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THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF MUSLIM SCRIPTURE:
A Study of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *I’jāz al-Qur’ān*

Yusuf Rahman

Institute of Islamic Studies
McGill University
Montreal, Canada.

May, 1995

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts

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Short title: . . .

The Miraculous Nature of Muslim
Scripture.

ABSTRACT

Author : Yusuf Rahman
Title : The Miraculous Nature of Muslim Scripture:
a Study of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*
Department : Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University
Degree : Master of Arts

This thesis is a study of 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (the miraculous inimitability of the Qur'ān) as expounded in his *magnum opus*, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa al-'adl*, part XVI, and in his other works which are related to the subject. The importance of these works lies in the fact that the author was an erudite scholar and a respected leader of the Baṣra School of the Mu'tazila, and also because his *Mughnī* is considered by many as the Encyclopedia of Mu'tazilite philosophy.

As a Mu'tazilite, 'Abd al-Jabbār demonstrates the inimitability of the Qur'ān in the light of both his doctrine of *mu'jiza* (the apologetic miracle of a prophet) and *khalq al-Qur'ān* (the createdness of the Qur'ān). This thesis argues that although his theory of *mu'jiza* is incredibly similar to that of the Ash'arites, 'Abd al-Jabbār's rendering of it and his main sources are not the Ash'arites but rather "the School of Jubbā'ī."

Besides demonstrating the Qur'ānic inimitability through *kalām*, 'Abd al-Jabbār also discusses its unsurpassable nature, in terms of the Holy Book's literary uniqueness,

faṣḥa. This argument is distinctly different from the theories of his predecessors. As such, the thesis examines his predecessors' and contemporaries' works on *i'jāz* in order to shed light on the peculiarity of 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory.

RÉSUMÉ

Auteur : Yusuf Rahman
Titre : La nature miraculeuse des Écritures musulmanes:
Une analyse de l'*I'jāz al-Qur'ān* d'Abd al-Jabbār
Département : Institut des Études Islamiques, Université McGill
Diplôme : Maîtrise ès Arts

Ce mémoire est une analyse de la théorie du *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (la miraculeuse inimitabilité du Qur'ān) d'Abd al-Jabbār tel qu'expliqué dans son *magnum opus*, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa al-'adl*, partie XVI, ainsi que dans ses autres travaux rattachés à ce sujet. L'importance de ces oeuvres repose sur le fait que l'auteur était un savant érudit ainsi qu'un chef de file respecté de l'école mu'tazilite de Baṣra et aussi parce que son *Mughnī* est considéré par plusieurs comme étant l'encyclopédie de la philosophie mu'tazilite.

En tant que mu'tazilite, 'Abd al-Jabbār démontre l'inimitabilité du Qur'ān à la lumière de sa doctrine du *mu'jiza* (le miracle apologétique d'un prophète) et de sa doctrine du *Khalq al-Qur'ān* (la nature créée du Qur'ān). Ce mémoire soutient que même si la théorie du *mu'jiza* d'Abd al-Jabbār est incroyablement similaire à celle des Ash'arites, il en demeure que l'interprétation d'Abd al-Jabbār ainsi que ses sources de référence ne sont pas d'origine ash'arite mais plutôt qu'elles sont issues de l'École de

Jubbā'ī.

Mis à part la démonstration de l'inimitabilité du Qur'ān par le *kalām*, 'Abd al-Jabbār analyse sa nature insurpassable selon la singularité littéraire du Livre Saint, la *faṣāḥa*. Cet argument est distinct des théories de ses prédécesseurs. De ce fait, ce mémoire examine les travaux concernant l'*i'jāz* des prédécesseurs et des contemporains d' 'Abd al-Jabbār afin de mettre en lumière la singularité de la théorie défendue par ce dernier.

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Apart from the debt owed to my family, my greatest thanks are due to Professor Issa J. Boullata, my supervisor. It was he who introduced me to the works of *i'jāz* of which his own knowledge was both extensive and penetrating. His kind encouragement, passion for reading the whole draft and knowledge of the Arabic language are well appreciated.

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Finally, I wish to express my deepest debt and gratitude to my beloved parents: to my father who has tirelessly encouraged my interest in Islamic Studies and provided me with knowledge of Arabic and French, which were very helpful in completing this thesis; a very special debt of gratitude is owed to my mother who sacrificed her time and left her beloved husband for six months in order to accompany me and my wife in Canada and to take care of our newborn daughter while we were busy with our academic activities; to my brothers and sisters, I extend my deep appreciation and sincere thanks for their moral and intellectual support.

Montreal, May 1995

Yusuf Rahman

NOTES

A. References

Throughout this thesis the sources of reference have been placed in footnotes at the bottom of every page. While each source has been referred to in full detail at its first occurrence in a particular chapter, from its second occurrence on, only the author, the title (in short form), and the (volume and) page number were recorded. The primary sources, however, have been abbreviated throughout the thesis. As such, it is suggested to consult their full title in the bibliography.

In order to achieve a clear chronological picture of the life of a particular scholar, I first quote the date of his death according to the Muslim calendar (Anno Hijra=A.H.) and then, after an oblique stroke, according to the Gregorian calendar (Common Era=C.E.). Each date is placed immediately after the scholar's name and enclosed in brackets, resulting for example in: 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 410/1024-1025). The exact dates are taken from the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* and other sources.

All Qur'ānic references are quoted verbatim from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Holy Qur'ān: Text, Translation and Commentary* (New York: American Trust Publication, 1977). If otherwise quoted, the source is indicated. Each Qur'ānic quotation is preceded by a reference to the Qur'ānic chapter (*sūra*) wherein it occurs and, after a separating stroke, the verse (*āya*) is mentioned. Both are enclosed in brackets, as for instance (Q. 24/35).

B. Transliteration

The system of transliteration of Arabic words and names applied in this thesis is that used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, with a slight modification.

ب = b	ذ = dh	ط = t	ل = l
ت = t	ر = r	ظ = z	م = m
ث = th	ز = z	ع = '	ن = n
ج = j	س = s	غ = gh	و = w
ح = h	ش = sh	ف = f	ء = '
خ = kh	ص = s	ق = q	ي = y
د = d	ض = d	ك = k	

Short: َ = a; ِ = i; ُ = u.

Long : َ = ā; ِ = ī; ُ = ū.

Diphthongs: اَيّ = ay; اَوّ = aw.

Long with *tashdīd*: اَيّ and اَوّ, instead of īya and ūwa, we employ iyya and uwwa respectively.

In the case of *tā' marbūṭa* (ة) *h* is omitted, unless it occurs within an *idāfa* where it is written *at*.

The *hamza* (ء) occurring in the initial position is omitted.

C. Abbreviations

<i>AI</i>	<i>Annales Islamologiques</i> (Cairo)
<i>AJISS</i>	<i>The American Journal of Islamic Studies</i> (Silver Spring)
b.	ibn
<i>BFAUA</i>	<i>Bulletin of Faculty of Arts University of Alexandria</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
<i>EI¹</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> (The First Edition). 1913-1936. Ed. M.Th. Houtsama (et al.) Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987.
<i>EI²</i>	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> (The Second Edition). Ed. H.A.R. Gibb (et al.) Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954-
<i>Eir</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i> . Ed. Ehsan Yarshater. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982-
<i>ER</i>	<i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> . Ed. Mircea Eliade. New York: Macmillan, 1987
d.	died
d.c.	died circa
<i>HI</i>	<i>Hamdard Islamicus</i> (Karachi)
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamic Culture</i> (Hyderabad)
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of the Middle East Studies</i> (London)
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i> (Tel Aviv)
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i> (Paris)
<i>JAL</i>	<i>Journal of Arabic Literature</i> (Leiden)
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (New Haven)
<i>JHP</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i> (La Jolla)

<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> (Chicago)
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> (London)
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i> (Jerusalem)
<i>MIDEO</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire</i>
<i>MMIA</i>	<i>Majallat al-Majma' al-Ilmī al-'Arabī</i> (Damascus)
Q.	The Qur'ān
<i>REI</i>	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i> (Paris)
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i> (Rome)
<i>RT</i>	<i>Revue Thomiste</i> (Paris)
<i>SEI</i>	<i>Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> . Ed. H.A.R. Gibb & J.H. Kramers. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i> (Paris)
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> (Stuttgart)
<i>ZGAIW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften</i> (Frankfurt)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT -----	i
RÉSUMÉ -----	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -----	v
NOTES -----	vii
A. REFERENCES -----	vii
B. TRANSLITERATIONS -----	viii
C. ABBREVIATIONS -----	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS -----	xi
INTRODUCTION -----	1
CHAPTER ONE: THE DOCTRINE OF <i>MU'JIZA</i> -----	6
A. Nature: Causality or ' <i>Āda</i> -----	6
1. "Nature" in the Baghdād Mu'tazilite Doctrine -----	9
2. The Rejection of "Nature" in the Baṣra Mu'tazilite System -----	14
3. The Rejection of "Nature" and <i>Tawallud</i> by the Ash'arites -----	19
B. <i>Mu'jiza</i> and Its Possibility -----	22
1. The Baghdād Mu'tazilites on the Possibility of <i>Mu'jiza</i> -----	23
2. The Baṣra Mu'tazilite Doctrine of <i>Mu'jiza</i> -----	25
3. The Ash'arite Doctrine of <i>Mu'jiza</i> -----	33
CHAPTER TWO: THE THEORY OF <i>I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN</i> -----	38
A. Earliest Works on <i>I'jāz</i> -----	38
B. Reasons for Writing on <i>Nubuwwa</i> -----	40
1. <i>Barāhima</i> -----	40
2. Al-Nazzām -----	46
C. The Works of 'Abd al-Jabbār's Predecessors -----	48
1. Al-Rummānī's <i>Nukat</i> -----	48
2. Al-Khattābī's <i>Bayān</i> -----	52
3. Al-Bāqillānī's <i>I'jāz al-Qur'ān</i> -----	56

CHAPTER THREE: 'ABD AL-JABBĀR'S <i>I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN</i> -----	65
A. Name and Nature of the Book -----	65
1. The Title -----	65
2. The Structure of the Text -----	68
3. The Plan of the Text -----	70
a. <i>Al-Mughnī</i> -----	70
b. <i>Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa</i> -----	73
c. <i>Al-Uṣūl al-khamsa</i> -----	74
d. <i>[Ta'līq] Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa</i> -----	76
B. The <i>Sā'il</i> and <i>Mas'ūl</i> in the Text -----	78
1. <i>Mas'ūl</i> -----	78
2. <i>Sā'il</i> -----	79
C. 'Abd al-Jabbār's Theory of <i>I'jāz</i> -----	84
D. 'Abd al-Jabbār's Influence on Future Generations -----	93
1. Al-Jurjānī -----	93
2. Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī -----	95
CONCLUSION -----	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY -----	100

INTRODUCTION

Say: "If the whole of mankind and jinns
were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān,
they could not produce the like thereof,
even if they backed up each other.
(Q. 17/88)

The notion of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* according to the Muslims indicates that the Qur'ān is a miracle (*mu'jiza*) bestowed on Muḥammad. Both terms, *i'jāz* and *mu'jiza*, come from the same verb. While *mu'jiza* is the active participle of *a'jaza*, *i'jāz* is its verbal noun.¹ A.J. Wensinck in his book, *The Muslim Creed*, asserts that a *mu'jiza* is an "apologetic or evidentiary miracle," since, he continues, "[it is] granted [by God] to the Prophets ... to prove their vocation and their sincerity, in such away that their opponents are silenced."² Hence the doctrine of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* serves the dual purpose of proving the divine source of the Muslim holy book, and the veracity of Muḥammad's prophethood, to whom it was revealed.³

¹See E.W. Lane, *Lexicon*, pp. 1960-1961. See also A.J. Wensinck, "Mu'djiza," *EF*, vol. III, p. 295.

²A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), p. 224. See also W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: an extended survey* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), p. 78; Richard J. McCarthy in his analytical summary of al-Bāqillānī's *Kitāb al-bayān*, p. 14.

³See Issa J. Boullata, "I'jāz," in *ER*, vol. 7, p. 87. Cf. G.E. von Grunebaum, "I'djāz," in *EF*, vol. III, p. 1018. John Wansbrough, however, argues in his *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 78, that the dogma of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* did not arise merely as evidence of Muḥammad's prophethood but also, and more importantly, as a recognition of the

Interest in the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* is reflected in a plethora of studies and in an equally large number of different approaches. Abdul Aleem, for instance, points out that there were at least three ways by which Muslims discussed the Qur'ānic *i'jāz*. Firstly, it was approached through systematic exegesis (*tafsīr*) of *taḥaddī* verses, such as 2/23-24; 10/38; 11/13; 17/88; 52/33-34, which challenge Muḥammad's opponents to produce a document similar to the Qur'ān. Secondly, *i'jāz* was discussed in conjunction with the question of whether the Qur'ān, as the speech of God, is eternal or created. Lastly, the issue of *i'jāz* was brought up concomitantly with the dispute over *ilāhiyyāt* (nature of God) and *nubuwwāt* (prophethood).⁴ As such, one can declare that it was among the *mutakallimūn* that this fundamental issue was mostly delved into.

In addition to these three approaches, there are numerous works of Arabic literary criticism which have studied the text of the Qur'ān and examined its style, such as *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān* of al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), *Majāz al-Qur'ān* of Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/824) and *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān* of Ibn Quṭayba (d. 276/889), although, as G.J.H. van Gelder says, "[they] did not yet amount to a theory of the inimitability of the Qur'ān."⁵

Not surprisingly, most works of *i'jāz* seem to combine both types of study: *kalām* and literary criticism (*al-naqd al-adabī*). They seem, even, to mutually influence each other. For example, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868-869), who was a Mu'tazilite, and al-Bāqillānī

Qur'ān's authority in the life of the growing Muslim community.

⁴Abdul Aleem, "'Ijazu'l-Qur'an [sic]," in *IC*, vol. 7 (1933), pp. 70-71.

⁵G.J.H. van Gelder, *Beyond the Line. Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), p. 5.

(d. 403/1013), who was an Ash'arite, respectively wrote *Nazm al-Qur'ān* and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* which could be regarded as treatises on literary criticism, as well as pieces of work reflecting the doctrine of their respective schools of thought.⁶

Unlike the *I'jāz* of al-Bāqillānī which had been studied extensively,⁷ the work of his contemporary adversary, *Qāḍī al-quḍāt* 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024-1025),⁸ a respected leader of the School of the Baṣra Mu'tazila in his time, has not gained the same attention. Indeed, it is even more sad to notice that some scholarly books, which dealt with both the history of the development of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* and the history of Arabic literary criticism, completely neglect 'Abd al-Jabbār's book and do not even bestow a passing remark on it.⁹ Thus, for the above reasons, this thesis will investigate 'Abd al-

⁶Cf. M. Khalafallah, "Qur'anic Studies as an Important Factor in the Development of Arabic Literary Criticism," *BFAUA*, vol. 6 (1952), p. 3.

⁷See J. Bouman, *Le Conflit autour du Coran et la Solution d'al Bāqillānī* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Campen, 1959). Cf. chapter II.

⁸For his biography see W. Madelung, "'Abd-al-Jabbār," in *EIr*, vol. I, pp. 116-118; Josef van Ess, "'Abd al-Jabbār," *ER*, vol. X, pp. 220-229. 'Abd al-Jabbār's other concepts have been dealt with most extensively in J.R.T.M. Peters, *God's Created Speech: a Study in the Speculative Theology of the Mu'tazilī Qāḍī l-Quḍāt Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976); G.F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: the Ethics of 'Abd al-Jabbār* (Oxford: 1971); G. Monnot, *Penseurs Musulmans et Religions Iraniennes. 'Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1974).

⁹On the history of the development of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, see Aleem, "'Ijaz," pp. 64-82, 215-233; Na'im al-Ḥimsī, "Tārīkh fikrat i'jāz al-Qur'ān mundhu al-bi'tha al-nabawiyya ḥattā al-'aṣr al-ḥādīr, ma'a naqd wa ta'līq," in *MMIA*, vol. 27 (1952), pp. 240-263, 418-433, 571-586; vol. 28 (1953), pp. 61-78, 242-256; vol. 29 (1954), pp. 104-114, 239-251, 417-424, 573-579; vol. 30 (1955), pp. 106-113, 299-311. On the history of Arabic literary criticism, see Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, *Athar al-Qur'ān fī taṭawwur al-naqd al-'arabī ilā al-qarn al-rābi' al-hijrī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1961); Iḥsān 'Abbās, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī 'inda al-'arab: naqd al-shi'r min al-qarn al-thānī ḥattā al-qarn al-thāmin al-hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1978).

Jabbār's concept of Qur'ānic *i'jāz*, and will compare it with that of his predecessors and that of his contemporary al-Bāqillānī. This thesis will also investigate the impact of his doctrine on the development of Islamic thought, particularly on the idea of *i'jāz*. In dealing with this issue, the present thesis will consist of three chapters.

Since the idea of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* bears two important concepts: *i'jāz* (miracle) and *al-Qur'ān* as the speech of God, the first chapter will be devoted to the first concept, namely, the idea of miracle, its possibility and the manner of its occurrence. The chapter will also examine the difference between 'Abd al-Jabbār's idea on the one hand, and that of the Baghdād Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites on the other hand. The latter concept, i.e., the speech of God, will not be discussed separately since it has been surveyed extensively by J.R.T.M. Peters¹⁰ and J. Bouman,¹¹ in their highly important works.

The second chapter will study the theories of *i'jāz* of two of 'Abd al-Jabbār's predecessors, namely: al-Rummānī (d. 386/996), al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) and one of his contemporaries, al-Bāqillānī. The aim of this study is to provide a general notion of how the concept of *i'jāz* had been formulated and explained, and yet remained an issue of dispute among Muslim scholars. It is also hoped that this exposition will provide a large framework against which the thought of 'Abd al-Jabbār can be measured.

The last chapter will focus on 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of *i'jāz*. Reference will not

¹⁰Peters, *God's Created Speech*.

¹¹J. Bouman, "The Doctrine of 'Abd al-Djabbār on the Qur'ān as the Created Word of Allāh," in *Verbum* (Nov. 14, 1964), pp. 67-86.

only be made to his main work *al-Mughnī*, part XVI,¹² but also to his other works, such as *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*¹³ and *al-Uṣūl al-khamṣa*,¹⁴ as well as, the works of his students, in particular, [*Ta'līq*] *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamṣa*.¹⁵

¹²Ed. Amīn al-Khulī.

¹³Ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān.

¹⁴Ed. D. Gimaret.

¹⁵Ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DOCTRINE OF *MU'JIZA*

A. Nature: Causality or '*Āda*

The doctrine of *mu'jiza* is closely related to the concept of nature (*ṭabī'a*) and the omnipotence of God. This can be shown, for example, from al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) preface to the Seventeenth Discussion of *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, in which he asserts that he denies causality¹ in order to uphold the omnipotence of God and to account for miracles.

"It is necessary for us to discuss this matter [natural causality] in order to assert the existence of miracles and for another reason, in order to preserve that belief which those who are perfect in belief have attained, namely, that God can do all things."²

The question that arises then is whether the *mutakallimūn* who believe in the doctrine of causality (nature), automatically deny the miracles and the omnipotence of God or not?

In examining this problem, this chapter will be divided into two parts. First, it will discuss

¹Harry A. Wolfson states that the term "causality" is often considered equivalent to the term "nature" and vice versa. It is evident in al-Ghazālī's denial of causality; when the latter says that the philosophers who support causality believe that things affect each other by a **nature** which they possess. See Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 559.

²See *TF*, p. 226. Cf. Simon van den Bergh's translation in *Averroes' Tahafut al-Tahafut* (London: Luzac & Co., 1954), p. 314. Although in rejecting the concept of causality, al-Ghazālī denies that he posits any specific metaphysical view, yet it is clear that his arguments are those of the Ash'arite occasionalist. For an analytical study of his being defender of the Ash'arites, see M.E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī's Second Causal Theory in the 17th Discussion of His *Tahāfut*," in *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (New York: Caravan Books, 1981), pp. 99-107.

how the Schools of *kalām* in the classical period³ i.e., the Mu'tazilites, "premiers penseurs de l'Islam," as A.N. Nader calls them⁴ and their opponents, the Ash'arites,⁵ conceived of the nature (*ṭabī'a*) and the authority of God. Basing myself on their teachings on nature, I will then examine the doctrine of *mu'jiza* in the second part of the chapter.

