

**THE OPPOSITION OF THE SHI'ITES TOWARDS KALĀM:
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO *TARJĪḤ ASĀLIB
AL-QUR'ĀN AND AL-RAWḌ AL-BĀSIM* BY THE ZAIDITE
MUHAMMAD IBN IBRAHIM IBN AL-WAZIR
AL-SAN'ĀNĪ (D. 840/1436)**

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Introduction

The majority of shi'ites, the mu'tazilite, and the murji'ite are regarded by the partisan of traditions (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) as heretics, innovators and even infidels. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) regarded Shi'ites as the Jews of the ummah.¹ This term was based on the assumption that shi'ites are mutakallimun, occupied with kalam, disputation and argumentation. Modern literature supports the claim that no shi'ites of classical period is opposed to kalam.² Despite extensive reference to *Tarjīḥ Asālib al-Qur'ān* (hereinafter: *Tarjīḥ*), al-Jabiri, for instance, relies upon it in his discussion of some Shi'ite of *ithna 'ashriyyah*'s attitude towards logic and Greek philosophy and not towards kalam.³

In this paper, the author argues that the opposition to kalam as means of argumentation, is not a monopoly of the partisans of the Tradition of Sunnite affiliation whose spearheads are the hanbalites.⁴ Kalam and the mutakallimun are also subjected to an opposition by shi'ite. Works by the Zaidite Ibn al-Wazir, which include *tarjīḥ*⁵ and *al-rawḍ al-basim fi dhabb an sunnat al-qawasim* (hereinafter: *al-Rawḍ*),⁶ represented the hostile attitude by certain shi'ite theological denominations towards kalam and the mutakallimun. This is based on two assumptions: Firstly, kalam,

in this instance, must be understood as a means by which the mutakallimun, use to defend their own creeds. Thus, kalam is identified as a means of argumentation, a methodical tool in the discussion and a stylistic device for exposing ideas. Secondly, kalam, in this regard, cannot be considered similar to 'theology,' in contrast to philosophy (*falsafah*) or jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In summary, kalam is considered only as a means which was typical of Muslim theology, and not as a Muslim theology itself.⁷

In the light of the works by Ibn al-Wazir, this paper argues that kalam and the mutakallimun also fell out favour by the shi'ite. In dealing with this discussion, we try to discuss: (1) Biography of the Zaidite Ibn al-Wazir, (2) His censure of kalam as reflected in his works, (3) Ibn al-Wazir's predecessors who allegedly opposed kalam and the mutakallimun, (4) the sources to which Ibn al-Wazir refers in the censure of kalam and the mutakallimun.

Biography of Ibn al-Wazir

According to Brockelmann, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Wazir al-San'ani, well-known as Ibn al-Murtada al-Yamani was born in Hajr al-Zahrawain in 775 /1374 and died in San'a in 840/1436.⁸

It is difficult to gather information about Ibn al-Wazir's familial life. The biographical dictionaries do not inform us much about it. However, according to Brockelmann, the information regarding Ibn al-Wazir's genealogy can be found in a manuscript preserved in Ambrosiana Library (291, IV, 93-100), *aṭrāf al-silsilah allati hiya aslāf al-nubuwwa wa wilāya muniha muṭṭaṣilah*, by his descendant, 'Uthman ibn 'Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn al-Wazir (d. 1052/1648).⁹

Summarizing from a number of the biographical sources, al-Hasani provides us with limited information concerning where Ibn al-Wazir studied and who his Islamic studies teachers were. He starts by informing us that Ibn al-Wazir's teachers were from San'a and any other cities in Yemen and Mecca, modern day Saudi Arabia.

Al-Hasani informs us that Ibn al-Wazir studied Arabic and literature under the supervision of his brother, al-Imam al-Hadi ibn Ibrahim al-Wazir and al-Qadi al-'Allama Muḥammad ibn Hamza ibn Muzaffar.¹⁰ He learned *tafsīr* and *uṣul al-fiqh* from al-Sayyid al-'Allama 'Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Abi al-Qasim, al-Sayyid al-'Allama al-Nasir ibn Ahmad ibn al-Imam al-Mutahhar al-Hasani, al-Shaykh Nafis al-Din Sulayman

ibn Ibrahim al-‘Alawi al-Ta’azzi. He also studied theology and the principle of Islamic Jurisprudence, fiqh, and mysticism under the supervision of al-Qadi al-‘Allama Ali ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Abi al-Khayr, al-Qadi al-‘Allama ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Hasan al-Dawari al-Sa‘adi.¹¹

Ibn al-Wazir not only studied in Yemen. In a number of biographical sources, it is mentioned that he enjoyed academic supervision from scholars in Mecca. This included al-Shaykh al-Muhaddith Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Zahira, al-Shaykh Najm al-Din Muḥammad Ahmad al-Tabari, al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ibrahim, known as Abu al-Yaman al-Shafi‘i, al-Shaykh Ali ibn Mas‘ud ibn Ali ibn ‘Abd al-Mu‘ti al-Ansari al-Maliki, al-Shaykh al-Mu‘ammar Abi al-Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Salama al-Makki al-Shafi‘i, Jar Allah ibn Salih al-Shaybani, al-Sharaf Ahmad ibn Ali al-Hasani, well known as al-Fasi.

