257-9.

(4) Ibid, p.259.

that neither al-Ṣadfi nor al-Qaḍi 'Iyāḍ was al-Bāqillānī's direct contemporary and that they were geographically distant would imply further shortcomings in their lists.

The first editors of 'K. al-Tamhīd' (1947) have enhanced the above mentioned lists by yet three more titles.<sup>1</sup> In the latest edition of one of al-Bāqillānī's most famous works, 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān' (1954) the figure had risen by yet another three titles pushing the grand total up to fifty-five headings.<sup>2</sup>

Before expanding however the list or lists any further or even reducing it, some explanatory remarks may be rather appropriate. It is not a question of the length or protractedness of the list or lists, yet it is far too early to pronounce on their credibility, nor for that matter a question of al-Bāqillānī's prolific authorship; it is simply that one cannot help noticing certain confusions in the ramification and a lack of certification appears to have been indulged in by both old authors and modern editors.

Al-Bāqillānī himself, if not secretarial shortcomings throughout the ages, may be held partly responsible for some of the incoherence. In this respect, we find al-Bāqillānī himself sometimes employing the word 'Kitāb' (book) to indicate a chapter or chapters in a single work or even several works. Thus ambiguity, though sometimes cleared up by the author al-Bāqillānī since he would indicate precisely the book, that is to say

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(1) Ibid, pp. 259-60.

(2) See 'I'jāz', Ṣaqr ed., pp. 42-56.

the chapter and the work in which it occurred;<sup>1</sup> sometimes, however, he failed to do so, which doubtless contributed somewhat to the increase in the volume of his 'works'.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of al-Bāqillānī's works discovered so far, either in print or in manuscripts, the lists compiled by both al-Ṣadfi and al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ appear to have been impaired with the splitting up of some of the titles,<sup>3</sup> identical with some modification,<sup>4</sup> or as it happened uncertainty on the part of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in respect of some of the titles added by him.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of modern editorships, apart from vague ramification,<sup>6</sup>

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- (1) Cf. 'K. al-Intiṣār' Ms. vol. I, fol. 147a wherein one of the references he made reads: "Kitāb al-Ijma' min Kitāb Usūl al-Fiqh al-Saghīr" likewise in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' vol. IX, fol. 6b. Another reference reads: "Kitāb al-Akhbār min Usul al-Fiqh" or even in a collective form as appeared in 'K. al-Bayān', McCarthy ed, p. 82, line 3: "Kutub al-Ta'dīl wal-Tajwīr fī Uṣūl al-Diyānāt."
  - (2) E.g. while in both 'Tamhīd', McCarthy edn., ch. 35, p. 341, and in 'K. al-Hidāyah', vol. VI, fol. 10b, we find al-Bāqillānī writing about and referring to a certain chapter. Al-Ṣadfi in his list (No. 4) counted it as a specific work.
  - (3) E.g. No. 22 and 35 in 'K. al-Bayān' appear as a single title, yet the reference made by the author in the introduction p. 5 would imply a certain unity when he spoke on the same topic on previous occasions. Further, in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' they are often mentioned as one title, cf. vol. XVII, fols. 13a, 15b-16a.
  - (4) E.g. No. 21 in al-Ṣadfi's list and No. 49 in 'Iyāḍ's can hardly be other than the same work.
  - (5) E.g. No. 31 in al-Ṣadfi's and Nos. 41 and 42 added by 'Iyāḍ; the latter's titles strike us not only that the recording of No. 42 was merely hearsay as 'Iyāḍ himself testifies but the fact that both 41 and 42 were abridgements of No. 31 in al-Ṣadfi's list suggests that they were both thus made by a later hand. This is supported by an abridgement of 'K. al-Intiṣār'. The attempt on al-Bāqillānī's part to abridge his own works appears, as recorded by 'Iyāḍ, (Ibid p. 244) not a successful one.
  - (6) Cf. 'K. al-Bayān', McCarthy edn., p. 142.

substitution of a sub-title appears to have been counted as an independent work.<sup>1</sup>

Here are some of al-Bāqillāni's works as extant or referred to by him in them.

The first five titles in this list, however, appeared neither in the old author's compilations nor among the additional titles which appear in some of the modern editions:-

- (1) K. Ta'rīf 'Ajz al-Mu'tazilah 'An Taṣḥīh Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah.<sup>2</sup>
- (2) K. Ahkām al-Mu'jizāt.<sup>3</sup>
- (3) K. Jāmi' al-Abwāb wal-Adillah.<sup>4</sup>
- (4) K. Al-Uṣūl al-Shar'īyyah.<sup>5</sup>
- (5) K. Khalq al-Af'āl.<sup>6</sup>

The following are the works mentioned in 'K. al-Tamhid', which would indicate that they had been composed before it, in some cases, titles are shortened.

- (6) K. Kayfiyyat al-Istishād.<sup>7</sup>
- (7) K. al-Uṣūl al-Kabīr fi al-Fiqh.<sup>8</sup>
- (8) K. Manāqib al-A'imma.<sup>9</sup>

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- (1) Cf. 'K. al-I'jāz', Saqr edn, p. 56, especially no. 55, which in many respects is but the sub-title of K. al-Tamhid. The account given by al-Sidfi, 'Wāfi', vol. III, p. 177 is more likely a development of that found in al-Baghdādi, Ta'rikh Baghdād, vol. V, p. 379.
  - (2) K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidin, vol. VI, f. 11a. Also cf. al-Baghdādi, Farq 247.
  - (3) Ibid. vol. VII, f. 7a.
  - (4) K. al-Intisār vol. I, f. 260b.
  - (5) Ibid.
  - (6) Ibid. vol. I, f. 242a.
  - (7) See 'Tamhid', Cairo ed. p. 40; McCarthy ed. p. 14.
  - (8) Ibid " " p. 146; " " p. 187.
  - (9) Ibid " " p. 229; " " p. 378 (Appendix).

- (9) K. Iḳfār al-Muta'wlin.<sup>1</sup>
- (10) K. Sharh al-Luma' .<sup>2</sup>
- (11) K. AL-TAMHĪD.<sup>3</sup>
- Works referred to in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'
- (\*) K. al-Tamhīd .<sup>4</sup>
- (\*) K. Usūl al-Fiqh.<sup>5</sup>
- (\*) K. Ahkāṁ al-Mu'jizāt.<sup>6</sup>
- (\*) K. Ta'rīf 'Ajz al-Mu'tazilah 'An Tashīh Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah.<sup>7</sup>
- (12) K. al-Intisār li-Naql al-Qur'ān.<sup>8</sup>
- (13) K. Naqd Naqd al-Luma' .<sup>9</sup>
- (14) K. Naqd al-Naqd 'Alā al-Hamadhānī .<sup>10</sup>
- (15) K. Daqā'iq al-Kalām. <sup>11</sup>
- (16) K. al-Farq bayn Mu'jizāt al-Nabiyyīn wa Karāmāt al-Ṣālihīn.<sup>12</sup>
- (17-18) Kitābayy al-Imāmah.<sup>13</sup>
- (19) K. HIDĀYAT AL-MUSTARSHIDĪN. <sup>14</sup>

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- (1) Ibid. Cairo edn. p. 186; McCarthy edn. (Not mentioned)
- (2) Ibid. " " p. 250; in fact al-Baḳillānī did not mention it, but from 'Iyād's biographical notes it would seem that it was written shortly after 'K.al-Tamhīd'
- (3) Published twice; Cairo(1947) Beirut(1957)
- (4) 'K.Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn Ms. vol. VIII, fol. 17b.
- (5) Ibid. e.g.vols. IX, f.6b, XII, f.17b., XIV, f.16a. XVII, f.15a.
- (6) Ibid. vol. 7f.7a.
- (7) Ibid. vol. VI, f.11a.
- (8) Ibid. vols VII, f.7b; VIII, f.22a; XII, f. 15a; XIV, f.8b; XI, f.10a
- (9) Ibid. vol. VII, f.7a.
- (10) Ibid. vol. XI, f.13b.
- (11) Ibid. vol. XIII, f.3a.
- (12) Ibid. vol. XVII, ff.13a, 15b-16a.
- (13) Ibid. vols IX, f.6b,; XVI, f.24a.
- (14) The original MS of this work belongs to al-Azhar University library and of which a photocopy is preserved by the Arab League Organisation's Library, Theology No. 245. For further detail see later.

Those which were mentioned in 'K. al-Intiṣār':-

- (\*\*) K. Uṣūl al-Fiqh.<sup>1</sup>
- (\*\*) K. Sharḥ al-Luma'.<sup>2</sup>
- (\*\*) K. al-Imāmah.<sup>3</sup>
- (\*\*) K. Jāmi' al-Abwāb.<sup>4</sup>
- (\*\*) K. al-Uṣūl al-Shariyyah.<sup>5</sup>
- (\*\*) K. Khalq al-Af'āl.<sup>6</sup>
- (\*\*) K. Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Ṣaghīr.<sup>7</sup>
- (20) K. AL-INTIṢĀR.<sup>8</sup>

The specific names mentioned in the printed parts of 'K. al-Bayān':-

- (\*\*\*) K. al-Tamhīd.<sup>9</sup>
- (\*\*\*) K. Sharḥ al-Luma'.<sup>10</sup>
- (\*\*\*) K. AL-BAYĀN.<sup>11</sup>
- (21) K. AL-INṢĀF.<sup>12</sup>

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- (1) 'Intiṣār' vol.I, ff. 141a, 278b.
  - (2) Ibid. ff. 161b, 204a, 227a.
  - (3) Ibid. f. 152b.
  - (4) Ibid. f. 260b.
  - (5) Ibid. f. 260b.
  - (6) Ibid. f. 242a.
  - (7) Ibid. f. 147a.
  - (8) This manuscript now belongs to the Sulemaniye Library, 6/18671, it bears the seal of Mustafa Pasha's Library.
  - (9) 'Bayan', McCarthy edn. p. 88.
  - (10) Ibid. p. 88.
  - (11) The surviving part of it was edited by R.J. McCarthy, Beyrouth, 1958.
  - (12) It was published in 1963. (For a discussion of the title of the work see 'I'jāz', Ṣaqr edn, Introduction, pp. 51-53) edited by Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawthari.

Those works referred to in 'K. I'jāz al-Qur'ān':-

- (\*\*\*\*) K. al-Uṣūl.<sup>1</sup>  
 (22) Ma'āni al-Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>  
 (23) K. AL-I'JAZ AL-QUR'ĀN.<sup>3</sup>  
 (24) Uṣūl al-Dīn.<sup>4</sup>

Thus it would seem that the material so far accessible, in print or manuscript, in part or full context, or those known to have existed, can be arranged roughly as follows:-

- (1) 'K. Manāqib al-Aḥmah!<sup>5</sup>  
 (2) 'K. al-Tamhīd'.  
 (3) 'K. al-Bayān'.  
 (4) 'K. al-Intiṣār'.  
 (5) 'K. Hidayat al-Mustarshidīn'.  
 (6) 'K. al-Inṣāf'.  
 (7) 'K. I'jaz al-Qur'ān'.

This order is determined by no other reason but the obvious fact that each of the first five works was mentioned in the work preceding it. In the case of No.3, 'K. al-Bayān' and NO.4. 'K. al-Intiṣār', these were mentioned only in No.5, 'K. al-Hidayat al-Mustarshidīn'. Of the last two

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- (1) 'I'jāz', Ṣaqr edn., p. 70. (2) Ibid. Pp. 317, 374.  
 (3) It has been published several times (see Saqr Introduction, p. 103) the latest of which is by S.A. Saqr, Cairo, 1954.  
 (4) This work was mentioned twice in the second part of the abridgement of 'K. al-Intiṣār', ff. 84a, 140b. The original manuscript of this abridgement belongs to the Municipal Library of Alexandria, No. 828, a photocopy of which is preserved in the Arab League Organisation Library, Commentary No. 264.  
 (5) GAL, S/1, p. 349. No.7.

works, and in particular, 'K. I'jāz al-Qur'ān', which we shall deal with frequently in the following pages, we find no reference in the previous work. Could this imply that both works were of a later period in the author's life?

On the face of it, or as far as our limited knowledge of al-Bāqillānī life and works allow, this may be the more appealing and acceptable conclusion, but it would by no means be the only one. Leaving aside 'K. al-Inṣāf' which is of little importance to us, in the case of 'K. al-I'jāz' the following remarks may accentuate further the possibility that it was one of al-Bāqillānī's later works, or at least that it was composed after 'K. . . . Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'.

A. We notice in the earliest list of al-Bāqillānī's works, drawn up by al-Ṣadfi, that the name of 'I'jāz' was not included among the others, which may suggest that the work had not achieved wide popularity, or that it was unknown completely, save to a few.

B. At the very end of the British Museum manuscript of 'K. al-I'jāz', Or. 7749, is appended the following note: "This is what had been written by the author himself for the library of 'Adud al-Dawlah and it was read by the author's son, al-Ḥassan, in 397 A.H." The date here is more likely in reference to the writing of the book rather than to the mere reading of the author's son. Such a statement may perhaps give reason as to why al-Ṣadfi could not include the work in his list, another reason being, perhaps, that it was tucked away in the above mentioned library; the date, on the other hand, if it is to be accepted, makes

clear that the work was only written six years before the author's death in 403 A.H.

But neither the date nor the statement seem to be convincing. Doubt about the authenticity of the date has already been cast,<sup>1</sup> to which may be added that it was penned by a later and different hand, which is apparent if the two scripts are compared. With regard to the statement, al-Bāqillānī himself made clear in his introduction that he was honouring by this work a certain person and not the mentioned library.<sup>2</sup>

C. Regardless of the above, in the light of the materials found in references, here used for the first time, up to that found in 'K. al-Hidayat al-Mustarshidīn', by comparison 'K. al-I'jāz', represents to us an advanced stage in the literary field and as shall be seen al-Bāqillānī seems to have abandoned some of the conventional views that he expressed in works prior to 'I'jāz'.

Before endeavouring to examine some of al-Bāqillānī's contributions towards the text of the Qur'ān in general and his chapter on I'jāz in particular, a certain fact should be emphasised. It is noticeable that most of his extant works were written to honour a person or to oblige a request of a group of persons. This fact led him consequently to repeat invariably many of his arguments.

For a wider look into the general background of the question of I'jāz in the studies of al-Bāqillānī two of his unknown works may be examined.

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(1) 'I'jāz', Ṣaqr introduction, p. 107.

(2) 'I'jāz', Bāqillānī's introduction, p. 7.

Al-Bāqillānī and Qur'ānic Studies'K. AL-INTISĀR'<sup>1</sup>Some aspects of the literary criticism

The work as a whole, or the surviving part of it, can be described as a general survey of the history of the Qur'ān, more particularly of what has become known as the sciences of the Qur'ān.

It may generally be taken for granted that al-Bāqillānī's prolific theological and jurisprudential writings were centred largely on the Qur'ān. This is justifiable by merits of his professions. On the one hand as being a judge, on the other as a leader of the school of al-Ash'arī. Further, the remainder of his works are good enough evidences.

From the list of his works compiled by al-Qādī 'Iyād, and from<sup>2</sup> references made by others,<sup>3</sup> it is clear that some titles were concerned with, either wholly or in part, literary and historical subjects relating to the text of the Qur'ān. We are informed by al-Bāqillānī's successor in the Ash'arite school of theology, Imām al-Haramayn, 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, that the question of the

(1) The manuscript of this first part of 'K.al-Intisār' (301 folios) which was copied in the year 1090 A.H., originally belonged to Qarā Mustafa Pāshā library, but it has been acquired by the Süleymaniye Kutüphanesi Müdürlüğü library, Istanbul, (No.6/18671) C.Brockelmann, G.A.L., s.1, p.349, no.5 (in the list of al-Bāqillānī's works) gives this work the title "K.al-Istibsār fi al-Qur'ān" which is another mistake as in recording al-Bāqillānī's own name as Abu Bakr. M.b. ('Abd) attaiyb al-Basrī, or Abū Bakr b. 'Alī. Also he attributes him as a direct pupil of al-Ash'arī. E.I. (1913) vol. 1, p.603.

(2) 'Tamhīd' Cairo edition, pp.256-9-

(3) Cf. 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān', ed. S.A.Sagr, pp.42-56.

of the Qur'ān in a certain work engaged several parts, that is to say al-Bāqillānī in 'K. al-Naḡd al-Kabīr', which contained forty volumes, three of them devoted to the question of the Qur'ān alone.<sup>1</sup>

This book, to which the reference was made, to judge only from its title, appeared to have been of a controversial tendency, the three parts dealing with the question of the Qur'ān might have made little literary contribution, yet judging by al-Bāqillānī's existing works the reverse might equally be true.

There are nevertheless three of al-Bāqillānī's extant works - to judge by the latest scholarly editions of them - which can be considered to be the full texts; the rest, however, in print or in manuscript are still grossly lacking a part or several parts.

Among those which are now known to us, yet incomplete, is 'K. al-Intiṣār Linaḡl al-Qur'ān' of which only the first part is accessible.<sup>2</sup>

Merely from its title page it may be assumed that the work as a whole was confined to this specific branch of Qur'ānic sciences, "the transmission of the Qur'ān" or Naḡl al-Qur'ān a chapter which is well known in the field of Qur'ānic sciences,<sup>3</sup> and of which much is to be found in such later works as 'K. al-Burhān' of al-Zarkashī and 'al-Itḡān' of al-Suyūṭī.

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- (1) Cf. Yāfi'ī, 'Marham al-'Ilal etc.', Bibliotheca Indica, New Series, No. 1246, p.167. The name of the book is wrong, Cf. also al-Kawtharī ed. of 'al-Ikhtilāf fī al-Lafz' footnote 2., p. 70. Cf. also al-Juwaynī, 'al-Shāmīl', ed. H. Klopper, p.121.
- (2) Cf. last fol. 302a.
- (3) Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, 'Muḡadimatān fī 'Ilūm al-Qur'ān', ed. A. Jeffery. We find him discussing some of al-Bāqillānī's views, and it is likely he was referring to 'K. al-Intiṣār'. cf. pp. 265-275 with 'Intiṣār', fols. 89a, 113a.

Reading through the author's own preface, his list of contents and the synopsis that follows, our attention is focussed on a certain chapter in which the author concerned himself with the miraculousness of the Qur'ān or I'jāz (cf. fol. 3b).

Although the 'transmission of the Qur'ān' is the predominant and prevailing theme throughout the book, or the remaining part of it, the idea of I'jāz as such is clearly apparent from the very beginning of this work.<sup>1</sup> Its literary concept is but, in some measure, the same as will be met with in al-Bāqillānī's other works, mainly 'K. I'jāz al-Qur'ān.'

From a certain chapter in this work it may be gathered that it was written sometime after 'K. al-Tamhīd'.<sup>2</sup> The fact that we find no reference to 'K. al-I'jāz' among other works he referred to in it,<sup>3</sup> and most importantly its literary discussions and its originality which was, to a large extent, derivative of third century achievements, as will be seen, suggest that it was composed also in a period prior to 'K. al-I'jāz'.

While reflecting on al-Bāqillānī's theological attitude towards the theory of al-Ṣarfah it will be seen how the embittered antagonism of the members of various theological schools affected their judgements.

In this work, apart from sporadic references made casually to the Mu'tazilite school and its members or their teaching, there is a long section directed mainly against their interpretations of a considerable number of Qur'ānic verses, (cf. fols. 220b ff.). The bulk of the book attack

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(1) Fol. 1a.

(2) Cf. 'K. al-Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, especially pp. 302, 345, with fol. 277a, line 17.

(3) Cf. fols. 141a, 147a, 152b, 161b, 204a, 227a, 260b, 278b.

the Shi'āite sect or sects and their multiple reproaches against the text of the Qur'ān, which al-Bāqillānī viewed from a Sunnite apologist standpoint and, most of all, the views of that well-known Shi'āite sect, al-Rāfiḍah - a sect, which among others, al-Bāqillānī contends with in other of his extant works.

The crucial point in all the controversies was simply that the Rāfiḍah, as the case most often seemed to be, were endeavouring to shake the belief in the version of the Qur'ān canonized by 'Uthmān, the caliph. To do so they promoted several attacks against the text of the Qur'ān ranging from grammatical errors, stylistic weaknesses to contradictions etc. Their ultimate goal<sup>1</sup> was to prove that their own version of the Qur'ān was the right one. A conflict which was impossible to confine to the literary field and involved other factors, most of all political ones.

Al-Bāqillānī's bitter altercations with this sect was well-known to his contemporaries, particularly Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī who singled him out from the school of al-Ash'arī<sup>2</sup> as being the most aggressive protagonist against the Shi'āh; though such verdicts are not necessarily sound if they are to be considered in the light of that prevailing embittered atmosphere.<sup>3</sup>

#### The contents

The pattern of the work as a whole, as outlined by the author himself,<sup>4</sup> and maintained throughout the book, is, first, the presentation of his

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- (1) This was often repeated by the author, cf. e.g. fol. 197a.  
 (2) 'Al-Muqābasāt', p.44. (For more of Abū Ḥayyān's scorn and criticism of al-Bāqillānī see 'Al-Imtā' wal-Mu'ānasah', Vol. 1, p. 143. Also 'K. al-Hawāmil wal-Shawāmil' p. 134, editor's footnote.  
 (3) As we find serious slander inflicted on Abū Ḥayyān by a later Sunnite.  
 (4) See fol. 4a.

opponents' arguments at the opening of each chapter or section, followed by his counter criticism or refutation from his Sunnite standpoint. Al-Bāqillānī, as was often the case with his other works, was honouring with this book a certain group of people.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was also intended to fulfil the urgent needs of lawyers, the reader of the Qur'ān, the commentators and those who were interested in the studies of meanings (Ma'ānī) or literary discussion.<sup>2</sup> It is in this last category that our interest lies and the last four chapters of this volume have some pertinent literary discussions. But perhaps a quick look at the contents prior to these chapters is desirable.

Apart from the first chapter, with its multiple proofs<sup>3</sup> and sections<sup>4</sup> involving a multitude of historical and traditional aspects dealing with many questions of the transmission of the Qur'ān, the other chapters cover subjects thus:-

- (1) Chapter concerning the Basmalah, Surahs CXIII and CXIV, the prayer, al-Qunūt, the order of the Surahs, the number of verses and what was revealed first and last (fol. 56a).
- (2) Chapter on the different opinions concerning the number of verses in the Qur'ān and the reason why they were called verses (fol. 63b).
- (3) Chapter concerning what was revealed first and last, the Makkī and the Madanī (fol. 67b).

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(1) See fol. 2b.  
 (2) See fol. 4a.  
 (3) See fols. 16b, 19a, 24b, 25b, 31b, 32a.  
 (4) See fols. 49a, 50a, 56a.

- (4) Chapter on the prayer, al Qunūt, and Ubayy's different opinion concerning it. (fol. 78b).
- (5) Chapter on the order of the Surahs, and whether it was achieved by revelation (Tawqīf) or by logical deduction (Ijtihād). (fol. 83a).
- (6) Chapter concerning that the order of the verses within the Surahs should be ~~maintained~~, that it was authorised by tradition and not by logical deduction, that the verses of the Surahs must not be mixed nor a verse replaced by another before or after it. (fol. 89a).
- (7) Chapter concerning the Surahs CXIII and CXIV; traditions relating to their transmission, proof of that, refutation of the allegation that Ibn Mas'ūd had omitted them, explanation of traditions concerning his omission and the ~~erasion~~ erasure of them from his copy of the Qur'ān and also his leaving out of the first Surah. (fol. 92a).

Most of these chapters are mentioned at the opening of the first chapter of this list but perhaps the fact that they in turn were sub-sectioned allowed for them to be dealt with individually.

- (8) Chapter concerning their (the Rāfiḍāh) opposition to the transmission of the Qur'ān, with regard to the Prophet's tradition.

"The Qur'ān is revealed in seven ~~letters~~ letters: all of them are satisfactory and sufficient", description of the successive traditions concerning these seven ~~letters~~ letters, their explanation, the different opinions concerning them, and whether the prophet stipulated them wholly and in detail to the community and indicated their liability as he did with the text of the Qur'ān and other matters or not and description of what we accept of such matters. (fol 104a)

- (9) Chapter concerning the seven letters in which the Qur'ān was revealed (fol. 118a). Sub-sectioned, a section concerning the explanation of the seven languages, the ways, and the seven readings which was maintained as what was meant by the Prophet's saying, "The Qur'ān was revealed in seven readings". (fol. 125b)
- (10) Chapter concerning again the Rāfidāh, and other perverted and heretical sects, oppositions and doubts, description of the theses and narrations they profess in this matter (i.e. discussed in previous chapter) which included the accepted and rejected and the isolation from 'Alī and his house, and explanation of its wrongness. (fol. 129b).

This chapter is also subdivided into the following chapters:

- (a) Chapter concerning the tradition from 'Ubayy b. Ka' b. (fol. 129b).
- (b) Chapter concerning the traditions they clung to from 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, explanation of their fallaciousness. (fol. 132a).
- (c) Chapter concerning the tradition from Abū Musā al-Ash'arī, its weakness, (fol. 133b).
- (d) Chapter on the conflict between al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī and Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ. (fol. 138a).
- (e) Chapter concerning the abrogated verses and opinion concerning that. (fol. 141b). This chapter is subdivided into several sections, proofs and counter proofs.<sup>1</sup>

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All these chapters are characteristic and self-revealing solely by their titles and clearly indicative of their subject matter of historical and

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(1) See fols. 144b, 145b, 152a, 153b, 154b, 173b, 176b.

traditional proofs and counter proofs. Nevertheless, some glimpses of literary evaluation and analogy are occasionally to be found.

Such discussions were not in fact initially intended. But the sway of controversy naturally engulfed them.<sup>1</sup>

Some examples will perhaps illustrate this and would also give an idea of the literary critic al-Bāqillānī at an earlier period of his career.

In a subsection of his chapter on the number of verses in the Qur'ān (fol. 65), al-Bāqillānī, in passing, deals with an old topic which had appeared in the study of Abū 'Ubaydah,<sup>2</sup> namely the meaning of the words Āyah<sup>3</sup> (a verse in the Qur'ān), Surah<sup>4</sup> (a chapter in the Qur'ān) and the word Qur'ān<sup>5</sup> itself.

Al-Bāqillānī's elaboration was not merely that of the philologist Abū 'Ubaydah, although philologists' definitions were maintained, further opinions were also observed or criticised. For instance, with regard to the word Āyah (verse) he reported such remarks:

"Some had said that the verse in the Qur'ān was thus called for its separation from another verse, and also that it was in the Qur'ān tantamount to a verse in a poem and rhyme in poetry, though it was not distinguished like the rhyme in poetry for it was not separated from another as the rhyme was in poetry."<sup>6</sup>

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- (1) Thus we are informed by al-Bāqillānī. fol.67b.  
 (2) Cf. 'Majāz', vol.1, pp. 1-7.  
 (3) Fol. 65b.  
 (4) Fol. 66b.  
 (5) Fol. 67a.  
 (6) Fol. 66a.

Concerning the word Surah, besides the philological explanations to be met with in the introduction of Abū 'Ubaydah's 'Majāz', al-Bāqillānī cited a few more.

e.g. "It is said that it was so defined because it was as a portion or a piece from the Qur'ān which was derived from the Arab saying 'Inna fī-hī la-ṣuratun min Jamāl' i.e. 'He (or it) is endowed with a portion of beauty'<sup>1</sup> etc.

For the word Qur'ān itself, al-Bāqillānī began with a lengthy syntactical explanation; the rest, however, is similar to that of Abū 'Ubaydah.

Again while embarking on the order of the Surahs in the Qur'ān (fol. 83a) the question at issue was, had the order of the Surahs been achieved by revelation (Tawqīf) or had it merely been a matter of logical deduction?

From this question sprang an interesting literary analogy, but in the heat of the controversy, al-Bāqillānī dismissed this as invalid, though he himself had no sound traditional basis for his rejection.<sup>2</sup>

The basic issue of the analogy regarded initially the literary 'unity' of the Surahs in themselves, each of which was to be considered individually as a coherent entity. For this:-

"Some argued against the fruitlessness of the order of the Surahs; that it is common knowledge that there is no man of letters, eloquent poet, or distinguished orator in the world, who would require of the people to take his writings, poetry or oration in the order they are issued;

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(1) Fol. 66b.

(2) Fol. 83b.

what he, in fact, requires of them is to comprehend what he intends in his poem in the order of its composition and the eloquent sequence. He should therefore care nothing as to whether it occurs at the opening, the middle or at the end of his Diwān; likewise the writer and the orator". They added: "Similarly the Prophet only required of the people to memorise the Surahs and to recite them with regard only to the order of their verses and did not require of them that each Surah should be ordered first or last".<sup>1</sup>

The literary analogy, however sound it seemed, was not acceptable to al-Bāqillānī if only because it lacked traditional evidence. But had he any himself. Yet his rejection of 'al-Qiyās' analogy is equally unconvincing.

Another example emerged from a rather serious question, for example, was the text of the Qur'ān complete? Here is encountered another literary analogy, but the situation was this time in reverse; in other words, the analogy was al-Bāqillānī's.

It reflected on a literary historical dispute over the authenticity and completeness of pre-Islamic poetry, a dispute which had engaged scholars, ancient and contemporary.<sup>2</sup> Al-Bāqillānī's idea may represent one side of the contention regarding it during the fourth century. It reads:-

"Nobody would imagine that 'Qifā Nabkī' (halt, friends both, let us weep), in Imru' al-Qays (Mu'allaqah) was in quantity much expanded previously to how it stands now, and that most of it disappeared and was not available to the narrators of anthologies (Dawāwīn), the memorisers of poetry, the

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(1) Fol. 86b.

(2) For some remarkable discussions concerning this subject see Professor A.J. Arberry's epilogue, 'The Seven Odes', pp. 228 ff.

authors of books on Ṭabaqāt ( categories of poets), the authors on the unfamiliar wordings of this poem, its interpreters and such persons versatile in this matter. Nor should any reasonable person be aware of the people's customs .... believe in the narration given by only one authority relating to Labīd, Hassān or Ka'b b. Zuhayr or other of their contemporaries or the generations that followed them, that they used to recite Imru' al-Qays's poem several times as long as it now stands, that it was in five hundred verses or longer than the Dīwān of Ibn al-Rūmī or that of Abū Nuwās, and that most of it has perished and disappeared .... this is ignorance which cannot convince, nor be approved of by, any who had the slightest knowledge of customs and traditions.<sup>1</sup>

However hard al-Bāqillānī drives us towards tradition and however noble the purpose he was endeavouring to serve, had he read his references carefully, he might have spared us, at least, the inclusion among the authors of 'Ṭabaqāt' the author, Ibn Sallām<sup>2</sup>, who opened his famous survey with a general doubt of the recorded poetry and emphasised the disappearance of a good portion of pre-Islamic poetry.

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These are some of the remarks touched on in the former chapters. Before entering into the literary discussions which are more magnanimous in the later chapters, a question needs perhaps answering and acknowledgement should be made.

The question which needs to be asked, is where was the author's promised chapter on I'jāz mentioned in his introduction ?

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(1) Fol. 130a.

(2) 'K.al-Ṭabaqāt' (1952), pp.1,23.

The fact that this work is incomplete may prevent us from any speculation, yet from the rough sketch of contents following his preface it would seem that the chapter on I'jāz was planned for somewhere between his chapter concerning the Surahs CXIII and CXIV and Ibn Mas'ūd's attitude towards them (fol. 92a) and his chapter on the seven letters (fol. 104a). In this order nothing is to be found. The only mention of I'jāz we find is one (fol. 7b) in which he listed its three points which are also to be found in more than one of his other extant works.

Can this be taken as all that he wished to tell us about I'jāz?<sup>1</sup>

The acknowledgement is perhaps due to that old Sunnite Master Ibn Qutaybah and to his efforts in 'K. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān'. Al-Bāqillānī in this and particularly the following chapters was, it is clear, greatly inspired by him as we shall soon see.

Although it was 'K. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān' which, one is convinced, guided al-Bāqillānī in his work on this part of 'K. al-Intisār', he did not seem to have consulted Ibn Qutaybah's other works, particularly 'K. Mukhtalif al-Hadīth'. This conclusion may be drawn from the fact that while Ibn Qutaybah in his later work vehemently rejected the Mu'tazilah's interpretation of the verse (II/255)<sup>2</sup> and the literary example they produced to ascertain their opinion, al-Bāqillānī did not seem to be anxious about the seriousness of the interpretation in its theological essence propounded by the Mu'tazilah, instead he included their view and the literary example in full.

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- (1) For an answer to this question see the following chapters particularly those on the summary of this work.  
 (2) Cf. Mukhtalif al-Hadīth p.80 with ff.212b-213a.

Now begins al-Bāqillānī's two major chapters in connection with grammar and language generally.

### Grammatical Analysis

This chapter (fols. 181a - 196a) is fundamentally designed to counter the Rāfiḍah's reproaches against the style of the Qur'ān and to assess in particular what they ascribed to it of grammatical errors. The Rāfiḍah, as has been shown here, were not only militant towards the alleged grammatical errors themselves, but were equally aggressive towards the persons of Abū Bakr and 'Umar who, in their estimation, had been the sole cause of these errors.

The chapter is henceforth equally divided to deal with two main propositions:

On the one hand it reflects on the traditions:

(a) reported of 'Uthmān to have said:

"There is some grammatical error in the Qur'ān and the Arabs shall straighten that by their tongues."

(b) reported of 'Ā'ishah, "There are in the Qur'ān three letters which are the fault of the scribe."

Having dealt with the authenticity of both traditions and the way they should have been interpreted, if at all, al-Bāqillānī began to discuss in turn the alleged grammatical defects in the verses: VX/63, II/177, IV/160, V/69 and III/10.<sup>1</sup> He quotes, however, freely, a multitude of old grammarians' and lexicographers' views regarding the verses in question, wherein literary examples are often demonstrated to ascertain the argument. One example

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(1) Fols. 189a, 190a, 191a, 191b, 192a.

would perhaps give an idea of al-Bāqillānī's approach. Let us choose the verse IV/160.<sup>1</sup>

"But those of them that are firmly rooted in knowledge, and the believers believing in what has been sent down to thee, and what was sent down before thee, that perform the prayer and pay the alms, and those who believe in God and the Last Day - to them we shall surely give a mighty wage".<sup>2</sup>

The underlined word (al-Muqīmīna) was the origin of the grammatical contention, since it breaks off the nominative sequence of words before and after it and resumes the accusative form. The opposition or the Rafidāh insisted that it should be in the nominative or else it is an error. In reply to them al-Bāqillānī has this to say:

"Concerning this verse various explanations are given:-

(a) Some say:- He means that they believe in that which is revealed to you and that which is revealed to the diligent in prayer (wa ila al-Muqīmīna).

(b) Others say:- He means that they believe in that which is revealed before you and before the diligent in prayer (wa min qabl al-Muqīmīna).

They said al-Kisā'ī used to interpret this as "They believe in that which is revealed to you and believe in the diligent in prayer" (wa bil-Muqīmīna) in comparison with the verse 'He believes in God, and believes the believers! (IX/61).<sup>3</sup>

(c) A considerable number of experts interpreted it as:-

This is (Naṣḥ Ala al-Madh) an accusative case performed because it is in the

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(1) Fol. 184b.

(2) A.J. Arberry, 'The Koran Interpreted', vol. 1., pp. 123-4.

(3) Ibid, p.214

praise, and the Arabs single out the praised noun or adjective by different inflection, joining the words succeeding it to the preceding in the same case.

(d) Abū 'Ubaydah<sup>1</sup> and other distinguished experts said :-

" It is in the accusative case because of the extension in speech....and they(the Arabs) do so in speech when it is long or the epithets by which they praise or dispraise are multiple, they break from the nominative case to the accusative and vice versa. This may also be applied when the speech is short and the epithets are not multiple, not in order to praise or dispraise. This is done deliberately and with intention throughout the sequence of speech."

Al-Bāqillānī continues (fol.191 b.)

"They may conceal something (an agent) by which both cases are affected as has been seen above..... and the like. They have cited examples for both cases when speech is extended.

(i) For praise, the poet's verse :-

May my people never be far;

They, who are the poison of enemies and slaughter of camels,

They join (al-Nazilīn) in every battlefield,

And are chaste (al-Tayyibūn) in their marital ties."

لَا يَبْغَدُونَ قَوْمِي الَّذِينَ هُمْ  
الْمَنَازِلِينَ بِكُلِّ مَعْتَرِكٍ  
سَمُّ الْعِدَاةِ وَأَفْدَى الْجُزْرِ  
وَالطَّيِّبُونَ مَعًا قَدْ هَلَّزِي

(1) "The Arabs", says Abū 'Ubaydah, (Majāz, vol. 1, pp. 142-3)  
"break from the (Raf') the nominative to (Nasb) the accusative when speech has been extended and return once more to the former inflection"

(ii) For dispraise, the poet's verse:-

And every people have obeyed their master's order

Save Numayr who ... to that of the ... foolish among them.

They stab (al-Tā'inīna) but have killed no one yet,

And they say (al-Qā'ilūna) "Whose is (this) dwelling, so that we may spare it"

وَأَلْقَى كَلِمَاتٍ لَمْ يَنْجَلِيهَا  
إِلَّا نَمِيرًا اطَّاعَتْ أَمْرًا غَاوِيًا  
وَكَحْرُ قَوْمٍ أَطَاعُوا أَمْرَ سَيِّدِهِمْ  
الطَّاغِيِينَ، لَمَّا يَقْتُلُوا أَحَدًا

They, (the grammarians) have agreed to the possibilities of both inflections, I.E. they may say in the accusative wal-Nāzilīna, wal-Tā'inīna followed consecutively by wal-Tayyibūna, wal-Qā'ilūna in the nominative case, or the other way round.

They, nonetheless, use (I'rāb) inflection by intent and with regard to the concurrence of the sequence of speech." Language and Literary Criticism

### Language and Literary Criticism

As the preceding chapter, this one has also been devoted to other kinds of the Rāfidah reproaches against the composition of the Qur'ān. The method adopted here, despite the interspersed theological discussions, is predominantly of an overlapping, explanatory and literary bent. The chapter as a whole is entitled, 'Their vilifications concerning the veracity of the transmission of the Qur'ān and its composition from the standpoint of language, and the description of some of their doubts which contain a variety of their calumnies against the Qur'ān and the investigation of the invalidation of that.'

The Rāfiḍah points of doubt demonstrated at the opening of this chapter and which recur in some form or another throughout the rest of the chapter, can roughly be summarised in the following:

- (a) Incompleteness and disappropriation in both meaning and wording.
- (b) Amputated and disjointed speech, the connection and completion of which remain meaningless.
- (c) Exceptions are misplaced, wrong and contradictory to the preceding one and that from which the exception was made.
- (d) Description of a thing with its undue epithet or its attribution to something else with which it has no connection.
- (e) Ascribing to God attributes which are not His.
- (f) Contradictory tidings.
- (g) The metonymies (al-Kināyāt) in the Qur'ān are meaningless.<sup>1</sup>

The Rāfiḍah, as has been seen in the previous chapter and in all their allegations throughout, were motivated by one idea and one idea only. They were simply endeavouring to prove that the only unique version of the Qur'ān was that handed down to them through their own authorities from the Imām.

Nothing, we are told by al-Bāqillānī, right from the start, was new in such allegations; the same attitudes or similar had long been held.<sup>2</sup>

Regardless, however, of all such acrimonious and embittered theological outbreaks waging among sects, mentioned only so as to give an idea of some of the working factors that induced al-Bāqillānī in his task, one is perhaps all for the literary erudition emerging from them.

The last point in the above cited list of the Rāfiḍah's criticism, involves clearly a critical literary criterion, namely 'metonymy'. One

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(1) Fol. 196b.  
(2) Ibid.

should perhaps return to the chapter before the last, and particularly to the final proof in that, wherein further discussion is to be found.<sup>1</sup>

In Ibn Qutaybah's 'Tawīl' the Rāfidah were presented to us as a fourth group who denied the role of metonymy;<sup>2</sup> al-Bāqillānī is primarily concerned with their views with special reference to a certain sect of them, namely the Ismā'īliyyah.<sup>3</sup>

The basis on which the Rāfidah were denigrating the role of the Kināyah (metonymy) in the Qur'ān was that it can, in their opinion, only be used by he who is afraid of plainness or in need of camouflage or adulation, which are improper with regard to God.

Thus the persistence on the Rāfidah's part and their decrying of the function of metonymy as a means of expression, led consequently to their accusation to others of changing words and verses in the Qur'ān. Ironically, though, it persuaded them to interpret them metaphorically in their own fashion, for instance the verse "Alas for me! Would that I had never taken anyone for a friend." (XXV/28) The word friend was interpreted by them to indicate the person of the Caliph 'Umar.

To al-Bāqillānī such a way of interpretation was not much different from that of those sects who in their own turn of mind interpreted words as: prayer, pilgrimage, wine, gambling etc., to signify certain people or persons. He also drew a parallel between the Rāfidah's interpretation with that of the earlier Khārijites<sup>4</sup> who misinterpreted certain verses in the Qur'ān so as to glorify some of their leaders.