Preference for a discussion of nature has been given for the following reasons. Firstly, nature is the place or the macro cosmos wherein a miracle occurs, regardless of whether the latter is regarded as breaking the laws of nature, or as being one of its laws. Furthermore, in connection with our topic, it is quite possible that this discussion can give us a clue to understanding the Baghdād Mu'tazilite doctrine, most of which has not been studied extensively, particularly the doctrine of miracle. As is well known, in contrast to

³R.M. Frank divides the history of *kalām* into three periods: early, classical and late. For this division and the characteristics of the three groups see Frank's *Beings and Their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), p. 7.

⁴Albert N. Nader, *Le Système Philosophique des Mu'tazila (Premiers Penseurs de l'Islam)* (Beirut: Editions des lettres orientales, 1956). When we mention in this chapter the Mu'tazilites, we mean primarily the Baṣra Mu'tazilites and the Baghdād Mu'tazilites of the second phase. The former school is represented by Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/916), his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933) and their students, while the latter is led by Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, also known as al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931) and his followers.

⁵The followers of al-Māturīdī (d. 331/942) are not included in this discussion since this group, as Alnoor Dhanani puts it, "does not seem to have played a major role in the development of *kalām* in the central heartlands of the Muslim world of the time." Alnoor Dhanani, *The Physical Theory of Kalām: Atoms, Space, and Void in Basrian Mu'tazilī Cosmology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), p. 6. Besides, R.M. Frank has written "Notes and Remarks on the *ṭabā'i*' in the Teaching of al-Māturīdī," in *Mélanges d'Islamologie: volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis*, ed. Pierre Salmon (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), pp. 137-149.

the extant sources of the Baṣra School of the Mu'tazilite which have been preserved, such as the works of 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1024-1025) and those of his students,⁶ the texts of the Baghdādīs have not survived.⁷ Most of al-Balkhī's doctrine we get from the reports preserved in the systematic works of Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs, and from Imamite treatises such as *Awā'il al-maqālāt fī al-madhāhib wa-al-mukhtārāt* by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān al-Ḥārithī al-Mufīd, known as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022).⁸ Wilferd Madelung introduces a manuscript of a work by

⁶One of 'Abd al-Jabbār's fundamental works is *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa al-'adl*, several editions under the direction of Ibrāhīm Madkūr and the supervision of Ṭāḥā Ḥusayn (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-miṣriyya al-'amma li al-ta'līf wa al-anbā' wa al-nashr, 1960-1965). For a general description of the contents of the whole work, see G.C. Anawati, R. Caspar and Mahmoud el-Khodeiri, "Une somme inédite de théologie mo'tazilite: le *Moghni* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār," *MIDEO*, vol. 4 (1957), pp. 281-316, and Mahmoud el-Khodeiri, "Deux Nouvelles Sections du *Moghni* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār," *ibid*, vol. 5 (1958), pp. 417-424.

The works of 'Abd al-Jabbār's students include Mānkḍīm Shesdīr's (d. 425/1034) [*Ta'līq*] *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1965). For the attribution of this work see D. Gimaret, "Les *Uṣūl al-ḥamsa* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār et leur commentaires," *AI*, vol. 15 (1979), pp. 47-96. In addition to *Sharḥ*, there is *al-Masā'il fī al-khilāf bayna al-baṣriyyīn wa al-baghdādiyyīn* of Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī (d. first half of the fifth/eleventh century), ed. Ma'n Ziyāda and Ridwān al-Sayyid (Beirut: Ma'had al-inmā' al-'arabī, 1975). For more bibliography of the al-Jubbā'īs see Gimaret, "Matériaux pour une bibliographie des Ḡubbā'ī," *JA*, 264 (1976), pp. 277-332; and idem, "Matériaux pour une bibliographie des Jubba'i: Note complémentaire," in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. Michael E. Marmura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 31-38.

⁷The only surviving work by al-Balkhī is his *Maqālāt* which has been edited by Fu'ād Sayyid in his edition of 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Balkhī and al-Jushamī's (d. 494/1101) *Faḍl al-i'tizāl*, pp. 63-119.

⁸Ed. 'Abbāsquḷī "Wā'iḏ Charandābī," with notes and introduction by Faḍl Allāh al-Zanjānī, 2nd ed. (Tabriz: Maktabat Ḥaqīqat, 1952). This work has been translated into French by Dominique Sourdel, "L'Imamisme vu par le Cheikh al-Mufīd," in *REI*, vol. 40 (1972), pp. 217-296. In addition, Martin J. McDermott has written on al-Shaykh al-Mufīd's doctrine under the title *The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022)* (Beirut:

Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī, a Muṭarrifī scholar,⁹ entitled *al-Burhān al-rā'iq al-mukhalliṣ min warṭ al-maḍā'iq*, which was strongly influenced by the Baghdād School.¹⁰ Unfortunately the present writer could not consult this enlightening and revealing work.

1. "Nature" in the Baghdād Mu'tazilite doctrine

Josef van Ess quite correctly characterizes the Baghdād Mu'tazilite doctrines as having a "high respect for the laws of nature and a cautious handling of the concept of God's omnipotence."¹¹ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī, chief representative of the Baghdād Mu'tazilite School in the early 4th/10th century, following the doctrines of his teacher, al-Khayyāṭ¹² (ca. 220-300/835-913) who is reported to have held a certain self determination for the created world, believes in the existence of natural qualities (*ṭabā'i'*) which determine the functioning of bodies and guarantee the preservation of the species.

In his *Awā'il al-maḡālāt*, al-Mufīd, who for the most part agrees with al-Ka'bī, reports that the latter had declared that things have natures which dispose them to act in a certain way. He says:

Dar el-machreq éditeurs, 1978).

⁹Concerning the Muṭarrifiyya sect, see W. Madelung, "Muṭarrifiyya," *EP*², vol. VII, pp. 772-773.

¹⁰See Madelung, "A Muṭarrifī manuscript," in *Proceedings of the VIth Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), pp. 75-83.

¹¹See his entry on "Abu'l-Qāsem al-Balkī al-Ka'bī," in *Elr*, vol. I, p. 361.

¹²For his biography and doctrine see J. van Ess, "al-Khayyāṭ," *EP*², vol. IV, pp. 1162-1164.

"I say that natures are determinant cause (*ma'ānī*)¹³ inhering (*taḥillu*) in substances (*jawāhir*) by which the action is prepared to be done. The eye (*al-baṣar*), for example, and the natural disposition (*ṭabī'a*) in it which make it ready to have sensation and perception inhere in it. And, for example, the ear (*al-sam'*), the healthy nose, and palates (*al-lahawāt*). And, for example, the existence of nature in the fire by which it blazes, and by virtue of which the fire burns the combustible things. The case of these and similar examples is quite clear.

Chapter. And I say that what is generated (*yatawallad*) by nature is the act of the one who caused it by acting upon the thing which has the nature. It is not really an act of a nature.

This is the doctrine of Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī. It is against the doctrine of the Mu'tazilites on natures, and against the atheist philosophers too in what they hold about acts of natures. Al-Jubbā'ī has denied it too, along with his son, the ignorant traditionists, and the partisans of divinely created human acts and determinism."¹⁴

The above-quoted statement reveals explicitly at least two basic concepts of al-Ka'bī, namely, natural causation and *tawlīd*. In the first paragraph, al-Mufīd, along with al-Ka'bī insists on natural causality, that there is a necessary connection between a natural efficient cause and its effect because of the object's intrinsic nature. In addition, al-Ka'bī, according to Abū Rashīd, believes that due to this proper characteristic (*khāṣṣiyya*) of things, barley cannot grow out of a grain of wheat, nor can any kind of animal come out of human seed (*nutfā*).¹⁵ It is quite evident, as van Ess suggests, that in this case al-Ka'bī agrees with the thesis of al-Khayyāt, who, in agreement with al-Nazzām (ca. 165-221/782-836), maintains that it is impossible to say that God could create (*ikhtara'a*)

¹³For the different meanings of "*ma'nā*" in the field of *Kalām*, see R.M. Frank, "*al-Ma'nā*: Some reflections on the technical meanings of the term in the *Kalām* and its use in the physics of Mu'ammār," *JAOS*, vol. 87, pp. 248-259.

¹⁴Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 82-83. Cf. McDermott, *Theology*, p. 215.

¹⁵Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 133. Cf. Marie Bernand, "La Critique de la Notion de Nature (*Ṭab'*) par le *Kalām*," *SI*, vol. 51 (1980), p. 90, where she lists four theses of al-Ka'bī's doctrine of nature recorded in the *Masā'il*.

heating (*muskhin*) from coolness and cooling (*mubarrid*) from heat.¹⁶

Because of this belief in intrinsic nature, al-Ka'bī consequently argues that God cannot act contrary to the laws of nature. He cannot, for example, act contrarily to the property of weight that is inherent in all things. Al-Mufīd says:

"On a heavy object: whether it is possible for it to stand in thin air without suspension or support.

I say it is impossible and untenable. Calling it possible would lead to contradictions.

This is the doctrine of Abū al-Qāsim and a number of the Mu'tazila and most of the ancestors (*awā'il*). Opposed to them are the Baṣra Mu'tazilites. And it has been said that the only Mu'tazilites against it are al-Jubbā'ī, his son, and their followers."¹⁷

Al-Ka'bī further believes that God cannot intervene directly in the course of things. Abū Rashīd records that in his *'Uyūn al-masā'il*, al-Ka'bī had rendered that it is impossible for God to move a heavy body without employing another body with which He pushes and pulls. In addition, it is not possible for God to produce spontaneously a materially uncaused (*mukhtara'a*) movement in a body, without its being generated by a mediate cause (*sabab*).¹⁸ This concept of indirect causality by God is rejected by the Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs who state affirmatively that God can freely produce all His effects directly and without intermediaries.¹⁹

¹⁶See, Al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār*, p. 41.

¹⁷Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 108. See also McDermott's *Theology*, p. 211.

¹⁸Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 196. Cf. Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 108, in which he does not state explicitly that God cannot intervene directly. Rather, he utilizes the "conditional clause" and says that "if materially uncaused (*ikhtirā'*) motion could exist in it, then Mount Abū Qubays could stand in the air by a rest (*sukūn*) that arose spontaneously (*ikhtara'a*) in it, without underpinning or suspension."

¹⁹Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 50, 94; Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 196.

The second concept put forward by al-Mufīd in his discussion of *al-ṭibā'* (natures)²⁰ is the concept of *tawlīd* which lies in the second paragraph.²¹ The explanation of this concept is that one thing is generated by (*tawallada 'an*) another act, another accident. When the free subject (*qādir*) produces an accident, the latter generates (*wallada*) another accident; and this latter accident is called *mutawallid* (generated act). An example of this is the impact of two bodies which generates sound and reasoning, which, in turn generate science. Generated acts have, therefore, two relations: a relation to a secondary cause, and a relation to an acting subject which is really the one who produces and generates it.

In contrast to the Ash'arīs who hold that God creates human acts, the Mu'tazilīs maintain that it is man, not God who creates human actions. These acts are either direct acts (*mubāshir/mubtada'*), i.e., the acts which are caused directly by the able subject within his substrate (*fī ḥayyizih*), or generated ones (*mutawallid*),²² which are carried

²⁰Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, pp. 82-83.

²¹This theory was probably invented by Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), the founder of the Baghdad School. For his doctrine of *al-tawlīd*, see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 402; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal* I, p. 44; al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, p. 157 and al-Khayyāt, *Intiṣār*, p. 52.

²²For a different opinion about human acts see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, pp. 400-408 and 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, pp. 11-14. Judith K. Hecker has translated the latter book for her dissertation under the title "Reason and Responsibility: An Explanatory Translation of *Kitāb al-Tawlīd* from al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawhīd wa-l-'Adl by Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadḥānī, with Introduction and Notes." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Berkeley, 1975. Concerning human acts, D. Gimaret divides the Mu'tazilīs into two main groups: the minimalists who limit human power and deny the latter's *tawallud*, and the maximalists characterized by their assertion of *tawlīd*. See Gimaret, *Théories de l'Acte Humain en Théologie Musulmane* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1980), pp. 26-47.

out outside of a person's own body and are brought about by means of another act or another accident. The aim of the Mu'tazila in maintaining that man is the creator of his own acts is twofold. The first is theological, that is to establish God's justice in recompensing and punishing men, and the other is moral, i.e., to insist on man's responsibility for his action.²³

Not only does al-Ka'bī's *tawlīd* reject the "created actions" of al-Ash'arī but it also repudiates the concept of al-Jāhiz's "nature" (d. 255/868-869), al-Nazzām's "necessation of a natural disposition" and Mu'ammār's nature (d. 215/830), which say that it is nature which causes the generated acts.²⁴ Al-Ka'bī, however, holds that the *mutawallidāt* are the result of the acting subject; "what is generated (*yatawallad*) by nature is the act of the one who caused it by acting upon the thing which has the nature. It is not really an act of nature."²⁵

Thus, the conclusion which can be drawn from these reports is that the Baghdādī Mu'tazilīs, besides their belief in the volitional cause of man, assert firmly the existence

²³See M. Schwarz, "Acquisition' (*Kasb*) in Early *Kalām*," in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition: Essays presented by his friends and pupils to Richard Walzer on his seventieth birthday*, ed. S.M. Stern, A. Hourani and V. Brown (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), p. 356.

²⁴For al-Jāhiz's concept of nature see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 407; al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, p. 175; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 11; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p.52; and Gimaret's note in *Religions*, p. 257. For al-Nazzām's see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 404; al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, p. 139; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 11; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 38; and Gimaret's notes in *Religions*, pp. 204-205. And for Mu'ammār's view of nature see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 405; al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, p. 152; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 11; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 46; and Gimaret's note in *Religions*, pp. 233-234.

²⁵Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 83.

of natural causality which consequently causes them to hold that God cannot act directly upon bodies, or in the words of Dominique Sourdel where she compares the doctrine of God's Will of the Baṣra Mu'tazilite with that of the Baghdad school: "... la position du Mu'tazilite al-Balḥī ... confond cette volonté divine avec les actes et les ordres divins."²⁶

2. The Rejection of "Nature" in the Baṣra Mu'tazilite System

The Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs vehemently oppose the concept of nature held by the Baghdadīs. The Baṣrians assert that the thesis espoused by the Baghdadīs is unintelligible (*ghayr ma'qūl*)²⁷ and faulty, because, argues Abū Rashīd, nature is inconceivable with either acquired knowledge (*muktasab*) or necessary knowledge (*ḍarūrī*).²⁸ The latter can be in turn subdivided into: a direct way, intuition (*badīha*) and an indirect way, i.e., perception, information, and empirical experience (*ikhtibār wa mumārasa*).²⁹ Abū Rashīd's

²⁶Sourdel, "L'Imamisme," p. 239.

²⁷Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 133. Cf. Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 120; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 14. For Abū Rashīd's criticism of nature, see Bernand, "Critique," pp. 90-98.

²⁸*Ibid.* George F. Hourani respectively defines *ḍarūrī* and *muktasab* as "knowledge which we have no choice but to accept it when it is presented to our minds," and "knowledge that results from a process of discursive proof." See his *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of 'Abd al-Jabbār* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 20-24. Cf. J.R.T.M. Peters, *God's Created Speech: a study in the speculative theology of the Mu'tazilī Qāḍī l-Qudāt Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), pp. 53-55.

²⁹Cf. Mānkḍīm's dual classification of necessary knowledge: the direct way constitutes knowledge which belongs to the "completeness of reason" (*kamāl al-'aql*), such as information, and the indirect way comprises the knowledge of perception. See, *Sharḥ*, pp. 50-51. Gimaret argues that this classification is not, as Peters suggests (Peters' *God's Created Speech*, p. 53), 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory. On the other hand, the latter classifies the knowledge of perception within direct knowledge, and the knowledge resulting from reason within the indirect knowledge. See Gimaret's review of Peters *God's Created*

master, 'Abd al-Jabbār, citing the Jubbā'īs' reason for the falsity of the concept of nature, affirms that an act (*fi'l*) can only be produced by a capable agent (*qādir*),³⁰ including both God and man in the category of the capable agent. The distinction between the two is that God is *qādir per se* (*bi-dhātih, li-mā huwa 'alayh fī nafsih*) and whose "being *qādir*" (*kawnuh qādir*) is a *ḥāl*. The corporeal agent, on the other hand, is *qādir* through the accident of *qudra* that is present in him.³¹

Instead of attributing natural events to nature, this school of thought alludes them preferably to the will and power of God. In this occasionalistic view, God, the followers of the Baṣra Mu'tazilite state, is quite capable of making barley grow out of a grain of wheat and bringing any kind of animal out of human seed (*nufṣa*).³² In another context, Abū Rashīd states that God can also let a heavy body rest suspended in the air.³³

Thus, the Baṣra School of the Mu'tazila prefers to use the notion of *'āda* (custom), instead of the concept of nature. This custom is God's creation which He can freely interrupt for any important reason, such as to prove the authenticity of a prophet.³⁴

Speech, in *JA*, vol. 265 (1977), p. 392.

³⁰'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 14.

³¹See Frank, "*al-Ma'nā*," p. 250. 'Abd al-Jabbār classifies all human acts into three categories: direct acts (*mubtada'* or *mubāshir*); generated acts (*mutawallid*); and both direct and generated acts. See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 13.

³²Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 133.

³³*Ibid*, p. 195.

³⁴See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 183, 189. Although Abū Rashīd criticizes the application of the notion of *'āda* to some problems, he does not, contrary to Wolfson's assumption, entirely discredit it either. See Wolfson, *Philosophy*, pp. 547-548. In his discussion of *mu'jiza* and *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, Abū Rashīd mostly uses the term *'āda*

This occasionalistic theory of the Baṣra Mu'tazila does not necessarily negate the concept of causality. The Jubbā'īs admit two kinds of causality:³⁵ first, necessary causality and second quasi-necessary causality. The former is the *ma'nā'illa* (determinant cause) which determines or specifies the designation or state of being (*ḥukm, ḥāl, ṣifa*); for example "motion" is the necessary cause which determines one's being to be "mobile", while "ability" (*qudra*) determines someone to be "*qādir*." Regarding this '*illa*, M. Schwarz refers to 'Abd al-Jabbār's statement in his *Mughnī*, part VI, p. 198, as follows:³⁶

We say that motion, rather than the body, is the cause ('*illa*) (of the fact) that the moving (body) moves. For motion cannot possibly exist without the body (in which it inheres) moving. Whereas the body may exist without moving.

The relation between '*illa* and *ḥukm* is so correlated that the presence or absence of the one implies or entails that of the other.

Similarly, the Ash'arites approve of this necessary causality. Al-Bāqillānī, the contemporary adversary of 'Abd al-Jabbār, writes in his *Tamhīd*:

The proof affirming the *accidents* is that a body moves after it rested. This is so, either *per se* (*li-nafsihi*) or in virtue of a cause ('*illa*). Were it to move *per se* it would not be possible that it should rest. Thus (the fact), that it is possible for it to rest after moving, is a proof that it moves in virtue of a cause (*li-'illa*), namely

and *intiqāḍ al-'āda*. See Abū Rashīd, *al-Nubuwwa in Ziyādāt al-sharḥ*, ed. R.C. Martin, pp. 1, 2, 5 ff.

³⁵See D. Gimaret, *La Doctrine d'al-Ash'arī* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1990), p. 59. See also Frank's "Kalām and Philosophy, A Perspective from One Problem," in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. P. Morwedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), pp. 76-77.

³⁶See Schwarz, "The Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's Refutation of the Aš'arite Doctrine of 'Acquisition' (*Kasb*)," *IOS*, vol. 6 (1976), p. 241.

motion. This proof is the proof of affirming colours, and smells, composition, life and death, knowledge and ignorance, power and impotence, and the like.³⁷

Besides the *'illa*, the Baṣra School presents another kind of causality which is unanimously rejected by the Ash'arites. This cause is called *sabab*³⁸ (generating cause) or *tawallud*. Like the Baghdād School, the Baṣrians too believe in the concept of *tawallud*. The difference between the two is that the Baghdādīs maintain that the effects of a generated cause follow with necessity.³⁹ The Baṣra School, on the other hand, insists that the generating cause (*sabab*) does not necessitate the generated effects (*musabbab*).⁴⁰ The relation between the two is quasi-necessary; the one who necessitates the generated effect is the one who determines the *sabab*.

The Baṣra Mu'tazilites' concept of *tawallud* also diverges from Bishr b. Mu'tamir's extreme theory. The latter asserts that man can create, by way of generation, color, taste and smell, sight, hearing and the rest of the sensations in another. This is in direct contrast to the ideas espoused by the Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs. The latter, although

³⁷See, Frank, "*Ma'nā*," p. 250.

³⁸While both terms *'illa* and *sabab* are used interchangeably in *falsafa*, the *mutakallimūn* utilize them differently. Gimaret defines the former as "cause qualificante" and the latter as "cause génératrice." See *Doctrine*, p. 59. See also, L. Gardet, "'Illa," in *EP*², vol. III, pp. 1129-1132; van Ess, "The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology," in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrossowitz, 1970), pp. 21-50.

