

The History and Origins of the Kalām Theology of the Ash‘arīs and Mātūrīdīs:

A USEFUL HANDBOOK OF HISTORICAL FACTS
AND CONCEALED REALITIES

Abu ‘Iyaḍ

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Yaḥyā bin ‘Ammār (d. 422H) and
Shaykh al-Islām Abū Ismā‘īl al-Harawī (d. 481H) said:

الأشعرية مخانيث المعتزلة

“The Ash‘arites are the Effeminatees of the Mu‘tazilah.”

The foundation of the theology of the Jahmiyyah, Mu‘tazilah, Ash‘ariyyah and Māturidiyyah is to impose the rationally deduced conception of **“divine perfection”** spoken of by Aristotle and Plato upon the texts of the Qur‘an and Sunnah. The dismissal of ḥadiths pertaining to the ṣifāt as speculative knowledge only, the claim of allegory (majāz) in the texts of the attributes, the claim of the meanings of the texts of the attributes being unknowable (tashābuh) and likewise, ta‘wīl (figurative interpretation) and finally, tafwīḍ (assumed ignorance and consignment of the meaning) are all

mechanisms that were **invented** to help achieve the goal of **imposing the language of rational divine perfection** of the likes of Aristotle, Plato and the Hellenized Jews, Christians and Sabians upon the speech of Allāh and His Messenger.

They were forced to do this because they made this conceptual baggage and its associated terminology the foundation for a so-called rational proof (ḥudūth al-ajsām) to show that the universe had a beginning, and hence must have a creator. However, because they employed this language, they had to remain true to its necessities, which meant that they could only speak about the creator of the universe—in terms of affirmation and negation—on the basis of this language. This language and its necessities clashed with the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. Thus, **the invention of mechanisms** to make the Qurʾān and Sunnah conform to their so-called reason which is really based on the metaphysics of Aristotle: discussion of jawāhir, ajsām and aʿrāḍ (substances, bodies and incidental attributes) known as Aristotle’s “**Ten Categories**” or **al-Maqūlāt al-ʿAshar**. Here they are:



THE TEN CATEGORIES OF ARISTOTLE

The first category deals with "what something is":

- **substance (jawhar)** – all created entities are substances or bodies

The rest are incidental attributes (aʿrāḍ), which deal with "how it is":

- **quantity (al-kam)** – dimensions: length, breadth, width

- **quality (al-kayf)** - perceived characteristics, color, shape, and so on.

- **relation (al-idaafah)** - how it is in relation to others, above, below, right, left

- **place (al-ayn)** - where it is

- **time (mataa)** - answering "when?", temporal characteristics of the substance

- **position (al-wad')** - how it's parts are ordered in relation to each other

- **action (yaf'al) acting** - what a substance is doing

- **affection (yanfa'il)** - a substance being acted upon

- **having (al-mulk)** - what the substance is wearing or possessing

The argument is that since incidental attributes cannot exist on their own and can only inhere (exist) within a body (substance), and since attributes must have had a beginning (because they cannot exist on their own), then likewise the bodies that possess them must also have a beginning, because if they possess something that must by necessity have a beginning, then they too must, by necessity, also have a beginning. And since all bodies in the universe must be thereby originated, an originator is therefore established.¹ However, when you now come to describe this originator, if you ascribe anything to this creator which comes under the incidental attributes (aʿrāḍ) as categorised by Aristotle, then you have likened this creator to all the bodies and thereby falsified the very proof you used to establish His existence. So there are only two ways: Either the proof you used is false and hence rejected.² Or the proof you used is true and the Qurʾān and Sunnah must be distorted to agree with it. This is where the alleged conflict between **reason** (ʿaql) and **revelation** (naql) arises and which provides the basis for the activity of the people of this innovated kalām in distorting the Qurʾān and the Sunnah.

¹ This is a very simple presentation of the argument, it has finer details.

² This proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām leads to falsehood because certain assumptions are used to complete it, from them, the claim of “**an endless chain of events**” being impossible. These assumptions made it impossible for them to win the argument against the atheists and philosophers and they only realised this after a couple of centuries of debate and argument—by the time that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī appeared in the 6th century hijrah. From this point onwards, they began to hybridise kalām with philosophy and employ philosophical arguments originating with the Muʿtazilah and the likes of Ibn Sīnā. Hence, in addition to ḥudūth al-ajsām whose weakness they had perceived, they began to employ the proofs of tarkīb and takhsīs in order to argue for Allāh’s existence and His oneness to defend their theology. The details of these affairs can be found on the website Asharis.Com.

This is what the Jahmiyyah did, when al-Ja'd bin Dirham and al-Jahm bin Şafwān appeared in the ummah. They came with the same thing that was being written and spoken of by the Hellenized Jews, Christians and Sabians such as Philo Judaeus (d. 50CE), Augustine (d. 430CE) and others centuries before Islām.

So then they had to resolve this problem of the conflict between their so-called “reason” and revelation which affirms an essence (dhāt), names (asmā'), attributes (şifāt) and actions (af'āl) for Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ):

- So the **Jahmites** were the most consistent, they denied everything, they said we reject all names, attributes and actions for Allāh, otherwise He would be a body. And they came up with a conception of a deity which exists only in the mind, something totally devoid of names and attributes, just like the Philosophers whose idea of a creator, or a first cause, or a prime mover, is no more than the imaginary idea of oneness in the mind. So the Jahmites applied this principle uniformly and coherently. They said there is no deity above the Throne, because this is direction (jihah) and this necessitates a location (makān) and this necessitates spatial occupation (taḥayyuz) and this would render Allāh a body (jism). They said Allāh will not be seen in the Hereafter because He would be seen in a direction which would also render Him a body. They said Allāh does not have speech (kalām) and that the Qur'ān is created because speech is an attribute of bodies and is also sequential which means confinement by time. They said Allāh has no names, or attributes as they would render Allāh a body.

So they denied everything, until some of them even said that you cannot say Allāh is “a thing” (shay’).