Madelung suggests that Ibn al-Wazir played a significant role in moderating the Zaydite teachings to make it acceptable to Sunnis. His voluminous *al-‘awasim wa ‘l-qawasim* represented his defense of the Sunni school doctrine, criticizing the opposing Zaydite teaching.¹² Madelung argues that Ibn al-Wazir had accepted the Sunni canonical collection of ḥadīth as an authority in religion. The attempt of Ibn al-Wazir to favour the neo-Sunni school is to accommodate the religious views and sentiments of the majority of the people who were under the Zaydite imamate control. The long lasting imamate ruling in Yemen until the modern time (1382/1962) is said to have owed its merit to Ibn al-Wazir.¹³

Ibn al-Wazir’s authority in Islamic studies was generally well acknowledged. This was reflected by his contribution of a number of works, these included: *al-‘awasim wa ‘l-qawasim*,¹⁴ *al-rawḍ*,¹⁵ *Īthar al-ḥaqq ‘ala al-khalq fī radd al-khilāfat ilā madhhab al-ḥaq*,¹⁶ *al-burhan al-qāti‘ fī ithbāt al-sāni’ wa jāmi‘i ma ja‘at bih al-shara‘i*,¹⁷ *qabūl al-bashari bi ‘l-taysir li ‘l-yusra, tanqīḥ al-anẓār fī ‘ulūm al-āthār*,¹⁸ *kitāb al-amr bi ‘l-uzla fī ākhir al-zaman, hasr ayat al-aḥkām al-shar‘iyya, al-tafsīr al-nabawi, majma‘ al-ḥaqā’iq wa ‘l-raqā’iq, al-tuḥfah al-safiyyā, al-ta’dīb al-malakūtī, kitāb al-qawā’id, nasr al-a‘yan ‘alā sharr al-‘umyān and al-hassam al-mashhūr*.

His popularity was reflected by his biography being quoted extensively by a number of leading biographers, these included: al-Qadi al-Hafiz Ahmad ibn Salih ibn Abi al-Rizal in *Matāli‘ al-Budur*, al-Sayyid al-Hafiz Ibrahim ibn al-Qasim ibn al-Mu‘ayyid al-Hasani al-Shuhara in *Ruwwat al-Fiqh al-Athār*, al-Sakhawi, al-Taqi ibn Fahd in *Mu‘jam* and by

al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani.¹⁹ It is therefore justified that he was considered as *al-Imam al-Kabir al-Mujtahid al-Muṭlaq* (the great savant and the independent mujtahid).²⁰

According to Madelung, Ibn al-Wazir established his own school. Students who attended his school include Salih ibn Mahdi al-Maqbali (d. 1108/1696), Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Amir (d. 1182/1768), and Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali al-Shawkani (d. 1250/1834).²¹

Ibn al-Wazir’s Censure against Kalam and the Mutakallimun

Ibn al-Wazir’s hostile attitude towards kalam and the mutakallimun was reflected in why he composed his works. In his introduction he states ‘...*rajā’an an akuna min al-ladhīna qala allah ta’āla fihim (wa yara al-ladhīna ‘utu al-‘ilm al-ladhīna unzila ilayka min rabbik al-haqq wa yahdi ilā ṣīrat al-aziz al-ḥamid) wa lima warada fī faḍl man intahara sāhib bid’a min ghayr riya’ wa la suma’a ma’a al-ishara ilā jumal shafiya fī faḍl kitāb allah ta’āla wa faḍl ḥāmilih wa dhikr nabdih min al-akhbār al-warīda fih wa bayān ba’d ma ishtamāla ‘alayh min al-dalā’il al-mughniyya fī al-I’tiqād ‘an al-ishtighāl bikutub al-awā’il* (hoping that I become one of those whom God the Almighty said (but those to whom the (revealed) knowledge has been given hold that which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord to be the truth, and that it guides to the path of the Sublime, the Praiseworthy²²), because excellence is for one who rebukes the author of innovation without hoping to achieve fame and popularity, demonstrating health-giving sentences which point to the virtue of the book of God the Almighty and that of those who bear it, mentioning several news in it and revealing some of evidences in it, which surely renders [us] in no need of being occupied by the books of the ancients.’)²³

Ibn al-Wazir, in this work, not only criticizes the use of kalam and any argumentation of rational nature, such as *jadāl* (debate), *mara* (disputation), or *nazr* (rational disputes), but he also opposes the use of logic and any other rational sciences to prove God’s existence, Prophethood, the hereafter and any other theology or logic, which could lead people into heresy (*zandaqah*) and infidelity (*kufir*).

After studying the individuals and their works, which Ibn al-Wazir discusses in his work, one may suggest that *Tarjīḥ* represents the Shi’ite counterpoint towards kalam. Ibn al-Wazir often quotes the opposing views of the descendants of *ahl al-bayt* (the family of the Prophet), Hasan,

Husain, Ja'far al-Sadiq, etc towards kalam. He mostly refers to the scholars of the Shi'ite denominations, such as al-Zamakhshari, al-Imam al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn al-Mutahhir, al-Sayyid Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan al-Qasimi, etc.