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- (1) Fol. 176b.  
 (2) 'Tawīl', p.202.  
 (3) Fol. 178a.  
 (4) Fol. 180b.

The function of metonymy and intimation, as perceived by al-Bāqillānī is an indispensable feature of the language and a mode of expression of considerable importance. It is a well trodden route and well known to speakers of the language, who have said acknowledging them, "Sometimes an allusion is more eloquent than plain wording and intimation is more eloquent than clearness".

A man may say to another, disbelieving or disagreeing with him or slandering him, in reply: "One of us is a liar, dishonest, cowardly or an ignorant fool", using this metonymy instead of saying bluntly: "You are a liar, coward or ignorant". Such intimation is likely to be more far reaching than plain wording, more suitable and penetrating to the heart, more appropriate in answering. Moreover, it is best from the language standpoint and more befitting to correlate the speaker with dignity and wisdom and thus enable him to prove his point without employing uncouth wording".<sup>1</sup>

The importance of metonymy, as perceived by al-Bāqillānī, may well be summed up in one word, 'laconism'.

To return to al-Bāqillānī's longest chapter (fols. 196a-302a), the end of this volume, which was primarily confined to language, more specifically to the opposition's - the Rāfidah and others - provocations and points of criticism which involved a vast multitude of Qur'ānic verses. It would, of course, be impossible in our position to endeavour to render the details of each individual verse, but perhaps the general trend and some of the literary characteristics should not be overlooked.

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(1) Fol. 179a.

On the whole, the general pattern of this chapter could well be summed-up as an exegetical analysis inclining more specifically towards problematic verses which had been aligned, in one way or another, with one of the Rāfidah's eight points which we saw previously. This being the overall approach we may try to assess the acknowledgement made a little earlier to that old traditionalist, Ibn Qutaybah, and his contribution in this respect and al-Bāqillānī's indebtedness or influence by them so that we need not repeat ourselves.

Taking into consideration al-Bāqillānī's section in which he reflected on 'omission and conciseness' and the circumstances in speech allowing for them (fols. 197b-210a) and the last chapter dealing with 'repetition' (fols. 298b-302a) and also (fols. 293a-294a) in the light of Ibn Qutaybah's accounts (pp. 162-172), (180-198) the immediate impression one gets is of reading more or less Ibn Qutaybah's accounts for the second time.

Though naturally they may differ over some of the details, the major difference between the two works in this respect is that while we find Ibn Qutaybah sets his rhetorical rules before embarking on the problematic verses themselves, al-Bāqillānī puts the same rule into practice.<sup>1</sup>

Further, a closer look at the rest of the contents in both works shows that similarities are clearly palpable between Ibn Qutaybah's polemic chapters in which he recorded the views of adversaries and his own reply to them (pp. 19-25), their allegation of difference and contradiction with regard to some of the verses (pp. 46-61). In al-Bāqillānī's book such an attitude is apparent at the opening of each chapter and section, in fact with

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(1) Fol. 294b where a list of most of the figures of speech is drawn.

regard to each verse.

Moreover, similarities are also visible between such chapters:

- |     |                          |                |            |         |                        |
|-----|--------------------------|----------------|------------|---------|------------------------|
| (a) | On readings,             | Ibn Qutaybah's | pp.26-35   | Intiṣār | ff.125b-129b.          |
| (b) | Grammatical errors,      | " "            | pp.36-45   | "       | ff.181a-196a.          |
| (c) | Mutashābih (consimilar), | " "            | pp.62-75   | "       | ff.290a-290b.          |
| (d) | Metonymy and implication | " "            | pp.199-212 | "       | ff.176b-181a;<br>199b. |
| (e) | The Secret Letters       | " "            | pp.230-239 | "       | ff.291a-293a.          |

So much as far as the resemblance between these two works, or al-Bāqillānī's indebtedness to 'K. Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān', but the point of divergence between them, however, clearly marks the former's aloofness from the dialectical theological approach of interpretation inasmuch as it indicates the latter's commitment to it by virtue of his profession. This may be inferred from Ibn Qutaybah's subsidiary chapters and their overlapping grammatical and philological tendency, of which al-Bāqillānī appeared to have made little use.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the theologian al-Bāqillānī could hardly avoid theological entanglements even in this chapter on language. No sooner does it begin than it is obstructed with a lengthy theological section.<sup>2</sup>

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- (1) Cf. al-Bāqillānī's discussion of the particle of similitude, Mathal, fol. 198b with Ibn Qutaybah's account 'Mushkil' p.378.
- (2) This section which covers the fols. 220b-249b is entitled: "As for the claim of the heretics that there is contradiction in the verses of the Qur'ān with regard to such matters as guidance, misguidance, the creation of deeds, fate, predetermined deeds and the obligation with the impossible: the multiple allegations of Ibn al-Rāwandī and his ilk in these respects, to which we shall also add the allegations of the Qadariyyah, the Mu'tazilah and those who followed them with regard to these verses, their imposition on them and their interpretation of them, the meaning intended in these verses and whether their (i.e. the above named) interpretations were engendered by ignorance and mere stubbornness and the desire for confusion and ambiguity ....."

Of the literary examples produced to illustrate a point in discussion and the emerging critical measures in connection with a verse or group of verses, perhaps some examples would give an idea of al-Bāqillānī's method. Considering the verses:<sup>1</sup>

1. "And indeed these are rocks which fall down for the fear of Allah".  
(11/74)
2. "And the birds in their flight? Of each He knoweth verily the worship and the praise". (XXXIV/41)
3. "Unto Him belongeth whosoever in the heavens and the earth. And those who dwell in His presence are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they weary". (XXI/19)
4. "The stars and the trees adore". (LV/6)
5. "If we had caused this Qur'ān to descend upon a mountain, Thou (O Muḥammad) verily hadst seen it humbled, and rent assunder by the fear of Allah". (LIX/21)

In all these verses there is a common factor, that is to say each of them expresses a certain personification of a natural phenomenon, substance or living being. Such metaphorical usages, the opposition, or the Rāfidah, maintained were impossible. Taking, however, the last verse as an example of al-Bāqillānī's interpretation with full literary citation to ascertain the validity of such uses, it runs:

"They, (the Rāfidah) stood on no solid ground. Nor yet is there any impossibility in His saying "Verily hadst seen it humbled, rent asunder", i.e. if we had caused this Qur'ān to descend upon a mountain which

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(1) Fol. 257b.

implicatively could have comprehended and heard it, it would have been pulverised, rent asunder despite its solidness and magnificence. It is also possible that the meaning here is, had we caused the mountain to understand and hear the Qur'an it could have rent asunder and broken into pieces for the fear of God.

The report about the worship of the sun, the moon, mountains and other objects and the glorification of such things can only mean- God knows best- their humility, humbleness and the humility and humbleness manifest in them; in other words, their need and infinite need for a maker to make them and a director to direct them and keep their equilibrium, without whom these things would never exist. As in His saying:-

"There are rocks which fall down for the fear of God" i.e. in which is manifest the stamp of the maker and the signs of need and desire in them, therefore it has been called analytically, fall down, humility, prostration and glorification. And it does not mean the physical prostration on the forehead or the kneeling down or the glorification which is only verbal.

Jarir said:-

"When the news of the death of al-Zubayr was announced

The walls of Madinah and the submissive mountains humbled them-

لَمَّا أَفْ خَبِرَ الزُّبَيْرُ تَوَاضَعَتْ  
سُودُ الْمَدِينَةِ وَالْجِبَالُ الْخَشِيعُ -selves."

And Ibn al-Ahmar the poet said:-

" And I knew of the balconies of its mosque

Two stones in Time's long keeping

They wept the desolation and I said as they mourned:

' Fortitude has vanished after your weeping'".

وَعَرَفْتُ مِنْ شُرُفَاتِ مَسْجِدِهَا      حَجْرَيْنِ طَالَ عَلَيْهِمَا الْحَضِرُ  
بَكِيَا الْخَلَاءِ فَمَلَّتْ إِذَ بَكِيَا      مَا لَعَبَدَ بَكَاءُ كَمَا صَبْرُ

The stones, of course, do not weep nor are they submissive, except by way of analogy and implication and by the way of informing of the great calamity and that it is one of those which makes even a mountain weep; thus magnifying the matter".

Further examples from the poetry of Labīd and other poets were demonstrated. The last was of al-Tirimmāh's verse:-

"And the companion of worries when worries gather together

The darkness of the night is a sleepless pillow".

وَأَخُو الْهَمُّومِ إِذَا الْهَمُّومُ تَحَضَّرَتْ : جُجَّ الظَّلَامُ وَمَسَادَةٌ لَا تَرْقُدُ

The poet here makes the pillow sleepless meaning he who sleeps on it, on account of the hammering of worries of both his heart and mind. Likewise when God Almighty mentions these things and characterises them by such epithets, He means other than them or he who witnesses, is admonished by and contemplates on their creation. And this is not deep to consider".

### Poetical Criteria

Pursuing the course of interpretation which included many a verse where a multitude of doctrinal controversies were propounded - though the literary examples were inevitably called for now and then as illustrations, al-Bāqillānī at this stage of 'K. al-Intiṣār' deals with purely literary criteria.

His opponents, mainly the Rāfiḍah, ascribed to the text of the Qur'ān corruption, incoherence and disorderliness which, in their opinion, were due to the people, i.e. the first three caliphs who had corrupted the text of the Holy Book.

The charge levelled against the story of Abrahām (Surah XXIX, vv.15-27) was that it had been interrupted by the story of Muḥammad (vv. 17-24) which obstructed its sequence.<sup>1</sup>

Before al-Bāqillānī recorded his verdict concerning the construction of the text in question, he invited his opponents into some detailed consideration of literary standards. Thus he opened the case:-

"For your assumption that in this form lies disjointment of speech and distortion of it, this is ignorance and departure from comprehension of the merit of diction and the ability of perceiving variations in speech; for the experts considered such a form of delivery a specimen of chasteness and eloquence and ability of expansion in speech. To them it is eloquent to emerge from one form of speech into another and the description of the interjectory, then the submergence once more into the former theme in an approbated and agreeable way. And they attributed to him who makes such offerings in his orations and poetry, the ability of good speech."<sup>2</sup>

The first measure considered in this respect was:-

"Digression (Iṣṭiṭrād)<sup>3</sup> i.e. the poet is engaged in describing a certain object then diverts to another".

After it was thus defined, quotations from several poets were demonstrated. The first was from Ḥassān b. Thābit.

"If you have lied in what you told me,

You have saved yourself the way al-Hārith b. Hishām did.

- 
- (1) Fol. 294b.  
 (2) Fol. 295a.  
 (3) Cf. 'I jaz', pp. 156-160.

He left the friends, not fighting in their defence,  
And repaired to the neck (lit. head) and bridle of a

Fierce steed. (ṭimirra)<sup>1</sup>"  
 فَتَوَّاتٌ مِنْهَا الْهَارِثُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ  
 وَبِجَا بَرَأْسِ طَيْرِ بْنِ وَجَّامٍ  
 إِنَّ كُنَّا كَاذِبَةً الَّتِي حَذَقْنَا  
 حُرُوكَ الْأَحْبَةِ لَمْ يُقَاتِلْ دُونَهُمْ

"It is obvious", commented al-Bāqillānī, "that Hassan did not mean by the commencement of his speech, with the warning against lying, the mention of the escape of al-Hārith b. Hishām, his failure, nor was he rebuking him; what he primarily meant was something else, though he inserted this in his poem and by so doing diverted it from its original intent".<sup>2</sup>

Further examples were also quoted from abū Tammām, al-Buhturī and al-Sariyy al-Raffā'.

The second criterion was:-

"Apostrophe (Iltifāt)<sup>3</sup> i.e. the emergence of one meaning from another, whether the poet returns to the former theme or abandons it altogether. This, however, is abundant in the Qur'ān, the Arabs' speech and the poetry of the eloquent; and we need not go into thorough details." Examples from the Qur'ān were quoted.<sup>4</sup>

From poetry he quoted as example Jarīr's verses:-

"When were the tents (pitched) in Dū Ṭulūh

- 
- (1) English translation by Professor von Grunebaum, 'A Tenth Century Document ....' p.45. See also 'Diwān', ed. H. Hirschfeld, p.3.  
 (2) Fol. 295b.  
 (3) Cf. 'I'jaz', pp. 149-156.  
 (4) Qur'ān, X/22, XIV/19-21.

may you(fem.) be given water by abundant rain - Oh ye tents.<sup>1</sup>

Do you forget the day she polished her teeth with the balsam branch?

May the balsam be watered abundantly."

مَتَى كَانَ الْخِيَامُ بِذِي طُلُوحٍ : سُقِيَتْ أُنثَى - أَيُّهَا الْخِيَامُ  
أَتَلَسَى يَوْمَ تَصْقَلُ عَارِضِيهَا : بِجُودِ لَبَنَامَةٍ سُقِيَ الْبَسْتَامُ

"Had the poet not digressed from one sense into another he should have said:- 'When were the tents (pitched) in Dū Tulūh, oh ye tents! For only this is the completion of what he commenced. As for the prayer for the tents to be watered by abundant rain and the description of his beloved's teeth and the branch for polishing them, these have no connection with what he intended in the first place. They are but an evidence of eloquence and expressiveness."<sup>2</sup>

In this way al-Bāqillānī also quoted from Abū Tammām, al-Nābighah al-Ja'dī, Kuthayyir 'Azzah, Abū Hayyah al-Numayrī and others.<sup>3</sup>

After all such criteria or figures of speech, mainly observed for the composition of poetry, were demonstrated, al-Bāqillānī returned once more to the construction of the story or stories in question. His conclusions read :-

"Had all these (examples) and the like of them been rightly considered within the realms of purity of language, eloquence and the aptitude

(1) English translation, Professor von Grunebaum (op.cit.) p.41. The second verse differs from the Dīwān text (cf. Beirut edn. 1960/1379 pp.416-7) and other references including the author's 'I'jāz' p.150 wherein it reads " 'Atansa" 'Do you forget (how it was) when Sulaima bade us farewell?' The version recorded here we find also in 'al-Lisān', vol.IX, Būlāq edn. p. 42 ; yet with a slight difference in wording, while the first word in the text of 'al-Lisān' is the word "Atadhkur" 'Do you remember....?' the first word here being in the text above.

(2) Fol. 296b.

(3) Ibid.

for variety in speech, then that speech with which God has addressed His prophet- wherein you dare to charge- is more relevant, more resembling and more frequently recited than most of what we have just mentioned; if only because His speech emerges from a story of one prophet and the recounting of his people's reaction, to the story of the Prophet, (Muhammad) and the address to him and the rebuttal of his people, Quraysh; so as to confirm and encourage him in his patience and perseverance in his cause. All this is appropriate, for God here gives His prophet an account of a previous prophet and of His address to that prophet's people, and compares the reactionary attitude of the two peoples.... All this undoubtedly indicates an ability in composition which could hardly be achieved by most of the learned men, of orators and prose writers. It is unattainable and beyond the reach save for the very few. Whosoever, therefore, imagines that in this text there are corruption of speech and digression from the way of eloquence and the wont of those who speak the language, "had surely an arid thought with shortcomings" <sup>1</sup>

This method of interpretation al-Bāqillānī seems to have maintained towards all interwoven stories in the Qur'ān.

'K. al-Intisar' and al-Baqillani's Conflicting Opinion Therein.

Dr. Tāhā Husain, in a public lecture, (1930) once declared that the language of the Qur'ān was neither prose nor poetry, but purely Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever Taha Husain's critics<sup>3</sup> at the time might have thought of his

(1) Fol. 196a-197b.

(2) 'Min Hadīth al-Shi'r wal-Nathr' (1936) pp. 24 ff.

(3) See 'Zakī Mubārak, 'al-Nathr al-Fannī' (1936) 2nd edn. vol. 1p. 34.

opinion, which plainly stated that the Qur'ān stands apart in the Arabic language and it is clearly distinct from the more common means of communication and conveying of ideas, both prose and poetry, al-Bāqillānī almost a thousand years ago expounded similar views.

'K.al-Intisār', or this extant part of it, presents to us two sides of al-Bāqillānī's conception of the language of the Qur'ān ; on the one hand, the idea that the Qur'ān should not be categorised as prose or verse, an idea quite harmonious with Tāhā Husain's theory, or rather one which placed Tāhā Husain on a par with him, on the other hand, another idea which found a closer affinity with Tāhā Husain's critics, viz. it should be described as prose.

The seeming contradiction of al-Bāqillānī's thesis concerns not only the Qur'ān's unique position in the Arabic language, as Tāhā Husain would have us believe, but also that the Qur'ān was revealed merely in the manner of Arabic dialect.

'K.al-Intisār', being as far as we know the only work in which these apparently diametrically opposed views are found together, reads at the very beginning :-

"And God made it (i.e. the Qur'ān) by what it contains of amazing composition, pure diction, unprecedented style and by its being divorced from all other forms of Arabic language a sign for His prophet." <sup>1</sup>

At the end of this volume, and several times throughout its literary chapters, we read :-

" When God spoke to the Arabs in their own tongue, it was in the manner of their language. They in their turn sometimes favoured the long-winded

(1) Fol. 1a.

style and repetition when it was thought more eloquent and apposite; and limited themselves at other times to conciseness when that was considered appropriate; therefore God spoke to them in their fashion."<sup>1</sup>

Are these two opinions reconcilable?

It does not, in point of fact, require al-Bāqillānī's opinion as to whether or not the Qur'ān is in Arabic; this has well been taken care of by the Qur'ān itself, and of its original Arabic it has been clearly and emphatically stated more than once.<sup>2</sup> Nor is it also al-Bāqillānī's main argument or dispute. The principal idea in both his statements is in which of the two major means of expression in Arabic, prose or verse, should the language of the Qur'ān be accommodated?

To him at any rate, and to Tahā Husain ten centuries later, it cannot possible be identified with either and therefore a third position must be assigned for it.

Of this uniqueness in the following two works, 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' and 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān', he has more to tell us.

## II

### 'K. NUKAT AL-INTISAR'<sup>3</sup>

#### The author's chapter on I'jāz

While reflecting on some of the material in the complete copy of the

- 
- (1) Fol. 298b.  
 (2) Cf. e.g. XXVI/195, XII/2, XX/13, XLI/3.  
 (3) The original MS. of unknown date, containing (approximately) 144 folios belongs to the Alexandria Municipality Library, No. 828 of which a photo-copy was acquired by the Arab League Organisation in 1948, commentary No.284, (cf. 'Fihrist al-Makhtūtāt al-Muṣammarah' (1954) vol.1, p.49 No. 284. There is mention of this work in GAL. The original author of the summary was Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Sayrafī, but when he died, 'Abd al-Jalīl b. Abū Bakr al-Sābūnī collated the material, adding a short preface (f.2b or 1b) with some changes to the first's text. (cf. f. 114a)

first part of 'K. al-Intiṣār', an enquiry was made as to the whereabouts of the author's promised chapter on I'jāz, which according to his provisional plans in the introduction to that part, should have occurred in the first part itself. This, however, is not the case. After despairing of obtaining the extant text of 'K. Nukat al-Intiṣār', at long last a photo-copy was made available.

The book as a whole is a summary of the entire 'K. al-Intiṣār' and it contains in the second part alone about twenty-five chapters, some of which have been subdivided into a number of sections.

Apart from the chapters dealing directly with the question of I'jāz, the rest of the material deals with various aspects in connection with the history of the Qur'ān or further refutation of some of the allegations on the part of the Rāfiḍah sect. The topics which are discussed in these chapters are:-

		Chapter concerning the allegation of some of the Rāfiḍah that the Qur'ān is incomplete .....	f.69a.
"	"	the proof that the Qur'ān is the miracle of the Prophet .....	f.69b.
"	"	The difference between the Qur'ān and the rest of the Arabic language .....	f.72a.
"	"	eloquence .....	f.72b.
"	"	al-Bayān (this has been subdivided into four sections, three of them dealing with the rule of <del>meanings</del> , ff.74b-76b, the last with omission ff. 76b-78b) .....	f.74b.
"	"	those who claim that the Qur'ān is poetry .....	f.79b.

Chapter concerning the Mu'tazilah who maintained that the Arabs were prevented from opposing the Qur'an (i.e. the idea of al-Sarfah) .....	f.84a.
(This is also subdivided into five sections ff.85a-91a)	
" " what was related of the Prophet being heard reading "Those are the most high Gharānīq".....	f.92b.
" " the Prophet's forgetfulness .....	f.94b.
" " the first person to gather the Qur'an between the two covers, and the proof that he was right in doing so .....	f.95b.
" " the prohibition of reading the Qur'an by the meaning without words .....	f.97b.
" " the prohibition of reading the Qur'an in the Persian language .....	f.105a.
" " the proofs of those who are in favour of the reading in Persian and the opposition against them .....	f.107b.
" " Abū Bakr's collation of the Qur'an and on what material it was written .....	f.110b.
" " the proof that what Abū Bakr did was right .....	f.111b.
" " 'Uthmān's collation of the Qur'an .....	f.112b.
" " Ibn Mas'ūd's attitude towards this collation .....	f.115a.
" " Uthān's choice of the reading of Zayd b. Thābit and not Ibn Mas'ūd's.....	f.117b.
" " the proof of 'Uthmān's correctness in choosing the reading of Zayd .....	f.120b.

- Chapter concerning the dialect in which the Qur'ān was revealed ..... f.124b.
- " " The difference over variant readings between the people of al-Shām, Madīnah and Irāq ..... f.126a.
- " " what al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf adhered to in that respect f.128a.
- " " the readings of the seven Imāms and their differences ..... f.130a.
- " " the criticism against 'Uthmān ..... f.130a.
- " " the differences between the seven readings and whether or not all or some of them differ from that of the community and what is the diversity of the different copies of the Qur'ān (including one further section.) ..... f.130b.

Of all these our concern is with the chapters dealing with I'jāz (ff. 69b-92b) which covers, the Qur'ān as miracle, the Qur'ān and the Arabic language, eloquence, al-Bayān, the Qur'ān and poetry and the theory of al-Sarfah. For brevity of detail and to avoid unnecessary repetition we shall deal with these topics with others of similar nature, adding accounts from other of his works separately or while reflecting on other of his books where more detail concerning some of them is to be found.

III

'KITĀB HIDĀYĀT AL-MUSTARSHIDĪN'<sup>1</sup>

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(1) The copy of this MS. was made 54 years after the death of al-Bāillānī by Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad al-'Adawī at the town of Sūr in the years 457-8 A.H., and revised by him 4 years later in 462 A.H. This information is found on a page attached to vol.XVII. This original MS. is in al-Azhar University Library; photocopy preserved at the Arab League Organisation Library. Photographed MSS. Theology 245, see, 'Fihrist al-Makhtūṭāt al-Muṣawwarah' vol. 1., p.141. No.245. The fact that there was no system of pagination used in the original Ms.(or added to the photographed copy), compels us for accuracy and convenience to refer to the folios of each

Introduction

When Ibn al-<sup>2</sup>Arabi lauded al-Bāqillānī's 'K. I'jāz al-Qur'an' as the best work on the subject ever written<sup>3</sup>, it is questionable whether he was referring to the particular 'K. al-I'jāz', as can be inferred from the sources mentioned below, or to his writings on the subject in general. If the appraisal was confined to the former only there are, among al-Bāqillānī's other writings on the subject, works of equal interest; if not more advanced in certain respects than it.

As we have<sup>had</sup> occasion<sup>to</sup> notice earlier, in most of al-Bāqillānī's extant works, a chapter, a whole work or several parts of a single work are devoted to the question of I'jāz or an aspect of it. 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'<sup>4</sup> is perhaps a unique example of the last category. Fortunately the surviving seriate volumes of this work, which deal exclusively with the question of prophet-hoods, contribute a great deal to the problem of I'jāz.

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- (1) cont. individual volume separately. The surviving volumes vary between 19 and 22 folios; 19 ff. vol. XVII.  
20 ff. vols. IX, X, XII, XIII, XIV.  
22 ff. vols. VI, VII, VIII, XVI.
- (2) Not the famous mystic Muhyī al-Dīn, otherwise known as al-Shaykh al-Akbar (d. 633/1240), but more likely the Ash'arite-Malikite judge Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah (d. 543/1143) also known as Ibn al-<sup>2</sup>Arabi who refers to al-Bāqillānī several times in his commentary 'Ahkām al-Qur'an' (Cairo ed. 1333A.H) see particularly vol. 1. pp. 424, 430-1, 436. For further acclamatory remarks and a summary of al-Bāqillānī's views.
- (3) Suyūṭī, 'Itqān' vol. 2. p. 134; Zarkashī, 'Burhān' vol. 2. p. 9.
- (4) 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn wal-Muqni' li-ma'rifat Uṣūl al-Dīn'. (The guidance to the seekers of guidance and the sufficing in the knowledge of the principles of religion); this is the full title which is inscribed on the covering folios of vols. VII, XII, XIII, XVII.

Solely from the references made by the author himself in this work to his previous works<sup>1</sup> it is evident that this was of a much later period. Yet there is no specific date, as with the rest of his works, that it can be ascribed to. Nor is it known for certain how many volumes the work comprised in its entirety, except for the mere fact that the remainder extant begins at volume ~~six~~ and continues, without break, until volume seventeen. At the end of the last volume further topics are advertised to be dealt with in the succeeding part or parts.<sup>2</sup>

While in the previous work, 'K. al-Intiṣār', the principle idea was the Qur'ān in general and more particularly its transmission, the chapter of I'jāz as appears in the summary of the second part of this work, is of a comparatively restricted range contrasted with that in the work which is now under consideration. The main idea in the present work being prophet-hoods which occupies all the surviving parts, the concept of miracles in general and the idea of the I'jāz in its specific literary sense, more particularly are the predominant themes.

Although some of the causative theological factors and some of the literary discussions in this work are to be met with in some form or another in other of the extant works of the author, it is noticeable that some of the topics are elaborated upon in much more generous and greater detail, if not viewed in an entirely different light.

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- (1) Ten are mentioned, cf. the author's list of works mentioned earlier.  
 (2) Vol. XVII, f.19a; the author's final words are: "This is a sufficient and convincing account regarding prophet-hood and the qualities of the Epistles ..... to be followed by a chapter concerned with al-Amr bil-Ma'aruf wal-Nahy 'An al-Munkar, (Command with instruction and right direction).

The material within these volumes is arranged with the topics or chapter and section headings following them. This fact indicates that the multitude of volumes are of little technical significance, hence it is obvious that a certain chapter or topic, which commences at the beginning, the middle or the end of a certain volume, continues throughout the following volume or volumes.

### An Approach

Our particular interest in this work begins precisely with volume VIII, f.17b, l.5, when the study of 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān' is introduced for the first time, and continues until volume XVI, f.11b. From then onwards a different topic, though not far removed from the general theme of this work - or the surviving parts of it - is commenced. For the material spanning volumes VIII to volume XVI, however, al-Bāqillānī has provided his own systematic arrangement for handling it, indeed, even arrangement for the material of some of the topics has also been supplied as shall shortly be seen.

Nonetheless, for the obvious fact alluded to towards the end of the last chapter, for the inconsistency in some of the author's arrangements, and for the added reason that we are introducing a work by al-Bāqillānī for the first time, which provides us with a comprehensive account - literary as well as theological - the plan which shall be adopted in the following pages will consist of the following objectives:

A - a brief outline of the accounts found in the second half of volume XVI (beginning at folio 11b) until the end of volume XVII which is also the end of the surviving parts of this work. Then those found in the volumes prior to volume VIII, and up to folio 17b in it. Both accounts are

introductory and subsidiaries to the main chapter on I<sup>ʿ</sup>jāz.

B - the remainder which deals directly with the chapter of I<sup>ʿ</sup>jāz for the thoroughness of material demonstrated between vol. VIII f.17b. until folio 15a in volume XIII, we shall consider in this the author's theological background to the question in general, to which may also be added his similar contribution in other works, if any.

C - the bulk of the accounts found between volume XIII f.15a to volume XVI f. 11b, being a direct contribution to such topics as eloquence, composition, poetry and rhymed prose, with other accounts of their nature appearing in other of al-Bāqillānī's works will be considered in chapters bearing these titles.

Although in this attempt it is hoped to avoid much of the unnecessary repetition caused originally by the quest for the author's works, one shortcoming with regard particularly to the work under consideration ostensibly seems to be an isolation of some of the literary discussions from their immediate and direct causes, as some of them have been juxtaposed, being provoked or stimulated by some of the theological arguments and vice versa. This, however, is not too alarming, in fact, we may be assisting the author's original plans for although he was prompted by his intervening discussions into premature pronouncement or fully developed ones he nevertheless refers to them in varied, though brief, forms when reaching their proper places in his general plan.

#### Volumes XVI, XVII

The opening of volume XVI is a continuation of a subsidiary section on rhymed prose which begins at folio 14b in volume XV. This continuation

ends at 4b. and a new chapter concerning 'The departure of the style of the Qur'ān from the composition of poetry and other compositions' commences (ff. 4b-11b). The account given in this chapter among others shall be considered in our chapter on 'The Qur'ān and poetry', (1) a discussion on the form. The materials in the remainder of this volume and the succeeding one deal exclusively with 'Miracles other than the Qur'ān',<sup>1</sup> which are evidently of secondary importance and far from contributing anything directly to the chapter of I'jāz. Nor need we enter into detail regarding them, but if only to give a general picture of this work and its contents the following may serve as an outline:-

- a) A brief account on the status of miracles besides the Qur'ān, vol XVI ff. 11b-12a.
- b) Reflections on some of the details given in the Qur'ān and the traditions concerning or interpreting some of them. Further detail in this respect is also found in vol. XIII ff. 6b-8b. The authors discourse also touches on the attitudes of those who rejected such miracles as al-Warrāq and Ibn al-Rāwandī. Vol. XVI ff. 12a-14a.
- c) Having demonstrated those miracles in general (f. 14b.) he begins to reflect on them in further detail. Among those reflected upon in vol. XVI are;-

the flowing of water between the prophet's fingers	f. 16a.
the feeding of the many from the little food	f. 16b.

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(1) For brief remarks on this chapter cf. 'Tamhīd', pp. 133-4; 'Bayān' p. 55, 'Inṣāf', p. 63, 'I'jāz' p. 10. 'Intiṣār' (sum) f. 87b. The author's comment in 'I'jāz' reads 'But those miracles took place at particular times, special circumstances, witnessed by particular people and were transmitted

- the physical coming of the tree towards the Prophet and its  
return to its place f.17a,
- the yearning of the palm tree stock for the Prophet when he  
left for the pulpit f.19b,
- the splitting of the moon f.19b,
- the praising of God of the pebbles in the Prophet's hands f. 1b,
- the Prophet's ascent to heaven (al-Mi'rāj) f. 1b,
- the talk of the wolf to a man from Aslam f. 2a,
- the sinking in the ground of the feet of Surāqah's horse when  
driven after the Prophet to kill him f.2a-4a.
- d) Amplification on some of the accounts given in the previous volume and  
early in the present one:-
- the physical coming of the tree ff.4a-5a,
- the feeding of the many from the little food ff.6a-8b,
- his invocation against Muḍar (the tribe) ff. 8b,
- the Prophet's foretelling of the fate of the army of Muḍatah ff.8b-10a
- the annunciation concerning the qualities of the Prophet, the  
multiplicity of 'Hatf' or voices whose speakers are unseen,  
the foretelling of monks, priests and the people of the  
Books of the Prophet ff.10a-16
- e) Finally a section on the universality of the Prophet's mission ff.16a-19a

## VOLUME VI

The first of the surviving parts of the voluminous 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', at least in the copy which is now accessible to us,<sup>1</sup> is

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(1) S.A. Ṣaqr in his introduction to his edition of 'I-jāz al-Qur'ān', p.44

enumerated in it as the sixth volume. The subtitle of this volume, which reads, 'Min Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt' (Of the book of prophet-hoods), underlines clearly the fact that the question of prophethood had hitherto been the principal idea. Although material demonstrated and issues reflected upon in the unobtainable parts of this work are beyond our reach, the mere fact that the author referred to some of the topics in them in the surviving volumes makes it possible to trace his views on them, in some way or another, in some of his other extant works which are well known to us<sup>2</sup>. Thus the question which has been the primary occupation until this volume is that of the prophethoods and the same subject continues to dominate the rest of the surviving parts until the author's final word in volume seventeen. From here onwards topics advertised for later discussion are of a different nature.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) cont. appears to have been informed by a particular friend of an incomplete MS. of the same work. Though, so far little about that MS. is known to us, for our particular purpose, al-Bāqillānī's reflection on the question of I'jāz, there is in the present version quite enough material.
- (2) Eg. His chapter on ability on which several of his arguments, including his views on the question of al-Sarfah, markedly depend. To this chapter references are made in vols. XI, ff. 12a; 14b; XIV, f. 1b., to mention only a few. The author's views with regard to this topic are traceable, in some form or another, in 'Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, pp. 286-95, also 'Inṣāf', pp. 46-7. He seems also to have discussed, in the missing parts such topics as the 'question of the creation of the Qur'ān', cf. vol. XII f. 19b. This is also traceable in 'Tamhīd', (op.cit.) pp. 237-51. Among other chapters also is 'the existence of magic', vol. VII, ff. 1b-14a, of which extensive details are found in 'K. a; -Bayān', ed. McCarthy, pp. 77 sqq. All these topics alluded to have doubtless a theological angle, but it is perhaps far too early to suggest that all the missing parts are thus biased, in fact there is evidence of discussion of a literary nature, as the following reference suggests " ... As we have already said and explained in the categories of the eloquents among poets, orators and writers." vol. X, f. 16a.
- (3) See vol. XVII, f. 19b.

The first current section in this volume is entitled:-

"And among these (i.e. the proofs) which explain the impossibility of the delay of the miraculous act at the claim of the prophetic office .... is<sup>1</sup>."

A section which is obviously a continuation of an extended chapter which was commenced somewhere in the previous missing volumes.

In this section, however, and the short sections that immediately follow it,<sup>2</sup> al-Bāqillānī is engaged in setting apart the distinguishing characteristics of the miraculous acts, for the office of a prophet on the one hand, and for that of a saint or a gifted person on the other. In the last of these sections explanations are also given to the reported deeds which had occurred in the lives of the prophets before their claims of the prophetic mission.<sup>3</sup>

At folio 5a of this volume begins the first chapter under the following heading:-

"The way in which miracles prove the veracity of the prophets". This is illustrated first by a series of questions and answers,<sup>4</sup> a pattern which is almost inevitable in all of al-Bāqillānī's works and a uniformity quite characteristic of many of the theological writings. It serves however to remove dialectical obstacles and elucidate the points before the author

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(1) Vol. VI, f.2a.

(2) Ibid, ff. 3a, 3a, 4a.

(3) Ibid, f.4a. It would seem from references made in the author's introduction to 'K. al-Bayān' (op.cit. pp. 4,5,7) as well as from the title of the same work that the difference between prophets' miracles and saints' 'karāmāt' is one of the major discussions in that work.

(4) Vol. VI, ff. 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b.

reaches his final conclusion in the line of discussion. This , however, may also be due to his teaching method. The series of questions and answers is followed closely by yet another series of sections elaborating the point further still,<sup>1</sup> leading up towards the conclusions, which appear throughout the first three volumes, and apologetics alternately from without his own community and from within; externally against attacks levelled at the fact of miracles generally, and internally against activities and interpretations obscuring them, seen from the author's Sunnite standpoint.

For instance, the fourth section in the last series is directed against the Brahman attitude regarding miracles. From its title alone the controversy is made clear and indicates fairly the depth of the theological wrangling ahead. It opens:-

"The Brahman vilify miracles, alleging that, had they been a proof of the veracity of the office of the prophetic mission, they should have been analogous by means of logic and reasoning, and should only be a proof of the veracity of a prophet, but since that is not so and the existence of their like is possible, and the violation of the law of nature proves the prophethood of no-one, their status as proofs is invalid."<sup>2</sup>

To our controversialist al-Bāqillānī, such a claim or claims were perhaps more than alarming, however false or genuine the attribution of the claims themselves, and was bound to induce him to a lengthy discussion of proofs and counter-proofs, which as it happened, he implements until the end

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(1) Ibid, ff. 13a, 13b, 18b.  
 (2) Ibid, f. 20b.

of this volume,<sup>1</sup> elucidating even further, and covering well over a third of the following one.

### VOLUME VII

The Brahmans' arguments against miracles as proofs of prophethoods and the author's refutations of them, carry us well into volume VII. The last section, however, directed against them, delivers us yet to a further field of discussion and to a subject well discussed by the author in a previous work. The contention here is internal - within the Muslim community. Al-Bāqillānī is led to tackle, or reflect on, some of his contemporaries' attitudes. The opening of the last section dealing with the Brahman reads:

"They (the Brahman) rely on their deprecation of the credibility of the miraculous acts, maintaining that there is no means of knowing whether those who claim the prophetic mission do not succeed by means of a trick or some other device, which enables them to perform that which they did."<sup>2</sup>

The controversy progresses to the following section, which bears the title, 'And among the factors which explain the impossibility of that which appeared at the hands of the Apostles to be a form of trickery or Makhārīq is<sup>3</sup> ....'

As the subject of trickery in contrast to miracles is raised in the discussion in the last three sections of this chapter, it leads the author

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(1) Ibid, ff. 21b, 22a, 22b.

(2) Vol. VII, ff. 1b, 1b, 2a, 3b, 3b, 4a. Apart however from a single remark in the published part of 'K. al-Bayān', p.26., and in 'I'jāz' p.6; a long chapter in 'K. al-Tamhīd' was devoted against the Brahman, ed. McCarthy, ch.9., pp.104-131.

(3) Ibid, ff. 4b, 10a, cf. 'Bayān', op.cit. pp. 56-93.

to reflect on these points:-

- a) The status of trickery, magic and the like of other divinations generally and the impossibility of identifying what occurred at the prophet's hand with such things. The details which are given in this section are less comprehensive compared with the author's lengthy chapter in 'K. al-Bayān'.<sup>1</sup>
- b) As some of the Jews interpreted some of the miracles attributed to the Prophet, particularly those other than the Qur'ān, as forms of trickery, al-Bāqillānī, in retort, argues the application of such interpretations to those attributed to Moses. His views here are similar to those expressed already in 'K. al-Tamhīd'.<sup>2</sup>
- c) The last section is of some importance as it exemplifies some of the factors that affected the study of I'jāz in the fourth century. The discussion is directed primarily at the activities of some persons in Islām. No matter how, in a mystical light, such activities in later times might have been viewed or interpreted, to the orthodox of the fourth century they were considered very serious and alarming, if only because they would confuse, or lead to the doubt in, the miracles of the prophets, or link them with magicians' and prestidigitators' trickeries and sorceries. Yet, consideration of the belief that some of the prophets' miracles were within the ability of other people, was no doubt among the contributing factors which urged al-Bāqillānī to contend against such activities. Among these persons<sup>3</sup> was noticeable.

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(1) Ibid. f. 11a, cf. 'Bayān' op.cit.

(2) Ch. 12, pp. 160-190, also p. 144.

(3) Such as al-Jannabi, Ibn Hilāl, Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥasan, all he described as of the Qaramitan movement. See also 'Bayān' p. 74.

al-Ḥallāj<sup>1</sup> of whom several anecdotes are recorded<sup>2</sup>.

Finally in this volume a new topic, or a new chapter, is commenced, entitled 'Nothing but the miraculous can prove the veracity of the Apostles'<sup>3</sup>, which is in fact a further elaboration on that maintained in the previous chapter and although we find two sections and a question in connection with this new topic in this volume, the whole may be considered as a prologue to a chapter directed against another group of the author's rival theologians, namely the Qadariyyah or the Mu'tazilah.

### VOLUME VIII

Although the bulk of this volume is devoted against the Mu'tazilite principles or the irreconcilability of the miraculous act as a proof of the prophetic mission and its veracity in the light of those principles, it also marks the beginning of the systematic study of the question of I'jāz.

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(1) He, to the pious Muslims of the fourth century, including the mystics themselves, was considered a highly dangerous personality, not only for the miraculous prodigies he claimed, or claimed to have occurred at his hand, but also to what is reported of him of opposing the Qur'ān. See for example al-Qushayri, 'al-Risālah' p. 164; ibn Kathīr, 'al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah', vol. XI, (the events of the year 309) p. 135. The historian al-Tanūkhī (d. 384), 'K. Jāmi' al-Tawārikh', with English trans. ed. Margoliouth, also reported his winning over the Rāfiḍah, cf. pp. 81-3, and Eng. trans. pp. 87-8. Thus whether true or false his alleged happenings, his opposition to the Qur'ān and the inclination of the Rāfiḍah towards him, each separately would be enough to set al-Bāqillānī against him. The suggestion by Massignon (quoted by M. Watt, 'Islamic Philosophy and Theology', Islamic Survey (1), pp. 80-1), "that the discussion of apologetic miracles found from the time of al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013) onwards was triggered off by the claims of al-Ḥallāj." Massignon's remark, which concerns chiefly the prodigies attributed to al-Ḥallāj to which others lay claims, namely the opposition to the Qur'ān and his winning over the Rāfiḍah, must be added.

