THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM OF THE RELATION BETWEEN REASON AND REVELATION IN THE THOUGHT OF QADI 'ABD AL-JABBAR

presented by

Muhammad Jawad Hasan Hashim al-Musawi.

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ABSTRACT.

The Philosophical Problem of the Relation between Reason and Revelation in the Thought of Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar.

The significance of 'Abd al-Jabbar (320-415 A.H.) in the history of Islamic thought is that his works represent the ultimate features of Islamic rationalism in general and Mu'tazilism in particular.

His works, especially the theological encyclopaedia Al-Muqni, did not only preserve the ideas of the old rationalists and the nature of the disputes between them and their opponents, but also attempted to present Islam from a comprehensive point of view.

As a Mu'tazilite he gave reason a very prominent place in his thought. He based his argument to support the primacy of reason on the responsibility of man. Since man is responsible, he must understand the nature of his responsibility. Obligation, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, involves knowledge and action; knowledge is entirely independent but the performance of actions depends on knowledge.

Inquiry is the first of man's obligations, because it is the main source of truth and knowledge. The function of inquiry, he held, is to understand things as they exist in the material world and to understand factual events by observation and comparison. He refused to recognize the following of the ideas of others (taqlid) as a source of knowledge, because that raises the question why one person or doctrine is to be followed rather than another, and the question cannot be answered without inquiry or thinking.

'Abd al-Jabbar also rejected the view that inspiration (ilham) could be considered as a source of knowledge and truth, arguing that since speculation and reasoning are within human capability, there is no need for inspiration.

Knowledge, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, is a conviction related
to the object as it is, when this conviction occurs in such a way as to entail the tranquility of mind.

'Abd al-Jabbâr built his theory of knowledge on the a priori principles, which he called "necessary knowledge", and which include perception, the principles of ethics and the basis of the proofs. He also considered perception as the source of human knowledge through which we know the material world and the concept of existence, and through the suffering we know what is just and what is unjust.

As for the question of prophethood which was discussed by Muslim intellectuals at a relatively late period, probably as a result of the rise of irreligious tendencies like the Zanâdiqa, and a secular rationalist group known as Barâhima, 'Abd al-Jabbâr argued against the denial of prophecy. Since there is no clear evidence that the Indian Brahmins had representatives in Islamic intellectual life, the name Barâhima could have been used by some Muslim theologians as a nickname for those who denied the prophecy, to justify their hostility towards them as an alien group or sect; and it is also possible that this name was used by the individuals or groups who attacked prophecy in an attempt to hide their real attitude towards the question.

The function of prophecy according to 'Abd al-Jabbâr is twofold:

1) As a source of knowledge or information; prophets inform us in detail of what we already know in general by reason. Detailed knowledge, he asserted, is as important as general knowledge. Revelation also informs us about many obligatory duties which cannot be known by reason, namely, the religious observances.

2) As a favour (lutf) of God to man, revelation helps men, in other words through the preaching of the prophets men might be more
likely to perform their obligations.

Revelation also confirms to rational beings the truths and knowledge which they gain by reason.

As for the problem of the relation between reason and revelation it arose from many factors. Among these factors was the fact that the adoption of Islam by a large number of people from different cultural backgrounds created the need for presenting Islam in a rational way. Other factors were the conflict between political parties and groupings, together with their use of the religious texts against each other, the development of the state in such a way as to open a gap between ideals and practical realities, and the translation of Greek philosophy.

'Abd al-Jabbār's solution to the problem was the assertion of the independence of reason in necessary knowledge and most acquired knowledge, and the independence of revelation in the sort of knowledge which one cannot know by reason, which is the knowledge of the religious observances.

He also held that since revelation informs us about detailed knowledge, which is known, in general, by reason, contradictions can never occur between reason and revelation, because truth never contradicts the truth whatever its source may have been.

'Abd al-Jabbār gave reason the primacy as a source of knowledge and truth, but he gave a supplementary, yet important role to revelation.
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The system of transliteration used in this thesis is that employed by students and staff at the University of Edinburgh. However the distinction between the 'ayn and the 'alif has not always been made, especially in words which will be easily recognized without this distinction, such as Mu'tazila, Shi'a and Qur'ān.
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INTRODUCTION.

The position occupied by 'Abd al-Jabbār in the history of Islamic thought is a very important one, his works representing the ultimate form taken by the Mu'tazilite doctrine. A careful study of them shows that he gave Mu'tazilism this final form, not only in theology, but in the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the principles of jurisprudence (ṣuṣūl al-fiqh) as well.

Recent studies in Arabic rhetoric have revealed that 'Abd al-Jabbār greatly influenced al-Jurjānī, whose theory about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, based on the manner of its composition (nagm), was only a development of the ideas of 'Abd al-Jabbār.¹

It is possible to say that since al-Ash'arī instigated his fierce attack upon rationalism, as represented in the Mu'tazilite methods, this method had not brought to light a great intellectual like 'Abd al-Jabbār, who was extremely aware of the nature of the conflict between the two movements, because he himself was an Ash'arite before his conversion to Mu'tazilism, and was educated in both the Traditionalist and rationalist schools of thought. This was probably one of the important factors which caused the reconciliation between reason and revelation to occupy a very prominent place in his works.

Another aspect of the importance of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works in the history of Islamic thought lies in the great efforts which he made to re-establish more firmly the doctrine of the Mu'tazila, by giving a full and detailed exposition, and by presenting it adequately, benefitting from the great heritage of the arguments which had previously taken place, of which he was very aware, or in which he personally participated against the Mu'tazila's opponents, such as the

Ash'arites, Imāmites and other sects and movements. He benefitted also from the development of the various Islamic sciences as they existed in his period, such as the interpretation of the Qur'ān, jurisprudence and the principles thereof, and probably also from the Greek thought which the Muslim intellectuals were very conversant with at that time.

The fact that most of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works took the form of expounding the Mu'tazilite principles in detail and defending them, could only mean that the practical requirements of the time involved the need to delineate the doctrine more elaborately, not only so as to be accepted, but also to be classed by the intellectuals among the other doctrines of the period, which were fully elaborated.

Since the great vizier of the Buwayhids in Rayy, as-Sāhīb b. 'Abbād, did not appoint any Qādi unless he was sure that he believed in the Mu'tazilite principles when 'Abd al-Jabbār himself was appointed as chief justice, after the consultation of the Mu'tazilite leader at that time, Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī, this could probably indicate that the Buwayhids in Persia encouraged the Mu'tazila to propagate their ideas. They may even have adopted Mu'tazilism as it was manifested in Zaydite doctrine.

Furthermore the fact that 'Abd al-Jabbār devoted his intellectual efforts to the refutation of the Ash'arites and the doctrines of the Imāmites, and to the defence of the divine basis of Islamic society by attacking those who denied the idea of prophecy, makes it possible for his ideas to be considered as the official doctrine of the Buwayhids in Rayy.

The discovery of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works and the publishing of many of them will shed new light not only upon Mu'tazilite thought, but also upon Islamic thought as a whole, and no doubt the study of
'Abd al-Jabbār will enable us to obtain a deeper understanding of the relation between Zaydisma and Mu'tazilism, because many of his students were Zaydites and helped to clarify the intellectual relations between the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites, and help us to understand the intellectual interests, and their relations to politics, of the Islamic society during one of the most significant periods of development in its intellectual history.

Despite the fact that 'Abd al-Jabbār was very much indebted to the two Jubbā'Is, and to Abū Hashim in particular, whose participation in the formulation of the Mu'tazilite doctrine was greater than was generally assumed, the significance of his thought was that it represented another stage in the development of the Mu'tzilite thought, the stage which shows the change from the form of the ideas of the individuals (ashāb al-maqālāt) to the comprehensive point of view, after the development of the different aspects of Islamic knowledge, with which every Muslim intellectual had to be conversant.

Even from a quick study of Al-Mughnî, we can gather that 'Abd al-Jabbār attempted to demonstrate Islam, or to be more accurate the Mu'tazilite view of Islam, as comprehensive and integrated, and this could also be found in his intellectual activities in many aspects of the Islamic sciences, as they existed during his lifetime.

This could be an important explanation for the prominent place given, by him, to the question of the relation between reason and revelation, so widely discussed in many of his works.

In his attempt to solve the philosophical problem of the relation between reason and revelation he gave revelation a secondary, but very important role, beside the primary role assigned to reason as a source of knowledge and truth.

As far as the discussion of this problem is concerned we can
say that the place occupied by 'Abd al-Jabbār in the history of Islamic thought was, in a sense, more or less the same as the place occupied by Ibn Rushd in the history of Islamic philosophy after al-Ghazālī's bitter attack upon it. Both 'Abd al-Jabbār and Ibn Rushd gave the same answer to the question, and held that since both reason and revelation are sound channels to knowledge, there cannot possibly be any contradiction between them, because truth can never contradict truth whatever its source might have been.
CHAPTER I: THE MAN AND HIS AGE.

Historical Setting.

'Abd al-Jabbar lived during a period of great political instability and social unrest in the history of Islam.

Before the Buwayhids occupied Baghdaḏ in 334 A.H. the 'Abbasid caliphate was divided into many small states which were virtually independent, and even at war with each other. Every Amīr kept a part of the 'Abbasid caliphate under his control and founded a minor state for himself. The Buwayhids held Pars, Jibāl, Isfahān and Rayy under their control and, later, succeeded in occupying Baghdaḏ. As for Khurasān and Māwarā an-Nahr they fell under Sāmānid control, and Abd Tāhir al-Qarmāţī occupied Yaman and Bahrain, holding them under his sway, while the Zīyārids were in control in Jurjān and Tabaristān and Muḥammad b. al-Yās made himself independent in Kīrmān. Baṣra, Wāṣīt and Aḥwāz were in the hands of the Buraydīs and the Ḥamdānids held Mosul, Diyar Bakr and Diyar Muḏar under their control, while the Ikhshidites were independent in Egypt and Syria. Only Baghdaḏ itself remained in the hands of the 'Abbasid caliphs, until it too passed into the hands of the Buwayhids.¹

The 'Abbasid caliphs, although officially the heads of the state, were practically powerless and were treated as the helpless puppets of the powerful amīrs and ministers.

One of the most important results of such a division of the Islamic lands into small minor states was the weakness of the position of the caliphate, to the extent that the Fāṭimids of Egypt claimed the official title of the Islamic caliphs, 'Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, after their occupation of Qayrawān, and the Umayyads of Spain decided at

a later date to assume the title, during the reign of 'Abd ar-Rahmān III, whereas they had not dared to claim this title before, having formerly employed Banū al-Khalā'īf (The Sons of the Caliphs). 2

A turning point in the decline of the Islamic state took place when the Byzantine troops marched, in counterattack, in 314/926 to take Malatya, and reached Diyār Bakr, capturing Ba'lbak and Beirut by 364/974. 2

The victories of the Byzantine troops in recapturing some of the territories which they had lost, had a great influence on Islamic intellectual life, as well as on the political and social life of the state. They did not threaten only the Islamic border areas, but also presented a cultural challenge which seriously threatened the very cultural identity of the Islamic state, especially as many of those who were originally from Christian origins adopted Christianity again after the Byzantines occupied the Islamic territories in which they were living. This could explain why Muslim intellectuals devoted their efforts again to the study of their heritage, and attempted to present Islam in a comprehensive manner.

Facing this religious and cultural challenge, 'Abd al-Jabbār himself took part in the campaign, and devoted some of his works to arguing against those who denied the prophethood of Muhammad, as well the denial of the idea of the prophecy itself. 3

In the case of a divided state, and the weakness of the central authority, seizing power becomes a subject of hope to many adventurers

2) Thomas Arnold, Caliphate, 57-8.
3) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 573; Mughni, vol. 15; Tathbit vol. 1 and 2.

who can form groups of supporters. The Amīrs were very well aware of this fact and were thus extremely cautious, worried and suspicious, and, naturally, such a situation rendered the whole society unstable.

Local wars, which were ordinary occurrences, sectarian conflict and riots, and the serious attack by the Byzantines, which threatened the Islamic state, were all contributory factors in the decline of the Islamic society.

In such circumstances the army becomes extremely important and sometimes dangerous, like the army of the Buwayhids which was formed mainly of Daylams and Turks. The Turks in Baghdād grew so strong that they succeeded in wrestling power from the Buwayhids in that city for a while, when Sabastakīn revolted against them. 4

The great dependence on an army of such large numbers to protect the independence of the Amīrs in their minor states, together with the incessant local wars and revolts, as well as the Byzantine threat on the borders, led to sizeable investments so the state always incurred a deficit. The Buwayhids used to handle any case of deficit by seizing the wealth of the rich so as to ameliorate the financial situation of the state, and this became a very normal occurrence during their era, when they fabricated any reason for such actions. The possessions of many viziers, Kātibs and even the wealth of the caliph himself were seized. After the death of their great vizier, ʿas-Sāḥib b. ʿAbbād, his properties were seized, despite the fact that he had given great service to the state, and to the Buwayhid Amīr Fakhr ad-Dawla himself in particular, and despite the great respect which he had enjoyed from all the Buwayhid Amīrs during his life.

4) Maskawayh, Tajārib, 2/ 329-343.
'Abd al-Jabbar was also one of those whose properties were seized after the death of his protector. In such a situation those who held high positions in the state felt insecure, and this, quite naturally, had a bad influence on the general situation as there was no sincere loyalty to the state, and bribery was rampant.

5) Ar-Rawdhawari, Dhayl, 3/261-263; Ibnal-Athir, Kamil, 9/77-78.
The Political Attitude of the Buwayhids.

In his article about the Buwayhids in the Encyclopaedia of Islam (new edition), C.L. Cahen maintained that the Buwayhids were, politically, Twelvers. Others have suggested that the Buwayhids were Zaydites, because the Daylamite plateau was, from the early 'Abbasid period, a place of Zaydite activities. The prominent Zaydite figure, al-Hasan al-Utrush, who converted many of the Daylams to Islam, caused them to accept the Zaydite form of Shi'iism.

There is no doubt that the Buwayhids were, politically, pro-Shi'iite, without making any distinction between the Zaydites and Imāmites. The Buwayhid's sympathy for Shi'ism not only freed them from the need to practice prudent fear, which was necessary whenever the power was in the hands of their opponents, but also gave them the opportunity to argue openly against other sects, and it is for this reason the doctrine of Shi'ism was elaborated in this period, in which three of their outstanding intellectuals lived, as-Sadūq, al-Muftid and ash-Sharīf al-Murtada.

There can also be no doubt about the fact that the 'Alids, whether Hasanids or Husaynids, were favoured at the Buwayhid court. They even had their own organization, Niqābat at-Talibiyyīn, which was established to promote relations between the 'Alids themselves, as well as relations between them and the government. The motives behind the establishment of such an organization were to ensure 'Alid independence, and to ensure the protection of the Shi'ites by showing great respect towards their outstanding representatives, the 'Alids.

6) E.I., art. Buwayhids.
7) E.I., art. Daylam.
According to Ibn al-Athîr Mu'izz ad-Dawla, the Buwayhid Amîr, had in his mind the idea of toppling the 'Abbasids from the caliphate and giving it to Mu'izz il-Dîn Allah al-`Alawî, or to some other `Alid \(^8\); however difficult it may be to accept this, especially as the Buwayhids, when they felt themselves threatened by the Fatimids, urged the outstanding scholars and `Alids to doubt their ancestral lineage and related them to `Ubayd b. Sa'id al-Jurmi \(^9\), the report of Ibn al-Athîr could indicate that the 'Abbasids feared that they might be removed from the caliphate, which was probably one of the motives of the 'Alid organization, to indicate that the 'Abbasids could be substituted for when necessary.

There are many examples which show the high standing of the 'Alids during the period of the Buwayhid dynasty, and the great respect shown to them at the Buwayhid's court. Ash-Sharîf Abû Ahmad al-`Usayn al-Musawî was the mediator between 'Aqîd ad-Dawla and Mu'izz ad-Dawla concerning the controversy between them. \(^10\) The 'Abbasid caliph aṭ-Ṭâ'î sent a letter sent a letter to 'Izz ad-Dawla, during the conflict which took place between them, with one of the 'Alids. \(^11\)

To understand the political attitude of the Buwayhids more profoundly it is of extreme importance to remember that the army was the most important factor in their political activities. Since most of their army was from Daylam, and were thus Zaydites, they sympathised with the Shi'îtes and protected them, but they did not show any specific

\[^{8}\) Ibn al-Athîr, Kāmil, 8/ 339.\]
\[^{9}\) Abî-l-Fiddâ', Al-Bidâya, 11/ 345.\]
\[^{10}\) As-Sâbî, Al-Mukhtar, 2/ 151 (Ms.\)]
\[^{11}\) As-Sâbî, Al-Mukhtar, 1/ 238.\]
partiality to any one of the main Shi'ite sub-sects, neither to the Zaydites nor the Imāmites. They probably showed great sympathy towards the Zaydites in Persia because they probably constituted the majority among the Daylamites, whereas they fully supported the Imāmites in Baghdad because they were the majority amongst the other Shi'ites. These facts could explain why the head of the 'Alid organization were mostly Ḥasanids in Persia, while in Iraq they were mostly Ḥusaynids. 12

They were quite aware of the nature of the political powers, so they did not involve themselves with any single Shi'ite sub-sect, and thus they could gain the support of all Shi'ites, both in Iraq and Persia. The Zaydite scholar al-Ḥākim Abū-l-Sa'd al-Jushamī (d. 494 ) described the Buwayhid Amīrs as Zaydites, except Bakhtiyar who, said al-Ḥākim, was Imāmite, or, as he put it, mixed the Raf'd with I'tizāl. 13

The Buwayhids did not attempt to show hostility towards any other sect, because their army contained many Turks who were mainly Sunnite. In 371 A.H. they sent, to the Byzantine Emperor, a letter in reply to his correspondence, with al-Bāqillānī 14, probably to show the Byzantines that Islam was united and could face any external danger, and also to give the impression that they represented all Muslims, and did not simply belong to one specific sect.

In their internal policies the Buwayhids were certainly aware of the fact that the populace of Baghdad was an important power, and had wielded a great deal of influence upon the course of events during previous periods, especially during the conflict between al-Amīn and his brother, al-Ma'mūn, as well as during the Miḥna. The two great

12) Aṣ-Ṣāhib b. ʻAbbād, Rasā'il, 236.
13) A. Uṯmān, Qādī-l-Qudāt, 20.
14) Ibn al-Aṯīr, Kāmil, 9/ 11-12
powers in Baghdād were the Hanbalites and the Imāmites, whereas the Daylamites seemed to have been in the majority among the Daylamites in Persia.

The Hanbalites in Baghdād seem to have been an organized group, they were actively powerful and always ready to rebel, leading revolts against the political power and interfering, sometimes very violently, in the public life of the people. In 317A.H., for example, there was a riot between two rival groups of Hanbalites, one of them, probably a small group known as the followers of al-Marūzī, interpreted the verse, "And a part of the night awake for it, a largesse for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate" 15, holding that the "praised estate" would be that God will let the Prophet sit with him on the Throne on the Day of Judgement, whereas the other group refuted that interpretation and held that the "praised estate" is nothing but the Prophet's intercession. During the course of this riot many were killed, and the army had to interfere eventually to prevent the continuance of the conflict between the two groups. 16

In 323A.H. the Hanbalites in Baghdād were very aggressive, carrying out surprise attacks on houses, emptying any wine they found upon the ground and smashing every musical instrument they came across, and whenever they saw a man walking in the street with a woman, they used to stop them to ensure that she was his relative, otherwise they would not let them walk together. They also used to persecute the Shāfi‘ites, and treated them very badly.

All this would seem to indicate a highly organized body of people who were very influential, and who soon became so dangerous.

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15) Ibn al-Athir, Kāmil, 8/ 157-158.

16) Ibid. 8/ 158.
that they were condemned by the Caliph himself, and accused of believing in anthropomorphism. 17

The Buwayhids however did not show the slightest intention of persecuting the Hanbalites or any other Muslim sect or sub-sect, simply because they knew very well that their army, especially in Baghdad, was made up of both the main Muslim sects.

The Imāmites in Baghdad were also powerful, being especially numerous in Karkh, the business centre of Baghdad at that time, which was already a major Shi'ite stronghold when the Buwayhids first came to Baghdad.

The Buwayhids did, however, persecute some of the outstanding Shi'ite figures whenever they felt that their activities were contrary to their own interests, as they put Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-ʿAlawi and an-Naqīb Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. Mūsawi, the father of ash-Sharif ar-Rafi'I, into prison in the era of ʿAḍud ad-Dawla, although they were later released during the time of ʾSaʿd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad. 18

The political attitude of the Buwayhids could be summarized as follows:

1) Although most of the Buwayhid Amīrs were Zaydites, they did not show particular favour towards any single Shi'ite sub-sect, especially in Irāq where the Zaydites were not active. This was perhaps an important factor in explaining why they adopted, or at least encouraged, Mu'tazilism which was a movement rather than a sect, and which was also able to contain many different tendencies, both those which lie closer to the Sunnites and those which are nearer to the Shi'ite point of view in politics, and tendencies which are

18) Ibid., 9/ 7.
the same as Shāfi‘ite in Islamic law, and tendencies which are the same as the Hanafites.

2) Since the Buwayhid army was drawn mainly from Daylam, where Zaydism was prominent, and the Turks, who were mainly Sunnites, they desisted from being hostile to, or persecuting any Muslim sect.

3) Although there is much evidence to show that they supported and protected the Shi‘ites in Baghda‘d, they apparently used, and sometimes urged, sectarian conflict. The letter from ʻIzz ad-Dawla to the 'Abbasid Caliph, at-Ta‘lī, sent from Wāṣiṭ during the occupation of Baghda‘d by the Turks, explained very clearly that they were completely conscious of the fact that the sectarian conflict in Baghda‘d was the weak point, by the use of which they could maintain their power in Ira‘q. The letter reminded the caliph that the Muslims in Baghda‘d were not in agreement, nor were they living in peace. 19

The sectarian conflict and the numerous riots were sometimes encouraged by them, like the riot which occurred at the time of Mu‘izz ad-Dawla. 20 They probably used the 'Alids as an instrument to the threaten the 'Abbasids and to keep them more under their control, so that they would submit totally to their orders, as well as to gain the loyalty of the Daylamites, who made up the majority of their army.

4) The Buwayhid’s external policy attempted to show Islam as totally united under their patronage.

19) As-Šābi‘, Al-Mukhtar, 2/ 238. (Ms.)
20) Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, 8/ 403.
Social and Intellectual Life During the Buwayhid Dynasty.

The division of the 'Abbasid state into many minor states, each virtually independent from the others, had a great deal of influence on social and intellectual life during the fourth century of the Hijra era.

The frequent changes of Caliphs, viziers and important employees was one factor of the social instability in the Islamic society of that time. This was very obvious in Iraq, and especially in Baghdad, which was occupied many times by different Amīrs. The Ḥamdānids, Buraydites, Buwayhids and Sabastakīn, supported by the Turks, all managed to capture Baghdad.21 The Qarāmiṭa found it feasible to threaten Kīfa, and the name of the Fātimids was mentioned many times in the Friday Khutba at Mecca and Medina.22

One of the obvious signs of such instability was the discharge of viziers, judges, kātība, and other important employees, a very ordinary occurrence at this time, extending even to the removal of caliphs, or even to their execution. This affected social life very much, because the continual changing of important people in important positions entails constant changes in loyalties, which could constitute one factor of instability.

In periods of instability and rapid changes, the struggles to gain power of groups and individuals increase, and violence and conspiracy become frequent.

One of the most prominent manifestations of social unrest was the increase in sectarian riots; there is some evidence that this sectarian conflict was encouraged by the Buwayhids themselves.

21) Maskawayh, Tajārīb, 2/ 332.
22) Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazam, 7/ 75.
not only by supporting one side, but also by venting the causes for this conflict. 23

In conditions of political struggle and social distress, thought often takes one of two tendencies:

1) The defensive attitude which usually manifests itself in two different ways:

a) The attempt to justify the convictions held by one group or sect and present it in a rationalistic manner, and to expose the ideas adopted by each of the struggling parties. The intellectuals become very active in the exposition of the doctrines and in presenting them in the best possible way to enhance their situation and make their doctrine more elaborate.