In censuring kalam, Ibn al-Wazir uses various expressions. This varies from light to harsh censuring. Ibn al-Wazir employs a light censuring tone towards kalam when the Mutakallimun learnt the reasoning from the Qur'ān, which resulted in exceeding in their reasoning. They did not limit themselves to reason something which is useful and mentioned in the Book of God the Almighty.²⁴ Ibn al-Wazir's light censuring is also noticed when he discussed the hatred of the *ahl al-bayt* towards kalam. Ibn al-Wazir maintains that Ali exhorted his son, al-Hasan to follow what he learned from the pious forefathers and not to be occupied with disputation (*al-khuṣūmāt*) and innovation (*al-shubuhāt*).²⁵ According to Ibn al-Wazir, Ali's reasoning for prohibiting his son from engaging in kalam was based on his knowledge that his son, al-Hasan lacked knowledge of kalam and on his conviction of invalidity of this science and the evil it incurred on the belief.²⁶

Ibn al-Wazir's criticism towards kalam occurs in a number of statements, dealing with various contexts. When discussing the qualification of a *mujtahid* (an independent scholar who engages in *ijtihād*), Ibn al-Wazir holds the opinion that the most important characteristic of a mujtahid is to avoid being occupied with the questions of kalām. His censure on kalām also occurs when he discusses the attitude of some members of the *ahl al-bayt* towards kalām. According to Ibn al-Wazir, Muḥammad ibn Mansur said that Abd Allah ibn Musa may God be pleased with him used to hate kalam on what people speak about. If a man told him about one who speculates (*yatakallam*) on what people speak about, he will say: O my God, make us die in Islam and then he get silent.²⁷ Relying on *al-Jāmi' al-Kāfī* of Abu Abdullah al-Hasani, Ibn al-Wazir opines that the pious ancestors exhorted the people to follow the tradition and to censure those who were involved in kalām. Then he mentions those who censure kalām among the *ahl al-bayt*, these included Ali ibn al-Husayn, Zayd, Ja'far al-Sadiq, Abd Allah ibn Musa, Ahmad ibn Isa ibn Zayd, al-Hasan ibn Yahya ibn al-Husayn ibn Zayd ibn Ali, Muḥammad ibn Abd Allah, Ibrahim ibn Abd Allah, al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim, Muḥammad ibn Ibrahim, and Muḥammad ibn Mansur.²⁸

Ibn al-Wazir quoted Ali's advice to his son, Hasan, to avoid rational dispute (*al-nazr*) and to hold of what his predecessors had taken as a

principle and to avoid what they did not know.²⁹ Ibn al-Wazir then discussed the attitude of two Shi'ite savants, Sayyid Abu Talib and Sayyid al-Imam al-Mu'ayyid bi llah towards kalām. In his opinion, eventhough they composed extensive works on *fiqh* and its *usul* and they did not produce any works on kalām, this was due to their hatred with being occupied by this science.³⁰ Their attitude towards kalam is also present in the poetry of Sayyid al-'Allama Yahya ibn Mansur ibn al-Afif ibn Mufaddal³¹ who speaks against the mu'tazilites.

They consider it great school
 Due to the length of its views and goodness of thought
 They forget that Islam is in no need, before their invention,
 Of every speech which arises lately
 They do not think that the Prophet asked them to avoid
 They were not aware of it that his prohibition for it is repetitive.³²

He mentioned that al-'Allama ibn al-Mufaddal composed a number of treatises warning people to avoid being occupied with kalām and innovations.³³

In another passage, Ibn al-Wazir identified people who are in different to being occupied with kalām to those who refuse the evils of the heretics.³⁴ According to Ibn al-Wazir, kalam is useless for obvious reasons; Firstly, to protect ourselves against the skepticism originating from our hearts. This can be achieved by understanding that God provides us with guidance. This is what the pious ancestors believed when they neglected kalam.³⁵ Kalām confused and distracted people. Those who are occupied with it, he causes his own destruction.³⁶

Similarly, Ibn al-Wazir maintains that those who refuse the unknown heresy (*shubhat*) and instead prefer with the science of kalām, resemble those who encounter deadly poison with hard medicines which probably become lethal for those who drank them. Instead of encountering the poison, they may have been dead because of drinking such hard medicines.³⁷ Having been deeply occupied with kalām, the *mutakallimūn* become doubtful, confused, be in enmity and accuse each other of being liars.³⁸

Ibn al-Wazir mentions that some of the *mutakallimūn* have regretted to being occupied with kalām. Having deeply penetrated the science of kalām, Ibn al-Wazir's opinion of Ibn Abi al-Hadid³⁹ was; if the one whom I deem greet is equal to the one who committed the offence against a severe calamity of the trials.

Then I was in a perplexity (*tih*) without knowledge = and I delved into a deep sea without ships.

Al-Shahrastani said in his *Nihāyah*:

I have paid a visit to all those institutions = I have already set my feet on those schools

I did not see but the humble who refrained and got confused = lying on the chin and grasp his teeth due to his regret.⁴⁰

Ibn al-Wazir then stated that occupying oneself with kalām could lead to innovation and to develop an interest in the questions of philosophers and innovators is very dangerous and inflicts a sickness to the sound hearts.⁴¹ There are a number of references in the Qur’ān and the prophetic tradition censuring against kalam, innovation and argumentation. In his opinion, some of the references contain the prohibitions of the innovations and the argumentation which is also on the Qur’ān and *qadr*. Some of the references also deal with the prohibition of reflecting the Essence of God and with the command of being doubtful with the ways of the people of kalām.