(2) Ibid. ff. 13b-16b.

(3) Ibid. f. 16b.

With regard to the Mu'tazilite principles nonetheless, the accounts which are given in this chapter are by no means the only accounts to be found in this work as a whole against other of the Mu'tazilite principles. Nor is it the first or last encounter with them. In fact, in all of al-Bāqillānī's extant works we find him tussling in one way or another against them.

The accounts which are given here however are not only specific and thoroughly detailed, they also show al-Bāqillānī's ability for connecting other theological disputes with the question of I'jāz.

The opening of this volume is a sub-chapter under the title, 'Explanation of the falsity of proving the veracity of the Apostles' miracles according to the Qadarite principles.'<sup>1</sup>

The chapter then runs into a series of sections<sup>2</sup> and the discussion of certain points of doubt,<sup>3</sup> all in relation to the attitudes of the Mu'tazilah and the interpretations of the attributes of God, particularly His Will. Both the main sections and the subsidiaries are summed up by the author at one point in the following:

- a) The inability of the Mu'tazilite school of Baṣrah to comprehend the meaning of the Will of God.
- b) The belief of the Qadarite school of Baghdād in the impossibility of the Will of God in reality.
- c) The adherence of the majority of both schools to the belief that accidents are the effects or the decrees of substances alone, without the

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(1) Ibid. f. 1b.  
 (2) Ibid. ff. 5b, 12a, 14b.  
 (3) Ibid. ff. 7b, 12a.

interference of God.<sup>1</sup>

On these three points thus revolves the rest of the sections and it would be sufficient to notice here that all such attitudes, as seen by the author, lead directly to the ruling out of the possibility of miracles.

The prophetic mission and I'jāz

Now from the more general approach towards prophethood to the more particular, specifically that of Muḥammad, which in consequence promoted the chapter on I'jāz, thus accentuated in the opening words in the first section in 'K. al-I'jāz', "What necessitates the complete solicitude with the knowledge of I'jāz al-Qur'ān is that the prophetic mission of our Prophet is based on this miracle."<sup>2</sup> Here it suffices to notice that the concept of prophetic mission is the second tenet of the firm principles on which the religion is based.<sup>3</sup>

Although, and for reasons which have already been mentioned, the author's views are invariably repeated, in this work, exclusively, we are presented with a general plan of the chapter. He commences:

"We must begin therefore by I'jāz al-Qur'ān as a proof of the prophetic mission of the Prophet (Muḥammad) - may God grant success - declaring that proof cannot be accomplished unless it has been known that

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(1) Ibid. f. 2b.

(2) P. 10.

(3) To use al-Bāqillānī's own words: "We must therefore believe that the ordinance of monotheism and prophethood is tantamount to the ordinance of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and all religious observances." 'Bayān', p. 40; see also 'Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, pp. 132-40; 'Inṣāf', p. 61; 'Intiṣār', ff. 69b sqq.

the Prophet did claim prophethood and insisted upon being followed and the knowledge of his veracity. That the Qur'ān did come to us through him and he challenged the Arabs to produce its like, or even a chapter of its like, and they failed to do so, despite the long duration of the challenge. Nor did they oppose him, notwithstanding the keenness of their desires, the abundance of their motives, their resolution to oppose him and the dispersing of the gathering around him.

They did not avert from opposing him for any other reason but the impossibility for them just to do that. It had been beyond them to produce the like of it, or a single chapter of its like, for two reasons

Firstly, because of its unique and magnificent composition, which is unlike the forms and compositions of their speech, though its individual words and phrases are the same as their speech, which they utter, and of which they are in full mastery. What they produce of prose and verse differs totally from the composition of the Qur'ān, by which they were challenged. Secondly, by what it is endowed with of purity of language and eloquence, which extends the limit of their ability and what they were accustomed to of purity of diction (which we shall see) and whether it outstrips their eloquence by the most or the least, after knowing its distinguishing merit, which draws the line between it and their eloquence."

Although from the very outset of this interlude the idea of I'jāz was perceived by al-Bāqillānī as clearly petrified on the one hand in the composition of the Qur'ān and, on the other, its eloquence and purity of diction, and although it was by no means his last word in defining what he meant by these terms, his discussion would imply the exclusion of secondary theological discussions which normally accompany them. This, as was often

the case, resulted in a two-fold approach towards I'jāz, that is to say a theological apologetic approach and at the same time a literary one. The two approaches often intermingle, one with the other. For example, a theological dispute may end up as a fruitful literary discussion, sometimes the reverse is true. This dualism of approach was no doubt necessitated by the nature of the subject itself and the author's experience. Yet the preference, rather the extension, of either approach is very clear. In the present work, for instance, and to some degree in 'K. al-Intiṣār' (or the abridgement of it), the inextricability of approaches is very marked. Moreover, we find him more inclined to pursue either of these two approaches as in his other works. In 'K. al-I'jāz', for example, the literary discussion is obviously predominant, whereas in both 'K. al-Tamhīd' and 'K. al-Bayān' the literary discussion becomes negligible, while the theological one is more in evidence.

In justification of the dual approach to the chapter on I'jāz, as in the work under consideration, al-Bāqillānī has this to say, following immediately on the above quoted remark:

"The proof of the correctness of this arrangement is that, it is impossible to demonstrate the proofs (for prophethood), by the miraculous act, for him who does not claim the prophetic mission, nor is it possible to prove his prophethood by a miracle whose existence and manifestation is not known; in this however there is no difference of opinion regarding it. Also it is impossible to know that what was manifest was a miraculous act for him who would claim prophetic office, when he himself did not claim that nor challenge by it (the bringing of the like of it) in writing or in

uttered words or the equivalent of the latter.

The form the challenge took was that of a declaration in proof of his prophethood, asserting that God supports him by (a book) the like of which no man can produce either in its genus or in its form of expression.

The challenge was made in these words, and in asserting that it cannot be met. This claim would have been rendered invalid had anyone produced the like of it. Similarly it would not have been recognized that the challenge was made with a work of miraculous (or inimitable) nature had it not become manifest that the challenge was not met and that the opposition failed to take it up. Further, the miraculous nature of that work can only be proved when it is seen that the opposition tried to meet the challenge and failed after trying. (f.19a)

At this point the author concentrates his attention on the Qur'ān, its brilliant style and high eloquence, and in due course makes the point that the Arabs' failure to meet the challenge was not the result of their fearing to do so, or merely of doubt in themselves or of other less immediate factors which prevented them from attempting. Had anyone of these or similar factors been the cause, that would not have constituted a proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān or its inimitability. The reason of their failure must be their sheer inability to meet the challenge.

#### Two Major theological themes

In the light of the justified systematic arrangement by the author in his prelude and also on the assumption that it should be acceptable, al-Bāqillānī now embarks on his long, protracted and discursive

dialogue on the chapter of I'jāz following up and reflecting simultaneously on both aspects of the problem- the theological as well as the literary- in considerable detail given predominantly and characteristically in the form of question and answers, proofs and counter-proofs, or the clarifications of some points of doubt raised by his opponents.

It is quite obvious that the theological discussion in this work as a whole is more comprehensive, detailed and repetitive than the rest of the author's extant works put together. Some of the topics were treated from a different angle in 'K.al-Bayān' and 'K.al-I'jāz'.

'K.al-Hidāyah', on the other hand, appears to be more comprehensive in both aspects; a topic or a particular question, for example, which may require a short section or a mere mention in the former two works or in others, may occupy a chapter extending over a volume or two in the present work.

The long and most discursive theological dialogue in this work can be viewed under two main entries, namely, "the challenge" and "the opposition" (or rivalry) and from this latter itself branches out a third major controversy, the idea of al-Sarfah . In 'K.al-Tamhīd', which was, after all, a preliminary study covering a wider range of theological aspects, there are many points in the chapter on I'jāz which are treated in brief compared with the present work.

Before dealing with these major topics note should be taken of some of the things which he mentioned at the opening of his prologue and which he considered needed no proof, as they necessarily became known. Such facts

as the Prophet's claim of the prophetic mission, his insistence on a following of believers and the fulfilment of prescribed religious obligations. These became as well-known as his appearance at Makkah and Madīnah.

This should become known in the same way as any other traditional fact handed down, for example, that 'The Book' is by Sibawayah, 'The Muwatta'' by Mālik and 'Halt friends both, let us weep' by Imru'al-Qays.<sup>1</sup>

### I. THE CHALLENGE

The challenge of the Qur'ān to the Arabs to produce the like of it, in toto, ten chapters or even one chapter, is stated in the Qur'ān in a corresponding number of verses and thus it became the essential basis of all theological discussion on I'jāz. Al-Bāqillānī's long and involved assessment deals fundamentally with two major aspects:

- i) the authenticity of the aspect of the challenge as such and its vital importance in confirming the prophetic office.
- ii) the authenticity of the Qur'ānic verses in which the challenge is stated.

This is the general theme in this early part of this work. In the later stages, however, we find the idea often recapitulated, intermingled with the aspect of rivalry and introduced in various discussions, particularly those grouped under the sub-heading 'The proofs of I'jāz'.<sup>2</sup>

The first section here is 'Concerning the Prophet's challenge to the Arabs and opens with the question, "If anyone asks, how can you

(1) Ibid. f. 19b.

(2) Although this features markedly in this work, cf. also 'I'jāz' pp. 22 sqq. and also pp. 334-5.

(3) Vol. VIII, f. 20a

ascertain- in the light of the foregoing premises- that the Prophet did challenge his people(tribe, Quraysh) and others who spoke the same language, to produce the like of the Qur'ān."

This question continues:

"This would prompt us to consider whether or not they opposed him. If you persist in asserting that he did challenge them, we shall say that they did not rival him. Had he challenged them by it and scolded them for their incompetence and their shortcoming, they would spare no time in competing with him. But he used only to recite it to them so as to enlighten them on historical events, on matters of religion and for the virtue of its contents, its language or literary value. To say, however, that he claimed it as a miracle for himself, yet rebuked them for their inability to produce its like is baseless" <sup>1</sup>

On the basis of denying 'the essential knowledge' <sup>2</sup> runs al-Bāqillānī's counter-reply.

To deny the authenticity of the challenge is the same as denying any obvious fact which requires no proof. In the author's opinion those who deny the challenge are likely to deny anything attributed to the Prophet, and in this are but co-equal with the Sophists and the Sumaniyyah who deny visual objects. <sup>3</sup>

The dialogue proceeded :-

"But how can it be possible that the knowledge of the Prophet's challenge with the the Qur'ān is necessarily known

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid. f. 20b, 'I'jāz' pp.15,24; for his definition of the essential knowledge see 'Tamhid' ed. McCarthy, pp.7-8.

(3) Ibid. f. 20b.

when some of the Muslims , who accepted the Prophet's prophecy deny it" <sup>1</sup>

The names of Hishām al-Fuwatī and 'Abbād al-Saymarī, the two distinguished Mu'tazilite and others are mentioned, though by way of inference rather than direct quotation. The questioners argues:-

"For we know they could not have held the view that the Prophet had claimed it (the Qur'ān) as a proof of his prophetic mission, because they were of the opinion that accidents, as they become known through a particular means, prove nothing. This would have been a blatant contradiction. And also the challenge could not be necessarily known and denied by them, for an intelligent person cannot force himself to deny necessities." <sup>2</sup>

After a brief emphatic recapitulation of the proofs of the challenge al-Bāqillānī in reply argues from the following points:-

- (i) if one or both the men in question deny the challenge they were no doubt denying the necessities; and it is not impossible to find one or two who deny necessities.
- (ii) of 'Abbād alone, he reported his denial of such obvious historical events as 'The Battle of the Camel' at Basrah, and if it were true of him, his position in denying necessities was no better than the Sophists,
- (iii) yet, both men were of the belief that the miracle during the Prophet's life was the coming down of Gabriel who brought down the Qur'ān.

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(1) Ibid. f. 21a.

(2) Ibid. f. 21b.

Analysing this attitude of theirs, al-Bāqillānī considers the difference to be merely one of terminology rather than essence; for what they meant by their saying that Gabriel was the miracle was, in truth, a return to the concept of eloquence and the composition of the Qur'ān, not Gabriel himself. Because if a certain substance (Jism) is endowed with a particular quality is considered miraculous.<sup>1</sup> This means that the miraculous element lies in the quality. What, however, embroiled the men in question in confusion and produced their wild thesis, was their assumption that when accidents became known by a particular means, they could not be taken as proofs.

The final section<sup>2</sup> in this volume is the first step to the second aspect of the challenge or the authenticity of the verses in which the challenge is stated. Two of them are mentioned with comments on them.<sup>3</sup> Reference has also been made to 'K.al-Intisār' for further points of criticism on the Qur'ān text and the author's refutation of it.

## VOLUME IX

The opening of this volume is a continuation of the discussion on the text of the challenge wherein a further two verses, in which the challenge is made were quoted.<sup>4</sup> As usual they are accompanied by a brief exegetical comment, as on similar occasions in the author's

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(1) Ibid., Here with the example of the Qur'ān, al-Bāqillānī draws simultaneously on the physical movement of the tree. He cannot, of course, describe the Qur'ān as 'Jism'. We notice that in 'I'jāz' p.449, he attributes this view to the later Mu'tazilite, Abū Hashim. One wonders as to whom it belongs.

(2) Ibid. f.22a.

(3) The verses are XVII/88, II/23.

(4) These are; XI/13, LII/34, in addition to XVII/88, II/23 quoted in the last section in the previous volume.

other works.<sup>1</sup> Although the authenticity of these verses is the sole topic for discussion it is by no means the author's final word concerning them. One in particular has given rise to further reflection in some of the following parts of this work.<sup>2</sup> The discussion here, however, evokes the following dialogue. The author's long answers may be reduced to the fundamentals.

Q: What if it is said: "We do not know for certain that these verses were among those which were brought by the Prophet and recited to the Arabs and taught to them?"

A: This would confirm your doubt in others,<sup>3</sup> in every chapter, verse and word in it, which leads consequently to doubt in its entirety. In other words, why is your doubt confined to these only?

Q: How do you know? Perhaps these verses were revealed towards the end of the Prophet's life, therefore not enough time remained for the people of Madīnah to produce a rival text.

A: If that were so, it would not have prevented them from rivalling one chapter at least; since the challenge did not specify a short or a long one. If they were in a position to do so, surely they might at

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- (1) Most of the above verses are quoted in 'Tamhīd' pp.141,156; 'I'jāz' pp.22-4; 'Intisār' (sum.) ff.82b,83b; 'Bayān' pp.24-28. Some of them are resorted to on similar occasions throughout some of the works, cf. eg. 'Hidāyah' vol.XVII, f.8b; 'I'jāz' pp.23,31,57, 281,387.
  - (2) Over the discussion of the question of al-Sarfah in vol.XII, ff. 2a-3b, the interpretation of the verse XVII/88 has been evoked. Also another question in connection with the challenge emerges at the opening of vol. XIV, f.1b-3a. Moreover a section in the same volume ff. 6a-8a by the title 'Their invectives against the Qur'an and the answer to them', is based mainly on this verse. It is also recorded among the verses indicating prophecies in vols. XIII, f.6b; XI, f. 6a.
  - (3) Reference is made to the Surahs; CXII, CX, XIX.

least have rivalled one of the short ones. If it it indeed to be imagined that he died shortly after the revelation of these verses.

Considering the history of the Qur'ān, all the verses in which the the challenge was stated were revealed at Makkah<sup>1</sup>, and it is impossible to believe that he remained at Makkah for fourteen years without challenging them.

If he only challenged them at Madīnah they would have asked him why had he not challenged them by the Qur'ān at Makkah.

The last point stimulates a new twist in the questioning:--

Q: What if it is said; perhaps he said to them: " I did not challenge you at Makkah because of the scarcity of my supporters and out of fear for myself, but did so at Madīnah while victorious and protected?"

A: This is a remote presumption for he did challenge, rebuke and ridicule them at Makkah unafraid of their sword. Yet even if what you say<sup>r</sup> had been the case, it would not have made any difference, for had<sup>a</sup> rival text been possible to produce, they would have tried it, indeed, if it were within their ability, neither war nor a sudden attack would have stopped them, hence neither conflict nor the clashing of the ranks nor the meeting in the battlefield would have diverted them from oratory, rhymed prose or poetry.

Sec:

Q: If they said of all the verses indicating the challenge by the Qur'ān to the Arabs, that the Prophet had said they were not his but were the speech of God and were his utterance, he was merely expressing them, how could he therefore have challenged with

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(1) This is not perhaps the case in verses 25-4 of Surah II, if the whole was revealed at Madīnah.

them, when he was only an expressor and mouthpiece for them?"<sup>1</sup>

The following series of three sections offered by the author in answer to the two points involved in this question, that is to say, the mere expression by the Prophet of the words of God and his challenging with them. With regard to the former issue, al-Bāqillānī argues that there was no difference whether the challenge was in the Prophet's own words or by those which was narrating from God; in either case there was a challenge, though it should be understood that the challenge was more effective as a revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Sec;

Again assuming that the challenge was by the mere recitation in the Prophet's own words, which are not of necessity known, the knowledge of the challenge must be through the manifest reasons; that considering the Prophet's outstanding knowledge of Arabic, had he abandoned the challenge he must have done so for his knowledge that the Qur'ān was no different from the rest of Arabic eloquence and also if all the later Muslim generations realised the fact about the Qur'ān, that it is an eternal miracle, unmatched and unrivaled, it must be realised that it must have been even more so in the case of the Prophet for he was claiming prophethood and revelation and could not have abandoned the challenge.<sup>3</sup>

Sec:

Moreover, it is logically impossible for the Prophet's supporters and opponents, who were renowned for sound reasoning and far-sightedness that he could remain among them for a long period while

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(1) Ibid. f. 3a.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. f. 3b.

claiming prophethood, that the revelation had been sent down to him and that he spoke not out of caprice but a revelation, reciting verses which clearly glorified himself and the Qur'ān,<sup>1</sup> and also impose religious duties and obligations; nor is it possible that Quraysh and others, known for many a fine quality, to remain silent without challenging him; nor for his supporters to yield submissively, had it not been for the undefiable challenge.<sup>2</sup>

## II. . . . OPPOSITION (Rivalry)

In accordance with the author's general plan, set out in the prologue, having thus dealt with the aspect of the challenge he now commences on the second major theological theme, 'the opposition' (rivalry)<sup>3</sup> or the lack of it. Unlike his treatment of the question of the challenge, he spends much longer time on it, in this and the succeeding volumes of this work; to such an extent that the majority of the questions raised throughout the remainder of this volume and those which follow it, until the middle of volume XVI, deal directly with this question. In some of the later parts, however, a question or a point may be formulated combining both aspects, the challenge as well as the opposition.

In comparison it would seem that some of the questions involved in these discussions had occupied the author in some way or another in some

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(1) Among the verses the author cites are; XIII/33, XXXIV/28, XXVI/193.

(2) FF. 4a-6b.

(3) Thus the term 'Mu'āradah' has been maintained by the author in all his works, yet the meaning it often implies is that of rivalry. Opposition as such may not be an accurate term.

of his early works as 'al-Tamhīd' and 'al-Intiṣār', but they were often of extreme brevity to the degree that a question or particular point which may receive a short answer in these works is pursued in the present in much more discursive and elaborate detail. Nevertheless, it is by no means all that the author appears to have contributed towards this particular issue, further aspects of it especially from a traditional standpoint, as he himself informs us at the opening of this chapter, were discussed in other of his early works.<sup>1</sup>

The basic issues discussed in those missing works and alluded to by the author himself concerned the tradition related by consecutive testimonies (Mutawātir) which became generally known and therefore confirm an essential knowledge of the veracity of whatever it refers to. His views in these works, as inferred seem to be from a general historical viewpoint, rather than those of a strict traditionalist. For further elucidation of his views he here demonstrates several examples concerning the transmission of historical events.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion from here is twofold, the author's strong belief in the nonexistence of opposition or active rivalry against the text of the Qur'ān by the Arabs, which covers the rest of the volume and the other which starts from the opening of the succeeding volume wherein the theme is generally refutative and polemic at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) Reference is made here to a chapter concerning authentically transmitted traditions (Akhbār) in some of the author's early works, 'K. Uṣūl al-Fiqh' and to two works on Imāmah, cf. 5b.
  - (2) ff. 7a-9b.
  - (3) f. 20a.

The first question, rather the first point of doubt, was:-

"Why do you deny that the Prophet was rivalled with the like of the Qur'ān and it became therefore no longer miraculous?"<sup>1</sup>

After the author's short interlude concerning the transmission of historical events, leading to the enumeration alternately of some of the causes which could have prompted the Arabs and other people who disagreed with the Prophet's mission to transmit such rivalry, had it ever occurred, he illustrates the point further in a series of short sections.

Sec:

Among the compelling motives for the transmission of rivalry to the Qur'ān and its declaration, had it ever occurred, is the fact that people of religion are more anxious to transmit what proves their religion right and discard that which differs from them, than the men of letters and others to hand down literature and all that is secular. In the light of this statement, the author concludes that had there been a rivalry, other people of other religions should have transmitted it.<sup>2</sup>

Sec:

Another proof of the falsity for the claim of rivalry is that considering the situation of the Prophet to the Arabs and their struggle against him, if there had been a rivalry, there would have been a greater drive to transmit it than indulging in wars against him.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) vol. IX, f. 6b.
  - (2) Ibid. ff. 9b-10a.
  - (3) Ibid. ff. 11a-b.

Sec:

Assuming that there was a rival text, known only to the few, it should have become known as time passed.<sup>1</sup>

Sec:

Moreover, granted that it were possible to say that the Prophet was opposed with the Like of the Qur'<sup>ān</sup>, but that it was not transmitted, as the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> had been; such an assumption can be countered by a similar supposition, as for example, that there was another Qur'<sup>ān</sup>, ten times as long, and more advanced in eloquence than it.<sup>2</sup>

Sec:

As a proof of the abundance of motives, it is found that people transmitted such nonsensical rivalry as that of Musaylamah.<sup>3</sup>

Sec:

If a rival text had actually been produced, but was forgotten through the expediency of averting people's motives, that itself would have been a violation of the laws of nature.<sup>4</sup>

Another point of doubt was that opposition with a text took place, though that was not necessarily transmitted for some reason which was not necessarily known. In support of this argument a comparison was drawn between the transmission of other historical events and the rival text. Because the transmission of the latter would involve certain risk it was abandoned.<sup>5</sup>

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(1) Ibid. ff. 11b-12a.

(2) Ibid. ff. 12a & b.

(3) Ibid. ff. 12b-13a; also 'Tamhīd', p. 154; 'Intisār' (Sum) f. 71b; 'I'jāz' pp. 238-41.

(4) Ibid. ff. 13b-14a. This may show a certain inclination towards the idea of al-Sarfah.

(5) Ibid. ff. 14a-b.

As usual, a long reply is provided by the author in which he draws on several features in the Prophet's struggle with the Arabs, all of which were enough to cause the transmission of an account of any rivalry or opposition.<sup>1</sup>

The argument then specifies a particular preventative cause, viz, the fear of the Prophet's supporters.<sup>2</sup>

The fear, argues al-Bāqillānī, did not prevent other allegations against the Prophet. Yet his supporters were fewer in number than his opponents.<sup>3</sup>

The final point of doubt in this volume is that there was no rivalry for there was no need for it, which in his opinion was but a nonsensical argument.<sup>4</sup>

This volume ends at this point and also ends the author's discussion concerning the non-existence of a rival text. For further discussions concerning with rivalry; such as the non-transmission of the supposed rival text through fear of doubt on the part of the Prophet's followers or that war was thought a more effective measure, etc., these are topics for discussion in the following volume.

#### VOLUME X

This unfortunately is the most defective volume among the surviving parts of this work, except for the last folios 11a-20b. The general theme of the discussion here is on the whole a further discursive continuation on the aspect of the opposition or rivalry,

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- (1) Ibid. ff. 14b-16b.  
 (2) Ibid. ff. 15a.  
 (3) Ibid. ff. 16a-18a.  
 (4) Ibid. ff. 18a-20a.

in fact, it marks the commencement of the more refutative part in this argument, to which the author alluded towards the end of the previous volume: namely, a refutation, rather confutation or counter-point, to the speculation and points of doubt put forth by, or assumed on the part of others, in connection with the question of opposition.

On the whole, the volume comprises three main points of doubt, in that respect, each of which is illustrated further by a series of short sections and each of them reflecting on or countering a certain point in the main issue in the question. Yet as the doubt proceeds, some of the subsidiary questions in turn provoke further issues. The main points of doubt can be reduced almost in their entirety, as for the author's multiple answers, for the reasons mentioned above, we can only hope to paraphrase some of the main points in them.

The first chapter in this volume is entitled "Concerning those who allege that a rival text was not produced despite the ability of the opponents to do that, for reasons and doubts which caused the Arabs to abstain from it."<sup>1</sup> The first section, or the first point of doubt, beginning in the familiar suppositional form: "If anyone asks", argues:-

Q: "Would you deny that the Arabs did not rival the Qur'an despite their ability to do so, because their motives were not sufficient? Owing, however, to the fact that an act can be performed by an able person, or by him of whom it can conceivably be said that he is an able person, when he wishes it and who is caused by motives to do so,

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(1) Vol. X, f. 1b.

if he lacks the motives, there is no ground for your denial?"<sup>1</sup>

A: In reply to this he enumerates a series of motives ranging from the claim of prophethood, the long duration of the challenge by the Qur'<sup>ān</sup>, before and after the Prophet's migration and during the time he was in a weak position, and when he became victorious, to his wars and his rebukes of the Arabs, the new religion and what it brought of new teachings. All these taken in the light of what had become known of the ardent zeal and self-pride of the Arabs, were sufficient causes for rivalry, had they had the ability. Taking the latter into consideration, they should have taken up the challenge instead of wars, slanders, defamatory poetry and accusing the Prophet of magic and madness or their denunciation of the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> as legendary myth.<sup>2</sup>

Q: "Would you deny that they abandoned the opposition for war because they did not know that, had they produced a rival text, they would have falsified his claim, therefore they imagined that war was the best cure?"

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid. ff; 2a&b.

(3) Ibid. f.2b; see also 'Tamhīd', pp.149-50. The idea that recourse to war was the reason that prevented the opposition from producing a rival text takes various forms throughout the present work and other works by the author. The questions are sometimes identical or slightly modified, for example, the question in the text above recurs with some modification at f.5a in vol.XV; Sometimes the suddenness of the war was considered the preventing cause, vol.X, f.11a, or the actual engagement in the war, 'Intisār' (Sum.) f.71a.

On the other hand, the argument was that the rival text was prepared but fear of the sword prevented them from declaring it, 'Tamhīd', p.146; 'Intisār' (Sum.) f.71a.

The difference in the wording of the two works is that while in the former the question takes the affirmative form, in the latter it is suppositional. For further reflection on this aspect of war see also vols; XV, f2a; XI, f.19b.

A: Every intelligent person necessarily knows<sup>1</sup> that a sound rivalry would diminish a false claim, likewise every intelligent person knows that on being challenged and provoked by oration, poetry, epistle or any craft or tradē to produce the like of it, if he did so, obviously he would have succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

Q: " Would you deny that they only abandoned competing with him..... for fear lest his supporters might have thought it was a successful rivalry (therefore his supporters enquire of him whether this was so and he replies that it was not) ?" <sup>2</sup>

The author's<sup>2</sup> long answer consists of two points :-

a) The unity of language, i.e. that if the Prophet's supporters ever thought that the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> could be rivalled, they would have found in this a better cause themselves for rejecting him.

b) The knowledge of language and eloquence is something natural to the speakers of the language and not aquired. The importance of this point to the author we see later in his consideration of eloquence. As an illustration of this argument that there had been no doubt on the part of the early Arabs, he demonstrates two episodes concerning two of the militant rivals of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

Q: "Would you deny that the people gave up because they were doubtful whether the challenge was in the composition, eloquence or

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid. f.3a. The completion of this question is from 'Tamhīd' See also 'Intisār' (Sum.) f. 71a.

(3) Viz. al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah and al-Nadr b. al-Hārith.

what the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> revealed of prophecies, and therefore they did not bother with opposition and resorted instead to war ?"

A: The long reply emphasises only one point that there is no equivocation in the text of the challenge to be understood other than eloquence and composition.<sup>1</sup>

There follows another point of doubt and the refutation to it.

Q: "Would you deny that the Prophet's followers or some of them were in a position to rival the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> (and to produce) what was even more eloquent and pure than it, and that they did so .....but that in the hope of achieving leadership or an office they conspired with him to conceal it ?" <sup>2</sup>

A: As a rebuttal to this the author argues the following points:-

i) Had it been within the power of his followers to rival him it should have been equally within the power of his opponents, for the language, nature (temperament), the land and the environment are but the same. It cannot be said that his followers were favourably disposed and his opponents not.

ii) Had there been a conspiracy on the alleged rivalry it should have become manifest through the ages, though concealed for a short time, for people through natural propensity are bound to speak of it as time passed.

iii) Moreover, his followers themselves were at one time among his great enemies.<sup>3</sup>

From the last point in the author's reply arises a further question which in turn occupies his discussion until f.77a where we

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(1) F. 4a.

(2) F. 4b.

(3) F, 4b-5a.

reach the final point of doubt in this volume. For the reason mentioned earlier it is difficult to benefit from the author's account on ff. 5a-11a. Of the account on the readable ff. 11a-17a the contribution in them to the chapter of eloquence will be seen later.

#### VOLUMES XI and XII

The former of these two volumes is linked with the volume prior to it- volume X, as the discussion over the last 'point of doubt' in that extends into it and consequently leads to the discussion of a new topic spreading into the succeeding volume-XII.

In the intervening chapters sections and proofs, the discussion as in the final sections in volume X reflects on some of the aspects of eloquence and composition. Somehow the question of 'ABILITY' is introduced into that literary and theological atmosphere and leads in turn to the inclusion of the question of al-Sarfah which, had the author adhered to his systematic arrangement, is to be expected at f. 12b in the succeeding volume XII, and continues until f. 9a in volume XII. Volume XII also proceeds naturally into the following, XIII.

The accounts given at the opening of volume XI, for their relevance to the question of eloquence<sup>1</sup> and composition may suitably

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(1) The various headings of which are:-

- i) A section in connection with the last point of doubt in vol. X, ff. 1b-2b.
- ii) Among the proofs of the inimitability of the Qur'ān (mainly from a stylistic viewpoint) ff. 2b-3b.
- iii) A proof that it is impossible that the difference between the eloquence of the Qur'ān and the most eloquent among the the speakers of the language (Arabic) should be close or equal, ff. 3b-6a.

be accommodated in our chapter on eloquence in al-Bāqillānī's studies. But at this juncture it would be better to wait and see what the author has to say on the question of al-Ṣarfah.

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Cont.

- iv) A further section (ff.6a-8a) concerning:
  - a) language is natural and not aquired,
  - b) the inability of the Prophet's contemporaries to rival the Qur'ān.
- v) Chapter on the proof of the pre-eminence of the eloquence of the Qur'ān to all common eloquence to the speakers of the language. (ff.8a-11a)

The point of doubt which provoked all the above and other theological discussion on such topics as necessity, inference and speculation reads:-

"would you deny that the opponents of the Prophet were able to rival the Qur'ān and produce the like of it, but fearing that no sooner had they done so, it would have been doubted and views would have differed extremely concerning it. Some would have said that it was like it, others hold the reverse. And doubt would befall him it was said that it was not a rivalry and thus lead him to speculation (Nazar) ..... Also doubt would remain with the Prophet's supporters who resorted to mere gusswork and could never be certain. Yet even if they produced a rival text the matter reverts once more to surmise. In either case doubt being unavoidable, thus they began with it" (vol.X,f.17 a & b).

Cf. also 'Tamhīd' p.150; 'Intisār' (Sum) f. 71a; 'I'jāz' pp. 382-5.

### III. AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ AND THE THEORY OF AL-ŞARFAH.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus dealt with vast aspects of the question of opposition, or the absence of it, to the Qur'ān, as his systematic arrangement in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidin' led him, al-Bāqillānī now deals with a very complicated question, rather a hypothesis, which is closely linked with the controversies in connection with the opposition. The idea here is that the opposition would have been tenable but for a divine intervention which rendered it impossible. This later became known as the theory of al-Şarfah.

Ṭāhā Ḥusain has ascribed two major influences to the rise of Arabic literary criticism during the third century A.H., as a result of the idea of al-Şarfah; firstly, that it induced its opponents to reject and write against it, and secondly it persuaded those of weak belief to reproach the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

The second remark, to judge from the example cited as an illustration, is perhaps an undue oversimplification.<sup>3</sup> Although the idea of al-Şarfah was of a Mu'tazilite origin, and in all probability an overgrowth of their principles, there appears scarcely any detail about it in the third century. Nor could the ambivalent attitude of Jāḥiẓ count as a sound opinion.

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- (1) It is worthy of note here that there was no difference of opinion between the theologians concerning the term al-Şarfah itself, or the root from which it derived. The Sunnite al-Bāqillānī's views being our concern, reference may be made to one of his colleagues, indeed his closest friend, Ibn Furak (d. 406/1015) who cited for the term such synonyms as: to prevent, to hinder, to withhold, to turn away, etc. See 'K. al-Hudūd fi al-Usūl', B.M. MS. Add. 9683, f. 56b.
- (2) 'Dhikra Abī al-Āla' (2nd ed. Cairo 1922) pp. 109-110.
- (3) The name specified was that of Ibn al-Rāwandī, whose motives on that account we have seen earlier were much more profound.

During the fourth century, however, as can be inferred from the study of al-Rummānī the Mu'tazilite, although he himself said little about it, it would appear that the idea attained a doctrinal status in the system of Mu'tazilite theology. On the other hand, the traditionalist al-Khaṭṭābī strongly disapproved of it. To him it was but a contradictory and fruitless attempt on the part of those who upheld it.

Towards the closing years of the fourth century and early in the fifth, the idea of al-Ṣarfah appeared to undergo a rather peculiar shift of opinion among the scholars of the three main theological sects. The Mu'tazilite al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, for instance, unlike the rest of his school, adversely attacked and deplored it.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile it began to gain new protagonists from the other two rival sects. The Shi'ite al-Sharīf al-Murtadā, to whom allusion has already been made, wrote in some detail favouring it.<sup>2</sup> As for the Sunnite-Ash'arite theologians, we find the name of Abū Ishāq al-Isfrā'īnī (d. 418/1027) a master in his own right and close associate of al-Bāqillānī, attached to it.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in the course of the succeeding fifty years or so, another distinguished Sunnite-Ash'arite theologian, one of al-Bāqillānī's successors in the Mālikite school of jurisprudence and the most outstanding Ash'arite to come after

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(1) 'Mughnī', vol. XVI, pp. 322-8.

(2) Tabarsī, 'Majmū' al-Bayān', vol. 1, p.3.

(3) For his relations with al-Bāqillānī see Ibn 'Asākir, 'Tabyīn, Damascus edn., p.244. For his views on al-Ṣarfah, see Jurjānī, 'Sharḥ al-Mawāqif' p.559; also Ibn Kamāl Pāshā, 'Risālah fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān', B.M.MS.Or. 5965, f.123a. 'Abd al-Aleem, 'Islamic Culture' vol. VII, p.216, has also noticed that Abū Ishāq dealt with I'jāz in his work 'K. al-Jāmi', a work which is only mentioned by H.K. vol.II, p.510, no.3892. It is not really certain whether he dealt with al-Ṣarfah or not.

him, 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, better known as Imam al-Haramyyn. (d.478/1083) vigorously embraced the idea of al-Ṣarfah.<sup>1</sup>

If al-Jāhiz, earlier in the third century, had expressed two opposite attitudes towards the idea, accepting its validity at one stage and rejecting it at another, the Sunnite controversialist al-Bāqillānī presents us with a subtle and equivocal stand, for although he strongly and emphatically states the lameness and ineptness of the idea with regard to the composition of the Qur'ān, his discussion upon other matters - indeed, even that of the composition of the Qur'ān - appears in essence to allow for it.

In the case of al-Jāhiz, we hoped to view his contradictory attitudes in the light of his relationship with his master al-Nazzām, disregarding the fluctuating loyalties reported of him on serious matters. Now in the case of the Sunnite al-Bāqillānī the situation can well be visualised in the light of the embittered rivalries among the theological sects, particularly that of the Mu'tazilites.

Although, in most of the extant works of al-Bāqillānī, references are found in one way or another to the idea<sup>2</sup> in fact some of its aspects were discussed in works which are not available to us.<sup>3</sup> Yet his most elaborate chapter on the question we find so far is in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', as his discussions involve two volumes of the work<sup>4</sup> and features markedly in other parts of it.<sup>5</sup>

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- (1) 'al-ʿAqīdah al-Nizāmiyyah', pp. 54-55.
  - (2) 'Tamhīd' ed. McCarthy, p. 145; 'Bayān', ed. McCarthy, pp. 14-15, 21; 'Iʿjāz', pp. 40-45, 99-100; 'Intiṣār', (the abridgement), ff. 79b-92b.
  - (3) 'Intiṣār (abridgement), f. 84a. The reference here is to 'K. Uṣūl al-Dīn'
  - (4) Vol. XI, f. 13b - vol. XII, f. 8b.
  - (5) Vols. VII, f.9b; VII, ff. 19a, 20a; XII, f. 15b; XIV, ff. 1b-2a.

Considering the circumstances in which al-Bāqillānī wrote most of his works one sees the reason why he had to repeat himself time and again. The brief or very brief accounts which occurred in such works as 'Tamhīd', 'Inṣāf', 'Bayān' and 'I'jāz' in connection with the question of al-Ṣarfah, became more and more lucid and protracted in such works as 'al-Intiṣār'<sup>1</sup> and 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' wherein a wide range of theological wrangles, involving a series of principles of his school and those of his rivals are exposed.

For some assessment of the idea it is necessary to consider the following points:-

What did the Ash'arite author understand of the idea?

On what basis did he reject it?

And did he in point of fact reject it altogether or allow for it in certain respects?

But before dealing with any of these questions, it is perhaps appropriate to consider the accounts given by al-Bāqillānī of the Mu'tazilite thesis as ascribed to the man who became the father of the idea, al-Nazzām. Bearing in mind that from the days of the founder of the idea to those of al-Bāqillānī certain developments and persistent, though variable, interpretations were attached to it at the hands of the later Mut'azilite generations, which fossilized the mere hypothesis into doctrinal belief and which also called for further involvement of other principles of the theology of the school.

The first report occurs in al-Bāqillānī's lengthy chapter in 'K. al-Hidāyah' and reads:-

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(1) In 'Intiṣār' (summary) the discussion of al-Ṣarfah seems to have been of some length but the summarizers no doubt cut it short.

"Though al-Nazzām among them (i.e. the Mu'tazilah) maintains that :  
 'I know not that the Arabs spoke the like of the Qur'ān before they were  
 challenged by it. Nay, perhaps speech of the like of it had been a  
 custom to them which was violated at the same time of the challenge by  
 the Qur'ān, or they lacked the knowledge of it or were prevented from  
 speaking such. And it was possible that they might have regained that  
 knowledge after the time of the challenge and the death of the Prophet."<sup>1</sup>

Another attribution to al-Nazzām is also recorded in the same work  
 while the author is demonstrating the various theses which were offered  
 in order to explain I'jāz:

"Al-Nazzām and those who agreed with him among the Qadariyyah say:  
 The miraculousness of the Qur'ān lies in the prevention from rivalry  
 and al-Sarfah at the time of the challenge to produce the like of it.  
 Prevention and al-Sarfah therefore are the only miraculous elements,  
 and not the Qur'ān itself. For it had been customary for the Arabs to  
 speak the like of the Qur'ān and perhaps they had spoken in a language  
 that was purer and more eloquent than it."<sup>2</sup>

In these two statements was laid the foundation of the idea, which  
 was often maintained<sup>3</sup> in later discussions. The stress is clearly put  
 on two main aspects;

- a) that of ability,
- b) that of knowledge,

of both of which, in this respect, the Arabs were deprived,  
 according to

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(1) 'Hidāyah' vol. XI, f.12b.  
 (2) Ibid. vol. XII, f.9a.  
 (3) Ibid. vol. XIV, f.2a.

the Mu'tazilah. The aspect of ability is here the most important and the aspect of knowledge merely an explanatory one. Now for an insight into the conflicting principles regarding ability which is the principal key to the question of al-Şarfah, we should look, though in brief, at the prevailing attitudes of both schools, under the following headings:

- i) God's Will over man's act,
- ii) Man in relation to his own act.