³⁹See al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 85. "every generated effect is a necessary effect."

⁴⁰Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 49. Hecker misses the important word "necessarily" when she translates *al-sabab fī al-ḥaqīqa lā yūjib al-musabbab*. See, Hecker, "Reason," p. 127. Cf. Idem, "Some Notes on Kitāb al-Tawlīd from the Mughnī of the Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār," *JSAI*, vol. 2 (1980), p. 302, n. 123.

admitting the existence of these acts "at the time of our action" (*'inda fi 'linā*), insist that the generated acts are in reality the result of *'āda* (habit) established by God. These generated acts, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, "come about upon the occurrence of other things for [various] reasons, and they do not come to be in the same way" (*lā tajrī 'alā ṭarīqa wāḥida*).⁴¹

Thus, it seems to be quite clear from their discussion of nature and generated effects, vis-a-vis the direct acts belonging to the original acts of humans, that the Baṣra School upholds the occasionalistic view. This view, as S. Pines has shown in his book *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre*,⁴² paved the way to a total denial of causality by the Ash'arites, as we will see below.

3. The Rejection of "Nature" and *Tawallud* by the Ash'arites⁴³

The Ash'arites are well known for their belief in the absolute omnipotence of God. To the Ash'arites, as eloquently expressed by Wolfson, "by His unrestricted power, God creates the world all by Himself without any intermediary so also by His unrestricted

⁴¹See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part IX, p. 61; Hecker, "Reason," p. 160. Cf. Gimaret, *Théories*, p. 45.

⁴²Cited by Schwarz in his "Refutation," p. 251.

⁴³Although the sources for the Ash'arite doctrine are numerous (see D. Gimaret, "Bibliographie d'Aš'arī: Un Re-examen," *JA*, vol. 273 (1985), pp. 223-292), this chapter mainly studies the doctrine of al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935-936), as it is preserved in Ibn Fūrak's (d. 406/1015) *Mujarrad*, ed. D. Gimaret (for more information on the importance of this book, see Gimaret, "Un Document Majeur pour l'Histoire du Kalām: *Le Muḡarrad Maqālāt al-Aš'arī* d'Ibn Fūrak," *Arabica*, 32 (1985), pp. 185-218), and that of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012) in his various works.

power does He govern the world all by Himself without any intermediary causes. Every thing in the world that comes into being comes into being directly by an act of creation by God."⁴⁴ Through this occasionalistic view, which attributes causal efficacy to divine will, not only do the Ash'arites reject the concept of nature but at the same time refuse the doctrine of *tawlīd*.

The Ash'arites deny the concept of natural efficient causality on logical and empirical grounds.⁴⁵ On logical grounds, in accordance with the Baṣrian Mu'tazilī, al-Ash'arī argues that the concept of nature is a term void of intelligible meaning (*lafẓ fārigh min ma'nā ma'qūl*),⁴⁶ because nature, al-Ash'arī claims, is neither substance nor accident. It cannot be substance since substances are homogeneous (*mutajānisa*) and, therefore, they do not have specific characteristics but rather share the same accident. Similarly, it cannot be an accident, because if it is, it must have the proper characteristic to distinguish it from the other accidents.⁴⁷

Therefore, the Ash'arites insist, an event which occurs uniformly (*'alā watīra wāḥida*) is not due to inherent necessity but because of *'āda* (custom) decreed arbitrarily

⁴⁴Wolfson, *Philosophy*, p. 520.

⁴⁵Cf. Majid Fakhry *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 318, where he adds the theological ground since the necessary causality "militates against the Qur'anic concept of God's absolute power and His unconditional prerogative to act freely and miraculously.

⁴⁶Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 131. Cf. al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, p. 43, where he says that the concept is inconceivable either with experience, perception or immediate knowledge (*'ilm bi-al-idṭirār*). For al-Bāqillānī's argument against nature see Bernard, "Critique," pp. 75-81.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

by God.⁴⁸ Al-Bāqillānī, in his book *al-Bayān fī al-farq bayna al-mu'jizāt wa al-karāmāt*, defines custom as "the repetition of the knower's knowledge and of the modes of the customary thing in one and the same way, either by the renewal and repetition of its quality, or by its remaining in the same state."⁴⁹ But, God will never break the order of things which He has made except for one single purpose: to establish the veracity of one of His prophets by means of a rupture in the order of things, which is His custom. The custom of God must not be understood in the sense that God is accustomed to a certain order of things but rather that men are accustomed to the order of things as produced by God.

Natural causality is further rejected by al-Bāqillānī on the empirical level. As an illustration, he gives burning and the heat of fire, and intoxication and a high degree of drinking. "What we observe and sense," he confidently states, "is the alteration of the body's state 'at' ('*inda*) the drinking of water and the proximity of the fire," (*inna alladhī nushāhiduh wa nuḥissuh innamā huwa taghayyur ḥāl al-jism 'inda tanāwul al-shurb wa mujāwarat al-nār*)⁵⁰ and not 'by means of' or 'through' ('*an*) the fire or the drinking. The one who actually creates the burning is God through His custom.

That is the case with natural causality. The Ash'arites, however, do not confine

⁴⁸See M.E. Marmura, "Causation in Islamic Thought," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), vol. I, p. 266.

⁴⁹Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, p. 57.

⁵⁰Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, p. 43. This argument is developed later by al-Ghazālī in his book *TF* in his refutation of natural causality. See, for example, Marmura, "Ghazali and Demonstrative Science," *JHP*, vol. III (1965), pp. 183-204.

such divine action to the realm of the inanimate and the irrational, they go on to affirm that the individual human act, like any other occurrence in the world, is also the direct creation of God. Man only acquires (*kasaba, iktasaba*) it.⁵¹ In this case, the Ash'arite position differs from that of the Mu'tazilites. While the Ash'arites intend to safeguard God's omnipotence, their opponents attempt to establish God's justice.

Therefore, in addition to their rejection of nature, the Ash'arites, at the same time, oppose the concept of causation or generation (*tawlīd*). For al-Ash'arī, both the thesis of nature and that of causation have the same meaning, i.e., "qu'elles prétendent substituer au libre vouloir de Dieu, et à la causalité purement extrinsèque par laquelle Il fait, à Sa guise, se produire les phénomènes, une nécessité intrinsèque aux choses."⁵² For the naturalists (*al-ṭabī'iyyūn*), it is the proper nature of the stone which determines its fall, but for the supporter of *tawlīd*, it is the accident of weight, inhering in it, which causes its fall.⁵³ That is why, al-Ash'arī, as is evident from numerous pages in *al-Mujarrad* of Ibn Fūrak, assimilates systematically the two theses which, according to him, the one is derived from the other, and consequently, the rejection of nature on the one hand but holding the concept of *tawlīd* on the other, will reveal a contradiction.

⁵¹For a thorough discussion on this concept see Schwarz "Acquisition," pp. 355-387; Frank, "The Structure of Created Causality according to al-Ash'arī," *SI*, 25 (1966), pp. 13-75; and B. Abrahamov, "A Re-examination of al-Ash'arī's Theory of *Kasb* according to *Kitāb al-Luma'*," *JRAS* (1989)ii, pp. 210-221.

⁵²Gimaret, *Doctrine*, p. 406. For al-Bāqillānī's refutation of *tawlīd*, see his *Tamhīd*, pp. 296-302.

⁵³It seems that al-Ash'arī misunderstood the Mu'tazilīs' concept of *al-Tawlīd*, because the latter ascribe the cause, not to the accident, but to the one who initially acts.

B. *Mu'jizu* and Its Possibility

Having presented the argument of these *mutakallimūn*, we should note that in a discussion of nature, they are divided into two main groups. First, there are those who insist on, let us say, the *sunnat Allāh*⁵⁴ (laws of nature created by God). They declare that whatever happens in this world cannot happen but within the chain of cause and effect (*'illa wa ma'lūl*), and that even God cannot violate these laws of nature. Rosalind W. Gwynne in her article, "The Neglected Sunnah: Sunnat Allāh (The Sunnah of God)," states that one of the characteristics of *sunna* is that it is meant to be imitated and not changed.⁵⁵ The naturalists (*al-ṭabī'iyyūn*) including the Baghdādī Mu'tazilīs belong to this group.

The second group are the Baṣra Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites who deny categorically the theory of nature and utilize the notion of *'āda* (the custom of God) instead. They assert affirmatively that God can occasionalistically and miraculously rupture the normal course which is habitually considered as cause and effect. This second group, however, differs with regards the concept of *tawlīd* or *sabab*. While the Baṣrian School believes in that theory, the Ash'arites hold conclusively that God is "le seul Être et seul Agent". "Les *asbāb*," writes Gardet, "n'ont aucune [cause] efficace, ni par eux-

⁵⁴For the Ash'arite definition of *sunnat Allāh* as "the custom of God" see L. Gardet, *Dieu et la Destinée de l'Homme* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1967), p. 48.

⁵⁵Rosalind W. Gwynne, "The Neglected Sunnah: Sunnat Allāh (The Sunnah of God)," in *AJISS*, vol. 10 no. 4 (1993), p. 455. Besides this characteristic, the *sunna* is set intentionally by the one having the authority to do so, namely, the imam, but in the occurrence of *sunnat Allāh* it is God; and the imam or God who sets the *sunna* shares responsibility for the deeds of those who imitate him.

mêmes, ni par une force créée en eux. Entre eux et les effets produits, il n'y a aucune consécration rationnelle ou logique, mais un simple "lien d'habitude" (*'āda, sunna*) que Dieu peut toujours rompre comme il Lui plaît."⁵⁶

Bearing this distinction in mind, we will now proceed to study the doctrine of *mu'jiza* on the basis of the previous discussion.

1. The Baghdād Mu'tazilites on the Possibility of *Mu'jiza*

We do not have any conclusive information on whether al-Ka'bī believed in the concept of *mu'jiza* or not. Our main source of al-Ka'bī's doctrine, *Awā'il*, has neither a theoretical discussion of miracles, nor a list of the miracles ascribed to Muḥammad. The only miracle mentioned in *Awā'il* and attributed to Muḥammad, is the miraculous aspect of the Qur'ān (*i'jāz al-qur'ān*). Al-Mufīd, following the doctrine of al-Nazzām, says:

"I say that it [*i'jāz al-qur'ān*] consists of God's prevention (*al-ṣarf*) of the masters of language and eloquence from opposing the Prophet, with its equal in order, upon his challenge (*taḥaddī*) of them to do so. Moreover, he made them fail in producing its like, even though it was in their power to do so, as a proof of his prophetic mission. And God's favor (*luṭf*) in preventing this will last until the end of time. This is a most clear proof and a wonderful piece of evidence. It is the doctrine of al-Nazzām. The mass of the Mu'tazila oppose it."⁵⁷

However, this statement, unlike his other statements, does not explicitly indicate if al-Ka'bī was in favor of this doctrine or not. Having this limited information, we can only guess at his concept of miracles by analyzing his doctrine of nature and making an analogy with the views of those who propagated the same view of nature.

⁵⁶Gardet, *Dieu*, p. 48.

⁵⁷Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 31.

Wolfson in *The Philosophy of Kalām* mentions only two Mu'tazilīs who believed in causality through nature.⁵⁸ They are Mu'ammār and al-Nazzām. Wolfson does not include al-Khayyāt and the latter's pupil, al-Ka'bī who, as we have tried to show, also upheld the concept of nature and necessary causality. The problem with al-Ka'bī's doctrine, however, is that we have conflicting statements ascribed to him and certainly one of them must be wrong or must be interpreted in the light of his other doctrines.

The first statement occurs in al-Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*, according to which al-Ka'bī believes that, "accidents, all of them, do not endure (*yabqā*) for two instances (*waqtayn*)."⁵⁹ This statement, for Wolfson and Dhanani⁶⁰ indicates that accidents are continuously created and hence al-Ka'bī is an occasionalist. However, there are other statements, as we have seen in our discussion of nature, which denote that al-Ka'bī believed in nature and causality in natural events. Therefore, it is quite probable that, although al-Ka'bī upheld the non-endurance of accidents, yet, he may not have meant it as a "continuous creation" as al-Ash'arī believed. If he had really meant it, it would have created a major contradiction within his entire doctrine.

Having established the position of al-Ka'bī, we can now make an analogy between his opinion and that of his predecessors who also believed in nature. One such predecessor is al-Nazzām who denied the attribution of such miracles as the splitting of

⁵⁸Wolfson, *Philosophy*, pp. 559-578.

⁵⁹Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 358. See also al-Baghdādī, *Uṣul*, p. 50; Abū Rashīd, *Masā'il*, p. 122; and al-Mufīd, *Awā'il*, p. 78.

⁶⁰Wolfson, *Philosophy*, pp. 522-526. Due to this statement, Dhanani, categorizes al-Ka'bī's position as having a "modified version of occasionalism." *Physical*, p. 43-44.

the moon to Muḥammad, the praising of God by stones in his hand, and the springing forth of water from between his fingers.⁶¹ The rejection of these alleged miracles by al-Nazzām is quite probably due to the fact that they contradict nature.⁶² This case is also evident in Mu‘ammar’s rejection of miracles. In his view, God does not create accidental effects but rather that the latter are effected by the necessity of nature. As such, a miracle, being an accident, cannot be created by God.⁶³

It is highly possible that al-Ka‘bī, following his predecessors who insisted on natural causality, rejected the occurrence of miracles reported in Muslim Tradition. The only miracle of Muḥammad he might have accepted is the Qur’ān; the miraculous aspect of which is its content of prophecy and the unseen information (*ghuyūb*).

2. The Baṣra Mu‘tazilite Doctrine of *Mu‘jiza*

Unlike the uncertainty surrounding the doctrine of the Baghdād Mu‘tazilites on miracle, the sources of the Baṣra School of Mu‘tazilites provide us a wealth of information on the latter’s views on miracles.⁶⁴ Even without these sources, we can still

⁶¹Baghdādī, *Farq*, 132, 149, 344-345.

⁶²Cf. Wolfson’s interpretation of al-Nazzām’s theory of miracle. *Philosophy*, pp. 569-572.

⁶³Hans Daiber, *Das Theologisch-Philosophische System des Mu‘ammar Ibn ‘Abbād as-Sulamī* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1975), p. 592. See also, Wolfson, *Philosophy*, pp. 572-575.

⁶⁴There are at least three sources on this subject: 1) ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *al-Mughnī*, part XV on *al-tanabbu’āt wa al-mu‘jizāt* (prophethood and miracles), 2) *Sharḥ* by Mānkḏīm and finally 3) the work of Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī on *al-nubuwwa* from his *Ziyādāt al-sharḥ*, ed. R.C. Martin. For the identification of the latter work see Martin, "The Identification of Two Mu‘tazilite MSS," *JAOS*, vol. 98 (1978), pp. 389-93; idem, "A

surmise that, due to their rejection of nature and their employment of the notion of *'āda*, the Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs did not have much difficulty in explaining the possibility of miracles. Miracles, according to them, are the events which disrupt the patterns of habit. In fact, one of the conditions (*shurūṭ*) they stipulate for a *mu'jiza*, is its interruption of *'āda*.

Beginning with lexical considerations, 'Abd al-Jabbār observes that the antonym of *mu'jiz* is *muqdir*; the latter meaning "his act to make someone else have the capacity to act" (*ja'luh ghayrah qādir*). As such, *mu'jiz*, then, comes to indicate that "another makes him unable to act" (*ghayruh ja'alah 'ājiz*).⁶⁵ Both these terms, in his opinion, should be ascribed to God alone since He is the only one who has the power to cause ability (*iqdār*) or inability (*i'jāz*) in others.

Arguing with the lexicographers who define *mu'jiza* based on etymology, 'Abd al-

Mu'tazilite Treatise on Prophethood and Miracles. Being Probably the *bāb 'alā l-nubuwwah* from the *Ziyadat al-sharḥ* [sic] by Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī (Died First Half of the Fifth Century A.H.) Edited in Arabic with an English Introduction, Historical and Theological Commentaries," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975.

⁶⁵'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 197. Cf. Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 568. Many scholars, such as Peters, Martin and McDermott, in their discussion of *mu'jiza* refer mostly to *Sharḥ* and regard it wrongfully as the work of 'Abd al-Jabbār. See McDermott, *Theology*, pp. 84-86; Peters, *God's Created Speech*, pp. 97-99; and Martin, "Mu'tazilite," pp. 68 ff. Gimaret has shown confidently in many of his writings that *Sharḥ* is not 'Abd al-Jabbār's but Mānkḏīm's commentary on 'Abd al-Jabbār's *al-Uṣūl*. See Gimaret, "Uṣūl," pp. 47-96; and his review of Peters' *God's Created Speech*, in *JA*, 265 (1977), pp. 387-398, where he says that "cet ouvrage [*Sharḥ*] n'a pas été écrit sous la dictée du maître ... mais qu'il est un commentaire (*ta'liq*) original et critique du Sayyid Mānkḏīm sur le *Sarḥ* de 'Abd al-Jabbār. Il convient donc de l'utiliser avec précaution et de garder présent à l'esprit que les points de vue qui y sont exposés ne sont pas nécessairement ceux de 'Abd al-Jabbār." p. 392.

Jabbār observes that the technical meaning (*iṣṭilāḥ*)⁶⁶ of *mu'jiz* as given by the *mutakallimūn* is more appropriate and comprehensive (*amass*) than the etymological one, even though the former is not necessarily connected to etymology. In fact, the *mutakallimūn* resorted to giving the term another meaning when they realized that it makes poor sense to say that one could be rendered incapable of doing that which he was not capable of in the first place.

There are four conditions (*awṣāf, sharā'it*) which have to be fulfilled in order to make an act a miracle.⁶⁷ (1) A miracle must come from God either directly or indirectly

⁶⁶Abd al-Jabbār does not give the technical meaning of *mu'jiza*. It is Mānkḏīm who defines it as "the act which indicates the truthfulness of him who claims to be a prophet." See *Sharḥ*, p. 568.

⁶⁷See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 171, 195-212; Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 569-571. Peters mistakenly says that 'Abd al-Jabbār (*sic.* Mānkḏīm) in the *Sharḥ* mentions five criteria. The fifth criteria, which is not given in the *Mughnī*, is that "it must come from some one who performs it and is just and wise (*fā'il 'adl ḥakīm*) because only in that case the authorization proves the truth of the message". See his *God's Created Speech*, p. 98 and n. 321. After a careful and thorough reading, however, it becomes clear that this statement is not one of the conditions of *mu'jiza* and does not refer to "the one who performs it". It refers instead to God "the Just and Wise." This conclusion is attested to by the fact that the structure of this statement is quite similar to that of the first criteria. Compare the statement which according to Peters belongs to the fifth criteria: "*an yakūn min jihat fā'il 'adl ḥakīm aw fī al-ḥukm ka'annah min jihatih*," with the first criteria "*an yakūn min jihat Allāh aw fī al-ḥukm ka'annah min jihatih*."

Nevertheless, it is perhaps correct to say that the Mu'tazilīs insist on the quality of the prophet who performs a miracle because, according to them, prophecy is "the recompense of action" (*jazā' alā 'amal*). See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 16. This view is in direct contrast to that of the Ash'arīs who maintain that prophecy is neither the recompense of action nor the reward for obedience. It is, however, "the direct and pure favor" (*ibtidā' faḍl*) given by God to whom He wills. This concept is based upon the verse of the Qur'ān 2:269; "He grants the wisdom (*al-ḥikma*) unto whom He wills". The *ḥikma* is interpreted by Ibn Mas'ūd as the *nubuwwa* and *risāla*. See Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 175. For a full discussion of the meaning and the distinction between *nabī* and *rasūl* see Gimaret, *Doctrine*, pp. 455-459; 'Alī Mabruk, *al-Nubuwwa min 'ilm al-'aqā'id ilā falsafat al-tārīkh: muḥāwala fī i'ādat binā' al-'aqā'id* (Beirut: Dār al-tanwīr li-al-ṭibā'a

(*an yakūn wāqī' min Allāh ḥaqīqa wa taqdīr*)⁶⁸ (2) A miracle must break the habit (*'āda*) of the people to which it is brought (*an yakūn min mā tanquḍ bih al-'āda al-mukhtaṣṣa bi-man aẓhar al-mu'jiz fīh*)⁶⁹ (3) People must be unable to perform it (a miracle) with respect to its kind (*jins*) or its quality (*ṣifa*) (*an yata'adhdhar 'alā al-'ibād fi'l mithlih fī jinsih aw ṣifatih*)⁷⁰ (4) A miracle must be peculiar to the one who claims prophethood (*an yakūn mukhtaṣṣ bi-man yadda'ī al-nubuwwa*).⁷¹

The miracle must first of all come from God either directly or indirectly, because the purpose of it is to authenticate the one who claims to be a prophet and to indicate that this authority lies only with God. Besides, creatures must not be able to perform any miracles either of its kind or its degree.⁷² In his *Sharḥ*, 'Abd al-Jabbār's pupil, Mānkḍīm clarifies the distinction between the two.⁷³ He says that *mu'jizāt* are of two kinds. The first is the act which is theoretically possible for man to perform (*maqdūr al-qudar*); while the other one is that which is not humanly possible, such as Jesus' miracle of raising the dead and Moses transforming the stick into a serpent. Such events are

wa al-nashr wa al-tawzī', 1993), pp. 189-192, 272-273.