Ibn al-Wazir’s criticism of kalām is also reflected in his quoting al-Shaykh Abu Ali’s advice to his son, al-Shaykh Abu Hashim: o my son, you should have known that I was in the past just like you, pursuing knowledge. I was often involved in debates. I seldom occupied myself with the deeds. In the past, when I was young and during the time when I was pursuing the knowledge, you are not like me. You are seldom involved in debates and you give much priority to deeds. Nowadays, I am pursuing nothing other than the safety, being guided by the statements which read: the path of the pious ancestors provides us with safety, while the path of the followers of the pious ancestors (*khalaf*) become more knowledgeable. Those who occupy themselves with debate and kalām are not willing to follow the path of safety and they are not protected from the enmity, injustice and the baseness.⁴² For these reasons, Ibn al-Wazir then exemplifies that it is plausible if the Sayyid al-Allama al-Imam al-Mu’ayyid bi ‘l-llah steered clear of kalām.⁴³

Ibn al-Wazir not only censures kalām, he also criticizes the people of kalām (*mutakallimūn*). His criticism is discernably understood by his statements that the scholars of kalām, the polemicists and the logicians could not admit to the pious ancestors that they were experts in their knowledge and they gave them a principle. If there is something in it, they should have changed their statements respecting it.⁴⁴

When dealing with the censure of the pious ancestors (*al-salaf*)

against being deeply involved (*al-ghulw*) in kalam, Ibn al-Wazir stated that it is an obligation for a smart intellectual (*al-aqil al-fitan*) to steer clear of kalām and hold onto the teachings of God the Almighty. In his opinion, the jurists of Islam, the leading scholars of the tradition and all the pious ancestors abandoned kalām and prohibited people from being occupied with it.⁴⁵

In another passage, Ibn al-Wazir discusses the attitude of the Shi'ite imams towards kalām. Referring to the authority of al-Qasim, al-Hadi and al-Nasir and to the author of *al-Jāmi' al-Kāfi*, he holds the opinion that Zayn al-Abidin, Zayd ibn Ali, al-Sadiq, al-Baqir, Abd Allah ibn Musa, Ahmad ibn Isa and al-Hasan ibn Yahya were opposed to kalām. The attitude of those scholars, Ibn al-Wazir maintains, has been discussed in *Kitāb al-Jumla wa 'l-Ulfa* of Muḥammad ibn Mansur.⁴⁶

Tarjīh not only represents Ibn al-Wazir's hostile attitude towards kalam but also describes his censure of any rational sciences. This was reflected in a number of facts as was reported upon the authority of logical premises and rational principles.⁴⁷ This was exemplified when al-Hudhud confessed to the oneness of God and argued the truth of his belief of the existence of God based on the existence of the rain and plants of which all the animals are in need of. He did not read logic, nor was he knowledgeable of kalām.⁴⁸ When they delivered a speech and gave a counsel, all leading scholars and Amir al-Mu'minīn did not employ the premises of the logicians nor the principles of the theologians.⁴⁹

Ibn al-Wazir also opposed logic. This is evident in his description of the pursuit of science. In his opinion, the pursuit of science even if it be in China includes religious sciences. In contrast, the pursuit of rational sciences, amongst which is logic, is prohibited.⁵⁰ Ibn al-Wazir's underestimation of the logician suggests his critical attitude towards logic. According to Ibn al-Wazir, the logicians, theologians and polemicists, could not consider themselves as experts in the sciences, because they could do nothing in comparison with the pious ancestor, in dealing with the establishment of the principle of the religion.⁵¹

The Sources on which Ibn al-Wazir al-San'āni relies when discussing the opposition of scholars towards Kalām

When discussing the opposition to kalām and logic, Ibn al-Wazir relies on the authorities and works of both Sunni and Shi'ite scholars. He refers to *'Uqūd al-Uqyān* of al-Imam al-Mahdi Muḥammad ibn al-Mutahhir, who is of Shi'ite denomination, while in other passages, he

relies on the works of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who is of Shafi'ite juridical affiliation and Sunnite theological affiliation.

Dealing with this discussion, Ibn al-Wazir does not always provide the names of the authors whose works he relies on. It is not uncommon that Ibn al-Wazir relies on the authorities without mentioning their works.

The works and the authorities on which Ibn al-Wazir relies when discussing the opposition to logic and kalām in *Tarjīh*.

- Al-Zamakhshari (p. 13, 152, 186)
- Al-Imam al-Nāṭiq bi 'l-Haq al-Sayyid Abu Tali (p. 14, 17, 32)
- Imam Al-Ghazali (p. 22)
- Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid (p. 25, 26, 79, 103, 130)
- Ja'far al-Sadiq (p. 31)
- Hamidan ibn Yahya al-Qasimi (p. 34)
- Mahmud al-Mulahimi (p. 49)
- Nur al-Din Abu Abd Allah Hamidan ibn Yahya (p. 88)
- Abu Huzail al-Allaf (p. 100)
- Hushsham al-Futi (p. 100)
- Hushsham al-Bardha'i (p. 100)
- Abu 'l-Husain al-Basri (p. 100)
- Zaki al-Din Mahmud al-Khwarizmi (p. 100)
- Abu Bakr al-Baqilani (p. 100)
- Abu Ya'qub al-Shahham (p. 100)
- Abu Ali al-Jubba'I (p. 100)
- Abu Hashim (p. 100)
- Abu Husain al-Khayyat (p. 100)
- Abu 'l-Qasim al-Balkhi (p. 100)
- Abu Abd Allah al-Basri (p. 100)
- Abu Rashid (p. 100)
- Ibn Matwih (p. 100)
- Al-Turtusi (p. 139)
- Al-Baghawi (p. 141)
- Ibn Taymiyyah (p. 142)
- Al-Murtadla ibn al-Hadi (p. 155)