Assuming under the former, that both statements attributed to al-Nazzām were genuine, whatever the exceptions and however hypothetical the idea expressed may sound, it would seem that in the endeavour to establish the idea of al-Şarfah he was the first to defy one of the principles of his own school, or at least make an exception of one of the school's strongly and generally held tenents. Hence, in essence, his theory allowed for a Divine Intervention to have hindered the Arabs from the production of the like of the Qur'ān. Such a view would be quite irreconcilable with the school as a whole, in its common adherence to the idea of justice, whence man was given initiative power, ability or free will, which the school as a whole held in opposition to God's Will (Qadar) over man's action.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to this attitude we find al-Ash'arī, and consequently al-Bāqillānī professing the view that man cannot create anything. God is the only creator. Nor does man's power produce any effect on his action at all. God creates the power (Qudrah) of His creature as well as his choice (Ikhtiyār). Thus He creates in him, his action, corresponding to

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(1) 'Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, p.253

the power and choice thus created.

Thus, although the initiative and the performance of man's action is God's creation, according to the Ash'arite theology, to avoid slipping into another theological extreme (i.e. the tendency of the compulsionists or al-Jabriyyah) and also to account at the same time for responsibility to man in his act (in essence, none), al-Ash'arī took a middle way by adopting or reviving<sup>1</sup> the idea of acquisition or appropriation (Kasb) which argues that though the initiative and the performance of man's act is God's creation, man, who is but the subject of his act, is nonetheless responsible through his acquisition of it.

However, the theory of acquisition might have been viewed as an obscure chapter in the Ash'arite theology,<sup>2</sup> it was but another endeavour to explain man's act in relation to God.

Despite such diametrically opposed attitudes of the two schools, the rift between al-Nazzām's conception of the idea of al-Ṣarfah, at least as recorded by al-Bāqillānī, and that of al-Bāqillānī himself, is not perhaps very great; for both men were acknowledging the Power of God over man's act. The only apparent discrepancy between them in this is that, while for al-Nazzām it was the exception, to al-Bāqillānī it was the rule.

It can hardly be assumed that al-Bāqillānī rejected the idea in the light of the aforementioned concept, on the contrary, there are far too

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- (1) For the historical development of this idea, see W.M. Watt, J.R.A.S (1943) "The origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition", pp. 234-247. Also by the same author "Islamic Philosophy and Theology" pp. 85-88.
- (2) Thus the coining of the phrase; 'More obscure than the Acquisition of the Ash'arite'.

many examples wherein he was totally reliant on the idea in his arguments, not only by implication but by plainly using the term al-Şarfah itself,<sup>1</sup> which makes his own position over this matter more or less equivocal.

In point of fact, such equivocation in his stand appeared to have prompted someone at one time to ask ( or he himself, as his suppositional method would allow, anticipate the question):

"If it is said: this is but like the claim of the Qadariyyah that al-Şarfah prevented the Arabs from producing the like of the Qur'ān"<sup>2</sup>.

To which he exclaimed: "God forbid!"

Nevertheless, having demonstrated a number of their interpretations of the idea<sup>3</sup> he concluded thus:

"But if they ( the Mu'tazilah) maintain al-Şarfah as meaning the deprivation(of the Arabs) of the ability to speak the like of the Qur'ān, though they ( the Arabs) might have been enabled to do so, they (the Mu'tazilah) would have been right; and if that is so, what they (the

- (1) See 'Bayān', p.34, "Similarly, if the apostle challenged his opponents to rise from their places and move their limbs and use their tongues, and they were hindered from doing so while he was enabled to do so, the miraculousness would then be in the violation of what they were accustomed to by the creation in them of impotence and inability to do what they had been challenged ....." see also pp. 96-7.
- (2) Hidāyah, vol. XIV, f.2a.
- (3) Ibid, e.g. "Some of them say:- 'The Arabs were speaking the like of the Qur'ān, but they were deprived of it during the time of the challenge.' Others say:- 'It was within their ability to produce the like of it, but they were prevented from doing so by depriving them of motives or providing them with an alternative occupation.' Others say:- ' .....by being deprived of the essential knowledge from their hearts ..... for they ( the Mu'tazilah) believe that knowledge to the eloquent is a matter of innateness and not acquired.'"

Muṣṭazilah) said<sup>1</sup> is wrong and the difference between our view and theirs is apparent."<sup>2</sup>

In a much earlier work al-Bāqillānī wrote: "We do not mean by our denial of al-Ṣarfah that God Almighty disables us in a matter which is possibly attainable."<sup>3</sup>

Regardless of the later Muṣṭazilite interpretations the above quotations would perhaps sum up fairly well for us al-Bāqillānī's perception of the idea. Considering the first of them, the obvious question would be, what was the diversity of opinion over the two ideas, to which the author here is referring, and what was al-Nazzām's original attitude?

The answer seems to lie in the second concept, which has been mentioned earlier, of man in relation to his own act. A concept over which the two rival schools differed considerably, nonetheless al-Nazzām, singularly and unlike the rest of his school, proved to be an exception in this respect.

The chapter which we need to consider, with regard to this issue, is that of ability which played an important role in the development of the study of the idea and was oftentimes evoked in al-Bāqillānī's discussion.<sup>4</sup>

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(1) The reference here to the above quoted, also vols. XI, XII.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Intiṣār, ( the summary) f.86a.

(4) Though his chapter on ability, to which he refers quite often throughout the surviving part of this work, as noted here earlier, is among the missing parts of this work. We find a long chapter in 'K. al-Tamhīd' on ability, see ed. McCarthy, ch. 25, pp. 286-295. His views are summed up in 'K. al-Insāf', p. 46, in these words, "And it must be known that the ability of creatures is simultaneous with their acts, nether before nor afterwards, as is the knowledge of the creatures and their perception which cannot exist before the known and the perceived."

The Mu'tazilite attitude, as presented to us by al-Bāqillānī, argues that if man can yield an act in one way, he can equally and by the selfsame power yield it in other ways.<sup>1</sup>

According to this idea, he who can speak Arabic, for example, is by the same power, is capable of speaking Persian and other languages *ad libitum*.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, to make this hypothesis more vexedly complex the Mu'tazilite condition - that is provided man had the knowledge and the means (lit. tool) which was the second most important factor in the discussion - was no longer necessarily required; for they argued that the lack of knowledge or means does not prevent, in effect, the act, hence the real prevention is the opposite of what the able can effect and the lack of knowledge here is not the opposite.<sup>3</sup>

To put the controversy in clear perspective; the Mu'tazilites argued that this power which yields an act must be a power to will an act and its opposite and that ability must also exist in the moment before the act. In opposition to this attitude, al-Bāqillānī, and long before him al-Ash'arī, held that the power is only the doing of the act, not its opposite, and it must exist in the moment of acting, neither before nor after.

Considering in this respect al-Nazzām's attitude, one feels somewhat surprised, for his views here are not those of the Mu'tazilites, but of the

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(1) 'Bayan', pp. 20-21; 'Intiṣār' (summary) f. 84a; 'Hidāyah' vol. XI, ff. 12b-13a.

(2) 'Bayān', pp. 20-21.

(3) 'Hidāyah', vol. XI, ff. 14b-15a. 'Intiṣār' (summary) f. 84b.

later Ash'arites. "Ability," it was reported of him to have said, "is in the act, indissolubly connected with every element of it." He also used to say: "Man cannot do whatever comes into his mind, contrary to the rest of the Mu'tazilah."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it would seem, as far as the two essential aspects i.e. God's Will over man's act and man in relation to his own act, were concerned that al-Nazzām, though ostensibly the main target of al-Bāqillānī's fierce attack, proved to be, from the standpoint of principles, on al-Bāqillānī's side in the argument. Though, granted he was the progenitor of the idea, or thus we are led to believe, what seems to have aggravated the situation and aroused al-Bāqillānī's deprecation was neither the idea nor the principles, original or exceptional, on which it had been founded, but rather the later Mu'tazilite interpretation of it, and the intermingling of it with other of their principles. During al-Bāqillānī's life-time, however, some of the Mu'tazilites appear to have abandoned the idea<sup>2</sup> or accepted of it what was al-Bāqillānī's version. In fact, we find his own famous argument, "If the composition of the like of the Qur'ān is possible, but al-Ṣarfah prevents men from doing it, speech would not be miraculous but prevention would be,"<sup>3</sup> became a Mu'tazilite argument to be held by the famous al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār himself.<sup>4</sup>

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(1) M. Abu Rūdah, 'Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Nazzām ..." p. 174.

(2) 'Hidāyah', vol. XI, 21b.

(3) Ibid. vol. XII, ff. 3b, 9a; 'I'jāz', p.43.

(4) 'Mughni', vol. XVI, pp. 219, 322. Here the Qāḍī argues: "We have explained that had this attitude (towards al-Ṣarfah) been correct, the Qur'ān would not have been miraculous but their prevention would have been.

Finally, further to the second question in which we hoped to sum up al-Bāqillānī's conception of the idea, a decisive difference between the terms 'Adam al-Qudrah' and 'Ajz', both of which may be rendered as -inability-, must be considered. Here the former term was of great importance, the latter however he did not consider to be the right term. He argues:-

"Know that we do not say the Arabs failed ('Ajizat) to produce the like of the composition of the Qur'ān. But we say they were incompetent to do so (Ghayr Qādirīn 'Alayh). The difference between these two sayings is that inability ('Ajz) according to us cannot be applied except to something already existant, as we have explained in the chapter on ability in this book and others. If they (the Arabs) were unable, according to this principle, to produce the like of the composition of the Qur'ān, they should have been able to produce the like of that. .... But if we say they were unable (Ghayr Qādirīn) to do so it should have been impossible for them to do so because of the lack of ability (Qudrah), though he who is lacking ability cannot be said to have failed ('Ajiz)." <sup>1</sup>

#### THE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF I'JĀZ

Having dealt with the question of al-Sarfah, al-Bāqillānī now commences a new chapter entitled "Concerning peoples' different views on I'jāz". <sup>2</sup> We have, however, already seen in the introduction to part four the various theses offered for interpreting I'jāz by the three main theological schools during the fourth century and there is no need here for us to repeat them. Al-Bāqillānī's own conception of I'jāz, as

(1) 'Hidāyah', vol. XI, f. 12a-b.

(2) Ibid, vol. XII, f. 9a.

often emphasised, is confined basically to its composition and eloquence. A view which is stressed in all his works when dealing with I'jāz. Taking his works in semi-chronological order, he seems to allow for other aspects. In 'K.al-Tamhīd'<sup>1</sup> for example, at one time, in addition to the eloquence and composition, he includes prophecies (al-Ikhbār 'An al-Ghuyūb) but later in the same work and also in later works; 'Intisār'<sup>2</sup>, 'Insāf'<sup>3</sup>, and 'I'jāz'<sup>4</sup> a third is also added, the telling about nations of the past, despite the Prophet's illiteracy.

In 'I'jāz' he informs us that these three were the conceptions of his friends (i.e. the Sunnites) and others.

In 'K.al-Hidāyah' his approach is different, or to be more precise, a critical one. Most of that which he enumerates in his previous works is severely scrutinised and in some cases rendered impossible to be held as a means by which I'jāz can be demonstrated. He has devoted - judging by the average number of folios in each volume - what may amount to a complete volume to it, beginning at folio 9a in volume XII and ending at folio 9a in volume XIII.

The material, as usual, is set in the familiar pattern of questions and answers, point and counter-point, and divided into sections and sub-sections, chapters and sub-chapters; sometimes the latter themselves being divided further. In conclusion, after demonstrating in brief the various theses, he declares "And we shall repudiate all other theses which disagree with our own."<sup>5</sup> Leaving out the author's long and

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- (1) Ed. McCarthy, p. 141, also pp. 157, 159.
  - (2) Pt. 1, f. 7a; Sum. pt. 2, f. 70a.
  - (3) Pp. 62-3.
  - (4) Pp. 48-50.
  - (5) Vol. XII, f. 10a.

and discursive dialogue, his attitude toward these theses can, on the whole, be summed up in the following:

- i) theses which he utterly rejected;
- ii) those accepted as valid in their own right, but not as a means by which I<sup>ʿ</sup>jāz can be demonstrated;
- iii) the latter interpreted as denoting his own conception of eloquence and composition.

A) The first inquiry taking the form of a question concerns the two Mu<sup>ʿ</sup>tazilite attitudes, that is to say that I<sup>ʿ</sup>jāz lies either in the eloquence alone without the composition, or vice versa.<sup>1</sup> This is followed by an analogous section in support of the author's own conception.<sup>2</sup> Some of these arguments we shall meet later in our chapter on eloquence.

B) Sec;

A very short section concerning the question of al-Ṣarfah. Here the author refers us to his preceding discussion in this volume and the previous one.<sup>3</sup>

C) Sec;

Proofs which reject the view that the I<sup>ʿ</sup>jāz of the Qur'<sup>ʿ</sup>ān derives from its freedom from contradiction and discrepancy.<sup>4</sup> The basic controversy here is with regard to the interpretation of the Qur'<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic verse: "If it were from other than God they would find in it many a discrepancy." (XV/81). Al-Bāqillānī does not deny the meaning of the verse, but interprets it as indicating discrepancies in its eloquence and composition.<sup>5</sup> For further

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(1) Vol. XII, ff. 10a-11a.  
 (2) Ibid. ff. 11a-12a.  
 (3) Ibid. f. 12a.  
 (4) Ibid. ff. 12a-16a.  
 (5) Ibid. f. 14b.

discussion on this, references are made to 'K. al-Intiṣār' and 'Uṣūl al-Dīn'.

D) Ch:

Concerning the views of those who maintain that the I'jāz of the Qur'ān lies in its contents and its teachings, which if they were examined would all prove to be right.<sup>1</sup> This likewise, he does not deny but as a means of I'jāz considers it a remote possibility. Al-Bāqillānī's objections here arise from two points. Firstly, that there is no difference between the prophet's instructions and those of the Qur'ān, for both are right in this respect. Secondly, this would confuse scriptures with the philosophers' sayings which ultimately proved to be right.

E) Ch:

Concerning the refutation of the idea that the Qur'ān is Mu'jiz because it is eternal.<sup>2</sup> Here is where the I'jāz controversy involves the famous theological trial, the creation of the Qur'ān. The controversy here deals with a supposition attributed to the Mu'tazilites which gives rise to the well-known controversy. To this we can only add that al-Bāqillānī relies mainly on al-Ash'ari's refutation of it<sup>3</sup> and that his lengthy chapter on it is among the missing parts of this work.<sup>4</sup>

F) Ch:

Concerning the view attributed to Ahl al-Ḥaqq (Sunnites) or others who

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(1) Ibid. ff. 16a-17b.

(2) Ibid. ff. 17b-19b.

(3) Ibid. f. 18a.

(4) Ibid. f. 19b. A short section on this and the following is found in 'I jaz', pp. 394-6. Cf. 'Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, pp. 237-251.

maintained the basis of I'jāz in the Qur'ān is that it is tantamount to the eternal speech of God.<sup>1</sup> This is also another aspect emerging from the question of the creation of the Qur'ān. The view here appears to be that it is neither eternal nor created but tantamount ('Ibārah 'An) to the eternal and therefore it is mu'jiz. Al-Bāqillānī considered this to be wrong from the following points:

i) If it is so, it must follow that the expression (al-'Ibārah) of the eternal by way of imitation and memorisation is also mu'jiz, for in this it is but like the original expression, but it is agreed that the expression by way of imitation is not mu'jiz, likewise the original expression itself, being only an expression, but the eloquence and composition contained therein are.

ii) Also if this expression were just prose or one that is qualified by a degree of eloquence attainable by the Arabs, or else poetry, which is within their ability, it would not be mu'jiz though an expression of His speech.

iii) All scriptures are expressions of God's speech, though they are not mu'jizāt because of the languages in which they were revealed.

iv) According to this view also, a letter or letters, or a word or two, should also be mu'jiz, for it is an expression of God's speech.

G) CH:

Concerning the Qur'ānic prophecies (al-Ikhbār 'An al-Ghuyūb) as a means of I'jāz:<sup>2</sup> This is one of the two points maintained in the author's other works, in addition to his main conception. Although it has been generally held as a

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(1) Ibid. 19b - vol. XIII, f. 1b.

(2) Vol. XIII, f. 2a.

proof of I'jāz, even by the author himself, as his account in his early work would imply, here he does not deny their miraculous role, but as means by which I'jāz is demonstrable they are not acceptable. For him such information, whether from God or the Prophet and whether or not in an eloquent form, makes no difference, I'jāz in them however lies in the knowledge of the Prophet of them, but not the informations themselves. The first part of this dialogue is a comparative one, in it contrast is made between the information passed down through prophets and the predictions and forecastings of soothsayers, astronomers and doctors of medicine.<sup>1</sup>

H) Sec:

Here an inquiry is made about I'jāz and prophecies. Is it the mere recounting in detail of them, the veracity of information or the actual happening of them? Having discussed these three points he concluded that prophecies cannot be declared miraculous by any of them. They are only miraculous insofar as they infringe the laws of nature through the Prophet's knowledge of them.<sup>2</sup>

I) Ch:

The prophecies mentioned in the Qur'an. He demonstrates as an example a number of verses from the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

J) Sec:

A final section in which some of the prophecies attributed to the Prophet are recorded.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Ibid. ff. 2b-5a; for further details reference is made to his work,

(2) Ibid. ff. 5a-6b. 'Daqā'iq al-Kalām'

(3) Ibid. ff. 6b-7b. Verses exemplified in this and others of the author's works: A='Hidāyah'; B.='I'jāz'; C='Intisār'; D='Tamhīd'; E='Insāf' are II/94-5 ABCD; VIII/7 ABC; XLVII/16 ABC; /21 ABCDE; XXX/1-4 ABCD; LIV/50 ABCD; IX/83 ABC; /33 ABCD; XLVIII/20-1A; XVII/83 A; XXIV/55 BCD; III/61 BCD; LVIII/21 E; VII/128 E.

(4) Ibid. ff. 7b-8b. For further detail reference is made to 'K.al-Intisār'

It was fairly fitting after the author's lengthy chapter on the various interpretations of I'jāz and his assessment of them that a reflective chapter should be attempted inquiring as to whether or not such dissidence of opinion amongst the different schools of thought would produce any effect on, or disposses the Qur'ān of its miraculousness.<sup>1</sup>

The title of the chapter reads:-

"Concerning the objection of the heretical opponents against I'jāz in view of the diversity of opinion amongst the Muslims, and the answer to it."<sup>2</sup>

The first question argues:-

"How can the Qur'ān still be miraculous despite the difference of opinion among the Muslim as to how it is so,; the refutation of some of their theses, and contradictions in some others?.....Does not such diversity of opinion deprive the Qur'ān of its miraculous status?"<sup>3</sup>

In reply to this al-Bāqillānī emphasises the fact that, despite the Muslims' different sects, they all believe in the miraculousness of the Qur'ān and all adhere to it as the proof of the Prophet's veracity. He argues further that it cannot be said that the difference of interpretation of the I'jāz would affect the function of the Qur'ān as a proof of Muhammad's truthfulness.

As the term proof itself was brought into the discussion, several definitions for it were discussed. Having favoured one in particular

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(1) For short reflection on this point, cf. 'I'jāz' pp.446-7.

(2) Vol. XIII, f.9a.

(3) Ibid.

he dismissed the rest as inadequate. This was followed by three short reflective sections on the various interpretations of I'jāz he had shown earlier.

The following chapter (begins at f.15a in vol. XIII) is a point of departure as the discussion becomes mainly impregnated with literary assessments of eloquence, rhymed prose and poetry.

And here is where we leave the general theological background of the chapter of I'jāz in al-Bāqillānī's studies for the literary evaluation of the aforementioned topics respectively in the remainder of this work as well as others.

AL-BĀQILLĀNĪ AND AL-BALĀGHAH (ELOQUENCE)I Unacknowledged sources

"Every author in Baghdād," wrote the master al-Khawārazmī, "is but quoting from other people's works in his own, save al-Qādī Abū Bakr."<sup>1</sup> To be sure, it was al-Qādī Abū Bakr, al-Bāqillānī himself, who at one time criticised other authors for the paucity of their original thoughts and their dependence on other people's material.<sup>2</sup> If the source of all quotations was known and stated both the laudatory anecdote as well as al-Bāqillānī's reproach would be perfectly valid, but the fact appears to be that, in the majority of cases, especially those taken from old authors, the origin of quotations is almost impossible to ascertain.

Despite al-Bāqillānī's contempt for people who did so, his own controversial posture would suggest that quotation, direct or inspired, so as to confirm or refute, was <sup>an</sup> indispensable tool in his own case. A matter which he acknowledges in some cases but ignores in the majority. This latter point is evinced in his early work, 'K.al-Intisār' in which we have had occasion to point out his indebtedness to 'K.Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān' of Ibn Qutaybah, if not the work as a whole, at least certain chapters of it. The inspirational role of the latter's book is not perhaps very surprising, if only because its author was a custodian of tradition prior to al-Ash'arī himself.

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(1) 'Tamhīd', Cairo edn. p.244; 'Ta'rikh Baghdād' vol.5, p.280.

(2) His criticism was launched in particular against al-Jāhiz's works, see 'I'jāz', pp. 377-8.

In his chapter on eloquence, one notices that the laudatory anecdote of the master al-Khawārazmī, regarding quotation, and al-Bāqillānī's own view on other authors' originality are not compatible, under any pretext; al-Bāqillānī here not only quotes, or to be more precise, paraphrases, other authors' works - who in the field of scholasticism were his rivals by tradition - but paradoxically enough, it was he himself who at one time held and cherished the same views, yet criticised, modified or rejected them altogether in some respect or another. Does such inconsistency towards rhetoric depict for us different phases in al-Bāqillānī's career as a literary critic or were his views moulded to fit different circumstances?

The following, it is hoped, will provide an answer to this question, through an expansion of his sources and attitudes.

## II The definition of eloquence

Although al-Bāqillānī has defined the term al-Balāghah, eloquence, elsewhere in his extant works,<sup>1</sup> the definition has received further elaboration in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'. It would also seem that he had elaborated on the term in similar fashion in his earlier work 'K. al-Intiṣār' but one or both of its summarisers have reduced it. Further, in both 'K. al-Intiṣār' and 'I'jaz al-Qur'ān' he elaborates on other aspects of eloquence which are not to be found in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'.

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- (1) Eg. "For eloquence is natural and not something that can be acquired; it is based on factors that exist in the intellect and are known by the eloquents." 'Bayān', p. 27.  
 "The essence of eloquence is the clarity in expressing oneself of the best meaning in the most eloquent diction, and the purpose intended by the speech." 'I'jāz', p. 433.

With regard to the definition of eloquence, for which we shall look primarily to 'K. al-Hidāyah', it would seem that apart from his own choice of the definition and exposition of that, it was al-Jāhiz's 'K. al-Bayān wal-Tabyīn',<sup>1</sup> which was the main source for the rest of al-Bāqillānī's definition. As for his contemporary rhetoricians Abū Hilāl al-Askarī and his maternal uncle, Abū Aḥmad al-Askarī, with the latter of whom he had had literary correspondence,<sup>2</sup> there appears to have been little influence on him, in this respect.

Putting all traditional rivalry, scholastic as well as personal quarrels aside, it is undoubtedly al-Jāhiz's 'K. al-Bayān' on which al-Bāqillānī draws to varying degrees in three of his major works, 'Intiṣār', 'Hidāyah' and 'I'jāz',<sup>3</sup> with regard to the definition of eloquence. The question of whether he was influenced by Ibn Qutaybah's 'K. 'Uyūn al-Akhbār', wherein several definitions of eloquence were recorded,<sup>4</sup> is very unlikely as he seems to be familiar with Jāhiz's 'K. al-Bayān'. Yet assuming he was influenced by the latter's work, it would, at any

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(1) For al-Bāqillānī's familiarity with this work of Jāhiz, see 'I'jāz', p. 193.

(2) Cf. Ibid. pp. 114, 149, 153, 158, 175. He also appears to have had personal conversation with him, pp. 176, 421, 453.

(3) Cf. A) Jāhiz, 'Bayān', vol. 1, p. 97 with 'Intiṣār' (Sum), f. 72b, also the following pages from the former work with folios from the latter, pp. 106, 113, 89, 92, 93, 111, 114, 115 with f. 73a; pp. 144, 145, 114 with f. 73b; pp. 134, 91 with f. 74a.

B) Jāhiz (op cit), vol. 1, p. 88, with 'Hidāyah', vol. XIV, f. 12a, also the following pages from the former with the folios from the latter, p. 93 with f. 10a; p. 97 with f. 12a; p. 113 with f. 11a; pp. 111, 115, with f. 11a; pp. 106-9 with f. 11a.

It would seem convincingly that this volume of 'Hidāyah' is based fundamentally on al-Jāhiz's two main chapters 'al-Bayān' and 'al-Balāghah'. For further references see below.

C) Jāhiz (op. cit) 'I'jāz, p. 193, acknowledgement made to Jāhiz.

(4) Cf. particularly vol. 2, pp. 169, 170, 173, 174. (1928/1346 edn).

rate, be al-Jāhiz via Ibn Qutaybah, as the latter was himself quoting from al-Jāhiz's 'K.al-Bayān'

It may be argued that al-Bāqillānī's main intention in introducing al-Jāhiz's definitions was to criticise them. This was true with respect to some of the definitions, nonetheless al-Bāqillānī's own definition of the term, al-Balāghah, which he esteemed as the most exclusive, precise<sup>1</sup> and catholic of all definitions, even the best of them all,<sup>2</sup> parallels some of them closely. Yet, if we accept the accuracy of the summary of 'K.al-Intisār' which is earlier than 'K.al-Hidāyah' the situation becomes somewhat puzzling, for it is found that what al-Bāqillānī appears to have accepted in an earlier work is rejected and strongly criticised by him in a later one. Here is al-Bāqillānī's definition as it occurs in 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn':

"Although people's verbal expression and the meaning therein differ concerning the definition of eloquence, we choose to define it as:-Eloquence is the expression of the right meaning in what is matching and compliant,<sup>3</sup> in noble, splendid and pure diction, which instils a deep impression on the souls and ears. Hence the expression of a meaning in noble diction leaves the best impression on the hearts and ears, which cannot be effected when it has been expressed in a diction empty of nobility and beauty of meaning. Thus, when the beauty of meaning and

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(1) 'Intisār' (Sum.) f. 73a.

(2) 'Hidāyah' vol.XIV, ff.10a,12a.

(3) The words thus **لَفِيفَةٌ وَوَقِيفَةٌ** occur in 'Hidāyah' vol. XIV, ff.9b-10a, but in 'Intisār' (Sum.) they read **لَفِيفَةٌ وَوَقِيفَةٌ** f.73a.

the nobility of diction are conjoined in speech, such speech becomes eloquent; if it has been expressed in a yet more noble diction, it will be still far better and more eloquent.

It is not, however, that a mere conjunction of a word to another, which expresses the meaning, thus attaining a degree in eloquence, but rather when a noble word is joined with a nobler one, when composed in the most noble diction that can express the meaning, speech attains the height of eloquence. Failing this and confining the expression to less noble diction and beauty, the speech consequently fails to assume its height in eloquence. And this is well-known from the state of speech and the precedence of people in it.

In other words, eloquence in speech is the expression of meaning in a form which is matching and compliant without being inadequate, mediocre or concealed or hidden, but free from the superfluities of speech and ambiguous words, and its divisions must accord with its noble diction. That, if such speech was long and extended to a greater length, it should follow naturally in a smooth continuation and not digress from what the speaker commenced at the opening of his speech, nor should the extension be abrupt."<sup>1</sup>

Having thus given us his own definition of eloquence, al-Bāqillānī proceeds, following a well-established tradition,<sup>2</sup> to give an exposition of some of the expressions which occur in the definition, meanwhile

(1) 'Hidāyah', vol. XIV, ff. 9b-10a.

(2) Cf. Jāhiz, 'Bayān', vol. 1, p. 161, in fact most of the definitions he recorded are followed by explanatory comments, cf. pp. 75, sqq., and Al-Bāqillānī's contemporary, Abū Hilāl commenting on one definition, Al-Bāqillānī's contemporary, Abū Hilāl commenting on one definition of eloquence covers the pages 15-37 in 'Sinā'atayn.'

reflecting on or criticising other definitions or certain phrases in them. For example, on the phrases:

A) correctness of the divisions of speech, he comments:-

"None of the parts of speech should intermingle with another, nor the meaning be expressed in synonymous words or near-synonymous (mutaqarib) nor of different composition and metres, lest its eloquence disappears, its meaning rendered ambiguous and unbalanced, uneven and unparallel in its metre. That each individual sentence should indicate an aspect of it when it is long, for when speech is such, its splendour fades and becomes coarse to the ear, and its parts clash and become disjointed and perhaps its meaning becomes obscured and hard to grasp except with an effort of thinking and consideration."<sup>1</sup>

B) Choice of words:-

"The meaning should not be expressed in vulgar and common diction, when it can be expressed in noble diction."<sup>2</sup>

C) Exactitude and matchability:-

"Speech should be free of superfluous (Fudul) and unnecessary words, not lacking in those which are necessary, nor should be encumbered with that which makes the meaning ambiguous, whereas if it is expressed in other terms the meaning becomes clear and apparent."<sup>3</sup>

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(1) Ibid. vol. XIV, f. 10b.  
 (2) Ibid. fol. 10b-11a.  
 (3) Ibid. f. 11a.

Modification and rejection

While al-Bāqillānī is elaborating on his own choice - and as had been the method in the work by which he was inspired, 'K. al-Bayān', of al-Jāhiz - he quotes and criticises some of the definitions recorded of eloquence and suggests further modification of others. In this he does not, however, strike us very much by the originality of his views, but rather by a certain development in his conception of some of them, and by his inconsistency. The following would perhaps illustrate this:-

"The eloquence of a speech (or statement) is that it should be free from constraint, remote from artificiality and needless of a gloss."

This was the meaning of al-Aṣma'ī's definition of eloquence, "The eloquent person is he who discloses the meaning in such a way that it needs no further explanation."

Although we find this definition in 'K. al-Intiṣār' where it is given without any comment,<sup>1</sup> in the later 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', al-Bāqillānī subjects it to criticism. "For", he argues, "a meaning can be disclosed without need for further explanation by him who uses common diction and colloquial language, abandoning the use of noble diction. What is thus expressed cannot be considered eloquent, though the meaning is understood and needs no further explanation. Speech can only be eloquent when it requires no further explanation, provided that the diction is distinguished and noble."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) 'Intiṣār' (Sum) f. 72b.

(2) 'Hidāyah' vol. XIV, f. 11b.

This is not an original opinion of al-Bāqillānī the Ash'arite, it was in fact a Mu'tazilite argument and it had long been recorded by al-Jāhiz with particular comment on it.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the phrase, "The cardinal point of eloquence is the ability to make people understand according to their mental capability and their social status," we find it had been incorporated by al-Bāqillānī in the definition which begins in 'K. al-Intiṣār',<sup>2</sup> but that in his later work 'al-Hidāyah' he had rejected that statement as unnecessary and a needless addition to the definition of eloquence, or at least to his modified form of it. He argues:-

"The addition of the condition 'to make people understand according to their mental capability .....' is unnecessary; for it is impossible to make the rabble, the mob, the vulgar and the coarse understand the meaning in noble diction. They can only comprehend the meaning when it is expressed to them in common and colloquial diction and in the rabble's tongue. If the speaker, however, manages to convey to them the meaning in such a language and in such manner, he is not eloquent, nor is what he says worthy of being described as eloquence. It may indicate his wisdom, his knowledge of what is required to address different classes of people, his copious awareness of customs ..... , but by no means can his speech be associated with eloquence."<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, despite his inconsistency regarding the passage above,

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- (1) 'Bayān', vol. 1, p. 163. The comment here is with regard to 'Attābi's definition.  
 (2) F. 73a.  
 (3) 'Hidāyah', vol. XIV, f. 10b.

he was merely elaborating on the view of al-Jāhiz.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the opening of the Indian definition of eloquence, translated for and recorded by al-Jāhiz<sup>2</sup> reads:- "The prime of eloquence is the gathering of the tools of eloquence." Although most of this definition pertains to the speaker, rather than to the speech itself,<sup>3</sup> al-Bāqillānī was interested exclusively in speech and did not, therefore, consider the opening qualification of the Indian definition to be of any importance since it concerned the speaker.<sup>4</sup>

### III Al-Bāqillānī's conception of eloquence

To his definition of eloquence, rather his selective choice of it, seen above, al-Bāqillānī undoubtedly attaches a particular significance which clearly underlines his conception of Balāḡah<sup>h</sup>. His rebellious attitude towards the theoretical Balāḡah<sup>h</sup> which was propounded in some detail in what might have been one of his later works, 'K. al-I'jāz' appeared to have long been discussed within a framework of embittered and discursive theological wrangles, as in 'K. al-Hidāyah' and other earlier works. For an insight into some of these early discussions, which often occur within or infuse a lengthy theological dialogue, interrupted by a subsidiary question or the clearing up of a point of doubt, an attempt can be made under the following headings.

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- (1) 'Bayān', vol. 1. p. 93. The phrase appears as a part of the Indian definition of eloquence. See also p. 162.
  - (2) Ibid. p. 92.
  - (3) Abū Hilāl in 'al-Şinā'atayn' having commented on the same phrase p. 20-21 appeared to consider it as description of speech, cf. p. 37.
  - (4) 'Hidāyah', vol. XIV, f. 10b.

## 1. Eloquence and composition

In an earlier chapter, we have noticed that of composition or those works entitled *Nazm al-Qur'ān*, nothing so far is known except their names. The first to write in this respect was *al-Jāhiz*, from whose time onwards authors, of different theological persuasions, also contributed, especially the *Mu'tazilites*. Nevertheless, considering the works of such later *Mu'tazilite* authors as *al-Rummānī* and *al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār*, the enthusiasm for the idea of composition in that school appears to have ebbed very low. The former, for example, included it neither among the seven points by which he sought to demonstrate *I'jāz*, nor reflected on it even in passing, as we have seen. The latter, on the other hand, even criticised the ability of the idea as a means by which *I'jāz* could be demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> Although this may indicate some of the later *Mu'tazilite* opinions, of the earlier, about whose works nothing is known, *al-Bāqillānī* says the following:-

"Some of the *Qadariyyah* maintained that *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* is what it (*Qur'ān*) contains of composition, but they did not consider the eloquence and the nobility of the words".<sup>2</sup>

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- (1) Cf. '*al-Mughnī*' vol. 16, pp. 197-8. Here it is noticeable that his view is identical with *al-Bāqillānī*'s. In reply to a question concerning the composition he concludes: "Therefore to us, it is impossible that the particularisation (competence) of the *Qur'ān* with a style of composition can be without its eloquence (*Faṣāḥah*) which is the purity of utterance and the beauty of meaning." Yet at p. 215, faced with a similar question, he considers the concept of the composition as confirmatory to that of eloquence.
- (2) '*Hidāyah*', vol. XIII, f. 9a.

- an attitude which he dismisses as invalid and of which the later Mu'tazilites appear to hold the reverse. Weighing al-Bāqillānī's own conception of the idea of composition alone, however, against the later Mu'tazilites' preference, that of eloquence, as a means by which I'jāz can be demonstrated, their attitudes would appear of equal antagonistic advantage, though neither dismisses the strongest viewpoint of the opponent offhand, yet when either questions this view in isolation they denounce it or give it a subordinate position.<sup>1</sup>

To al-Bāqillānī, at any rate, in the insoluble compound of eloquence and composition, lies the culmination of I'jāz and it is impossible for him to consider one without the other. To this end, all other ways by which I'jāz is sought demonstrable, to him are inadequate, unless they are interpreted as indicating eloquence and composition together.<sup>2</sup> Thus with al-Bāqillānī's conception of I'jāz, being so positive, the most important question to be asked perhaps is: What did eloquence mean to him and how far did his conception of it differ from that of contemporary Mu'tazilites?

Much of the answer to the latter part of this question depends entirely on his definition of eloquence itself, as he repeatedly maintains on several occasions in 'K. al-Hidāyah'<sup>3</sup> and which he also holds in

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- (1) A good parallel in this respect is apparent when comparing al-Baqillani's 'Hidāyah' vols. XII, f. 10a and b; XI f. 17a, with 'Abd al-Jabbār's 'Muḡhni', vol. 16 p. 322.
  - (2) Accounts were given of these ways when we outlined vols. XII, XIII. Note particularly vol. XII, f. 14b.
  - (3) Eg. vols. XIV, ff. 9b, 13a; XII, 11b.

opposition to the Mūṭazilite definition of al-Balāḡah ( i.e. the purity and beauty of words only) being in his opinion exclusive, not only because it rules out the concept of the composition, rather relegates it to a secondary place, but also because it opens the door to legitimate questions, such as:-

"The utterances and individual words are common in all forms of the Arabs' speech and they initiated them, and were from whom other people took them. That the status of an eloquent word in the Qur'ān is as good as it is in poetry, oratory, the art of letter writing, prose and rhymed prose, and cannot be different simply because of the diverse forms of speech in which it occurs."<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons, al-Bāqillānī at one stage seems to have been inclined to favour the conception of composition or style without any consideration of eloquence.<sup>2</sup> But to hold this was to discard half of his own dual conception. To surmount such difficulty he resorted to a different definition of eloquence. This only solved one half of the problem but in doing so presented himself with another, which was that although it is clear to him that eloquence, as such, differs from composition, as such,<sup>3</sup> his definition of the eloquence of the Qur'ān is hardly separable from its composition, which may be taken as further evidence of the

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- (1) This argument is reported twice; vols. XII, f. 10a; XIV, f. 17a.  
 (2) Cf. vols. XIV, f. 16b; XII, f. 10a and b.  
 (3) In a reply to a question inquiring about the differences between the two ( vol. XIV, f. 18a and b) the author's final words read:-  
 "It is clear that eloquence in speech is something different from its composition arrangement, etc."

inextricability of the two as perceived by the author, with regard to the language of the Qur'ān. He went even further as to argue:- "We have said already<sup>1</sup> that it is possible that I'jāz of the Qur'ān lies in its eloquence and composition. In the light of this we must consider the eloquence of the individual words in itaṣ; something more than the mere words used by the speakers of the language in all their forms of speech. Nay we say ....., "<sup>2</sup> What he said was but the definition of eloquence once more, which can hardly be separated from composition.

## 2. Words and meanings

In our final chapter on the original text of 'K. al-Intiṣār' a comparison was drawn between the views of the twentieth century Ṭahā Ḥusain and those of the tenth century al-Bāqillānī, concerning the status of the language of the Qur'ān in Arabic. Of the latter's seemingly conflicting opinions further details are hoped to be found in other of his extant works.

The apparently contradictory views of al-Bāqillānī that the Qur'ān is Arabic and yet totally different, seem to have originated from the consideration of two different entities, on the one hand the consideration of the individual words as such, and on the other the grouping of them, the composition. Words alone do not distinguish the language of the Qur'ān from the rest of the Arabic language. The question often emerges: "How can the Qur'ān be different when it is couched in the same words as

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(1) Cf. vol. XII. f. 10a and b.  
 (2) Cf. vol. XIV, f. 16b.

as other forms of speech?"<sup>1</sup> Nor do words, per se, particularise any form of speech. But what signifies the language of the Qur'ān in Arabic is its composition. This is the essence of al-Bāqillānī's often maintained argument.<sup>2</sup> For example, "We do not mean by our saying that the Qur'ān is Arabic and it is revealed in the language of the Arabs, that its eloquence and composition, which are beyond the customs of the Arabs and the tongue of their eloquence, had ever been spoken by them .... but we mean by our saying it is Arabic that the individual words in it are Arabic and that the speakers of the language had already spoken them."<sup>3</sup>

With regard to meaning, al-Bāqillānī's views are similar to those of al-Jāhīz and many others, that meanings are common to every language and therefore signify nothing of the eloquence, brilliance or style of that particular language.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Eloquence is natural and not acquired

That eloquence, for that matter language, is natural and not acquired is an important consideration in al-Bāqillānī's theo-literary discussion. In this concept lies undoubtedly the basis of his rejection of the effectiveness of the theoretical *Balāghah*. The theological background of this argument is extremely complex for it employs in the first place the most puzzling chapter in the Ash'arite theology, the idea of aquisition, particularly with regard to knowledge. Here we may concentrate on the two

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- (1) Cf. 'Tamhīd' p. 151; the question here is: "How can the Qur'ān be miraculous when it is not other than the letters of the alphabet in which both the eloquents as well as others had spoken".
  - (2) For his elaborations see 'Hidayah' vols. XI, ff. 10a-12a; XII, ff. 10a-12a; XIII, f. 20a; XIV, ff. 2b, 17b-18a.
  - (3) Cf. vol. XI. 10a.
  - (4) Cf. vols. XII f. 10b; XIII, 11b, 19a.

main relevant points. Firstly, how was the concept initially included in the chapter of I'jāz and secondly, what effect resulted from it regarding the literary theory of criticism?