It is important to note that the Jahmites were most consistent in applying these necessities. After them came kalām groups that were built upon contradiction and incoherence. They basically played word games and were in the middle, neither taking a firm stand behind the Philosophers and the Jahmites and nor taking a firm stand behind the Prophets and Messengers and their followers. So historically, some of Imāms of the Salaf referred to them as the makhānīth (the effeminate) who were refusing to be full, mature men. Yaḥyā bin ‘Ammār (d. 422H) (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “The Mu‘tazilites are the effeminate (makhānīth) of the Jahmites and the Ash‘arites are the effeminate of the Mu‘tazilites.”³ Hence, they were **effeminate sissies**⁴ in the middle with their kalām, not being consistent with it and going all the way like the Jahmites and Philosophers did, which is what it demanded from them and nor leaving kalām altogether and being full men with the People of the Sunnah, the followers of revealed Books and sent Messengers.

We have discussed the men—the Jahmites—now we can discuss the various categories of effeminate sissies in the middle upon the speech of Yaḥyā bin ‘Ammār:

- The **Mu‘tazilah** took this kalām from the Jahmites and because they knew that they would be scorned by the ummah, they played word games and tried to pretend that they affirm the names. So they said: We accept

³ Refer to Majmu‘ al-Fatāwā (6/359).

⁴ A sissy is a person that is effeminate or cowardly.

Allāh is called “al-Alīm, al-Raḥīm, al-Samī” and so on, but without the attributes of ‘ilm, raḥmāh, and samī. So this is just sophistry, pure sophistry. They denied all attributes and actions for Allāh and adopted a “negative theology” stance, which is where you describe Allāh only in negatives so as to avoid affirming attributes for him, similar to what the Jahmites did before them, following the ways of the Greeks and Sabeans and the misguided Jews and Christians. Towards the end of the second century, the Mu‘tazilah had influenced the caliphs and an inquisition was made against the people of the Sunnah on the issue of the Qur’ān. They believed it was created and claimed that to say it is Allāh’s uncreated speech is taj̄sīm, shirk and kufr. Thousands were killed, tortured, imprisoned or beaten in this inquisition that lasted many years. The tide turned when Imām Aḥmad (d. 241H) who is **the Imām of Ahl al-Sunnah** defeated the Mu‘tazilah in forced debates in front of the caliphs in the early third century. After this the Mu‘tazilah became despised and dwindled.

- Then came **Ibn Kullāb** and a group with him, they ascribed to the Sunnah but were weak and deficient in it and were also given to disputation with the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah. They accepted the foundations of that innovated kalām and tried to argue by way of it. So they found a way to establish the attributes through reason, the seven attributes of life, knowledge, hearing, seeing, speech, power and will, and affirmed the ‘uluww of Allāh over His creation, and the ṣifāt khabariyyah (face, hands, eyes) which are mentioned in the Qur’ān as well

as many other attributes. They refuted the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah on the issue of Allāh's 'uluww, ṣifāt khabariyyah and His attributes and had strong words in that regard. However they fell prey to some of the doubts of the Mu'tazilah. Because they did not affirm attributes based upon the Prophetic traditions—opposing the way of Companions, the Tābī'īn and the Imāms of the Salaf, and employed reason as the primary tool, they were unable to answer the Mu'tazilah on the issue of Allāh's speech. They convinced him that speech is such that it requires organs as well as motion (ḥarakah) because speech is sequential it requires succession in time. So he could not rebut the Mu'tazilah on the issue of the Qur'ān being created because of this and innovated a new doctrine never known before, which is the doctrine of **kalām nafsī**. That Allāh's speech is just a meaning in Allāh's self. This is false, because kalām as defined in the Arabic language is **nuṭq muḥim** which must involve expression of words that are heard and provide a complete meaning. The Salaf held that Allāh speaks with a voice whose reality is unknown, like the rest of the attributes, and this is what the texts indicate. However, Ibn Kullāb was operating in the jurisdiction of kalām and fell prey to their doubts. He therefore innovated this new saying not known in the ummah before that.⁵ In short, Ibn Kullāb and the Kullābiyyah affirmed the names of Allāh, the seven attributes and the ṣifāt khabariyyah (face, hands, eyes) but they denied that Allāh has chosen actions (af'āl ikhtiyāriyyah), because this would imply—

⁵ Al-Shahrastānī (548H), in his book Niyāyat al-Aqdām, wrongly ascribed this saying to al-Ash'arī in his book whereas it was Ibn Kullāb who innovated it.

upon that innovated 'ilm al-kalām—that Allāh is subject to events (ḥawādith). Hence, their approach towards the speech of Allāh (kalām) and His pleasure, anger and so on. All of these are actions tied to Allāh's will. The Kullābiyyah eliminated the element of will in these attributes. The Kullābiyyah were scorned by Imām Aḥmad because they followed the way of al-Jahm bin Ṣafwān in their speech about Allāh, having based it upon 'ilm al-kalām. They opened an evil door through their disputations after the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah had been defeated. From this group was **al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī** (d. 243H) and **Husayn al-Karābīsī** (d. 248H). The theology of the Kullābiyyah is actually the foundation for the theology of the Ash'arīs and the Māturīdīs. The approach of the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs towards Allāh's chosen actions is actually taken from the Kullābiyyah and they have different renditions of the solution to the problem of Allāh's chosen actions.