⁶⁸ Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 199. Cf. Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, 569.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* In *Sharḥ* this condition is placed in the fourth, see Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 571.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* The *Sharḥ* does not specify this thesis as a separate condition, it includes in the first category, see Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 569.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* This category appears in the second and third theses of *Sharḥ* (a) it must occur following the claim of him who claims to be a prophet and (b) it must correspond to that claim. See Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 569-570.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁷³ Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 569. Cf. Martin, "Mu'tazilite," pp. 71-72.

humanly impossible and, therefore, come directly from God.

Other miracles, such as the destruction of cities and the moving of mountains, are events within the capacity of man but are nonetheless highly unfeasible with respect to their degree (*ṣifa*) of difficulty. The theoretical possibility of performing these events lies in "amassing enough quantity of capacity (*qudar*) to move a mountain or to split a sea."⁷⁴ The miracle of the Qur'ān is also of this kind because, "it belongs to the genus of the sound which is classified as possible for humans to perform (*maqḍūr al-qudar*). Therefore," Mānkḍīm continues, "if we think about it, we must allow that it comes from a prophet, in which God must have given an increase of knowledge, enabling him thereby to produce it."⁷⁵ Thus, these miracles come indirectly from God (*ka'annah min jihatih*).

The second condition for a miracle is that it must interrupt habit (*nāqiḍ li-al-'āda*). 'Abd al-Jabbār finds it necessary to add that this 'āda is the "habit of the people to whom the miracle is brought" (*al-'āda al-mukhtaṣṣa bi-man aẓhar al-mu'jiz fīh*) or, in the words of Mānkḍīm, "the habit of the people in whom it occurs" (*li-'ādat man bayna ẓahrānayh*). As such, when God intends to establish a proof for His prophet, He starts by creating the habit of the people to whom the prophet will be sent. This explains the difference between the 'āda and *mu'jiza* of Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. Since people derive their knowledge from this 'āda, God, according to the Baṣra Mu'tazila, will not arbitrarily interrupt this habit. He would interrupt it only if His intention is to establish an

⁷⁴Cf. Martin, "Mu'tazilite," p. 72.

⁷⁵Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 569. Cf. Martin, "Mu'tazilite," p. 73.

unequivocal proof for the one who lays claims at prophethood.⁷⁶

In his *Mughnī*, 'Abd al-Jabbār denies the occurrence of miracles in the hands of non-prophets, such as *karāma* in the hands of saints. Attacking al-Ḥallāj's *karāma*, 'Abd al-Jabbār, following al-Jubbā'īs, considers them as "feats of prestidigitation, performed with the help of accomplices and by using faked houses and rooms."⁷⁷ The reason for the denial of the occurrence of *karāma* in the hands of saints is, that it makes it difficult to distinguish between the true prophet and the non-prophets. However, Abū Rashīd dismisses this argument by noting that the claim (*da'wā*) of prophethood, which constitutes the fourth *sharṭ* of *mu'jiza*, distinguishes the *mu'jiza* of a prophet and that of a non-prophet.⁷⁸

The third condition of a *mu'jiza* is that people must be unable to perform it. This condition, which is clearly based on the first and the second category, renders that there is no distinction within the inability to perform a miracle with respect to its kind or to its degree. In this discussion, 'Abd al-Jabbār refutes the opinion that a miracle is that which is humanly impossible to perform, such as the miracle of Moses or that of Jesus. Keeping the miracle of the Qur'ān in mind, 'Abd al-Jabbār then says that the proof of prophethood does not lie in a miracle's genus. Rather, it lies, in its interruption of the *'āda*. Hence, there is no distinction between the conversion of the rods into serpents and *i'jāz al-*

⁷⁶'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 189, 217.

⁷⁷See Gardet, "Karāma," *EL*², vol. IV, p. 615.

⁷⁸See Abū Rashīd, *Ziyādāt*, pp. 146-163. For a brief discussion of this matter see Martin, "Mu'tazilite," pp. 77-79.

Qur'ān, because they similarly break the habit.

Finally, the *mu'jiza* must be peculiar to the one who claims to hold the office of prophecy. This condition clearly refutes the occurrence of a miracle in the hands of non-prophets, such as the *karāma* of saints, because they would be too numerous and this would make it difficult to distinguish between the proof of a prophet and that of a saint.

In the last paragraph of his discussion, 'Abd al-Jabbār further states that a miracle must correspond with the prophet's claim, which must precede the miracle itself. He does not consider the events which occur miraculously before or after the claim as *mu'jiza*, because the legal consequence (*ḥukm*) of the claim, that is, "the claimant must accept the message and the people to whom he is sent must obey him," is ineffective during those periods.⁷⁹

To the problem as to whether God can manifest a miracle through a liar, 'Abd al-Jabbār responded negatively. He believed that if this was the case, there would not be any distinction between the good man (*ṣāliḥ*) and the liar (*kādhīb*), between the true prophet (*nabī*) and the false prophet (*mutanabbī*). His pupil, Abū Rashīd, on the other hand, argued that God can manifest a miracle through a liar by producing a miracle contrary to what the latter requested or said he can produce. In this way, God demonstrates that the claimant is a fraud.⁸⁰

These are the four conditions universally recognized in the classical doctrine of

⁷⁹ 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 213.

⁸⁰ Abū Rashīd, *Ziyādāt*, p. 4. Cf. Mānkadīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 570-571; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, pp. 236-241.

mu'jiza which were not only held by the Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs⁸¹ but also, as we shall see later, by the Ash'arīs, although, as we have seen in the case of the Baṣra School, not all points were unanimously agreed upon.

'Abd al-Jabbār further articulates that the miracle by which God indicates that a prophet is to be trusted and that the message he bears is really His message is of two kinds. The first kind consists of a message (*khiṭāb*) from God and fulfills the four conditions of a true miracle; while the second kind comprises all the other miracles which accompany a prophet as a proof that his message comes from God.⁸² Peters names the latter "the circumstantial miracle."⁸³

In the case of Muḥammad, the veracity of his prophethood was confirmed by both kinds of miracles. The message, that is the Qur'ān, is a miracle since it surpasses all human capabilities in its eloquence.⁸⁴ As well as all the other "circumstantial miracles"

⁸¹It seems that the concepts of "challenge" (*taḥaddī*) and "attempt to match" (*mu'ārada*) are missing in 'Abd al-Jabbār's discussion of *mu'jiza*, however they appear extensively in his discussion of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. See, for example, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 236 ff. Because of these and other concepts which are remarkably comparable with those of the Ash'arite, Mabruk baselessly assumes that 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of *mu'jiza*'s similarity with the Ash'arites is due to the former's hidden Ash'arism, his previous theological belief, which influences his doctrine. See Mabruk, *Nubuwwa*, p. 284, 290 n. 160. The concepts of *'āda* had been discussed widely before his time, and even during the time of al-Jubbā'īs. It is also the case with the theory of "challenge" and *mu'ārada*. They had been broadly used in Arabic poetry, see, for example, G.E. von Grunebaum's discussion of *mu'ārada*, "The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory," *JNES*, III, no. 4 (1944), p. 242 ff. Besides, *taḥaddī* is the interpretation of the verses of challenge in the Qur'ān.

⁸²'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 164.

⁸³Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 99.

⁸⁴'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* will be discussed later in the third chapter.

God has granted to Muḥammad."⁸⁵ In his recently edited book, *Kitāb al-uṣūl al-khamṣa*, 'Abd al-Jabbār affirms that these circumstantial miracles are not humanly possible to perform (*laysa fī maqdūr al-bashar*).⁸⁶

3. The Ash'arite doctrine of *Mu'jiza*

Al-Ash'arī, as reported by Ibn Fūrak, defines *mu'jiza* as "the events which occur contradicting the past custom" (*al-umūr allatī taḥduth nāqiḍa li-al-'āda al-mutaqaddima*).⁸⁷ A miracle has no other purpose but to prove the authenticity of prophethood and the truth of what the prophet had said. Besides the prophet's performance of a miracle, al-Ash'arī says that there are three other ways through which the authenticity of a prophet can be known: (1) other personalities must attest to his quality of prophethood; (2) necessary knowledge (*'ilm bi-al-ḍarūra*) must prove his veracity; and finally (3) there must be declarations by previous prophets regarding the description of the next prophet.⁸⁸

In order to prove the authenticity of a prophet, al-Ash'arī affirms that a miracle should not only occur at the moment of the claim (*da'wā*) of prophethood, but should also be preceded by a challenge (*taḥaddī*) to match it; and people should be incapable of

⁸⁵In his *Tathbūt*, 'Abd al-Jabbār offers an extended treatment of Muḥammad's miracles. See *Tathbūt*, vol. I, pp. 5-91; idem, *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 407-423.

⁸⁶'Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Uṣūl al-khamṣa*, ed. D. Gimaret in the latter's "Les Uṣūl," p. 90.

⁸⁷Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 176.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 176. Cf. Gimaret, *Doctrine*, p. 459.

matching it.⁸⁹

Al-Bāqillānī adds another important element which does not seem to be explicitly stated by al-Ash'arī. The former asserts that a miracle should be something over which God alone has power, and which cannot fall within the scope of the powers of creatures, be they angels, men or *jinn*.⁹⁰ A *mu'jiza*, al-Bāqillānī continues, does not fall within the scope of the power of creatures (*maqḍūr*), not because of their being prevented (*man'*) from effecting it or because of their inability (*'ajz*) to effect it, but because the *mu'jiza* cannot be an object of their power.

Therefore, al-Bāqillānī insists that the real meaning of *mu'jiza* is not "to establish (*iḥbāt*) an inability to effect," although this description is etymologically correct according to the linguistic demands (*mūjab al-luḡha*) and the requirements of convention (*muqtaḍā al-muwāḍa'a*).⁹¹ In arriving at the real meaning of the *mu'jiza*, al-Bāqillānī suggests, we must not rely on etymology alone, but on reasoning and proof as well. The reason for his denial of the etymological meaning is based on a principle, which is called by McCarthy as his "metaphysics."⁹² This principle affirms that "it is wrong to predicate inability of a subject unless for the deed he is able to effect" (*innahu lā yaṣīḥḥ 'ajz al-khalq illā 'an-mā taṣīḥḥ qudratuhum 'alayh*).⁹³ In other words, this principle assumes

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁹⁰Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, p. 6.

⁹¹Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, p. 13. Cf. McCarthy's introduction of *Bayān*, p. 14.

⁹²See Richard J. McCarthy, "Al-Bāqillānī's Notion of the Apologetic Miracle," in *Studia Biblica et Orientalia*, vol 3, *Analecta Biblica*, vol. 12 (1959), p. 249.

⁹³Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, p. 9.

that just as it is possible to characterize someone with the inability to perform a miracle, it is also possible to admit that this 'ajz can be replaced by an ability (*qudra*), since the absence of the one entails the presence of the other. However, a miracle is something over which creatures have no power, hence, "it is impossible (*muḥāl*) to predicate to creatures an inability to effect something which is impossible as an object of their power" (*annahu muḥāl waṣf al-khalq bi-al-'ajz 'an-mā yastahīl kawnuh maqdūr lahum*).⁹⁴

Concerning the Mu'tazilite dual classification of miracles, that is a miracle over which God alone has the power; and a miracle which is classed under the power of creatures (*maqdūr al-qudar*), al-Bāqillānī does not entirely reject it.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, he argues, in effecting the second type, the miraculousness (*i'jāz*) lies in the violation of custom by creating the ability (*qudra*) to move the mountain or to ascend to the heavens, or by preventing others from doing ordinary actions. This violation of custom is something over which God alone has the power.

Therefore, al-Bāqillānī divides miracles into two groups: The miracles which God alone can effect, such as the miracles of Moses and Jesus; and the miracles which are theoretically possible for humans to effect.⁹⁶ Richard J. McCarthy calls these

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹⁵Thus, Martin's opinion that al-Bāqillānī rejects this classification (see Martin, "Mu'tazilite," p. 72) does not conform with al-Bāqillānī's own statement that "what they say is not far-fetched." (*laysa bi-ba'īd*). See *Bayān*, p. 16. See also McCarthy, "al-Bāqillānī," p. 250.

⁹⁶Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, p. 23. Cf. al-Ash'arī's dual classification: the miracle whose occurrence is difficult to understand; and miracles which might be able to be understood after serious thought and analysis. Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 178.

respectively "the absolute miracle" and "the modal miracle."⁹⁷ The modal miracle, in turn, may be subdivided into two types. The first is the small amount, the ordinary action (*qalīl mu'tād*), which cannot be considered a miracle.⁹⁸ The second type of the modal miracle is the extraordinary amount (*kathīr ghayr mu'tād*) of something which God enables the prophet to effect. In the case of a modal miracle, it is not the kind (*jins*) of action which is to be considered as a miracle, but the way in which the action is effected.

Muḥammad, according to the Ash'arites, is supported by these two kinds of miracle. First is the Qur'ān, the greatest and the most important miracle of Muḥammad.⁹⁹ This unique book distinguishes it from other revealed books, i.e., the Old and the New Testament since they were not qualified as miracles nor did they include a challenge (*taḥaddī*).¹⁰⁰ The second kind of miracle is that of the circumstantial miracle reported in Muslim tradition and *sīra*.

In addition to his performance of these two kinds of miracles, the authenticity of Muḥammad's prophethood, according to al-Ash'arī, is supported by the declaration of the

⁹⁷McCarthy, "Al-Bāqillānī," p. 250.

⁹⁸McCarthy assumes that this includes a miracle whose miraculousness lies in God's preventing men from doing such actions on the occasion of the prophet's challenge. See, McCarthy, "al-Bāqillānī," p. 252. But, as the explanation continues, it is implicitly stated that the small action cannot be a miracle since it does not violate custom as is the case with the extraordinary action. See, al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān*, pp. 24- 25.

⁹⁹Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 178. According to al-Ash'arī, the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān lies in four aspects: its composition, its contents of prophecy, its contents of ancient tales and finally its influence on hearts. See pp. 178-179. Al-Bāqillānī's *i'jāz al-qur'ān* will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 179.

previous prophets who announced his coming.¹⁰¹

Having discussed the Baṣrian Mu'tazilīs and the Ash'arīs' concept of *mu'jiza*, we find the remarkable similarities between the two concepts interesting. Both of them discuss the real meaning of *mu'jiza*, its conditions, and its kinds in almost the same language and the same method of reasoning. But, it may not be assumed that this similarity is due to, as Mabruk suggests, 'Abd al-Jabbār's previous theological belief influencing his doctrine, because in some points they differ significantly.

The first point is that the majority of the Baṣra Mu'tazilites, unlike the Ash'arites, deny the occurrence of a miracle, such as *karāma*, in the hands of non-prophets.¹⁰² Another main difference is the Baṣrian's assertion regarding the qualities of whoever is assigned by God as a prophet. In direct contrast to the Ash'arites' absolute occasionalism, the Mu'tazilites insist that the office of prophethood is the reward and recompense granted by God to those who conduct good deeds and fulfill their duties. The last difference, which we will discuss in the next chapter, is their concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹⁰²The Ash'arites unanimously believe that God can perform miracles as He pleases, through sorcerers as well as through saints. See the Ash'arites' discussion of *karāma* in Gardet's article, "illa," p. 616; Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, translated from French by Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 40-42.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORY OF *I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN*

A. Earliest Works on *I'jāz*

Having examined, in the previous chapter, the concept of *mu'jiza* from which the validity of prophethood is attested, in this chapter, the discussion will focus on the miracles of Muḥammad and specifically his most famous miracle, *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.

Historically, the literature on the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* grew from the third/ninth century onwards.¹ Among the most important early works, which have come down to us and contributed to the development of this idea, are *al-Nukat fī i'jāz al-Qur'ān*² of Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Rummānī (d. 386/996), and *Bayān i'jāz al-*

¹For a brief summary of these works, see Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: *i'jāz* and Related Topics," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 143-54; idem, "I'jāz," *ER*, vol. 7, pp. 87-88. See also Na'im al-Ḥimṣī, "Tārīkh fikrat i'jāz al-Qur'ān mundhu al-bi'tha al-nabawiyya ḥattā al-'aṣr al-ḥādīr, ma'a naqd wa ta'līq," in *MMIA*, vol. 27 (1952), pp. 240-63; 418-33; 571-86; vol. 28 (1953), pp. 61-78; 242-56; vol. 29 (1954), pp. 104-14; 239-51; 417-24; 573-9; vol. 30 (1955), pp. 106-13; 299-311. (Due to the late discovery of *al-Mughnī*, al-Ḥimṣī does not discuss 'Abd al-Jabbār's *I'jāz*). And 'Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān: Al-i'jāz fī dirāsāt al-sābiqīn. Dirāsa kāshifa li-khaṣā'is al-balāgha al-'arabiyya wa ma'āyirihā*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-'arabī, 1964) and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān: Al-i'jāz fī dirāsāt al-sābiqīn. Dirāsa kāshifa li-khaṣā'is al-balāgha al-'arabiyya wa ma'āyirihā. Al-i'jāz fī mafhūm jadīd*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-'arabī, 1964). However, al-Khaṭīb surprisingly did not include in his book the work of al-Rummānī, although the author had consulted *Thalāth rasā'il*. (About the latter's book see note two *infra*)

²Published in *Thalāth*, pp. 67-104. For translations of this text, see Awad al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī's *al-Nukat fī i'jāz al-Qur'ān*: an Annotated Translation with Introduction,"

*Qur'ān*³ of his contemporary, Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998). After these two came the work of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012) entitled *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*,⁴ and that of his contemporary, 'Abd al-Jabbār, a work with the same title.⁵ This work was incorporated into his *Summa Theologica*, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa al-'adl*, part XVI.

At this point, it is important to note that these four respective scholars represent different schools of thought. For instance, al-Rummānī was associated with a separate wing of the Baghdād Mu'tazilites and was a pupil of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Ikhshīd⁶ (d. 326/937). The latter had relinquished all ties with Abū Hāshim of Baṣra and had

Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1987. pp. 101-94, or an abridged translation in Andrew Rippin and Jan Knipfert. ed. and tr., *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 49-59. For a brief summary of the content of the book, see Boullata, "Rhetorical," p. 143; G.C. Anawati, "Textes arabes anciens édités en Egypte au cours des années 1955 et 1956," *MIDEO*, vol. 3 (1956), pp. 290-1. It should be noted that instead of recording ten elements of *balāgha*, Anawati shows four elements only.

³Published in *Thalāth*, pp. 17-65. Claude-France Audebert has translated this work into French *al-Ḥaṭṭābī et l'inimitabilité du Coran: Traduction et introduction au Bayān i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1982), pp. 115-155. For its summary, see Boullata, "Rhetorical," pp. 143-144; Anawati, "Textes," p. 289; Audebert, *al-Ḥaṭṭābī*, pp. 85-6; and Hava Lazarus-Yafeh's review of Audebert's book in *IJMES*, vol. 18 (1986), pp. 80-81.

⁴This book has been partly translated into English by Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism. The Sections on poetry of al-Bāqillānī's I'jāz al-Qur'ān. Translated and annotated* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950). Besides *I'jāz*, al-Bāqillānī demonstrates the inimitability of the Qur'ān in his other works, such as *al-Tamhīd*, pp. 141-159 and *al-Inṣāf*, pp. 54-55. J. Bouman has studied al-Bāqillānī's theory of *i'jāz* in his book *Le Conflit autour du Coran et la Solution d'al-Bāqillānī* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Campen, 1959).

⁵This work will be studied in the third chapter.

⁶For his biography, see J.-C. Vadet, "Ibn al-Ikhshīd," *EF*, vol. III, p. 807.

founded the *Ikhshūdiyya* in Baghdād. His contemporary, al-Khaṭṭābī, on the other hand, was a traditionist (*muḥaddith*), jurist (*faqīh*) and man of letters (*adīb*). Al-Bāqillānī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār respectively represented the Ash‘arite and Baṣra Mu‘tazilite Schools of thought.