In that period the Mu'tazila produced 'Abd al-Jabbār, most of whose works were channelled into the exposition of Mu'tzilite ideas and their defence. The Imamites put forward al-Mufīd, whose works took the form of arguments against their opposition. The Ash'arites put forward al-Isfarā'īnī who played the same role as regards the Ash'arite doctrine, while the Karrāmiyya presented Muḥammad b. al-Hayṣam who made, more or less the same attempt.

b) The attacking of the ideas of others, who are opposed to a particular doctrine, which was known as the refutation of books or doctrines. One form of the refutation of ideas was carried out in heresiography, and al-Baghdādī's al-Farg bayn al-Firāq as well as Ibn Hazm's al-Fisal are excellent examples of this.

2) The second tendency is the compromise between different doctrines, and the acceptance of solutions which give a measure of satisfaction to those concerned.

23) Ibn al-Athīr, Kāmil, 8/ 304, 405.
In the periods of intellectual struggle between the different points of view the importance of reason increases, and reason becomes a means of defence and attack, and that is why that age was marked by the flourishing of theology and philosophy, which was represented by al-Parābī, Ibn Sinā and ar-Rāzī who were the great philosophers in Islam.

We may note that this dependence on reason was extreme to the extent that one movement held that human reason was completely sufficient as a source of truth and knowledge as well as ethics, and that there is no need for prophecy. This movement is known in Islamic intellectual history as the Barāhima, whose ideas and origins will be discussed in the third chapter. Ar-Rāzī, the great physician and philosopher, was also one of the prominent intellectual figures who denied the use of revelation and denied the need for prophecy. These ideas must have been widely spread to be refuted in so many of the intellectual works. 'Abd al-Jabbār himself participated in the dispute and devoted many of his works to proving the importance of revelations as a source of knowledge and truth by reason. He also wrote some works so as to prove the prophethood of Muhammad and the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, and tried to present a rational interpretation of the Qur'ān, which was probably one of the main sources used by az-Zamakhsharī in his Tafsīr. In the same period al-Bāqillānī wrote his book on the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān (Ijāz al-Qur'ān).

24) E.I. 2, art. Barāhima.
The Man.

Qādī-l-Qudāt Abū-l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Asad ʿAbādī al-Hamadānī was born about 320 A.H. in Asad ʿAbād, a small town belonging to the territory of Jībāl or Hamadān. We only know a little about his family, but some sources say that his father was a cotton ginner, but these reports are dubious because they attempted to show that he could make a lot of money after he became chief justice, Qādī-l-Qudāt.

The earliest available source which gave a short account of ʿAbd al-Jabbār's life is Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-Masāʾīl by the Zaydite scholar, al-Ḥākim al-Jushāmī (413-499 A.H.), who did not mention any information about ʿAbd al-Jabbār's family, but since his family sent him to another town to receive a religious education at an early age, they could hardly have been as poor as some references suggested.

ʿAbd al-Jabbār, however, received his elementary education in his own town, then he went to Qazwīn to join the circles of some of the famous traditionalists there, like az-Zubayr b. ʿAbd al-Wahīd (d.347) and Abū-l-Ḥasan b. Salama al-Qattān (d.345). About 340 he went to Hamadān to join another circle there, and then to Isfahān, in about 345, to study with Ibn Fāris (d.346).

About 346 he moved to Baṣra where he encountered a different intellectual climate. The ideas of the Muʿtazila still had many adherents in the city, and the dispute between scholars was still furious. ʿAbd al-Jabbār was an Ashʿarite in theology and a Shāfiʿite

25) A. 'Uthmān, Qādī-l-Qudāt, 29.
in jurisprudence before he met the Mu'tazilite scholar Ibn 'Ayyānah at Basra, who converted 'Abd al-Jabbār to Mu'tazilism.

We do not possess any information as to why he adopted the Mu'tazilite doctrine, but as that could happen to a man who was firmly educated in the traditionalist circles for more than ten years, we can certainly gather that the debate was still alive between the two movements at that time, and the conflict was still strong. We can also assume that since 'Abd al-Jabbār decided to change from one doctrine to another in his middle twenties he must have been well acquainted with the nature of the controversy, and been mature enough to make the choice.

After becoming a Mu'tazilite 'Abd al-Jabbār went to Baghdad to study with the leader of the Mu'tazila at that time, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī (d.369), and even stayed with him at his house. 'Abd al-Jabbār asked his shaykh to accept reading the Hanafite Fiqh with him, but al-Baṣrī did not encourage him. He said, "since I'm a Hanafite in Fiqh, you had better stay among the Shāfi'ites." 27

About 360 he left Baghdad to stay in Ramahirmiz, a small town in southern Persia, which seemed to possess a large number of Mu'tazilites, where he started to dictate his famous book of twenty volumes, MuğrīFI Abwāb at-Tawhīd wa-l-'Adl. In this very important work 'Abd al-Jabbār presented the doctrine of the Mu'tazila in great detail. The importance of this work does not lie only in the great amount of information it contains about the Mu'tazilite's ideas, but also in the attempt it makes to present their doctrine in a comprehensive view.

When as-Sāhib b. 'Abbād received the office of vizier at the

27) Ibn al-Murtada, Tabaqāt, 112.
Buwayhid court in Rayy, he asked 'Abd al-Jabbār to come to Rayy and take up the position of chief justice, Qādī-l-Qudūt, so he accepted the appointment and went to Rayy, keeping the post in 367.  

The post held by 'Abd al-Jabbār was of great importance, since it was political and financial as well as religious, and was certainly the most important post next to that of the vizier himself.

The very fact that 'Abd al-Jabbār held such a position is an indication of how famous and outstanding he was at that time. He continued to hold that post until his sponsor died in 385A.H., when he was discharged and his properties seized.

There is no clear explanation as to the reason for 'Abd al-Jabbār's dismissal or the seizure of his properties, in the accounts given by the historians, but the fact that the properties of as-Sahīb were seized the very day after his death, in spite of the great respect he used to enjoy and the services he had devoted to the state and to the Buwayhids in particular, could explain this. Of course, the seizure of properties was one of the normal means to face the financial deficit of the state during the time of the Buwayhid dynasty.

'Abd al-Jabbār returned to Ramahirmiz after he was discharged and devoted the rest of his life to lecturing, debating and writing. His intellectual activities made it necessary for him to travel from Ramahirmiz to Rayy and to Isfahān, until he died in 415.

From the list of his works we can gather that 'Abd al-Jabbār was very well known during his lifetime, throughout the whole Islamic

29) ar-Rawdhārāwī, Dhayl, 3/ 262-263.
world. His works contained answers to many questions which were sent from many places in Persia, Iraq and even Egypt.  

'Abd al-Jabbār was very active intellectually, and in his works virtually covered most of the different kinds of Islamic knowledge. Apart from his main works in philosophical theology, which was the field which attracted him most, he wrote more than one book on Tafsīr, the interpretation of the Qur'ān, two of which have survived, Mutashābih al-Qur'ān and Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'an al-Maṭā'īn, two other books on the Qur'ān are also mentioned as having been written by him.

In Ḥadith he also had a collection or 'Amālī, while he also wrote a book of two volumes on the proof of the prophethood of Muḥammad. He also wrote upon jurisprudence and the basis of jurisprudence (Uṣūl al-Figh), one of which appears to have been very famous at his time, Al-'Amād. He also wrote many books in which he argued against other sects, like the refutation of Al-Lumāt and the refutation of the Imāma. His main works in theology are Al-Mughni, Shārī' al-Uṣūl al-Khamsa, Al-Majmū' al-Muḥtār li-t-Taklīf and Mukhtāsār al-Ḥasanī.

31) The list of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works in Sharḥ, pp. 20-23.
32) Ibid.  
33) Ibid.  
34) Ibid.  
35) Ibid.  
36) Ibid. This book was published in Cairo by Dār al-Ḥilāl (1971), part of Rasa'il al-'Adl wa-t-Tawḥīd, vol. I, pp. 162-253, under the title al-Mukhtāsār Fi Uṣūl ad-Dīn, which the editor suggested after reading the introduction in which this title was mentioned. Reading the introduction carefully we can say that it is undoubtedly Mukhtasār al-Ḥasanī which was mentioned in the list of the works of 'Abd al-Jabbār.
The Political Attitude of as-Sahib b. 'Abbād.

In order to understand the political attitude of 'Abd al-Jabbār more deeply it might be useful to know, in general, what form the political attitude of his sponsor, as-Sahib b. 'Abbād, took.

Ismā'il b. 'Abbād at-Talaqani, known as as-Sahib b. 'Abbād (320-385 A.H.), was the most famous and powerful vizier of the Buwayhids, and was well known as a famous intellectual and an outstanding belletrist. He was also one of the principal figures directing the policy of the Buwayhids. He played a very important role in most of the political events which took place at the Buwayhid court in Persia. 37

After the death of the Buwayhid Amir Mu'ayyad ad-Dawla, as-Sahib made the greatest efforts in supporting Fakhr ad-Dawla as his successor, from which he gained his power and great favour, which made him the most influential vizier of the Buwayhid dynasty. 38

In the accounts given by the historians and scholars about the political attitude of as-Sahib we find several different points of view. Some described him as Imamite, some suggested that he was a Zaydite, while others called him a Mu'tazilite.

Such contradictory opinions about an important and outstanding politician and intellectual as as-Sahib are not really so surprising. An experienced and farsighted politician like him would not show a narrow prejudice towards one sect or sub-sect thus incurring the loss of the support of the majority, instead he attempted to adopt a very general attitude among the supporters of his policy rather than be involved in a restrictive attitude. On the other hand an outstanding intellectual like him, occupying a prominent place in

37) ar-Rawdharawarī, Dhayl, 3/ 73.
38) Ibid..
Arabic literature would be, later, an object of rivalry and conflict between the sects to which he was very close, every sect would claim him as a member, especially when such a person could be classified in more than one category.

Most of those who ascribed as-Saḥib to the Imāmīte form of Shi'ism depended on the fact that he used to show great respect to the house of the Prophet.

Ash-Shaykh as-Sadūq, the famous Imāmīte scholar and the contemporary of as-Saḥib, mentioned, at the beginning of his book Uyun Akhbar ar-Riḍā, that he had compiled that book for the book treasury of as-Saḥib after he came across two poems written by him, dedicated to the Imam 'Alī b. Mūsa ar-Riḍā.39 Al-Majlisī, a later Imāmīte scholar, ascribed as-Saḥib as one of the Imāmī jurists (min Fuqaha Aṣḥābinā).40 There is a report which claims that 'Abd al-Jabbār refused to perform the prayer over him after his death because he was a Rāfiḍite, another report says it was because 'Abd al-Jabbār thought as-Saḥib died without repentence.41

Some Imāmīte sources claim that ash-Shaykh al-Mufīd witnessed that the book in support of Mu'tazilism ascribed to as-Saḥib was not written by him.42

In the lisan al-Mīzān Ibn Hajar stated that beside his I'tizāl as-Saḥib was a Shāfi'īite with Shi'ite passion.43 Al-Baghdādī reported that most of the Mu'tazilites in his time were holding Abū Ḥāshim's idea of I'tizāl, because as-Saḥib urged people to hold his ideas.44

40) Ibid., 11/ 334.
41) ar-Rawdharawarī, Dhayl, 3/ 362.
43) Ibid., 11/ 367.
44) al-Baghdādī, al-Farq, 169.
It seems that the mistaken ascription to the Mu'tazila and Shi'a occurred after the adoption of some Mu'tazilite principles by the Shi'ites, such as the ideas of God's justice and the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an and the denial of the eternal attributes of God. The Shi'ites also make 'Adl one of their basic principles. Many of the outstanding Imamites are, for that reason, described as Mu'tazilites, among them as-Sayyid al-Murtada and al-Hasan b. Mūsā an-Nawbakhti. 45

The mistaken ascription to the Shi'ite and the Mu'tazilite could, however, shed light on the relationship between the two sects, which did not seem to be greatly opposed to each other at that time.

Since 'Abd al-Jabbar reported that Abū 'Alī al-Jubbār (235-303) intended to unify the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites in his town (al-'Askar) on the grounds that both of the sects used to hold the same theological doctrine except in the question of Imāma 46, there must have been a general feeling, between the two sects, that they were not enemies as they had been at the time of al-Jāhiz or al-Khayyat, the gap had already narrowed thanks to the attitude of the school of Baghdād, whose attitude towards the question of Imāma was different to that of the school of Basra, and they were definitely moving closer together during the Buwayhid era.

In one of his works entitled at-Tadhkira Fī-l-'Usūl al-Khamsa, as-Sāhib defended the principles of i'tizāl in the same manner, and adopted the view of the Mu'tazilite school of Baghdād of the superiority of 'Alī to the other Caliphs, and he criticized the Imamites and their attitude, which held that 'Alī was in the state of prudent

45) Ibn al-Murtada, Tabaqat, 104.
fear to explain why he did not claim to be Imām, and he also criticized them for holding that there was an obvious designation (nass wādīḥ) on his Imāmate. 47 In another of his works, entitled al-Hidāya wa-d-Dalāla, he mentioned many of the Mu’tazilite scholars, such as Ja’far b. Ḥarb, al-Iskāfī, al-Jāḥīḍ and al-Jubbā’I, as his shaykhs, which indicated that he followed their doctrine. 48

According to Ibn an-Nadīm as-Sāḥib wrote a book about Zaydism and another about the Imāma, in which he maintained that ‘Alī was superior to the other caliphs, but they were also rightful Imāms. 49

In one of his works as-Sāḥib mentioned the term ash-Shi‘a al-Adliyya in contrast to the ‘Uthmāniyya and Nasibiyā, by which he probably meant the Mu’tazilite school of Baghdad. 50

From the above accounts we can deduce that as-Sāḥib b. ‘Abbād was not Imāmite, but rather a Mu’tazilite with Zaydite tendencies. His great respect for all ‘Alids without any distinction, which was a general attitude during the Buwayhid era, was on reason for the Imāmites claiming him.

A fact which supports this thesis that as-Sāḥib was not Imāmite is the fact that ‘Abd al-Jabbār completed his famous work, al-Mughnī, during his lifetime, and mentioned as-Sāḥib at the end of the last volume with great respect, and most of that particular volume was devoted to attacking the Imāmites. It is obvious that ‘Abd al-Jabbār would not have dared to attack the Imāmites if he had known that as-Sāḥib was an Imāmite.

47) as-Sāḥib b. ‘Abbād, Ḥabān, 28,30.
49) Ibn an-Nadīm, Fihrist, 135. (Beirut)
50) as-Sāḥib b. ‘Abbād, Ḥabān, 28.
Another fact which supports the point of view which suggests that as-Ṣāhib was a Mu'tazilite with Zaydite tendencies is that he asked 'Abd al-Jabbār to write a book on theology which would be a guide to belief for his grandson, whose father was a descendant of al-Ḥasan, and probably Zaydite. 'Abd al-Jabbār wrote a book for him whose title was Mukhtasar al-Hasani, which stood as a sufficient summary of the Mu'tazilite doctrine. 51.

51) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mukhtasar.
The Political Attitude of 'Abd al-Jabbar.

There are two important facts which we must consider if we are to discover the political attitude of 'Abd al-Jabbar, and to understand his political views in general and his attitude towards the question of Imāma, in particular.

The first factor relates to the fact that 'Abd al-Jabbar was an Ash'arite before he was converted to Mu'tazilism, and was first educated in the Traditionalist circles, which was very important psychologically in influencing his attitude.

The second factor is the fact that 'Abd al-Jabbar held a very important religious and political position at the Buwayhid court. The office of Qādī-l-Qudāt was the most important position after the Amīr and the vizier. It was political and financial, as well as legal and religious. The great dignity of the Qādīs probably comes from the great respect shown by the ordinary people towards them as representatives of the Islamic revelation. The caliphs themselves used to appoint the Qādīs, but 'Abd al-Jabbar, however, was appointed by the Buwayhid Amīr, probably after consultation with the caliph. The letter of his assignment (al-'ahd) as chief justice was composed and written by as-Sāhib b. 'Abbād himself.52

It seems that as-Sāhib b. 'Abbād was looking for a suitable person to occupy this important position, and 'Abd al-Jabbar was chosen after consulting the head of the Mu'tazila at that time, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī.53

This could only mean that the position that 'Abd al-Jabbar held was predominantly a political position, and, in that case, his

52) as-Subki, Tābaqāt, 3/ 230.
53) 'Uthman, A., Qādī-l-Qudāt, 36.
his political attitude could not have run contrary to the general policy of the Buwayhids.

Coming to his political views we notice that 'Abd al-Jabbār devoted a volume of two parts from his famous book, al-Mughnī, to discussing the question of the Imāma. This question occupied an important place in many other works by him. One of his works mentioned by some of the heresiographers was a refutation of the Imāma (Naqd al-Imāma), 54 which was probably written against the Shī'ites, or Imāmites in particular.

He also devoted about seventy pages from the first volume of his work Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubūwat Sayyidinā Muḥammad to criticizing the Imāmites, and to arguing against the idea of obvious designation (an-nagās al-jalli)which it was claimed had been given to 'Alī, and to proving that the three other caliphs were rightful Imāms. 55

'Abd al-Jabbār denied any kind of designation, whether it was obvious or implicit, in the question of the Imāma, which makes his standpoint distant not only from the Imāmites, but also from the Zaydites. He sometimes suspected the authenticity of many traditions in which there are indications that 'Alī was considered as the successor of the Prophet. He, in brief, held the same attitude as the Sunnites regarding the question of Imāma or Khilāfa. Since there was no obvious or implicit designation from the Prophet regarding his successor, he held that the only possible way to name the Imām or caliph is the choice and the contract (al-ikhtiyār wa-l-īaqd) of the community. In support of his ideas 'Abd al-Jabbār

54) The list of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works in Sharḥ, 20-23.
55) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Mughnī, 20/ i, ii.
presented many historical events from the Sunni point of view.  

'Abd al-Jabbâr's main argument was that the question of Imâma is not a rational question (mas'ala 'aqliyya), it is rather based on revelation (hukm shâtî). In other words the need for an Imam is not for the solving of rational problems but for putting the revelation into practice. Imâma, he added, is more or less like any other position in the community such as governors ('ummâl) or judges (qudât), and must be based on the choice of the people after knowing the distinguishing marks of the position. 57

Regarding the difference between the Mu'tazilites' and Zaydites' attitude to the question of Imâma, 'Abd al-Jabbâr maintained that most of the Zaydites have more or less the same viewpoint as the Mu'tazilites with one slight difference, namely that some of the Zaydites believed that there was a designation in the traditions (samâ') upon one person, whereas the Mu'tazilites held that the designation was only stating the distinguishing marks or character of the Imam, and there are also some differences as regards the distinguishing marks of the Imam between the Zaydites and Mu'tazilites, by which he probably meant the doctrine of some Zaydites that the Imam must be descended from 'Ali, whether Hasanid or Husaynid, 58 but he asserted that the Imam must be from Quraysh.

'Abd al-Jabbâr also considered al-Hasan and al-Husayn as rightful Imãms, because they were chosen by the people, or the community, and not because there was a designation (nags) on their Imâmate 59, he also considered Zayd b. 'Ali, Muhammad b. 'Abd

56) 'Abd al-Jabbâr, Mughni', 20/ii pp. 3-32.
57) Ibid., 20/ii, 17.
58) Ibid., 20/ii, 38.
59) Ibid., 20/ii, 145.
Allah and his brother Ibrāhīm as rightful Imāms, especially Ibrāhīm who, as 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, was followed by the Mu'tazila.  

Thus the political views of 'Abd al-Jabbār were, more or less the same as the views of the Sunnites with one exception, that is his belief in the superiority of 'Alī over the other caliphs, which he seems to have believed in later.  

It could be said that 'Abd al-Jabbār's political views were the same as the views of the school of Baghdad. He also attempted to reconcile the Mu'tazilite attitude with the Zaydites of his time, by accepting the Imāmate of the Zaydites' Imāms, but denied that there was an obvious or an implicit designation on the Imāmate of 'Alī, or that the Imām should be descended from one of the family of 'Alī and Fāṭima. In other words he accepted that the Imāms in whom the Zaydites believed were rightful Imāms, not because the principle held by the Zaydites was right, but because they were chosen by the people.  

This solution or compromise was very practical at that time, because it kept the relation between the Zaydites, who were numerous amongst the Daylam, and the Mu'tazila, whose attitude was probably the dominant one politically or the official doctrine of the state, stable, and did not give the opportunity for any Ḥasanid revolutionary to claim the Imāmate.  

Although the views of 'Abd al-Jabbār as regards the Imāma were refused by his Zaydite students, and refuted by some Zaydites, like Muḥammad b. Ahmad b. al-Walīd who wrote a short monograph against them entitled Al-Kalām al-Ḥāsim al-Mufni li shubah al-Mughnī 62, in which

\[60) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Mughnī, 20/ ii, 150.
61) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Shafr, 767.
62) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Mughnī, 20/ ii, pp.263-274.]
he mentioned that the views of 'Abd al-Jabbār about Imāma in al-
Majmū' al-Muhīt bi-t-Taklīf were refuted by Ja'far b. ʿAbdād b.
Yaḥyā, but the fact that many of his students were Zaydites, like
Ibn Matwayh, who collected al-Majmū' al-Muhīt, and Mankadim ʿAbdād
b. al-Ḥusayn Abū Ḥāshim, who collected Sharḥ al-ʻUṣūl al-Khamsa,
and ʿAbd as-Salām al-Qizwī63 and Abū-l-Qāsim al-Bustī,64 gives the
impression that his political attitude was not very far from that of
the Zaydites, and this could be supported by the fact that 'Abd
al-Jabbār's works were preserved by the Zaydites, and found in
their collections in Yemen.

64) Ibn al-Murtaḍā, Ṭabaqāt, 117.
CHAPTER II: THE PLACE OF REASON.

The Necessity of Inquiry (Nazar).

Knowledge and inquiry occupy a very prominent place in the thought of 'Abd al-Jabbār. Besides the large volume of his encyclopaedia, Al-Mughnī, which he devoted to knowledge and inquiry (al-ma‘ārif wa-l-nazar), he also devoted many pages to the subject in the other volumes, and many pages in most of his other works.¹

In order to understand 'Abd al-Jabbār's attitude towards reason, and his theory of knowledge, it is very important to present, in brief, his theory of human responsibility (at-taklīf), which is the central view upon which his philosophical thought, as well as his religious ideas, are based.

'Abd al-Jabbār described the human being who possesses an intellect or mind (al-taqil) as a responsible being or an obligated being. The word "mukallaf" whenever it comes in his works is equivalent to human being. Man is a responsible being, if we may put it like that. Responsibility or obligation (taklīf) is the purpose of Man's creation. God is not obliged to create man, that was only his favour and grace (fadlun wa-minna), because he created man so as to benefit him. He provided him with maturity of intellect (kamāl al-taqil) and desire (shahwa), he gave him everything from which he can benefit. God, also, gave man the opportunity of the great reward in the life to come (‘arradahu li-th-thawāb al-'azīm), which could not be granted without his being responsible or obligated.²

Since the creation of man was for his own benefit he ought to be thankful to God for the grace of life, and for his granting

¹ 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ al-'Usūl al-Khamsa.
him possession of the great reward. Thus every rational being is obliged or responsible. 3

The definition of taklīf, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, is "to inform others that they must do or not do something, to benefit or to avoid harm, with an effort or a severe effect upon him (mashqqa), but not to the extent of compulsion ('iljā'), or constraint." 4

'Abd al-Jabbar explained this by stating that in every obligation there is one who obliges, one who is obligated, orders to be carried out and the fruit of the obligation. The one who obligates is God, Man is the obligated, rational and legal requirements are the orders, and reward is the fruit of the obligation to those who deserve it.

'Abd al-Jabbar also maintained that obligation implies the following elements:

1) The information.