- Then came **Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī** (d. 324H), he was born two decades after Imām Aḥmad had already defeated and humiliated the Mu'tazilah. He was a Mu'tazilī for forty years of his life having been brought up in the household of a prominent Mu'tazilī leading scholar, Abū 'Alī al-Jubā'ī (d. 303H). After discovering a flaw in the theology of the Mu'tazilah and unable to receive a satisfactory answer from its leaders, he renounced it. He then sat in the circles of the Kullābiyyah who had a presence in Baṣrah and Baghdād and benefited from their refutations against the Mu'tazilah. Ibn Kullāb had written works in this respect and some of

them are cited by Ibn Fawrak (d. 406H), who is Ash‘arī, and also by Ibn al-Qayyim, through him. Having adopted their creed, al-Ash‘arī authored works in which this creed was outlined. Before his death, some time after 322H, he authored the book *al-Ibānah* and there is conclusive, irrefutable proof for this, and it can be found in *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī* of Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571H) who authored this work to refute the claim that al-Ash‘arī only authored *al-Ibānah* out of deception. This work is **a thorn in the throats** of the Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs today who are in reality followers of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah and they have numerous approaches towards it. They claim that it was written very early on, after he left the Mu‘tazilah, which is false. Or they claim al-Ash‘arī wrote it only to show agreement with the Ḥanbalīs of Baghdād in order to gradually draw them out of their alleged tajsīm and tashbīh and this is pure falsehood and is in fact a revilement of al-Ash‘arī himself. Or they say the book has been tampered with by the evil “Mujassimah”, another patently false claim. In *al-Ibānah*, al-Ash‘arī affirms the ‘uluww of Allāh, the nuzūl of Allāh, the attributes in general and the ṣifāt khabariyyah (face, hands, eyes) and also has rebuttals against the arguments of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah—ironically, the very ones that today’s Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs use against the Salafis! Al-Ash‘arī, during a period of around two decades, slowly transitioned from the creed of Ibn Kullāb and moved towards the creed of Imām Aḥmad who was the defender of the creed of the revealed Books and sent Messengers, of the Companions, Ṭābi‘īn and the Righteous Salaf. One of the things to note is that

al-Ash‘arī—speaking about the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām which was the foundation of the people of kalām in their false speech about Allāh—he said it was an innovation and taken from the Philosophers. He was obviously correct in this, but at the same time, he did not say it was false and incorrect. Al-Ash‘arī had three stages after leaving the Mu‘tazilah. The first in which he spoke with ḥudūth al-ajsām. The second in which he said it was an innovation in Islām but without declaring it false in and of itself and is simply one of numerous other proofs. In this stage he still had remnants of kalām. And the third in which he was upon the way of Imām Aḥmad in pretty much all affairs with some very subtle and negligible remnants of Kullābism according to some researchers. Those who came afterwards and ascribed to al-Ash‘arī continued using this proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām and this set up the foundations for the misguidance of all Ash‘arīs thereafter. It was inevitable that they would leave the way of al-Ash‘arī and slowly migrate towards the views of the Mu‘tazilah and the Jahmiyyah because this particular proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām, taken to its full rational conclusion, simply demands it. Thus, it is established, undeniably, that the Ash‘arites inherited this proof from the Mu‘tazilah⁶ and it was used as the

⁶ Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī was a Mu‘tazilī for the first forty years of his life. His mother married one of the heads of the Mu‘tazilah, Abū ‘Alī al-Jubā‘ī and he was raised in that household. In transitioning to the Kullābī school, al-Ash‘arī remained upon this proof. His last position however, was that it is a long-winded innovation that the Prophet (ﷺ) never called to and should not be used. Despite this position of al-Ash‘arī himself, those who came after him made it an integral part of the theology of the school. As for Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah, they considered this proof to be a corrupt, flawed,

foundation for the madhhab⁷ starting with al-Ash‘arī (d. 324H) in *al-Luma‘ Fi al-Radd ‘alā Ahl al-Zaygh*, then al-Bāqillānī (d. 403H), in *al-Tamhīd al-Awā‘il*, then ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdādī (d. 429H) in *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn*, then al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 471H) in *al-Tabṣīr Fil-Dīn*, then al-Juwaynī (d. 478H) in *Kitāb al-Irshād* and also *al-Shāmil Fī Uṣūl al-Din*, then al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) in *al-Iqtisād Fī al-‘itiqād*, and also *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, then al-Shahrastānī (d. 548H) in *Nihāyah al-Aqdām*, then al-Rāzī (d. 606H) in *Muḥaṣṣal Afkār al-Mutaqaddimīn wal-Muta‘akhhirīn* and also *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn Fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, then al-Ījī (d. 756H) in *al-Mawāqif Fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām*.

- After al-Ash‘arī came the “**Ash‘arites**” a series of scholars who ascribed to him but injected their own ideas, concepts or variations into the theology. They drifted away and took “Ash‘arism” far away from what al-Ash‘arī himself died upon, which was the creed of Imām Aḥmad. These scholars slowly moved back towards the doctrines of the Mu‘tazilah and Jahmiyyah in rejection of the ‘uluww of Allāh, of His nuzūl, of His ṣifāt khabariyyah, and that the Arabic Qur‘ān is the uncreated speech of Allāh and so on. This started with **al-Bāqillānī** (d. 403H) who asserted that the proof of ḥudūth al-ajsām was

false proof that does not reach its objective, in addition to it being an innovation.

⁷ It should be noted that some of these figureheads had various stages in their lives and in later periods some of them considered the use of this proof impermissible when they saw its intricacies and difficulties, even if they considered it correct due to their inability to see its falsehood. Others began to incorporate proofs of a philosophical nature to avoid reliance upon *ḥudūth al-ajsām* alone and to deflect any criticism against the school.