Given the fact that the first three works noted above, have been extensively studied by Western scholars,⁷ it should be sufficient here to discuss their most salient points, in order to provide some background knowledge of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *I’jāz*. However, before embarking upon this endeavor, it is worthwhile to examine the motivations behind the writing of works on *i’jāz*. One would like to know the reasons that prompted such authors to write about prophecy, particularly about the prophecy of Muḥammad, and *i’jāz al-Qur’ān*.

B. Reasons for Writing on *Nubuwwa*

1. *Barāhima*

By reading the works on prophethood and *i’jāz*, we can easily deduce that these works were written in response to many attacks levelled at the Prophet’s mission and the Qur’ān.⁸ Among the most vocal attackers were the rationalists, who supposedly denied

⁷See nn. 2, 3 and 4 *supra*.

⁸‘Abd al-Jabbār, the author of *al-Mughnī*, has written many books refuting the attacks on the Qur’ān and prophets, such as *Tanzīh al-Qur’ān ‘an al-maṭā’in*, *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Adnān Muḥammad Zarzūr and *Tathbūt dalā’il al-nubuwwa* and *I’jāz al-Qur’ān*. In his introduction to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Mutashābih*, Zarzūr remarks that Mu‘tazilīs were the first to write books defending Islam and refuting the attacks levelled at the Qur’ān. (Zarzūr, *Mutashābih*, p. 51).

the possibility of prophecy, and the heretics,⁹ such as *Barāhima*.¹⁰

In his *Tamhīd*, al-Bāqillānī identifies two different groups of *Barāhima*.¹¹ The first group categorically rejects the existence of prophets, while the second group claims that either God has sent no prophets except Ādam, or no prophets except Ibrāhīm. Concerning the second group, al-Bāqillānī states:

"As to those of the *Barāhima* who affirm the prophecy of Adam while denying the prophecy of those after him, and those who affirm the prophecy of Abraham while denying those after him, they have admitted the permissibility of sending prophets, and that they have existed and their message been transmitted, although they dispute with us on the prophecy of particular individuals. The claim of this group is not that of those who deny prophecy absolutely. We say to them, What is your proof for the prophecy of Adam or Abraham? If they say, The appearance of signs at their hands, we say, What is your proof for the validity and truth of these signs-granted that we have not witnessed them, nor met those who did so? If they say, It is the transmission of those whose numbers guarantee them against lying, then they are opposed by like arguments in respect of Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. And the dispute with them takes the form of the dispute with the Jews."¹²

⁹B. Lewis has written an article, "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam," in *SI*, vol. I (1953) pp. 43-63 in which he explains the meaning of heresy in Islam and the technical terms used to denote heresy. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī clarifies the difference between heretics in the West, and those among the Arabs (Islam). While the former declare their heresies by claiming, as Nietzsche had said, "God is dead," the latter maintain that "the idea of prophecy and prophets is dead." (*laqad mātat fikrat al-nubuwwa wa al-anbiyā*). See Badawī, *Min tārikh al-ilḥād fī al-Islām* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'arabiyya li-al-dirāsāt wa al-nashr, 1980), p. 5.

¹⁰Scholars do not agree upon whether these *Barāhima* correspond to the Indian Brahmins. See the article by Norman Calder, "The *Barāhima*: Literary Construct and Historical Reality," in *BSOAS*, vol. LVII, part 1 (1994), pp. 40-51. See also F. Rahman, "Barāhima," *EL*², vol. I, p. 1031; and Sarah Stroumsa, "The *Barāhima* in Early Kalām," *JSAI*, vol. 6 (1985), pp. 229-241.

¹¹Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, p. 104. 'Abd al-Jabbār in his *Mughnī*, part XV, pp. 109-146 advances the arguments of *Barāhima* and, at the same time, refutes them. However, he does not differentiate between the two types of *Barāhima* as al-Bāqillānī does.

¹²Al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd*, p. 104. Translation from Calder, "Barāhima," p. 44.

In the above statement, al-Bāqillānī argues against those who affirm the prophecy of Ādam or Ibrāhīm only, and tries to demonstrate a set of propositions. These propositions are: that Muḥammad was a prophet, that his prophethood was convincingly proven by miracles, and that knowledge of these miracles is grounded in reliable transmission.

As far as the first group is concerned, al-Bāqillānī raises several of their arguments, two of which, according to M.E. Marmura, "attempt to show that the supposition of prophecy as a genuine revelation of God to man would contradict some divine attribute[s]."¹³ The first argument maintains that since all men are of the same genus, there is no specific trait to differentiate between one man and another to hold the prophetic office. Consequently, it would be a contradiction in God's justice if He were to prefer one individual over another with His revelation.¹⁴ The second argument attributed to the *Barāhima* relates to divine wisdom. Since God endows men with reason, which in turn enables them to arrive at the good, the act of revealing the good to them

¹³M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna's Theory of Prophecy in the Light of Ash'arite Theology," in *The Seed of Wisdom. Essays in Honor of T.J. Meek*, ed. W.S. McCullough (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 162.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 162-163. Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (d. 320/932), who is reported not to believe in revelation and prophecy, has also used the same argument rejecting prophethood. For his argumentation, see P. Kraus and S. Pines, "al-Rāzī," *El'*, vol. III: 2, p. 1136; Badawī, *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, p. 168, 171; idem, "Muḥammad Ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. and introduced by M.M. Sharif, vol. I (Karachi: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963), pp. 445-446; and idem, *Histoire de la Philosophie en Islam*, vol. II (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1972), p. 590.

through prophets becomes superfluous. And, a superfluous act is an unwise act.¹⁵

Alas, neither al-Bāqillānī nor 'Abd al-Jabbār clearly states who these *Barāhima* really are. In his, "Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte," published in *RSO*, vol. 14 (1934)¹⁶ Paul Kraus, in the light of *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyya* of the Ismā'īlī dā'ī al-Mu'ayyad fī al-Dīn (d. 470/1077) in which Ibn al-Rīwandī's¹⁷ (d. about the end of the third/ninth century) *al-Zumurrudh* is refuted, ascertains that it is Ibn al-Rīwandī who actually puts the irreligious thesis, rejecting the possibility of prophethood, in the mouth of the *Barāhima*.¹⁸ Whereas Josef van Ess, who bases his argument on *al-Tawḥīd* of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944), argues in several articles,¹⁹ that it is not Ibn al-

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 163. See al-Rāzī's argument relating to the supremacy of reason in Badawī, *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, p. 166-167; and idem, "al-Rāzī," p. 439-440, 445. According to Badawī, al-Rāzī is a pure rationalist and believes in reason and reason alone by which not only good and evil can be distinguished, as the *Barāhima* believe, but also the knowledge of God. (See, *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, p. 166-167).

¹⁶Has been translated into Arabic by Badawī in *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, pp. 67-154.

¹⁷Scholars do not agree on the spelling of his name, al-Rāwandī, al-Rīwandī or al-Rēwandī. Abdul-Amir al-A'asam, knowing the two different locations in Khurāsān: Rāwand and Rīwand, believes that the right spelling is Ibn al-Rīwandī, since Rīwand is the nearest place to Marw al-Rūdh where he was born and spent his childhood. See al-A'asam, *Ibn ar-Riwandī's Kitāb Fadihat al-Mu'tazilah: Analytical Study of Ibn ar-Riwandī's Method in his criticism of the Rational Foundation of Polemics in Islam* (Beirut - Paris: Editions Oueidat, 1975-1977), p. 7, n.1 and p. 19. I have accepted his persuasive argument regarding the spelling of Ibn al-Rīwandī, and I will use it as such in this thesis.

¹⁸P. Kraus, "Ibn al-Rāwandī," *EI*¹, Supplement, p. 95. See also G. Vajda, "Ibn al-Rāwandī or al-Rēwendī," *EI*², vol. 3, pp. 905-6; Badawī's translation of Kraus's "Beiträge" in *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, p. 130.

¹⁹van Ess, "Ibn ar-Rēwandī, or the Making of an Image," *al-Abḥāth*, vol. 27 (1978-1979), pp. 5-26. See also his article, "al-Fārābī and Ibn al-Rēwandī," *HI*, vol. III no. 4 (1980), pp. 3-15; and "Une lecture à rebours de l'histoire du Mu'tazilisme," in *REI*, vol. 46 (1978), in particular, pp. 164-191 on Ibn al-Rīwandī.

Rīwandī who is a heretic, but rather his friend and mentor Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq²⁰ (d. the end of the third/ninth century). In agreement with van Ess, Sarah Stroumsa asserts that in the *Zumurrudh*, Ibn al-Rīwandī appears as the defender of prophecy while al-Warrāq plays the role of the one who attacks prophecy.²¹ But, unlike Kraus whose opinion depended on the *Majālis* and van Ess's who relied on the *Tawhīd*, Stroumsa maintains that:

"[T]here is no contradiction between Māturīdī's account and those of Mu'ayyad and 'Abd al-Jabbār [*Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*]. Rather, when the accounts of these three sources are examined in detail, it becomes evident that the three complement each other."²²

Although the question of which of the two opinions is the correct one is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worthwhile mentioning that 'Abd al-Jabbār, in his *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, always refers to both of them together.²³ While in the *Mughnī* part XVI, he clearly indicates Ibn al-Rīwandī by name, along with the latter's book *Kitāb al-Dāmigh*, in which the latter claims that there is an internal contradiction (*tanāquḍ*) in the

²⁰For his biography, see L. Massignon, "Warrāq," *El'*, vol. IV:2, p. 1125; S.M. Stern, "Abū 'Īsā Warrāq," *El'*, vol. I, p. 130; and W.M. Watt, "Abū 'Īsā Warrāq," *Elr*, vol. I, pp. 325-326.

²¹Stroumsa, "The Blinding Emerald: Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Zumurrud*," *JAOS*, vol. 114, no. 2 (1994), pp. 163-185. She is of the opinion that Ibn al-Rīwandī was a true freethinker who rejected the authority of any scriptural or revealed religion. (see, Stroumsa, "Emerald," p. 178, n. 108).

²²*Ibid*, p. 184.

²³For example, 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, vol. I, 51, 128, 129 and vol. II, p. 371, 374, 508 and 657. See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, index.

Qur'ān.²⁴ In addition to this, as Stroumsa tells us, 'Abd al-Jabbār also evidently draws some points from *al-Zumurrudh*, although in doing so, he does not explicitly mention the name of the book.²⁵ In the *Zumurrudh*, Ibn al-Rīwandī argues against prophecy on several grounds. These arguments were divided by Stroumsa into five groups,²⁶ the first and apparently the most important of which seems to be the denial of the value of prophecy. This denial surprisingly fits well with the report recorded by al-Bāqillānī and 'Abd al-Jabbār. The argument is as follows:

"God has bestowed upon human beings the gift of intellect, by which they can judge right and wrong. If what the prophets announce corresponds to what the intellect decrees, then prophets are superfluous. If it contradicts what the intellect decrees, then one should not listen to them."²⁷

Concerning the Qur'ān and its unmatched style, *al-Zumurrudh* suggests that there are several natural interpretations to explain why the Arabs did not take up Muḥammad's challenge and produce a document similar to the Qur'ān. One of them is that Muḥammad's opponents were too busy fighting with Muḥammad in battle, and had no

²⁴'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 390. Ibn al-Rīwandī also has another book attacking Muḥammad and the Qur'ān, that is *al-Farīd*. H.S. Nyberg lists this book in his preface to *Kitāb al-intiṣār* under the name *al-Farand* (see al-Khayyāt, *Intiṣār*, p. xxix). But, Amīn al-Khūlī, the editor of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, believes that the correct name is *al-Farīd* (see *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 9, n. 1).

²⁵Stroumsa, "Emerald," p. 172.

²⁶These five arguments relate to: (1) the primacy of intellect, (2) the Qur'ān, (3) Muslim traditions, (4) miracles, and (5) Muslim rituals. (See Stroumsa, "Emerald," pp. 181-184). Kraus, however, divided them into three groups. See his division in Badawī's translation in *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, pp. 97-98.

²⁷Stroumsa, "Emerald," p. 181; Badawī, *Tārīkh al-ilḥād*, p. 88. van Ess mentions this very argument for denying prophecy, see, "al-Fārābī," pp. 6-7.

time to compete with him in a literary composition.²⁸

In addition to Ibn al-Rīwandī and Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, 'Abd al-Jabbār also mentions a number of other scholars such as 'Umar b. Ziyād al-Ḥaddād, Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥuṣrī, Abū Shākir al-Dayṣānī, Ibn Ṭālūt together with two philosophers, al-Kindī (d. after 257/870) and al-Rāzī (d. 320/932).²⁹

2. Al-Nazzām (ca. 165-221/782-836)

Another figure, whose opinions on the inimitability of the Qur'ān were repeatedly mentioned but were, in most cases, also refuted, is al-Nazzām. Commenting on the theory of this *mutakallim*, Abdurrahman Badawi writes: "L'opinion d'al-Nazzām sur l'insupérabilité du Coran est l'opinion la plus courageuse jamais émise par un musulman jusqu'à nos jour,"³⁰ because, Badawi continues, unlike most Muslims, al-Nazzām does not consider the style of the Qur'ān inimitable.

²⁸See Stroumsa, "Emerald," p. 182. Cf. Melhem Chokr's discussion of *zindīqs* and the *mu'ārada* of the Qur'ān in Chokr, *Zandaqa et Zindīqs en Islam au Second Siècle de l'Hégira* (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1993), pp. 153-170.

²⁹See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, vol. I, p. 51, 128, 129 and vol. II, p. 371, 374, 508, 657. See also 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt*, index. The first five figures are considered by the author of the *Fihrist* as "chefs des Manichéens, *mutakallimūn*, extérieurement musulmans, intérieurement *zindīqs*." See G. Vajda, "Les Zindīqs en pays d'Islam au début de la période abbaside," *RSO*, vol. XVII (1937), pp. 181 and 192-197. See also G. Monnot, *Penseurs Musulmans et Religions Iraniennes. 'Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1974), pp. 60-68. For al-Kindī's and al-Rāzī's ideas which were refuted by 'Abd al-Jabbār see, *Tathbīt*, pp. 629-632; see also nn. 14 and 15 *supra*.

³⁰Badawi, *Histoire*, vol. I, p. 109. Muhammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīda has collected the *mutakallimūn*'s accounts of al-Nazzām's view of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* in his book *Ibrāhīm bin Sayyār al-Nazzām wa ārā'uh al-kalāmiyya al-falsafiyya* (Cairo: Maṭba'a lajnat al-ta'līf wa al-tarjama wa al-nashr, 1946), pp. 32-40.

In *Kitāb fadīḥat al-mu'tazila* of Ibn al-Rīwandī, which was entirely refuted by al-Khayyāt, Ibn al-Rīwandī reports al-Nazzām's views of *i'jāz*:

"He [al-Nazzām] maintained that the Qur'ān's arrangement and order [*naẓm wa ta'līf*] are not proof of the Prophet - may God bless him -, and that men are able to produce something similar to it. This is in spite of what God - the Great and Glorious - says: "Say, if men and demons should combine together to bring the like of this Qur'an, they could not bring the like of it."³¹

Al-Khayyāt replies to this account by asserting that, according to al-Nazzām, the Qur'ān's significance as proof of Muḥammad's prophethood lies in the Qur'ān's content of prophecies (*akhbār al-ghuyūb*).³² This statement is actually not a refutation of Ibn al-Rīwandī's accusation but an approval of it, that there is no *i'jāz* in the stylistic form of the Qur'ān, since the eloquent Arabs could have produced a document similar to the Qur'ān or even better.³³ The reason why Muḥammad's opponents did not produce a similar book was not due to their permanent inferiority in literary acumen, but rather to a temporary inability created in them by God.³⁴ This created inability is called by al-Nazzām "*al-ṣarfa*" which means that their desire to compose a text rivaling the Qur'ān, was miraculously turned away by God. The miracle of the Qur'ān was, therefore, a historical one, i.e, it does not continue up to now. This notion of *ṣarfa* was later accepted

³¹See al-Khayyāt, *Intiṣār*, p. 28. See also al-A'asam, *Fadīḥat*, p. 178.

³²*Ibid*, p. 15; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p. 271.

³³This account is also reported by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Hujaj al-nubuwwa*, p. 184; Baghdādī, *Fārḡ*, p. 143; idem, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, p. 184; Shahrastānī, *Milal*, p. 39. See also Gimaret's notes in *Religions*, p. 209.

³⁴van Ess, "Abū Eshāq Nazzām," *Elr*, p. 279.

by a few scholars only, like Hishām al-Fuwaṭī³⁵ (d. c. 218/833), ‘Abbād b. Sulaymān³⁶ (d. c. 250/864), al-Rummānī, al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) and his pupil, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā³⁷ (d. 436/1044) and the Ash‘arite, Abū Ishāq al-Isfarā’īnī³⁸ (d. 418/1027).

Bouman thinks that al-Nazzām, with his controversial theory of *ṣarfa*, did not want to put forward a new argument on *i’jāz*, but rather to look for the reason why the *mu‘āraḍa* (imitation) did not occur.³⁹ However, as the theory is recorded repeatedly in many books of *i’jāz*, even though its inventor is sometimes not mentioned explicitly, it can be said with certainty that al-Nazzām had advanced *ṣarfa* as an aspect of *i’jāz*.

C. The Works of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Predecessors

1. Al-Rummānī’s *Nukat*

Al-Nukat is considered by Issa J. Boullata as "one of the earliest systematic works having the word *i’jāz* in their title."⁴⁰ However, it is not an easy task to historically

³⁵About his other doctrine see Ch. Pellat, "Hishām ‘Amr Fuwaṭī," *EI*², vol. III, p. 496.

³⁶For his doctrine see W.M. Watt, "‘Abbād Sulaymān," *EI*², vol. I, pp. 4-5; W. Madelung, "‘Abbād Salmān," *Eir*, vol. I, pp. 70-71.

³⁷For his biography, see C. Brockelmann, "al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā," *EI*², vol. VII, p. 634. Concerning al-Murtaḍā’s doctrine of *ṣarfa*, see Richard C. Martin, "A Mu‘tazilite Treatise on Prophethood and Miracles. Being Probably the *bāb ‘alā l-nubuwwah* from the *Ziyadat al-sharh* [*sic*] by Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī (Died First Half of the Fifth Century A.H.) Edited in Arabic with an English Introduction, Historical and Theological Commentaries," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975, p. 91 ff.

³⁸For his doctrine, see W. Madelung, "al-Isfarāyīnī," *EI*², vol. IV, pp. 107-108.

³⁹Bouman, *Conflit*, pp. 22-33; Audebert, *Ḥaṭṭābī*, p. 80.

⁴⁰Boullata, "Rhetorical," p. 143; see also G.E. von Grunebaum, "I’*djāz*," p. 1020.

trace when the term *i'jāz* was created,⁴¹ and who was the first to use it. Ibn al-Nadīm in his fourth/tenth-century index of authors and books, *al-Fihrist*, considers the work of al-Rummānī as the second work to use the word *i'jāz* in its title. The first to use the same word in the title is Muḥammad b. Yazīd or Zayd al-Wāsiṭī⁴² (d. 306/918) who entitled his work *Kitāb i'jāz al-Qur'ān fī naẓmih wa ta'līfih*. Unfortunately, that book is not extant.

According to al-Rummānī, the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān lies in seven primary aspects,⁴³ they are: (1) the abandonment of the imitation [of the Qur'ān], despite the presence of abundant motives and a dire need to do so (*tark al-mu'āraḍa ma'a tawaffur al-dawā'ī wa shiddat al-ḥāja*), (2) the [Qur'ān's] challenge to every one (*al-taḥaddī lī al-kāffa*), (3) *al-ṣarfa*, God's turning of humans attempts away from imitation, (4) *al-balāgha*, the Qur'ān's eloquence, meaning its rhetoric and its aesthetic effectiveness, (5) the [Qur'ān's] truthful information concerning future events (*al-akhbār al-ṣādiqa*

⁴¹Bouman claims that the Mu'tazilite attacks (al-Nazzām's) against the style of the Qur'ān, constitute the most important cause behind the writing of a book by the *mutakallimīn* refuting the former's opinion and employing the technical term *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. (Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 45). We have shown in the first chapter the two kinds of *mu'jizāt al-nabī*. *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, which is derived from the same root *'ajz*, was invented to differentiate between the two types.

⁴²See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 245. See also Audebert's introduction and chart in *Ḥaṭṭābī*, pp. 58-64.

⁴³Al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 69. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 122; Boullata, "Rhetorical," p. 143; Aleem, "Ijaz," p. 223; Rippin, *Textual*, p. 49; al-Jemacy, "al-Rummānī," pp. 103-104; Ṣaqr's preface to al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, p. 12; and Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 46.

'an al-umūr al-mustaqbala), (6) the [Qur'ān's] breach of custom (*naqd al-'āda*),⁴⁴ and (7) the [Qur'ān's] analogy to all other inimitable miracles (*qiyās bi-kull mu'jiza*).