The works:

- Ḍiya'u al-'Ulūm* (p. 42)

Al-Talkhīṣ (p. 71, 72)

Al-Waṣā'if ala Madhab al-Salaf (p. 81)

The authorities with their works:

'Uqud al-Uqyān of al-Imam al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn al-Mutahhir (p. 14)

Kitāb al-Shifā of the Qadi Iyad (p. 14, 21, 185)

Al-Sunan of Ibn Majah (p. 15)

Al-Amali fī 'l-Ḥadīth (p. 15, 16) and *Sharḥ al-Taḥrīr* (p. 32) of al-Imam al-Nāṭiq bi 'l-Ḥaq al-Sayyid Abū Ṭālib.

Majma' al-Zawā'id of al-Haythami (p. 16)

Al-Jāmi' of the hafiz muhaddith Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi (p. 16)

Nahj al-Balāghah of Ali ibn Abi Talib (p. 17, 25, 141)

Al-Tamhīd (p. 19), *al-Ziyādat* (p. 45, 93), *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* (p. 32, 73) and *al-Mi'yar* (p. 74) of al-Imam al-Mu'ayyad bi 'l-Allah Yahya al-Husaini ibn Hamza

Al-Jumal al-Islāmiyyah of al-Sayyid al-Allama Yahya ibn Mansur (p. 19).

Al-Jumla wa 'l-Uḥfa of Muhammad ibn Mansur al-Kufi (p. 19, 27, 30)

Al-Jāmi' al-Kāfi of al-Sayyid al-Allama Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Alawi al-Hasani (p. 19, 27, 31, 87, 102).

Sharḥ al-'Uyūn of al-Hakim Abu Sa'id al-Muhsin ibn Karrama (p. 21)

Al-Muḥīṭ of the chief judge 'Abd al-Jabbar (p. 21).

Al-Mujtaba fī 'l-Istidlāl of Mukhtar ibn Mahmud the mu'tazilite (p. 21, 73, 75, 80, 99, 102, 110, 117).

Al-Arba'ūn fī 'l-Kalām 'alā al-Nubuwwat of al-Fakhr al-Razi (p. 22)

Al-Muntakhab of Muhammad ibn Sulayman (p. 31).

Al-Arjuza of al-Muttahir ibn Yahya (p. 36).

Al-Muhadhdhab of al-Sayyid Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan al-Qasimi (p. 37-38).

Kitab al-'Ibar wa 'l-I'tibār of al-Jahiz (p. 48, 92, 110).

'Awārif al-Ma'ārif of Umar ibn Muhammad al-Suhrawardi (p. 51).

Al-Burhān of al-Juwaini (p. 69, 72, 95).

Jām' al-Jawami of al-Subki (p. 69).

Al-Minhāj fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh of al-Baiḍawī (p. 71).

Al-Muḥīṭ of Ibn Taymiyyah (p. 75).

Awā'il al-Muḥīṭ of Ibn Matawiyya (p. 76m 116).

Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr of Abu Hashim (p. 78).

Al-Baligh al-Mudrik bi Ḥubb ‘alā al-Baligh al-Mudrik of al-Hadi (p. 86).

Kitāb al-Bassat of al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Amr al-Ashraf (p. 87).

Kitāb al-Tawḥīd of Muhammad ibn Mansur (p. 93).

Al-Fā’iq of Rukn al-Din al-Khwarizmi (p. 103).

Kitāb al-Arba’in (p. 107) and *Asrar al-Tanzil* (p. 110) of al-Razi.

Al-Tadhkirah of Abu Ali al-Taymi (p. 138).

Al-Ḥāwī fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh of Yahya ibn Hamza (p. 141, 159).

Kitāb al-Fuṣūṣ of Ibn ‘Arabi al-Ta’I (p. 152).

Kitāb al-Majāz of Zaid ibn Ali (p. 155).

Al-Nāṣikh wa ‘l-Mansūkh of al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim (p. 155).

Tafsīr al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhshari (p. 161, 183).

Ibn al-Wazir’s Censure of Kalām as Reflected in his *al-Rawḍ al-Basim*

As in *Tarjīḥ* where arguments opposing kalām were present, so too do we find similar arguments in Ibn al-Wazir’s *al-Rawḍ*. The following passages shall be devoted to discuss his censures of kalām and the *mutakallimūn*.