obligatory—whereas al-Ash‘arī said it was a bid‘ah—and then **Abū Bakr bin Fawrak** (d. 406H) who started making ta‘wīl of the texts of the attributes and authoring in that regard. Then came **Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī** (d. 429H) who rejected Allāh’s ‘uluww and the ṣifāt khabariyyah and this was cemented by **Abū al-Mu‘ālī al-Juwaynī** (d. 478H) who had clear influences from the Mu‘tazilah. **Al-Qusharyī** (d. 465H) injected taṣawwuf into Ash‘arism. Then **al-Ghazālī** (d. 505H) and **al-Rāzī** (d. 606H) came along—and they had been reading the books of the Bāṭiniyyah and the Philosophers as well as debating them—they injected some of their ideas such as gnostic illuminism into their theology and also taṣawwuf. They also became greatly confused because it turned out that their kalām arguments did not stand the test of time against their disputants who were claiming that the universe is eternal with Allāh. This also laid the ground for the Ash‘arīs to hybridise kalām with falsafah because by this time, the shrewd ones among them had realised that ḥudūth al-ajsām, as an argument, cannot prove the universe had a beginning and that the counter-argument, that the universe is eternal, is just as strong, on the basis of this same proof. This is because the proof has some intricacies and problems which **unless it is accepted that Allāh has actions tied to his will and power**, cannot be resolved. However, since they reject Allāh’s chosen actions as “ḥawādith” to avoid likening Him to a body, they were unable to resolve the problems. As a result, this proof was bivalent, it was possible to take it in two directions. To say the universe is originated, or to say the universe is eternal. This is why

al-Rāzī became so confused, he could not really resolve it and in his book, *al-Maṭālib al-Āliyah*, he spoke with “takāfu’ al-adillah”, that the evidences for either view are basically equivalent.⁸ So Ash‘arism is an ugly picture, and has an ugly history, however, the Ash‘arites today use propaganda in trying to paint Ash‘arism as some sort of saviour for Islām. This is intellectual and academic fraud on so many fronts and this is not the place for a detailed discussion of that. Some of these scholars got really confused, such as al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī and admitted at the end of their lives, that all their pursuits in this kalām were vain and left them bewildered and that the simple and plain truth lies in the revealed texts and in the way of the Salaf.

- It is important to discuss the likes of **Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī** (d. 376H) and **Abu Bakr al-Bayḥaqī** (d. 458H) because their statements or views are often used by Ash‘arite propagandists to argue for the theology of the Jahmites that they are upon. Al-Khaṭṭābī was originally upon kalām but he left it and authored against it. He authored words affirming the creed of the Salaf which were reproduced by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463H) in his well-known statement on the Ṣiḡāt. And as for al-Bayḥaqī then he was concerned with the Sunnah and was not with kalām fundamentally, however he got led astray by his teacher Abu Bakr bin Fawrak in the matter of ta`wīl. He was stuck between a number of influences. First, by the book al-Ibānah of al-Ash‘arī, which he cites

⁸ Refer to our article in refutation of Jahmite ignoramus on this subject which can be found here: <http://www.asharis.com/creed/?lwbyjtjw>

from in his works and this is why we see al-Bayḥaqī affirming the *ṣifāt khabariyyah* (face, hands, eyes), following al-Ash‘arī, but then he has *idtirāb* (confusion, inconsistency) in other areas of the *ṣifāt*, resorting to something of *ta’wīl* or *tawwīd* upon the approach of the people of *kalām*. Because there is this confusion with al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Bayḥaqī, it is possible for an Ash‘arite to come along and to employ their speech in order to mischaracterise the way of the Salaf. And this is from the frauds of the Ash‘arites because the way of the Salaf **is known from their own speech**—all of which is very clear in their refutations of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah in the second and third centuries after hijrah. The speech of those who were affected by *kalām* and fell into *idtirāb* (inconsistency) in this topic with contradictions in their speech cannot be used to characterise the way of the Salaf in the matter of the attributes.

- This now leads us to another group of the “effeminate” using the speech of Yaḥyā bin ‘Ammār (d. 422H), and they are the **Māturīdīs**. These are Ḥanafīs who were upon the way of Abū Ḥanīfah in fiqh, but they traversed the way of the Mu‘tazilah and Kullābiyyah in theology based upon *kalām* (*ḥudūth al-ajsām*) and then tried to throw that upon Abū Ḥanīfah and his students. There were pockets of Kullābiyyah over yonder in Samarqand and likewise much of the debates of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333) were with the Mu‘tazilah, upon the foundations of *kalām* that were developed by the Mu‘tazilah. Because of this, al-Māturīdī came with a theology remarkably similar to that of al-Ash‘arī in the

early period after he left the Mu'tazilah, when he was a Kullābī. However, the Mātūrīdīs were closer to the Mu'tazilah in rejecting 'uluww, and the ṣifāt khabariyyah and were influenced by the Kullābiyyah in relation to Allāh's chosen actions, which they lumped together into a single attribute they called takwīn and which they made eternal like the other attributes they affirmed. This is how they resolved the problem of "ḥawādith", which is just a philosophical term used to refer to Allāh's chosen actions which the Qur'ān and the Sunnah affirm, which are from His perfection. As for the Ash'arīs, they had an approach different to the Mātūrīdīs in solving this problem and all of this returns back to Ibn Kullāb's inability to refute the Mu'tazilah, being forced thereby to deny that Allāh speaks and acts according to His will. The Mātūrīdīs did not really develop as a school till many centuries later, till the sixth and seven centuries hijrah, through the writings of **Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī** (d. 508H) and **Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī** (d. 537). The influence of the Mu'tazilah was stronger upon them than the influence of the Kullābiyyah because from the outset, they rejected Allāh's 'uluww and His ṣifāt khabariyyah unlike the very first Kullābīs and Ash'arīs such as Ibn Kullāb (d. 240H), al-Ḥārith al-Muhāsibī (d. 243H) al-Ash'arī (d. 324H), Ibn Mahdī al-Ṭabarī (d. 380H), and al-Bāqillānī (d. 403H). In the case of the Ash'arīs, they drifted, a century after al-Ash'arī, back in the direction of the ta'tīl (negation) of the Mu'tazilah and Jahmiyyah. In contrast, the Mātūrīdīs were upon that from the beginning because the influence of Mu'tazili kalām upon them in negation was stronger than the Kullābī kalām in affirmation. So Abū Manṣūr al-

Māturīdī began compiling the so-called “Ta’wīls of Ahl al-Sunnah”, the ta’wīls of those texts which they, like the Jahmiyyah and Mu’tazilah before them, presumed to be tajsīm and tasbhīh and which had to be washed and neutralised. In reality, these were the ta’wīls invented by the Jahmiyyah in the second century hijrah and which were compiled by the Ḥanafī Jahmite, **Bishr al-Marīsī** (d. 218H) to wage war against the Salaf, the followers of the Prophets and Messengers and revealed Books. The Māturīdīs tried to ascribe their “kalām” to Abu Ḥanīfah and his students but they are innocent from it. Hence, it is important to distinguish between Abū Ḥanīfah and his students who were Salafīs, upon the Salafī creed and the Ḥanafī Jahmites which is al-Māturīdī and whoever followed him upon the kalām that Abū Ḥanīfah and the Salaf condemned.