It is very necessary in at-taklīf to inform the one who is obliged in the actions which he has to do and which he has to avoid, and to inform him also in which way these actions which he has to do may be fulfilled. Man cannot perform his obligations without a certain extent of knowledge about the actions he is required to do, and about the way they are to be performed. 'Abd al-Jabbar considered this knowledge as a part of empowerment (tamkīn), that is to give the man strength to perform his obligations. 5

3) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Muhīt, 206.
4) Ibid., 11
5) Ibid., 14.
As to how man may be informed, 'Abd al-Jabbār suggested many different ways. It could be by sending prophets, it could be by creating the necessary knowledge in man's mind (al-ʿilm ad-darūrī) about the actions which he has to perform, like the origins of morals and the principles of reason, and it could also be by setting up rational signs or scriptural signs to guide man to the right actions which he has to perform, or he is obliged to do. If this knowledge was necessary knowledge (darūriyya), the actions which he has to perform must be known in general (ʿalā-l-jumla), but if it was not necessary, actions must be known in details (mufassala).

Thus obligation is based on knowledge, or in other words obligation is founded on reason, and there is no obligation without knowledge or reason.

This may lead us to the belief that the whole of human responsibility is really based on reason.

2) Unpleasant duties (al-mashaqa).

By mashaqa 'Abd al-Jabbār meant the actions in which man is obliged and which must either be to do what is against his wishes (mā tanfur minhu an-nafs), or to avoid doing what he desires.

Responsibility, then, means to put limits to human desire without constraint (ʿiljāy).

Thus mashaqa is a medium status between man's desire or repulsion on the one hand, and constraint (ʿiljāy) on the other. To do what one likes, and to avoid what one dislikes, does not need any obligation, and to be constrained (mulja) means to be without responsibility. In other words, the actions which are an object of obligation are not the kind of actions which we want to do, and are not of the kind which we cannot do at all.

What is the necessity of mashaqa? 'Abd al-Jabbār explains
this by asserting that the only way to be worthy of the reward is to exert an extraordinary effort, as in the case with the person whom we wish to appoint to a very important high position, we must test him in many difficult situations, thus ensuring that he is capable of holding such a position.

3) Empowerment (at-tamkhin).

The obligation must also come after strengthening man and bestowing upon him the faculties necessary to perform the actions. 'Abd al-Jabbār used the term izāhat al-illa (the removal of the excuse). By this he meant that man, as a responsible being, has been bestowed with power and instruments to perform his obligations.

'Abd al-Jabbār, like any other Mu'tazilite intellectual, asserted that to be responsible is to be capable of an act. So responsibility entails free will as well as the power or the capacity.

According to him it is not enough that man has the capacity and the power to perform the actions he is obliged to perform, but it is also necessary to strengthen his motives for performing these actions. 6

The logical structure of 'Abd al-Jabbār's argument could be put as follows:

Man is responsible because he is a rational being (jā'il).

Because he is responsible he must be free and bestowed with faculties with which he may perform actions according to his responsibility.

That is why he considered everyone who is mentally immature or dispossessed of free will not to be responsible.

These two ideas, depending on reason and believing in man's

free will, are very essential in Mu'tazilite thought. The denial of the eternal attributes of God is associated with the idea of the createdness of the Qur'an which was held by all the rationalist movements in Islam, to make room for rational interpretation of the Qur'an, which was the possible way for rational speculation. The idea of obligation or man's responsibility entails belief in free will, which was associated with God's justice. These two essential ideas, al-`adl wa-t-tawhīd, summarizes the whole philosophy of the Mu'tazila, their attitude towards the Qur'anic verses and the traditions, together referred to as "the texts" (an-nuṣūg).

4) Reward.

In every obligation, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, there must be a fruit (thamara), which is the reward given to those who deserve it. The obligation will be pointless (tabath) if we omit the reward, because God has no need for his creatures' actions.
Knowledge

1) The importance of knowledge.

Obligation, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, is two-fold, knowledge and action (ilm wa 'amal), it is also, he held, a rational obligation and an obligation by scriptures (at-taklif al-'aqll wa-at-taklif as-sam'il). He asserted that knowledge is the basis of sam'il, because sam'il needs the rational knowledge, but rational knowledge does not need sam'il, for there are many kinds of knowledge which do not entail any action. Thus knowledge can be completely independent but action cannot. To act we have to know first what to do and how to do it, but we always possess knowledge even when we are not performing any action. 7

This is the attitude of the rationalists towards the relationship between knowledge and action. Knowledge always comes first, because it is the basis of action, this can imply that reason comes before revelation, and thus has priority. This suited the intellectual class which received its importance and position in society because of speculation and its intellectual production based on their independent thinking. This could also be linked with their freedom of thought, which was the most important reason for their existing as a distinguished class.

Since human responsibility, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, contains knowledge and action, and knowledge has the priority, then a certain kind of knowledge should come before obligation, this being the necessary or immediate knowledge which must come even before any other kind of knowledge. If there is no knowledge of such, there will be no obligation. 8

7) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Muhît, 15-16. 8) Ibid., 17
2) The necessity of inquiry.

'Abd al-Jabbar used the terms nazar, ta'fikr, ta'ammul and tadaabbur and ru'ya in the sense of thinking or philosophical contemplation. 9

According to him, man's responsibility is based on knowledge, and the purpose of knowledge is to obtain facts, and facts can only be gained by thinking or speculation. 10

Thinking (nazar), according to him and the Mu'tazilites in general, is the main source of our knowledge of facts, whether these facts are rational or religious (lqliyya wa sama'iyya) thinking is the only means to discover them.

'Abd al-Jabbar defined thinking as the inquiry into the status of the thing and comparison between one thing and another, or the comparison of events (ta'ammul ḥal ash-shay' wa-t-tamthil baynahu wa bayna ghayrihi, aw tamthil ḥāditha min ghayriha). 11

So nazar, or inquiry, is an attempt to understand things as they exist in the material world, and to understand actual events, by contemplation and comparison.

It is possible to say that contemplation and comparison are the two essences of inquiry according to 'Abd al-Jabbar.

In the definition of contemplation he held that contemplation of a thing means describing that thing in a certain state of its existence. So as to clarify his definition he distinguished between inquiry (nazar) and conviction (istiqād), holding that both conviction and inquiry are connected with external subjects, but

9) 'Abd al-Jabbar, Sharh, 45.
10) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughni, 12/5.
11) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughni, 12/5-6.
thinking or inquiry differs from conviction in that conviction is connected with things or events in one of their peculiar characteristics (ṣifa muṭayyana), whereas thinking or inquiry is connected with things and events in their various states. 12

So, the relationship between the thing or the event which is the object of conviction, and the conviction itself, is static, whereas in inquiry it is dynamic.

Thinking, then, is a continuous questioning and investigation about things, events and relationships. It is not a firmness on one state like conviction. So when it is confined to one state there is no more thinking, in other words when conviction appears thinking disappears.

This view that thinking is a continuous questioning of things, events and their relationships, seems to be very relevant to the Mu'tazila, who placed everything under investigation, contrary to those with other tendencies who refused to question any idea related to religion, and considered all questioning as innovation (bid'a). The Mu'tazila, which was initially a rationalist movement, asserted that questioning and comparison were not only legal, but were also required.

Thinking or inquiry, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, is obligatory to every rational being, it is the first obligation which man has to perform. It is necessary because there is danger in avoiding it. So thinking, according to him, is the only way out of this danger.

To clarify his idea about the necessity of thinking 'Abd al-Jabbār asserted that man was initially endowed with the innate

tendency to seek his benefits and to avoid harm, whether such harm was surely known or simply assumed (mat'ūn al-awmāzān), and there is no difference whether these benefits or harms are secular or religious. So thinking is of great importance, since we have to know which actions can bring about benefits so performing them, and which may cause harm so avoiding them.

The importance of thinking to man is equivalent to his security. That is why it is necessary and it is the first obligatory action man has to perform.

'Abd al-Jabbār did not accept the idea that knowledge rather than thinking or inquiry is the first obligation to man, simply because he held that thinking is the only means of acquiring knowledge. It is right to say that knowledge is the purpose of thinking and inquiry, but it is also right that no acquired knowledge can be obtained without thinking. This was an attempt by the rationalists to recognise that no knowledge whatsoever comes through the following of others ideas without investigation (taqlīd). They refused any kind of previous orientation to a certain kind of knowledge so as to maintain reason's independence and its priority, and to belittle the value of the texts (muṣūl) in the obtaining of knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbār also refused the idea of those who believed that scepticism (shakk) is the first obligation of man. Doubt, he argued, will certainly occur in man's mind when its causes arise, in other words we are not obliged to doubt, because doubt will come whenever there are reasons for it, but we are obliged to think because thinking is our own action, occurring whenever we wish.

'Abd al-Jabbar attacked those who accepted their religious and intellectual attitudes by means of taqlid. Taqlid, according to him, is the acceptance of the ideas of others without question. That is certainly, in his opinion, not a way to knowledge, indeed it is virtually impossible because every follower cannot accept every doctrine because they are contradictory to each other. So he has to accept to follow one of them, and that brings up the question as to why he accepted this particular doctrine and rejected the others.

'Abd al-Jabbar also argued that those who accept others' ideas without any questioning as to proof, deny the necessity (yajhadun ad-darura) because to accept one idea without proof is not more reasonable than accepting the contrary idea. The adoption of the idea that the external world is eternal is not less reasonable than the adoption of the idea that it is created. Thus following others ideas cannot be justified, because the question as to why will certainly arise.

Some may claim that they accept one's ideas because he is more pious (ṣāliḥ), but they have to face the fact that pious people exist amongst the followers of every doctrine, and they have to justify why they chose to follow this particular person. Some would claim that it is safer to follow the doctrine of the majority, but again they have to face the fact that the majority is not always right, one can possess the truth and many can miss it, and,'Abd al-Jabbar added, how can the follower of a certain idea or a particular man be sure that the man he followed or the doctrine he accepted are certainly right? If he is not completely sure about it this implies that he admits the possibility of being wrong which entails that it is not admissable to follow or to believe in it.
If he was sure that the man whom he followed, or the doctrine which he accepted, is right, then the question of how did he know this will arise. Did he know this by a necessary knowledge? That is impossible. The acquired knowledge depends on the proof, so he should have known this by thinking or inquiry. 16

'Abd al-Jabbār also argued that if somebody claimed that he followed a certain person and accepted his opinions without question because he believed that this man is a knowing and learned person, then he also has to face the question of how this learned person obtained his knowledge. He cannot argue that he obtained it by following the ideas of another learned man because he will be caught up in a vicious circle (dawr wa tasalsul).

Thus, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, following others' opinions without questioning and investigation is not safe, and it is certainly not a way of obtaining knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbār also criticized those who believed in inspiration as a way to knowledge. They held that God created, initially, knowledge in man's heart, and the only way to possess knowledge and truth is to obtain it directly from God. They denied rational speculation and reasoning (an-nazar wa-l-istidlāl).

'Abd al-Jabbār's argument against the idea of inspiration as a source of knowledge is based on the idea that since speculation and reasoning are within the human faculties, and since knowledge certainly occurs by thinking and speculation, then man can know without the direct guidance of inspiration.

'Abd al-Jabbār argued, as had Abū Hāshim and al-Jubbā'ī before, whether the inspired person knows that he is inspired

16) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughni, 12/123.
by means of speculation or by inspiration. If it was by inspiration
the argument would not reach any conclusion, because it is an
object of dispute, if he knows it by speculation that means he admits
the value of thinking. 17

This argument shows that the Mu'tazilites did not admit any
individualistic attitude towards knowledge and truth. Since truth
is objective and absolute, and obtaining it is possible for everyone
who seeks it, there is no need for inspiration.

'Abd al-Jabbār had to face the arguments of those who denied
the necessity of thinking on the grounds of the Qur'ānic verse, "Al-
yawn iṣkamtu īlum dīnākum wa ʿātmāātu lālaykum niʿmatī wa raḍītu
lakum-ī-Īslāmā dīnā" 18 which, they held, means that there is no
more need for speculation and inquiry about the principles of Islam
(ṣul ad-dīn) and the branches of doctrine (furūʿ ad-dīn). According
to 'Abd al-Jabbār we cannot use the Qur'ān in such an argument,
because to recognize the Qur'ān itself we have to know God, and
know that he is one and just, and that can only be known by means
of reason. The real meaning of the verse, however, he held, was
that God made Islam more perfect and clearer by the exposition
of legal orders (al-ʿumūr ash-Sharī'yya), and that cannot be applied
to reason because rational matters (al-ʿumūr al-ʿaqīliyya) must be known
before the Qur'ān and revelation. 19

3) Inquiry and knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbār had to face the question of the relationship

18) al-Māʾīda, 3. (5:3)
between inquiry and knowledge. Some of the opponents of the rationalists raised a very important question. Namely, if inquiry always produces knowledge of the truth then all the rational beings (*uqala’) must possess it equally, but, practically, we do not find any agreement upon one truth or upon one opinion among them, although they all try to obtain it by means of inquiry.

In solution to this problem 'Abd al-Jabbar asserted that if all rational beings were equal in their intelligence, and all seek the truth by discussing the proofs, they would certainly possess the knowledge of the truth equally and without distinction, but since their intelligences are different some of them can obtain the knowledge of truth before others, and since some of the rational beings come seeking the truth, already affected by their previous convictions or using their intelligence in thinking of the obscurities (yanzarūn fi-sh-shubah) instead of the proofs, they will certainly differ in obtaining the truth. 20

So, to possess the knowledge of the truth one has to seek it without any previous convictions. It is also of equal importance to discuss the proof (dalil) and not to seek the obscurities (shubah).

He was also aware of the other question which used to be raised against rationalism, that is the question of the removal of the individual from one doctrine to the opposite doctrine. The removal from one doctrine, he argued, does not mean that this doctrine was wrong, nor does the continuance of belief in a certain doctrine mean that it is right; rationalist beings can move from a wrong doctrine to another wrong doctrine, form a right doctrine

20) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughril, 12/ 120.
to a wrong doctrine, and from a wrong doctrine to a right doctrine. If we consider the doctrines from which the individuals move as untrue that would lead us to believe that the contradictory doctrines should all be true. The only way to discover if a doctrine is right or wrong, he maintained, is to investigate its proofs. Any doctrine based on necessary knowledge (buniya 'alā 'ilm li-l-īdīrār) in which no contradiction can be found either in its first principles or its secondary principles ('usūl wa furūt), and in which every idea can be rationally justified, then we can consider it a true doctrine.

So, it is the task of inquiry and thinking to distinguish between what is true and what is not true. Such knowledge comes as a result of thinking (tafākīr), but all thinking does not necessarily produce knowledge, there are two essential conditions, and knowledge never comes in their absence, one is related to the person who thinks, the other is related to the way of thinking:

1) Thinking must come from a person who possesses maturity of intellect (yantaliku kamāl al-īqāl)

2) This person (tāqīl) must think in a practical way, he must seek the proofs and investigate the way in which they are truth.

So, in obtaining the truth, it is not only important to think, but how to think could be of equal importance. The most important thing is to seek the truth by seeking its proofs. Those who seek the truth by thinking and questioning the obscurities will never come across it.

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22) Ibid., 199.
23) Ibid., 12/ 11.
24) Ibid., 12/ 140.
Clarity is always very important for rationalists, because their whole attitude towards knowledge and truth is based on clear thinking and reasoning. Truth, according to them, is objective because it is clear, and it is obtainable because it is clear. If some of us miss it is because we do not think independently, and cannot be impartial in our previous attitudes and stand as an obstacle in finding the truth.

That is why 'Abd al-Jabbār asserted that thinking (nazar) cannot produce the knowledge of the truth, if we do not believe that matters can possibly have this character or the other, and that could only exist when there is uncertainty or probability (gānn), with the knowledge of the truth, as well as with ignorance, no thinking could take place, because neither the knowing person (tālim) nor the ignorant one admit the existence of any truth contrary to what they believe in. 25

So, according to him, when we have any actual knowledge about one subject there will be no need for thinking, and when one has an attitude based on ignorance there will be no room for thinking. This could mean that any decisive conviction about a certain subject, no matter where it comes from, does not only make thinking fruitless, but also useless and impossible.

4) Inquiry as an obligatory action.

When 'Abd al-Jabbār held that inquiry is the first obligatory action, man has to perform, because there could be great danger in avoiding it, he was completely conscious of the question which could be raised, that is what causes man to know that such a danger is to

be expected if he avoids thinking.

'Abd al-Jabbār suggested that the feeling of such a danger occurs to man so as to start him thinking for one, or perhaps more than one, of the following reasons:

1) He will probably feel such a danger when he knows about the controversy between sects and religions, every doctrine considering others as heretical or unbelieving. This may make him aware of the danger, or the harm which may be expected from being one of the untrue believing sects, so he will feel deeply the danger of keeping on believing in a doctrine or holding convictions which could be untrue, and that feeling makes him start thinking.

2) The feeling of danger could occur after he listens to the preaching of those who propagate their own doctrine or ideas, or when he reads a book about others' ideas, which makes him feel the possibility of being on the wrong side, and the danger of that. So he starts thinking, because he realizes the danger in avoiding thinking.

3) This feeling could occur to him when he thinks of himself and finds the great graces which he possesses, so he will feel the danger of not knowing the source of these graces (al-muntīm), he might disobey Him, or not offer Him the least thanks, so he begins to think.

4) If all these means of awakening him to the feeling that it is dangerous to avoid thinking do not occur to man, then an irruptive idea will be brought into his mind, awakening him to the danger of avoiding thinking. This idea could be created by God in every human being's mind or by an angel sent by God, in the case of one being unaware of the danger of avoiding thinking. 26

The conception of khatir was an attempt made by the later

26) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Al-Muḥīt, 26-27.
Mu'tazila to explain how man could be obliged to think without being formerly warned about that. The conception of khātir is associated with their doctrine of God's justice. Since thinking is the first obligatory action man has to perform and if the things surrounding him did not cause him to start thinking, then it is an injustice not to inform him about that obligatory act. This feeling of such a danger is not a kind of knowledge which is known necessarily, it is a feeling which comes before any knowledge to urge man to start thinking and obtain knowledge. 27

The conception of khātir is also associated with the theory of taklīf, which asserted the importance of information in every obligation. This information cannot come through revelation because inquiry and thinking come before any belief in revelation, so God will inform man directly or by means of one of his angels.

This gap between knowledge as a human performance and knowledge as an obligatory action could not be passed without the assumption of khātir. So, when they failed to explain the starting point of thinking as an obligatory action, they came back to the direct or semi-direct communication between man and God. They probably accepted the conception of khātir to deny that thinking so as to know God is obligated by the scriptures, because this would give priority to the scriptures or texts (mushāq).

According to 'Abd al-Jabbar the khātir stirred itself in man's mind when something befalls him causing him to think. He describes the khātir as a soliloquy which occurs to man, warning him that it is necessary to start thinking.

Khātir, as Abū Ḥāshim held, is a speech created by God, or

by his ordering an angel to create it. 28

So we can notice that, although the Mu'tazila refused to admit the priority of the scriptures, or because they did not admit that, they accepted the conception of khātir which is a kind of direct communication between God and man.

Al-Baghdādī ascribed to an-Nazzām the view that he believed in khawātir as matter, and ascribed to him the view that God creates two khātirs in man's mind, one of them being the obedience khātir, to obey God, the other is the disobedience khātir, not disobey Him. Al-Baghdādī ascribed to Abū-l-Hudhayl that he held that khawātir are accidents (a-rād), God creates one of them and Shaytān makes the other. He also ascribed to Abū Hāshim the idea of the two kinds of khātir, one from God and the other from evil. 29 In 'Abd al-Jabbār's works there is no evidence to show that the Mu'tazila held that there are two kinds of khātir, one being from God and the other being evil. 'Abd al-Jabbār, who devoted one hundred and forty-eight pages from the twelfth volume of al-Mughnī 30 which is more than a quarter of it, to explaining and defending the idea of khātir, did not mention any idea of the above-mentioned kind. It is obvious that al-Baghdādī was affected by the later debate between the Mu'tazila and their opponents. He wanted to associate the doctrine of the Mu'tazila with the doctrine of the Barāhima who held the idea of the two kinds of khātir, to show that they were not far from those who denied the prophecy.

The conception of khātir shows, however, the nature of the controversy and debate between the Mu'tazila and their opponents

30) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, 12.
in the developed stage of their history, about knowledge and the importance of both reason and scriptures in obtaining it.

5) What is knowledge? (*'ilm*)

Inquiry is necessary, and it is an obligatory action to man. It is necessary because it is the only possible way of obtaining knowledge. So, knowledge is the purpose of inquiry. 31

Before 'Abd al-Jabbār gave his own definition of knowledge he discussed some of the popular definitions among intellectuals of knowledge.

He did not agree with those who defined knowledge as an encirclement of the known subject (*'ihāta bi-l-ma'lum*). *'ihāta*, to him, could only be applied to matter, *'ilm*, he argued, although it is related to known matters, this relation is not necessarily materialistic, as the term *'ihāta* may suggest.

'Abd al-Jabbār discussed the definition of knowledge held by Abū 'Ali al-Jubbā'ī and Abū Hāshim who considered knowledge as a "conviction related to the object as it is ( *'itiqād ash-shay' alā mā huwa lihi* ). This definition is not accurate according to him because, he argued, the ignorant person and the one who is convinced of the object as it is coincidentally (*bi-t-tabkhīt*), does not possess knowledge, because conviction, in his opinion, is to possess a judgement related to one object, whether this judgement is a result of rational proofs, or following the ideas of others' without investigation, or just by guessing. 'Abd al-Jabbār refused that taqlīd or tabkhīt could be right ways to knowledge.

So, our convictions could be true, but that does not make

31) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, 12/ 5.
us knowledgeable, because the way of possessing the truth has the same importance as believing in it.

'Abd al-Jabbar also discussed the definition of knowledge as the perception of the known matters (idrāk al-ma‘ālim). Perception, he explained, is applied to matter, so we may perceive what we do not know, and know what we do not perceive or cannot perceive. Knowledge is more comprehensive than perception, because perception is only related to the things perceptible through our senses, and that could be a way to knowledge or a part of it.

'Abd al-Jabbar also refused the definition of knowledge as a conviction (i‘tiqād), whether it comes through proofs or not. It is true, he said, that knowledge is a kind of conviction, because the knower is convinced of what he knows, but the follower of another’s ideas could be convinced of what he believes in but he does not possess knowledge.

Tīm, as held by 'Abd al-Jabbar, is a conviction related to the object as it is, if this conviction occurred in a peculiar way (waqa‘a lāwājīh makhsūq), that is, he added, if this conviction entailed the tranquillity of mind (sukūn an-nafs).

Such knowledge contains two things of equal importance:
1) To be convinced of one object or thing as it really is.
2) This conviction must imply tranquillity of mind.

Did 'Abd al-Jabbar attempt to show that there are two different measures regarding the knowledge of the truth, one being objective which is to be convinced of a thing as it really is, the other being

33) Ibid., 12/26.
subjective, as his definition may suggest at first sight?

A careful examination of 'Abd al-Jabbar's ideas regarding knowledge shows that he did not intend to hold that knowledge is both subjective and objective, he rather insisted on the objectivity of the truth.

'Abd al-Jabbar wanted to say that truth imposes a conviction of its own, because it is objective. Everyone who possesses knowledge of the truth will certainly realize that in his mind.

Regarding his definition of knowledge we can note

1) The asserting that knowledge is conviction of the object as it is, meaning that real knowledge is objective.

2) Holding that this conviction will create the tranquillity of mind (sukūn an-nafs), showing that real knowledge of the truth is very clear, to impose itself on our minds once we obtain it, that is to exclude the attitude of dubiousness (shakk) and surmise (gann) towards the truth.

3) The assertion that inquiry or thinking is the only way of possessing the knowledge of the truth, is an attempt to exclude any conviction based on following the ideas of another without investigating them.