Ibn al-Wazir’s discussion opposing kalām in his *al-Rawḍ* is based on the following arguments; the reason why the partisans of the tradition fault is because of their adherence to kalām.⁵² Leading scholars of arts joined the traditionalists (*al-muhaddithūn*) in steering clear of kalām.⁵³ To avoid the interpretation of the traditions on the attributes and to prohibit people from being occupied with kalām is not a monopoly of the partisans of the tradition; this is also done by masters of theologians.⁵⁴ This is reflected in; firstly, the statements by Imam al-Ghazali opposing kalām⁵⁵; secondly, al-Imam al-Razi’s prohibition of studying kalām⁵⁶; and thirdly, al-Juwayni’s censure of kalām.⁵⁷ The partisans of the tradition avoided kalam not due to their static comprehension but due to their obedience to the Qur’ān.⁵⁸

In Ibn al-Wazir’s opening argument, he declared that the science of tradition is the most significant of all the sciences. This he argued because it is referred to by the *uṣūli*, *faqīh*, Arabic grammarian, philologist, mystic, interpreter (*mufasssir*) and counselor (*wā’iz*).⁵⁹

Like many other apologetics, Ibn al-Wazir also seeks the support for his opposition to kalām and the *mutakallimūn* amongst the greatest authorities in Islamic History.⁶⁰ He maintains that Imam al-Ghazali was

a fervent opponent of kalām. According to Ibn al-Wazir, this is reflected in his statements opposing kalām, which can be found, in three of his works; *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *al-Tafrīqa bayna al-Iman wa 'l-Zandaqah*.

According to Ibn al-Wazir, in both of his works, Imam al-Ghazali stated in his *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, that it is claimed that the use of kalām is to reveal the truth and to know it. The claim is far from being true. Seeking Kalām results in leading one astray. Asserting his view, Ibn al-Wazir argues that Imam al-Ghazali stated in *al-munqidh* that the arguments of kalām does not acquaint one with any certainty. Imam al-Ghazali's censure of kalām can also be found in other works. According to Ibn al-Wazir, in *al-Tafrīqa bayna al-Īmān wa 'l-Zandaqah*, Imam al-Ghazali argued that it is prohibited to be occupied with kalām.⁶¹

By considering al-Razi⁶² a master of kalām and theologians, Ibn al-Wazir probably want to argue that even the masters of kalām themselves regretted being occupied with it. According to Ibn al-Wazir, al-Razi stated; I have had experience of all the methods of kalām and of all the paths of philosophy, unfortunately I have not found in them either contentment nor comfort to equal that which I have found in reading the Qur'ān...' Likewise, al-Razi asserts that the end of the intellectual enterprise is *compos mentis*, and most of the efforts of the scholars end in error.⁶³ By referring to *Sharḥ Muslim* of al-Qurtubi,⁶⁴ Ibn al-Wazir explains al-Juwayni's attitude towards kalām. He then quotes the latter's statements which are also mentioned by al-Suyūṭī in his *Sawn al-Manṭiq*; 'I have already abandoned the authorities of Islam and their knowledge. I then travelled by the greatest sea. Each time I sought the truth and freed from unquestioning imitation, I choked [by the water]. Now I returned to the word of the truth; 'You must follow a faith of the old women. You impose upon me my affair with sincere words. So, wo unto Ibn al-Juwayni!⁶⁵ He used to say to his companions; 'Do not be occupied with kalām! So if I know that kalām occupies me to its highest point, I am not occupied with it.'⁶⁶

Ibn al-Wazir, accordingly, cites the statements opposing kalām by his Shi'ite fellows. According to Ibn al-Wazir, Yahya ibn Mansur al-Hasani, the most leading scholar of Zaydite Shi'ite denomination, has repented from being occupied with kalām and has prohibited himself from it. His repentance and abstinence from occupying himself with kalām is aptly described in fine poetry which essentially states that if one wants to know what leads one to danger, is because of being occupied with kalām and debate.⁶⁷

Ibn Abi al-Hadid, the author of the monumental *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* whom Ibn al-Wazir regarded as a Mu'tazilite, is also referred to as one who opposes kalam. This is reflected in his poems lamenting him being perplexed, seeking the truth by means of the theological path. According to Ibn al-Wazir, Ibn Abi al-Hadid stated; *ṭalabtuka jahidan khamsīn 'aman = fa lam aḥṣūl 'alā barār al-yaqīn*.⁶⁸

Likewise, Ahmad ibn Sannan's report of his uncle, al-Walid ibn Abban al-Karabisi with regard to the latter's attitude towards kalām, does not miss the attention of Ibn al-Wazir who stated when al-Karabisi lied on his death-bed, he asked his sons; 'do you know if there is one who is more knowledgeable than me? They replied; Yes. So he replied; you have to follow what is upheld by the partisans of the tradition, because I saw that the truth is with them.'⁶⁹

Ibn al-Wazir continues to postulate that people abandon kalām not due to it being subtle and obscure, but because they were convinced by it being prohibited.⁷⁰

According to Ibn al-Wazir, the *mutakallimūn* tried to interpret the verse of the Koran which reads '...*wa jādilhum billati hiya aḥsan*...' ⁷¹ as a command for the Muslims to undertake *jidāl* (debate and argumentation). This thus justifies what they have done. Regarding this question, Ibn al-Wazir replied from two points of view; firstly, that the phrase '*wa jādilhum*', is conditioned with '*billati hiya aḥsan*', and not a command of absolute *jidāl*, i.e, *billati hiya aḥsan*. According to Ibn al-Wazir's opinion, it is embodied in the Prophet's practice of *jidāl*, which he does not follow the way the *Mutakallimūn* do.⁷² Secondly, *jidāl* should be practiced with '*billati hiya aḥsan*,' means that God has taught in the Qur'ān to his Prophet. However, engaging with the discussion with the people of heresy is prohibited.⁷³