- It is important here that we also discuss **Abū Ja’far al-Ṭahāwī** (d. 321H) because the Jahmites, as part of their propaganda, claim that the theological schools of Ahl al-Sunnah are only three and return back to al-Ash’arī, al-Māturīdī and al-Ṭahāwī. This is false, rather there is only one school for Ahl al-Sunnah and it is that which the Companions and Tabi’īn were upon and following them the Salaf of the second century who opposed and spoke against the Jahmites and Mu’tazilites. From them al-Awza’ī, al-Thawrī, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī and others and then the Imāms from the third century, at the head of them, Imām Aḥmad. The Ash’arīs and Māturīdīs are in clear opposition to the Salaf as should be evident from what has preceded and this is only denied by an ignoramus or

an arrogant fool who shows arrogation in the face of undeniable historical fact. The Ash‘arīs and Mātūrīdīs are the inheritors of the kalām theology of the Jahmites and Mu‘tazilites for sure. As for Abu Ja‘far al-Ṭahāwī, then his creed is not founded upon kalām, but rather upon taslīm (submission) to the texts, without distinction between Qur‘ān and ḥadīth. This is evidenced by the fact that when you compare his work with that of the standard Ash‘arite texts—such as those listed earlier—you do not find any hint of that kalām theology and its core foundations⁹ such as: the first obligation being to rationally prove a creator, discussion of bodies (ajsām) and accidents (a‘rāḍ), rejection of ḥadīths in matters of creed because they are speculative (ẓannī), discussing conflict of reason with revelation and so on. Further, there are certain affairs in his creed that directly contradict the kalām theology of the Ash‘arīs and Mātūrīdīs, such as al-Ṭahāwī’s discussion of the Arabic Qur‘ān being the uncreated speech of Allāh and his affirmation of the **af‘āl ikhtiyāriyyah** such as Allāh taking Ibrāhīm (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) as His friend (khalīl) becoming angry and pleased (yaghḍabu wa yardā) in a manner that is unlike that of the creation and so on. **These particular affairs are such that they cannot in principle be reconciled with the kalām theology of the Jahmites who call themselves Ash‘arīs and Mātūrīdīs today.** They are a proof that al-Ṭahāwī did not derive his theology through the route of kalām,

⁹ Al-Ṭahāwī’s creed is not a detailed text, but nevertheless, no hint of any foundational principles of the kalām theology of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah can be found therein.

fundamentally. However, because al-Ṭaḥāwī used ambiguous speech in some other places and because he was Ḥanafī in fiqh, the Mātūrīdīs gave great concern in orienting this creed and framing it upon their foundations of kalām which neither al-Ṭaḥāwī, nor Abū Ḥanīfah and his students were upon. This indicates the dishonesty of the Jahmites in that they leave the clear, unambiguous, explicit speech of the Imāms of the Salaf who are abundant and plentiful and rely upon words that contain ambiguity and can be readily interpreted to agree with a particular orientation. As for Abū Ḥanīfah and his students, they affirmed the ʿuluww of Allāh, the ṣifāt khabariyyah, the nuzūl of Allāh and did not delve into kalām at all, rather they prohibited from it and al-Ṭaḥāwī was upon their way. As for the Ḥanafīs that came afterwards, they acquired the basis of their theological speech from the Jahmiyyah and Muʿtazilah.

From what has preceded you should know that there are only three positions that a person can be in in this subject. Two comprise **manhood** and the third comprises **effeminate sissyhood** to borrow the term of Yaḥyā bin ʿAmmār once again because it is so apt.

As for the first: Then they are followers of the Prophets and Messengers and revealed Books and they are **the Salaf and the Salafīs**. They hold that Allāh is most knowledgeable (aʿlam) of His own self and most eloquent (afṣaḥ) and that His Messenger is the most knowledgeable of creation of Allāh, most eloquent in speech and most sincere (anṣaḥ) in desiring guidance for the creation. They hold that Allāh described Himself with names, attributes and actions and they affirm all of

them without distinction due to the evidence of revelation itself, and upon a uniform consistent and internally coherent principle: affirmation (ithbāt) with negation of tamthīl and takyīf. There is no tashbīh in anything Allāh described Himself and it is impossible for their to be so, because the uncreated essence of Allāh is unlike all other essences and hence, and thus there is no problem with affirming the attributes He informed us of or His Messenger informed us of because their realities are unlike those of the creation and are unknowable to us. Hence, there is no caution in saying: We affirm for Allāh the attributes of life, hearing, seeing, knowledge, power, face, hands, love, mercy, pleasure, anger and so on. It is all one coherent subject area. Thus, these are true men, with manhood, they abide by their principle coherently and without contradiction. Any attribute of Allāh that is established in an authentic text, they affirm it without likening it to the creation and without distorting and rejecting its meaning.