So the term sukūn an-nafs does not imply that there is a subjective element in the knowledge of the truth, 'Abd al-Jabbar, as well as many other Mu'tazilites, used this term to assert that knowledge contains a full conviction of its object, doubt and opinion (gann) may exclude the knowledge of the truth. Sukūn an-nafs, he said, is something we find inside ourselves when we refer to it after obtaining the knowledge of the truth.

'Abd al-Jabbar gave an example to show the distinction between the real conviction which entails sukūn an-nafs, and that which
does not entail it. Everyone, he said, can distinguish between his conviction that a certain person is in the house, because he personally saw him, and his conviction in that because someone told him so. 35

This example obviously shows the attitude of the Mu'tazila towards the texts (an-nusūg) as a source of knowledge. To see rather than to hear is the basis of convictions and the knowledge of the truth, or, in other words, proofs rather than the texts or following another's ideas is the way to obtaining the truth.

To clarify his definition of knowledge 'Abd al-Jabbâr distinguished between knowledge ('ilm) and ignorance (jahl). He asserted that when the conviction is related to the thing as it is with the tranquillity of the mind that is knowledge, when the conviction is related to the object as it is not that is ignorance, but when the conviction is related to the object in a way it appears to him most likely that he is right, that is neither knowledge nor ignorance. 36

So there is a state between knowledge and ignorance, by which he probably meant doubt or zann.

'Abd al-Jabbâr rejected the viewpoint of al-Jâhiç who held that the ignorant person can find his mind tranquil in what he believes, or in his ignorance as he put it.

The ignorant one, 'Abd al-Jabbâr argued, does not have tranquillity of mind in the accurate meaning of the term, he only assumes that he possesses it, simply because his feelings about what he was believing in will change after he comes to discuss and investigate his belief and his tranquillity of mind, or what he used to call such, will disappear. 37

35) 'Abd al-Jabbâr, Sharh, 47.
37) Ibid., 12/ 37.
This argument could reinforce the idea that 'Abd al-Jabbār and the Mu'tazilites in general did not mean to ascribe any kind of subjective measure to knowledge and truth by the term sukūn an-nafs.

'Abd al-Jabbār also rejected the attitude of the sophists (Ashab at-Tajāhul) towards the truth, who asserted that the truth of everything is what we believe in, and there is no independent or absolute truth.

He referred to al-Jahiz who said that there was a group called Ashab at-Tajāhul, who believe that things have no truth in themselves, and the truth of everything is what anyone believes in. 'Abd al-Jabbār described the doctrine of this group as being that they admitted the existence of the truth in some respects, and refused the idea which denied the existence of the truth, but the truth, according to them, is what we believe in. 38

The term Ashab at-Tajāhul is not very clear, but from 'Abd al-Jabbār’s description we can gather that they maintained entire disbelief in the ability of the human mind to attain a knowledge of objective or absolute truth, which is the same as the idea held by the Sceptics (Shukkāk), it could also be applied to the Sophists who support the relativity of human knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbar argued that the conviction in the belief of anyone does not affect the object in which he believes, because if our convictions or beliefs have any influence on the object in which we are convinced, that would imply that convictions, beliefs and things are of the same character, and could also imply that our beliefs and convictions can change the character of things, which could lead to the belief that the same thing could be in one state

38) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughni, 12/ 47.
and in the contradictory state at the same time, because convictions and beliefs in one thing could be contradictory. 39

The argument of those who believed in the multiplicity of truth, because we find that two persons can consider one feature beautiful and ugly respectively, was rejected by 'Abd al-Jabbār. Considering the feature beautiful or ugly, he argued, is something other than the feature itself. Features do not change according to our attitudes towards them.

The same character could arouse appreciation or repulsion, and that is due to our differences in outlook or measures, not to the appearance itself which has only one character, whereas individuals have many states (kālāt); doctrines, he held, do not exist as such because our desires and repulsions do not interfere in the acceptance or the refusal of them. If someone believes that injustice is good, his conviction is nothing but ignorance. 40

So, truth is objective and absolute, it does not change according to our desires or attitudes or changes in state. The knowledge of the truth is possible for anyone who seeks it, as long as he has maturity of intellect, and as long as he seeks it in the only possible way of obtaining it, that is thinking and inquiry.

In dealing with the question which was raised by the Mu'tazila's opponents, which is why do the opponents of the Mu'tazila seek the truth and look through their proofs without reaching the same conclusions? 'Abd al-Jabbār explained that it is because the Mu'tazila's opponents usually look at the proofs without divesting themselves of their previous attitudes towards the doctrine of

40) Ibid., 12/ 50.
the Mu’tazila. This attitude will affect their thinking and direct it against the ideas. By being impartial, he said, one would certainly reach the same conclusion. 41

Thus it is very important to seek knowledge of the truth without preconceived attitude.

It is possible to summarize ’Abd al-Jabbār’s ideas about knowledge as follows:

1) Knowledge is an objective conviction that a thing is as it really is.

2) Since it is objective it entails a secure sense of certainty or tranquillity of mind (sukūn an-nafs), this will exclude doubt and probability from knowledge, as well as any conviction based on any foundation rather than reason. He also excluded taqlīd, and any conviction arrived at by guessing (zann), or by chance (tabkhir).

3) Proofs are the basis of knowledge, that is why truth is absolute and not relative. In other words, if all people search for the truth in the right way "by thinking", they will be able to discover it equally.

The Mu’tazilites asserted the unity of truth by holding that it is objective and absolute, and obtainable to everyone who seeks it, as they asserted the unity of God by denying His eternal attributes, and as they asserted the unity of man by holding the doctrine of free will.

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41) ’Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, 12/ 111.
The Theory of Knowledge.

Necessary Knowledge.

At the outset 'Abd al-Jabbār attempted to give a definition of intellect (aql) in order to set up his theory of knowledge. He had to face, as a rationalist thinker regarding reason as the chief source and test of knowledge, the question of "How do we know?"

According to him, as we understood before, our intellects (al-mughūl) are our means of possessing knowledge. Truth cannot be obtained in any other way than thinking. What then is aql?

'Abd al-Jabbār defined aql as a sum of specific knowledge (jumla min-l-tūlūm al-makhūga), when man obtains it he will be capable of thinking and reasoning (an-nazar wa-l-istidlāl), and can achieve what he is obliged to.

As thinking is necessary in possessing knowledge, it is also necessary to have a priori principles before thinking, or, as he put it, a specific knowledge upon which our thinking will be based. These principles, he asserted, or specific knowledge, are necessary to achieve thinking, that is why it must come before any obligation can be placed upon man. 'Abd al-Jabbār called this specific knowledge aql.

Thus aql, according to him, is a basic knowledge upon which our mental activity depends, it is the principles of knowledge, and that is why it is necessary and a priori.

'Abd al-Jabbār defined necessary knowledge as any knowledge which did not occur to us by ourselves (tahduth finā lā min qibalīnā), he supported his opinion by arguing that since anyone who possesses

42) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughīr, 12/ 375.
this knowledge could be described as āqil, although he might lack any other kind of knowledge, or any knowledge of any kind, and when anyone possesses every other kind and does not possess this knowledge he cannot be described as āqil. Thus āqil is this specific knowledge and nothing else.

'Abd al-Jabbār did not accept the idea that āqil is something other than this specific knowledge although it is in need of it, because he who needs something can exist without the existence of what he needs, as īlm cannot exist without the existence of hayāt but hayāt can exist without the existence of īlm. Since āqil cannot exist without this specific knowledge, thus this specific knowledge is āqil. 43

'Abd al-Jabbār also denied the definition of āqil as a substance jawhar, as was held by the Falāsifa. Āqil, according to him, has not the character of substances, because āqil makes the person āqil, but substances do not necessitate a certain character for things.

'Abd al-Jabbar would accept the term jawhar when it is used metaphorically to indicate that āqil is the foundation or the origin āqil of all kinds of knowledge. Thus āqil is not a substance or a thinking matter, it is principles and foundations of human knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbār also refused to consider āqil as an instrument (jāla) because instruments are matters of specific character and āqil is not. But he would accept considering āqil as an instrument in the sense that we use it to obtain knowledge, and for reasoning, that would be metaphorically possible.

'Aql, according to him, is not a sense (ḥāssa) because senses are physical matters made in a specific way to perform a certain function, 'aql is not so. He would accept considering 'aql as ḥāssa in the sense that we can acquire knowledge through it, and that would be a metaphorical term. To realize the function of 'aql we must compare it with our senses through which we perceive sensations, as we acquire knowledge through 'aql.

'Abd al-Jabbār also refused to hold that 'aql is a power (quwa), unless we mean by the word quwa that without it we cannot think or reason. 44

It is obvious that 'Abd al-Jabbār avoided the definitions of 'aql as substance, instrument and sense to avoid considering 'aql as existing matter. Intellect, according to the rationalists, cannot be materialistic, but why did he refuse to consider 'aql as quwa? Probably because the power will need an instrument, and he was attempting to avoid this.

In explaining the importance of a priori knowledge in thinking 'Abd al-Jabbār held that human knowledge is like an established building, everything in it is related and based upon another thing. Origins ('uqūl) are the foundations of derivatives (furū), clear knowledge (ja’la) is the foundation of concealed knowledge (khafi'). Then there must be a basic foundation for human knowledge, and this basic foundation is necessary knowledge. He also added that since all degrees of human knowledge are related to each other, and the way of possessing these kinds of knowledge is one, thus if we did not know some of it we would not know the other part, because every kind of it depends on the other, so there must be origins or

principles for all these kinds of knowledge, which is the necessary knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbar was aware that the question could be raised about this necessary knowledge which is, if *taql* was this sum of specific knowledge or principles, is it possible to say that this knowledge is numerable by a certain number, so that we can know it exhaustively?

'Abd al-Jabbar preferred to hold that this specific previous knowledge is not numerable but has one certain character.

Why did 'Abd al-Jabbar avoid speaking about a definite number of the principles of knowledge? They were certainly very clear to him, he actually gave a good account about them throughout his works. The reason was, probably, that, since he did not accept the ideas related to *taql* as *jawhar*, *fāla* or sense (*hāssa*), he could not accept that this fundamental knowledge could be numerable.
The Maturity of Intellect. (Kamāl al-'Aql)

We have already seen what 'Abd al-Jabbār meant by necessary knowledge, which is every knowledge which occurs to us other than through our own actions, and we cannot exclude it from our intellect by any doubt or obscurity. This necessary knowledge, according to him, causes maturity of intellect. That means anyone who possesses this knowledge can be called tāqil, and so may be an object of obligation, and whoever does not possess it is not tāqil, so he is not responsible.

Kamāl al-'aql, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, contains many kinds of knowledge which could be explained as follows:

1) Perception ('idrāk).

Perception, he held, is what distinguishes the living beings from other beings. 45 This could mean that perception is the first knowledge every living being possesses, and that is why he regarded perception as the origin of all our knowledge. Without the kind of knowledge that comes via our senses nothing could be known. 46

He asserted that perception could be an authentic means to knowledge in two conditions:

a) the perceptive being is tāqil.

b) if there were no muddles or ambiguities.

'Abd al-Jabbār also held that our knowledge of things perceptible through our senses is reliable knowledge, because it is the sort of knowledge which entails tranquillity of mind, which is valid to every kind of knowledge. 'Abd al-Jabbār argued that it is obvious that everyone who receives his knowledge through his senses is very


46) Ibid., 13/ 239, 12/ 28.
convinced of what he knows when there are no confusions or ambiguities; he, for example, takes good care of fire and avoids dangers, which implies that he always trusts his senses and the knowledge perceived through them.

So our experience in everyday life gives us many examples about the external world which come through our senses or perception and are trustworthy. It is obvious, he added, that there is no clear way of knowing other than to perceive it, and that is why if we know something by perception we do not need any other proof to convince us, because anybody who wants to prove something may go back to perception. Thus the perceived things are proof in themselves. 47

'Abd al-Jabbār attacked the sophists who denied the existence of any knowledge based on perception. Some of our perceptions, he admitted can be muddled and obscured, but we always have a measure to distinguish between the real or true knowledge and false knowledge, which is sukūn an-nafs. 48 So, perception, like any other kind of human knowledge, requires a deep conviction without any obscurities or muddles.

'Abd al-Jabbār argued against those who denied the authenticity of the knowledge which comes from perception under the pretence that a thirsty person may think a mirage to be water. The thirsty person, he explained, does not perceive the water, he only perceives whiteness and something shimmering and pulsating, all these perceptions are true, but when he makes a picture of these things, believing them to be water, his conviction is wrong, and has nothing to do with the perception. So it is not the perception that is mistaken nor the

48) Ibid., 12/ 260.
senses, because perception shows things as they arrive at our senses, but when we interpretate these perceptions wrongly mistakes occur. Thus 'Abd al-Jabbār distinguishes between perceptual mistakes and perception. Perception, without obscurities, is always right, but people may be wrong in what they deduce from their perception, giving the thing one character or another. 49

He returned again to the example of two persons with different attitudes towards one human being's appearance, one considers it beautiful, the other considering it ugly. Their different considerations, he argued, are related to two different psychological attitudes, that is the desire of one and the repulsion of the other, but we never consider one appearance beautiful and ugly at the same time and in the same manner (tālā nafs al-waḥ). 50

This explanation is also valid for the example about the two people who differ in tasting honey differently; the normal person would find it sweet whereas a bilious one (loathing of stomach) (gāhib al-murra) will find it bitter. Again it is not the fault of the perception but due to the fact that the person who is ill finds the bitterness of his stomach mixed with the taste of the honey, and will be overcome by it. So, if these people were both in the same condition of perception, they would both find it the same. 50

So perception is reliable in knowledge, and we must trust the information given by it. But perception has not to pass judgements, whether the thing is right or wrong, because we only know the states of things by perception, and from that we can discover that these things are in existence. 51

50) Ibid., 12/ 52. 51) Ibid., 12/ 56.
So the information given by perception, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, is the first step towards knowledge, because we perceive by our senses the external world, and consequently we know that these external beings exist, and accordingly without our knowledge of what we perceive by our senses no other knowledge can be possible.

In answering the question of how our knowledge moves from perception to abstract knowledge, 'Abd al-Jabbār explained this by asserting that we perceive the beings existing in the external world in their character as existent things, when our perception is not related to the existence of the existing things it is abstract knowledge, but the perceived characters of existent beings could not be obtained without their existing. Thus we come to the other stage of knowledge by deducing that, since the beings are perceived, they must be in existence.

We can also know after our perception many other things which are not objects of perception, which are not even related to our perception of existent things. As we know the purpose of somebody when he indicates pointing with his hand, and the purpose of speech when we hear the sounds of the words in certain conversations, we do not, of course, perceive through our senses any purpose, beliefs or motives, but perception is the way to obtain this kind of knowledge.

Thus perception is the source of our knowledge. We receive through our senses the characters of existent things, so that we know they exist, and from knowing their existence, we know the idea of existence. We see or hear many indications and many speeches, so we can discover purposes, beliefs and motives.

'Abd al-Jabbār also added that when the rational being (al-'Agīl) perceives the existing things through his senses and examines their different states, he may know that it is impossible for any
existent being to be in two different places at one time, and when he knows the existent thing he may also know that it is impossible for the thing to be and not to be at the same time (mawjūd wa maʿdūm), and he may also know that the existent being is either eternal or created. This knowledge, as 'Abd al-Jabbār held, is a necessary knowledge, although some of it may come before the rest. To know it is impossible for the existing being to be in two places at the same time, we must have previous knowledge about the existent being. It is possible to say that 'Abd al-Jabbār considered the principles of the intellect as necessary knowledge and a priori to any other knowledge, but they are not a priori to human experience, which is the basis for obtaining these principles, that is why it must come before them. 52

It is possible to say that 'Abd al-Jabbār was a rationalist and an experimentalist as well. He attempted to find a solution to the problem of the belief in the a priori principles of knowledge, and experience as a source of knowledge, by asserting that necessary knowledge can be consecutive in time, one coming before the other, and one can be the basis for the other.

To clarify 'Abd al-Jabbār's viewpoint regarding knowledge we can show it as follows:

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        PERCEPTION (character of beings in the external world.)

      The existence of beings.
        Motives and beliefs.
                  Pain, suffering and pleasure.

      The idea of existence.
        The principles of intellect.
                  Principles of Ethics.
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When 'Abd al-Jabbār discussed the question of whether senses or intellect is more trustworthy in acquiring knowledge, he

distinguished between senses and perception, and he distinguished, as well, between necessary knowledge and acquired knowledge which comes through thinking and contemplation. Although he admitted that without our knowledge of the external world which we obtain through our senses no other knowledge could be obtainable, he asserted that this question was not correctly formulated. It is possible, according to him, to say that perception is the origin of each rational knowledge, but that does not mean that knowledge given by the senses can prove or disprove rational knowledge. Since perception is the origin of all knowledge, all our knowledge is founded upon it, but that does not entail that we know, by our senses, if every rational judgement is right or wrong. It is sukūn an-nafs which distinguishes right from wrong, that is the full conviction of the intellect. Knowledge given by perception is reliable, but we know its reliability by means of rationalization or reasoning, and also by rational reasoning we know the rightness or the falsity of ideas and beliefs. So the knowledge of right and wrong is entirely rational knowledge.

Another branch of necessary knowledge is the knowledge of the motives (dawātā) of the human actions. 'Abd al-Jabbār held that every human being is endowed with innate motives to seek out his benefits and to avoid harm, and he, accordingly, would know what are pure benefits and what are pure harms, so as to achieve the action which would enable him to obtain the benefits, and to avoid actions which could cause him harm. Without this necessary knowledge no obligation or responsibility can be placed upon him. 54

As a rationalist 'Abd al-Jabbār founded his psychology on knowledge, motives and deterrents (ad-dawā'ī wa-s-sawā'īf) which are known by necessary knowledge. Thus knowledge is the basis of action. Seeking benefits and avoiding harm requires the knowledge of harms and benefits, or of their motivations and deterrents.

It is possible to say that 'Abd al-Jabbār wanted to assert that it is not enough to be informed about what to perform and what to avoid, it is also necessary to know why one action is required and another is prohibited, the knowledge of such is necessary.

The origins of the proofs ('uṣūl al-'adilla).

The knowledge of the origins of the proofs or their principles must be necessary as well, for if it was not necessary knowledge we would have to face the difficulty that every proof will need another proof as a base ad infinitum. 55

'Abd al-Jabbār held that all the principles of evil actions (muqabibāt), good actions (muhassināt) and obligatory actions (wajibāt) are known by necessary knowledge, and that injustice, lying without gaining benefits or avoiding harms are evil actions, is known by necessary knowledge as well, and that being grateful, just and giving back trusts or deposits are obligated actions.

Since this knowledge is the basis of human responsibility it must be a necessary knowledge. It is such an important knowledge because he who does not know how to distinguish between good and evil cannot refrain from ascribing to God (yūnaziḥ) evil actions. This necessary knowledge is the basis of our moral knowledge, and

the basis of our behaviour, so it must come before them.

The other branch of the necessary knowledge is the knowledge of ourselves. Thus we know by necessary knowledge our conditions, our psychological moods, when we like and when we dislike, and whether we believe or disbelieve. 'Abd al-Jabbār held that those who do not know about themselves cannot know anything outside themselves.\(^5\)

Acquired knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbār did not devote much of his works to acquired knowledge, simply because it is a very wide topic, too wide to be encompassed.

Acquired knowledge, according to him, is that kind of knowledge which we cannot obtain without thinking and inquiry, and it is not agreed upon among all rational beings, because it is the result of individual speculation and reasoning. 57

'Abd al-Jabbar added that, although acquired knowledge cannot find any consensus (ijmā') among the rational beings (taqallā') this does not belittle its importance. The disagreement about acquired knowledge comes as a result of obscurities (shubah) without which all rational beings would agree on rational knowledge. 58

Revealed knowledge, he maintained, is acquired knowledge because its acceptance is based on reasoning and argument. Our knowledge of God cannot be necessary knowledge for the following reasons:

1) If this knowledge is necessary knowledge all the rational beings must agree about it, but they are not agreed about such a knowledge, some of them deny His existence, others believe in it.

2) If our knowledge of God is necessary the one who does not believe in God must be excused for the denial of His existence and of any kind of knowledge related to Him.

3) If our knowledge of God is necessary nobody can avoid possessing it by any doubt or obscurity. But this is not the case and it is obvious that many of those who believed in Islam became

58) Ibid., 12/ 55.
apostates and turned unbelievers like Ibn ar-Rawandi and Warrāq. 59

59) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 54.
Reason and Ethics.

Like any other Mu'tazilite thinker 'Abd al-Jabbār accepted the possibility of founding an absolute moral structure on reason. Such a structure based on reason considers moral values universal, and man can achieve them without any guidance from revelation, although revelation comes to recognize them and to ensure them.

Perception, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, is the source of our knowledge of good and evil, or of the moral values. Justice and injustice, for example, are known by perception, because we perceive through our senses pains and thus know of human suffering, and we know that the person who was suffering does not deserve it, and he who caused the pains and suffering has no right to do so, so we know that injustice is an evil action and justice is a good action.

The foundation of Ethics on benefits and harm (al-manāfi' wa-l-mādār), or on pain and pleasure is not only a rationalistic viewpoint, but is entirely realistic. Evil action is simply described as the action which causes pain or suffering to others, and that is why he asserted that if revelation did not allow us to kill animals, we could not know that by reason. This could imply that making others suffer, whether human beings or animals, cannot be rationally justified.

'Abd al-Jabbār held that our knowledge of rational evils (al-qabā'ih al-'aqliyya) is of two kinds: one of them knowing by necessary knowledge, the other knowing by a knowledge based on reasoning (bi-istidlāl).

According to 'Abd al-Jabbār there are two important reasons

60) 'Abd al-Jabbār, 12/ 66, al-Mughnī.
61) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, 14/ 150.
for man's avoiding evil actions:

a) his knowledge that they are evil.

b) his lack of need (there is no need to do it).

The faculty for the achievement of an action is not enough for one to achieve it, when he chooses an evil action, he either does not know it is evil, or he needs to do it at a certain time.

As for good actions 'Abd al-Jabbār asserted that man may perform them only because he knows they are good actions in spite of the fact that he does not need to perform any of them.

Thus in evil actions there are two factors to be considered, the psychological factor, which is the need or the practical demand, and the knowledge.

Since knowledge is gained only by reason, which distinguishes between good and evil, the basis of Ethics are accordingly rational. We choose good because it is good and choose evil either because we do not know it is evil, or because we have no other choice. 62

Coming to the definition of evil, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained that evil is every action for which, when performed by an able person, he deserves to be blamed on certain aspects (ṭalā baʿd al-wujūh). This was so as to exclude evil actions which are done by children or lunatics, whose actions can be described as evil actions, although they are not to be blamed. 63

Thus evil and good are not relative values, they are absolute values, unjust action is evil, no matter who does it, but to be responsible is to have the faculty on one hand, and to know your responsibility on the other hand.

63) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 41.
The source of our knowledge of good and evil is reason. Evil was always evil, even before it was prohibited by revelations. 64

This could imply that revelation only came to assert what was already accepted or deduced by reason. Revelations did not found any moral values which were not formerly known by reason. Reason decides about actions, which are good and which are evil, when reason describes a certain action as good revelation commands it, and when reason considers another action as evil revelation prohibits it.

Thus, this could also imply that man's moral responsibility for his actions is required from every rational being, whether he knows or does not know about revelation. In other words it is possible to say that every rational being is morally responsible as a rational being or a human being and revelation has nothing to do with his responsibility.

'Abd al-Jabbār also maintained that every moral action which is required by revelation can certainly be known by reason, but religious observances cannot be known by reason. 65

64) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Muhīt, 309-310.
65) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mukhtasar, 225.
CHAPTER III: THE PLACE OF REVELATION.

Muslim intellectuals faced the question of prophethood as an intellectual or philosophical problem at a relatively late period. They were engaged in discussion, in the earlier period, of the problems which were raised by the division of the Islamic community into political parties or groups, and religious sects. They were also concerned with facing the opposition of the old religions, which denied the prophethood of Muhammad.