Of the seven aspects of *i'jāz*, al-Rummānī devotes most of his attention to the fourth element, i.e., *al-balāgha* which he defines as "the conveying of meaning to the heart in the best of verbal forms (*iṣāl al-ma'nā ilā al-qalb fī aḥsan ṣūra min al-laḥẓ*)."⁴⁵ This definition, according to one of *al-Nukat*'s editors, Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, bears two possible meanings.⁴⁶ The first meaning, "the communicating of meaning to the heart," concerns the psychological effect of eloquence on the heart (*al-athar al-naḥṣī li-al-balāgha*), while the second, "the best of verbal forms," refers to the literary structure or the rhetorical aspects of the Qur'ān.

With regards to the structure of the Qur'ān, al-Rummānī divides eloquence into three different classes.⁴⁷ The first constitutes the highest level, the second is the lowest, while the third lies between the previous levels. The highest level, in the opinion of al-Rummānī, is the miracle *par excellence*. It is exemplified in the Qur'ānic eloquence, whereas the middle and the lowest degrees of eloquence are possible for men to imitate.

⁴⁴Al-Jemaey mistakenly translates it as "the surpassing of natural law." See al-Jemaey, p. 104, 190. As we have explained in the first chapter, *al-'āda* is not "the natural law" but "the custom." Cf. al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī," p. 104, n. 189.

⁴⁵Al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 75.

⁴⁶Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām, *Athar al-Qur'ān fī taṭawwur al-naqd al-'arabī ilā ākhir al-qarn al-rābi' al-hijrī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1961), p. 236.

⁴⁷Iḥsān 'Abbās claims that al-Rummānī's classification of *balāgha* was influenced by the Greek triple ranking of structure: the high (*raḥī*), the middle (*mutawassīṭ*), and the ordinary (*'ādī*). See 'Abbās, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī 'ind al-'arab: naqd al-shi'r min al-qarn al-thānī ḥattā al-qarn al-thāmin al-hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1978), p. 340.

In order to show the eloquence of the Qur'ān, he lists ten rhetorical aspects:⁴⁸ conciseness (*ijāz*), simile (*tashbīh*), metaphor (*isti'āra*), concordance (*talā'um*), articulations (*fawāṣil*), paranomasia (*tajānus*), alteration (*taṣrīf*), implicitness (*taḍmīn*), hyperbole (*mubālagha*), and clear exposition (*ḥusn al-bayān*).

Not surprisingly, al-Rummānī devotes a large section of his book to a discussion of these rhetorical aspects and their occurrence in the Qur'ān.⁴⁹ According to Sallām, seven of the ten rhetorical terms had appeared in previous studies of the Qur'ān, except for *al-talā'um*, *al-taṣrīf* and *al-taḍmīn*, which were novel concepts added by al-Rummānī to the study of the rhetorical terms of the Qur'ān.⁵⁰

Aside from his discussion of the ten rhetorical terms, al-Rummānī also suggests that there is *ijāz* in the Qur'ān's influence on the reader's and hearer's heart. An aspect which makes the Qur'ānic *ijāz* more penetrating and influential. Thus, in his comment on concordance, for example, he says:

"The advantage of concordance lies in the beauty of the speech upon the ear and the ease of its pronunciation, as well as the receptivity to its meaning in the hearer's mind when the beauty of the form and the way of determining it is pointed out."⁵¹

⁴⁸Al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 70. See also Boullata, "Rhetorical," p. 143; al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī," pp. 92-93. Cf. Rippin, *Textual*, pp. 49-50; Ṣaqr's preface of al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, p. 12; and Bouman, *Conflict*, p. 46.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 70-101.

⁵⁰Sallām, *Athar*, p. 236. Shawqī Dayf notes that al-Rummānī has invented some terms for Arabic literary criticism, but he does not clearly identify these inventions. See Dayf, *al-Balāgha: taṭawwur wa tārīkh* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1965), p. 107.

⁵¹Al-Rummānī, *al-Nukat*, p. 88. Cf. al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī," p. 153; Rippin, *Textual*, p. 53.

An interesting factor in al-Rummānī's *Nukat* is his inclusion of *ṣarfa* and eloquence, which seem to be contradictory, as two aspects of *i'jāz*.⁵² The idea of *ṣarfa* was firstly invented by al-Nazzām in order to argue that men are quite capable of composing a counterpart to the Qur'ān and even surpassing it, but God deprived them of doing so. The *ṣarfa* seems also to be in contradiction to his other aspects, namely, the abandonment of imitation and the breach of custom.

The assumption that al-Rummānī had tried to integrate these different theories, led R. Martin to conclude that al-Rummānī's *Nukat* "is not a theological work, [for] the author was primarily a philologist and grammarian by profession."⁵³

2. Al-Khaṭṭābī's *Bayān*

Like al-Rummānī, his contemporary, al-Khaṭṭābī also accepted the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qur'ān as one of the aspects of *i'jāz*. In addition to this, he also discusses in his book *Bayān* three other theories which make the Qur'ān miraculous.⁵⁴

⁵²See Aleem, "I'jaz," p. 223; Himsī, "Fikrat," vol. 28, p. 63; and 'Alī Mahdī Zaytūn, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān wa atharuh fī taṭawwur al-naqd al-adabī: min al-qarn al-khāmis/al-ḥādī 'ashar ilā nihāyat al-qarn al-sābi'/al-thālith 'ashar* (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1992), p. 38.

⁵³Martin, "The Role of the Baṣra Mu'tazila in formulating the Doctrine of the Apologetic Miracle," *JNES*, vol. 39 (1978), p. 187. M.G. Carter's, "Linguistic Science and Orthodoxy in Conflict: The Case of al-Rummānī," *ZGAW*, band 1 (1984), pp. 212-32, argues against Martin's thesis and wishes to prove that throughout his works, al-Rummānī presented Mu'tazilite ideas. Cf. al-Jemaey's opinion of al-Rummānī in, "al-Rummānī," p. 97.

⁵⁴Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān*, pp. 19-21.

They are: the Qur'ān's challenge,⁵⁵ the *ṣarfa* and the Qur'ān's foretelling of future events.⁵⁶

The first aspect, the Qur'ān's challenge, is considered as the central argument for the miraculous inimitability of the Qur'ān.⁵⁷ In this respect, Audebert quotes al-Khaṭṭābī's statement: "J'estime que parmi tous les aspects de l'inimitabilité du Coran qu'on a pu dégager celui-la [*taḥaddī*] est le plus aisé à établir."⁵⁸ The challenge was launched by Muḥammad to his Arab contemporaries for twenty years,⁵⁹ however, instead of producing a single *sūra* similar to the Qur'ān, they vied with him in battle. This response of the Arabs is seen by al-Khaṭṭābī as an indication of their being incapable of matching the Qur'ān.

Unlike the previous aspect of *i'jāz*, the second and the third aspects were rejected

⁵⁵M. Khalafallah in his article, "Two Fourth Century A.H. Approaches to the Theory of *I'jāz*," in *BFAUA*, vol. 8 (1954), p. 13 does not include this argument as an aspect of Qur'ānic *i'jāz*. Nonetheless, a clear examination of al-Khaṭṭābī's preface (pp. 19-20) may reveal that it is one of its aspects. See also, Boullata, "Rhetorical," pp. 143-4.

⁵⁶Because of this and other points, al-Jemaey claims that al-Khaṭṭābī was influenced by al-Rummānī (al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī," p. 2, 92). But Audebert argues that due to the absence of knowledge of the precise dates of the two books, it is impossible to know exactly who influenced whom (Audebert, *al-Haṭṭābī*, p. 73; 108).

⁵⁷Al-Khaṭṭābī mentions it in *Bayān*, pp. 19, 25, 31-33 and 43.

⁵⁸Audebert, *Haṭṭābī*, p. 116.

⁵⁹There are other versions of the duration of the challenge; al-Jubbā'ī, for example, states that the challenge was advanced for twenty-three years. See, 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 397. Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Hujaj*, p. 145 "*nayyif wa 'ishrīn sana*" (over twenty years).

by al-Khaṭṭābī.⁶⁰ Refuting the *ṣarfa*, which implies that the Arabs could have matched the Qur'ān if God had not deterred them, al-Khaṭṭābī quotes the verse of the Qur'ān which ascertains that humans and *jinn* will never produce the like of the Qur'ān. (Q. 17/88).⁶¹

In rejecting the third idea of Qur'ānic *i'jāz*, that is its prophecy of future events, such as Q. 30/1-3 and 48/16, al-Khaṭṭābī argues that this concept is not evident in the general character of all verses of the Qur'ān. Moreover, God's challenge is not specifically to compose one aspect of Qur'ānic content, but to produce one *sūra*.

Finally, al-Khaṭṭābī proposes a theory involving the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qur'ān. Like al-Rummānī, who classifies eloquence into three categories, al-Khaṭṭābī divides speech (*kalām* but not *balāgha* as al-Rummānī had suggested) into three different categories of varying degrees of lucidity and eloquence. The first is the highest in sublimity and strength of style; the second is the medium one which is eloquent and easy, while the third is the nearest to ordinary speech.⁶² However, unlike al-Rummānī who ascribes the highest degree to the Qur'ān, al-Khaṭṭābī states that the distinguishing feature of the Qur'ān is the fact that it partakes of each of these categories in a harmonious manner, thus producing a unique species of composition which combines both sublimity

⁶⁰Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān*, pp. 20-21. See also Audebert, *Ḥaṭṭābī*, pp. 80-84; al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz*, pp. 161-163; Boullata, "Rhetorical," pp. 143-144; Khālafallah, "Two Fourth," p. 13; Ṣaqr's preface to al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, pp. 14-15; and Bouman, *Conflict*, p. 47.

⁶¹Boullata, "Rhetorical," pp. 143-144; Khālafallah, "Two Fourth," p. 13; al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz*, p. 162.

⁶²Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān*, p. 23. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 121; al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz*, vol. I, p. 164; Khālafallah, "Two Fourth," p. 14; Aleem, "Ijaz," p. 224; Ṣaqr's preface to al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, p. 16.

and sweetness. Although, these two qualities are contrary to one another, yet their successful juxtaposition in the composition (*naẓm*) of the Qur'ān serves as an honor (*jaḍīla*) granted by God to the Qur'ān. This great honor is bestowed on the Prophet in order to consolidate his prophethood. For al-Khaṭṭābī, all speech, be it divine or human, consists of words (*alfāz*) conveying meaning, ideas (*ma'ānī*) existing in words, and a structure (*naẓm*) arranging both.⁶³ Human speech may excel in one or another of these aspects but the Qur'ān, which is believed to come from God, has achieved the highest excellence in all. This is due to its revelation in the most eloquent wording, and in the best possible composition, containing the highest and noblest meanings. The source of this excellence does not only lie in the placement of each word in its right place but also in the choice of words, so that any changing of place or words will disturb the construction of its elegance.

Lastly, at the end of his dissertation, al-Khaṭṭābī points to another secret of the Qur'ān's miraculous superiority, that is the effect of the Qur'ān on man's heart and soul.

He says:

"There is no other composition, in poetry or in prose, other than the Qur'ān which if you listen to it produces in your heart a state of sweetness and ecstasy and a sense of awe and admiration. The soul becomes elated at the hearing of the Qur'ān and when it has been absorbed in its majesty it becomes filled with awe

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 24. Mustansir Mir considers al-Khaṭṭābī to be the first writer to suggest *naẓm* as an aspect of *i'jāz*. See Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'ān: A Study of Islāhī's Concept of Naẓm in Tadabbur-i Qur'ān* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, 1986), p. 11. Although al-Jāhiz's *Kitāb naẓm al-Qur'ān* is not extant, we can still find his theory of *naẓm* in his other books, such as *Hujaj al-nubuwwa*, which is earlier than al-Khaṭṭābī's. See for example, p. 120, 143, 146 of *Hujaj*.

and piety, and forgoes its stubbornness and opposition."⁶⁴

Although al-Khaṭṭābī's treatment of *i'jāz* does not exhibit a satisfactory degree of thoroughness or detail, which, according to Dayf, can be attributed to al-Khaṭṭābī's career as a traditionist and jurist,⁶⁵ one must also state that the latter, as well as al-Rummānī, had influenced al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*.

3. Al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*

Compared to his predecessors' works, al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz* is perhaps the most studied.⁶⁶ The reason for this, as von Grunebaum puts it, is that: "Bāqillānī's treatment of the problem appears thus considerably more elaborate and systematic than that accorded it by his predecessors."⁶⁷

Al-Bāqillānī advances three arguments to demonstrate the miraculousness of the Qur'ān.⁶⁸

⁶⁴*Ibid*, p. 68. Translation from Khalafallah, "Two Fourth," p. 15.

⁶⁵Dayf, *al-Balāgha*, p. 103.

⁶⁶To name some western scholars, though only a few: Bouman in his, *Conflit*, pp. 54-83; and idem, "Fondaments de l'autorité du Coran chez al-Bāqillānī," *Le Monde Non-Chrétien*, Nouvelle Série, 34 (1955), pp. 154-71; Grunebaum, *Tenth*; Angelika Neuwirth, "Ṭarīqat al-Bāqillānī fī izhār 'jāz al-Qur'ān," *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsān 'Abbās on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Wadād al-Qāḍī (Beirut: American University, 1981), pp. 281-96.

⁶⁷Von Grunebaum, *Tenth*, p. xviii.

⁶⁸Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, pp. 48-54. Idem, *al-Inṣāf*, pp. 54-5. Cf. *al-Tamhīd*, p. 141 where he mentions two aspects of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, i.e., prophecies about the future and the composition of the Qur'ān. But, on p. 154, he differentiates between prophecies about the future and the ancient tales. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 118-119; Boullata, "Rhetorical," pp. 144-145; Aleem, "Ijaz," p. 225; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 76; al-Khaṭīb,

1. The Qur'ān contains prophecies about future events and this is beyond the power of man.
2. It is well known that Muḥammad was an *ummi* (illiterate). It is also known that he was not conversant with the books of the ancients or their tales and biographies. Nevertheless, he recapitulated all the important events that had happened from the creation of Adam down to his own prophecy. Thus, there is no other way but to conclude that he had received all of the above-information directly from God through revelation.
3. The style of the Qur'ān is original in structure and wonderful in composition and reaches the ultimate in rhetoric, surpassing the limit man can reach in composition, style and eloquence.

From the explanation of those three propositions, it is clearly shown that al-Bāqillānī mainly insists on the inimitability of the Qur'ān in terms of its content and style. He also affirms that the latter is more important than the former, because it is this inimitable style that distinguishes it from the other revealed books, i.e., the Old and New Testaments.⁶⁹ The miracle of these books lies only in their content of prophecy not in their style. As such, the inimitability of the Qur'ān can only be compared with Moses' miracle of transforming a staff into a serpent and Jesus' miracles of healing the blind and raising the dead. The reason for such a comparison is that all of these miracles were

I'jāz, pp. 181-183; Ṣaqr's preface to al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, p. 78.

⁶⁹Bouman thought that al-Bāqillānī was the first to compare the Qur'ān to the Old and New Testaments. (See *Conflit*, p. 87). With the discovery of Ibn Fūrak's *Mujarrad*, however, it becomes permissible to say that al-Bāqillānī's opinions were influenced by al-Ash'arī. See Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, p. 180; and D. Gimaret, *La Doctrine d'al-Ash'arī* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1990), pp. 465-466.

beyond their contemporaries' capabilities and are considered unusual events which break the natural habit. Moreover, their contemporaries were challenged (*taḥaddī*) to produce similar miracles but they could not.

Since the miracle of the Qur'ān lies in its style, only the people who know the linguistics of Arabic and the methods of *kalām* can understand and explain its supernatural quality.⁷⁰ Hence, al-Bāqillānī indicates that it is not possible for those whose language is not Arabic, or even for those who only speak the language but have no taste for its fine points, to appreciate the style of the Qur'ān and to be certain of its uniqueness. Consequently, they must depend primarily on the judgment of those whose business is to distinguish between the ordinary and the extraordinary styles.⁷¹ In other words, the arguments of the *i'jāz* for those who are not well versed in Arabic or who are non-Arabs (*a'jamī*) are only *istidlāl* (deduction);⁷² meaning that if the Arabs could not imitate the composition of the Qur'ān, neither could they.

According to al-Bāqillānī, one can only understand the inimitability of the Qur'ān, when one understands and realizes the singularities of its style. These singularities are:⁷³

1. The first point which is a general one is that the style of the Qur'ān, with all its different phases and aspects, goes beyond all the known styles and is special to the Qur'ān

⁷⁰Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, p. 9.

⁷¹Aleem, "Ijaz," p. 78.

⁷²Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, p. 393.

⁷³*Ibid.*, pp. 51-69. See also Ṣaqr's preface to al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, pp. 79-81; Aleem, "Ijaz," pp. 225-226; Bouman, *Conflit*, pp. 67-69; idem, "Autorité," pp. 165-166; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," vol. 28, pp. 76-78.

alone.⁷⁴

2. The Arabs have got no piece of composition which can rival the Qur'ān in its eloquence and purity of style.⁷⁵

3. The style of the Qur'ān retains its high level in all phases of expression. For example, the Qur'ān contains tales and sermons, arguments and exhortations, promises and warnings, ethical teachings and other issues, and yet, in spite of these different aspects, the style never degenerates, as is the case with even the best of poets and orators. They excel only in one class of subjects while the Qur'ān excels in all of them with the same perfection and without any incongruity.⁷⁶

4. In the composition of the best authors (even on one subject), there is often one part which does not compare with the others. This is particularly the case when the author shifts from one idea to another. Whereas in the Qur'ān, the most divergent topics are treated in such a way that they appear to be one whole.⁷⁷

5. The style of the Qur'ān is not only superior to that of men but also to that of *jinn*. It might be said that this is a claim about which we cannot be sure because it is beyond the range of our knowledge. However, we can be sure, at least, that the style of the

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 51-52; Aleem, p. 225; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 67; idem, "Autorité," p. 165; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 76.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 53; Aleem, p. 225; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 67; idem, "Autorité," p. 165; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 76.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 54-56; Aleem, p. 225; Bouman, *Conflit*, pp. 67-68; idem, "Autorité," p. 165; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 56-57; Aleem, p. 225; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 68; idem, "Autorité," p. 165; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

Qur'ān is superior to the style of those compositions which the Arabs believed to be the compositions of the *jinn*.⁷⁸

6. All the different forms of expression like dilation and elision, collection and distribution, metaphor and explicitness, etc. which are found in many Arabic compositions are also to be found in the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, the Qur'ānic forms of expression exceed those of the Arabs in every respect.⁷⁹

7. It is more difficult to coin words for new ideas than to coin words for current ones. Yet, in the Qur'ān, we find such words which express the Qur'ānic ideas about *sharī'a* in a way which is beyond the power of man.⁸⁰

8. The excellence of a composition and the height of its eloquence are established when, on taking out of a word and putting it in another sentence or verse, this word catches the attention of the reader or hearer. This is exactly the case with the words of the Qur'ān which, when used in other compositions, shine like jewels or pearls.⁸¹

9. The letters of the alphabet on which the Arabic language is based are twenty-eight,⁸²

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 57-62; Aleem, p. 225; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 68; idem, "Autorité," p. 165; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 62-63; Aleem, p. 226; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 68; idem, "Autorité," p. 166; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 63; Aleem, p. 226; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 68; idem, "Autorité," p. 166; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, pp. 63-66; Aleem, p. 226; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 68; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 77.

⁸²Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar, another editor of al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, also mentions twenty-eight letters. (See Ḥaydar's edition, p. 64). Ṣaqr, however, mentions twenty-nine. (See Ṣaqr's edition, p. 66). The difference in enumerating the letters of Arabic alphabet is due to the fact that the people who mention twenty-nine letters distinguish two kinds of *alif*: *layyina* (soft) and *mutaḥarrika* (movent). The former is

and the chapters of the Qur'ān which begin with letters of the alphabet number twenty-eight. Moreover, the letters of the alphabet used in an initial position are fourteen, i.e., exactly half of the total number of letters. This is to show that the composition of the Qur'ān is based on the very alphabet the Arabs used. The letters of the alphabet have been classified in different categories by different people as for example non-vocal (*mahmūsa*) and vocal (*majhūra*),⁸³ guttural and non-guttural,⁸⁴ strong and weak,⁸⁵ covering and open letters.⁸⁶ The remarkable fact is that half the letters from all these classes are used at the beginning of Qur'ānic chapters. This classification dates from long after the appearance of the Qur'ān and the fact that exactly half the number from every class are used is a proof of a knowledge of the future and possible only to God.⁸⁷

10. The language of the Qur'ān is simple and easy and its meaning is quickly understood. It does not contain uncouth words or expressions. Nevertheless, it is impossible to rival its style.⁸⁸

These are the ten points which make the style of the Qur'ān, the most important aspect of the *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, unique and perfect.

properly called *alif* and the latter is *hamza*. (See E.W. Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 1).