As for the second: Then they are the followers of the Philosophers, the Hindus, the Hellenised Jews, Christians and Sabeans and they are **the Jahmites**. They argued for Allāh's existence by arguing for the origination of the universe using the argument of attributes present in created bodies (al-a'rāḍ fil-ajsām) and then remained consistent with its necessities. The Sabeans for example argued that, "the world has a cause who has never ceased to be, who is one, not manifold, who cannot be described by means of attributes which apply to the things caused."¹⁰ Ibn Nadīm says of them in al-Fihrist: "And their saying that Allāh is one (wāhid), no attribute (ṣifah) is

¹⁰ Pingree, David. *The Sabeans of Ḥarrān and the Classical Tradition*. International Journal of the Classical Tradition. Vol. 9. No. 1 (Summer 2002), pp.8-35

incumbent upon Him and no binding predicate is permitted to (be said of) Him and no syllogisms can be imposed upon Him , as occurs in [the book of Aristotle] Metaphysics...”¹¹ So they, the Jahmites, who inherited this applied this as a uniform principle and denied everything for Allāh, all His names, attributes and actions. And they were consistent and this is why they are described as “men”, with manhood, as per the statement of Yaḥyā bin ‘Ammār.

Thus far, it becomes clear that there are only two coherent ways. Either you affirm everything upon a coherent principle founded in revelation itself, or you deny everything upon a coherent principle founded upon the intellects of the polytheistic, star-worshippers and idolators among the Greeks, Hindus and Sabeans and the People of the Book affected by them and their speculations about the world and its physical nature. So the closest to them and most coherent of them are in fact the first Jahmites.

As for the third, and they are the **effeminate sissies** in the middle and they are **the rest of Ahl al-Kalām** who are confused and bewildered in between, prattling around with their blatant contradictions and inconsistencies. So for example, when the Jahmiyyah accuse the Mu‘tazilah of tajsīm and kufr because they affirm names for Allāh upon the argument that there is nothing in what is observed that is called “knowing (‘alīm)” and “powerful (qadīr)” except that it is a body, the Mu‘tazilah say that these names do not represent any attributes and Allāh can be “the knowing (al-‘alīm)” but without knowledge (‘ilm). This is plain falsehood, a form of sophistry in argument.

¹¹ Ibn an-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, Section nine, part one, 'A Description of the Chaldean Harranians Known as the Sabeans'. *Al-Fihrist* was translated into English by Bayard Dodge in two volumes (London, 1969).

And when the Mu'tazilah accuse the Māturīdīs of tajsīm and kufr for affirming attributes like knowledge, power, hearing and seeing, the Māturīdīs say that agreement in name does not mean agreement in reality. However, when Ahl al-Sunnah use the same argument for all the other attributes denied by the Māturīdīs, they reject this argument. And when Ahl al-Sunnah say that hearing and seeing that the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs affirm are not anything but limbs as found in all the creatures that possess them—the same argument used by them to deny the face and hands—the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs say that Allāh's attributes of hearing and seeing are unlike those of the creation and it is not necessitated that they are like the limbs of the creatures. However, they do not accept the same answer of Ahl al-Sunnah for the rest of the attributes that they deny. And then the more honest of them—knowing the untenability of this—simply state that hearing and seeing is synonymous with the attribute of knowledge, which means, they do not really affirm the attributes of hearing and seeing at all. And then when the Mu'tazilah point out to them that if you merge these two attributes into another attribute to avoid tajsīm, then what is the problem in merging all the attributes and making them synonymous with the essence (dhāt) so as to avoid tarkīb (composition), such that Allāh does not have any attributes in reality. So all of them are arguing with each other as to exactly what is the nature of this kalām-based Tawhīd and what does or does not invalidate it. And the most laughable part of it all is that alongside all this, they say that **the evidence of reason is definitive (qaṭ'iyy)** whereas the evidence of revelation is speculative! Almighty strange! Then how come all of these people of kalām do not have a united word in the affair whereas Ahl al-Sunnah from the time of the Companions and the Salaf

till this day of ours have a united, coherent stance and all of their speech is identical, from its beginning to its end? Is there not any greater sign of truth and falsehood than this?

Imām Aḥmad (d. 241H) said, “We worship Allāh by [affirmation of] His attributes which He described Himself with and we do not exceed the Qur’ān and the ḥadīth Thus, we say [only] as He said and we describe Him as He described Himself, we do not exceed that.”¹² **Imām al-Dārimī** (d. 280H) said, “We describe Him with what He described Himself with and what His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) described Him with.”¹³ **Imām al-Ājurī** (d. 360H) said, “The people of truth describe Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) through what He described Himself with and through what His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) described Him with and through what the Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) described Him with. This is the way of the scholars who followed and did not innovate. It is not to be said, ‘How?’ Rather, it is merely [to make] submission and have faith in it.”¹⁴ **Ibn Taymiyyah** (d. 728H) said, following the Salaf, “The foundation in this topic is that Allāh is described through what He described Himself with and what His Messengers described Him with, both in terms of affirmation (ithbāt) and negation (nafī). Thus, [one] affirms for Allāh what He affirmed for Himself and [one] negates from Allāh what He negated from Himself. And it is known that the way of the Salaf of the ummah and its leading imāms is affirmation of what He affirmed of attributes without takyīf (asking or specifying how) or tamthīl (likening) and without taḥrīf (distorting) or ta’ṭīl (negating). Similarly, they negate from Him what He negated from His self whilst affirming

¹² Ibn Baṭṭāh in al-Ibānah al-Kubrā (3/326).

¹³ Al-Radd ‘alā al-Jahmiyyah (Dār al-Salafiyyah, 1405H, p. 13).

¹⁴ Al-Sharīah (Mu‘assasah al-Qurṭubah, 1416H), 2/52.

the attributes He affirmed without making *ilhād* (deviation) therein.”¹⁵ This positioning is based on revelation and it is also from reason, the revelation guides to correct reason, and so this positioning is indicated through the Qur’ān and reason completely agrees with it, because sound, uncorrupted reason will never disagree with revelation - this is a core fundamental principle in which the followers of the Prophets oppose the followers of the approach of the Philosophers from the Jahmites and their offshoots who assert a conflict - in fact they were forced to assert a conflict - between reason and revelation.

Now when a person reads this methodology, he cannot find fault with this approach, because this is based purely in revelation, this methodology is based upon the obligation of knowing Allāh through revelation - in other words, it is how Allah Himself has told us that this is how we are to speak of Him and know Him. No one can criticize or refute this, how is any Ash‘arī or Mātūrīdī going to refute this and say it is the wrong methodology? They cannot touch it, it is flawless, it is a divinely revealed methodology.