The real active opposition to Islam, at the outset, did not argue against the prophecy itself, but attacked the prophethood of Muhammad, or doubted the universality of his message.

Early in the 'Abbasid period the movement of the Zanādiga appeared to be a serious threat to Islam and the 'Abbasid caliphate. The fact that al-Mahdi established an institution with extensive authority to hunt them down and persecute them, shows how dangerous this movement was.

Although the meaning of the term zindiq is not very clear, we can say that it was used to describe those who did not believe in the revealed law, so the English word "irreligious", might be the appropriate translation for the term. It could be noticed that the zanādiga, however, did not hold any doctrine in the positive sense of the term, their attitude being rather one of negative criticism, and this could be justified by the fact that this movement did not last to establish a set of beliefs, it was persecuted before it reached the stage of formulating a well established doctrine.

At the beginning of any movement there is always the critical stage of other ideas, which usually occurs during the initial

period to justify the rise of that movement and pave the way to it, although in many instances this could imply a positive rather than a negative attitude towards the problems. The Zanjāda, however, were accused of intending to ridicule or insult the Prophet's honour (ṣabb ar-rusul). 2

The great attention which was given by Muslim intellectuals to the question of the prophecy, and the great attempts which were made to justify it rationally, give the impression that the Islamic community was all too conscious of the danger of the ideas which denied the prophecy, which means that such ideas were widely known and accepted by many of the intellectuals.

It is likely that the sources of these ideas, beside the Zanjāda, were those individuals who were educated in Greek philosophy and influenced by it, like ar-Rāzī (d. 923 or 932). These ideas which argued against prophecy, however, were not confined to certain limited circles.

As for the attitude of Muslim philosophers, who were very much influenced by Greek science and philosophy, it appears that they were confronted with a feeling of hostility by the Islamic community at the outset, because they adopted ideas which were considered as non-Islamic. In defending themselves and their philosophical attitudes they attempted to prove that Greek philosophy is not contradictory to Islam. Their attempt to justify prophecy rationally, was to prove that Greek philosophy is not contradictory to Islam, rather than to give room to divine revelation in their thought.

Al-Kindī (c.800-868 or 870), as Ibn an-Nadīm reported, wrote a monograph confirming the prophecy of the prophets. 3

2) E.I., art. Zindiq. 3) Ibn an-Nadīm, Fihrist, Kh.
Al-Farābī, who also, attempted to justify prophecy by means of reason, wrote another book reconciling Plato and Aristotle, al-Jamā' bayna Ra'yi al-Ḥakīmayn, which gives the impression that Greek philosophy was accused, at a relatively early period, of being contradictory.

Al-Farābī (d.950) made this very clear in his introduction to the aforementioned work, by stating that there were many differences between Plato and Aristotle (al-Ḥakīmayn al-Muqaddamayn) about the proof of the existence of God, and how He created the causes, soul and reason, and many other differences concerning politics, logic and ethics. 4

This criticism not only shows a good knowledge and understanding of Greek thought, but also indicates a great encounter with philosophy, or Greek thought, in Islamic society.

The attempt made by Ibn Sinā (d.1037) was moving in the same direction, it also depended on Greek philosophy to prove that prophecy is possible; it was in other words an attempt to defend Greek philosophy so as to have it accepted among Muslims.

It could be said that the main difference between the philosophers of Islam and the Mu'tazilite thinkers regarding the question of prophecy was that the philosophers of Islam attempted to prove that prophecy is possible, by maintaining that direct contact with God is feasible for certain individuals who possess special imaginative powers (gūwa mutakhayyala). This sort of theory of prophecy is psychological rather than philosophical. Their attempt was to understand and to analyse the psychological ability of the prophet rather than understand the nature of prophecy and revelation, and

4) Al-Farābī, Jamā', 79.
the need for it as a source of knowledge and a basis of behaviour. Thus it was the personality of the prophet, and not his message, that they were concerned with, whereas the Mu'tazila dealt with the prophecy itself as an intellectual and philosophical question, and attempted to understand its nature and why it was needed.

From what 'Abd al-Jabbar wrote concerning the question, we can gather that this question occupied an important place in the heritage of the Mu'tazila. He referred to Abu 'Ali al-Jubbā'ī many times in his argument.

'Abd al-Jabbār devoted much of his intellectual efforts to the defence of prophecy and to proving, by means of reason, the possibility of it as well as the need for it. He devoted one volume of his Encyclopaedia al-Mughnī to prophecies and miracles (at-tanabbu‘at wa-l-mu'jizāt) 5, he also devoted another volume to the non-Islamic sects 6, wrote two volumes on the Qur'ān, one of them about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān (jâ‘lāz al-Qur'ān) 7 and the other on the question of the createdness of the Qur'ān (khālq al-Qur'ān) 8, and, also, a book of two volumes concerning the proof of the prophecy of Muḥammad (Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidīnā Muḥammad) 9 and two books defending the Qur'ān against the criticism of many opponents. 10 It is possible to say that the question of prophecy was discussed in virtually every work, that is still preserved, written by him, and this could indicate that the question of the prophecy was widely

7) Ibid., vol. 16.
10) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Tanāth,
discussed at his time, and attitudes opposing prophecy were widely known.

'Abd al-Jabbār himself mentioned that many books were written about the denial of prophecy, and added that these books were currently available; he mentioned the names of Ḥaddād, Warrāq, Ibn ar-Rawnādī, al-Huṣari, al-Kīndī and ar-Rāzī as the sources of these ideas. 11

From the account given by 'Abd al-Jabbār and others we can gather that the Mu’tazilites were still conversant with Greek thought, either from the translations which were available or through the channel of Muslim philosophers.

Apart from Abū-l-Hudhayl, an-Naẓẓām and al-Jāḥiẓ, who were all very conversant with Greek thought, Ibn an-Nadīm reported that al-Balkhī wrote against ar-Rāzī’s work about divine knowledge, al-’Ilm al-Ilāhī, and Abū 'Abd Allāh refuted the book that ar-Rāzī wrote against al-Balkhī. Ibn an-Nadīm also reported that Dirar wrote a refutation of Aristotle’s book of substances and accidents, and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī refuted Aristotle’s book al-Kawn wa-l-Fasād (Genesis kai Phthora). He also reported that an-Nāshī’ al-Akhār followed the methods of the philosophers in his theological works, and that an-Nawbakhtī, who was described as a Shi’ite and Mu’tazilite, had many books on theology and philosophy. Ibn an-Nadīm also reported that he summarized Aristotle’s work al-Kawn wa-l-Fasād. 12

'Abd al-Jabbār himself admitted that he leafed through Aristotle’s al-Āthār al-’Ulwīyya, and was conversant with his ideas which were presented by others. 13 He also reported that Abū Hāshim wrote

11) ’Abd al-Jabbār, Tanẓīḥ, 1/ 374.
13) ’Abd al-Jabbār, Tathbīṭ, 1/ 76.
some books in refutation of Aristotle's ideas and books.  

The Necessity of Prophecy.

In order to explain the necessity of God's sending prophets 'Abd al-Jabbār started his argument by stating that prophecy is a good action (fi‘l ḥasan), and being so God performs it. He went on to define the nature of good action, holding that every good action must contain two important aspects:

1) The action must not contain any evil.

2) The action must have a good or sound purpose (gharad sahīḥ). Thus good action is simply a non-evil action with a good purpose. He obviously meant by good purpose, that the action must lead to the causing of benefits or the avoidance of harm.

'Abd al-Jabbār made his definition of good action in both negative and positive ways so as to maintain the relativity of good and evil. He refuted the idea that actions can, in themselves, be good or evil; it is not possible, according to him, to describe actions either as good or evil in abstract. A certain action could happen in one way and be considered good, but in another way be considered evil. He gave as an example the action of standing up, which could be a good action when we stand to honour a friend (ta‘ṣīn ṣadīq), while the action of sitting down could be good as well when we sit waiting for a friend, but these two actions could not be good if they contained a bad purpose. Consequently it is necessary to discover if the sending of prophets is devoid of all evil as well as being an action with a good purpose, that is leading to benefit

14) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Tathbit, 2/ 628.
and avoiding harm.

'Abd al-Jabbār based his proof of the necessity of prophecy upon this argument: if the purpose of sending prophets is good, because man may benefit from the revelation with which they come, it is God's justice to send prophets to inform man about his benefits, otherwise God would not fulfill His obligations, and it would be unjust to break His obligations.17

The main function of prophecy, he asserted, is that it contains the kind of information about man's benefits which cannot be known by means of reason, that is why it is good, and because it is good it is necessary, for God always does what is best.18

It is obvious that 'Abd al-Jabbār meant by the kind of knowledge or information which cannot be gained except by revelation what is related to the religious observances.

So the basis of obligation is reason, but revelation contains matters without which the obligatory duties cannot be performed. It is possible to put his idea as follows: the content of obligation is rational, and its form is based on revelation, reason can lead to being thankful to God and to His worship, but it does not inform us about any specific action to be performed so as to be thankful to God.

'Abd al-Jabbār also asserted that the thing, without which the obligatory duty cannot be achieved, is as obligatory as the duty itself.19

17) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 563.
19) Ibid., 15/ 20.
The Refutation of the Brahmin's Ideas.

Muslim intellectuals and heresiographers ascribed the idea of the denial of prophecy to the Brahmins, al-Barāhima. According to Ibn Ḥazm the Barāhima is a clan in India from which the higher class of Indians come (ashrāf 'ahl al-Hind), and who claimed to be the descendents of Barhamī, one of the Indian kings, they agree with the doctrine of monotheism but deny the prophecy on the grounds that for God to send prophets to those who will not believe in them would be absurd, and the wise being "God" would not perform it, and they added that if God wanted to lead people aright through sending down prophets, why did he not compel the reason of each individual to the truth? 20

From the dialogue between the Ismā'īlī scholar Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī and the philosopher Muḥammad b. Zakariyya ar-Rāzī we can gather that Muḥammad ar-Rāzī's denial of prophecy was on the same grounds as that ascribed to the Brahmin's. He held that reason is sufficient to possess the truth and knowledge, but some people seem to be incapable of possessing knowledge and truth because they have not made the necessary efforts through which, if made, they could become equal to those who depend on reason in possessing it. 21

Since there is no clear evidence to prove that the Brahmins had representatives in the Islamic society the question of why Muslim intellectuals and heresiographers ascribed the ideas of those who denied the necessity of prophecy to the Brahmins could have two possible answers:

20) Ibn Ḥazm, al-Pisal, 1/ 69.
21) From Kitāb Aʿlām an-Nabuwwa by Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, Rasāʾil ar-Rāzī, ed. Paul Kraus.
1) The individuals or the groups who attacked the prophecy made an attempt to hide their attitude towards prophecy by ascribing their criticism to a sect which was non-islamic and had no representatives in Islamic society.

2) It is also possible that Muslim intellectuals refuting this idea attempted to ascribe it to an alien group or sect to show their hostility, in the same way as they ascribed many ideas to the Jews, Christians and Sumaniyya.

‘Abd al-Jabbar devoted thirty-eight pages from the volume of al-Mughni which deals with prophecies to the refutation of the doctrines ascribed to the Brahmins, which could give the impression that the denial of prophecy was still discussed widely during his lifetime.

It is possible to say that the theory of prophecy in the late Mu’tazilite thinkers works, and especially in the works of ‘Abd al-Jabbar, was, in general, a refutation of the arguments of the Barahima.

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbar the denial of the necessity of God’s sending prophets ascribed to the Barahima was on the following grounds:

1) Different ways of possessing knowledge cannot be contradictory to each other because that would lead to the change of its genus, and the consideration of some of it as ignorance, so the proofs must not be contradictory to each other, because proofs are the ways to knowledge, and if they contradicted each other that would mean that knowledge is not reliable and there would be no trust in any known subject.

The Brahmins held that prophets would demand what was against reason, for if they demanded what reason approves, there would be no need for them, reason in that case would be sufficient, and
demanding actions or beliefs which were against reason would lead to the conclusion that God may send prophets with revelations to demand something contrary to what He had set in the human being's reason.

'Abd al-Jabbār accepted the idea that knowledge cannot be contradictory because truth is of one kind whatever its source, but he refuted their argument that the teaching of the prophets could be in contrast to reason, because one truth never contradicts another truth. He also asserted that the different sources of knowledge cannot be a cause for doubt about its soundness, whether the knowledge of one action, as regards it being good or evil, comes by means of reason or by revelation, our obligation is the same: to perform the good action and avoid the evil one.

To make his opinion clear he gave the example that we know, by necessary knowledge, our obligation of the repulsion of harm from the self, and if we have been told by someone that there is a predatory animal in our path, we should certainly know that it is our obligation not to travel along that road, and in that case reason cannot be indispensable.

So, there could be many different ways of possessing knowledge, but that does not necessitate change in the known subject. He also argued that the way in which we have to perform our obligation (wa'ājib wa'ājib al-wājib) cannot be known by reason only, but also by information, anecdote (khabar), experience and practised custom (āda).

'Abd al-Jabbār referred to the argument which was set by Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'I, who held that every rational being must refer in his everyday living interests to those who know by experience

poisons, medicines and beneficial foods which are good for the health, and he asserted that this sort of knowledge cannot be possessed except by information and anecdotes from experienced persons. Thus if any advice given by an experienced and trusted physician could cause the same benefits to us as our experiences, we cannot exclude this experiences on the grounds of the sufficiency of human reason.\textsuperscript{23}

This sort of argument gives the impression that the Mu'tazila likened the use of revelation to the importance of human experiences, which are beneficial to man because they abridge the way to knowledge and truth. This could imply that some of the teachings of the prophets could be gained by reason, but that might take a long time, and that explains why they consider one aspect of the importance of prophecy as a favour (lutf).

So, it is now obvious that 'Abd al-Jabbār, as a rationalist, considered reason as the main source of knowledge and truth, but did not belittle the value of human experiences, practised customs and other information given by prophets, as another source of knowledge. In other words the soundness of one judgement according to him could be measured by the content of it, whether it contradicts reason or not, rather than by doubting its source.

2) 'Abd al-Jabbār ascribed to the Barāhima the idea that many actions which are demanded or even allowed by the preaching of the prophets are evil actions (qabīha) if we use reason as a measure of good and evil. They considered, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the slaughtering of animals, fasting and the performing of the prayer as evil actions.

'Abd al-Jabbār argued that this sort of statement is illogical

\textsuperscript{23} 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughni, 15/ 46.
because, as mentioned above, good or evil actions are, according to him, relative, and no judgement could be given about an abstract action. To give an accurate judgement about one action, whether it is good or evil, it is necessary to know the purpose of that action. The actions demanded by revelation (aftāl shar'iyya), he held, contain many benefits for us as we were informed by the prophet whose prophecy was approved by miracles. 24

The essence of this argument is that since the prophecy of our prophet was approved, and his revelation accepted as truthful, there should be no room for argument about the details, because the whole was accepted. This argument, which covers everything in one revelation, is not of rational basis, because it accepted miracles as rational proof.

3) In his refutation of the Brahmins' attitude towards prophecy 'Abd al-Jabbār asserted that anyone who called for an obligatory duty, and the obligated person chose that duty in his presence, and would not choose it in his absence, is as necessary as the obligatory duty itself, 25 and since the prophets called for these obligatory duties, and many obligated people would not have accepted these duties except in their presence, prophecy is necessary.

According to 'Abd al-Jabbār there are many obligations which we are not able to know through reason. Reason can certainly inform us that it is a good action to give back deposits, and that unjust actions are evil, but we cannot know by means of reason that performing the prayer leads to avoiding monstrosity and abomination (al-fahšā' wa-l-munkar).

24) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 566.
Since, he argued, there are many things which cannot be known by reason there must be another source for knowing them, and that source is revelation.

4) 'Abd al-Jabbār held that the main function of revelation, as far as knowledge is concerned, is to inform us in details about what was already known, by reason, "in sum" (al-jumla al-mustaqirra fi-l-lugūl). This detailed knowledge is, according to him, as important as the sum, because it contains the sorts of actions we have to perform and the way in which we must perform them.

As to why this detailed knowledge is needed 'Abd al-Jabbār explained that the ways followed by revelations are based on the differences between the obligated persons, the differences between places, and the differences between times. So an action demanded from a certain person could be an evil action when another person performs it, and what is allowed to one individual could be prohibited to another.

This could imply that the knowledge gained by reason is an absolute knowledge, rational truths are always truths despite the differences between individuals, societies and times, whereas revelations contain a detailed account of the truth which is relative and changeable. That is why the Mu'tazila considered our knowledge of God and the knowledge of good and evil as rational knowledge, otherwise it would be an object of change, and 'Abd al-Jabbār considered every knowledge that could be gained by reason as a rational knowledge despite the fact that its source could be a revealed source.

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26) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Sharḥ, 565.
It is possible to put his statement like this: as far as the truth is concerned it is always absolute, whether its source was reason or revelation, but rational obligations are absolute whereas obligations known by revelation are relative, because every revelation is valid at a certain time, and the obligatory duties are related to the limitation of time, place and the ability or the capacity of the individual.

It is possible to summarize the function of prophecy, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, as follows:

1) Prophecy informs us in details what we already know "in sum" by means of reason and, since this detailed knowledge is necessary and indispensable, prophecy is necessary.

2) Prophecy informs us about many obligatory duties which cannot be known by reason, like the religious observances (tibādāt), and in this aspect prophecy is an independent source of knowledge.

3) Prophecy is a favour (lutf) from God to the obligated person, "man", because by the preaching of the prophets man might be more likely to perform good actions and avoid harms or evil actions.

4) Prophecy also emphasizes to human or rational beings truth and knowledge which they gained by reason. In other words, it persuades man to follow the proofs of reason.

From what was said above we can maintain that the role which was given to revelation as a source of knowledge and truth by 'Abd al-Jabbār, although it was supplementary, was important because he held that as far as religious duties were concerned, revelation is important and independent from reason.

Dealing with the question, "Does God demand any obligatory duties from those who did not have prophets sent to them?" 'Abd al-Jabbār classified the obligated persons into the following categories:
a) Those whom God knows will obey in what they are obligated to
do by reason; he would not send prophets to them.

b) Those whom God knows will not obey in what they are obligated
to do by reason, and will disobey the prophet as well: God would
not send a prophet to them either.

c) Those whom God knows that, when they accept the revelation
of one prophet, will be more likely to obey and avoid actions of
evil or sins; God will send prophets to them, and this group is
sub-divided into two kinds:

i) Those whom God knows will receive more benefit if they
accept the revelation directly from the prophet himself; God will
send the prophet in their lifetime.

ii) Those whom God knows will receive benefits through
practicing a given revelation, handed down to them by traditions;
God will give them that. 28

This classification could imply that prophecy is not necessary
for all mankind, some can perform their obligations without any need
for prophets, some would not perform their obligatory duties even
in the presence of the prophet or his revelation; sending prophets to
the first group is unnecessary, and to the second is pointless and
absurd, revelation will only be sent when people need it and may
receive benefits from it.

28) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mukhtasar, 236.
Miracles present a basic problem in prophecy. It is virtually agreed that miracles are unusual occurrences which break the natural order of events, or appear to do so, and that they occur as proof of a particular prophet's prophecy.

The main argument which could support the necessity of miracles is that since prophecy itself is not a usual occurrence, because contact with a supernatural power is not always possible for every individual, then such claims could only be proved by an extraordinary occurrence, which is the miracle.

'Abd al-Jabbar devoted some of his intellectual efforts to the discussion of the problem of miracles, and attempted to state certain conditions so as to distinguish between true and false miracles as well as tricks. In addition to the specific volume of al-Mughni devoted to prophecies and miracles, he dealt with this question in many other places throughout his works.

'Abd al-Jabbar defined a miracle as an action which the ordinary person is unable to perform, because it is God's action, performed to prove the prophecy of one prophet, and contains a break in the usual order of events (naqd al-'ada). 29

As for the basic character of the miracle 'Abd al-Jabbar fixed the conditions for distinguishing the real character of miracles as follows:

1) In miracles the action must be considered as God's action, or as initially instigated by God, and this is two-fold:

   a) actions whose genuses are not of man's ability, like the animation of the dead or the changing of the stick into a snake.

29) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mukhtasar, 237.
b) those whose genuses are within man's ability like the ruining of towns or removal of mountains. The Qur'ān, according to him, is of this kind, because sound is within the human being's ability, and that is why he agreed that if we judge by reason alone it is possible to say that the Qur'ān was composed by Muhammad, who was given the necessary ability to do it by God.

'Abd al-Jabbār ascribed to the early Mu'tazila scholars the assertion that if the miracles of the prophets were the sort of action which could be achieved by man, but which could not be achieved during the time of the particular prophet, this should certainly be considered as a break in the normal order of events. To clarify his opinion he gave the following example: if the prophet asked his God on a certain occasion to approve his prophecy by giving him the ability to walk while dispossessing all others of this ability, that would be unusual.30

In this he was attempting to justify what was ascribed to some Mu'tazilites, like an-Nazzām, who appeared to hold the idea of garf to describe the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

2) Miracles must occur within a short time of the claim of prophecy by a certain person, because if it happened before he claimed the prophecy it would not be related to his prophecy, and anybody could claim it.

3) Miracles must correspond to the prophet's claims otherwise it would not be proof of the true nature of his prophethood.

4) Miracles should include a real break in the usual order of events.31

30) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, 15/ 266.
31) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 568-570.
As for the distinction between miracles and magic he maintained that magic is making things appear to us in a way different to their true nature, it depends on deceiving people into believing that the magician can do what is impossible, or showing them what has no real existence, such as flying without wings; the purpose of magic actions is not to cause people benefits but to cause them harm.

'Abd al-Jabbār also attacked the kuhhān and astrologists who claimed that they could predict the future, and he accused anyone who believed in them of kufr. 32

In his distinction between true miracles and false miracles, tricks, legerdemains or slight of hand, he stated the following strict points:

a) True miracles are God's actions or actions performed with His empowerment, whereas false miracles or tricks are man's actions. Consequently miracles contain a real break in the order of nature or events, unlike false miracles which do not contain anything of this kind.

b) Miracles cannot be learned by man by training but tricks and false miracles can.

c) True miracles are of a unique nature; they are not common to many people, unlike false miracles and tricks which are common to a number of people.

d) False miracles need to be achieved with the assistance of some instruments and equipment, true miracles do not require these.

e) The practitioners of legerdemain can only deceive those who do not know the way of performing them, whereas true miracles are universally recognized, and for this reason God made the miracle of

32) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Tanzīl, 28-29.
every prophet according to the highly developed knowledge of his time. 33 Moses, for example, lived in a period in which magic was widely practiced, so, when he turned his stick into a snake, the miracle was obvious, but when Jesus was sent medicine was highly developed, so his miracles were performed in this sphere, animating the dead and returning the sight to the blind. Likewise rhetoric and its associated knowledge were flourishing during Muhammad's era, so his miracle was manifested in the style of the Qur'ān. 'Abd al-Jabbār also held that the challenge of the miracle will be stronger when it confronts the most powerful aspect of human ability at that time, as this would certainly persuade the people to think seriously about the prophecy of the prophet.

As for the miracles of the saints (karāmāt as-gālihin), 'Abd al-Jabbār rejected them on the grounds that the only function of the miracle is to distinguish between the true and false prophets, so if anyone other than the prophet is supported by a miracle there would be no obvious distinction between the real prophet and the claimant to prophecy, and miracles would be ordinary occurrences rather than a break in the order of nature. 34

'Abd al-Jabbār devoted one chapter of the fifteenth volume of al-Mughnī to discussing the tricks ascribed to Hallaj and others, mentioning some of these tricks and explaining the false nature of them. 35

33) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 572.


The Prophecy of Muhammad.

'Abd al-Jabbār wrote a book of two volumes arguing against those who denied the prophecy of Muḥammad, as well as a number of chapters in his other works devoted to this question. His book on the proof of the prophethood of Muḥammad, Tathbīt Dalā'il Nubuwwat Sayyidinā Muḥammad, was regarded as a very good book of its kind, even by the later Hanbalite scholar Ibn Taymiyya, who attacked the Mu'tazila.