Taking al-Bāqillāni's works in chronological order, a paradox arises as he seems to emphasise two contradictory arguments. Was there a misunderstanding of the man's views by some of his later summarisers?

In 'K. al-Tamhīd', which is one of his earliest works, the idea of language as natural was propounded in a reply to one of the questions on the opposition or rivalry. The proposition was that the Arabs might have opposed the Qur'ān but did not for the reason that doubt could have occurred among the followers of the Prophet as to whether or not what had been produced was in opposition. In reply to this he argued that it was incorrect, for the tongue and the language were theirs and language was natural to them, therefore doubt could not have taken place.<sup>1</sup>

In 'K. al-Bayān' the emphasis is shifted from language to eloquence as we read:- "For eloquence is natural and not something that can be acquired; it is based on factors which exist in the soul and are known by the eloquent."<sup>2</sup> Or once again:- "And since eloquence was something natural to them" and also on the same page:- "But eloquence is not something that can be achieved by any artifice being rather a created habit."<sup>3</sup>

In 'K. al-Intiṣār', strangely enough, we read this statement: "The Arabs were not when they were created speaking or aware of speech, but were ignorant until they touched on language and agreed on it, henceforth they

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(1) 'Tamhīd' p. 150.

(2) and (3) 'Bayān' pp. 27, 31.

became aware of meaning and composition with a knowledge which is neither a natural impulse nor natural. If it were a natural necessity it would have been for them to have spoken initially with all their poetry, rhymed prose, composition, prose and oratory, not delaying until a general consensus was reached."<sup>1</sup>

If this is to be a true representation of a thesis by al-Bāqillāni, it is clear that it is in contradiction to what he maintained in other works, even if the discussion was on a different level.

However, in 'K. al-Hidāyah' the author's thesis that eloquence as a whole is natural is well illustrated and features in several volumes as a reply to the question:-

"If it is possible that a person could excel, through exertion in the quest of sciences and the acquisition of them and by exercising every effort attain a high position, outstripping all his contemporaries in a particular branch of science, would you deny therefore this possibility, and a distinguished and great advancement in eloquence, language and composition by means of effort in the knowledge of language ....?"<sup>1a</sup>

The first part of his two-fold reply is:-

"Eloquence and chasteness in speech are not achieved by means of quest and acquisition but rather are they inborn, natural and of a necessity".<sup>2</sup> This was emphasised several times.<sup>3</sup> The main argument was that though proficiency in sciences, trades and crafts could increase

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(1) 'Intiṣār' (Sum) f. 72a and b.

(1a) vol. X. f. 17a.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Cf. e.g. vols. X, ff. 7a, 10a, 17b, 19a. XI, f. 4a.

by further quest and acquisition, that in language could not for the simple reason that it was imitation and something which had been handed down, the later generations following the steps of the former.

Elaborating on the idea of language as a necessity, he argued that by necessity was not meant logical deduction but that those who were born speaking a language and trained in it were necessarily cognizant in the trait of that language.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4 Traditional and theoretical knowledge

Is the eloquence of the Qur'ān categorically definable?

Although with this question begins the author's chapter on eloquence in 'K. al-Hidāyah' the same question was provoked on another occasion later in the same work. And each time stimulating a series of further questions.<sup>2</sup> The author's reply however reveals to us one of the crucial factors that shaped his attitude toward theoretical rhetoric of which more is to be seen in the following two chapters.

Two fourth-century attitudes emerging from one conception yet arriving at different conclusions need to be considered. To Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī, the contemporary of al-Bāqillānī and to many others including al-Bāqillānī himself the only and most obvious answer to the above question can only be achieved through a thorough knowledge of the language in which the Qur'ān was revealed. And the way to this is none else but by studying the

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(1) Vol. X, f: 17a.

(2) Most of them involving theological details some of which we have already seen. Vol. XIII, ff. 16a, 17a, 17b, 18b, 20a; vol. XV, ff. 2a 4a, 5a; XIV, ff. 1b, 2b, 4a.

stylistic characteristics of that language both in its prose and verse. This approach is well propounded from the very outset of Abū Hilāl's 'K. al-Sinā'atyn'.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Bāqillānī's awareness of the appropriateness of such an approach is often emphasised particularly in his long chapter in 'K. al-I'jāz',<sup>2</sup> "The way to the knowledge of I'jāz", which was mainly designed for this purpose. Although knowledge had been considered the fundamental initiative two types of it must be realised: there was on the one side a theoretical approach toward that knowledge of which Abū Hilāl was a supporter as well as a participant and of which al-Bāqillānī had his doubt as to its expediency, and on the other, a traditional approach on which al-Bāqillānī stood firmly.

When the foregoing question was put to al-Bāqillānī, his reply includes among many other things which already we have met in his theological discussions, he emphasises the knowledge of the early generations, particularly the Prophet's contemporaries, of language. Here is the other version of the above question as it occurs at a later stage and the author's reply to it:-

Q: "You have claimed that there is a certain disparity in the quality of people's eloquence and maintained that the difference between the eloquence of the Qur'ān and the most eloquent of men is apparent and well-known; it is as the difference between the most eloquent among

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(1) pp. 1-2.  
 (2) pp. 171-236.

the Arabs and he who is inferior and of little eloquence. Tell us therefore of the qualitative traits of eloquences and the outstripping of the Qur'ān of them all, so as to ascertain your claim?"

In reply al-Bāqillānī argues:-

"We have explained sufficiently already with regard to this<sup>1</sup> and we need not reiterate; we have however explained that the distinction between two kinds of speech, a high and a low, is not necessarily comprehensible to everyone, but only to him who is well aware of the property of eloquence with exactitude and in minute detail, and also in a position to express himself categorically of it .... Similarly, the precedence concerning the composition of poetry, the knowledge of the poet's temper and his natural disposition; The distinction between his poetry and that of another who is of a rank below him or close to him. All such is well-known to the poets and the people of eloquence and language. Though all this is not confined to them within a restricted limit, nor is it of a specific well-known and detailed quality which can be described nor can a name for it be given. The well-versed in poetry can distinguish between a poet's work and that of his contemporary and tell the difference between them, as well as the authenticity of poetry. A matter which is not amenable to him who does not understand poetry, is not aware of the nature of the poet, or has not read, considered or contemplated his poetry."<sup>2</sup>

(1) The reference here is to vol. XIII, f. 15a.

(2) Vol. XV, f. 1b-2a.

IV Al-Bāqillānī and the traditional theory of Balāghah

With regard to the definition of eloquence it was, more or less, al-Jāhiz's 'K. al-Bayān wal-Tabyīn' which was the main source, though unacknowledged,<sup>1</sup> that guided al-Bāqillānī in his attempt, where he had occasion to modify or criticise the ample material provided therein. Even his own definition, one feels, is but a patchwork, the fragments of which can easily be traced among the multitude of materials put forth by al-Jāhiz.

Al-Jāhiz, as we have seen already, had also reflected on a number of figures of speech which received further development throughout the third and fourth centuries, inspiring a good number of authors. Of these figures al-Bāqillānī appears to have made extensive use, particularly those of conciseness and prolex style. This appears more convincingly in 'K. al-Intisar' and 'Hidāyat' al-Mustarshidīn'. During the fourth century another Mu'tazilite rhetorician, al-Rummānī, emerged as an author who, as we have seen earlier, not only promoted the study of eloquence, but closely associated it with the study of I'jāz in his treatise 'Al-Nukat fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān'. From this latter work al-Bāqillānī drew inspiration for three of his major works known to us. The results, however, are not always the same.

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(1) By comparison we find Abū Hilāl ('Sina'atayn', pp. 45) acknowledges his reliance on this work. His uncle, Abū Aḥmad al-'Askarī, ('Balaghatayy al-'Arab wal-'Ajam', Constantinople, 1302 A.H., pp. 218-9) also includes Jāhiz amongst his sources. The fact that the rest of his sources follow al-Jāhiz may suggest in turn his influence on them.

To understand al-Bāqillānī's real attitude towards the traditional approach to Balāghah, one needs perhaps to distinguish between two periods in his writings; works prior to 'K. al-I'jāz' mainly 'Intiṣār' 'Hidayah' and 'Bayan', and his later rebellious attitude epitomised in 'I'jāz', though the fountainhead of this tendency is to be sought in the earlier 'Hidāyah', as we have shown in the previous chapter.

In the early works he shows, in one respect, almost a conventional attitude, pursuing traditional conceptions well elaborated in Rummānī's treatises. In this respect it is almost certain that he is only reproducing the latter's contribution. Here he speaks of almost exactly the same figures of speech:

- A) Conciseness (or omission),<sup>1</sup>
- B) Metaphor,<sup>2</sup>
- C) Simile,<sup>3</sup>
- D) Paranomasia,<sup>4</sup>

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(1) In the earlier work, 'Intiṣār' (Sum), f. 77a, al-Bāqillānī or presumably one of his summarisers, only used the term omission for conciseness. This, as we know from al-Rummānī's treatise (pp. 70-1) is one of the two main divisions of conciseness. In 'Hidāyah', vol. XV, f. 7a, the term conciseness is retained. The difference seems to be that, he refers us, in his contribution in the latter work, to a previous volume which is most likely to be vol. XIV, ff. 9 sqq., wherein his elaboration on conciseness and prolex style (which was a direct precis of Jāhiz in 'K. al-Bayān') whereas in the former, 'Intiṣār' or at least what is left of it, there is a clear indication that he was under the influence of al-Rummānī's treatise. Note particularly his remark: " .. and the omission of the correlative is more eloquent", in the light of this account given by al-Rummānī in his treatise, pp. 70-7-. This particular remark is also an aftermath which occurs in the latter, 'Hidāyah', and it is in fact the only important remark which was perhaps one of the main reasons for him to repeat the same chapter twice in the same work.

(2) 'Intiṣār' (Sum), f. 77a; 'Hidāyah', vol. XV, f. 8b.

(3) Ibid. f. 77a; ibid. f. 9a (entitled 'Similes and parables'.)

(4) Ibid. f. 77a-b; ibid. 9b.

- E) Hyperbole,<sup>1</sup>  
 F) Implication,<sup>2</sup>  
 G) Harmony,<sup>3</sup>  
 H) Fawāsil, (the ends of Qur'ānic verse),<sup>4</sup>  
 I) Taṣrīf, (the various derivations of words),<sup>5</sup>  
 J) Bayān, (clarity or eloquence).<sup>6</sup>

In these works his comments show little sign of resentment, to the figures of speech; emphasising the fact that each of them is more eloquent when it occurs in the Qur'ān than in the rest of the Arabic language. He even follows them to their sub-divisions which had been assigned to them by al-Rummānī.<sup>7</sup>

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- (1) Ibid. ff. 77b-78a; ibid. f. 11a. (2) Ibid. f. 78a; ibid f. 10b.  
 (3) Ibid. f. 78a-b; ibid f. 14a.  
 (4) Ibid. ff. 78b-80b; ibid f. 14a. This term, being the last figure occurring in 'Hidāyah' and because of its connection with rhymed prose, appears to have acted as a 'red herring'. Al-Bāqillānī's attention had been diverted and he no longer continued his reflection on the rest of the figures of speech, leaving out a very important one, the Bayan (clarity or eloquence) which actually to him was the only figure worthy of recognition, (cf. 'I'jaz' pp. 418, 426.) and plunging headlong until the end of this volume furthering his discussion with different types of rhymed prose until vol. XVI, f. 4b, and he was never able to return to the point.  
 (5) Ibid. F, 78a; ibid. f. 11b.  
 (6) Ibid. ff. 74b-76b; not mentioned in 'Hidāyah'.  
 (7) Cf. al-Bāqillānī's divisions of the figures of speech with al-Rummānī's treatise, al-Nukat;  
 A) Conciseness two divs. I.f. 77a; H. f. 7a-b; N.pp. 74-5.  
 B) Simile " " I.f. 77a; H.f. 8a; N.pp. 74-5.  
 C) Hyperbole six " I.f. 77b; H. ff. 11a-12b; N.pp. 96-7.  
 D) Paranomasia two " I.f. 77a-b; H. ff. 9b-10a; N.pp. 91-2.  
 E) Bayān four " I.ff. 74b-76b; H. none; N.pp. 98-101.  
 I = 'Intisār' (Sum); H = 'Hidāyah', vol. XV; N = 'Nukat'.  
 F) Implication, though Rummānī divided it, offering two sub-divisions for each part (pp. 94-5), of the first two, and perhaps for their

There is perhaps no need for us here to go into any detail on the figures of speech demonstrated by al-Bāqillānī in these two works; for not only do they show no originality but also for the added reason that we have dealt with the source from which they derived, see Chapter on al-Rummānī.

v Al-Balāghah, Badi' and al-Bāqillānī's rebellion

"If rhetoric was to be a *techné* ( an art or craft based on special knowledge) the speaker or writer should have knowledge of the human soul and its different parts or functions; also he should have a theoretical knowledge of the different kinds of men." These were Plato's words:

"Aristotle took up the challenge in the first two books of Rhetoric. He begins by asserting that Rhetoric is a *techné* and establishes the formula of the three types of Rhetoric which were universally adopted later."<sup>2</sup>

Although the Arabic literary theory of criticism is believed to have

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(1) cont. from overleaf.

logical or Aristotelian bias, al-Bāqillānī ignores them in both works. He did however produce the literary or secondary sub-divisions ('Inti-  
ṣār', f. 78a; 'Hidāyah', vol. XV. ff. 10b-11a.). It is perhaps coincidental that we find Rummānī refers us for further detail regarding this figure to his 'K. al-Jāmi' (p.95). Similarly al-Bāqillānī also refers us to an earlier work for more detail, presumably to one of his works on Usūl (cf. 'Hidāyah', vol. XV, f. 11a.

G) Harmony of letters. While Rummānī divides it into three types (pp.87-9), rejecting two of them and accepting and praising the third, al-Bāqillānī ('Intiṣār' (Sum), f.78a-b; 'Hidāyah' vol. XV, f. 13b) does not follow him closely and seems to divide it into two types only. There appears also some confusion in al-Bāqillānī's text with regard to this figure, see following footnote.

H) Metaphor, I) Fawāṣil and J) Taṣrīf seem to require no particular sub-divisions.

(2) G.M.A. Grube, 'Aristotle on Poetry and Style' p. 65.

been influenced, in some measure, by the Aristotelian Rhetoric<sup>1</sup> or Greek philosophy generally, in the case of al-Bāqillānī the classical controversy between Plato and Aristotle cited above appeared to be in some way reversed. The search for techné or criteria, either purely Arabic or externally inspired, had engaged the literary theorists for more than two centuries before al-Bāqillānī's own time, even long before that,<sup>2</sup> and was still occupying his contemporaries, even he himself, as has been seen previously was utilizing some of the theorists' achievements.

The little dissention over a particular figure of speech,<sup>3</sup> or the detrimental statement which could undermine the theoretical Balāghah entirely as a science and the criteria of Badi' which we have noticed in some of the author's earlier works, now become more apparent as we reach 'K. al-<sup>4</sup>Ijāz'.

Two questions however are posed in this context: firstly, why did al-Bāqillānī rebel against the techné or theoretical Balāghah and secondly, on what basis?

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- (1) Qudāmah b. Ja'far was the most suspect case but more recent studies have shown that the work 'The Criticism of prose' was mistakenly ascribed to him (see 'Alī Hasan 'Abd al-Qādir , 'Majalat al-Majma' al-<sup>5</sup>Ilmi al-<sup>6</sup>Arabi', Damascus 1368-1948 vol. 24, p.73sq.) Also modern studies have minimised the general claim of the Aristotelian impact on Qudāmah's 'The Criticism of Poetry' cf. H.Ritter, in his introduction to 'K. Asrār al-Balāghah' (1954) p. 4. He notes: "But if the Rhetoric of Aristotle is compared with Qudāmah's book very few points of contrast can be found!" S.A. Bonebeker also in his introduction to "The Kitāb Naqd al-Sir" (1955) p. 41 writes: "On the other hand, the Rhetoric and the Poetic of Aristotles have left no clear trace on 'The Naqd al-Sir.'"
- (2) For the more premature pre-Islamic and Umayyad criticism see Shawqī Dayf 'al-Balāghah Ta'rikh wa Tatawwr.' pp. 9-19.

But before attempting to answer these questions, it would perhaps be more appropriate to examine, though in brief, some of the prevailing attitudes towards Balāghah.

Ibn al-Mu'tazz's 'K. al-Badī' marks, beyond question, the beginning of specialisation and scientific techné in the Arabic literary theory of criticism. His achievement had, it is evident, a far-reaching effect on the eminent literary theorists of the fourth century<sup>2</sup> which would confirm its pioneering role. The author's claim that he was the first Arab author to initiate such work<sup>3</sup>, however, is only valid in the sense that he was the first to classify such criteria since his study was, in effect, a reappraisal of current literary theses; the term Badī' itself had long been established and adopted for the same function before him.<sup>4</sup> Further his five main chapters (i.e. Metaphor, p.3; Alliteration, p.25; Antithesis, p.36; The confirming of the end with the beginning, p.47 and Dialectical mannerism, p.53) and the additional thirteen figures which he called

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- (3) cont. from overleaf. While reflecting on the figure of speech Fawāsil (vol. XV, f.15b) we notice such remarks: "It is not WE who say that eloquence is confined to Tajānus al-Maḡāti' (syllabic harmony) nor the likeness of the Fawāsil (the end of Qur'ānic verses), but we say these belong to eloquence ..... when the words endow with them are harmonious and the meanings therein are noble and beautiful."
- (2) cf. eg. al-Āmidī, 'al-Muwāzanah' ed. S.A. Saqr, vol. 1, pp. 14, 17, 18, 20, 31 and throughout pp. 134-290; al-Qādi al-Jurjāni, 'al-Waṣāṭah' ed. A.A. Zayn, pp. 33-42; Abu Hilal, 'al-Sinā'atayn', p. 410 was also indebted to K. al-Badī'.
- (3) See 'Badī' p. 58
- (4) cf. al-Jāhiz, 'al-Bayān', vol. 1, p.51; vol. 4, pp.55-6, Ibn al-Mu'tazz himself acknowledges his borrowing of the fifth category from al-Jāhiz, see 'Badī', p. 53.

'beauties' (Muḥāsīn) , were not altogether unfamiliar to the literary critics before him, especially his immediate predecessors, as Tha'lab and al-Mubarrad who were also counted among his tutors.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Mu'tazz's prophecy that the chapters on the figures of speech he had drawn for Badi' could be proliferated further or be reduced to a chapter or two<sup>2</sup> was proven, immediately his contemporary (in a sense, his colleague) Qudamah ibn Ja'far fulfilled the former aspect by furnishing his work 'The criticism of poetry' alone with twenty or more figures, agreeing, though with different terminology in seven of them with Ibn al-Mu'tazz the rest being however, if not altogether fresh, at least old terms retitled.<sup>3</sup>

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- (1) Apart from the studies of al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah we find, for instance, seven of the figures of speech recorded by Ibn al-Mu'tazz mentioned in Thalab's 'K. Qawā'id al-Shi'r' (ed. C. Schisparell). Three of them are considered by Ibn al-Mu'tazz among his five main chapters of 'Badi''. Terminology may, however, differ.
- cf. 1. Isti'ārah, 'Badi' p. 3sq. 'Qawā'id al-Shi'r' p. 193.  
 2. Muṭābaqah, Ibid p. 36 Ibid (it is called Mujāurarat al-Addād) p. 196.  
 3. al-Tajnis Ibid p. 25 Ibid (we find Muṭābiq as a kind of Tajnis).  
 4. Tashbih (Beauties) Ibid. p. 6b. Ibid. pp. 134-6, 203. ((p. 196.  
 5. T'rīd and Kināyah (beauties) Ibid. p. 64, Ibid (called laṭāfat al-Ma'na) p. 191.  
 6. al-Ifrāṭ fi al-Sifah (beauties) Ibid p. 65, Ibid (al-Ifrāṭ fi al-Iqrūq), p. 190.  
 7. Husn al-Khurūj (beauties) Ibid p. 60. Ibid. p. 195.
- (2) Badi' p. 2.
- (3) (a) Isti'ārah, Badi' p. 3sq. Naqd al-Shi'r p. 202 sqq.  
 (b) Muṭābaqah, Ibid p. 36. Ibid (He calls Takāfu') pp. 78-9.  
 (c) Tajnis Ibid p. 25 Ibid (as al-Muṭābiq wal-Mujānis) p. 93.  
 (d) Kināyah and T'rīd, Ibid p. 64 Ibid (as Irdāf) p. 88.  
 (e) Ifrat Ibid p. 65 Ibid Ghuluww p. 34.  
 (f) Iltifat Ibid p. 58 Ibid p. 81.  
 (g) Tashbih Ibid p. 68 Ibid pp. 23-61.

Yet, while Ibn al-Mu'tazz emphasises his first five chapters, Qudāmah, on the other hand, makes no such stipulation. Like the former, he also claimed his attempt<sup>1</sup> to be unprecedented, presumably for the Greek element he injected into it. But unlike Qudāmah, it was Ibn al-Mu'tazz's study which received more popularity among the fourth century critics, 'the former's 'Criticism of Poetry', was received with less enthusiasm and sometimes even harsh criticism.<sup>2</sup>

It was al-Bāqillānī's near contemporary, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, who utilised Qudāmah's invention almost entirely,<sup>3</sup> adding his own invention

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(1) 'Naqd al-Shi'r', p.1.

(2) al-Āmidī e.g. did not appreciate Qudāmah's further dimensions to some of the figures of. 'Muwazanah' vol. 1. p. 275; Ibn Rashīq, 'ʿUmdah' vol. 1. p. 221. In addition to the references made in their extant works, to the former a Risālah in which he criticised Qudāmah's approach is attributed and to the latter a work by the title: 'Counterfeiting Qudamah'S Criticism' cf. Ibn Abī al-Isbic, 'Tahrir al-Tahbir', introduction, p. 88.

(3) In addition to the seven figures of speech in which Qudāmah agrees with Ibn al-Mu'tazz - though terminology sometimes differs - he introduced:- (throughout the three main sections of his book) further figures of speech:-

al-Tarṣīʿ, p. 14; al-Mubālaghah, p. 27 (which is different from the Ghuluw); Sihhat al-Taqsīm, p. 70; Sihhat al-Tafsir, p. 73, al-Muqābalah, p. 72; al-Tatmīm, p. 75; al-Istighrāb wal-Turfah, p. 33; al-Musāwah, p. 84; al-Isharah (I jāz) p. 85; al-Tamthil, p. 90; al-Tawshih, p. 96; al-Ighal, p. 97. Abū Hilāl in his 35 sections on Badi' 'Sināʿatayn' pp. 266-430 includes ten of Qudamah's additional figures, moreover he introduces for the first time, six figures:-

(1) al-Tashṭir	(2) al-Mujāwarah
(3) al-Mudā f	(4) al-Taṭriz
(5) al-Talaṭuf	(6) al-Istishhād.

The rest of Abū Hilāl's seven figures are of uncertain origin, presumable from his uncle, Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAskari to whom he refers several times in his book.

to it, and thus extended the number of the figures of speech still further, which successively progressed in some later rhetorical studies<sup>1</sup> until by the middle of the eighth century they reached one hundred and fifty-one.

To return, in the light of the above roughly sketched survey, to our two questions concerning al-Bāqillānī's rebellion more particularly with regard to the cause for this and the basis on which his revolt was established, we notice first that in his criticism of poetry, al-Bāqillānī was responding to a provocation, since some had tried to compare the Qur'ān's eloquence with that of poetry. Could it be said that his criticism of poetry led him consequently to question the validity of the criteria on which poetry itself was examined? Whatever stress this may have laid on his argument, in the prevalent theological contention are found far better motives for his discontent.

As in the case of poetry also a similar charge sprang from al-Balāghah which no doubt hardened al-Bāqillānī's attitude towards it. In 'I'jāz' he records a two-century-old unsuccessful attempt, in this respect,<sup>2</sup> but in 'K. al-Hidāyah' he reports: "Nay, but some of our contemporaries

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- (1) Among the later authors who extended the number of the figures of Badī's are:- Ibn Rashīq (d.463/1078) who brought them to 65 in 'K. al-'Umdah'; Usāmah b. Munqidh (d.584/1188) pushed the figures to 95 in his 'K. al-Badī'; Ibn Abī al-Isba' (d. 654/1256) took on himself to bring them to one hundred (cf. his introduction to 'K. al-Tahrīr wal-Tahhīr', vol. 1, p. 96); Şafiy al-Din al-Hillī (d.677/1278) recorded in a single poem 151 figures of speech, cf. his poem 'al-Kafiyah al-Badī'iyah', 'Diwan', Najaf edn, (1956) pp. 471-488.
- (2) pp. 46, 237, see also 373.

said that in their own eloquence and that of the Arabs before them there is even more eloquence than in the Qur'ān."<sup>1</sup>

Further, as we have seen already in the theological controversies which appear to have been the more prevalent and powerful motives when turning towards the rival camp, mainly that of the school of the Mu'tazilah, we find an intense shift of support from composition to eloquence. The tenacious conception of the idea of the composition, with or without Balāghah, was still strong and active as in the studies of the composition of <sup>the</sup> Qur'ān early in the century; but by the time of al-Rumḡānī, we find his treatise criticised by al-Bāqillānī - for no other reason than that the latter's inference seems to suggest its reliance totally on theoretical Balāghah. Moreover, among the later Mu'tazilites who fostered the idea of eloquence in connection with the study of I'jāz was al-Bāqillānī's contemporary, al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbar whose support and enthusiasm for Balāghah was in no whit less than that of al-Bāqillānī for composition.

Balāghah, as such, was not denied by al-Bāqillānī regarding the question of I'jāz itself; he is no doubt in favour of it as part of his strong composite conception of eloquence and composition. In this context his comprehension of it, it must be realised, lies mainly in the purity of individual words which is not sufficient by itself.

Thus the studies of Badi', Balāghah or poetry criticism<sup>2</sup> have all

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(1) 'Hidāyah', vol. XIV, f. 16b.

(2) While some of the fourth century critics (e.g. al-Āmidī, al-Jurjānī and Abū Hilāl) used the term Badi', others favoured the term poetry criticism, cf. al-Khawārazmī, (d.387), 'Maḡātib al-'Ulūm' ch. 5, sec. 5, pp. 94-7.

contributed towards the techne and provided ample criteria by which poetry or prose could be evaluated. Having been faced with the question as to whether I'jāz was recognisable by the rhetorical elements of Badi'<sup>1</sup> or poetry criticism, early in 'K. al-'Ijāz', or those listed under the study of Balāghah later in the same work,<sup>2</sup> al-Bāqillānī by way of a succinct summary recorded over forty of them. Some in the studies of Badi' and poetry criticism are identical with those occurring in the study of Balāghah,<sup>3</sup> others are sub-categorised<sup>4</sup> or conjoined,<sup>5</sup> he sums the whole matter up in his words: "Some people assume that the I'jāz of the Qur'ān can be derived from the chapters (on the rhetorical figures) which we have submitted and that proofs of this (I'jāz) can be adduced from them. This, however, is not our opinion. For (p. 95) these types, when brought to attention, can be grasped by training, habit (ta'awwud) and application (taṣannu'). The same applies to poetry which can be produced (ta'ammul) properly if a man knows its method (tarīq) and is thus enabled to compose it (naẓm). Whereas the types (of presentation) from which we maintain that the I'jāz of the Qur'ān may be known cannot possibly be achieved by human beings nor grasped by them."<sup>6</sup>

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(1) 'I'jāz' pp. 101 sqq.

(2) Ibid. pp. 396-435.

(3) E.g. Isti'ārah, Ta shbih, Mubālaghah, I'jāz, the last figure in studies of poetry and criticism Ishārah.

(4) E.g. Taḍād, Muṭābaqah, Takāfu'; Kināyah, Ta'rīd Laḥn al-Qawl.

(5) E.g. Tamthīl, Mumāthalah; al Ghuluww, al-Ifrarṭ fī al-Sifah.

(6) 'I'jaz' p. 162, trans by G. von Grunebaum, 'A Tenth Century Document'..... p.49.

Having reflected on these studies of Balāghah later in the same work he elucidated this viewpoint further: "We have related at the opening of this work (the reference is to the above quoted) that some people wished to consider I' jāz by the elements of eloquence called Badi' of which examples from poetry have been demonstrated. Others claimed to consider it in the light of those we have enumerated in this section (the reference is to his criticism of Rummānī). Know that what we have explained and maintained already is the right conception: for these matters are divisible, some of them can be found, affected or acquired by learning. Thus any of these cannot possibly lead to the true knowledge of I' jāz. But those which cannot be acquired by learning or affectedness of eloquence, demonstrate I' jāz .... "

"We have maintained in this section that there is no dispute with him who claimed that simile is a means for learning eloquence, but if we say that simile which occurs in the Qur'ān is miraculous we should be faced with the question of similes that appear in poetry - as you well know-you will find in the poetry of Ibn al-Mu'tazz similes that have charm."<sup>1</sup>

Or in other words: "As for the verse in which he claimed that there is a simile if he claims that its I' jāz lies in its words and composition, I do not dispute this, on the contrary, I shall prove it, but I should not claim its I' jāz because of the simile alone."<sup>2</sup>

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(1) Ibid. p. 416-17.  
 (2) Ibid p. 418.

Finally, in this respect, it may be asked what particular source or author had al-Bāqillānī in mind in his rebellion against theoretical Balāghah?

In summing up al-Bāqillānī's position in relation to rhetoric, Professor G. von Grunebaum once noticed: "It cannot be said with certainty whence al-Bāqillānī derived his terms and definitions."<sup>1</sup> Whatever caution prompted him to draw this conclusion it can fairly be said, at least on al-Bāqillānī's own authority, that he himself made clear on numerous occasions whence some of his terms and definitions were derived. As for those whose sources were concealed there are clear indications as to the origins of a substantial number of them.

Considering for example the terms and figures of speech demonstrated in connection with his reflection on Balāghah though the source from which they were taken is not clearly stated, we cannot be mistaken in holding that it was al-Rummānī's treatise which was al-Bāqillānī's main source. As for the bulk of the figures which were selectively demonstrated in his chapter on Badi', in conjunction with poetry criticism, two authors evidently appear to have been his main source, Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Qudāmah ibn Ja'far. It would seem, however, that he began first by manipulating the views of both authors as can be seen in his first reflections on the figures he recorded earlier in this chapter. (i.e. Isti'rah,<sup>2</sup>

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(1) A Tenth Century Document .... Introduction, p. XX.

(2) Cf. 'Badi' p. 3 sq; Naqd al-Shi'r, p. 129; I'jaz, p. 106.

Tajnis or Mujānasah<sup>1</sup> and Mutābaqah).<sup>2</sup>

As the fifth chapter in 'K. al-Badī'<sup>3</sup> was the dialectical mannerism which had been borrowed with acknowledgement from one of al-Jāhiz' works, it stands to reason why al-Bāqillānī refrained from including it in his list, considering the traditional rivalry between their two schools on the one hand and the criticism launched against al-Jāhiz personally - the author as well as his works - in 'K. al-I'jāz', on the other.<sup>3</sup> This would perhaps explain al-Bāqillānī's restraint in including that particular figure of speech in his selective list.

On the whole, it would seem that he has made use of ten figures<sup>4</sup> of speech of those occurring in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's 'K. al-Badī', some of which had also occurred in 'The criticism of poetry' of al-Qudāmah bearing the same terminology or under a different one.

From 'K. Naqd al-Shi'r' itself eleven<sup>5</sup> of the figures which are not to be found in Ibn al-Mu'tazz's work are apparent in 'K. al-I'jāz'.

Although he did mention the names of these two authors with regard to the definition of some of the figures<sup>6</sup> his definitions and the examples cited to illustrate them are in almost all the cases coincidental with theirs.

- (1) Ibid, p. 25 sqq.                      Ibid, p. 92;                      Ibid, p. 125.  
 (2) Ibid, p. 36 sqq.                      Ibid, pp. 79-80;                      Ibid, p. 122.  
 (3) See 'I'jāz', pp. 185-7.  
 (4) These are: Isti'ārah, Mutābaqah, Tajnis, Rad al-'Ajz 'Ala al-Ṣadr, Ittifāt, I'tirād, Rujū', Kināyah, and Ta'sīd, Tashbih, al-Ifrāt fī al-Ḍifāh (Ghuluw).  
 (5) These are: al-Muqābalah, al-Musāwah, al-Ighāl, Siḥbat al-Taqsīm, Siḥbat al-Tafsīr, al-Mubālaghah, (combined with the Ghuluw), al-Ishārah, al-Tamthīl, al-Tatmīm (and al-Takmil), al-Tarḡīl and al-Tawshīh.  
 (6) Cf. p. 145 in I'jāz, the figure is Tamthīl.

The remainder of the figures selected by al-Bāqillānī which are eleven - four of them being either of different terminology,<sup>1</sup> sub-categorization<sup>2</sup> of the comparison<sup>3</sup> of two different terms. In the case of a particular term<sup>4</sup> the source from which he took it is revealed.<sup>5</sup> Another was a well-established term.

It is clear, however, that of all authors whose works inspired al-Bāqillānī in this respect, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, the author of 'K. al-Sinaʿatayn' does not seem to have had any particular influence on him, if only because we find none of the six figures of speech introduced for the first time by Abū Hilāl included in 'K. al-Iʿjāz'.<sup>6</sup>

There are four figures<sup>7</sup> of speech in 'K. al-Sinaʿatayn' included neither in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's nor Qudāmah's list. Nor were they among the six figures introduced for the first time by Abū Hilāl. The fact

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- (1) Matabaqah and Tokafu ; Tākid al-Hadh bima Yushbih al-Dhamm and Istithna.
  - (2) Finayah and Lahn al-Qawl.
  - (3) Tasri and Tajnis. See also Mudara ah.
  - (4) His source for Istithnad was Abu Ahmad al- Askari.
  - (5) Tiktzar.
  - (6) Professor von Grunebaum with regard to this has noted "only one of the six figures observed by al- Askari appears in his book" (i.e. al-Baqillani's 'I'jaz'), op. cit. p. XX. The footnote for the quoted remark in Professor von Grunebaum reads " (31) Ta atuf (inter ) no. 23 in al-Baqillani, no. 32 in Askari." Ta atuf, to use a recent edition of 'K. al-Sina atyn' (Cairo 1952) is not included among the six newly invented figures observed for the first time by Abu Hilal. And there appear to have been some confusion between Talatuf which is one of the six figures introduced for the first time by Abu Hilal (cf. Sina atyn) (1952) p. 267, and Ta atuf which was perhaps an error in the edition used by Prof. von Brunebaum.
  - (7) These are Ta atuf, al- Aks (wal-Tabdil) al-Salb wal-Ijab and al-Ustithnad.

that these four occur in 'K.al-I'jāz' does not necessarily mean that the source from which they were taken was Abū Hilāl's work since he himself was dependent on other sources in them.

## VI Al-Bayān.

Of all the figures of speech whether emergent from the practical studies, either under the title of al-Badī' or poetry criticism generally, or enumerated in the study of al-Balāghah, as in the study of al-Rummānī, Bayān is the only <sup>one</sup> which was unconditionally accepted by al-Bāqillānī. In 'K.al-Intisar' we find a lengthy independent and introductory chapter<sup>1</sup> beginning with the differentiation between the more general al-Bayān and al-Balāghah, followed, after the technical definition of the former, by reflection on the five indications which had been assigned to it, i.e. utterance, allusion, wording, 'Aqd (digital counting) and Nusbah (lit. a post; tech. a state of circumstance). All of which are indications as to what is absent from the senses and of necessity unknown. Nothing is new, however, in this information; for it and even more besides can be found in al-Jāhiz's 'K.al-Bayān'<sup>2</sup>. The only additional remark seems to be that between the time of al-Jāhiz and that of al-Bāqillānī some had tried to exclude allusion from the aforementioned five points for Bayān, while al-Bāqillānī attempted to restore it.

In 'K.al-Hidāyah' the fate of the chapter on Bayān, through the diversion of the author's attention by another chapter, or a figure of speech, has already been noticed. Yet in the same work we are informed by the author that he had contributed more detail concerning Bayān in his books on Usūl

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- (1) Intisār (Sum.) ff. 74a-76a.  
 (2) Bayān wal-Tabayīn, vol. 1, pp. 76-80  
 (3) Cf. vol. XIV, f. 16a.

In 'K. al-I'jāz' having demonstrated<sup>1</sup> the ten figures of speech which were recorded by al-Rummānī the first figure he acknowledged unconditionally was Bayān<sup>2</sup>. There appears to be two reasons for al-Bāqillānī's unconditional acceptance: firstly, that Bayān is praised<sup>3</sup> in the Qur'ān's own text and secondly, that it cannot be taught, this latter being the main basis on which the author rejected the rest of the figures of speech.

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- (1) I'jāz, pp.369-416.  
 (2) Ibid, pp.426-429.  
 (3) E.g. Surah LV/3-4.

THE QUR'ĀN AND POETRY

1- A discussion on the form

Is the Qur'ān poetry or rather is there any form of poetry in the Qur'ān? A negative answer for this question is clearly and emphatically made in the Qur'ān's own text: "It is not the speech of a poet."(LXIX/41) and other similar verses. This, however, did not prevent some people from allowing the reverse; the question posed in this case is, perhaps, what is the poetry to which the Qur'ānic text was related?

In Arabic, poetry is traditionally defined as 'Speech in metre and rhyme.' According to this definition, the form rather than the matter appear to have been the characteristic which distinguishes the art of poetry, to the early Arabs, and on this basis alone shall we look at the author, al-Bāqillānī, and his antagonists with regard to the form of the Qur'ān.

There are lengthy chapters specifically on this point in 'K.al-Intisār', (Sum.),<sup>1</sup> 'K.Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn'<sup>2</sup> and 'K.I'jāz al-Qur'ān'.<sup>3</sup> Although there are slight modifications in their titles and the form in which discussions are demonstrated, the contents on the whole bear much resemblance.

In 'I'jāz, which presumably was of a much later period, al-Bāqillānī seems to arrive at a conclusion which is more advanced than in

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- (1) Pt. 2, ff. 79b-84a, entitled 'Reply to him who claims that the Qur'ān is poetry.'
  - (2) Vol. XVI, ff. 4b-12b, entitled 'Chapter concerning the difference between the Qur'ān and the composition of poetry.....etc.'
  - (3) pp.76-86, entitled, 'The denial of poetry in the Qur'ān'.

the other two works. In fact, he touches on the essence of poetry rather than the form, which is the main thesis for discussion. He opens his chapter by offering us interpretations of the attitudes of some of the early Arabs, as recorded in the Qur'ān and of their saying that it is a poetry and the Prophet is a poet. His interpretation runs:

"What the Qur'ān related of their saying that the Qur'ān was poetry and the Prophet was a poet should be taken in the sense that they associated him with poetry, to indicate that he was more conscious than anybody else of the skilful art of the composition of speech; they did not intend it to mean that what he brought them was of the kind of poetry that had been known to them by its well defined and familiar metres nor that that which the philosophers mean when describing the sage and the wise among them as poetic, because of their subtle use of speech and dialectic. That genre falls outside the definition of poetry as the Arabs understand it."

"On either of these accounts," argues al-Bāqillānī, "their description is correct. A third possibility is that the words were used by those whose knowledge of the metre of poetry was inadequate. This, however, is the least likely supposition."<sup>1</sup>

Yet, it was this last attitude, or the interpretation of it, which was al-Bāqillānī's principal theme in all of these three works.

Taken into consideration as a whole, of the accounts given in the three works, those which occur in 'Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' are evidently

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(1) 'I'jāz' pp. 76-7.

more detailed than those given in the other two , though it would seem that similarities between them and those in 'K,al-Intisār', even in the abridged form are rather close.

The accounts of the whole reflect a twofold controversy: firstly, a historical recorded attitude and secondly, also shared by some of the author's contemporaries,<sup>1</sup> that the Qur'ān is poetry. In due course the question which inevitably arose was, what was poetry- with prime consideration to its form- the classical epitomisation of that and the relevance, or correspondence of that to the form of the Qur'ān ?

The discussion, as usual, took the pattern of question and answer or reproach and the refutation and rebuttal. If anything may be inferred from these questions, however, it is that they are very evocative indeed and highly sceptical. The first perhaps would suffice to show this :

Q: "Would you deny that the Qur'ān is poetry and in the metre of poetry, that its verses(Āyātuhu) are tantamount to the verses of the poem, the short verse and the long, that its chapters(Suwaruhu) are coequal to the poems and the short and the long ?"<sup>2</sup>

The question was elaborated further: " Because the Qur'ān had been endowed with noble composition and wording, doubt inhibited those who did not consider them and assumed therefore it was something different from poetry and other forms of speech. Nevertheless, one of the strongest reasons for the existance of poetry in the Qur'ān is

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(1) 'I'jāz', The author's introduction, p.5.