Coming back to **effeminacy and sissynood**, then two opposing groups of fully mature men are stood on either side of the field, and in the middle, in the field are the effeminate sissies fighting each other and arguing out their blatant contradictions for centuries and centuries on end till this day of ours. And at the same time, they commit this blatant intellectual fraud and make use of slimey propaganda that somehow, they are the champions of Islām and vanguards of Islām and the

¹⁵ Refer to *Al-Tadmuriyyah* (ed. Muḥammad bin ‘Awdah al-Sa‘awī, Maktabah al-‘Ubaykān), pp. 6-7.

leaders of Ahl al-Sunnah! One of the greatest and most atrocious lies ever told in history.

There is only statement to say to them, as was said to them a thousand years ago: Either

a) Become full men and join the Jahmites and Philosophers until you arrive at a conception of a deity that exists only as a figment of the imagination, stripped of all names, attributes and actions or

b) Become full men and join the followers of the Prophets and Messengers and affirm everything upon a uniform, coherent principle. So far, they have refused to do so—as evidenced by the fact that they still exist as Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs—save whom Allāh willed to guide to the right path.

So all of this is what is referred to as “kalām”—[speculation about the divine based upon speculation about the nature and reality of the world]—and the Salaf severely condemned it. As noted earlier, this kalām had already affected the Jews and Christians before Islām and is referred to as “classical theism” in academic writings. On the basis of this kalām, the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah accused the Salaf of being Mujassimah and Mushabbihah in the second century hijrah.

It is clear that the Ash‘ariyyah and Māturidiyyah acquired the uṣūl of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah in the foundations of their theology and that their doctrinal school is built upon the very kalām for which the Salaf condemned the heretical innovators in the second and third century. It should come as no surprise then that just like in the second century hijrah, the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah were accusing the Imāms of the Salaf with tajsīm and tashbīh and were inventing ta‘wīls to undermine the

texts of the attributes which they presumed to be apparent statements of kufr requiring “zapping” and “neutralising”, today in the 21st century, the Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs are doing the same with the followers of the Salaf. This is plainly evident.

The reality of the position of the people of kalām is that the language of “divine perfection” of Aristotle and Plato is better guidance (a‘lam, aḥkam and aslam) than the language that came in the Book and the Sunnah, which they treat as **presumptions of tajsīm and tashbih** and which—if left as it is upon its apparentness—is pure kufr. Hence, Tawḥīd was changed from what the Messengers came with: “the sole right of Allāh of being worshipped alone” to “distorting and undermining the revealed texts to remove all stains of tajsīm and tashbīh” in order to present a “rational” Tawḥīd founded upon the conceptual baggage and terminology of star-worshipping polytheists of ancient Greece.

This is why Ibn Taymiyyah stated these monumental words in al-Ḥamawīyyah, and how insightful and truthful they are:

أم كيف يكون أفراخ المتفلسفة وأتباع الهند واليونان وورثة المجوس والمشركين
وضلال اليهود والنصارى والصابئين وأشكالهم وأشباههم : أعلم بالله من ورثة
الأنبياء وأهل القرآن والإيمان

“Or how can the hatchlings of the Mutafalsifah, and the followers of the [philosophy] of the Hindus, Jews and inheritors of the Magians [Persians] and the polytheists and the misguided of the Jews, Christians and Sabeans and their likes be more knowledgeable of Allāh than the inheritors of the Prophets and the people of the Qur‘ān and Īmān?!”

This is the reality of their saying and no discussion on any matter of the Names and Attributes should be entered into

with any Ash‘arī or Mātūrīdī until he is forced to admit these facts of history and demanded to either become a full man by moving fully in one of two directions or otherwise to admit to being an effeminate sissy whose weak ‘aql and cowardice should be rightfully mocked and ridiculed.

Finally, the discussion would not be complete without a mention of the tactics of the neo-Jahmites posing as “Ash‘arīs” and “Mātūrīdīs” today in trying to spread their kalām theology.

It has long been recognised by the learned Ash‘arites that their theology cannot stand on its own right. We mean by this that they are unable to present the true and real foundations of their creed to the masses because they know the masses are averse to that heavy philosophical language of ajsām and a‘rāḍ and all the intricacies of that long-winded, flawed, corrupt proof they made to be the foundation of Islām itself by which they claim they have established that the universe is originated. This has been stated by al-Ghazālī (d. 505H) in his book *Iljām al-‘Awām ‘an Ilm al-Kalām* written towards the end of his life in which he wrote that if the Prophet (ﷺ) invited the common people through this type of philosophical language used by the Ash‘arīs and Ahl al-Kalām in general, not even one person in a thousand would accept belief in Allāh and would turn to atheism (taṭīl).¹⁶ Given this, it is useful to know that there are a number of stages with the Ash‘arīs and Mātūrīdīs. The first is the industrial strength heavy kalām that was introduced by the likes of al-Bāqillānī which is evident in his works and which came directly from the Mu‘tazilah. Then when the likes of Ibn Sīnā (d. 429H) came—and he supported the conjecture of the Greek

¹⁶ In his book *Iljām al-‘Awwām ‘an Ilm al-Kalām*. For more details on this matter visit: <http://www.asharis.com/creed/?ykoxo>

philosophers that the universe is co-eternal with Allāh—and the arguments of the people of kalām were contested and the debate continued through the era of al-Ghazālī and then al-Rāzī, it became evident that they, the people of kalām, could not resolve the matter because the proof they were using was actually flawed and weak, and they themselves got utterly confused. So they began to say that the common folk should not be involved in kalām as it will lead them to misguidance. From this point onwards, and this is the next stage, the books of the Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs no longer contained the heavy, industrial strength kalām foundations that were common to the books of the Mu‘tazilah and Ash‘arīs like al-Bāqillānī. However, they still asserted that the theology derived from those kalām foundations was the truth. So this theology and its innovated language was cemented in these schools, and it remained being taught. Most Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs simply pass through schools and institutions being brainwashed with this theology and only the shrewd and intelligent ones delve further and become hardcore in kalām, and they are an extremely small minority.