In order to prove the prophethood of Muḥammad 'Abd al-Jabbār started to prove that abortion (nashk) of the revelations and legal judgements is possible and admissible. His argument was addressed to the Jews basically, who seemed to argue against the prophethood of Muḥammad on the grounds that abortion is not possible in revelations, and denied the prophethood of any prophet after Moses, holding that the law given by Moses was still valid and would last forever. 36

Abortion, according to him, is the elimination of a legal judgement which was fixed by a legal proof, by stating another judgement fixed by another legal proof. 37

'Abd al-Jabbar distinguished between nashk and bada', maintaining that the term bada' implies that the oration must be addressed to the same obligated person, the action must be the same, and the manner of the action must be the same, when all these factors are present and command comes after prohibition, or prohibition after command.

To make his idea clear he gave the example that when a man commands his servant, saying to him, "When it is sunset and you

37) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ, 504.
are in the market buy meat," and then says to him, "When it is sunset and you are in the market do not buy meat," the last statement was made because he discovered something about the meat which was not known to him previously.38

. The attempt made by 'Abd al-Jabbār to make that decisive distinction between naskh and badā' was to assert that naskh does not imply the consideration of a certain action as good after considering it evil, or vice versa, because the Mu'tazila held that the measure of good and evil is objective and unchangeable, because it is based on reason. He also attempted to make it clear that a given legal judgement could be beneficial for a certain society at a certain time, and harmful for another society at another time.

From what 'Abd al-Jabbār said about naskh we can deduce that revelations, according to him, or at least previous revelations are in compliance with the needs of the time, and the abortion of a revelation means that a new one will come to satisfy the new demands. God never commands from one obligated person what he had previously prohibited, but God might command actions which are similar to what he had prohibited, and one action and what is similar to it are two different actions rather than one, and since they are two different actions, one could be good and the other could be evil.

'Abd al-Jabbār went on to argue with the Jews that it is obvious that the interests of the people are different with the changing times. The revelation of Adam, he argued, allowed a brother to marry his sister, which was prohibited during the time of Moses, and it was also permissable to marry two sisters at one time at the time of Jacob, which was prohibited by Moses' revelation.39

The Miracles of the Prophet Muhammad.

Although 'Abd al-Jabbar considered the Qur'ān as the supreme miracle of the Prophet, he accepted many other miracles which were mentioned in many statements (akhbār).

He held that the support of the angels during the battle of Badr was a sign of Muhammad's prophethood, as well as the fact that he promised his enemies that his victory would come to pass, and promised the Muslims that God would grant them control of the world. He also accepted the miracle of the splitting of the moon, and criticized an-Nazzām who had denied it, and another sign of his prophethood, he maintained, was his trust in God which was very obvious during the Mubahala, when he went accompanied by his daughter, his grandsons and his cousin and challenged his opponents to accept the curse of God upon the liers.

The Qur'ān.

'Abd al-Jabbar devoted two volumes of al-Mughni to the Qur'ān, one of them to the question of the createdness of the Qur'ān (vol. 7), the other to the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān (vol. 16). He also compiled two other books on the subject, one of them about mutashābih (the obscure verses of the Qur'ān), and the other in defence of the Qur'ān against the criticism of it, Tanzih al-Qur'ān 'an al-Mata'īn.

In the Tanzih and Mutashābih he attempted to refute the criticism of the Qur'ān, which was probably widely known at this time. He attempted, with great success, to show that what seemed to be contradictory.

40) 'Abd al-Jabbar, Tathbīt, 2/ 408.
41) Ibid., 2/ 447.
42) Ibid., 1/ 55.
43) Ibid., 1/ 431-432.
in the Qur'ān is not really so, and he interpretated and justified that in accordance with the Mu'tazilite doctrine.

The two main philosophical problems which he dealt with were the questions of the createdness of the Qur'ān, and the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

1) The createdness of the Qur'ān.

The doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān is one of the characteristic beliefs of the Mu'tazila. This doctrine was so important that it prompted Mu'tazilite scholars to discuss widely, and in detail, the nature of speech, sounds, letters and the instruments of speech. The political motives behind this doctrine, before it turned into an academic problem, have been profoundly discussed by Professor W. Montgomery Watt in many writings. 44

The doctrine that the Qur'ān was created is more suitable for rationalists to give place to the rational interpretation which is necessary not only to reconcile reason and the revealed texts, but also to justify any attitude among the large number of variations in the rational tendency.

To prove that the Qur'ān was created 'Abd al-Jabbār attempted to analyse the nature of speech, because they held that the speech of God is of the same kind as intelligible speech in this visual, human world.

Speech, according to him, is a specific order of sounds. It consists of well-organized letters, of two or more than two, and, idiomatically we do not recognize the organized letters as speech unless they convey a meaning, and speech can convey meaning only

45) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughfī, 7/ 7-10.
in the conventional language. So, if the speech of God, the Qur'ān was eternal, the Arabic language must also be eternal.

As we can gather from 'Abd al-Jabbār's argument, the argumentation of the createdness of the Qur'ān became very complex and elaborate.

2) The miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

The question of the Qur'ān as a miracle of the Prophet occupied an important place in the thought of the Mu'tazila. It was reported that an-Naẓẓām held that the Qur'ān was a miracle of the Prophet in the sense that God did not allow the Arabs to imitate it, by removing their ability to do so. This interpretation is known as garfa in Islamic thought.

Al-Jāḥiẓ wrote a book about the style of the Qur'ān (Naẓm al-Qur'ān). 46

The Mu'tazilite scholar ar-Rummi (296-384 A.H.) wrote another book about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān (an-Nukat fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān), in which he discussed the style of the Qur'ān in detail, and held that the style of the Qur'ān was the highest standard of rhetoric and eloquence. He also held that the Qur'ān contained many predictions about the future. 47

'Abd al-Jabbār maintained that the Qur'ān was the miracle of the Prophet, its miraculous nature containing many different aspects:

a) Each verse of the Qur'ān is a miracle and a proof, by its style, eloquence and rhetoric, and its style was a break with the normal custom of speech.

b) It is also a proof of Muhammad's prophecy because it

47) ar-Rummi, an-Nukat Fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān, part of Thalāth Rasā'il Fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān.
contains many verses which foretell the future.

c) It is also a proof because it attracted mankind's attention to the proofs of reason.48

As for the eloquence of the Qurān 'Abd al-Jabbār referred to Abū 'Ali al-Jubbā'I's definition of eloquence, who maintained that eloquence is purity of style together with upright purport,49 it is not necessary for the speech, he added, to be eloquent to be composed in one specific way, because it is possible for the orator to be more eloquent than the poet in spite of the fact that their ways are different, as it is possible when the speech was composed in the same way. The proof that the Qurān was a miracle, 'Abd al-Jabbār affirmed, is that the Prophet challenged the Arabs to imitate one verse of it, at a time when the Arabs were extremely eloquent, and their motives for proving the falsity of his prophecy were strong, but they could not rise to the challenge, not only because the standard of its eloquence was superior to theirs, but also because the style in which the Qurān was composed was a break within their custom of composing speech. God singled out the Qurān in a manner of composition very distinct from the way in which the Arabs used to compose poetry or prose, together with a high degree of eloquence and rhetoric which was superior to their standard, and that, he added, is why many scholars argued about the secret behind the Qurān's miraculous nature, was it the style in which it was composed, or the degree of its eloquence and rhetoric? The aspects of the miraculous nature of the Qurān are numerous, whereas each scholar or attitude adheres to one particular aspect alone.50

48) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Tathblīt, 1/ 85.
49) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughni, 16/ 197. 50) Ibid., 16/ 244.
'Abd al-Jabbar argued against those who maintained that the challenge of the Qur'ān was not concerned with the imitation of its style but with the verses which foretold the future. His argument was that the challenge of the Qur'ān was to imitate any chapter (sūra) of it, and it is obvious that not every chapter contained predictions of the future, the challenge was valid to the Qur'ān as a whole not solely to one part of it.51

'Abd al-Jabbar also refuted the idea that the style of the Qur'ān itself was imitable, but God dispossessed the Arabs of the ability to imitate it. That means the style of the Qur'ān was not superior to the way the Arabs used to speak, and had God not dispossessed them of their ability to imitate the Qur'ān it would have been possible.

The argument of 'Abd al-Jabbar was based on the belief that the Qur'ān itself was the challenge, not the dispossessing of the ability of the Arabs to imitate it; that is to say if God had not revealed the Qur'ān and made it the miracle of the Prophet to make the Arabs unable to speak in the manner they used to, that constitutes an obvious miracle, but since the challenge was to compose a verse like a Qur'ānic verse their argument is not valid.

It is obvious that 'Abd al-Jabbar did not attempt to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān in the negative sense which the other argument may lead to, but as a miracle in the positive sense of the term "miracle".

As for the proof that the Arabs could not imitate the Qur'ān, 'Abd al-Jabbar dealt with this question in detail. The main point of his argument was if the Arabs imitated the Qur'ān we would certainly

51) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughni, 16/ 220.
know about it, such an occurrence could not be hidden simply because
it is not admissible for the large number of people to hide a fact
or to be in collusion and agreed upon one lie, especially if
this large number of people was spread over a vast area. Collusion
cannot occur without meeting or correspondance, and that is impossible
for the large and far-flung number of people.

'Abd al-Jabbar added that many cannot agree upon one lie, unless
a very reasonable purpose makes them do so, people would not place
their hands on their heads at one time without any reason.

'Abd al-Jabbar set two conditions for considering a statement
(khabar) as a proof:

1) The number of people who transmitted the anecdote is large
   enough not to agree upon a single lie.

2) The knowledge that there is no reasonable incentive to make
   them agree upon the lie. He also suggested the following reasons
   for people agreeing upon the same lie:

   a) The desire to gain one thing or more than one thing
      in which they are interested.

   b) Collusion.

   c) The fear of the governor (khawf as-Sultan) if they tell
      the truth.

   d) The avoidance of any harm which could happen to them if
      they told the truth.

Thus the absence of motives which may make people lie,
necessitates the belief in what is transmitted to us as a statement

52) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughni, 16/ 24.

53) Ibid., 16/ 27.

54) Ibid., 16/ 26.
(khabar), and since it was widely reported that the Arabs did not imitate the Qurʾān, we must accept that as a proof that the Qurʾān was the miracle of the Prophet.

The basis of his argument could imply that the nature of mankind is good, if there is no reason for him to perform an evil action.
The Main Sources of Islamic Law.

At the outset 'Abd al-Jabbar stated very clearly that the first proof is the proof of reason (dālīl al-ʿaql), because, he argued, it is by reason that we distinguish between good and evil, and by reason that we know that the Qur'ān, Sunna and 'Ijmā' are proofs.

Some might be surprised, he added, about this classification of the proofs, assuming that the proofs are the Qur'ān, Sunna and 'Ijmā'. The answer to this is that God addressed His speech to those who possessed an intellect, or the rational beings (lustalā'), because revelation is accepted by means of reason, so the proof of revelation was considered as rational, because reason accepts it.

When we hold, he argued, that the Qur'ān is the original proof we mean that it is considered so, because it attracted the attention to the proofs of reason, and because we seek the proof of the legal judgements from it.55

He considered qiyās and khabar al-wāhid as proofs of legal judgements, but classified them within 'Ijmā', the Qur'ān and the Sunna because their being proofs was known by these proofs.56

1) The Qur'ān.

As for legal judgements, the Qur'ān is their origin, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār; in the seventeenth volume of al-Mughni he dealt, in detail, with the question of how we can derive legal or ritual judgements from it.

According to him the statements of the Qur'ān contain commands, prohibitions, promises (wa'īd) and threats (wa'īd). Both the precise

55) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Fa'īl al-I'tizāl, 139.
56) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 88.
verses of the Qur'ān (muḥkam) and the obscure verses (mutashābih) contain purposes and usefulnesses for the people, otherwise God would not have revealed them. The question as to why the Qur'ān contained some verses which are obscure was answered by him as follows:

1) Since God made inquiry (naẓar) obligatory to Man, and prohibited the following of the previous attitudes without investigation, he made some verses clear and precise, and some obscure, to urge man to contemplation, discussion and to the avoidance of taqlīd.

2) God revealed such obscure verses to make the obligation harder so that, consequently, the reward will be greater.

3) God wanted to make the Qur'ān the highest degree in style in respect of rhetoric, so as to make it the unchallengeable proof of the Prophet, and that entails not only the presentation of the fact but also the manner of speech in which it is presented, and which was considered highly rhetorical. This manner was achieved by the use of metaphorical statements.  

The statements of the Qur'ān are of two kinds:

a) Statements which do not indicate the way in which we must perform our obligations.

b) Statements which do indicate the way in which our obligations have to be performed.

As for the first kind of statement, it is also very useful in our obligations, as, for example, the narrations about 'Ād and Thamūd and how they were destroyed, or the narrations about the great suffering of the Prophet, which must be contemplated when we recite them.

57) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mugni, 17/ 40.
58) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mugni, 16/ 370-372; also Sharp, 600.
2) *Al-Hadîth (The Traditions)*.

The Mu'tazila were accused of rejecting the traditions ascribed to the Prophet, or of doubting the authenticity of most of them.

From the accounts given by Ibn Qutayba we discover that the earlier Mu'tazilites attacked the Traditionalists and accused them of lying, and their denial of the authenticity of the traditions was based on the following reasons:

i) The great number of traditions which are contradictory to each other.

ii) The number of traditions which contradict the Qur'an, the Sûra, and 'Ijma'.

iii) The traditions which contradict the necessity of reason, among which there are many traditions concerning magic and belief in the Jinn.

iv) The traditions which could lead men to believe in anthropomorphism (*tashbîh*). 60

It was also reported that Wâsîl b. 'Aţâ' reprimanded 'Amr b. 'Ubayd because he used to interpretate the traditions of the Prophet metaphorically; Wâsîl asked him to repeat what he heard and desist from interpretation. 61

The main reason for their attitude towards hadîth was to weaken the position of their opponents who enjoyed their great reputation in the Muslim community because they were considered as the carriers of the sunna, as well as to make room for rational interpretation. Since many of the traditions were against their

60) Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wil Mukhtalaf al-Hadîth*.
doctrine of free will or the eternal attributes of God, they had either
to accept a metaphorical interpretation of them or reject them
altogether by doubting their authenticity.

To understand his attitude towards traditions more fully it
is worthwhile to note three factors which were involved, to various
degrees, in the formulation of his consideration of traditions as
proof:

1) 'Abd al-Jabbar was educated in the Ash'arite school of
thought before his conversion to Itizal, as was mentioned in the
first chapter, and heard hadith from some of the outstanding
Traditionalists as that time.

ii) Being a Mu'tazilite, and the most outstanding scholar
of that school of thought at that time, made him feel the great
responsibility of the previous attitudes of the Mu'tazila towards
traditions. Many of these traditions were apparently against the
basic principles of their doctrine.

iii) The strong criticism which was levelled against the
Mu'tazila, accusing them of rejecting the sunna of the Prophet,
created a feeling of hostility among the public against them, and
prompted him to accept this relatively moderate attitude towards
hadith, and to justify their previous attitudes.

In his book Faqal-Itizal wa Tabaqat al-Mu'tazila he
accepted many traditions ascribed to the Prophet to enhance his
argument, he refused to accept some traditions, and interpretated
some, often metaphorically, in order to reconcile them with the
Mu'tazilite doctrine. 62

In his attempt to justify the Mu'tazilite attitude towards
hadith, he refused the criticism addressed to them, that they did

62) 'Abd al-Jabbar, Faqal, 148-158.
not act upon or according to the traditions of the Prophet, which were known to them. He asserted that the Mu'tazila depended primarily on the proofs of reason, which does not facilitate the acceptance of many different interpretations. He also accepted the *sunna* as a proof, but only when its attribution to the Prophet was approved. He also accepted what was approved by consensus.

The Mu'tazila doubted traditions which were transmitted by individuals, he added, because they could be objects of lies, inattentiveness (*sahw*), forgetfulness, changing and alteration.63

As for the question as to whether the Mu'tazila considered the knowledge of *hadīth* as recommendable, he answered that the Mu'tazila never believed it not to be so, but neither did they consider it obligatory, and they required from everyone who sought this knowledge to be very careful and to distinguish between the authentic and unauthentic traditions, and between what could be interpreted and what could not.64

The term *sunna* according to 'Abd al-Jabbar is applied only to what had been approved as having been said by the Prophet or performed by him, and was to be carried out by all Muslims at all times. Statements transmitted by individuals (*akhbār al-'ahād*), when they fulfil the conditions to be acted upon, are only called *sunna* from the conventional point of view ('alā sabīl al-*muwāda*). That is why, he added, it is not admissible, as far as reason is concerned, to say in transferring such traditions, "The Prophet said", but we must say "It was reported that the Prophet said" (*ruwiya*).65

63) 'Abd al-Jabbar, Fadl, 195.
64) Ibid., 194.
65) Ibid., 185-186.
'Abd al-Jabbār, however, accepted the action upon the statements transmitted by individuals in law.  

'Abd al-Jabbār also dealt with the question of following the Prophet's example (ṣiṣṭādāl) in his sayings and actions. He held that we are not obliged to follow the Prophet's example in the following aspects:

a) In rational knowledge (al-laqliyāt).

b) In actions which the Prophet performed as a prophet (mumtathilān).

c) In actions performed for a personal purpose.

So it is necessary to know the manner in which the Prophet's actions were performed. The commands of the Prophet are obligatory, whereas his disapproval indicates that the action is evil, and his silence implies that there was no judgement, and when he did not disapprove that means the action is not an evil action.

From the previous account we can gather that 'Abd al-Jabbār's attitude towards the traditions was slightly different from that of the earlier scholars of the Mu'tazila, who intended to reject the traditions altogether, as is reported by the heresiographers. The need for adopting such a moderate attitude was the fact that many of them were judges who required legal basics for their judgements in the increasing everyday problems which they had to face. The Mu'tazila did not ahve their own school of fiqh, and that is why they adopted either Shāfi'ite or Hanafite views in jurisprudence. 'Abd al-Jabbār was himself a Shāfi'ite in fiqh, having been influenced by their legal studies, which facilitated the adoption of this moderate attitude.

66) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Fadl, 158.
3) The Consensus ('Ijma').

Consensus, according to him, is the agreement of a number of the group or the community on a single idea or decision, provided that this agreement occurs intentionally, no matter whether this agreement occurred at one time or at several different times. But unintentional agreement is not considered, nor is the agreement on necessary knowledge.68

'Abd al-Jabbâr's argument about the consideration of 'ijma' as a proof was directed against the Imamites who asserted that, if it is possible for every individual in one group or community to be mistaken, it is possible for all of them to be mistaken, and if the whole community were infallible, each one of them should also be infallible. They examples given to support their argument was that if we considered all the Jews unbelievers, every single Jew must also be an unbeliever.

'Abd al-Jabbâr refuted this argument holding that it is possible for a group of ten persons to choose the right decision when they are together, although each one of them could be mistaken in his personal decision, they could also reach many different decisions when they act individually, yet choose one when they act together. The tribe of Tamîm, he argued, could come to the right decision when they act together and consult each other, whereas every individual could be wrong in his decision.69

As for the proof that 'ijma' must be considered as a source of law, 'Abd al-Jabbâr referred to the Qur'an 4:115, "If anyone contends with the Prophet even after guidance has been plainly

69) Ibid., 17/159.
conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of faith, we shall leave him in a path he has chosen, and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge."

The following of the path of men of faith, he held, was obligatory and is the consensus. 70

He also maintained that the Prophet commanded that consensus should be followed; many of these traditions, he admitted, were transmitted by individuals, but they were accepted and carried out by the Companions of the Prophet and their followers, and this was known by widely transmitted statements. 71

'Abd al-Jabbar did not believe that it is possible to justify the proof of 'ijmā' by reason, as it is impossible to maintain that reason would accept that there is a specific group of individuals who cannot be mistaken. 72 Consensus, he held, is a branch of the Kitāb and the Sunna, that means it is not an independent proof in itself, because its validity as a proof depends on the Qur'ān and the traditions. 73 He did not consider any agreement based on doubt as a true consensus, but he asserted that when the agreement is based on analogy and personal opinion (ijtihād), the consensus is valid. 74

According to 'Abd al-Jabbar the agreement must include all the believers to be considered as a consensus, for we cannot impose what is agreed between the Mu'tazila upon the Khawārij, or

70) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughnī, 17/ 160.
71) Ibid., 17/ 182.
72) Ibid., 17/ 196.
73) Ibid., 17/ 216.
74) Ibid., 17/ 235.
use it as a proof against them. The consensus of the 'Ulamā', he
maintained, can be considered as a proof on the condition that it
will lead to the consensus of the populace or their followers, which
will include the whole community. He did not consider the agreement
of the majority on one idea or decision as a true consensus, because
the majority could be wrong. He inclined to the consideration of
the house of Muḥammad (Ahl al-bayt) as a true proof because of a
tradition supporting that, whereas the agreement between the Companions
of the Prophet, according to him, cannot be considered as a true
proof.\textsuperscript{75}

We can gather from the previous presentation of 'Abd al-Jabbār's
attitude towards \textit{Ijmā'}, that it was more or less the same as that
of the Hanafites and Shāfi'ites.

\textsuperscript{75} 'Abd al-Jabbār, \textit{al-Mughnī}, 17/ 208-214.
Analogy (Qiyās) and Personal Opinion (Ijtihād).

Knowledge of the scriptures (sharā'ī), according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, like rational knowledge, is two-fold:

1) Necessary knowledge, which contains the obligation of every individual (furūd al-kaffa), is necessary in the sense that it must be known by everyone as religious duties.

2) Acquired knowledge, which is mostly the obligatory duties of the 'Ulamā', rather than the populace ('amā), is analogy and personal opinion, and is sub-divided into two parts:

a) Knowledge based on proof, which is qiyās.

b) Knowledge based on the most probable opinion (ghalib az-zann), which is ijtihād. 76

The need for analogy comes when we face an obscurity about a religious problem, when we know, for example, that to lie, without gaining benefits from it or avoiding harm, is an evil action, but we might find it difficult to decide about a lie to gain benefits or avoid harm, the use of analogy in this case could help towards reaching the right decision.

As for analogy, 'Abd al-Jabbar maintained that its from is rational, whereas its basis is the scripture. 77

To justify analogy and personal opinion 'Abd al-Jabbar asserted that in different schools or rites (madhāhib), as far as beliefs such as tawḥīd and 'adl are concerned the truth can only exist in one school, but differences in what is related to probabilities are possible. 78

76) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughnī, 17/ 277.

77) Ibid., 17/ 281.

78) Ibid., 17/ 284.
'Abd al-Jabbār argued against those who held that analogy cannot be a part of religion, because it is the action of the person who performs it (fi'il al-qā'īs). He refused to accept the basis of this argument, which assumed that religion cannot be the action of the obligated person. Moreover he asserted that religion cannot be anything except the actions of obligated persons. He also argued that since the condition of the valid analogy is to think of the proof or the sign (al-dalā'il wa-l-Amārā), there will be no fear of following one's desires or passion when one uses analogy. Whenever we consider the proofs the decision upon an obligatory duty will be a single entity, but when we think of the signs it is possible for the truth to exists in various schools of thought.79

The technical discussion of analogy which occupied many pages in the seventeenth volume of al-Mughnī shows that his attitude towards the problem was the same as the Sunnī schools of Fiqh, who accepted analogy as a proof. Since analogy depends upon logical reasoning and judgement it is not difficult to explain why a rationalist thinker like 'Abd al-Jabbār accepted it.

As for personal opinion he argued that it is possible to depend on the most probable opinion (ghalib az-zamn) only when conviction about one judgement is impossible (mutādhdhir), but not in the case of conviction about one problem. Consequently, the obligatory duty may only exist as one when the basis of it is conviction, but it can be varied when it is based on probability.80 There are many legal questions, he added, about which the Companions gave different judgements, but in spite of that each one of them respected the ideas of the others and did not consider them mistaken.81

CHAPTER IV: THE RELATION BETWEEN REASON AND REVELATION.