(2) 'Hidāyah' vol. XVI, f.4b.

that we find in it what may be considered as poetry and in the metre of poetry, the which cannot be denied. The only difference is in the naming of its verses and poems, while the Bayt (the verse) is in it called Āyah and the Qasīdah (the chapter) is called Surah."<sup>1</sup>

The controversialist goes on to add: "By examining this we find many examples in the Qur'ān in the metre of poetry"<sup>2</sup> Although these examples are by no means exhaustive,<sup>3</sup> they are quoted by al-Bāqillānī in his three works now being considered with only slight variation. On the whole, they show that either a verse from the Qur'ān is in the same metre as a verse in poetry or that a Qur'ānic verse is incorporated by a poet in one of his poems. For example, the Qur'ānic verse

a) "And He will lay low and give you victory over them and He will heal the hearts of the believers." (IX/14)

وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ وَيُنصِّرُهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِي صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ

is in the same metre as the poet's verse (Wāfiḥ)

لَنَا غَنَمٌ نَسُوقُهَا غِرَارًا : كَأَنَّ قُرُونَهَا جَلَّتْهَا عِصَا

"We have such a multitude of sheep, which we drive by,

As though the horns of the old ones are like sticks"<sup>4</sup>

b) The Qur'ānic verse,

"Hast thou observed who beliieth religion ? That is he who repelled the orphan." (CVII/1-2)

is interpolated by the poet, Abū Nuwās in one of his poems:

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid. f.5b.

(4) 'Intisār (Sum.)', f.80a; 'Hidāyah', vol.XVI, f.5b; 'I'jāz', p. 78.

وقد أمدنا ليصدع قلبه و الهوى يصدع الأفؤاد السقيها  
 أرايت الذى يكرزب خالد بين فذالك الذى يدع ايتيا

"He reads blatantly, so as to break my heart,

for love shatters the sickened heart,

Hast thou..... etc." <sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this dispute is of course to evoke the statements in the Qur'ān confirming that it is not poetry and consequently that it is not a revelation. Al-Bāqillānī, in refuting this, argues with the following points:

- i) the denial that the Qur'ān is not poetry is confirmed in its own text,
- ii) had it been poetry the early Arabs (the Prophet's contemporaries) should have said so and therefore opposed him and
- iii) the opinion of the experts agreed that it is not poetry.<sup>2</sup>

It was however the second of these points which stimulated the discussion further, particularly in 'K.al-Intisār' and 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn', bringing into realisation the scrutiny and interpretation of some of the historical accounts in this connection; noticeable among them were the stories of al-Walīd b. al-Mughīrah, and the wife of

(1) Ibid.; Ibid.p79; 'Tamhīd', ed. McCarthy, p.155.

(2) Ibid.; Ibid.; Ibid.

(3) Ibid.f.80a-b; Ibid.vol.XVI,ff.6b-7a, -the gist of this episode is on hearing someone reading the Qur'ānic verse "O ye who believe ! Fulfil your combat" (V/1), al-Walīd turned his head in admiration and uttered:"One verse(Baytun Wāhidun) contains command, prohibition, information desired, restriction, allowance, invocation and reply. I confess this is not the utterance of a human being."

The important words here are 'one verse' which were taken as evidence. Al-Bāqillānī, although he rejected it on the basis above noted, found that it contradicts the final words in the same statement,i.e. if the whole argument was to prove that the Qur'ān was poetry and, more important, not a revelation, the man in question was made to appear as if arguing against himself.

one of the Prophet's own poets, 'Abd Allah b. Rawāḥah.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Bāqillānī could not deny the authenticity of some of these episodes, if only because in the Qur'ān itself reference is made to them. But while his opponents held them to have been generally accepted and the attitude of the Prophet's contemporaries indiscriminately, he interpreted them as the opinions of some individuals who were motivated by stubbornness and the urge for falsification and the suppression of the new religion,<sup>2</sup> or ignorance as in the case of the mentioned poet's wife.<sup>3</sup> The rest of the episodes, however, to which he himself added a few more, he dismisses on the ground that they were of no sound authenticity (i.e. Akhbār āḥād),<sup>4</sup> or were handed down through a relatively small number of transmitters, not enough to make the Mutawātir.

As history has provided no concrete solution or because at its best it is a matter of interpretation, al-Bāqillānī's opponents had but to resort to a more material question, the text of the Qur'ān

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- (1) Ibid.f.80b; Ibid.f.7b. The substance of this story is that on accusing her husband of having committed adultery, she, in the belief that if a Muslim was in a high state of impurity, (Junub) he was not permitted to read the Qur'ān, requested him to recite some verses therefrom to prove his innocence. He recited instead the following poem:

شهدت جاهد به من + وأنت إنبار متوى إكافرنا  
 وإن لم يرد نوره لطار طاف + وفوق لم يرد به. إكافرنا  
 وحمله سمانية رشاد + مسطرة الله مومنا

which the wife accepted as from the Qur'ān. If however this story was true, to al-Bāqillānī it only proved the ignorance of the wife.

- (2) Ibid. ff.80b-81a; Ibid.f.8a-b.  
 (3) Ibid. f.81a; Ibid.f.8b.  
 (4) For further discussion on these traditional criteria, see J. Robson, E.I. 'Hadīth', vol. III(n.s.) p.25.

itself, or as they put it: "At any rate, what then is the answer to that which we have just mentioned, that many of the Qur'anic verses are in the metre of poetry, and should therefore be poetry, or considered as such."<sup>1</sup>

It was necessary for al-Bāqillānī to identify what was poetry proper and what was to be considered as poetry in the traditional sense, and whether the measures constituted for poetry would possibly accommodate the text of the Qur'an, or at least the verses in question. His reply argued: "That Quraysh and all the eloquent among the Arabs, as well as the experts in this matter, never believed that one verse of poetry (al-Bayt), or its equivalent was poetry although it may constitute a part of a poem and contain some of the rules of poetry. They were all well aware that poetry, in the strict sense of the word, whose composer was worthy of the title of poet, consisted of no less than two verses onwards. This is also the opinion of the majority of our contemporary Muslims, as well as the experts in this matter."<sup>2</sup>

The question naturally to be expected, following the above statement is, "Why is not one verse poetry or worthy of the description as such?"

To al-Bāqillānī, as to al-Jāhīz nearly two centuries before, the answer was, should that have been the case, most people would be declared poets, even to the inclusion of children, since a sufficient quantity

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(1) 'Midāyah', vol. XVI, f. 8b.

(2) Ibid. 'Intiṣār' (Sun), f. 81a; 'I'jāz, p. 30. In 'Intiṣār' the author's definition of poetry reads: "Poetry proper is speech with rhyme and metre, which cannot be achieved but for him who is aware of it, intending both the right metre and rhyme."

of prosodical metre can easily be recognised in their speech, during any form of their everyday conversation, in such domestic phrases as:

"Give me water to drink, in the tankard, boy."<sup>1</sup>

or similarly:

أَسْقِي فِي الْكَوْزِ مَاءَ يَا غَلامَ

"Close the door and bring me the food."<sup>2</sup>

أَغْلِقِ الْبَابَ وَأُخِضِ الطَّعامَ

which should be also considered as poetry. Moreover, such a metrical quantity may also occur in such genealogical chains as:

"He is 'Alī, the son of Ishāq, the son of Yahyah, the son of Khālid,

The son of Mūsā, the son of Kuthayr, the son of al-'Alā; the son of

Sā'id." <sup>3</sup> هو علي بن يحيى بن خالد + بن موسى بن كثير بن الملا بن صالح

The least recognised quantity, arguer al-Bāqillānī, is two verses, with the exception of the metre Rajaz, wherein four verses of that are tantamount to two.<sup>4</sup> Some, however, have excluded this metre altogether.<sup>5</sup>

The persistent opposition returned to the text of the Qur'ān to find at least the minimum quantity metrically measurable by any of the standardised metres. Their choice was the opening verses of the surahs, LI (3-4)<sup>6</sup> and LXXVII (1-3).<sup>7</sup> Considering that the first verse in the

(1) 'Intiṣār' (Sum), f. 81a; 'Hidāyah', vol. XVI, f. 9a; 'I'jāz' p. 83.

(2) Ibid; ibid; ibid; p. 81.

(3) Ibid; ibid f. 9b.

(4) Ibid. f. 81a; ibid. f. 8a; 'I'jāz' p. 80.

(5) Although this attitude is recorded in 'Intiṣār' (Sum), f. 82a; 'I'jāz' p. 81, the author's own opinion is, if the poems of the metre Rajaz were as long as those of Ru'bah and his father al-'Ajāj, there is no reason for their exclusion. 'Intiṣār' (Sum) f. 82a.

former surah has a different ending, the letter 'Wāw', whereas the succeeding verses end in the letter Ra it makes the least quantity of the Rajaz metre incomplete, without other prosodical deficiencies.

The last Surah the opposition picked on was LXXIX (1-5).<sup>1</sup> Al-Bāqillānī, as he did in the previous Surahs, here begins by emphasizing that such a quantity may occur in common speech.<sup>2</sup> Yet, from a prosodical viewpoint the Qur'ānic verse endings varied between Q.T.H.Q. and R. This however, led in turn to the consideration of one of the prosodical defects IKFĀ', or the substitution of some cognate letter for the Rawiyy which is one of the gravest faults in poetry.<sup>3</sup> Further according to the rules of prosody the letters Alif, Wāw and Yā' cannot be employed as letters of Rawiyy when they are long vowels as in the verses in question.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, from the prosodical deficiency Ikkfā', emerges the question most expected; cannot poetry be considered as such when there exist differences in its rhyme, ('urūf al-Rawiyy), despite the existence of

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- (1) "By those that pluck out vehemently  
and those that draw out violently,  
by those that swim serenely  
and those that outstrip suddenly  
b, those that direct an affair!" trans. A.J. Arberry, (op. cit)  
vol. 2, p. 322. In 'Intisar' (Sum), f. 83a, other verses were  
questioned e.g. XVIII/35, XI/2, but only in parts.

- (2) Several examples are shown among them:

"By the noble's right  
And his face of delight  
And his body slight  
And his faith so light

وحن الشريف  
وجهره لطيف  
وجسمه الخفيف  
ودينه السخيف

(or so foolish) 'Hidāyah' XVI, f. 10a; 'Intisar' (Sum) f. 82a.

- (3) Cf. W. Wright, 'A grammar of the Arabic Language', vol. II, p. 357.  
(4) Op. cit. p. 352.

some of the verses which were composed in that fashion?

The question being thus twofold, al-Bāqillānī begins by taking the second part first, reflecting on the authenticity of the two poems which were offered as examples,<sup>1</sup> and the poets to whom they were ascribed. The majority of the verses and the poets, to him, are anonymous,<sup>2</sup> except for one verse, which was mentioned by Sibawayh in 'The Book', which might have been with others of the same rhyme.

Though he does not deny this possibility, what he strongly rejects is that the verses offered cannot be taken as proof that the Qur'ānic verses in question are poetry.

The first part of the question, however, he referred to the experts, who do not consider as poetry that which is of different rhymes.

(1)

أرى من نصيبه جفاء بنفسه + إذا قام يَصْأَعُ لِقَدْرِهِ ذَمِيم  
فقال: أهد فأهد لميسر أنت + بمركبة والماقيات تدور  
فينا يسرى لله قال قائل + لئن جئت فؤادك لم يخب

(2) 'Hidāyah', vol. XVI, f. 11a; 'Intisār' (Sum.) f. 82b. In the latter work a fourth verse is recorded; In 'I'jāz' p. 84, the author's example is:-

رب اغني كنت به مفتبطاً + اشد كفتي لعمري صحبتك  
تمسكاً مني بالود ولا + أمسبه زهدني ذكرك  
تمسكاً مني بالود ولا + أمسبه يفيك لعمري ولا  
حورك عنده ابدأ + نجاب فيه أملاك

## 2 Al-Bāqillānī as a poetry critic

While acknowledging in an earlier chapter the view that the fourth century was the century of the specialists in literary theory, it should perhaps be realised that this does not imply limitation in the field of specialisation as the epithet would indicate, although some of the critics were, or became known to us, as such. This, at any rate, is not the point of view which has been expressed and which we are acknowledging, hence it does not argue of the limitation of the field of specialisation but rather the depth and thoroughness in the scope of literary theory.

Throughout the third and fourth centuries there were authors whose contributions are apparent in more than one field of literary or scientific study, and who proved to have equally accomplished noteworthy prominence in more than one branch of study. Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī (d. 310/922), for example, was beyond question, an eminent historian as well as the most distinguished among the commentators on the Qur'ān.

That al-Bāqillānī was a preeminent theologian and a jurist, in his own right, are facts which need not be emphasised here. The fact that he was a literary critic as well, and rightly proved to be such, is not perhaps surprising considering the nature of the subject with which he was dealing. Theology as such, or law for that matter, did not prevent other authors from tackling literary matters, and in this respect both al-Jāhiz and al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī prove to be good examples.

The question which needs to be asked here, before we look more closely at al-Bāqillānī's reflections on certain poems, is, did his

strong theological conviction undermine his integrity as a literary critic?

Zakī Mubārak's assertion,<sup>1</sup> that al-Bāqillānī approached poems of which he knew the weaknesses so as to show by contrast their inferiorities against the superiority of the Qur'ān, is hardly justifiable from a traditional Arab viewpoint. None - except Zakī Mubārak - have suggested that Imru' al-Qays's 'Mu'allaqah' and al-Buḥturī's poem, which are the two main poems criticised by al-Bāqillānī, were known wholly for their weakness. In fact, the traditional viewpoint of them proves the contrary which was the only reason al-Bāqillānī selected them in the first place.<sup>2</sup>

It is a fact that every age has a peculiar relationship to every existing literary work, and it is conceivable that every age sees Imru' al-Qays's 'Mu'allaqah' for instance from a new angle; it is equally true that every individual critic has his own idiosyncrasy, which leads to the obvious conclusion that every work of criticism is truly relevant only to the age that produces it. But retrospective criticism is a different matter; it is simply a matter of opinion. Throughout the ages we find some of the literary critics held and confirmed similar views to those of al-Bāqillānī; in fact, some actually even quote him.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, there were those who could not see eye to eye with him, even among his own contemporaries, as we shall see later.

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(1) 'Al-Nathr al-Fannī' ..... , 2nd edn., vol. 2, p. 64.

(2) 'I'jāz', pp. 241-3, 327-334.

(3) Al-Bāghdādī, 'K. Khizānat al-Adab', (Bulāq edn. 1299), vol. 1, pp. 508, 519, 550; vol.2, pp. 65, 66; vol.4, pp. 246, 305, 417, 418, 492.

In this respect, the modern scholars' diverse attitudes bear some resemblance to those of the ancients. If Zaki Mubārak in his unsupported view tries to denigrate al-Bāqillānī's literary criticism on account of the man's theological conviction, von Grunebaum's opinion of his attainment is: "Considering its pioneering nature, al-Bāqillānī's achievement ranks high."<sup>1</sup>

Ostensibly, it would seem that one has no choice but to take sides in the dispute over the role of al-Bāqillānī as a literary critic and to ally oneself with one of the two prevailing attitudes: for or against him; but this would take us nowhere, nor would the reconciliation of different opinions be of greater reward.

There are, however, certain facts which must be borne in mind. Al-Bāqillānī was a responsible theologian and here lies the whole problem. As a theologian, and this is to be expected of him as any zealous theologian, he is bound to be sensitive on dogmatic matters. He was, no doubt, indignant to find some who were trying to compare Imru' al-Qays' 'Mu'allaqah' or his other poetry with the Sacred Book,<sup>2</sup> or were alleged to do so, and others who claimed that al-Buḥturī's poetry had reached in eloquence the status of I'jāz.<sup>3</sup> This is chiefly the cause of his indignation. He was therefore stirred, provoked or even shocked, but be that as it may, these were only the causes of his reaction; the question is how far did his indignation warp his judgement, if in fact it did so at all?

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- (1) JAOS., vol. LXI (1941), p. 57. (2) 'I'jāz', pp. 322, 328.  
 (3) Ibid., p. 373. In Professor G. von Grunebaum's trans. 'A tenth century document of Arabic literary theory and criticism', p. 115, this passage reads: "Among them (the secretaries) there are some who in gross exaggeration (gulumān) claim for al-Buḥturī the I'jāz".

### 3 Imuu'al-Qays's Mu'allaqah and the poem of al-Buhturī

To begin with, al-Bāqillānī does not criticise the verses of the Mu'allaqah in their entirety, as his announcement in an earlier chapter in 'K. al-I'jāz' would have us believe.<sup>1</sup> He has, however, chosen to discuss approximately half of its verses.<sup>2</sup> His criticism, though in varying proportion, is focused on the first three themes of the Mu'allaqah, which are,

- i) The conventional opening, the love theme or the Nasīb,
- ii) The description of the night,
- iii) The description of the horse,

thus leaving other aspects and themes included in the poem virtually untouched.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) p. 70.

(2) All in all, the number criticised or reflected upon by the author is 38 verses out of the total figure of 77, as occurs in one of the earliest records of the Mu'allaqah, that of al-Aṣma'ī (cf. the latest edition of the poet's Diwān, by M. Abū al-Faḍl, pp. 8-26). In an early surviving commentary on the poem, that of al-Nahhās (d. 377-8/987), the number of verses is 76. (cf. E. Frankel ed. (Halle a/S, 1876), pp. 3-63). Also, cf. al-Batlayūsī's commentary (Bombay edn. 1895), pp. 19-52; and 'The Divan of the six ancient Arabic poets', ed. W. Ahlwardt, (London, 1870), pp. 146-50, no. 48. Though both the Ahlwardt and Abū al-Faḍl edns. are based on the al-A'lam of Santa Maria copy, a verse has been dropped in the former, which was perhaps due to the different MSS. used by the two editors. Throughout the ages, it would seem that there were incorporated a considerable number of verses into the original. Cf. for example, Abū Zayd al-Qurashī, 'Jamharat Ash'ar al-'Arab', pp. 49-66, he recorded 85 verses; al-Sandūbī edn. (Cairo 1938) pp. 124-37, wherein the figure is 91. We are assured by the early critics that al-Aṣma'ī's version is the most authentic, (cf. e.g. Mubarrad, 'Kāmil', ed. W. Wright, (Leipzig 1846), p. 148.

(3) Of the first theme, which consists of 43 vv. in al-A'lam's copy of al-Aṣma'ī's Riwayah, we find al-Bāqillānī contends with only 32vv. leaving out vv. 3, 4, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42 and 43; transposition of verses is apparent between vv. 19 and 20, and, peculiarly enough, between vv. 8 (6) and 29. Al-Bāqillānī is not perhaps to be indicted for the dismissal of vv. 3 and 4, the same shortcoming occurs in the

(3) cont.

fourth century commentator al-Naḥḥās's version, which may indicate that the version of the Mu'allaqah current during the fourth century lacked them. Nor can he be accused of alternating between verses to serve a particular end; transposition of verses within a single theme is noticeable in various versions. (Cf. al-Naḥḥās's commentary, vv. 32, 42; 18, 44; 52, 56; etc. Also, al-Baṭlayūsi's commentary, vv. 32, 38; 57, 65; etc.) In the case of the latter however, alternation is apparent even between the verses of two different themes. Alternation of verses can lead to a gross misinterpretation and bad assessment when comparing for example, the verses 19 and 20 in al-Bāqillānī's criticism ('I'jāz', pp. 256-9), with Ibn 'Abd Rabbīth, 'Al-'Iqd al-Farīd', vol. 5, pp. 347, 357, as they, in the latter work, are in their right order, or at least as occur in al-Aṣma'ī's 'Riwāyah'.

The second theme, the description of the night, which comprises the vv. 44-48, al-Bāqillānī comments briefly on three verses.

The third and the last theme he touched, the description of the horse, vv. 49-58, three verses only receive attention.

In this respect, the question of al-Riwāyah (the transmission) itself raises a difficult question, when we come to consider the somewhat bizarre alterations of the readings of the Mu'allaqah throughout the centuries, up to al-Bāqillānī's own time, (cf. Abū al-Faḍl edn. pp. 367-376, wherein he listed the various readings of it). For an exclusive study on the subject, see also Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Asad, 'Maṣādir al-Shā'ir al-Jāhili', ch. 5, pp. 485-549. Nonetheless, if al-Aṣma'ī's version had been traditionally recognised as one of the most authentic readings, and if we also take into account that of al-Naḥḥās, the fourth century commentator, al-Bāqillānī's 38 vv. of the Mu'allaqah would appear to correspond roughly to the two versions put together, (Naḥḥās, though he often refers to al-Aṣma'ī's Riwāyah, cf. e.g. v. 6, p. 7, and v. 9, p. 9, he described it particularly as the best, cf. e.g. v. 15, p. 14, and v. 33, p. 27, etc., used nonetheless another version) in 24 verses al-Bāqillānī is in full agreement with al-Aṣma'ī. In 10 verses, when the differences are made over a word or words, construction or both, he agrees with al-Naḥḥās.

In the case of verse 9, the difference is in grammatical inflection. Al-Bāqillānī's version may differ from them both, cf. v. 5. He may agree in one hemistich with one and in the second with another, cf. vv. 19 and 27. The three of them may differ over words and construction, cf. v. 28.

Verse 29 provides us with a very confused case, al-Naḥḥās, for example, dismissed it altogether, offering instead two versions of verse no. 30. It involves also v. 8, which is partially dismissed by al-Bāqillānī. For a fuller picture the diagram below may indicate the peculiarity of this verse and its involvement.

Further, none of the afore-mentioned are fully exhausted. Of three chosen themes it is the first one, the Nasīb theme, of which al-Bāqillānī covers a substantial number of verses, as well as scrutinising them in fuller detail, whereas, in respect of the other two his contribution was far less.

In the case of al-Buhturī's panegyrical poem al-Bāqillānī's liberal selection therefrom is more generous than that from the Mu'allaqah, for he reflects on forty-one verses out of the entire fifty-three which the poem contains. From the second and the longest theme — the description of the horse — he was only content<sup>4</sup> with nine verses out of twenty. And a single verse in the final theme was overlooked by him.

On the whole the poem consists of four major themes:-

(I) the love prelude or the Nasīb, (11 vv.)

(3) cont.

<u>Hemistich</u>		<u>al-Asma'ī</u>	<u>al-Nahhās</u>	<u>al-Bāqillānī</u>
V. 8 (6)	a b	+ as v. 29b	∅	∅
V. 29	a b	∅	+ as v. 8b(6)	+ as v. 8b(6)
V. 30	a b	∅	* mentioned twice	∅

Key

+ = not found

∅ = present

\* = In one version he agrees with al-Asma'ī, in the other with al-Bāqillānī.

(4) See I-jāz, p. 353.

- (ii) the delineation of the horse, (20 vv.)
- (iii) the praise for the eulogised person, and (12 vv.)
- (iv) finally the description of the sword. (10 vv.)

Apart however from the few exceptions, above noted, the order of the verses within those themes was observed intact. There are however various readings of the text of the poem manifest in several sources which recorded or referred to it.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, though <sup>the</sup> alternating of a verse with another<sup>2</sup> or the disappearance of some of the verses is apparent in some of the editions of the poet's *Diwān*, this latter is not the case in al-Bāqillānī's selection.

As the love theme engages most of al-Bāqillānī's criticism of the *Mu'allaqah*, to be precise 32 verses out of the total of 38. which he selects, one of the issues involved therein is worthy, perhaps, to be called:

#### Moral and ethical criticism.

When judging a work of art as moral or immoral, the first thing to be considered is perhaps the principle or principles on which a verdict is justified and thus established. Although criteria, as the works of art themselves, differ considerably, in the case of the theologian

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- (1) For a good number of these various readings, see the most recent edition of the poet's *Diwān* (1964) by H.K. al-Ṣayrafi, vol. 3. pp. 1741-52. Cf. particularly vv. 5,6,11,12,32,33,45,49,50,52 with those in al-Bāqillānī's selection.
  - (2) Cf. Constantinople edn. (1300 A.H.) vol.2, p. 218. Here v.23 occurs as 17 and v.18 as 31 and 34 alternates with 35.
  - (3) Cf. Beirut edn. (1962) p. 368 wherein v.19 is not found. For further observation see al-Ṣayrafi's edn. (op.cit., pp.1741 footnote and the footnote for v.22.)

al-Bāqillānī the religious element appears naturally the most obvious. Yet the fact remains that the ode or the Qasidah, which was subjected to such criticism, had been a product of a pagan age, which, for good or ill, had had its own set of properties and values. Whether this important factor would invalidate the later judgements, which were persuaded or motivated by different terms of reference, or not, the case is clearly unevenly balanced.

Nonetheless, although we may observe the imbalance or unfairness of a literary trial, we should not pronounce judgement on a classical work, in this respect, before consulting the Arabic literary theory, particularly the views of the critics prior to al-Bāqillānī himself.

Was the moral concept a sound criterion for criticising poetry? The question was thus raised by the poetry critic Qudāmah b. Ja'far (d. 332/922) sometime earlier in this century or in the latter part of the previous one, especially in connection with certain verses in the ode in question.

At the very outset of his 'Criticism of poetry' while demonstrating the qualities on which poetry should be criticised<sup>1</sup> and preambing on one of the four major elements he assigned to poetry, the meaning, he observes that, meanings to poetry are the substance or the raw material at the disposal of the poets, no matter whatsoever the poet chooses, praise-worthy or defamatory, what is important is the perfection of the treatment of the meaning of the material he chooses.

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(1) 'Naqd al-Shi'r', ed. S.A. Bonebakker, pp.4-5.

Illustrating this point further he adds, "I have found some people who defamed Imru' al-Qays's verses,

'Many a fair one like thee, though not like thee a virgin,  
 Have I visited by night; and many a lovely mother have  
 I diverted from the care of her yearling infant adorned with amulets!  
 When the suckling behind her cried, she turned to him  
 With half her body, but half of it pressed beneath  
 My embrace, was not turned from me.'<sup>1</sup>

arguing that the meaning here is obscene. The obscenity of the meaning itself is not a reason which repudiates the excellence of the poetry in it, as the excellence of carpentry cannot be denigrated because of the bad inherent quality of the wood."

On the other hand pre-Islamic poetical manners were not condemned on account of this fact, on the contrary, they were preserved; some of the poetry critics even insisted that the poets of their own time should adhere rigidly to them.<sup>2</sup>

Nor was al-Bāqillānī the first to launch moral criticism against the verses of Imru' al-Qays's Mūallaqah. It was Ibn Sallām's (d.232/845) sonorous remark concerning pre-Islamic poets generally, that some of them used to abstain from obscenity in their poetry and were not notorious for mentioning their atrocities; but others did not refrain from doing so nor were they ashamed of indulging such. Of the latter group Ibn Sallām

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(1) 'The Poem of Amral Kais', trans. by Sir W. Jones, p. 15.

(2) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Al-Shi'r wal-Shu'arā', ed. M.J. de Goeje, pp. 14-15.

single out the poet Imru' al-Qays.<sup>1</sup>

Turning to al-Bāqillānī's approach in the light of the above attitudes; Qudāmah's permissive remark, with which, we have good reason to believe, he was familiar, appears to have meant nothing to him, or passed unheeded by him, but that of the early Ibn Sallām and those who followed him clearly appealed to him and was exercised on a number of the verses of the Mu'allaqah such as:-

- v. (9) 'The first half of this verse (9) contains nothing but silliness'
- v. (9) 'His silly juvenile attitude.'
- v. (10) 'Outweighing with silliness'.
- v. (11) 'A feminine manner of speech.'
- v. (11) 'In the second hemistich again there is a touch of feminine.'  
speech.'
- v. (14) 'He shows such obscenity and foulness that the decent person  
(al-karīm) would loathe, and be too proud to repeat."

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(1) 'Tabaqāt al-Shu'arā' pp.34-5. For example of such outrageous atrocities he quoted the verses:  
"Many's the pregnant woman like you, aye, and the nursing mother, I've night-visited, and made her forget her amuleted one-year-old."

and, "I came and already she'd slipped off her garment for sleep,  
Beside the tent-flap, all but a single flimsy slip."  
(The Seven Odes, trans. A.J.Arberry, pp.34,62)

Ibn Qutaybah's 'Al-Shi'r wal-Shu'arā', p.40, quoted the same first verse as occurred in Ibn Sallām's 'Tabaqāt' and another from a different poem.

"I ascended to her after her people had gone to sleep,  
Like water bubbles rising gradually, (Hāl 'ala hāl)  
(Trans. von Grunebaum, p. 11)

Al-Marzubānī, (d.384/994) 'Al-Muwashshah', p.113, quoted also the verse which occurred in both, to which he added the verse following it in the Mu'allaqah,

"Whenever he whimpered behind her, she turned to him,  
with half her body, the other half unshifted under me."  
(Trans. A.J.Arberry, op.cit. pp,35,62.)

v.(15) 'The first verse (v.15) represents extreme obscenity and levity.'

v.(17) 'The first verse (v.17) exhibits a great amount of poor judgement (rakaka), and a feminine touch and delicacy, yes, (even) effeminacy.'<sup>1</sup>

#### 4 Al-Bāqillānī's attitude towards poetry.

Summing up al-Bāqillānī's position in the development of rhetoric Professor von Grunebaum observes, "His outlook is that of an educated layman rather than that of a specialist."<sup>2</sup>

For al-Bāqillānī the field of specialisation was theology to which all his works testify. However, when theology progresses to literary criticism as in 'K. al-I'jāz', though he often utilises the views of literary critics, his own judgements and personal observations are no doubt of extreme originality.

Before considering some examples of al-Bāqillānī's assessment of poetry, to see whether his views are harmonious with any literary traditional theory of criticism or exceedingly eccentric and biased, his attitude towards poetry generally should perhaps be considered first. To read such remarks as :-

"He who imagines that poetry is of noteworthy prominence, his error is apparent and his ignorance is manifest. For poetry is a mode (of expression) mellowed by tongues, alternated by hearts, overflowing with misgivings and in it the Devil plays his part,"<sup>3</sup> the immediate impression would be that the author here is resentful

1) 'I'jāz', pp. 251-6, Eng. trans. by G. von Grunebaum, 'A tenth-century document....' pp. 65-9. 2) Trans. Intro. pp. xx.

3) 'I'jāz', pp. 457.

of the whole business of poetry root and branch. But this would be an unfair assumption. And such a remark should necessarily be considered in relation to the context in which it occurs wherein the comparison is between God-sent, the Qur'ān and man-made, poetry.

In this context the author's view is not far removed from the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse (XXVI/224) concerning poets. Considering, however, poetry in isolation or poetry for poetry's sake or in relation to its copartner, prose, al-Bāqillānī's conception of it is extremely high. On hearing, for example, a debate in which two experts in literature were expressing two different views; the former showing the advantage of prose over poetry, the latter favouring the reverse, in support of the latter view he comments :-

" In my opinion, the latter view is confirmed by the fact that most of the brilliance of Arabic language is in poetry and that we do not find in their prose what we find in their poetry."<sup>1</sup>

In the same debate one of the objections levelled against poetry was that it narrows the possibility of rendering ideas; to which al-Bāqillānī has this to say :-

"Despite its narrowing of the boundries of speech, it nonetheless contains it intact.....If poetry is well-arranged within its domain and if all its implements are complete no (other) human discourse approaches it. " <sup>2</sup>

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(1) Ibid, p. 236.

(2) Ibid. For an earlier assessment of this issue see G.von Grunebaum, Al-Mubarrad's Epistle on poetry and prose, *Orientalia*, (n.s.) vol. X, (1941) p. 373.

Another point which also is worth considering in this respect is the view of poetry critics on the two poems in question, especially those critics who were long before the author's time and also those counted among his contemporaries. Fortunately, a considerable number of verses in both poems, if not the poets' anthologies as a whole, had been or were a subject of evaluation to those critics. Al-Bāqillānī was evidently well aware of many of those views, indeed, he even took the trouble to examine some of them. It is quite immaterial whether he agrees or differs with those critics as long as the rules are genuine and the criteria of similar bases. And if he happened to exercise those rules more fully, surely, the more to his credit.

For his own criticism however, his declaration, right from the start, that he is to demonstrate some of the weaknesses and shortcomings of such celebrated poems, may lead us for the moment to think of the onesidedness of his treatment or even of his stretching of the point too far.

This however does not lead him astray to deny or overlook any element of beauty in them.<sup>1</sup>

Further it would seem that al-Bāqillānī's strong tendency to show that such a mundane, albeit fine art, as poetry, even at its best could be imbued and impaired with defects, urged him to penetrate more deeply in his examination of the text of the two poems, or his selection from them, which, to say the least, is the real function of a true critic.

(1) Cf. eg. I'jaz, pp. 274-5, 342.

To illustrate the above we may quote at some length from his

criticism of the Mu'allaqah:-

- " 1. "Halt ye two, let us weep in remembrance of a beloved one and of a dwelling-place at Saqt al-Liwà, between ad-Dahûl and Hawmal, 2. and Tūdiḥ and al-Miqrat; its traces have not been effaced by what Southwind and Northwind have woven over it."

Those who are his eager partisans or claim all the beauties of poetry (for him) say: this is an innovation (badi' ) for he (p.131) halt and asks to halt, sheds tears and asks to shed tears, mentions the past ('ahd), the mansion and the beloved, gives vent to his pain and wishes (the past) to remain, and all this in one verse; and (his partisans list) more merits of like kind.

We have explained this only lest you might think we overlook the points of beauty (in his poems) whenever they occur, and neglect the signs of craftsmanship (sinâ'a) whenever they are to be found. Consider-may Allah lead you the right way-and look -may Allah give you guidance: You know that in these two lines there is nothing whereby he has outstripped any other poet on the race-track or beaten any other artist. Both in wording and meaning there are defects (in these verses).

The first of them is that he invites him who weeps for the memory of the beloved, to halt. The mention (or: though) of her does not, however, demand that the unconcerned should weep. For the latter the striving for happiness would be the only natural thing, though he might weep because of his (friend's) weeping and feel sorry for his friend because of the narrowness of his straits. As for his weeping for his friend's beloved and his companion's mistress, that is absurd. For if it is the poet's intention to let (the companion) halt and shed tears as a lover, the wording is correct but the sense is bad from another point of view: It is the height of folly (saḥf) to assume that the poet should not be jealous of his beloved and should ask another man to dally with her, and to display his love jointly with himself.

Further, the recording of the places and the naming of the localities: ad-Dahûl, Hawmal, Tūdiḥ, al-Miqrat and Saqt al-Liwà, does not serve any purpose in these two verses. It would have been sufficient to mention (trans. p.62) some of them in laying out the scene (of his grief; ta'rif). This prolixity (tatwil), since it avails nothing, (shows) a certain lack of (poetical) power ('ayy) 1

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- (1) Later on while reflecting on al-Buhturī's poem (v.3, p. 337.) referring to the same verses once more in comparison with that of al-Buhturī's wherein similarly certain names of certain places are given, al-Bāqillānī has this to say:-

"Imru'ulqis was not content with one specification (ḥadd) but he delimited (the area in question) by four specifications as if he wished to buy the site (Manzil) and was afraid-if he made a mistake in one of the borderlines- that the purchase would be void or its conditions invalid" (trans. p.93)

For more similar ridiculing remarks see also pp.346,348, 351.

Further, his words lam ya'fu rasmu-hâ (its traces have not been effaced). Al-Asma'î mentions amongst the beauties of (this poem) that (the traces) are remaining. So that it grieves us to see them. Had they been wiped out we would feel (more) at ease, but it would be more appropriate to be considered one of its drawbacks<sup>1</sup>. For if he is sincere in his love the effacing of the traces could only increase the intensity of his affection and the strength of his passion. Al-Asma'î upholds the propriety of this clause only for fear lest (Imru'ulqais) be blamed for it and the (following) questions be raised: What is the purpose of his informing us that the vestiges of the abodes of his beloved have not been effaced? And: What meaning (can be ascribed) to this padding (of the verse)? So (al-Asma'î) adduces whatever he can (in Imru'ulqais' defense) but he has not succeeded by his help in absolving him from his blunder (ḥalal). Then there is in this (group of) word(s) one more defect: for he finishes the (sequence of) verses, saying (vs. 4b.):<sup>2</sup> fa-hal 'inda rasmin dârisin min mu'awali (but is an effaced trace a place for excessive wailing?) So (already) Abū 'Ubaida points out that he goes back on himself and gives himself the lie, just as does Zuhair: (p. 132)

"Halt at the abodes which the (bygone) times have not effaced; oh yes, but winds and rains have changed them."

Another (scholar) says: with the first verse (Imru'ulqais) intends (to say) that the traces have not been entirely obliterated, and with the second (i.e., 4b) that they have partly disappeared, so that the two terms do not contradict each other. This assumption does not help, for afa and darasa have the same meaning. Hence, when he says lam ya'fu rasmuhâ, and then 'afâ, this is doubtless a contradiction. The attempted justification of Abū 'Ubaida (i'tidār) would be nearer the mark if only it were

(P. 63)

correct. But (Imru'ulqais) does not introduce his saying (i.e. 4b) in order to rectify (istidrak; his statement in 2a) as does Zuhair. So (Abū 'Ubaida) is still farther off the mark.

(For) li-mâ nasajat-hâ (by what have woven.....), (Imru'ulqais) should have said li- mâ nasaja-hâ. He expressed himself incorrectly and chose by way of comment the feminine form, for they (i.e., the words janub and

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- (1) The phrase "We, however, regret his testimony" which occurs in the translation after al-Asma'î's name is a mistake due - as the translator expresses his fear - to a fault in the text from which it was translated. The underlined is what we find in the edition we are using.
  - (2) According to the poet's Diwan the verse number is 6b.

šam'al) are applied here in the meaning of winds (and winds are feminine.) Only the metre forced him to take this improper licence. lam ya'fu rasmu-hā (its traces have not been effaced):- the best wording would have been lam ya'fu rasmu-hu; for he mentions al-manzil (the abode; masc.). If (the feminine) refers to the plains (biqā') and regions in which the abodes are situated, it is still a mistake. For he wants to qualify as obliterated only the abode where his beloved had alighted, or (to describe it as) not having been effaced, as distinguished from the neighbouring places. If, however, by al-manzil (the abode) he means ad-dār (the homestead) and therefore uses the feminine (ad-dār being feminine), it is again a mistake. And even if (these lines) should be free from all (the defects referred to) and from all other shortcomings which we do not care to mention because of our aversion to profusion, we still would not doubt that the poetry of our own contemporaries is by no means inferior to these verses, nay, that it even surpasses and excels them".<sup>1</sup>

Comparing the above example of al-Bāillānī's criticism with other poetry critics' views to see how far he himself was off the mark or indeed how original and penetrating his views are, one notices that apart from those early critics whose views were criticised by him, there were those among the early critics who generally praised the verses in question.<sup>2</sup> Among his own contemporaries although we find some who praised them in part,<sup>3</sup> others recorded some of the shortcomings in them.<sup>4</sup> Yet if we may seek an apologist's view among the author's contemporaries to harmonise or to balance the severity of his judgement, al-Sharīf al-Mustadā's opinion may be of some importance.

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(1) A Tenth century Document, pp. 61-3.

(2) See Ibn Qutaybah, al-Shi'r wal-Shu'arā', p. 56, Qudāmah, Naqd al-Shi'r, p. 97.

(3) Āmidī, Muwāzanah, vol.I., p. 464.

(4) Marzūbānī, Muwashshah, 35.

"Among that which can sustain various interpretations" writes al-Sharīf al-Muḥtadā, 'Amālī', vol. 2. pp. 192-5, "is Imru' al-Qays's verse, (verse 2):

"Foodih and El-Mikrat, whose trace is not yet effaced  
for all the spinning of the south winds and north blasts."

(a) Some people say:-

The meaning here is that its trace is not obliterated by the spinning of the two mentioned winds only, but because of the continuous winds and rains in general - and as a proof for this is his saying in the other verse (6b) "What is there left to lean on when the trace is obliterated?"

(b) Others say:-

The meaning of "its trace is not effaced" is that its trace is not obliterated. According to this view the trace was in existence and unobliterated, and the poet's saying in the other verse, "obliterated trace" means where the trace would be obliterated in future, though it was then in existence.

(c) Others say:-

The meaning of its trace is not yet effaced as has been maintained in the second opinion, i.e. it is not obliterated by the spinning (of the two winds), but they (the two places), were in existence and standing, to an extent that we are saddened for them and become concerned for their sight - Had they been totally obliterated we would not have grieved, as the poet Ibn Aḥmar said:

"O! would that the abodes had perished,  
Lest they should bring a sad and grieved (lover) to tears".

إلا ليت المنازل قد بليت : فلا يبكين ذا الشجن حزين

Or as another poet said:-

"Would that the traces of abodes which remain to grieve us

Disappeared as their inhabitants had perished."

كَيْتَ الدِّيَارِ الَّتِي تَبْقَى لِحُزْنِنَا : كَانَتْ تَبِينُ إِذَا مَا أَهْلَاهَا بَانُوا

As for the poet's saying afterwards: "What is there left to lean on when the trace is obliterated" is not in contradiction with this; it is as anyone may say: "Your book is obliterated", i.e. partly.