For this reason, one of the main brainwashing tactics used by the Ash‘arī and Māturīdī schools is to begin by throwing the accusations of tajsīm and tashbīh against the followers of the Salaf and to warn from the dangers of tajsīm and tashbīh. This is a form of intellectual terrorism to scare their followers, recruits and listeners. If they began to say:

“Let us begin with Aristotle’s Ten Categories, and let us use that as the foundation for establishing our theology following the ways of the Philosophers and Hellenized Jews, Christians and Sabaeans before us. In the universe there are only bodies (ajsām) and their attributes (accidents, a‘rāḍ). You should know

that attributes cannot exist on their own and must inhere in bodies and are therefore originated and all bodies contain attributes, never being devoid of them, and since bodies do not precede these attributes they contain, they must also be originated, and because of the impossibility of an endless chain of events in the past, then all bodies must have come to be after non-existence and this proves the universe is originated. Thereafter, the creator who is behind this universe must be different to all bodies. Hence, He is not a jawhar (substance), not a jism (body), not an ʿaraḍ (incidental attribute), not in direction (jihah), not in spatial occupation (taḥayyuz), not in the universe and not outside the universe and so on. And because this evidence of reason is definitive and absolute, then it has a higher status than revelation which depends upon reason for it to be established. Hence, the texts that we find in the revealed texts, we must neutralise them and remove the stains of tajsīm and tashbīh that they came with because they are nothing but pure kufr if left upon their apparentness.”

As you can see, you can't sell your creed to the masses with this type of frank and honest language, you have to conceal it from the masses. So you have to begin with intellectual terrorism whereby you scare the wits of your audience. You have to make them fear those evil, nasty “Mujassimah” who have landed from the planet Mars and who are planning to take over the whole world. And that it is only the saviours, the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs, who are going to save them from those evil nasty Mujassimah. And that the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs are going to equip them with the tools, the ray-guns and so on, to zap the tajsīm and tashbīh that those evil Mujassimah are going to attack them with. So this is the basic approach and to this end they have a number of deceptive and dishonest tactics. From them is that they go to the writings of certain Ḥanbalīs that

were poisoned by the Jahmī and Mu‘tazilī creeds such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597H)¹⁷ and use them as a basis to teach and justify their own creed. This is a subject area in itself, which is how the Ash‘arīs and Māturīdīs rely upon those from the four schools who ascribe to one of the four imāms and who fell into kalām in order to throw the accusation of tajsīm and tashbīh upon the followers of the way of the Salaf. They rely upon people’s ignorance of history and they themselves distort and falsify history to help in the propagation of their innovated kalām theology which cannot actually stand on its own merits and which would be rejected by the common person, due to his sound and intact fiṭrah (innate disposition).

Another tactic they use is to present the idea that their scholars were the saviours of Islām against the Philosophers

¹⁷ He is Abū al-Faraj, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Alī bin Muḥammad, better known as Ibn al-Jawzī, and he was from the Hanbalī school of jurisprudence. He was confused in the matter of the divine attributes and held contradictory positions, being from a line of Hanbalīs who fell prey to something of the deviation and kalām of the Mu‘tazilah and Kullābiyyah in *ta’wīl* and errors in the affirmation of the divine attributes. From them Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan bin Hāmid (d. 403H), al-Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā (d. 458H), Abū al-Hasan Ibn al-Zāghūnī (d. 527), and Abū al-Wafā’ Ibn ‘Aqīl (d. 513H). Some times Ibn al-Jawzī would affirm the attributes, other times he would speak with *ta’wīl* and other times with *tawfīd*. This error of his was not due to partisanship to a particular doctrinal school, for he was severe against the Ash‘arites and detested them, however he was affected due to the influence of those whom he blindly followed, chief amongst them Abū al-Wafā’ Ibn ‘Aqīl, who was his teacher and he had followed the ways of the Mu‘tazilah, studying with some of them. Ibn al-Jawzī criticised the earlier Ḥanbalīs, like Ibn Hāmid, Abū Ya‘lā and Ibn al-Zāghūnī who had something of excess in affirmation of the attributes, but much of this criticism was polluted with an I‘tizālī perspective utilizing the doctrinal views and *ta’wīls* of the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah. Ibn al-Jawzī was rebuked and boycotted by the Ḥanbalī scholars of his time for his severe errors in this field.

when in reality, they are the ones who opened the door to the Philosophers to attack Islām, and thereafter, they were unable to deal with them sufficiently because they left the Book and the Sunnah and relied upon the flawed tool of their innovated kalām theology which itself, has its origins with the very Philosophers whose ideas they were trying to combat. This is also a subject in itself and cannot be discussed at length here.

These people present today are no different to the Jahmiyyah and Mu‘tazilah of the second century who were accusing the Salaf of being Mujassimah and Mushabbihah, and this is no surprise at all because they all have the same foundation in the kalām theology they took from the Hellenized Jews, Christians and Sabeans and which they made to be the foundation of their religion. The great Imām of the Salaf, **‘Abd Allāh bin al-Mubārak** (d. 181H) said: “Whoever says to you so and so is a Mushabbih, then know that he is a Jahmite.”¹⁸ And Imām al-Barbahārī (d. 329H) said: “If you hear a man say: ‘So and so is a mushabbih’ and ‘So and so speaks about tashbīh’, then know that he is a Jahmite.”¹⁹

والحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

Abu ‘Iyaad
12th Jumādā al-Ūlā 1439 / 30th January 2018 (1.2)
@abuiyaadsp
abuiyaad.com

¹⁸ As related by Ibn Mandah, refer to Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (5/393).

¹⁹ Refer to *Sharḥ al-Sunnah of al-Barbahārī*. Dār al-Minhāj (1426H), p. 115.