In another passage, Ibn al-Wazir stated that the Prophet and his Companions never occupied themselves with kalām.⁷⁴ He continues that being involved in the dispute with the people of argumentation and being eager to invite them to debate will not be done by a knowledgeable individual and not justified by the enlightening book.⁷⁵ Ibn al-Wazir also indicates that being involved in an affair which could lead to doubt, confusion and innovation is abhorrent.⁷⁶

The Sources and The Authorities on which Ibn al-Wazir relies when discussing the Censures towards Kalām in al-Rawḍ

In discussing the censures towards kalām by his predecessors, Ibn

al-Wazir sometimes refer to the authorities and their works, and sometimes he mentions only the authorities. The sources and the authorities to which Ibn al-Wazir refers when discussing the censures towards kalām are *al-mufhim fi saḥiḥ Muslim* by al-Qurṭubī, *Saḥiḥ Muslim* by al-Nawawī, *Iḥyā ‘Ulum al-Dīn*, *al-Tafrīqa* and *al-Munqidh* by Imam al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqālāt* by Abu al-Qasim al-Balkhī al-Ka‘bī, *Kitāb al-Ziyadat* by al-Imam al-Mu‘ayyad bi Allah, Yahya bin Mansur al-Hasanī, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balagha* by Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Khatīb al-Rāzī, Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī, *Nihaya al-Iqdam fi ‘Ilm al-Kalām* by al-Shahrastānī.

Notes And References

1. This statement is discussed elaborately by S.M. Wasserstrom, ‘The Shi’as are the Jews of our Community an Interreligious Comparison within Sunni Thought,’ in *Israel Oriental Studies*, XIV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 297-324.
2. Abrahamov in his *Islamic Theology*, for instance, suggests that though shared by a different denomination, the opposition to kalam and the *mutakallimun* are only a monopoly of the traditionalists, The shi’a has no place in his discussion of those who have hostile attitude towards kalam and the *mutakallimun*. See, Abrahamov, Benyamin, *Islamic Theology Traditionalism and Rationalism*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998. The most leading scholar of Islamic theology, Josep van Ess does not suggest us any information pertaining to this subjectmatter. Twice he mentioned Ibn al-Wazir in his *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, but he does not indicate any objection or opposition by the latter to kalam. He deals with him rather with regard to scholars’ controversy on *ru’ya* (*visio beatifica*). See, vol. IV, pp. 415, 511.
3. See, ‘Alī Husain al-Jabirī, *al-Fikr al-Salafī ‘ind al-Shi’a al-Ithna ‘Ashriyya Dirasa Tahliliyya li Mawqif al-Fikr al-Salafī fi ‘l-Islam ‘Umuman wa ‘ind al-Ithna ‘Ashriyya ‘ala Wajh al-Khusus min Mantiq wa Falsafat al-Yunan*, Beirut, Masnurat ‘Uwaidat, 1977.
4. Here I was inspired by Van Ess’ identification of kalam with two senses: narrow and broad. The narrow sense, he argues, points to ‘a technique by which the *Mutakallimun* use for defending their conviction.’ Here, thus, ‘kalam is identical with an instrument of argumentation, a methodical tool in real discussion and stylistic device for the expansion of ideas.’ While the broad significance of kalam, according to van Ess, points to ‘something like ‘Muslim Theology,’ in contrast to philosophy (*falsafa*) or jurisprudence (*fiqh*).’ Van Ess discusses this topic in ‘Disputationpraxis in der Islamischen Theologie: Eine vorläufige Skizze,’ in REI, 44 (1976), pp. 23-60; and in ‘Early Development of Kalam,’ in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G.H.A. Juynbol, Carbondale & Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1982, pp. 109-123.

5. This work is published twice: in Cairo by Idara Tiba'a al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Azhariyya al-Misriyya in 1349/1931 and in Beirut by Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya in 1984.
6. This work is published in Damascus by Idarat al-Tiba'a al-Muniriyya.
7. For this assumption, the present author is inspired by J. van Ess's article, 'Early Development of Kalam,' in Juynboll, G.H.A. (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982, pp. 109-123.
8. GAL, S. II, p. 249.
9. Ibidem; cf, Lofgren Oscar and Renato Traini, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Rome, 1980, vol. II, p. 144.
10. Probably he was Shamsuddin Muhammad ibn Hamza al-Fanari al-Hanafi who was born in 751/1350, studied in minor Asia and Egypt, became qadi in Brussa, jailed during Timur occupation and died in 834/1431. See, GAL, II, p. 303.
11. See, the introduction of the editor, Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Yahya Zibara al-Hasani al-Yamani, *op. cit.*, p. 1-4.
12. Madelung, W. 'Zaydiyya,' EI2, vol. XI, pp. 477-481.
13. Ibidem.
14. This work was published twice. The first was published in Amman by Dar al-Bashir in 1985 (3 vols), the second was published in Beirut by Mu'assasa al-Risala in 1992 (9 vols.).
15. This work consists of two juzs and was published in Cairo (idara al-Tiba'a al-Muniriyya). The first juz deals with the discussion that the science of tradition is the most virtuous sciences (*afdal al-'ulum*). The second juz discusses, among other things, the censure of kalam and its people. In this juz is also found the statement of al-Razi, al-Juwayni, Imam al-Ghazali against kalam.
16. This work was published in Cairo by Matba'a al-Adab wa 'l-Muayyad (1318-1900). This work deals with the discussion.
17. This work was published in Cairo by al-Matba'a al-Salafiyya (1349/1931).
18. This work was published in Beirut by Dar ibn Hazm in 1999.
19. Ibidem, p. 4.
20. *Ithar*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
21. Madelung, *op. cit.*, p. 480.
22. Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 421, vol. II, Sura Saba, XXXIV: p. 6.
23. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
24. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
25. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 24-25.
26. Ibidem.
27. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
28. Ibidem.
29. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
30. *Tarjih*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
31. According to Brockelmann, Yahya ibn Mansur was the author of *al-Kashifa li Ma'ani 'l-Jumal wa 'l-Usul*. GAL, S. II, p. 995.
32. *Wa yarawna dhalika madhhaban musta'ziman min tuli anzar wa husn tafakkur Wa nasu ghina al-islam qabl hututhihim 'an kull qawl hadith muta' akhkhir*