(This view was recorded by al-Bāqillānī, I'jāz, p. 246).

(d) Abū Bakr al-'Abdī says:-

"The meaning of 'Its trace is not yet effaced' is from my heart, though the physical place itself is effaced. According to this interpretation, the mentioned statement does not include the poet's saying: "What is there left to lean on where the trace is obliterated?" In all aspects, therefore, there would be no contradictions."

(e) Others say:-

The poet means by his saying 'its trace is not yet effaced', that it is not obliterated, then he contradicts himself when he says "What is there left to lean on where the trace is obliterated?"

A contradiction similar to that of Zuhayr when he says:-

"Halt! at the abodes which time has not effaced,

Yea, winds and continuous rains have obliterated."

قِفْ بِالْدِيَارِ الَّتِي لَمْ يَغْفِهَا الْقَدَمُ : بَلَى وَغَيْرَهَا الْأُرُوحُ وَالرِّيمُ

or as the other poet says:-

"... would that you never die, O best (son) of Amr son of Malīk,  
Nay, he who is taken to the graves is surely deceased."

فلا تبعدن يا خير عمرو بن مالك مكي إن من رر القبور ليعبد

Al-Murtadā, however, does not consider Zuhayr's verse as contradictory, for it can be taken in the light of any of the interpretations offered in the verse of Imru'al-Qays which rid it of contradiction. Nor the other poet's verse hence the first hemistich of it is an invocation and it does not imply affirmation nor negation."

(This is Abū'Ubaydah's view as recorded by al-Bāqillānī, I'jāz, pp. 245-6.)

(f) There is another way of interpreting Imru'al-Qays's verse (this seems to be al-Murtadā's own view), that is, to consider the meaning of 'its trace is not yet effaced' as "it does not increase or grow therefore it is apparent, so that the observer knows it and it is recognised by the spectator, but it is hidden obscured and invisible." Then the poet adds: "What is there left to lean on where the trace is obliterated?" Thus there would be no contradiction between both statements hence obliteration is stated in both cases. There is no doubt that the word ('Afā; is effaced) is an antithetical word which can express obliteration in one sense and multiplicity and profusion in another."

For the meaning of the word 'Afā' indicating multiplicity and increase al-Murtadā quoted from the Qur'an the verse (VII/90), from Tradition, 'Trim the moustaches, and spare the beards'; from poetry, the verse: 'But we made the sword to wound the camels' thighs  
Which are full of meat, and their humps are high'.

ولكننا نخص بسيف منها : يا سوق عافيات اللهم كوم

## 5. Criteria of Criticism

It is not<sup>so</sup> much a question of the genuineness or the widespread employment of the principles of criticism exerted by al-Bāqillānī on the text of the two poems in question or what he selected from them, but merely which of these principles did he use ?

In the example which we have already seen of his criticism of the first two verses of the Mu'allaqah there are at least four objections which have been raised. The same objections together with others have also been levelled against several verses throughout the rest of the same poem as well as that of al-Buhturī. In the following we may briefly<sup>1</sup> outline some of the major points of criticism :

### A. Lack of originality.

That nothing was unique or the idea was very common or had been expressed by an earlier poet, or was expressed by even a much later one in a more vigorous and expressive form than by any of the two poets concerned, is almost a uniform pattern of evaluation, rather disparagement, which is maintained by the author at the opening and closing of the example which we have seen. Further, more examples are also apparent in other verses of the same poem<sup>2</sup> and to an even greater extent in the poem of al-Buhturī.<sup>3</sup>

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(1) In addition to his translation of the poetry section in 'K. al-I'jāz' reference should also be made to professor, G. von Grunebaum's learned detailed classification of the criteria of evaluation " Arabic literary Criticism in the 10th century A.D. " J.A.O.S. vol. LXI, (1940) pp. 52-5, in which the vies of al-Bāqillānī and others have aptly been demonstrated.

(2) Eg. vv; 8, (p. 250), 9, (251), 14, (254), 16, (255), 17, (256), 21, (260), 22, (261), 24, (264) etc.

(3) Eg. vv; 3, (340) , 5, (341), 6, (342), 9-11, (345), 13, (347), 14, (349) etc

The approach itself is sound enough, or at least it can be confirmed by many examples from the works of the literary critics of the relevant period. However, the final aspect of the above four points (i.e. the outstripping or the excelling of a later poet an earlier one brought about as an additional discrediting measure) however true from a purely comparative view point,<sup>1</sup> it does contradict on the other hand a valuable basis for comparison emphasized by al-Bāqillānī himself when dealing with the poetry of al-Buhturī. He writes;-

"The poetry of al-Buhturī can only be compared with that of poets of his own class (tabaqa) and of his own contemporaries, who compete with him in the same race-course and have attained to (about) the same station."<sup>2</sup>

Had this been the author's method in dealing with the Mu'allaqah, or indeed with the poem of al-Buhturī itself, he would<sup>have</sup> at least acted up to his own principles.

- B. Padding (Hashw)<sup>3</sup>
- C. Contradiction<sup>4</sup>
- D. Grammatical errors<sup>5</sup>

- (1) "You find" noticed al-Bāqillānī "that the earlier (poet) employs motives for which a later (poet) has substituted something better inspired by the earlier" 'I'jāz' p.279, Trans. p.83.
- (2) Ibid, p.369, Trans. -p.112.
- (3) Eg. the word 'minnī' (lit. from me), the subject being the word tears and the phrase 'on my breast' also the repeating of the subject, tears in the second hemistich in verse 5 of the Mu'allaqah. Another example is the phrase 'beside the tent-flap' in the verse 25 (p.267) "I came and already she'd stripped off her garment for sleep.....all but a single flimsy slip"
- In the case of al-Buhturī's poem more examples can be seen. See verses; 2, 5, 14, 18, 44, 46. Sometimes the padding was qualified as chilling eg. v.18 (p.351), or just bad, see vv.44, 46, (pp.360, 361)
- (4) Eg. Mu'allaqah, vv.2, 6 (pp.246, 248)
- (5) Although the author reported that men of letters had written a good deal on Imru'al-Qays's grammatical and other mistakes (p.278), he himself recorded some of them in vv.2, 12, 13, 23, 28.

E. Rhetorical shortcomings.<sup>1</sup>

F. Dislocation either between two hemistichs in a single verse<sup>2</sup>  
or the poor relation between a verse and those preceding it.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes the interdependence between verses has also been  
noticed by the author.<sup>4</sup>

- 1) Although some of the rhetorical shortcomings occurring in the Mu'allaqah are observed by the author, such as; the weakness of the simile (v.11, p.252); the inappropriateness of the metaphor (v.20, p.257), or its being of inferior position (v. 21,p.250) and the comparison of simile and antithesis (v.50, p.277). In the case of al-Buhturī's poem, however, for the obvious fact that some of the later poets, particularly Abū Tammām and al-Buhturī, depended greatly on rhetorical devices or indulged them considerably; several shortcomings were observed by al-Bāqillānī in al-Buhturī's poem. Some of them he described as;
  - i) Ugly and unbecoming, e.g. the simile in vv. 17,19, (pp.350, 352), metaphor in v.44 (p.359).
  - ii) Common, e.g. the simile in v.4 (p.340).
  - iii) Constraint, e.g. the antithesis v.3 (p.339), 'Tarsī' v.4 (p.340), antithesis and paronomasia v.10 (p.345).
- 2) E.g. Mu'allaqah, vv. 9 (p.249), 10 (p.251), 18 (p.257), 26 (p.268).
- 3) E.g. Mu'allaqah, vv. 21,(p.261); Buhturī's poem vv.7 (p.342), 11 (p.344), 12 (p.346), 19 (p.352), 32 (p.354), 35(356), 37-8 (p.358), 43 (p.359). More noticeably when the poet moves from one of them into another.
- 4)

RHYMED PROSE

This is the third and final literary theme considered in al-Bāqillānī's studies on I'jāz. As in the case of his delineation of poetry his contribution concerns two major objectives:-

- a) The occurrence of rhymed prose (Saj') in the Qur'ān:
- b) The criticism of some examples of rhymed prose which had been associated in one way or another with the style of the Qur'ān: It is however, unlike his chapter concerning poetry in the sense that his contribution here is far less.

In his early theological works such as 'K. al-Tamhīd' and 'K. al-Hidāyah', his discussion concerning rhymed prose sprang primarily from one of the theological controversies, viz. the question of opposition or rivalry. In the former work, for example, the question in one case was, "Could not Musaylamah's rhymed prose be considered a form of rivalry to the Qur'ān?" This was a proposition which the author repulsed on the grounds that had it been considered any form of rivalry the Arabs, more particularly Musaylamah's contemporaries (the reference here being to the apostatical movement during his time) should have clung to it. He himself did not claim it as miraculous style nor did he challenge by it.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier in 'K. al-Hidāyah' the same examples of the persistence of Musaylamah's rhymed prose were cited in connexion with the same question of rivalry, but then merely as a proof of the abundance

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1) Pp. 154-5.

of the Arabs' motives to transmit any rivalry against the Qur'ān, if there had been any.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the same work when the author's discussion becomes more or less eclectic, Musaylamah's examples, together with pre- and post-Islamic specimens of good and bad rhymed prose were compared.<sup>2</sup>

In 'I'jāz' the author's major chapter on the subject was confined mainly to one specific issue or the denial of the existence of rhymed prose (Saj') in the Qur'ān, a debate with a more theological overtone than a literary one. To the author as well as many of the Ash'arite school, including al-Ash'arī himself, there was no rhymed prose in the Qur'ān. On the other hand, there were many others who held the reverse, arguing that it even contained rhymed prose of splendour and literary merit comparable to that conveyed by the application of figurative language.

This assertion by the latter group was based on the following:-

- i) There is a particular verse in the Qur'ān (XX/70) in which the name of Aaron precedes that of Moses, for no apparent reason, according to them, but the sake of the rhyme.
- ii) Comparatively rhymed prose differs from poetry in that it does not appear in speech unintentionally, or if it does so, it is much less than the least recognizable quantity of poetry, the which can be found in the speech of him who is a poet proper and him who is not; therefore the quantity of rhymed prose occurring in the Qur'ān could not have appeared unintentionally.

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1) Vol. IX, ff. 12-b-13b.

2) Vols. XV, ff. 14b-20a; XVI, ff. 1a-4b. Such names as; Sayf b. Dhī Yāzan, Abū Talib, al-Hajjāj, al-Mukhtār and others. See also 'I'jāz' pp. 238-241.

iii) This latter point was based on a particular definition of rhymed prose.

Contending with such opinion al-Bāqillānī begins by forwarding a series of external factors which led rapidly towards theological wrangles, some of which we have already seen in his chapters on the challenge. For example:-

Had there been rhymed prose in the Qur'ān it should not have been different from the rest of the Arabs' language. And if it were like the rest of their speech it would not have been miraculous. Further he argues if it is possible to say that there is miraculous rhymed prose it should be equally possible to speak of miraculous poetry. Yet rhymed prose was customary to the Arab soothsayers and its exclusion from the Qur'ān is more appropriate than that of poetry, for the reason that divination contradicts prophethood where poetry does not. In addition to all this a Tradition of the Prophet condemning the language of the soothsayers is cited.

Leaving, however, all such external justification aside and facing the question of rhymed prose, per se, what had been considered as rhymed prose in the Qur'ān by those who professed such, in al-Bāqillānī's opinion was but sheer misunderstanding.

In his opinion speech may bear resemblance to rhymed prose but it does not necessarily do so. For what qualifies speech as rhymed prose is the fact that the meaning in it is subject to its wording and determined by the outcome of it, a feature which is not in the Qur'ān.

Faced with the question of whether the Qur'ān included them

both (i.e. rhymed prose in which the meaning is merely following the wording and not for any merit of its own or vice versa), the author considers that a detailed assessment of this would require a full investigation of each chapter in the Qur'ān which is beyond the scope of this work.

Justifying the theory of al-Fawāsil<sup>1</sup> (quiescence or pauses at the end of Qur'ānic verses) which distinguishes the style of the Qur'ān from the rest of Arabic language, in his opinion it is sound as long as they are considered unintended, therefore their occurrence is but like the occurrence of a single verse of poetry in speech which does not entitle it to be called poetry.

Further, if what occurs in the Qur'ān should be considered rhymed prose, in the author's opinion, it should be bad and unpraiseworthy for the reason that rhymed prose has its fixed rules, any divergence from which leads to the decline of speech and its isolation from the realm of eloquence.

Having resorted to further external factors in support of his view and also rejecting the concept of internal rhyme in the Qur'ān, al-Bāqillānī finally refers to the definition of rhymed prose and the Qur'ānic verse (XX/70) an importance to which was attached by those who maintained that there was rhymed prose in the Qur'ān.

The definition, that rhymed prose was derived from the constant cooing of a pigeon was meaningless to him for this would include poetry also. In the case of the Qur'ānic verse the claim in his opinion is also false for the advantage here lies in the repeating of the same story in various ways.

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(1) Although al-Bāqillānī is supporting al-Rummānī's idea about al-Fawasil he does not agree with him in all aspects (cf. p.90 with 'Nukat' p.90), nor with his definition of rhymed prose cf. Ibid.93

CHAPTER VIII

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A L - A S A D A B Ā D H Ī

(Al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār Ibn Ahmad Ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār)

325/415 A.H. = 935/1042 A.D. \*

"He is what the Mu'tazilah call the chief judge ( Qādī al-Qudāt ), a title by which they denote none but him and whenever it is mentioned refers to no one else save him. He was the head (Imām) of the Mu'tazilah in his day."

Subkī, 'Tabaqāt', III/219-20.

\* We read in Ibn al-Athīr's 'Kāmil' (vol. IX, p. 235), "....and he passed the ninety years of age."

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

From the scant biographical accounts - often repeated throughout the centuries - the portrait depicted of al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār shows a man whose most prominent characteristic was that he was the most influential as well as controversial theological figure among the later generation of the Mu'tazilah who came after Abū Hāshim. He was born of humble origin; among the common people of Hamadhān,<sup>1</sup> his father, we are told, was a cupper.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, his ambition made of him the singular man of learning in his lifetime and afterwards, and raised him to one of the highest offices in the administration of jurisprudence.

For a brief introductory outline about his life and works we would, perhaps, be enlightened by the accounts given of him by Ibn al-Murtadā, the author of 'Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah',<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that materials otherwise are rare, Ibn al-Murtadā's notes provide us with an extended list of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works, but it is by no means exclusive. Perhaps some complementary illustrative notes would not be amiss. Ibn al-Murtadā writes:-

" Having finished recording the generations (of the Mu'tazilah) which had been mentioned by al-Qādī ( the reference here being to the Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār himself and his book, 'Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah' to which, the author being considered, has referred on p. 7; On this

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1. The phrase here reads Min Sawād Hamadhān, which can also mean 'the rural area'. See Ibn Hajar, 'Lisan al-Mizan', vol. 3, p. 386.

2. Ibid.

3. 'Al-Mu'tazilah', ed. T.W.Arnold, the Arabic text, pp. 66-7.

remarkable work of 'Abd al-Jabbār other authors seem to have been solely dependent.)<sup>1</sup> we have added two more strata of them (i.e. the Mu'tazilah) an eleventh and a twelveth which were recorded by al-Hākim.

(1) Qādī al-Qudāt, the chief judge,<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār<sup>3</sup> al-Hamadhānī.<sup>4</sup> In his early life he followed the Ash'arite

1. For Abū Sa'īd al-Bayhaqī's 'K. Sharh Usūl al-Masā'il', whose main source was 'K. Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah' of al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, see S.M. Stern, EI. (1954/60), vol. I, p.60.
2. It should be understood, we are advised by Ibn al-Athīr, (Kāmil, vol. VIII, p.150), that the judiciary title, Qādī al-Qudāt, the chief judge is not to be understood in its general significance; he was only the chief judge of the province of Rayy and neighbouring districts.
3. A further name is recorded by Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb', f.32a and Subkī, 'Tabaqāt', vol.3, p.219, i.e. with the addition of Ibn al-Khalīlīb: 'Abd Allah. About his Kunyah while we find Subkī (op.cit) chose Abū al-Husain, the rest of the biographers agreed on Abū al-Hasan. It could however be a printing error in Subkī's.
4. In some of the references instead of al-Hamadhānī, al-Asadabādhī is observed, (cf. Yāqūt, Mu'jam', vol.2, p.314); sometimes both of them (cf. Dhahabī, 'K.al-'Ibar', vol.3, p.119), or only the Mu'tazilite, (cf. Ibn al-Athīr, op.cit., pp.77, 235). Yet, with regard to his Nisbah, 'Asadabādhī' there appears to have been some confusion, which has extended even to modern studies; Yāqūt, for example, presents us with two versions, one of them, is no doubt, a mistake, i.e. "Istirabādhī" or "Istārābādhī", (cf. Mu'jam al-Buldān, ed. Wüstenfeld, vol.IV, p.859). The same error also occurs in Ibn al-'Imād, Sh. Dh., vol. 3, p.202; also in Isnawī, it reads "Isarabādhī", Tabaqāt al-Fuqahā' B.M.Ms.Or. 3037, f.45b. and perhaps in others.

Subki, on the other hand, (Tabaqāt; vol.3, p.219), Dhahabi, (K.al-'Ibar...., vol.3, p.119) and Ibn Hajar, (Iṣān al-Mizān, vol.p.386) have chosen "Asadabādhī" which is also a mistake.

The above underlined Nisbah is more likely to be the most genuine, for the reasons that:

Firstly, Asadabādh lay on the boundary of Hamadhān, and secondly and more auspiciously, the revealing fact that it is the home town of al-Zubayr b. 'Abd al-Wahīd (d.347/958) who also is known as "al-Asadabādhī" and who was one of 'Abd al-Jabbār's own tutors (cf. Sam'ānī, 'Ansāb', vol I, pp. 210-12, (1963); Ibn al-Athīr, 'Lubāb', vol. 1, p. 41.

For further geographical details about these two different towns i.e. Asadabādh and Asadabād, see Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Hamadhānī, 'K.al-Buldān', ed. de Goeje, pp.229-30.

rite in dogmatic principles (Usūl), and in law (or Furū') he used to practice the Shafi'aite teaching. As he frequented the learned's circles and began to contemplate and discuss matters he became aware of the right way to which he submitted. He then attached himself to Abū Ishāq b. 'Ayyāsh<sup>1</sup> under whom he studied for a while, after which he emigrated to Baghdād.<sup>2</sup> In Baghdād he resided with al-Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allah<sup>3</sup> for a considerable period of time (studying) until he outstripped his fellow students and became a singular man of learning.

Al-Hākime writes:

" I am incapable of describing his status in learning and his excellence, he was the man who distended the science of theology, and unfolded its raiment, and who composed the valuable works in it which were renowned in the East and West. He conveyed in them great and serious controversies, the like of which were never surpassed. He lived a long life during which he never ceased teaching and dictating books. His books and disciples were cosmopolitan both during his life and after his death, and to him was passed down the leadership of the Mu'tazilah, hence he became their Shaykh and scholar without rival: They were dependent on his books and issues which abrogated the works of former scholars. His fame, however, is quite sufficient to need no further description.

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1. Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. 'Ayyāsh al-Basrī (d. 386/996) who had been a disciple of Abū Hāshim and from him took both Abū 'Abd Allah and 'Abd al-Jabbār, he wrote a book on Imāmah and other subjects. See pp. 5, 63-4, of Ibn al-Murtadā's 'Tabaqāt'.
  2. On his way to Makkah as a pilgrim; Isnawī, Tabaqāt, Ms. f. 45b.
  3. Al-Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allah al-Husain b. 'Alī al-Basrī (293/367=909/977) who was nicknamed "al-Jā'ad", described as the guide, a voluminous author as well as a Mu'tazilite leader. (Cont.)

After the year 360 A.H. al-Sāhib<sup>1</sup> summoned him to Rayy where he stayed continuing his teaching till he died in the year 415 or 416." (p.67) Al-Sāhib used to say of him: ' He is the most excellent man on earth', or again: ' He is the most learned man on earth.'.

When he wished to read the Hanafite law under Abū 'Abd Allah he was advised by him thus:

' This is a science in which every diligent man is rewarded. I am myself a Hanafite, be you a Shāfi'aite ', thenceforth he achieved a high position in law. But he dedicated his life to the study of theology. He used to say: " Law has its people to look after it as a means for this life, but theology has no persons save God, exalted be He." Al-Hākim said:-

" It had been reported that his writing in the various subjects which he embraced covered 400,000 leaves." <sup>2</sup>

His works are multifarious, among them are those which deal with:

### Theology

- (1) ' K. al-Dawā'ī wal-Sawārif ' (Fī al-Kalām)<sup>3</sup>  
 (2) ' K. al-Khilaf wal-Wifaq ' (" " )

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3. (contd.) The correspondence between him and 'Abd al-Jabbār continued until the latter assumed the office of Chief Judge, then it ceased to be. For further details about his life and work see Ibn al-Murtadā's book, pp.62-3 and al-Baghdādī, 'Ta'rīkh Baghdād', vol.8, pp73-4; No. 4153. In all the surviving parts of 'K.al-Mughnī' 'Abd al-Jabbār often refers to him.
1. The famous minister and scholar (d.385/995). The relation between the two men we shall see later.
  2. This estimation seems to be quite fair, judging from the discovered and published 5 parts of 'K.al-Mughnī', 'al-Usūl al-Khamsah' and others which amount roughly to some 4,702 pages.
  3. This phrase Fī al-Kalām (concerning theology) is to be found in the new edition of this work ed. S.Diweld- Wilzer, p. 113.

- (3) 'K. al-Khātir' (Fi al-Kalām)  
 (4) 'K. al-I'timād' (" " )  
 (5) 'K. al-Man' wal-Tamānu'  
 (6) 'K. Mā Yajuz Fī-hi al-Tazāyud wa-mā lā Yajūz', etc.

#### His Dictations

- (7) 'Al-Mughnī'<sup>1</sup>  
 (8) 'Al-Fi'l wal-Fā'il'  
 (9) 'K. al-Mabsūt'  
 (10) 'K. al-Muhīt' (Bil-Taklīf)<sup>2</sup>  
 (11) 'K. al-Hikmah wal-Ḥakīm'  
 (12) 'K. Sharh al-Usūl al-Khams'<sup>3</sup>

#### His Commentaries

- (13) 'Sharh al-Jāmi'ayn'  
 (14) ' " al-Usūl'  
 (15) ' " al-Maqālāt'  
 (16) ' " al-A'rād'

#### Those dealing with Usūl al-Fiqh (Principles of Law)

- (17) 'Al-Nihayah wal-'Amd'  
 (18) 'Its Commentary'

#### Refutation

He had also works devoted to refuting works by his opponents

- (19) 'Naqd al-Luma'<sup>4</sup>

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1. Several parts of which have been discovered and published recently including that which will be dealt with later.  
 2. Part one also of this work has been edited recently by J.J. Houben, <sup>B</sup> Beyrouth, (1965); also by 'Umar al-Sayyid 'Azmi, Cairo, (1965).  
 3. Edited very recently by 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān Cairo (1965), the from sources accessible to him has listed about 20 more works to the list drawn here see pp. 20-23.

(20) 'Naqd al-Imāmah'<sup>1</sup>

Replies

Those which were answers to questions remote regions as:-

(21) 'Al-Ziyārāt'

(22) 'Al-'Askariyyāt'

(23) 'Al-Qāshāniyyāt'

(24) 'Al-Khawārazmiyyāt'

(25) 'Al-Nisābūriyyāt'

Dispute

Those which are concerning disputes between eminent scholars.

(26) 'Al-Khilāf bayn al-Shaykhayn'

Those concerning religious exhortation

(27) 'Nasīhat al-Mutafaqiha'

He has books on every topic that I heard of and even that which I did not, in which he was the most excellent and inventive. On the whole, a full list of his works is impossible."

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This is what Ibn al-Murtada has recorded about the life and works of 'Abd al-Jabbār. With regard, however, to the list of works he recorded for him, although by far it is the richest one, nevertheless, as he himself often repeated, it is by no means comprehensive. Further,

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4. (contd.) This presumably is 'K. al-Luma'' of Abū al-Hasan al-Ash'arī; a work which aroused other Mu'tazilites to refute it, and brought a counter-refutation from the Ash'arite side as can be inferred from the title of al-Bāqillānī's 'K. Naqd al-Naqd 'Ala al-Hamadhani'.<sup>8</sup>
1. The subject of al-Imāmah on the other hand had its own contention between the three theological sects. I have not been able to find out which of the Shī'aite authors' works he was refuting. It could possibly be that of al-Shaykh al-Mufīd. But we find al-Sharīf al-Murtadā has refuted 'Abd al-Jabbār's section on Imāmah in K. al-Mughni in his work which entitled 'K. al-Shāfi'

it may be noticed that Ibn al-Murtadā's original source was

(28) 'K.Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah' by al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār himself.

Furthermore, there is 'Abd al-Jabbār's long printed work,

(29) 'Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'An al-Matā'in' (Cairo, 1329 A.H.), in which the author himself made reference to another work, which he called:

(30) 'Al-Muhkam wal-Mutashābih'<sup>1</sup>

Also names of works are mentioned by the author in the surviving parts of some of his works. For example;

(31) 'K.al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr'<sup>2</sup>

(32) 'K.al-'Amd'<sup>3</sup>

(33) 'K.al-Misbāh'<sup>4</sup>

C.Brockelmann<sup>5</sup> has also discovered six more manuscripts, five of which are not included in Ibn al-Murtadā's list. These are:

(34) 'Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidina Muhammad'<sup>6</sup>

(35) 'Risālah fī 'Ilm al-Kīmyā'

(36) 'Mas'alah fī al-Ghāybah (of the Imām)

(37) 'Al-Amālī'

(38) 'Mutashābih al-Qur'ān'

(39) Suyūtī has also recorded a Tafsīr<sup>7</sup> (a commentary on the Qur'ān)

(40) and Haji Khalifah has added one more polemic work.<sup>8</sup>

1. See p. 4.

2. 'Al-Mughnī' vol. XII, p. 37.

3. Ibid. vol. XVI, p. 95 and vol. XVII, pp. 17, 84, 152, 354 etc.

4. 'Tathbīt....' Ms. ff. 36b, 196a.

5. GAL., Sup. I, pp. 343-4.

6. Ibn Hajar, 'Lisān al-Mizān', vol. 3, p. 386; Ibn Qādī Shuhbah, 'Ṭabaqāt...', BM. Ms. Or. 3039, f. 69a&b.; Ibn al-'Imād, Sh. Dh. vol. 3, pp. 202-3 all have mentioned 'Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah', perhaps they were referring to the same work or to the author's chapter in 'K.al-Mughnī' which deals with al-Nubuwwāt.

7. 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn' p. 16; no. 47.

8. 'Kashf al-Zunūn' vol. III, p. 353, no. 5905.

Susana Diweld in her new edition of Ibn al-Murtadā's 'Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazilah'<sup>1</sup> has listed "al-Mughnī bi-Barakāti-hi" as an independent work. But this is nothing but 'K. al-Mughnī'. The phrase "Bi-Barakāti-hi" (by His blessing, is nothing more than a prayer as can be inferred from the context it occurs in, in the author's account on Abū Muhammad A. al-Rāmahurmuzī in whose mosque 'Abd al-Jabbār began writing his 'K. al-Mughnī'<sup>2</sup>. Also by the same editor the word "Ikhtiyārāt" has been listed as a title of a certain work which can mean no book at all or more than one book.

It seems that Ibn al-Murtadā, for some reason or another, has left out of his account a well-known episode which most other biographers have mentioned, sometimes in a rather scornful manner<sup>3</sup>. The episode shows 'Abd al-Jabbār's ingratitude and misbehaviour towards a man, had it not been for his patronage, he could not have achieved his far-reaching reputation as a judge.

The event and its dire consequence took place after the death of al-Sāhib b. 'Abbād in 385/995. As people assembled for consolation and to pay their tributes to the deceased statesman and scholar, it was reported of al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār to have said: "That he could not approve of mercy being implored for Ibn Abbad as he had died without any manifestation of repentance; an observation for which the Qadi was charged of being disrespectful. Fakhr al-Dawlah proceeded to arrest him and his connections, and fixed their fine at 3,000,000

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1. 'Die Klassen Der Mu'tazilten von Ahmad ....al-Murtada', Bibliothec Islamica, vol XXI, pp. 98, 113.
  2. Cf. Arnold's edition, p.58.
  3. Al-Ma'arrī, 'Risālat al-Ghufrān' ed. Bint al-Shāṭi', pp.405-6.

dirhams. Among goods sold to make up this sum there were a thousand Tailasans and a thousand garments of Egyptian wool. Ought not this Qādi to have explained his own account before giving sentence on that of some one else, and that person Ibn Abbad, who had promoted him, made his fortune, feathered his nest and given him his position." <sup>1</sup>

Whatever the moral principle on which 'Abd al-Jabbār inflicted his judgement might have been, of the exact circumstances we are not in a position to tell. In the light of some recorded material it would seem that the conflict between the two men had begun sometime between 367 when 'Abd al-Jabbār was appointed chief judge, and the year 385. It should perhaps be remembered that despite his distinguished position as statesman, Ibn 'Abbād was also a scholar in his own right, to an extent that on some occasions <sup>2</sup> even 'Abd al-Jabbār himself was obliged to learn from him.

The circumstances, if we may interpret it in the light of some of the reported episodes, seemed to have been that 'Abd al-Jabbār, feeling himself a man of considerable weight in learning, surrounded by the hypocritical society of Nisābūr<sup>3</sup>, could not feel free from a debt bestowed on him by Ibn 'Abbād who set him up and gave him position.

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1. Abū Shujā' al-Rudhrāwī, ' Dhayl Tajārib al-Umamī vol. III, pp. 262-263. Trans. D.S. Margoliouth, 'The Experience of the Nations' Pt. VI pp. 278-9.
  2. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam', vol. II, p. 314; Ibn Kathīr, 'Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah' vol. II, p. 315.
  3. The only poem so far we find for 'Abd al-Jabbār begins:-

" May God not glorify such a country as Nisābūr,  
Wherein the market of hypocrisy is ever flourishing."

لا قدس الله نيسابور من بلاد سوق النفاق هذا ابداً على ساق  
Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam al-Buldān', ed. Wüstenfeld, vol. IV, p. 59.

Yāqūt provides us with such an illuminating episode:

" One day, 'Abd al-Jabbār met Ibn 'Abbād while the former was riding. He did not descend, so as to show his curtesy to Ibn 'Abbād, instead he said:

" O Sāhib, though for the sake of etiquette, I wish to dismount ( so as to show respect) but the dignity of knowledge restrains me."<sup>1</sup>

Yāqūt also reported the amusing yet revealing episode about the deterioration in the form of addresses used by 'Abd al-Jabbār in his correspondences with al-Sāhib.

" He ( the Qādī) used to address his letters to Ibn 'Abbād as:-

To al-Sāhib.....from his propagator (Dā'i-hi) 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad.

Then, to al-Sāhib..... from his client (Wali-hi) 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad.

In the end to al-Sāhib ( without any respects) from 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad.

Al-Sāhib, in noticing such deterioration, said one day to his companions:-

" I have a feeling that our friend may dry up to al-Jabbār !  
( God ) only."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Yāqūt, 'Mu'jam' , vol. II, p. 314.

2. Ibid.

Al-Asadabādhī and Qur'ānic Studies,<sup>1</sup>  
'K. Tanzih al-Qur'an 'An al-Matā'in'

The role of 'al-Majāz' in the scholastic Tafsīr

As a theologian, as expected of him, just as in the case of his contemporary rival, al-Bāqillānī, 'Abd al-Jabbār's writings, of necessity, were closely related to the text of the Qur'ān in one way or another. Although it may suggest itself, the question to be asked is perhaps, in which of the branches of Qur'ānic study was the Qādi's chief concern and what was his actual contribution ?

To avoid any unnecessary speculation, and because of the existence of a single exegetical work by the author, accessible to us, this latter should not totally be overlooked if only to give some idea of his endeavour, particularly from a linguistic and literary point of view.

As a commentator, in all the scanty biographical accounts transmitted throughout the centuries about 'Abd al-Jabbār, among other shreds of that busy life, two qualities seem the most prominent, on the one hand the author's copious and prolific writings and on the other the multiplicity of his pupils. Among the latter, for instance, is a name which was later renowned, that of the Mu'tazilite commentator, al-Qazwīnī (d.483/1090). The later al-Suyūṭī in his 'Tabaqāt al-Mufasirīn',<sup>2</sup> for example, informs us that al-Qazwīnī's commentary on the Qur'ān consisted of five hundred volumes of which a whole volume was devoted to one single verse (II/102). Further, al-Suyūṭī also informs us that al-Qazwīnī was instructed by al-Qādi 'Abd al-Jabbār.

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1. This is the earliest recovered work by 'Abd al-Jabbār. It was published for the first time in 1329 A.H., reprinted, Beirut, 1966.  
 2. 1839 edn. p.19, No.57.

That was an example of the effort of one of the Qādī's pupils in the field of Qur'ānic exegesis, but what was the effort of the master himself ?

Al-Suyūtī, in the same quoted work, when reflecting on 'Abd al-Jabbār, the commentator, wrote that he himself had seen of his work on Tafsīr which he described as of a moderate size. This in all probability is the work under consideration, as the printed version of it contains 392 octavo pages. But what did al-Suyūtī know of 'Abd al-Jabbār's commentaries ?

A much earlier author, Ibn al-'Arabī (d.543/1148) gives us a different account of 'Abd al-Jabbār's copious writings on Tafsīr, which is more to be expected of him. Ibn al-'Arabī informs us that he, with others, had read in the City of Peace (Baghdād), in the Nizāmiyyah school library, a commentary by 'Abd al-Jabbār entitled 'The Comprehensive' (al-Muhīt) which consisted of a hundred volumes.<sup>2</sup>

'Abd al-Jabbār himself, however, apart from the present work and his commentary on single verses in other of his surviving works, particularly 'K.al-Mughnī' and 'Tathbīt.<sup>3</sup>', in the introduction of the present work informs us of a complete commentary covering all the chapters in the Qur'ān, which- judging by its title alone- was undoubtedly another work on Tafsīr.

The present work, nonetheless, can also be described as a commentary on the Qur'ān. Yet calling it thus it should perhaps be qualified further as a selective commentary, for although it reflects on all the chapters in the Qur'ān, the author is dealing, in point of fact, with specific verses in each chapter, or offering mere answers to particular queries concerning them.

<sup>1</sup>. Ibid. p. 16, No. 47.

<sup>2</sup>: Ibn 'Asākir, 'Tabyyīn', p. 29, on the margin; see also Ibn Taymiyya, Muqaddimah, p. 21. (3) Mughnī, vol. xvi, pp. 387-396.

Moreover from its title it is clear that it is a polemic work, a tendency also noticeable in certain sections of 'K.al-Mughnī'.<sup>1</sup>

If al-Bāqillānī in 'K.al-Intisār' was in the first place concerned with the allegations of the Rāfidah against the text of the Qur'ān and in some measure the views of the Mu'tazilah, the two main sects referred to frequently in this work are the Jabriyyah, the compulsionists and the Mushabbihah (the anthropomorphists).<sup>2</sup> The fact that the author was a leading Mu'tazilite makes it natural also that the interpretation offered fell totally within the scholastic framework of the school's five main principles as also did other major theses, such as the creation of the Qur'ān, the interpretation of many verses whose literal sense would imply an anthropomorphic property and guidance and misguidance. Thus it is apparent that the general picture of this work as a whole is an example of dogmatic commentary, that is to say, an interpretation which sought support for some of the scholastic teaching in the Qur'ān or interpreted certain verses of the Qur'ān so as to confirm or justify their teachings.

A typical example to illustrate this can be seen in the following enquiry and the answer to it, concerning the verse XI/107 :

"Q: IT may be asked concerning the verse, "And as for those who ~~are~~wretched - why, in the fire! There shall they groan and sob ! to dwell therein for aye, so long as the heavens and earth endure", Does not this imply the termination of punishment by the perpetuity of the the heavens and earth, which will eventually become extinct; yet you have maintained

1. Cf. Ibid. p. 370-379 with 'Tanzīh', p. 4.

2. Cf. for the formers pp. 124, 128, 133, 202, 334, 214,; for the latter pp. 126, 334, 225.

that punishment is everlasting, how can this be possible?"

"A: The verse may be interpreted as follows: Hell has its own heaven and earth and so does paradise, which shall be everlasting; this is the meaning. It was also said of the meaning here that it was the improbability of their exemption from Hell, therefore it was connected with something very remote whose inexistence could not be imagined, in accordance with the Arab method as in the poet's saying:-

'When the crow turns hoary I shall come to my folk,  
And when the tar should become as (white as) fresh milk'

إِذَا شَابَ الْغُرَابُ أَتَيْتُ أَهْلِي : وَصَارَ الْقَتَادُ لِلْبَيْتِ الْكَلْبِيِّ

No doubt the role of language generally and the figurative interpretation were considered of vital importance; one particular query over the Qur'ānic verse, "And every man's augury (lit. bird) have We fastened to his neck", (XVII/13) clearly emphasized this. The query here is that this is not known in the language; for it cannot be said of him who has a right to something or owes a due to someone that it is a bird fastened to his neck.<sup>2</sup>

More than two centuries earlier a query of a similar nature had prompted the philologist, Abū 'Ubaydah to write 'K. al-Majāz' as we have already seen. In almost the same way 'Abd al-Jabbār repeated Abū 'Ubaydah's words, arguing that since the Qur'ān was described as an Arabic book, whatever was found in it must be Arabic either in the literal sense of the words themselves or metaphorically, for they were thus acceptable when they occurred in rhymed poetry and in prose.

Having interpreted the word 'bird' in the verse in question as denoting 'requital', from the language he also reported that it was also said of him who encountered a misfortune or met with luck; to so- and-so the bird has come with such-and-such.

The difference between the two approaches of the two men is that of the philologist proper, Abū 'Ubaydah and the professional theologian 'Abd al-Jabbār. In this respect it is noticeable that while the former seeks support for each verse or for a single word in it from poetry or the general useage of language, the latter, despite his emphasis on the relation between the Qur'ān and the rest of the language in which it was revealed, makes little use of poetry in the present commentary, in the whole of it about eight lines of poetry are quoted.<sup>1</sup>

Rhetorical and figurative analyses.

a) Majāz, (the trope)

Despite the fact that before and during al-Asadabādhī's lifetime rhetorical and figurative studies had developed considerably, particularly at the hands of the Mu'tazilite scholars who closely associated this branch of study with the language of the Qur'ān, as was noticed in the study of the Mu'tazilite al-Rummānī, 'Abd al-Jabbār himself was in favour of eloquence as a means by which I'jāz could fully be understood. In the present brief commentary however little elaboration in this respect is to found. The most frequent figure of speech to which he refers on several occasions is that of the Majāz, through which he aims at the interpretation of several verses. However, his conception of this linguistic phenomenon goes no further than its primitive conception as occurs in the earlier studies of the third century, especially those of Abū 'Ubaydah and al-Jāhiz; in other words another form of expression beyond the limited

literal sense (contd.)

1Ibid. pp. 165-6.

2. Ibid. pp. 201-202.

1. pp. 9, 158, 166, 266, 277, 311, 320, 353.

of individual words. He contributes therefore very little to the many terms which analytically emerge from it, unlike the study of Ibn Qutaybah, nor for that matter, are thorough details given when he is solely dependent on Majaz in his interpretation, despite his emphasis of its importance or description of it as the most effective means employed by the language.

The following query would suffice as an example:-

"Q: How can God attribute mockery to Himself as in his saying, 'God shall mock at them and let them go on in their rebellion blindly wandering', (11/15)?

"A: Mockery is impossible for God, for it is a special act done by him who cannot achieve what he wishes except by such means. God - exalted be He - is above such. What He meant by this is that He shall punish and requite them for their mockings, as He says in the verse (XLIII/40) .... And the Arabs say 'requitat is for requital', The former is not, however, a requital. And in the Prophet's saying 'Give back the trust to him who entrusted you, but deceive not he who deceives you.' The word mocking in the verse is used for the requital of their mocking by way of Majaz and the extensive use of language."<sup>1</sup>

(b) Tashbīh-Simile

The other rhetorical figure of speech frequently used is simile, a useful device employed in analyzing several verses.<sup>2</sup> But as in the case of the Majāz, the author briefly points out some of its qualities such as usefulness in parable or its general appropriateness. The following per-

1. p. 11.

2. E.g. pp. 12, 98, 148, 240, 322-3, 328, 331.

3. p. 328.

haps illustrates this:-

"And amongst men is one who serves God upon the very edge." (XXII/II)

Q: "What can be understood by this which is unknown in the language?"