The Problem.

The question of the relation between reason and revelation, as a philosophical problem, arises, in its acuteness, because both reason and revelation present themselves as the sole source of knowledge and truth. Reason, or rational tendencies, justify their attitude by means of logic and the given examples of everyday life, whereas revelation claims the authority to transcend the bounds of reason which are, according to its outlook, as limited as the human experience itself, and bases its logic on the direct contact between man and the supernatural power of Divinity by means of the prophets, its main proofs being the miracles.

This problem becomes even more difficult when the preaching and the statements of one revelation are, or appear to be, contradictory to logic, and also when it contains some mystery or obscure statements, as does virtually every revelation. These mysterious or obscure statements will certainly cause those who support revelation to bridge the gap between reason and the prescriptions in order to justify their obscurities and keep the statements it has adopted valid and acceptable according to the knowledge of the times, following the development of human science and philosophy in which new convictions appear, as well as human needs and interests which are changeable. This is why we find, in every era, those who hold that revelations are necessary and who tend to found their proofs on the most authentic knowledge of the time, using Greek sciences at the time in which they were dominant in human knowledge, whereas they now attempt to base their proofs on the facts furnished by modern science.

Thus it is possible to say that the majority of philosophical
theology is related, in one way or another, to the question of the relation between reason and revelation.

As for the rationalists such as the Mu'tazila, the problem started when one recognized both reason and revelation as authentic sources of knowledge and truth, and as bases for human virtues and ethics. This raised the question of the nature of the function or the role each has to perform.

The acceptance of any kind of revelation entails the adoption of one of the four following possible relationships between the revelation of God and the logic of reason:

1) One can differentiate totally between the function of reason and the function of revelation. That is to say that reason's function is to understand and interpretate the external world, the laws of nature, whereas revelation tends to link man with the supernatural power (God), but this solution causes difficulty in deciding which is the sphere of reason and which is the sphere of revelation, especially in ethics.

2) One solution could be the acceptance of revelation as the only authentic source of knowledge and truth, to which reason must submit in all aspects and must follow its demands. This was the attitude of the Hanbalites in Islam, who gave no role to reason whatsoever, whether secondary or primary, as a source of knowledge and truth. This solution however creates difficulties concerning the facts given by science and philosophy, which are often everyday facts of life, and which might sometimes be in contradiction with the scriptures, or at least appear to be so.

3) The acceptance of reason as the main source of knowledge and truth, and reconciling it with the scriptures, which may result in difficulties because of the change in meaning of the religious
texts, so that they are twisted and are only considered as following the changeable and developing human knowledge, which could belittle its active role in life, and which could lead to its being doubted.

4) The acceptance of the primacy of revelation, rendering to reason a secondary, but important role in understanding and accepting revelation. The Ash'arites adopted such attitudes towards the problem; they considered revelation as the main source of knowledge and truth, but maintained that reason has an important function in knowledge, even in religious knowledge.

In Islamic thought, however, the decisive division between reason and revelation had no representatives, especially in the main sects and schools of thought, as it did not separate religion and the state. Ethical values, the measure of right and wrong, whether the actions of the individual or the political groups, or those of the state or the people, were based on Islam. Islam, in its various forms, was the ideology of all Muslim political groups and parties, as it was the basis of the state, which made the problem more complicated, because it was not only an academic problem but also a political one. Texts were interpreted to coincide with the doctrines of every sect, and to suit its political attitude. It was not only the solutions to the problem which differed, but the formulation of the problem as well. Every sect or group used to raise the problem and draw a solution from its own outlook, which brought about the great need for dependence on reason, even to those who denied the primacy of reason. The Ash'arite school and al-Ghazâlî were very obvious examples of that tendency.

The Hanbalites refused to consider the question itself, and accepted revelation as the sole source of knowledge and truth, and held that reason must submit in everything to the demands of
revelation, whereas the Mu'tazilites gave the primacy to reason and accepted revelation on the basis that it is not contradictory to reason.

It would perhaps be useful, in shedding some light on the problem, to consider its historical development.
Faith and Reason.

At the outset, it is not far from the truth to maintain that Islam was not against reason. The Qur'an, which was considered as the miracle of the Prophet, in fact addressed itself to those possessed of minds. The Qur'an also applied logic together with preaching, and the argumentations of the Qur'an were based on the logic of reason.

As any great movement in history Islam had to make itself clear and acceptable by depending on reason. This could be noticed in many verses in the Qur'an, especially those verses devoted to arguing with its opponents.

The two main principles of faith in Islam, however, were:

a) The belief in God.
b) The acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad, and all that had been revealed to him by God.

These two principles were clear in the confession of the faith (Shahada), which existed at the time of the Prophet, and perhaps later, as a sign of an individual's acceptance of the new religion.

In spite of the fact that this concept of 'Iman was agreed on by virtually all the Islamic sects, there were many sharp disagreements about:

a) The conditions of 'Iman.
b) The way leading to 'Iman, is it reason or revelation?
c) The many details of the contents or concept of tawhid, and the many details about the problems related to the prophethood, and other problems.

The repetition of the Shahada was a sign of 'Iman at the outset, but later became an object of dispute.

The political significances of 'Iman were well-studied and
investigated by Professor W. Montgomery Watt in his article "Conditions of Membership of the Islamic Community" and in the chapter devoted to "Faith and Community" in The Formative Period of Islamic Thought.  

Faith, or Islam in general, to the Kharijites was a programme of actions rather than a set of beliefs or a rational concept, whereas the Murji'ites, whose ideas were always close to the authorities, did not emphasize actions. That is to say, the Kharijites were concerned with faith as a social aspect leading to social activities, whereas the Murji'ites were more individualistic.

The belief was ascribed to Jahm b. Ṣafwān that faith is nothing but knowledge, and that he did not consider the confession with the tongue a part of it. This obvious link between faith and knowledge suits the rational tendency, which gives knowledge or reason the priority and considers it as the highest human merit. The question of faith, whether confessing it with the tongue is important or not, was not far from the political conflict of that time, in which the question of whether Abu Ṭalib was muʾmin or not was probably raised. The Shi'ites considered him muʾmin, although he did not confess his faith openly, their opponents did not regard him so, whereas Abū Sufyān was considered as muʾmin. Al-Mansūr's letter to Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Ḥasan made that obvious when he argued that when God sent Muḥammad he had four uncles, two of them believed in him, my grandfather was among them, al-ʿAbbās, and two of them did not believe in him, one of them was your grandfather, Abū Ṭalib.  

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1) Studia Islamica XXI, pp. 5-12; and also in Formative Period, pp.119-148.

The question was also related to the concept of taqiyya (prudent fear), which formulated the Shi'ites attitudes during the periods in which their opponents were the governors.

The Ash'arites held that faith is all pious deeds (Talāt), that is the performance of all obligatory and supererogatory performances (furūḍ wa nawfil), but they gave special importance to belief in their doctrine of the eternal attributes of God, and to predestination. ³

The Mu'tazilites attitude was not greatly different to that of the Khawārij. They held that 'Imān is the performance of all the obligatory duties together with the avoidance of grave sins (tark al-kabā'ir).⁴ They did not tend to exclude the grave sinner from the Islamic community, but they asserted that he would be sent to Hell.

The main difference between the Mu'tazila and the Ash'arites was in the definition of the term Tā'a. The Ash'arites defined Tā'a as obedience to God's orders (awāmir Allāh), whereas the Mu'tazilites held that it is obedience to God's will (tā'at al-'Irāda).

It is obvious that these two differing concepts of the term Tā'a express two different attitudes towards the texts. To hold that Tā'a is to act upon God's orders gave the primary importance to adherence to the texts, because God's orders are only known by the scriptures, the Qur'ān and Traditions, whereas the other definition was an attempt to prevent man's becoming bound to the literal meaning of the texts, and to direct attention to what was willed by God, which could only be known by reason.

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³ Al-Baghdādī, 'Uṣūl ad-Dīn, 249.
⁴ Ibid., 249.
God, for example, wants the performance of good actions, and the avoidance of evil actions, and the knowledge of good and evil is a rational knowledge, whether there is a text or not. We should obey God's will by following the judgement of reason, which distinguishes between good and evil.

To relate faith with reason the Mu'tazilites held that faith becomes obligatory only at the time in which the individual reaches the stage of mental maturity (tamām al-(aql), when he has attained the stage of reasoning which is necessary for the possession of knowledge. They did not insist upon a specific age, unlike the Ash'arites who attempted to reconcile reason with the texts, by giving a secondary importance to reason, holding that both maturity of mind and adolescence are important, although the sole source of obligation is revelation.

Al-Baghdādī ascribed to Abu-l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf that he maintained that when any child becomes mature in mind even before adolescence, he or she is obliged to possess all the knowledge of Tawḥīd and Ḍālīl, directly after their knowledge of themselves. Any knowledge which could be known only by revelation must be obtained after hearing about it in a way which leaves no room for excuse.

In this view ascribed to Abu-l-Hudhayl the knowledge which is necessary for ʿImān is classified into two kinds:

1) What is related to reason, that is what could only be obtained by reason, which is the knowledge of God, His oneness and His justice.

2) What could be obtained only by revelation, which are the religious observances.

5) Al-Baghdādī, ʿUsūl ad-Dīn, 258.
6) Ibid., 255.
The first knowledge becomes necessary as soon as the individual reaches the stage of maturity of mind, whether he was adolescent or not, and the second becomes obligatory after reaching maturity of mind on one hand, and hearing about it on the other.

Al-Jaḥīẓ, who held that all kinds of knowledge are necessarily known, classified all non-Muslims into three categories:

a) Those who knew the truth and did not follow it, (muṭānīd); they are considered sinners.

b) Those who thought carefully and did their best to approach the truth, but could not obtain it due to their lack of ability; they are not sinners.

c) Those who did not inquire because they did not know the necessity of inquiry; they must also be excused.

So, it is only those who knew the truth but did not submit to it who are sinners, because God would not demand from anyone something which surpasses his capabilities. 7

‘Abd al-Jabbār accepted the definition of Abu-l-Hudhayl that faith is the performance of all obligatory and supererogatory duties, together with the avoidance of evil actions. 8

This definition involves two aspects:

1) a positive aspect which implies the performance of the obligations. These obligations, however, are often known through reason, although some of them could be known by revelation.

2) a negative aspect which is the avoidance of evil actions which are usually known as grave sins (kabā'ir), and those are also known by reason.

7) Al-Ghazālī, al-Mustasfa, 2/ 359.
'Abd al-Jabbar discussed the ideas concerning 'Imān, which were held during his time, classifying the definitions of 'Imān as they were known into three categories:

a) The Najjārites (an-Najjāriyya) who asserted that 'Imān is nothing but the knowledge with the heart. He refuted this definition on the grounds that this could imply that if somebody knows the idea of God, whether he denied His existence or admitted it, but did not perform the duties God wanted him to perform, and neglected the demands of revelation, he must be considered as mu'min. In other words 'Abd al-Jabbar accepted that knowledge leads to 'Imān, but it is not sufficient to make one a mu'min.

It is obvious that 'Abd al-Jabbar wanted to assert that sound knowledge of God and belief in Him could only be proved by the soundness of the believer's actions. This is the rationalist attitude towards human behaviour, which, they maintained, must be based on rational knowledge or the manifestations of it.

b) The Karrāmites (al-Karrāmiyya) who believed that faith is only the confession with the tongue. 'Abd al-Jabbar refuted this definition, arguing that the acceptance of such a definition could entail that the hypocrite (munāfiq), who pretends to be a believer and hides his unbelief must be considered as a real believer, although the religion of the Prophet and of the community do not consider him as a true believer.

The rationalist attitude is concerned with the content of 'Imān, "the true and convinced knowledge," rather than the form "the literal repetition of the Shahāda."

c) The Ash'arites' concept of 'Imān, which was the belief with the heart (taṣdīq fi-l-qalb), or counting true with the heart, was also refuted by 'Abd al-Jabbar. He argued that this definition
is wrong from a linguistic point of view, because the term tagdīq is only applied to the tongue. It is the infinitive of the verb gaddaqa, which means one's saying to the other "you are right". This definition, however, he added, excludes actions which are, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the manifestations of faith or belief. The Ash'arites' definition of 'Imān, he explained, is based on their concept of kalām (speech), which they held to be "a meaning subsisting in the soul of the speaker" (ma'nā qā'im fi-nafs al-mutakallim), and denied that it is well-organized letters.9

Thus 'Imān is not what one confesses with the tongue, it is a convinced knowledge which is manifested in actions, in other words it is the sound knowledge which leads to sound action.

To make that clearer, he considered 'Imān and Islam as conveying the same meaning. When he was arguing about analogy being held as a proof in jurisprudence, his answer to the question was raised by those who did not consider analogy as a proof, because analogy is the action of the person who analogizes, whereas religion is nothing but the actions of the obliged person.10

9) 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharh, 708-709.
10) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughni, 17/ 278.
The Channels Leading to Faith.

Muslim intellectuals also argued as to whether the channels which lead to faith are those of reason or those of revelation. Ibn Rushd classified the sects of Islam, as regards their attitudes towards this question, into two main categories:

1) Those who believed that the texts (ṣanāt) and not reason compose the channel leading to faith; he applied the name Hashwiyya to describe them, which was a nickname used by the rationalists to abuse the Traditionalists.

2) Those who maintained that reason (aql) leads to faith, and they are the Ash'arites.

Ibn Rushd admitted that none of the works of the Mu'tazila were known in Spain, although he thought that their methods were more or less the same as those of the Ash'arites. 1)

Since Ibn Rushd reported that nothing of the works of the Mu'tazila was available in Spain, censorship must have been well-organized, so as to prohibit their works becoming known in Spain, or at least the discussion of their doctrine was not welcomed, which might have stimulated further study.

It is possible to classify the main attitudes towards the channels leading to faith as follows:

a) The conservative tendency represented by the Traditionalists to whom the nickname Hashwiyya was applied. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and Mālik b. Anas were two prominent figures who represented this tendency, which regarded the scriptures as the basis of faith, and held that every Muslim must believe in them literally, without any rational interpretation. This tendency also asserted that any questioning

1) Ibn Rushd, Manāḥij, 132-135.
or investigation related to the texts was not allowed.

Mālik b. Anas represented this attitude very clearly when he stated, concerning the question of *istiwāʾ* (God's seating himself on the throne), that the *istiwāʾ* is known, but the nature of it is unknown, so the belief in it is obligatory and any question about it is innovation.¹²

This statement shows that the Traditionalists not only refuted the answers of those who held other views, but accused the question itself. Thus they tried to consolidate the dominant convictions, which the rational tendency was trying to move towards reason and rational interpretation.

It is probable that the conservative tendency of the Traditionalists considered that the unity of the Islamic community could only be maintained by complete submission to the scriptures (the Qurʾān and Ḥadīths). This tendency also gained its importance and dignity in society by being cognizant with the transmission of Ḥadīth, by defending the validity of the texts they were defending their position in society.

b) The rationalist tendency which was probably founded as a movement at the time of the acceptance of *taʾwil*, as we shall see later, which held the possibility of dealing with the religious texts by the application of rational interpretation.

This tendency asserted that the only possible channel to faith is reason. It did not recognize the following of the ideas of others without investigation (*taqlīd*) as a source of sound religious knowledge, including the knowledge about God and revelation. It also held that our knowledge of our obligations and prohibitions is a rational

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¹² Al-Ghazālī, *Faysal*, 188.
The rational tendency asserted the unity and objectivity of the truth, be it religious or not, that is to say they championed the unity of the human intellect.

The belief and trust in reason held by the rationalists was not an attempt to belittle the importance of revelation, it was rather to place great trust in it, as it is impossible for it to be in contradiction to reason, and whenever that appears to be so, it is the mistake of our own understanding of the religious text, which, if properly understood, would never be in contradiction with any rational knowledge.

The rationalist movement was accused by the Traditionalists, especially the Ḥanbalites, of opposition to the preaching of the prophets. The later Ḥanbalite Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya accused the belief that knowledge is obligatory, by reason before being asserted by revelation, of going against the prophets who preached the primacy of revelation (wafiy), to ideas and minds (ārā' wa-l-ugūl), whereas their opponents held the opposite doctrine.

The maintaining that knowledge, whether religious or otherwise, is obliged by reason before being confirmed by revelation could imply the right of reason to investigate or raise any question, so that there would be no authority which could prohibit inquiry. Even the scriptures and the traditions can only be understood and accepted by reason. It is a championing of free thinking without which the rational movement could not have survived and flourished.

If the religious knowledge is obliged by reason, even before

14) Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Mukhtasar as-Sawā’iq, 1/296.
the assertion of revelation, reason is then the only possible way
of measuring soundness or falsity, so it is the right of reason to
refute any text, or interpretate it metaphorically, when any
contradiction appears to exist between texts and the logic of
reason. This gave the rational tendency the weapon to refuse any
text, or interpret it in line with their general doctrine. That is
to say, the chain of transmitters is not the real measure of the
authenticity of the text, it is rather the rational soundness of it.

Moral principles also, according to the rationalists, are of
rational basis, this was also an attempt to belittle the literal
understanding of the religious texts.

The attitude of the rationalist tendency towards the validity
of the human experience in knowledge and truth was shown in the
interest in the study of the Greek sciences and philosophy, the
valid knowledge of the time, whereas the conservative tendency
constructed the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, concentrating on
the chains of men who transmitted the Hadith.

c) The reconciling tendency which manifested itself in the
Ash'arite school which accepted that reason could lead to knowledge
of God and His oneness, and the knowledge of the createdness of the
universe, and also the possibility of God's sending prophets, and
the possibility of obligation, but there is only one channel which
leads to knowing the obligatory duties and the prohibited actions
and that is revelation. 15

This tendency accepted reason as a source of religious knowledge,
but a secondary source, that is to say that we can trust reason
to a certain limited extent but only revelation can determine about

15) Al-Baghdādī, ḫūsūl, 24
human actions and distinguish between good and evil.

This tendency was, practically, closer to the Traditionalists than to the rationalists, because it bound human actions to the texts. Although it held that rational knowledge is possible in religion it did not make room for them to be understood by the free thinking means of reason. In other words this tendency applied reason to justify the attitude of the Traditionalists.

During the time of the severe struggle between doctrines and tendencies a medial solution gains a lot of supporters, virtually the support of the majority, and it was for that reason that the Ash'arite doctrine was widely accepted by the majority of the Islamic community at a later date.

d) The Sufi tendency which held that intuition (kashf) leads to faith, and that this direct knowledge of God could only be obtained through religious exercises or devotions (mujahadat an-nafs). This tendency turned the problem upside down by holding that it is necessary to perform these devotions in order to obtain knowledge, whereas the rationalists held that it is necessary to know before practicing the rituals and devotions. Faith, according to the Sufists, is an individual's knowledge of God, which may be obtained only when one person follows its road, which is asceticism (ruhd). That is why this tendency was not socially active before the time of al-Ghazālī who was able to found a rational basis for it.
Rational Interpretation. (Ta'wil)

The word *ta'wil* in Arabic means the explanation or the interpretation of ideas or texts. It is used in the Qur'ān to indicate the knowledge of the meaning of a verse which differs from the apparent meaning. The word *ta'wil*, however, was applied by Muslim intellectuals to the rational or metaphorical interpretations of the religious texts.

Ibn Qutayba, who wrote a book reconciling the traditions which seemed to contradict each other, called his book *Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadīth*, to mean reconciling or compromising.

The need for *ta'wil* was felt from the earliest period of Islamic thought. It acceptance by some organized blocks, as well as by some individuals, since the early Umayyads paved the way for the beginning of the rational movement.

It was reported that Ja‘d b. Dirham held that God did not take Ibrāhīm as a friend nor did he address Moses directly,¹⁶ which means that Ja‘d denied the literal meaning of the verses which mentioned that, probably interpreting them rationally or metaphorically. We do not possess the actual arguments of Ja‘d, but since it is ascribed to him that he held that the Qur’ān was created and denied the eternal attributes of God, we can perhaps maintain that there was already an early awareness of the connection between the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur’ān and the denial of the eternal attributes ascribed to God on one hand, and the adoption of *ta'wil* on the other.

The acceptance of *ta'wil* could be considered as a sign of the rise of philosophical awareness in Islamic intellectual life,

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and the major obstacle in its path was the literal understanding of the texts.

Ja'd b. Dirham not only established the basis of philosophical theology, but also supplied the rationalist movement with its first martyr.

The denial of the eternal attributes of God by people called Jahmiyya was based on the argument that if they were not denied it would lead to anthropomorphism (tashbīh), which was the accusation which was always made against the Traditionalists by the rationalists. The Jahmiyya also held that the Qur'ān was created and accepted ta'wīl accordingly.

The need for ta'wīl was not clear to the rationalists alone, many of the Traditionalists also accepted a certain degree of it. Mujāhid al-Makkī interpreted the verse about the transformation of those who committed a criminal act on a Saturday into monkies, by holding that the transformation did not affect their bodies, but their souls (qulūb), which was the metaphorical orientation of the text far removed from the literal meaning of the verse. He also interpreted the entry into Hell even of the mu'mins by asserting that Hell, for the believers, is the fever in this life and not in the life to come, while one of the traditions stated that fever is a breeze from Hell. 17

Mujāhid also interpreted the verse, "None knoweth its explanation save Allāh and those who possess a profound knowledge (rasikhūn fi-l-ʿilm)" in the same manner as the Muʿtazilites, that is to say he accepted that the knowledge of the Mutashābih could be known not only by God, but by those who possessed a deep knowledge.

17) Goldziher, Madhāhib at-Tafsīr al-Islāmī (Arabic translation), 179.
These attempts, although they were few and individualistic, led to the acceptance of ta'wil as a method applicable to all verses.

It is also noticeable that the rationalist movement did not assert that there are two degrees in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, the apparent meaning (zāhir) and the hidden meaning (bātin), as some Islamic sects held. They maintained that there is only one actual meaning to the Qur'an, which must not in any case be contradictory to reason, and the rational interpretation is needed and is necessary whenever a verse or tradition appears to contradict reason. This could imply that revelation cannot, in any case, bring any statement which contradicts the judgements of reason, and could also mean that reason has the authority to understand and interpretate texts within its convictions. The Mu'tazila applied ta'wil very widely to harmonize reason and revelation, by the rational understanding and interpretation of the texts. Some of them denied magic and kahāna (prophecy), and it was also reported that an-Na qqām denied the existence of the Jinn and their influence over human acts, which was an extremely daring attitude, because many verses of the Qur'an mentioned their existence and their influence over human acts, without adopting ta'wil nobody could run the risk of denying them.

'Abd al-Jabbār applied the method of ta'wil not only in his two important works about the Qur'an (Tanzīh and Mutashābih), but also in many places in most of his works.

At a later period ta'wil became more acceptable even among the Traditionalists. Ahmad b. Hanbal himself was reported to accept the rational interpretation of three traditions, namely:

1) The Black Stone is the right hand of God on earth.

2) The heart of the believer lies between two fingers of God.

3) I feel the breath of God coming from Yaman.

Al-Ghazālī, who asserted that the traditions must generally be understood literally, accepted the use of ta'wil when there is proof that the tradition cannot be understood as it appears literally, and he preferred the Mu'tazilites' interpretation of the meaning of actions (wazn al-a'māl) to that of the Ash'arites.

Ibn Rushd, later, not only accepted ta'wil as a method which could be applied to reconcile reason and revelation, but also accepted the idea that the Islamic revelation has two degrees or standards of interpretation, zāhir and batin. He classified people into three categories:

a) The common people or the populace (al-jumhūr), who must not be allowed to be aware of the rational or philosophical interpretation of the texts, because that could lead them to unbelief.

b) The people of dispute (ahl al-jadāl), by whom he probably meant the theologians, who must only be allowed to know the argumentative interpretation of the texts.

c) The people of philosophical interpretation who are allowed to be aware of the hidden meaning of the texts.