⁸³For the difference between the two, see Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, pp. 66-67. See also Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 476 and 2902.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 67; Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 630.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*; Lane, *Lexicon*, p. 1519.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*; and Lane *Lexicon*, p. 1827 and 2329.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 66-69; Aleem, p. 226; Bouman, *Conflit*, pp. 68-69.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*; Aleem, p. 226; Bouman, *Conflit*, p. 69; al-Ḥimṣī, "Fikrat," p. 78.

Opposing the opinion of his contemporaries, al-Bāqillānī shows that the Qur'ān is not and does not contain *shi'r* (poetry)⁸⁹ or *saj'* (rhymed prose).⁹⁰ Aside from quoting the verses of the Qur'ān: 36/69 and 26/224, which declare that it is not poetry, he adduces other evidence, which Bouman calls the "Bāqillānian argumentation."⁹¹ This evidence includes the argumentation concerning the Qur'ān's challenge (*taḥaddī*) and the argumentation regarding its imitation (*mu'āraḍa*) or the attempt to match it and meet the challenge:

"If the eloquent people among the Arabs, in the time when the Qur'ān was revealed, had considered it as poetry, which had not been beyond their style, they would have immediately imitated it (*mu'āraḍa*), because poetry was practicable and easy for them. However, since we do not see them trying to do so, we understand that they did not believe it to be [poetry]."⁹²

In another place, he suggests that if the Qur'ān had been in rhymed prose, it would not have been beyond their style and would have even been imitable.⁹³ On the basis of these arguments, al-Bāqillānī sought to reject the possibility that poetry and rhymed prose

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 76-85. For a discussion of al-Bāqillānī's refutation of *shi'r* and *saj'* in the Qur'ān, see M. Badruddin Alavi, "Inimitability of the Qur'ān," *IC*, vol. 24 (1950), pp. 9-12.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 86-100. Devin J. Stewart in his article, "*Saj'* in the Qur'ān: Prosody and Structure," *JAL*, vol. XXI, part 2 (1990), pp. 101-139 presents two opposing opinions over the question of whether the Qur'ān contains *saj'* or not. The rest of his article, however, convincingly demonstrates that the greater part of the Qur'ān is *saj'*.

⁹¹Bouman, *Conflict*, p. 69.

⁹²Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, p. 80.

⁹³*Ibid.*, p. 87. However, Aḥmad Ṣaqr, the editor of al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*, does not agree with al-Bāqillānī on this point. The former says that rhymed prose is a characteristic of the art of composition which must be present in the Qur'ān. See Ṣaqr's preface in *I'jāz*, pp. 85-87.

can be found in the Qur'ān. He believed that the concept of the inimitability of the Qur'ān may not be compared to any type of sublunary composition, since the Qur'ān represents one of God's attributes, i.e., His Speech.⁹⁴ Another reason for the impossibility of comparing the Qur'ānic composition to any human composition is the presence of many incongruities (*tafāwut*) in human creations. The composition of the Qur'ān, on the other hand, is totally consistent, as it is stated in the Qur'ān (4/82): "Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy."

Basing his argument on the belief that the Qur'ān may not be compared to human compositions, al-Bāqillānī, although accepting the rhetorical uniqueness of the Qur'ān and endeavoring to demonstrate its rhetorical superiority over all forms of Arabic literature,⁹⁵ sees that the rhetorical inimitability is not a necessary argument for *i'jāz*, since it could be taught or studied. What could not be emulated, however, is the composition of the Qur'ān, as it has no guide to be imitated.

In the end, like al-Rummānī and al-Khaṭṭābī, al-Bāqillānī considers the psychological effect of the Qur'ān as one important aspect of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. In this respect, al-Bāqillānī says: "... it [the Qur'ān] has the effect on the hearts and influence on the mind, of making [someone] sad or happy, disturbed or amused, encouraged or desperate,

⁹⁴See *al-Inṣāf*, p. 62 where al-Bāqillānī quotes Muḥammad's tradition saying: "The superiority of God's Speech over other speeches is the same as His superiority over His creatures."

⁹⁵Al-Bāqillānī lists and discusses ten rhetorical terms of al-Rummānī, but does not mention the latter's name. See al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, pp. 396-435.

laughing or weeping⁹⁶ Indeed, it is this powerful composition that had affected Muḥammad's contemporaries and all other people after them,⁹⁷ whether rhetoricians, literary critics or people who had only the simple ability to recognize the verbal power of the Qur'ān.

Lastly, one can deduce from his arguments that al-Bāqillānī was certainly influenced by his predecessors who were not only erudite in the field of *i'jāz* but also in Arabic literary criticism.⁹⁸ This influence can be clearly discerned even though he does not acknowledge them. Finally, the most remarkable feature of his work might be his effort and his ability to collect and to synthesize between the ideas of previous writers on *i'jāz* and of literary critics before adding to them and producing a work that is uniquely his own.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 419.

⁹⁷For the Qur'ānic effect on the early Arabs, see al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, p. 38.

⁹⁸Von Grunebaum, for example, has shown the influence of Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (d. 394/1004) and Qudāma b. Ja'far (d. after 320/932) on al-Bāqillānī's *I'jāz*. See von Grunebaum, *Tenth*, p. xx, and pp. 116-119.

CHAPTER THREE

‘ABD AL-JABBĀR’S *I’JĀZ AL-QUR’ĀN*

A. Name and Nature of the Book

1. The Title

Due to its late discovery, *I’jāz al-Qur’ān* by ‘Abd al-Jabbār has not been studied extensively.¹ The afore-mentioned work is the sixteenth part (*juz’*) of *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa al-‘adl*, which was discovered in Ṣan‘ā’, Yemen, in 1951 by a scholarly expedition sent by Dr. Ṭahā Ḥusayn, the Minister of Education in the Royal Egyptian Government. After spending some months photographing manuscripts, the expedition, which was led by Khalīl Yaḥyā Nāmī and Fu‘ād Sayyid, returned to Egypt with great success. They brought with them approximately three hundred photographed manuscripts, among which was *al-Mughnī*.²

¹At this point, one should mention the work of Richard C. Martin, "A Mu‘tazilite Treatise on Prophethood and Miracles. Being Probably the *bāb ‘alā l-nubuwwah* from the *Ziyadat al-sharḥ* [sic] by Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī (Died First Half of the Fifth Century A.H.) Edited in Arabic with an English Introduction, Historical and Theological Commentaries," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975. Although this book studies the doctrine of the Mu‘tazilite School of Baṣra, it discusses the doctrine of Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī more than it discusses that of his teacher, ‘Abd al-Jabbār.

²For information on this expedition and manuscript, see G.C. Anawati, "Une oeuvre mu‘tazilite inédite: Le *Mughnī* du Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Ġabbār," in *Akten des Vierundzwanzigsten Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses. München 28 August bis 4 September 1957*, ed. H. Franke (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1959), p. 288-292; and idem, R. Caspar and Mahmoud el-Khodeiri, "Une somme inédite de théologie mu‘tazilite: le *Moghni* du Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār," *MIDEO*, vol. 4 (1957), pp. 281-316.

The *Mughnī* originally consisted of sixteen volumes (*mujallad*) containing twenty parts, only twelve of which were found in Ṣan'ā'. They were parts IV to IX, XI to XIV, XVI and XX. As far as part XVI is concerned, a second manuscript was found in Dār al-kutub, Cairo, together with some other parts, which were not extant in the library of Ṣan'ā', such as parts XV and XVII.³ The Ṣan'ā' manuscripts are generally referred to as the *ṣ* manuscript, while the Cairo manuscripts as the *ṭ*. According to Dr. Amīn al-Khūlī, who was entrusted by Dr. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn with editing the sixteenth part, the *ṭ* manuscript is more complete than the *ṣ* manuscript. The latter lacks one entire page in its discussion of the *mu'āraḍa* of the Qur'ān.⁴

In contrast with the other parts of *Mughnī*, the sixteenth part was the first text to be printed and published by the General Culture Administration of the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance of the United Arab Republic.⁵ It appeared in 1960 in Cairo, under the title *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* (The Inimitability of the Qur'ān). This title, however, is not quite appropriate, since *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* constitutes only a treatise (*kalām*) on the four

³Concerning these Cairo manuscripts, see Mahmoud el-Khodeiri, "Deux Nouvelles Sections du *Moghni* du Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār," *MIDEO*, vol. 5 (1958), pp. 417-424. According to J.R.T.M. Peters, el-Khodeiri's data about the discovered manuscripts in Dār al-kutub were not complete, since the library has also preserved parts V and VI of *Mughnī*. See Peters, *God's Created Speech: a study in the speculative theology of the Mu'tazilī Qādī l-Qudāt Abū l-Ḥasan bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), p. 26, n. 114 and p. 27.

⁴See Amīn al-Khūlī's preface in *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 3 and 5. See also the missing page from the manuscript *ṣ* on pp. 257-259 of the present *Mughnī*.

⁵See Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 27. See also G.C. Anawati, "Textes arabes anciens édités en Egypte au cours des années 1961 et 1962," *MIDEO*, vol. 7 (1962-1963), p. 153.

discourses explored in that part.⁶ Moreover, in the *explicit* of the manuscript of volume twelve or at the end of *Mughnī* part XVI, it says: "... The end of the book on prophecies follows -God willing - the section in which we explain the aspects of the knowledge of the meaning of God's and the Prophet's words."⁷ In addition, at the end of the *Mughnī* part XIV, it says: "We now begin to talk about the prophethood ... What follows - God willing - is the discussion on prophecies."⁸ Therefore, it can be assumed that parts XV and XVI originally belonged together and discussed the same topic; that is prophecy.

In his introduction to the discussion on prophecy, 'Abd al-Jabbār classifies the subject into three categories (*jins*): *jawāz bi'that al-anbiyā'*, the possibility of prophethood; *wuqū' al-bi'tha*, the occurrence of prophethood; and *nubuwwat nabiyyinā*, the prophecy of our prophet [Muḥammad].⁹ Here, in the latter category, the concept of

⁶Those treatises are: (1) [Some sections on] *al-kalām fī al-khabar*, (2) *al-kalām fī jawāz naskh al-sharā'i'*, (3) *al-kalām fī thubūt nubuwwat Muḥammad wa fī i'jāz al-Qur'ān wa sālir al-mu'jizāt al-ẓāhira 'alayh*, (4) *al-kalām fī ithbāt sālir mu'jizāt al-rasūl, siwā al-Qur'ān*. Cf. Anawati, "Une oeuvre," p. 291 where he mistakenly mentions the first as "*al-khabar al-wāhid*," and the third as "l'opposition au Coran" (*mu'āraḍat al-Qur'ān*). The topics in the first pages of *Mughnī* part XVI clearly show that they are the continuation of the sections discussed in the treatise of *khabar* which begins in *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 317. See also the *explicit* of *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 419, and of the manuscript in el-Khodeiri, "Deux," p. 420.

⁷See Anawati, "Une somme inédite," p. 313. See also 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 433; Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 33.

⁸'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XIV, p. 461. See also Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 33; Anawati, "Une somme inédite," p. 310.

⁹See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, pp. 7-8.

i'jāz al-Qur'ān is discussed.¹⁰ We can thus determine that part sixteen of the *Mughnī* is properly not entitled "The Inimitability of the Qur'ān," but rather "The Prophecy of Muḥammad," which consists of four discussions: the transmission, the possibility of the abrogation of religion, the inimitability of the Qur'ān and the affirmation of other miracles by Muḥammad. In this chapter, however, I will confine my analysis to the third point, that is the discussion of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.¹¹

2. The Structure of the Text

The *Mughnī*, as al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī (d. 494/1101), one of the biographers of the Mu'tazila tells us, is one of 'Abd al-Jabbār's works which are usually characterized as *amālī* (dictated) works¹² to distinguish them from the works written by himself (*muṣannaḥ*). The proof of this fact is the author's remark at the end of the *Mughnī*.¹³ In it 'Abd al-Jabbār said that he had spent twenty years dictating this voluminous work together with his other books. Moreover, having examined all the manuscripts, Daniel

¹⁰In *Mughnī*, part VII, p. 5 'Abd al-Jabbār writes: "We postpone (*nu'akhhir* and not *nūjiz*) the discussion of the inimitability of the Qur'ān, the related question of the aspect (*wajh*) of its inimitability, the cessation of the attacks of those who attack it, and mention of its judgements till the chapter on the prophecies, God willing." See Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 285.

¹¹'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 143-406.

¹²Al-Jushamī, *Sharḥ al-'uyūn*, in *Faḍl al-i'tizāl*, p. 376; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*, p. 113. See also G. Monnot, *Penseurs Musulmans et Religions Iraniennes. 'Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1974), p. 272; and Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 28.

¹³'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XX/2, p. 258. See also Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 28; Gimaret in his review of Monnot's *Penseurs*, in *JA*, vol. 263 (1975), p. 457.

Gimaret states confidently that the word *imlā'* appears quite clearly in each volume of the Ṣan'ā' manuscripts.¹⁴

In addition, Gimaret displays two other points to demonstrate that the *Mughnī* is an *amālī* work and to differentiate between the dictated works and the commentaries (*shurūḥ*).¹⁵ Firstly, in the *Mughnī*, the author constantly speaks of himself and refers to his other books using the plural form, for example, he says, *allatī bayyannāhā fī al-kalām 'alā al-barāhima* (*Mughnī* XVI, p. 144), *kamā naqūluh fī bāb al-ibāḥa* (*Mughnī* XVI, p. 195). On the other hand, in the commentaries, the author speaks of another person and refers to the latter's books. This is quite clear in *Kitāb al-Majmū'* which, contrary to the assumption of J.J. Houben, the editor of its first volume, who believes that this is 'Abd al-Jabbār's work, is a paraphrased commentary of 'Abd al-Jabbār's *al-Muḥīṭ bi al-taklīf* written by his student, Ibn Mattawayh (d. 469/1076). In this book, Ibn Mattawayh refers to 'Abd al-Jabbār and to his book in the third person, such as *wa qad qāla fī kitābih*, and *wa qad ashāra fī al-kitāb*. The second mark of distinction concerns the style of both genres. Like many *amālī* books, the *Mughnī*, in its composition and style, mostly takes the form of a dialogue, comprising *su'āl wa jawāb*,¹⁶ whereas a commentary usually does not.

¹⁴See Gimaret's preface in *Kitāb al-Majmū'*, vol. II, p. 20; and idem, "Les *Uṣūl al-ḥamsa* du Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār et leur commentaires," in *AI*, vol. 15 (1979), p. 53.

¹⁵See, *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁶M. Cook in his "The Origins of *Kalām*," *BSOAS*, vol. 43 (1980), pp. 32-43 shows that the dialectical technique of Muslim *kalām* is a borrowing from Christianity and other sources.

In presenting a dialogue, the author of *amālī* volumes usually followed one of two ways.¹⁷ He, either responded to a hypothetical interlocutor who questioned the thesis the author holds, so that the form of dialogue would be *in qāla ... qulnā ...* ("if he were to say ... we would reply ..."), *in qāla ... yuqāl lah ...* ("if he were to say ... he will be told ..."). Or, he would display a dialogue as if it had occurred between two real people. The form is *qāla lī ... qultu lah ...* ("he said to me ... I told him ..."), *qāla ... qāla lah ...* ("he said ... so he said to him"). The *Mughnī* adopts seemingly the first type of dialogue which very often leads to difficulty in determining the *sā'irs* 'Abd al-Jabbār refers to, since the latter mostly speaks of them in impersonal terms.

3. The Plan of the Text

a. *Al-Mughnī*

The text of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* is to be found in the sixteenth part of the *Mughnī*. The text bears the title: "A discourse concerning the truthfulness of the prophecy of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, and the inimitability of the Qur'ān and all his miracles." (*al-Kalām fī thubūt nubuwwat Muḥammad, ṣalawāt Allāh 'alayh, wa fī i'jāz al-Qur'ān, wa sā'ir al-mu'jizāt al-zāhira 'alayh, 'alayh al-salām*).¹⁸ The treatise, which covers 263 pages (from page 143 to 406) and is divided into thirty-two sections (*faṣl*), may be

¹⁷See S. Stroumsa, "The Blinding Emerald: Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Zumurrud*," *JAOS*, vol. 114, no. 2 (1994), p. 166. Cf. Josef van Ess, "The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology," in *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970), p. 23.

¹⁸'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 143. The last topic, namely the other miracles of Muḥammad, actually belongs to the last discussion of the book.

classified into four major sections.¹⁹

The first section (pp. 143-190) deals with the manner by which the prophethood of Muḥammad and the Qur'ān can be determined. In it, 'Abd al-Jabbār seeks to show that the existence of Muḥammad and the Qur'ān were transmitted by numerous authorities (*mutawātir*) and that they therefore are known necessarily and immediately (*ḍarūrī*). Then, he briefly discusses the criticism raised by the Imāmites,²⁰ the *Ḥashwiyya* and *ahl al-ḥadīth*.²¹ The former claim that there were some alterations in the 'Uthmānic Qur'ān and the latter argue that the Qur'ān was not transmitted through *mutawātir* traditions but rather through a single authority. At the end of this section, 'Abd al-Jabbār provides several arguments on the Qur'ān's authenticity and its being an indication of Muḥammad's prophethood.

In the second section (pp. 191-225), *al-Qāḍī* elaborates upon various styles of speech and the superiority of the style of the Qur'ān over other speeches. In this section, he argues that speech is an action (*fi'l*); and that when this action is executed in a certain manner, it becomes one of the precise acts (*al-af'āl al-muḥkama*).²² In the next sections,

¹⁹This classification is mine.

²⁰Concerning this group, see, for example, W. Ivanow, "Imām," *SEI*, pp. 165-166; W. Madelung, "Imāma," *EI*², vol. 3, pp. 1163-1169.

²¹Concerning this group, see Anonymous, "Ḥashwīya," *SEI*, p. 137; editors of *EI*², "Ḥashwiyya," *EI*², vol. III, p. 269; and J. Schacht, "Ahl al-Ḥadīth," *EI*², vol. I, pp. 258-259. Cf. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 22.

²²By including speech in the domain of action (*fi'l*), 'Abd al-Jabbār intentionally rejects the doctrine of "the eternity of the Qur'ān" because of its being in the mind of God, and upholds "the createdness of the Qur'ān." For a discussion of this matter, see Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 280 ff.; and J. Bouman, "The doctrine of 'Abd al-Jabbār on the Created Word of Allāh," in *Verbum* (Nov. 14th 1964), pp. 67-86.

he explains the definition of *faṣāḥa*, the ways of making a speech *faṣīḥ* and the soundness (*ṣiḥḥa*) of challenging other people to compete in the eloquent speech.²³ As we shall see, 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory of the aspect of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* centers on these sections.

In his third section, (pp. 226-336) which is the most important section, 'Abd al-Jabbār deals primarily with the arguments on the inimitability of the Qur'ān. Firstly, he clarifies the meaning of inimitability of the Qur'ān; then, in the following sections, he discusses the arguments supporting its inimitability, such as the Qur'ān's challenge to produce a document similar to it, the historical and psychological proofs of the absence of efforts to rival the Qur'ān, and finally the aspects of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān.

The last section (pp. 337-406) is as important as the third one, since it usually appears in 'Abd al-Jabbār's discussion of the Qur'ān and its miraculousness. It contains *al-Qāḍī*'s argument against the criticism raised by the attackers of the Qur'ān, such as Ibn al-Rīwandī and his friends, the Imāmites and the Bāṭiniyya²⁴ of the Shī'ites.

Besides *Mughnī* part XVI, 'Abd al-Jabbār's views on the *i'jāz* are also to be found

²³It is important to mention here that the challenge, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, is to produce something similar to the Qur'ān and not to reproduce or imitate. See for example, *Mughnī*, part VII, p. 203 where 'Abd al-Jabbār writes: *inna al-taḥaddī innamā waqa' an ya'tū bi-mithlih fī faṣāḥatih wa balāghatih min ḡhayr an ya'tū bih 'alā sabīl al-ḥikāya li-anna ityānah 'alā hādḥā al-wajh lā yata'adhdhar 'alā kull aḥad*. See also *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 222-223; Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 390.