Ma zannuhum bi 'l-mustafa fi tarkih ma istanbatuh wa nahyuh al-mutakarrir. See *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 33.

33. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 36-37.
34. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 44.
35. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 45.
36. *Ibidem.*
37. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.
38. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
39. Abu Bakr Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Ubayd ibn Sufyan al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi was born in Bagdad in 208/823 and died there in 281/894. He was author of monumental *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha* (20 vols). He was regarded mu'tazili in *usul* but *shafi'I* in *furu* being objective in his attitude to the *ahl al-bayt* and explicit in his affirmation of the rights of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Many scholars believe that he was between *shi'I* and sunni parties (*bayn al-fariqayn*), since he was inspired by sense of equity (*insaf*). See, Vaglieri, L. Vecchia, 'Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid,' EI2, vol. III, pp. 684-686.
40. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
41. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 52.
42. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 67.
43. Al-Mu'ayyid bi 'l-lah is Yahya ibn Hamza al-Husayn, the author of al-Tiraz, who died in Dhimar in 749/1349. See fn, no. 1, p. 19; *tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 56.
44. *Wa kadhalika 'ulama al-kalam wa 'l-jadaliyyun wa 'l-mantiqiyyun la yastati'un la yastati'un an yad'u ala al-salaf annahum hadu fi 'ilmihim wa la mahhadu lahu qa'idatan.* *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 90.
45. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 67.
46. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 102.
47. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 49.
48. *Ibidem.*
49. *Ibidem.*
50. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 40.
51. *Tarjih, op. cit.*, p. 90.
52. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 9-10.
53. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 10-11.
54. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 11.
55. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 12.
56. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 13.
57. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 14.
58. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 15.
59. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 4-5.
60. This is comparable, for instance, with al-Suyuti's reference in his *Sawn al-Mantiq* to a great number of his predecessors who regarded as the opponents of kalam.
61. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, p. vol. II, pp. 11-12.
62. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Umar ibn al-Husayn who was one of the most celebrated theologians and exegetists of Islam was born in 543/1149 in Rayy. He studied kalam under the supervision of his father, Diya al-Din Abu 'l-Qasim who wrote *Ghayat al-Maram*, in which he showed himself

a warm partisan of *al-Ash'ari* and whose teacher was Abu 'l-Qasim al-Ansari, a pupil of the Imam al-Haramayn. He studied philosophy to al-Majd al-Jili and fiqh to al-Kamal al-Samnani. He was buried in Herat in 606/1209. Al-Razi's works are huge in numbers, the majority of which are concerned with kalam (40), philosophy (26), and exegesis (5). See, Anawati, G.C. 'Fakhr al-Din al-Razi,' in EI2, vol. II, pp. 751-755.

63. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 14.
64. Abu 'l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Umar al-Qurtubi who was an eminent Maliki scholar was born in Cordoba in 578/1173 and died in Alexandria in 656/1259. He was a teacher of traditions and the most prominent expert on the Arabic language. His work, *al-Mufhim fi Sharh Muslim* was often quoted by al-Nawawi in a number of places in his own work. See, Arnaldez, R., 'Al-Qurtubi, Abu Abd Allah Muhammad,' EI2, vol. II, p. 512.
65. Abu 'l-Ma'ali Abd al-Malik al-Juwayni who was well-known as the *Imam al-Haramayn* was born in 419/1028 at Nisabur and died in 478/1085. He was a leading scholar in *usul al-fiqh* (*kitab al-waraqat fi usul al-fiqh* and *kitab al-burhan fi usul al-fiqh*) and *kalam* (*al-shamil*). See, Brockelmann, C, 'Al-Djuwayni, Abu 'l-Ma'ali Abd al-Malik,' EI2, vol. II, pp. 605-606.
66. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 14; cf, Sawan al-Mantiq, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
67. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 12.
68. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 13.
69. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 14.
70. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 16.
71. The Qur'ān, Chapter 16, verse 125.
72. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 139.
73. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 140-141.
74. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 137.
75. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 141.
76. *Al-Rawd, op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 17.

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