A: "The meaning is, as the hypocrite ostensibly shows his service to God, concealing something different from what he reveals, thus he has been likened to the edge, for the edge is the brink of something. In the act of worshipping one needs to reveal or submit both internally as well as externally, but as the hypocrite shows only one side of this he, thus has been described ..... and this kind of simile achieves in eloquence what the plain use of words does not.<sup>1</sup>

(c) Mubalaghah-Hyperbole

This figure of speech has been referred to more than once also, yet as in the case of the former two, details are very brief. Moreover, he often emphasizes "And this is in accordance with the Arabs method of hyperbole". For an insight to his treatment of it the following query would perhaps be enough.

Q: "It may be asked concerning the verse "Verily, the worst of beasts in God's sight are of the deaf, the dumb who do not understand." (VIII/22). How can the deaf and the dumb be linked with those who do not understand?"

A: "It has been mentioned in the verse before it" ... and be not as those who say, "We hear," and they hear not" (VIII/21). Thus he blamed them for rejection, and then likened them to the deaf and dumb,

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1. p. 240.

in agreement of the way in which language stresses the reproach for him who heeds not righteousness and who may also be described as dead." <sup>1</sup>

(d) Al-Hadhf - Omission

Certain aspects of omission have been stressed, both from a grammatical point of view as well as on a rhetorical basis; such omissions as the omission of apodosis of oath, <sup>2</sup> the predicate, <sup>3</sup> the correlative <sup>4</sup> or the antecedent of two nouns in a state of construction. <sup>5</sup> The following query is an example of one of them which also involves rhetorical analysis.

Q: "It may be asked concerning His saying "Do you reckon the giving of water to pilgrims and inhabiting of the Holy Mosque as the same as one who believes in God?" (IX/20), how can the simile here be appropriate, between the slaking of the pilgrims thirst and the belief in God?

A: "What is meant here is, is the person who undertakes the giving of water to the pilgrims equal to him who believes in God, or is the giving of water to the pilgrims as the belief of him who believes in God? The like of such omission is desirable in the language when the unomitted in speech indicates the omitted." <sup>6</sup>

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1. p. 144.
  2. E.g. p. 362
  3. E.g. p. 164
  4. E.G. p. 183
  5. E.g. p. 331.
  6. p. 148, see also 325, 301, etc.

The Proofs of the prophetic Mission'K. Tathbīt .....etc. 1A Biographical and Polemic Approach

Notwithstanding the esteem and regard for this work by some of the later authorities, who in acknowledgement described it as a work in which the author had excelled and through which he became distinguished, and consequently considered it among the greatest and best of the author's writings<sup>2</sup>; and despite its title - the proofs of the prophetic mission- and the early chapters which concern mainly the Qur'ān<sup>3</sup>, there is, however, very little contribution in it to the chapter of I'jāz from a literary point of view.

For some idea about the general scope which this work covers, it is clear that there are three major themes on which revolve most of the accounts given; a polemic approach, a biographical historical one and from this latter itself emerges considerable detail with reference to the problem of I'jāz in its widest sense, viz. the examination of some of the miracles attributed to the Prophet other than the Qur'ān.

Although each of these themes is quite distinct from the other, the way in which they were handled by the author is by no means clear cut. Each overlapping and often leading to or running into the other alternately.

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1. The full title of this work is 'K. Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwt Sayyidinā (Nabiyyinā) Muhammad', Suleymaniya, Koprültü, Sehîd Ali Pasa Ms. 1575. This manuscript was copied from an earlier one by 'Alî b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Bakrî in 620 A.H. cf. ff. 313a. The original was written in the year 385, cf. ff. 19a, 79b. The word in brackets is what was used by the author himself but a later hand has substituted the word before it in the title, cf. 1b.
  2. See Ibn Hajar, 'Lisān al-Mizān' vol. 3, p. 386; Ibn al-'Imād, Sh. Dh. vol. 3, p. 202.
  3. Cf. eg. ff. 42a-100a, 193b-197b.

The polemic approach

This is presumably the most interesting part in this work, occupying at the same time the bulk of it. It reveals on the one hand the author's controversial ability and on the other the extent of his knowledge and awareness of other religions and creeds than Islām. In this respect lies the significance as well as the heresiographical value of this work as an important early document of the controversies between Muslims and non-Muslims and among the various sects within the Muslim community itself all seen from a Mu'tazilite stand point.

It is in this respect that the author's lengthy chapters on Christianity,<sup>1</sup> Judaism,<sup>2</sup> Mazdaism,<sup>3</sup> and Manichaeism<sup>4</sup> are remarkable. On the heretical movements engendered within the Muslim community there is interesting information both from a historical as well as a heretical view point regarding the Qaramitan movement.<sup>5</sup> Accounts are also given on some of the Shi'ite sects.<sup>6</sup> Finally in this respect also details of vital interest are given on a number of heretical authors and their works current during the author's life, which undoubtedly were the direct motivation that initiated the study of I'jāz before and during the fourth century.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Cf. eg. ff. 42a-100a, 193b-197b. For a recent assessment of the author's accounts on Christianity see S.M.Stern, The Journal of Theological Studies (n.s) vol. XVIII (1967) pp. 34-57, vol. XIX, pt. 1, (1968) pp. 127-185.
  2. Cf. eg. ff. 181b, 204b, 224b-252b, (largely the Jews of Madīnah)
  3. " " " 150a-153b, 91a, 87a, 49a-50b.
  4. " " " 87a&b.
  5. " " " 170a-174a, 61b-62a, 171a-181a, 49b, 64a.
  6. " " " 19a, 189b-190b, 279a-287b.
  7. " " " 23b, 33a, 61a, 106a, 94a, 169a etc.

A biographical and historical approach

This is the second major theme which consequently led to the author's reflection on the subject of miracles other than the Qur'ān. This tendency, as we have seen on earlier occasions, was pursued by other groups of authors who clearly emphasized their avoidance of the theologians' approach to the subject, In the case of the theologian, 'Abd al-Jabbār the two approaches are combined. Here he reflects on several aspects of the Sīrah of the Prophet's life from the rise of Islām to the end of the Caliphate of the first four Caliphs.<sup>1</sup> In support of some of these accounts the interpretation of certain verses from the Qur'ān and some of the Traditions were felt as a necessity, including among the former those verses in which the challenge by the Qur'ān is stated.

Miracles other than the Qur'ān

Within the predominant biographical theme, especially in the early chapters while the author is seeking support for the prophetic mission from the Qur'ān's own text, and for the reason that some of the miracles other than the Qur'ān are mentioned or thus interpreted from the Qur'ān itself, the author has elaborated in detail on them. To the accounts in these chapters may also be added the author's lengthy chapter concerning miracles other than the Qur'ān in 'K. al-Mughnī' (vol. XVI, pp407-423) where a considerable number of these have been reflected upon.

In this respect, however, two points are worthy of note; firstly the Mu'tazilah attitude towards miracles other than the Qur'ān and secondly the author's explanation of this attitude.

1. Cf. eg. ff.120a-140b.

2. Five of them have been discussed in this work, see ff.25a, 26b, 29a, 37a, 40a; and 17 are discussed in 'K. al-Mughnī'

Reference has already been made to statements indicating rejection of miracles by the Mu'tazilah. Such accounts were most often transmitted by those who held views opposite to those of the Mu'tazilah. Here however, the author is himself a Mu'tazilite and his views are therefore of special significance.

At one stage he noticed " As for those who tried to disgrace our Shaykhs concerning them, (the reference here being to miracles other than the Qur'ān) alleging that they had rejected all miracles attributed to Muhammad. This allegation is but sheer ignorance. Our Shaykhs had confirmed and proved such miracles. But they did not uphold them as a proof in the face of the opponents." <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand there were those among the Mu'tazilah who rejected or, to say the least, criticized the validity of some of those miracles, such as al-Nazzām, with whom 'Abd al-Jabbār strongly disagreed. <sup>2</sup>

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1. Al-Mughnī, vol.XVI, p. 152.

2. Tathbit....ff-25a-26a; see also 'Mughnī' vol.XVI, p.242.

Al-Asadabādhī and The Study of I'jāz'K. al-Mughnī volume XVI<sup>1</sup>

For an obvious reason the editor of the sixteenth volume of 'K. al-Mughnī has chosen 'I'jāz al-Qur'ān' as a title for it. The author himself, however, called it, 'K. al-Nubuwwāt' or a work on prophethood, as stated in the final words of it and in references elsewhere in the recovered parts of the work as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The XVIth volume, together with the unrecovered volume XV complete 'Abd al-Jabbār's contribution to the chapter of prophethoods and I'jāz.<sup>3</sup> The question of whether or not he dealt with any literary aspect or employed purely theological discussion in volume XV, remains so far unresolved.

Further, in the introduction to one of the published volumes (vol. VII), 'The Creation of the Qur'ān), there is a certain word which if it is to be understood as it stands, the author seems to promise therein a brief elaboration on the chapter of I'jāz<sup>4</sup> postponing the detailed discussion to the present volume and the unrecovered volume XV prior to it.

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1. Edited by Amīn al-Khūlī, (1960)
  2. E.g. XVI p. 433; vol. VI, p 5; vol. XVII, p. 267.
  3. cf. Editors note, vol. VI, p. I (1962).
  4. vol. VII (1961 ) p.5. The Arabic word here reads وَنُوحِرُ which may be a misreading of the word وَنُوحِرُ, notice the similarities of the letters.
  5. cf. vol. VII, editors. note p.D.

### Preliminaries and Subsidiaries

Before approaching the question of the prophetic mission of Muhammad and consequently and specifically the problem of I'jāz, al-Asadabādhī was evidently concerned with many preliminaries covering a wide field in connection with the general discussion of prophethood. It is obvious that many aspects were covered in these preliminaries employing all the missing volume fifteen and a good portion of the present volume.

The latter (XVI) opens with a section dealing with one aspect of the self-contained unit stressed by the chain of transmitters, or the chapter on al-Akhbār, which began in the former (XV). Four further sections on the same chapter are also to be found (pp. 9-47).

This is followed by another lengthy chapter comprising twelve sections concerning the abrogation of religions (pp. 49-142).

The author's final words in that chapter read "Now we return to the demonstration of I'jāz al-Qur'ān and all that connected with it; of its transmission, the way it should be handled and the arrangement of the discussion afterwards of the branches related to it."<sup>2</sup>

To the chapter on I'jāz, both from a theological as well as from a literary stand point pages (143-344) are devoted, into which we shall look more closely, particularly the latter aspect.

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1. References have been made to some of the aspects in vol. xy in the present volume cf. his reference to his chapter or section on the Brahman p. 144, 75.

Having dealt with the aspects of the question of I'jāz, the author begins to reflect on subsidiary aspects which he himself considers of secondary importance, branching from or related to the principal theses. This begins with a series of fourteen sections following immediately the main discussion on I'jāz (pp. 345-406). Here he deals with several allegations or the refutation of them. His main targets are the views of the extremists (al-Ghulāt), al-Baṭiniyyah or those who were divergent from liberal acceptance of the Qur'ān or who claim to find under the letter of the Qur'ān a hidden esoteric meaning, the Traditionalists and several others.

The final section in this work is a reflection on the duties and obligations of him who accepts the Prophet's mission (pp. 125-433)

Neither the preliminary sections and chapters nor the subsidiaries which branch from the main discussion of I'jāz require from us further details.

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(contd.)

2. p. 142.

### The Theological approach

As in the case of al-Bāqillānī, especially in 'K. Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn, al-Asadabādhī contributed, in a very similar vein, to the theological aspects involved in the chapter of I'jāz. Naturally, the classification of the materials in some cases and the conclusions drawn therefrom differ in one way or another, but the most striking feature is that the details over the main issues reflected upon and the discursive method of handling them bear a close resemblance, more particularly with regard to such subjects as the aspects of the challenge, the opposition and the reflection on the different ways in which I'jāz was interpreted. Even some of the minor and less significant points; such as the definition of the proofs, the different opinions on I'jāz held by Muslims and whether such diversity would effect the authenticity of I'jāz or not and several others. Whether or not such similiarity of approach was due to the fact that one of the authors was improvising on the other's work or sheer coincidence is hard to say.

In the light of this we shall touch briefly on al-Asadabādhī's major theological sections in the XVIth volume of 'K. al-Mughnī'.

#### 1) Introductory sections

The author's chapter on the prophetic mission and I'jāz commences with a series of discursive sections of varying length serving as rudimentary essentials for the realization of the

prophetical mission and I'jaz.

The first section (pp. 143-144) concerns the ḥore necessary for the knowledge of the prophetical mission. The ḥore is divided into three categories, essential knowledge, acquired knowledge and a third indecisive one, which may be confused with either of the former. The knowledge of the prophetical mission belongs to the first category.

The second section (pp. 115-152) concerns the explanation of the proof and the acceptance or rejection of it. The section as a whole is an introduction to a chapter on the transmission of the Qur'ān, some aspects of it are discussed in the succeeding section. In conclusion the author reflects on the Mu'tazilite conception of miracles other than the Qur'ān.

The third section (pp. 153-166) concerns the explanation of the means to the knowledge of the Qur'ān. This is a contribution towards the transmission of the Qur'ān which is very much in the manner of al-Bāqillānī's 'K. al-Intiṣār'. It includes the refutation of the theses of certain sects against the text of the Qur'ān such as its incompleteness or corruption and similar allegations. If al-Bāqillānī's attacks were against al-Rāfidah and the Mu'tazilah, 'Abd al-Jabbār was also battling against a Shi'ite sect, the Imamiyyah, but on the other hand he was against some of the traditionists and al-Hashawiyah in their claim that the transmission of the Qur'ān had been through a

single authority. Among the questions discussed were Ibn Mas'ūd's attitude to the chapters CXIII and CXIV, the prayer al-Qunūt, the Basmalah and 'Umar's views concerning stoning.

The fourth section (pp. 167-190) concerns the knowledge of what particularizes the Qur'ān, so that it can be comprehended as a proof of the prophetic mission. The principal arguments here are; the Qur'ān's occurrence through the agency of the Prophet and his claim of it as a proof of his mission, but in the discussion other theological issues are involved such as the creation of the Qur'ān and the comparison of the Qur'ān with other prophetic miracles.

The fifth and final section (pp. 191-196) provides us with a thorough background for the question of whether language is a thing inspired or a matter of general consensus.

## II) The challenge and opposition (rivalry)

After his intervening sections on the literary aspect of I'jāz, the author moves to consideration of the two major theological themes respectively, the aspects of the challenge and the opposition, in a similar fashion to al-Bāqillānī. Here is a brief outline of the author's section on them:-

### a) Explanation of the genuineness of the challenge by eloquent speech (pp. 214-225).

Eloquent speech is of varying degrees and ends, and although the amount of individual words is limited their composition falls into various forms, and accordingly the status of speech in eloquence does differ; therefore it is possible that disparity should

take place in it, so as to discern between its various degrees - in a thing of such a nature a challenge by it is correct.

This is the main idea concerning the proving of the veracity of the challenge by means of eloquent speech. After a brief lapse into the question of ability, the rest of this section is devoted to the discussion of the impossibility of maintaining the challenge by means other than eloquence, such as, al-Sarfah, the composition alone, prophecies - particularly those mentioned in the Qur'an - and words and meanings.

b) Explanation of the way in which it is proper that the Qur'an is inimitable (pp. 226-235)

Having confirmed at the opening of this section that the Qur'an is inimitable, because advanced people in eloquence are incapable of producing its like, the author proceeds to discuss the concept of ability, following the question, wherefore such people were incapable, when incapability of performing an act necessitated the lack of ability, means and such like, which they did not lack? What is lacking in the author's opinion is knowledge. This as we have seen in the chapter on al-Sarfah, in al-Bāqillānī's study, was considered a weak argument proposed by the Qadariyyah or the Mu'tazilah.<sup>1</sup> Here al-Asadabādhī does not deny the Mu'tazilite conception of the ability of man in the performing of an act - any act - granted ability and means,

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1. cf. al-Bāqillānī, 'Hidāyah' vol. XI, ff. 8a-15a, on this reference is made to al-Asadabādhī and the refutation of one of his works, see f. 136.

but emphasizes throughout the section that there are various degrees in that performance, and knowledge is the main key to them, but in the case of the language of the Qur'ān those people able in language lack that particular quality of the language of the Qur'ān or the knowledge of it.

c) The challenge by the Qur'ān (pp. 236-245)

The main point in this section is to prove historically that the Prophet did challenge <sup>by</sup> the Qur'ān. The series of questions and answers used here are almost exactly the same as those employed by al-Bāqillānī in 'K. al-Hidāyah' (vols. VIII, IX) and the whole section serves as a preliminary step towards the question of the opposition.

d) Explanation of the proof that the Qur'ān is inimitable (pp. 246-249)

Here is further progress towards the discussion of the opposition. After a short account of the circumstances in which the Prophet challenged the Arabs by the Qur'ān, al-Asadabadhi presents the proof for the lack of opposition by the following claims;

- (i) There was no opposition on the part of the Arabs to the Qur'ān.
- (ii) Because it was impossible for them.
- (iii) It was impossible because of the quality of the Qur'ān's eloquence.
- (iv) That quality was unprecedented, therefore it was a violation of custom.

As the impossibility of opposition necessitates the lack of it and the violation of the law of nature by a certain quality cannot be established before the quality itself is established, the four claims can be reduced to two;

- i) The lack of opposition,
- ii) due to its violation of custom.

To these two points the following lengthy sections are devoted.

e) The opposition did not take place (pp.250-264)

Knowledge through authentically transmitted tradition (Akhbār) is tantamount to perceptive knowledge. On this premise the author conducts his discursive argument in this section. The questions dealt with are identical with those in al-Bāqillānī's 'K.Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn' (vol.IX), and all of them are endeavours at providing an answer to a specific point which is, if there were an opposition or rivalry it should have been handed down.

f) The opposition did not occur for it was impossible (pp. 264-310)

This is by far the longest section in this volume. After a short interlude in which the author reflects on the concept of ability generally and the abundance of the Arabs' motives to rival the Qur'ān, he moves to explore the abundance of those motives in a number of questions which in turn engendered more.

Among the main questions are:-

How is it known that the Arabs' motives were abundant ?

And if so, How has it become known that such motives urged them to belie the Prophet's claim ?

How is it known that they did not doubt the effectiveness of the literary opposition while other forms of opposition could be? All such questions are also similar to those in al-Bāqillānī's *Hidayah* vol. x.

In the light of the above two major sections a short reflective section on the distinctiveness of eloquence of the Qur'an is also found (pp. 311-315)

### III. The different interpretations of I'jāz (pp. 316-336)

Besides this section devoted to the scrutiny of the various theses claiming ways in which I'jāz can be interpreted, elaborations on some of them are also apparent in other sections in this volume<sup>1</sup>; indeed remarks concerning some of the points are traceable in other of the author's extant works.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, the author's views, as in the case of al-Bāqillānī, are of two kinds; rejection of some of these theses and acceptance of others, but not as means for identifying I'jāz. To the former belong his views on al-Sarfah - which is a Mu'tazilite thesis -, and the eternal nature of the Qur'an or the representation of the eternal words of God, both of which were the views supported by some of the Sunnite scholars.<sup>3</sup> The rest of the seven interpretations as has been seen in the

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1. cf. pp. 216-225.

2. cf. 'Tanzih' p. 208. Commenting on the verse xvii/88, his views on al-Sarfah read:-  
"Had they (the Arabs) been able to produce the like of the Qur'an, but they were prevented (Surifū) this verse would have no meaning.

3. cf. Bāqillānī 'I'jāz' p. 395, 'Hidayah' vol. XIII f. 19b.

introduction to part IV and the study of al-Bāqillānī, though to him valid consideration cannot be held as means for demonstrating I'jāz. Regarding his views on eloquence and composition see the following.

Eloquence and CompositionA key section:

The strange thing about al-Asadabādhi's literary contribution to the chapter on I'jāz is undoubtedly its extreme brevity. This peculiarity however becomes more apparent when it is realized that the author's main conception of the idea of I'jāz lies in eloquence. In contrast however, his literary contribution is far less than his theological elaboration. Altogether six sections of this volume include in their titles the term eloquence in one form or another.<sup>1</sup> Yet a closer look at the contents of these sections shows that the first and the most important section of them is not wholly the author's. The remainder of these sections on the other hand are unbalanced by theological detail.

The most important section reads:-

" Our Shaykh, Abū Hāshim <sup>2</sup> says, "Speech can only be eloquent through the chasteness of its wording and the beauty of its meaning. Both factors must be considered; for if the speech is chaste in wording but with a meagre meaning it is no longer considered eloquent. It should therefore include both these elements. Eloquence in speech does not mean that it should be of any particular composition, for the reason that an orator may be considered more eloquent than the poet and yet the forms of compositions are totally different, if what is meant by composition is merely a different method. Further the form of composition may be the same, but the merit is manifest in the eloquence. What must be considered therefore is what we have mentioned, for it is the only recognizable

1. Cf. The headings on pp. 191, 197, 199, 207, 210, 311.

2. The son of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, for both father and son see before.

trait in every composition and every method."

The above statement by Abū Hāshim is illustrated by the twofold question:

Q: "Could not an eminently eloquent person be unable to compose poetry, although poetry can be composed by someone who is inferior to him? Why does <sup>not</sup> his excellence in eloquence manifest itself in the form of composition ?

A: Merit cannot be judged according to possibility or impossibility, for it can only be valid in relation to those who share ability in common where one of them is better than the other. Where inability occurs this is impossible,..... for it cannot be said that one person is more eloquent than another who is unable to be eloquent. But it is not usual that a person can specialize in one form of style to the exclusion of other people; so that the categories of style of eloquence become well-known and common, likewise the degree of eloquence. Therefore both must have a distinctive merit. For this reason it would be valid in my opinion, to say then the Qur'ān is endowed with a special style of composition to the exclusion of eloquence, which is the chasteness in wording and the beauty of meaning."

And if someone says " Even if I take into consideration the style of composition I must equally consider the distinctive merit of eloquence" he will have reverted to what I am saying" <sup>1</sup>

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(1) vol. XVI, pp. 197-8.

The importance of this section is twofold; it emphasizes eloquence, or rather identifies I'jāz with the idea of eloquence, which in this context (according to the Mu'tazilite definition) is nothing more than the chasteness of wording and the beauty of meaning. On the other hand, it reduces the concept of composition to nothing, or at its best to the status of a part of the conception of eloquence itself.

The above argument is that of Abū Hāshim who died 321/933. It suggests in all probability that he was reacting to a Mu'tazilite thesis, for hitherto the idea of composition was, as far as it is known to us, the monopoly of the Mu'tazilite authors such as al-Jāhiz and al-Wāsitī, to mention only two, whose work included such a title, and it would seem to have encouraged such later Mu'tazilites as al-Rummānī to contribute in some detail towards the idea of eloquence.

Later on al-Asadabādhī, for some reason did not follow the example of al-Rummānī, yet his own views on the idea of composition in particular do not seem directed against the early Mu'tazilite masters alone, but rather against some of his contemporary Sunnites, more particularly al-Bāqillānī, who adopted and strongly supported the idea of composition.

If Abū Hāshim offered any other arguments against composition, we do not know how they ran. However al-Asadabādhī who inherited his views and supported them, seemed to have found himself in difficulties whenever theological questions were aimed at him. But before we come to examine some of those difficulties which troubled him with

regard to composition, perhaps we should first examine him on eloquence.

(A) Eloquence.

In a section entitled ' On the differentiation of eloquence<sup>1</sup>' al-Asadabādhī elaborates further on Abū Hāshim's thesis in favour of eloquence,

"Know that eloquence does not manifest itself<sup>2</sup> in the individual parts of speech, but only occurs in speech through the joining (bil-Damm) of words together in a special order, and in joining it is necessary that each word must have a particular definition. This definition can be sought through convention (bil-Muwāda'ah) which includes the joining (al-Damm) or through parsing which is participant in it or by means of the context in the speech. To these three categories there is no fourth one; for in speech either the word itself is considered, its vowels or its place. This must be realised in each individual word as well as in the rest of the words when they are grouped together; for a word when joined with another may acquire a particular definition and that goes for its grammar, vowels and its place in speech. In accordance with what we have just mentioned the merit of eloquence manifests itself in these aspects and nothing else<sup>3</sup>."

In this section the author has also touched on several points related to language in general and eloquence in particular. The first

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1. p.199

2. In a footnote the the editor quotes a variant, which seems to cotradict the reading in the text which the editor accepted.

3. p. 199.

question leads to the consideration of an important element in the chapter of eloquence, that is to say, the concept of meaning. The question here is:

Q: "You have said that among the elements which are included within eloquence is the beauty of meaning, would you not therefore consider it (as an essential element?)."

A: Although meanings are essential, in them the trait of eloquence is not manifest, though it occurs in speech because of them. For we find two persons expressing the same meaning, yet one of them is more eloquent than the other. On the other hand, the meaning can be lofty and noble yet the form in which it has been expressed is low. Nonetheless, it must be considered."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing perhaps is new in this, the same idea has long been expressed by al-Jāhiz.

In the sphere of eloquence further substantiating remarks are to be found about the role of the use of figurative language, particularly that of al-Majāz or trope which he considered to be in certain circumstances more penetrating in expressing the meaning than the plain use of words. Conciseness and prolex style, could be employed as circumstances required. And such features as the beauty of melody and the sweetness of utterance enhance speech to the hearing. The importance of the latter was but a garnish, in his opinion to what he had already maintained.

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1. Ibid, cf. also p. 222.

The second question in this section rested on the problem of whether or not language was something achieved by convention and choice,<sup>1</sup> which was a Mu'tazilite thesis, or whether it was inspired, if the former was the case, the proposition put was "Could not the speakers have produced something more advanced in eloquence?" (and consequently, in the case of the Qur'ān, something superior to it)

The question induced a long analytical discussion involving the aspect of the knowledge of language. Moreover the following two sections may also be considered as further discursive corollaries to it. However, the question itself in the author's opinion was a misinterpretation on the part of the questioner, of the idea that to the Mu'tazilah language was something achieved by convention.

Nonetheless, in reply to the question, al-Asadabādhī argues that whatever be the origin of language, inspired or otherwise, presupposing that the speakers could produce something more advanced in eloquence is ruled out merely by assuming the opposite. What must be considered is what exists and according to its virtue alone must be determined the merit of the language of the Qur'ān as well as other forms of speech.

Next the discussion focussed mainly on the idea of the knowledge of language. The following section entitled "Explanation of the basis on which it is appropriate to speak of the disparity of eloquence"<sup>2</sup>, further illustrates the author's opinion in a similar vein.

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1. p. 201, This point was expounded in the author's preliminary see pp. 191-6.  
2. p. 207.

His opinion was that the right means to discern the disparity of eloquence is only by deep knowledge of the language and nothing else, which means natural aptitude and command of the tools. However since both are common to every speaker, there would be no disparity when two speakers are equal. The basis for disparity must be something other than the ability and command of means, which is nothing but knowledge.

And knowledge, with regard to language is something of necessity and not acquired. This is the main issue in the succeeding section and also the author's main conception of it. This is to cut short a long discursive section<sup>1</sup>

(B) Composition and al-Asadabādhī's rebellious attitude:

One has every reason to believe that not only was al-Asadabādhī under the influence of the attitude of his Shaykh, Abū Hāshim, concerning the inappropriateness of the conception of composition as a means by which I'jāz could be demonstrated, but also that other factors contributed towards the hardening of his opinion, if only the views of his rival Ash'arite contemporaries, to speak of none but al-Bāqillānī.

Of Abū Hāshim's opinion itself nothing is known apart from what was transmitted by al-Asadābādhī which is an obvious attempt to undermine the conception of composition, or reduce it so that at its very best its status was untenable without consideration of eloquence. It is problematic, however, as to what would have been the answer of Abū

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1. pp.210-213.

Hāshim if he had encountered such theological wrangles over this issue as did the later al-Asadabādhī.

Al-Bāqillānī's realization of the concept of composition is less equivocal. He held it on a par with that of eloquence, condemning any view supporting the one without the other. In the case of al-Asadabādhī however the matter seems to founder, as he furnishes his argument with what appears to be incompatible details. Was he, as his Shaykh, Abū Hāshim, against the idea or, as others, for it or was he for and against it with certain provisos in either case?

Before examining any of these aspects acquaintance should be made with what exactly was meant and understood by composition in the first place. Abū Hāshim's opinion which had been the main source of al-Asadabādhī should be considered first.

As the ways in which speech was formed were common, this indicated that speech could either be prose or verse, nothing else, the language of the Qur'ān therefore must have had its share in one of them, what particularized it was the eloquence therein. In other words, if the form (composition) had already existed, yet could not be considered alone, what was all the fuss about? This basically seems to have been Abū Hāshim's view

When al-Asadabādhī came to emphasize the superiority of words over the meaning he considered the former as being the only measure through which merit in speech is discernable, elucidating this further he argues :-

"What reveals the quality of speech is but the variation which concerns words, or the appearance of certain words before or after others, or the vowels which indicate the function of grammar. Through these three, differentiation thus takes place."<sup>1</sup>

Turning to al-Bāqillānī we read the following as a definition of the composition of letters, " Their composition is nothing more than their existence one before another and their arrangement as they are, and nothing else." <sup>2</sup>

The discrepancy between the two statements is slight, while the former is concerned with words the latter- dictated only by the nature of the question- is concerned with letters, nonetheless both lead to a similar conclusion.

In the course of al-Asadabādhī's discussion on the questions of the challenge and the opposition, or rivalry, further questions arose with regard to the idea of composition, and its appropriateness. The first question reads:-

Q: " Could not the challenge by the Qur'ān be valid on account of its specification with unprecedented composition, hence what had been customary to the people (the Arabs ) was poetry and its like and orations and the like thereof in prose, therefore the Qur'ān came with an unprecedented style in eloquence ?" <sup>3</sup>

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1. Mughnī, xvi, p.200

2. Tamhīd, ed. McCarthy, p. 151

3. Mughnī, xvi, p.216.

The main points in reply to this question are:-

- a) The purpose was to explain a way in which the challenge was valid.
- b) That since what had been maintained, that is, with regard to eloquence (seeing that the Qur'ān is in a particular style which was different from what they knew in prose and verse) was correct, what the questioner was enquiring about did not disagree with what had been already maintained; on the contrary, in the author's opinion it emphasized his main conception.<sup>1</sup>

Until this point al-Asadabādhi shows tolerance and forbearance to the idea of composition. But when his reply proceeds a little further he reverses the argument against the questioner and addresses him "But we know that the matter is contrary to what you have suggested"<sup>2</sup> The rest of this argument concerns a clarification of the point that precedence alone is not sufficient and other considerations must be taken into account. He illustrates the concept of mere precedence as follows :-

" For him who has precedence in poetry, what he produces is not necessarily inimitable, though it were distinguished with unprecedented composition." <sup>3</sup>

A similar question and answer, however, also occur in the same section.<sup>4</sup> The final words there read: "And for this reason (i.e. mere precedence in poetry) we have considered the quality of being unprecedented in that form merely emphatic",<sup>5</sup> that is to say when the various forms of speech being composed are already endowed with eloquence.

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1. Mughni, vol. xvi, p. 216  
 2. Ibid. p. 216  
 3. Ibid. p. 216  
 4. Ibid. p. 225  
 5. Ibid. p. 223.

When reflecting on the different ways of I'jāz, the question about composition becomes evident once more. This time he comes closer to al-Bāqillānī's view of fusing the idea of eloquence and composition. Yet, he differs from him in that eloquence alone can be held as a means by which I'jāz can be demonstrated but not vice versa.<sup>1</sup>

Further, in this amalgamation the position of composition must be only considered a measure for emphasis. The question at one point involves difficult theological considerations which need not be dealt with here.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, despite this reluctant attitude towards composition and his relegation of it, motivated by personal qualms, he could not dismiss it altogether. On the contrary, his own argument always involuntarily reverted to it, as can be seen in the following inquiry :-

Q: "Has not the Qur'ān been revealed in the language of the Arabs, and therefore should there not be in their speech the like of it...? How can it be said that the degree of its eloquence is beyond their usual capacity?"<sup>3</sup>

Oddly enough, in the first half of his answer to this enquiry, al-Asadabādhī refers to nothing but the composition, contrary to his general emphasis, throughout on the idea of eloquence. It reads thus:

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1. pp.321-322

2. p. 304.

3. Ibid The word used here is 'Nizām' of the root 'Nazm'. Sometimes he uses the term Damm, nonetheless they convey the same idea.

"What is meant by saying that the Qur'ān was revealed in their language is nothing more than that its words are embodied in the language which they adopted by general convention, but in this particular composition, it is not in the language."

### Conclusion

In retrospect it would seem that from the earliest days of the revelation, throughout the centuries, the language of the Qur'ān held the pre-eminent status in the Arab mind. The initiation of the Arabic linguistic and literary studies are directly attributable to this phenomenon. The apparent reason, so far as is estimable, for the rise of Arabic literary studies was first and foremost an attempt at sustaining and safeguarding the purity and sanctity of the language of the Sacred Book.

Among the factors which contributed to this was obviously the eruption of the Arabs from the relative isolation of their peninsular into direct contact with other peoples who were of different languages and cultural backgrounds.

By the end of the second century, when many branches of linguistic study were fully developed, or progressing onward to further achievement, the early generations of philologists and grammarians contributed in their embryonic attempts, in no small measure, towards the explanation of the inspiring qualities of the language of the Qur'ān, particularly in the learned circles of Basrah and Kufah. From these early philo-grammatical studies originated such works as 'Majāz al-Qur'ān', 'Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān' and others which inspired greatly eminent scholars of the succeeding generations, who digested and refined them even further, particularly with regard to the literary and rhetorical terminology.

It was the studies of these later generations of scholars, among whom were such authorities as al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah, in which,

doubtless, was laid the foundation of the literary theory of criticism, albeit in a nebulous form, coagulating in time with further elaboration, into a coherent system.

Meanwhile, in the sphere of scholastic theology, events of great consequence were ensuing, culminating in the famous historical trial the 'Creation of the Qur'ān', which advanced immense controversies among the scholars. Perhaps because of this, at least as far as contemporary sources are concerned, it induced inquiries into the inimitability of the language of the Qur'ān, producing for the first time a negative dimension -i.e. the theory of al-Sarfah- to the chapter of I'jāz, which accompanied it for centuries thence.

The third century, witnessed, together with the development of Arabic linguistic sciences, a further evolution of Qur'ānic studies, yet there was still no sign of the emergence of I'jāz as an independent topic, except in the work of al-Jāhiz, entitled 'Nazm al-Qur'ān'. This latter would appear to have been the acceptable title for the study of I'jāz upward to the fourth century. It is unfortunate however that none of the works under that title is accessible to us .

The closing decades of the third century revealed three trends of great potential:

a) In the purely literary theory achievements were accomplished at the hands of such philologists and grammarians as al-Mubarrad and Tha'lab reaching almost final shape in the studies of their pupils, Ibn al-Mu'tazz and Qudāmah b. Ja'far.

b) From sceptical and philosophical sources emerged the most provocative attacks aimed at the very essence of the bases of the

idea of I'jāz (i.e. prophecies, scriptures and miracles), as we have seen in the shattering attacks of both Ibn al-Rāwandī and Ibn Zakariyā al-Rāzī, whose views unquestionably were among the basic factors that affected the study of I'jāz in the fourth century.

In the case of al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutaybah however the provoking motives were a mixture of external and internal factors due principally to the integration of Arabs and non-Arabs.

c) The final and last achievement in that century was the emergence of I'jāz, for the first time, as a new topic, due, presumably to no lesser factors than those we have just mentioned.

It is regrettable however that with the loss of the first work on I'jāz we are also in no position to obtain the immediate responses of the third-fourth century period to the aforesaid factors, be they purely theological or imbued with literary analyses glimpses of which we have seen in some of the authors who are our main concern, particularly in the study of 'Abd al-Jabbār. The link between the studies early in the 4th century and the authors of I'jāz later in the century is also untraceable.

With the exception of the Traditionist, al-Khattābī, the rest of the authors who are connected with the study of I'jāz during the fourth century were 'committed' or professional theologians, indeed, to two of them the leadership of their own schools, was passed down. Namely al-Bāqillānī and al-Asadabādhī. As for the third, al-Rummānī although he was not a leader in name he did in fact command a large following in the school of the Mu'tazilah, to the degree that he was distinguished by some biographers as the Mu'tazilite al-Rummānī.

Al-Rummānī's short treatise is evidently the most systematic and

the most direct contribution to I'jāz in the literary sense we have so far seen. The author having divided 'Balāghah' into ten figures of speech, he followed them respectively into further analysis. His classification is in many respects by far the best. His views were impressive; and it is perhaps no surprise that his treatise achieved the widest acclaim influencing a good number of his contemporaries scholars, including no lesser authorities than Abu Hilāl al-'Askarī and al-Bāqillānī and many of the later generations, some of whom criticised certain shortcomings in them, particularly his categorisation of 'Talā'um' and 'Fawāsil'.

The author was, as far as we could make out, greatly inspired by Aristotelian rhetoric, but to his credit he did not follow blindly the criteria of rhetoric as propounded by Aristotle.

The other short work was that of al-Khattābī in which the author stresses certain characteristics of I'jāz. His effort is remarkable in his endeavour, right from the start, to dispell the concept that, though the eloquence of the Qur'ān was well-known it could not be defined in literary terms, a view which, as we have seen, was entertained before and after the author's time.

His moderate emphasis on the role of the individual words marks a radical departure from the hitherto traditional view concerning their role. His attitude towards them culminated further in his brief philological and etymological analysis of the subtle applications of individual words.

His evaluation of meanings differs totally from the discarding attitude which was adopted first by al-Jāhiz and supported by several others.

With regard to composition the author's short reflection, terse as it is, was uninhibited by any partisan consideration, unlike al-Bāqillānī and al-Asadabādhī.

As an anti-theologian he seemed to have turned one of the theological arguments in connexion with I'jāz (i.e. al-Mu'āradah), into a fruitful literary analysis. Finally in what is tantamount to a mystical experience is the author's final words on the subject, that is to say, the effect of the Qur'ān on the hearts and souls.

The two major authors who evidently championed the study of I'jāz in its theological aspect and in most elaborate and exhaustive detail were doubtless the two outstanding theologians, al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār. They parallel each other from this angle very closely over the wide and discursive range of the subject particularly with regard to the three main aspects- the challenge, the opposition and the idea of al-Sarfah-, differing only in some of their final conclusions. 'Abd al-Jabbār alone however expanded his argument, invoking new dimensions of historical polemics. His literary contribution is particularly prevelant in his expounding of role of 'Majāz' in his short scholastic Tafsīr and in his elaboration on eloquence and style in 'K.al-Mughnī', but in both of these he was merely exercising earlier views.

The man who doubtless brought the study of I'jāz to its ultimate fruition in the fourth century was al-Bāqillānī. His critical reflection on eloquence is an original evaluation of the efforts of the earlier scholars. Further his criticism of poetry defines him as a literary critic in his own right.

His views however on rhymed prose expose his limitation, lacking

the penetrating insight he revealed in his contribution to eloquence and poetry criticism.

Finally, it was by no means that the chapter on I'jāz engaged only the authors with whom we have dealt, many others reflected on it in one way or another, inspiring many of the outstanding critics, Abū Hilāl al-'Askari the author of 'K.al-Sina'atayn' is but one of many.

We have merely restricted ourselves in the foregoing pages to those studies in which I'jāz was the major theme.

A Final Word on the Subject

by  
Dr. W.N. Arafat

Although the question of the inimitability of the Qur'ān dates from the time of the Prophet himself, and the challenge in the Qur'ān, it became the subject of literary, grammatical and philological controversy in the third century (A.H) and continued to be so until our own time.

As soon as the basic point was formulated in an attempt at explaining in concrete or rational terms the reasons of the deep effect the Qur'ān has always had on the Arabs, attempts were made to think and analyse.

One of the earliest and least important from the academic point of view was the theory of al-Sarfah, which quite simply dismisses the lack of an effective rival text to the intervention of the divine will. This was the view of the rationalist Mu'tazilites.

The other attempts tended to begin with an analysis of the contents or the various aspects of the Qur'ān and nearly all gradually developed into a theoretical analysis of the rhetorical and philological characteristics of the Arabic language, mingled, occasionally, with literary criticism, and, as in the case of al-Bāqillānī, with critical analysis of well-known poems.

<sup>ultimately</sup> The conclusion one may justifiably reach, after an examination of the studies, is that the question will remain unsolved in a manner that would end the curiosity of the scholars, critics, theologians or philologists.

The effect of the Qur'ān on the Arabs is due to more factors than they have been able to specify or list; perhaps because of the composite nature and the sublimity of the expression in a language that is naturally one of the richest and most flexible.

The studies of I'jās will remain valuable essays on philology, rhetoric and literary criticism and the Qur'ān will continue to guard the integrity of the Arabic language over a wide area of the globe.

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Abbreviations

- B.M.= British Museum.  
 B.N.= Bibliotheque Nationale (Paris).  
 S.K.M.= Süleymaniye Kutüphanesi Müdürlüğü.  
 A.L.O.L.(pho).= Arab League Organisation Library(photo-copy).  
 Ind.Off.= India Office Library.