It is worth noticing that Muslim philosophers, like Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sīnā, accepted that the Qur'ān has zāhir and batin, and adopted, as did Ibn Sīnā, a symbolic interpretation of the texts, whereas the Mu'tazila, who applied rational interpretation, did not accept

19) Al-Ghazālī, Faysal, 184.


20) Al-Ghazālī, Faysal, 186.
the two standards of understanding in the Qur'an, probably because Muslim philosophers attempted to reconcile the texts not only with logic and reason, but also with Plato and Plotinus, as well as Aristotle, which was virtually impossible without using the symbolic interpretation of the texts.

It is possible to hold that, although the need for ta'wil in the understanding of the religious texts was mainly of a social and political nature, the acceptance of it was necessary to establish a rationalist movement and philosophical theology in Islam, without which its foundation would have been virtually impossible.

The need for ta'wil and the rationalist movement was due to many factors, which could be summarized as follows:

1) The adoption of Islam by a large number of people who belonged to many different religions and cultures, who faced the systematization of new ideas without invalidating previous views and attitudes, made the presentation of Islam in a rationalistic manner very necessary in order

   a) to understand its concepts

   and b) to accept it.

The devotion of great Muslim scholars to the study of the religious heritage and the contemplation and analysis of religious texts, which started after the conversion of a large number of people in the occupied territories, led to the foundation of the rationalist movement.

2) Islamic political and social life raised many questions whose answers were practically needed, and made the rationalist study of religious texts necessary. Political groups and religious sects were seeking the support of the texts for their attitudes. The arguments between the disputing groups stimulated rational thinking
and understanding of the texts, and sometimes the orientation of them according to their interests.

3) The continuous disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims, who continued to criticize Islam, especially after it had spread widely. The opponents of Islam were very conversant with Greek thought, which they used in arguing against Islam, that made it necessary to present Islam in rationalistic terms, which were more effective than the way of the Traditionalists, which could not face the sophisticated logic of the opposition. This could explain why the pioneers of the rationalist movement, like Jahm, Wāṣil and Abū-l-Hudhayl, argued against non-Muslims.

4) The development of the system of administration in the Islamic state and the adoption of rather sophisticated institutions, which turned the Islamic state into an autocratic state, opened the gap between the state and religion, which was the basis for the stability and solidarity of the community. This gap between ideals and everyday, realistic life, which was relatively changeable, made it necessary to reconcile the texts and the actual authority of the state, which gave primacy to the normal interests of day to day living, which is, in other words, the rationalistic life.

Thus, it is possible to say that the struggle between the Traditionalists and the rationalists, texts and reason, was in one sense the struggle between ideals and reality. This not only appeared in theology and philosophy but in jurisprudence as well.

5) The translation of Greek sciences and philosophy, which arose from the practical demands at the outset, later exerted a great influence on Islamic intellectual life, and forced Muslim intellectuals to recognize the necessity for reconciling Greek science and Islam, reason and revelation. Greek science and philosophy were the
The need for reconciling Islam and logic, was felt by both the philosophers of Islam, who were trying to justify their interest in the study of Greek philosophy, and the rationalists who were attempting to justify the use of revelation by means of reason.
Reason and Revelation.

The English word "revelation" has not a single equivalent term in Islamic theology and philosophy. Muslim intellectuals applied many different terms when they discussed the use of revelation, or the question of the relationship between reason and revelation.

In the Qur'ān the term wa'ābī was used many times to denote the communication between God and the prophets, whether directly or by the medium of an angel, Gabriel. The word wa'ābi, however, means literally "inspiration". The verb sharāla, from which the word sharāa is derived, is also used in the Qur'ān to mean legislate. The word sharāa itself was later applied in Islamic thought to mean scriptures or prescriptions, and was sometimes used to mean revelation, as Ibn Rushd used it.

Muslim intellectuals also applied the term samī, literally to mean "hearing", when they discussed the relationship between reason and revelation. By samī they meant the knowledge which is known by the Qur'ān and the Traditions.

'Abd al-Jabbar used the term nubuwwat when he discussed the necessity of revelation. The word nubuwwat means "prophethood", but when he discussed the problem of the relation between reason and revelation he employed the word samī. It is likely that the term samī was initially used by the Traditionalists to give great importance to the Hadīth, by using one term to mean both the Qur'ān and the Traditions, but this term seems to have been accepted by all Muslims, and was very widely used by the intellectuals.

23) Qur'ān, 42: 13
24) Ibn Rushd, Fāsl al-Maqāl.
Muslim philosophers often preferred to use the term *sharī'a* or *nubuwwa* in the discussion of the relation between reason and revelation, or in the justification of revelation. 25

This could imply that Muslim theologians were concerned with the idea and the laws revealed to the prophet rather than his personality or the nature of prophecy itself, whereas the philosophers of Islam were concerned with the psychology of the Prophet himself rather than his preaching.

Muslim theologians used the term *aql* (reason) in discussing the problem of the relation between reason and revelation, but Ibn Rushd applied the term *nikma* which literally means "wisdom", but he used it specifically to mean Greek philosophy, probably because he was concerned with defending Greek philosophy by reconciling it with the Islamic revelation. In other words his real aim was not to justify revelation by reason, but to justify Greek philosophy by revelation.

'Abd al-Jabbār, however, used the term *aql* and its plural *taqāl* to denote the principles of reason, which were, according to him, *a priori*, and the reasoning based on them.

The Relation between Reason and Revelation.

In obligation (taklīf).

We have already understood, from the second and third chapters, that man, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, is responsible, and his responsibility entails

a) Knowledge.

b) Moral actions.

c) Religious observances.

Knowledge and ethics are based completely on reason, whereas the religious observances may only be known by revelation.

Thus there are two sorts of obligatory duties, rational obligation, and obligation based on revelation (taklīf 'aqīl wa taklīf samīl). 26

Obligation, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained, does not need, to be enjoined upon man, the preaching of a prophet, because the prophet himself is an obligated person; should obligation need a prophet, the prophet would not be obligated, except when there is another prophet, and this would entail an endless chain of obligated persons. 27

'Abd al-Jabbār asserted that what every obligated person has to perform or avoid was placed, "in sum", by God in the human intellect (necessary knowledge), and man only needs acquired knowledge, whether rational or revealed, to know his obligations in detail. 28

This obviously means that the function of revelation, as far as obligation is concerned, is to clarify in details what has already been known, in general, by reason, and has no function other than this.


27) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughfīl, 14/ 152.

Reason sets the basis and revelation only emphasizes the details, and this is what was usually called *lutf* (favour) in Mu'tazilite thought. 29

'Abd al-Jabbār explained this by stating that, if God knows that an obligated person will perform his obligations in all aspects, there is no need for His sending a prophet to him. 30

This could also mean that the relation between reason and revelation, in the question of man's responsibility, is the same as the relation between knowledge known in sum and knowledge known in details. Since the sum of knowledge could not, in any case, contradict the detailed knowledge of the subject, being based on it, revelation accordingly could not be contradictory to reason.

To make his opinion clearer 'Abd al-Jabbār maintained that all the obligatory actions must be of one of the following categories:

1) Either an obligatory duty which man has to perform, and about which it has been decided, by reason, that, if we avoid it, we will suffer harm, the performance of it is thus obligatory.

2) Or an evil action which man has to avoid and which has also been judged by reason as causing harm in the future were it to be performed, whose avoidance is thus obligatory.

3) Or a good action which man is recommended to perform (*ḥasan yundabu 'ilayhi*), and about which it has been decided, by reason, that every action achieved from it will cause benefit in the future, so its performance is recommended.

The function of reason and revelation is, thus, to acquire knowledge about these specific actions (*a'yān al-'af'āl*), which are

| 30 | Ibid., 14/ 153. |
considered as obligatory duties, evil or good actions. 31

Knowledge in sum, 'Abd al-Jabbār argued, which is absolutely a rational knowledge, is not sufficient. Actions must be known in details to be performed, the things which every obligated person has to do, and the way in which he has to perform his obligations, is as important as the general knowledge of the obligatory duties.

According to him God created in every intellect the knowledge, in sum, about actions which are included in obligation, and made signs and proofs concerning their details, some of which cannot be obtained by reason, so, there must be another medium for obtaining them, which is revelation. 32

In this he attempted to place revelation, in the knowledge of man's responsibility, in a secondary but very important role.

It is possible to put 'Abd al-Jabbar's main argument concerning this question as follows:

a) The knowledge of man's responsibility is two-fold:

i) The knowledge that man is responsible on one hand, and the knowledge about the nature of this responsibility, which he called "knowledge in sum", and which is rational on the other.

ii) The knowledge of the specific actions he has to perform to fulfill his obligations, and this knowledge is detailed knowledge, and could be acquired either by reasoning or by revelation.

b) Although the basis of the revealed knowledge, which is contained in man's responsibility, is rational, there are many specific actions which cannot be known in details, which is very necessary for their performance, except by revelation; by which 'Abd

al-Jabbār meant ritual life and religious observances, and the ways in which these should be performed.

c) Proofs of reason cannot lead in any case to legal judgements initially, although it is possible to hold that they can lead to conclusions based on the revealed judgements. Reason, for example, cannot decide that the performance of the prayer is an obligatory duty to those who are able to perform it, this is completely within the confines of revealed knowledge, but reason, after its knowledge of the obligation of performing the prayer, can reach the conclusion that prayer is not obligatory when a person is not able to perform it.  

We can deduce from what we have already discussed that, in obligation, reason is absolutely independent in its judgements and proofs, whereas revelation is only independent in some of the detailed knowledge, which does not initially fall within the sphere of reason. But reason can take part in the cognition of revealed detailed knowledge when there is a revealed judgement on which reason can base its proofs or reasoning.

In his attempt to solve the problem of the contradiction between reason and revelation 'Abd al-Jabbār classified the actions, in which such contradiction could occur, as follows:

1) Actions which are made obligatory by revelation and which reason considers as evil actions, such as the performance of the prayer.

2) Actions which are highly recommended by revelation but which reason considers as evil actions like the supererogatory performance of the prayer (nawafil as-salāt).

33) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Ju'ūshī, 17/ 89.
3) Actions which are made obligatory duties by revelation which reason considers simply as good actions, like giving alms and penances (kaффārāt).

4) Actions which are prohibited by revelation, whereas reason considers them allowed, such as adultery and eating during the daytime in Ramadān.

5) Actions which are prohibited by revelation but which reason highly recommends, like feeding the poor during the daytime in the fasting month.

6) Actions which are allowed in revelation but which reason considers as prohibited actions, like the slaughtering of animals.

Although this contradiction is apparently obvious, 'Abd al-Jabbār explained, revelation discloses to us things in which, had they been known by reason, no contradiction would remain.

If we, for example, known by reason that the performance of the prayer leads to great benefits and rewards, and also leads to the performance of the obligatory duty, we would certainly consider it an obligatory action by reason, and if we know by means of reason that adultery leads to corruption, we would certainly believe that it is an evil action by reason, and recognize our obligation to avoid it.

That is why, 'Abd al-Jabbār added, we hold that revelation does not make the action itself evil or good, but simply reveals or discloses to us some facts about these actions.34

That is to say that what appears to be contradictory between religious texts and logic, or between reason and revelation occurs because of some obscurity about the real aims of these actions. Once

34) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-МughnI, 6/ ii/ 64.
reason realizes the benefits behind them, after revelation has disclosed that obscurity, it will accept them because they concur with its principles.

'Abd al-Jabbār gave the example of a person who suffers from fever (harāra), he certainly knows by reason that he should avoid eating any kind of food which may increase the heat of his body, but he does not know in details the specific sorts of food which he has to avoid, but when a doctor directs his attention to them he will be able to avoid them. Also the example of the person who seeks advice from the experts so as to obtain the best returns from his business, he knows what he wants, but he does not know how to attain what he wants. Thus, reason is most reliable in these aspects, and that is why it is considered as one of the greatest graces given to man by God.35

The solution to the problem which 'Abd al-Jabbār arrived at was an attempt to maintain that the knowledge gained by reason and the knowledge obtained through revelation come from one source. God created the human intellect and set the origins of the proofs in it, thus making it capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil, and God also sent the prophets with revelation which is always in harmony with reason, for if reason cannot distinguish right from wrong and good from evil it would not be able to accept the preaching of the prophets. Since the judgements of reason are true, and the revelations of the prophets are true, there will be no contradiction. Whatever appears to be so, will soon disappear after the revelation has clarified the obscurities, and revealed the real purpose of the demands of revelation, which contain many great

35) 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Muhît, 32.
benefits to man.

That is to say right never contradicts another right, but rather strengthens and asserts it, no matter whether this right or true judgement comes from this channel or another. This was the same as the argument put forward by Ibn Rushd in his reconciliation between reason and Greek philosophy.

The Mu'tazila forged an organic link between knowledge and obligation, or in other words between reason and human responsibility, as they linked free will with responsibility.

Man is responsible because he is a rational being, and he is free willed because he is responsible. That is to say we know, by reason, that we are obligated, and by our obligation we know that we are free willed, whereas the Sunnites asserted that all knowledge is known by reason, but the obligatory duties are only known by revelation.

Thus the Sunnites distinguished between the sphere of reason and that of revelation, as if they were two different means to knowledge.
Knowledge.

We understand, from the second chapter, that 'Abd al-Jabbar considered reason as the main source of knowledge and truth, whether it was religious or non-religious.

Revealed knowledge does not participate in rational knowledge, but rational knowledge participates in revealed knowledge.

As regards knowledge 'Abd al-Jabbar asserted that reason is completely independent from revealed knowledge, in the following aspects:

a) As far as necessary knowledge is concerned revelation is not needed.

b) Knowledge gained by reason and clearly approved by it, has no need for revelation to render it sound.

Revealed knowledge, he held, only discloses what was obscured in some of the prescriptions, so that it is accepted by reason and justified by it.

'Abd al-Jabbar's definition of the rational and revealed judgements was that a rational judgement is every judgement which is known by means of reason, whether necessarily or by reasoning, whereas revealed judgements are those known only by revelation. Any judgement, he added, which could be recognized through both, that is both rational and revealed knowledge, is also a rational judgement, in which case revelation affirms it.36

So only a small amount of knowledge is subject to revelation, that being the knowledge of the religious observances (fārādāt), which cannot be gained by reason.

The knowledge of God, His oneness and justice is a rational

knowledge rather than a revealed knowledge, because the acceptance of revelation depends on it. In other words, the acceptance of revelation by reason must have a previous knowledge of God and His justice, so that we may build our acceptance upon it. Rational knowledge, he held, is the origin (ًال) and the revealed knowledge is the branch(فَرَّ), and the branch cannot furnish the proof for the origin. 37

It is possible to say that the solution to the problem of the relationship between reason and revelation presented by 'Abd al-Jabbâr, as far as knowledge is concerned, was to distinguish between the sphere of reason and that of revelation on one hand, and to link them together on the other; that is to say, although the origins of the proofs are rationalistic and the revealed proofs are branches of the origins, revealed knowledge can be considered as independent as regards ḥibâdât. The knowledge of God is a rational knowledge, so is the awareness that we must thank God for the grace of His creation of us, and for having been granted minds, but the knowledge of the manner in which we are to be thankful is a revealed knowledge.

'Abd al-Jabbâr recognized two channels for obtaining knowledge, and he explained, as mentioned in chapters II and III, that the ways of revelations are based on the differences between the obligated persons, the differences of time and place, and the differences in the conditions of the actions. By this he meant that revealed knowledge is relative whereas rational knowledge is absolute.

Thus the relation between reason and revelation is the same as the relation between absolute and relative knowledge. Reason states the knowledge of the obligatory duties, and revelation fixes the

37) 'Abd al-Jabbâr, al-Mughni, 17/ 93.
forms of the actions, with which we perform these duties, which are relatively different according to the differences between individuals, societies, times and places.

No contradiction exists between rational knowledge and revealed knowledge, because the branches cannot be contradictory to the origins upon which they are based; in other words, since the knowledge of the way in which we have to perform our obligations is based on our knowledge of the duties or the obligations themselves, the problem is no longer a problem.
Ethics.

The principles of ethics, according to 'Abd al-Jabbar, can only be known by reason, and the knowledge of them constitutes a necessary knowledge, and obviously, he added, what is known by necessary knowledge does not need to be known by revelation.

The knowledge of the evil of injustice and ingratitude for God's grace (kufr an-ni'ma) is also a necessary knowledge.38

Thus our knowledge of the evil or goodness of actions is a priori knowledge, we do not even need any experience to recognize that unjust acts or telling lies without gaining benefits or avoiding harm are evil actions. However experience alone can instruct us about a certain action considered as unjust and deduced to be evil, and we might need further contemplation to know that telling lies, even to attain benefit or avoid harm, is an evil action, in other words the evil lies in telling the lies themselves.39

'Abd al-Jabbar classified evil actions into two different categories:

1) Rational evils (qabīh 'aqli) which are considered evil in themselves, and the knowledge of their evil nature is gained by necessary knowledge.

2) Evil actions which are thus considered due to revelation, which are not evil in themselves but are considered as such because they lead to rational evils when someone practices them.40 That is to say that failure to perform the prayer, or not keeping Ramādān, are not evil actions in themselves, but are considered so because

38) 'Abd al-Jabbar, al-Mughnī, 14/152.
they lead to the violation of the obligatory duties of being thankful for the grace of God, which is a rational evil.

Revelation, then, in ethics is subordinate to reason, it cannot decide which action is good and which action is evil, that is the function of reason, but it persuades people to perform what is good and avoid what is evil, and can also show the way towards that, this is the idea of God's favour (lutf), which occupied such a prominent place in the thought of the Mu'tazila, and which was an attempt to explain the relation between reason and revelation in ethics, as well as justifying the validity and the use of revelation.

'Abd al-Jabbār made this idea very clear when he explained that if we did not know by revelation that the man who did not know God, but performed all rational good and avoided all rational evil, will not go to Heaven, we would assert that it is possible that he should be sent to Heaven, because he did not violate any of his obligations, however, he added, his knowledge of God will certainly strengthen his motives to perform good and avoid evil.41

One may summarize 'Abd al-Jabbār's attitude towards the relation between reason and revelation as regards ethics on the following lines. The purpose of the creation of reason is to gain knowledge about good and evil, and the purpose of this knowledge is to act upon it, that is to perform good and to avoid evil. The purpose in sending prophets with revelations is to inform man as to those actions which he should perform and those which he should avoid. The principles of good and evil are placed in human reason, and revelations are only a favour from God to mankind to strengthen his motives to do good and avoid evil, and to indicate how he

should set about this.

From what we have discussed in the previous pages we can state 'Abd al-Jabbār's attitude as regards the relationship between reason and revelation as follows:

i) Man's responsibility demands a knowledge regarding his obligations, and God should inform man about this. This knowledge was created by God in sum in the human beings' intellects (khalaqahā Allāhu jumlatān ff-1-'uqūl) to be the measures of right and wrong, or good and evil. There are no means other than reason in knowing these measures. That is why reason was the greatest grace from God to humankind.

ii) Revelations are a favour from God to inform man of the detailed knowledge of what had already been set, by God, in every human being's intellect.

iii) Revelation is independent in the knowledge of the religious observances, because it is the only possible channel to know about the ways in which man can perform his religious obligation.

iv) Because both the judgements of reason and those of revelation are true, there will never be any contradiction between them. The proofs of reason are the origins and the proofs of revelation, which are the branches, and branches never contradict their origins, upon which they were based.

v) What seems to be a contradiction between reason and revelation appears to be so because there is some obscurity about the revealed judgement, once revelation discloses that obscurity and explains the rational logic behind it, by stating the real purpose of the actions which were demanded in the revealed law, reason will accept them and justify them.

vi) The common ground for both reason and revelation is ethics,
whose principles are rational, and revelation cannot change what is good in itself or evil in itself, it only affirms it and gives details about it. Rational evil is always, at all times and in every place, an evil, because it is evil in itself, but revealed evil, or evil which is known by revelation, is thus considered because it leads to the rational evil.

vii) The relationship between reason and revelation could be understood by the following standards:

a) The independence of reason in necessary knowledge (perceptions, the principles of ethics and the knowledge of man's responsibility), as well as in acquired knowledge, whose proofs are based on the logic of reason. And the independence of revelation in the knowledge of the details of the religious observances (libādāt).

b) In all aspects of knowledge reason has primacy, because we accept revelation by reason, and because the revealed judgements are only an affirmation of those of reason, which persuade people to act upon them. The relation between reason and revelation could be the relation between the origins of the proofs and their branches, the basic facts or truth and their details. Revelation, thus, is subordinate to reason, it has a secondary but important role.

c) In human actions, as they must be performed (ethics), the relation between reason and revelation is the relation between content of knowledge and the form of knowledge, between what should be done (content), and how it should be done (form). Although the form is important it is always relative and changeable according to the relative conditions of time and place, as well as the differences between individuals. So revelation also has a subordinate, but important role.

viii) Although the Mu'tazila gave the primacy to reason, we can
find, in their concept of *khātir*, a sort of belief in an individual revelation, a direct contact between every individual and God, informing him of the necessity of inquiry. It is an individual revelation, but it also affirms the importance and the primacy of reason.
Conclusion.

The problem of the relationship between reason and revelation arose not only for academic purposes, but also to meet the political and social needs of the time.

I The social and political needs could be summarized as follows:

1) The adoption of Islam by a large number of people, who belonged to different cultures and religious backgrounds, made Muslim intellectuals feel the need for the presentation of Islam in a rationalistic way.

2) The questions raised because of the political conflict made the rationalistic study of the religious texts by the parties and groupings, which were involved in this conflict, necessary to defend their attitudes and support them against their opponents.

3) The dispute between Islam and its opponents was one of the important factors which caused the problem to arise and be discussed widely.

4) The development of the state institutions widened the gap between the state and religion, the ideals and every-day living interests, which are not only actual but are constantly changing, and that made necessary the reconciliation between reason and revelation, between ideals and the actual needs of every day.

II The intellectual purposes, which could be summarized along the following lines:

1) The spread of the ideas belonging to many cultures and the adoption of them by some Muslim intellectuals paved the way for the adoption of a sort of rationalistic attitude towards religion; and the need was deeply felt to reconcile religion with reason.

2) The translation of Greek thought later exerted a great influence on Islamic intellectual life and forced Muslims to recognize the
necessity of reconciling Greek thought, which was considered as a science at that time, with religion.

The rationalist tendency in Islam as manifested in the Mu'tazila was aware of the problem from a relatively early period. They made an attempt to reconcile reason with revelation through their dispute with other tendencies. They accepted that reason is the main source of knowledge and truth, and attempted to give revelation a supplementary, but important role.

'Abd al-Jabbar, however, whose works represent the ultimate features of Mu'tazilism, attempted to solve the problem on the following principles:

1) Firstly he accepted that reason is entirely independent in respect of necessary knowledge which covers perceptions, ethics and man's responsibility, and it is also independent in respect of most acquired knowledge, which is based on necessary knowledge. Revelation is independent in the sort of knowledge which cannot be obtained by reason, that is the knowledge of religious observances.

2) Secondly he asserted that the relation between reason and revelation is the same as the relation between the content of knowledge and the form of knowledge. The content of knowledge, for example what should be performed, is rational knowledge, and some of the form of knowledge, for example how the action should be performed, is revealed knowledge. 'Abd al-Jabbar considered the content of knowledge as "knowledge in general", and revealed knowledge as the detailed knowledge, which is, according to him, only valid in the religious laws and observances.

3) Thirdly revelation can also persuade men to depend on proofs of reason and urge them to follow or act upon the principles of ethics, and it always asserts what reason asserts; that is to say
the problem of the relation between reason and revelation is no longer a problem, because God created reason for man to act upon its judgement and benefit from it, and sent prophets with revelations which do not disagree with reason, because truth never contradicts the truth. The argument of the primacy of revelation, according to him, is not valid, because we accept revelation by reason, otherwise it could not be understood and followed.
ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Fadl


al-Muṣḥnī


al-Muḥīt

(al-author: 'Abd al-Jabbār)


al-Muḵṭāṣar


Sharḥ


Tanzīḥ


Tathbīt

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