²⁴Concerning this group see B. Carra de Vaux, "Bāṭiniyya," *SEI*, pp. 60-61; M.G.S. Hodgson, "Bāṭiniyya," *EP*, vol. I, pp. 1098-1100.

in his other books, such as *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa* and *al-Uṣūl al-khamṣa*,²⁵ as well in his student's book, [*Ta'līq*] *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamṣa* by Mānkadīm Sheshdīv (d. 425/10-34).

b. *Tathbūt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*

In this book, which is classified by 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān among the works about tradition,²⁶ 'Abd al-Jabbār, basing himself on the Qur'ān and the tradition of Muḥammad, maintains that the miracles of Muḥammad, both the sensory miracles (*al-ḥissiyya*) and the miracle of the Qur'ān, prove that he was truly a prophet.

Having discussed the sensory miracles in the first pages of *Tathbūt*, 'Abd al-Jabbār begins his discussion of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān on page eighty-five. He starts by citing the Qur'ānic verse which categorically states that neither humans nor *jinn* can produce a text similar to the Qur'ān. (Q. 17/88) This is followed by three arguments supporting the inimitability of the Qur'ān. These arguments speak of the Qur'ān's eloquence (*faṣāḥa*); its information (*akhbār al-ghuyūb*) on hidden matters; and its injunction (*tanbīh*) to use reason. However, the rest of the discussion (pp. 86-234), as I

²⁵His books *Mughnī* parts VII and XV, *Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'an al-maṭā'in* and *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* must also be included. Although these books do not discuss the doctrine of *i'jāz* specifically, yet they provide numerous examples and explanations on this theory. Moreover, while interpreting the verses of the Qur'ān, both *Mutashābih* and *Tanzīh*, counter the criticism levelled at the Qur'ān.

²⁶'Uthmān, *Qāḍī al-quḍāt 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadḥānī* (Beirut: Dār al-'arabiyya, 1967), pp. 59-60. Curiously, the *Tathbūt* is not mentioned by the biographers of 'Abd al-Jabbār, such as al-Ḥākim al-Jushamī in *Sharḥ al-'uyūn*, or Ibn al-Murtadā in his *Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*.

see it, is devoted solely to the second aspect of its *i'jāz*, i.e., information on the hidden things,²⁷ including the doctrine of Christianity,²⁸ and some counter-arguments against the criticism levelled at Muḥammad and the Qur'ān.²⁹

c. *Al-Uṣūl al-khamṣa*

This book was both mentioned and published for the first time by D. Gimaret in his "Les *Uṣūl al-Ḥamsa* du Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār et Leurs Commentaires."³⁰ Like the *Tathbūt*, the *Uṣūl* is also not listed among the works of 'Abd al-Jabbār by such

²⁷Cf. 'Uthmān's preface to *Tathbūt*, p. z.

²⁸G. Monnot has discussed 'Abd al-Jabbār's argument against the Christians. See his "Les doctrines des chrétiens dans le 'Moghni' de 'Abd al-Jabbār," *MIDEO*, vol. 16 (1983), pp. 9-30.

²⁹It is interesting to note the comment (*ta'liq*) written on the margin of the manuscript (See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt*, p. 234, n. 1) which says:

"May God favor you, our master, the distinguished judge, *al-Qāḍī* 'Abd al-Jabbār. You have argued well against the disbelievers, the accursed, the liars, the apostates, the sinners, the corrupted and the evil dissenters, may God defeat them and banish them, so that they may not succeed in their enterprise, casting doubt upon the integrity of the Companions of the Prophet, Peace be upon him and them all.

I said [it is not clear to me who gives this comment]: I have not seen a book refuting the dissenters' argument better, or more accurately, more reliably and firmly presented than the argument mentioned by *al-Qāḍī* 'Abd al-Jabbār in this book. Therefore, anybody interested in refuting these people, must refer to this blessed book which is rare and is not known to many people. And even if they know its name, they do not know its many benefits. Therefore, preserve and analyze it repeatedly. Unfortunately, the author of this book is famous for his *i'tizāl* ideas [being Mu'tazilite] and once he gives his seclusion up, his place will be - God willing - in the highest level of Paradise with the other ancestors, due to the benefits which his arguments provided the Muslims with, and God knows best.

³⁰See *AI*, vol. 15 (1979), pp. 79-96.

biographers of the Mu'tazila as al-Jushamī and Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1437).³¹ Nevertheless, basing himself on the fact that there is no contradiction between this book and 'Abd al-Jabbār's entire doctrine or the latter's style in dictating the book, Gimaret firmly asserts that this book is of 'Abd al-Jabbār's creation.³²

Commenting on the simplicity of the book, which covers only seventeen pages in the printed text, and 'Abd al-Jabbār's intention in writing this book, Gimaret says that: "[I]l s'en [*Kitāb*] tiént cependent aux options fondamentales, et traditionnelles, du Mu'tazilisme sur le plan des *uṣūl al-dīn*; il en donne une présentation simplifiée, aisément accessible à un public moyen, dépouillée autant que possible de l'appareil ((philosophique)) dont il l'entoure ordinairement."³³

In the discussion of prophethood, (pp. 89-91) where the doctrine of *i'jāz* is usually expounded, 'Abd al-Jabbār affirms that the prophethood of Muḥammad is attested to and consolidated by the presence of several miracles, some of which he explains in turn. Although Gimaret asserts that in this simple book 'Abd al-Jabbār does not discuss the criticism voiced by the *Barāhima* on the possibility of prophecy, the author of this thesis finds that 'Abd al-Jabbār responds to their criticism on the Qur'ān even if he does not explicitly refer to that group by name. See, for example, the criticism pertaining to the verses of the Qur'ān which contradict each other. This criticism and the verses which are

³¹See al-Jushamī, *Sharḥ al-'uyūn*, pp. 367-369 and Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila*, p. 113.

³²Gimaret, "Les *Uṣūl*," p. 74.

³³*Ibid*, p. 75.

brought to exemplify the contradiction are almost the same as the criticism discussed in the *Mughnī*.³⁴

d. [Ta'līq] *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*

Following the publication of *Kitāb al-uṣūl al-khamsa* in the afore-mentioned article, Gimaret went to much pain in affirming that *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa* is not the work of 'Abd al-Jabbār himself, as had been previously claimed by 'Uthmān, Peters, Monnot and others.³⁵ Instead, Gimaret declared that this book is the critical commentary of his student, the Zaydī Imām Mānkḏīm Sheshḏīv (d. 425/1034).³⁶ As such, Gimaret advocated caution in utilizing it as a source of 'Abd al-Jabbār's doctrine. However, the doctrine of *i'jāz* as propounded in this book does not seem to be in contradiction with 'Abd al-Jabbār's own doctrine.

The text on *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* in the *Sharḥ*, comprises two sections.³⁷ The first section discusses the reason behind the Qur'ān's miraculousness, while the second answers the attacks hurled at the Qur'ān. Apart from the division into two sections, there are also some words written in the margin of the printed text, which seem to suggest a sub-

³⁴See, for example, *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 394-395.

³⁵Such as, Claude-France Audebert, *al-Ḥaṭṭābī et l'Inimitabilité du Coran. Traduction et introduction au Bayān i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1982), p. 73; and G.F. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of 'Abd al-Jabbār* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 7.

³⁶Gimaret, "Les Uṣūl," p. 50 ff. See also idem, "Mu'tazila," *EP*, vol. VII, p. 793; and idem, "Review of Peters's *God's Created Speech*, in *JA*, vol. 265 (1977), p. 392.

³⁷See Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 585-606.

division of the text into separate sections.³⁸ If we are to follow these words, the following division of the text will emerge:

I. An introduction to the concept of the inimitability of the Qur'ān, (pp. 585-598) which comprises:

- a. The challenge to produce something similar to the Qur'ān.
- b. The absence of the *mu'āraḍa*.
- c. The way of knowing its *i'jāz* for the non-Arabs.
- d. The rest of Muḥammad's miracles.

II. The criticism raised against the Qur'ān (pp. 598-606) including:

- a. The question of the benefits of *al-āyāt al-mutashābihāt*.
- b. The question of the meaning of *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*.
- c. The Refutation of the Imāmites.
- d. The Refutation of the Bāṭiniyya.
- e. The Criticism of Aṣḥāb al-waqf.³⁹

³⁸Cf. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 281, n. 13.

³⁹*Aṣḥāb al-waqf/al-tawqīf* are the revelationists or theologians, as opposed to the conventionalists, who believe that the origin of language comes from God. For a detailed discussion of this matter, see Bernard G. Weiss, "Language in Orthodox Muslim Thought: A Study of *Waq' al-Lughah*" and Its Development," Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Princeton University, 1966; idem, "Medieval Muslim Discussions on the Origin of Language," *ZDMG*, vol 124 (1974), pp. 33-41; H. Loucel, "L'Origine du Langage d'après les Grammairiens Arabes," *Arabica*, vol. 10 (1963), pp. 188-208, 255-281; and Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam. exégèse lexicographique et théologique* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988), especially pp. 37-50 on "le débat sur l'origine des noms divins."

f. The Criticism of the Murji'a.⁴⁰

By paying close attention to these sources, we can conclude that they demonstrate the pattern of 'Abd al-Jabbār's approach to the question of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. They speak of the special attention he devotes to the criticism of the Qur'ān by his opponents. In addition, these sources give us some idea about the *sā'il* or the opponent to whom 'Abd al-Jabbār vaguely refers during the dialogue. Above all, these sources provide us with authentic samples of 'Abd al-Jabbār's doctrine of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*. Hence, the following pages will discuss these two issues respectively and will end with an examination of 'Abd al-Jabbār's influence on the work of future generations.

B. The *Sā'il* and *Mas'ul* in the Text

1. *Mas'ul*

In a dialogue, the *mas'ul* is often the author himself. This is the case with the *Mughnī*, where 'Abd al-Jabbār plays the role of the one who defends his thesis. However, in the course of his debate, 'Abd al-Jabbār often refers to others, such as *shaykhunā* (Our Master) or *shuyūkhunā/mashāyikhunā* (Our Masters). The singular *shaykhunā* denotes individual scholars, such as *shaykhunā* Abū 'Alī (d. 303/916) (*Mughnī* XVI, p. 152, 162, etc.), *shaykhunā* Abū Hāshim (d. 321/933) (*Mughnī* XVI, p. 164, 190, etc.) and *shaykhunā*

⁴⁰Concerning this group see A.J. Wensinck, "al-Murđjī'a," *SEI*, p. 412; W. Madelung, "Murđjī'a," *EI*², vol. VII, pp. 605-607. Their criticism on the Qur'ān, however, concentrates on *'umūm al-lafẓ* (general term). They deny the existence of conventional term that denotes universality, and if it exists, they argue, it does not imply the *shumūl* nor *al-istighrāq* (universal inclusion). See Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 604-605.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh (d. 369/980)(*Mughnī* XVI, p. 190).⁴¹ And whenever there was a disagreement between Abū ‘Alī and Abū Hāshim, ‘Abd al-Jabbār usually adopted the son’s argument. The plural forms *shuyūkhunā* or *mashāyikhunā*, on the other hand, mostly refer to the previous scholars of the Mu‘tazila.

2. *Sā’il*

Upon a deep analysis of the sources we have consulted, one is led to believe that ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opponents, concerning the issue of *I’jāz al-Qur’ān* are the *Barāhima*. The latter were represented by Ibn al-Rīwandī and his friends.⁴² There are at least three of Ibn al-Rīwandī’s books listed in the *Mughnī*, together with the books of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Masters that refute the former’s books. These books are *Naqḍ al-Imāma ‘alā Ibn al-Rāwandī*⁴³ and *Naqḍ al-Dāmigh*⁴⁴ by Abū ‘Alī, and *Naqḍ al-Farīd*⁴⁵ by Abū Hāshim. In *al-Dāmigh*, for example, Ibn al-Rīwandī claims that there are contradictions in the Qur’ān. Referring to the argument of his Master, Abū al-Hudhayl al-‘Allāf (d.c. 227/841), ‘Abd al-Jabbār retorts that the Arab contemporaries of Muḥammad were most

⁴¹In addition to these three Masters, ‘Abd al-Jabbār has another teacher, who is his direct teacher, i.e., Abū Ishāq al-Baṣrī. For more information on these Masters see, Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 17-19. See also ‘Uthmān, *Qāḍī*, pp. 47-49.

⁴²For their doctrine see chapter two. Peters, surprisingly, does not mention Ibn al-Rīwandī in his list of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opponents (Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 19-23). That list is revised by Gimaret in his review of Peters’s *God’s Created Speech*. (See *JA*, vol. 265), p. 389.

⁴³‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 152.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, pp. 389-390.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, p. 310.

erudite and proficient in the idiosyncrasies of Arabic speech; and hence, if they had found any "contradiction" in the Qur'ān, they would have revealed it when Muḥammad challenged them to do so. Therefore, since they did not take up his challenge on this issue, we can rest assured that no such contradiction exists in the Qur'ān.⁴⁶ In addition, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintains that a contradiction occurs when one of two speeches contains a denial of an affirmed statement or an affirmation of a denied one.⁴⁷ However, the Qur'ān is free from any conflicting remarks.

To support his thesis, 'Abd al-Jabbār clarifies the meaning of those verses which were deemed by Ibn al-Rīwandī to be contradictory. For example, the verse: *laysa ka-mithlihi shay'un*⁴⁸ was said to contradict *jā'a rabbuka*⁴⁹ while *wa mā khalaqtu al-jinna wa al-insa illā li-ya'būdūni*⁵⁰ is not consistent with *wa laqad dhara'nā li-jahannama kathīran min al-jinni wa al-insi*.⁵¹ According to 'Abd al-Jabbār, these verses will not be found to contradict each other, once they have been interpreted in accordance with reason. Hence, the verse "There is nothing whatever like unto Him" is consistent with *jā'a rabbuka*, when the latter is interpreted as *jā'a amru rabbika* (The command

⁴⁶*Ibid*, p. 387. Cf. Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 599.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p. 388. On page 389, 'Abd al-Jabbār quotes Abū 'Alī's argument in the latter's book *Naqḍ al-dāmigh*, where the Master says that the contradiction occurs when the Qur'ān contains affirmation and denial at the same time (*fī 'ayn wāḥida*). See also Gimaret, "Matériaux pour une bibliographie des Ġubbā'ī," *JA*, vol. 264 (1976), p. 294.

⁴⁸Q. 42/11.

⁴⁹Q. 89/22.

⁵⁰Q. 51/56.

⁵¹Q. 7/179.

from your Lord came)⁵² or *jā'a man yataḥammalu amrahu* ([those] who bear His command have come).⁵³ This rational interpretation also applies to another verse. "I have only created jinns and men that they may serve Me" is in agreement with "Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell," if we know that the meaning of the latter implies the result of their deeds (*'āqiba* or *maṣīr*).⁵⁴

In his exposition of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, 'Abd al-Jabbār fiercely opposed the **Shī'ites**. He argues against the **Imāmītes** who often insisted that many things have been purposely omitted or inserted into the **Sunnī Qur'ān** for the purpose of concealing and refuting all evidence supporting the truth of the **Shī'ī** doctrine.⁵⁵ These allegations were swiftly refuted by 'Abd al-Jabbār who also denied the theory of "the inner meaning" (*bāṭin*) of the **Qur'ān** and "the *nāṭiq imāms*" of the **Bāṭiniyya**.⁵⁶ While mentioning the book of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868-869) *Fī naẓm al-Qur'ān wa salāmatih min al-ziyāda wa al-nuqṣān*, 'Abd al-Jabbār, in the *Tathbūt*, affirms that these accusations were nothing but a tool

⁵²'Abd al-Jabbār, *Uṣūl*, p. 90.

⁵³*Ibid*, p. 380 and 394.

⁵⁴*Ibid*, pp. 394-395; and *idem*, *Uṣūl*, p. 90.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, p. 153 and pp. 384-386. This issue has been much discussed in scholarly circles; see I. Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-tafsīr al-Islāmī*, trans. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1955), p. 293 ff.; J. Eliash, "The Shī'ite Qur'ān: A Reconsideration of Goldziher's Interpretation," *Arabica*, vol. 16 (1969), pp. 15-24; E. Kohlberg, "Some Notes on the Imāmīte Attitude to the Qur'ān," in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, ed. S.M. Stern, A. Hourani, V. Brown (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 209-224; Mahmoud Ayoub, "The Speaking Qur'ān and the Silent Qur'ān: A Study of the Principles and Development of Imāmī Shī'ī *tafsīr*," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of The Qur'ān*, ed. A. Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 177-198. See also, F. Buhl, "Tahrīf," *SEI*, p. 561.

⁵⁶'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 345 and pp. 367-369. .

cunningly devised to attack Muḥammad and his *khulafā' al-rāshidūn*,⁵⁷ and ultimately to destroy Islam.⁵⁸ To refute their claim, 'Abd al-Jabbār affirms that the Qur'ān is known epistemologically with a necessary knowledge (*darūrī*) through *al-naql al-mutawātir*.⁵⁹ Therefore, it is impossible that the transmitters altered the Qur'ān in any way. What is more, the Qur'ān, since its revelation, had been memorized by numerous people, a fact which protects it from any alterations.⁶⁰

As to the claim of the **Bāṭiniyya**, 'Abd al-Jabbār advances those verses of the Qur'ān⁶¹ which clearly state that "Nothing have we omitted from the Book," (Q. 6/38) and "We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims." (Q. 16/89) Following this argument, 'Abd al-Jabbār also refutes the assumption that the *āyāt mushtabihāt* comprise the inner meaning of the Qur'ān. To disprove this view, 'Abd al-Jabbār, first of all, explains the reasons or the advantages of "the ambiguous verses." He provides four reasons, which could be summarized as follows: the ambiguity verses encourage people to think or reason, and when they use their reasoning, the reward of their effort will be greater than blindly

⁵⁷Idem, *Tathbūt*, p. 63.

⁵⁸Idem, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 162.

⁵⁹'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 153 ff. and 384 ff. Related to this argument is 'Abd al-Jabbār's opposition of the view of **al-Hashwiyya wa ahl al-ḥadīth** who claim that the Qur'ān is known through a single authority. ('Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 153, 156, 345).

⁶⁰Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 601-602.

⁶¹'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part. XVI, p. 365. See also Mānkḍīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 604.

imitating others.⁶²

In light of that explanation, 'Abd al-Jabbār suggests that in order to understand the meaning of the ambiguous verses, all Muslims, not only the Imāms, should refer to the context (*qarīna*) of the verses, either from the unambiguous verses, or by resorting to reason.⁶³ Interestingly, he declares that when the Qur'ān seems to contradict reason, it must be re-interpreted to fit the dictates of reason! Besides the Bāṭiniyya, Mānkdīm includes *aṣḥāb al-waqf* or *al-tawqīf* in the group which denies the possibility of knowing the real meaning of the *ẓāhir* verses. These people assume that since the words in the Qur'ān are *al-alfāz al-muḥtamala*, i.e., that they apply to both particular and general words (*makhṣūṣ aw 'ām*), we should suspend judgment (*natawqqaf*) and not establish the meaning of any verse until we determine the context (*qarīna*) which distinguishes between the two.⁶⁴ To refute this assumption, 'Abd al-Jabbār, as the proponent of the convention (*muwāḍa'a*) and the opponent of *aṣḥāb al-tawqīf*, says that speech is communicative (*mufīd*) and has meaning because of the conventions which many people agree upon. As for the Qur'ānic speech, in particular, people agree that the meaning of the Qur'ān can

⁶²*Ibid*, pp. 373-374. Cf. idem, *Uṣūl*, p. 91; and Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 595-600. In his *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, 'Abd al-Jabbār clarifies the difference between *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*. The *muḥkam* verses are the verses which imply only one meaning. The *mutashābih* verses, on the other hand, demand a special analysis in order to conform to the meaning of the *muḥkam* verses and the dictates of reason. See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih*, pp. 6-7. Cf. Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 600-601.

⁶³*Ibid*, pp. 378-383; idem, *Uṣūl*, p. 90; idem, *Mutashābih*, pp. 6-7; and Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, pp. 600-601.

⁶⁴Mānkdīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 604. Cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part. XVI, pp. 359-360.

be derived from the indications within it or from the contexts related to it.⁶⁵

In addition to these people, the same as his opponents in the *Mughnī* part VII on "The Qur'ān and God's Other Speech,"⁶⁶ in the discussion of "the inimitability of the Qur'ān," al-Ash'arī, Ibn Kullāb (d. 241/855) and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam appear to be his opponents as well.⁶⁷ 'Abd al-Jabbār rejects the Traditionalist view that the Qur'ān was a miracle by virtue of being Muḥammad's recitation of the eternal speech (*kalām qadīm*) of God. He argues that if the Qur'ān were the eternal speech of God, the Prophet would have been challenging his opponents to do something humanly impossible.⁶⁸

Lastly, we should mention the proponents of *naẓm* and *ṣarfā* who were also among the opponents of 'Abd al-Jabbār.⁶⁹ Their doctrine will be discussed below.

C. 'Abd al-Jabbār's Theory of *I'jāz*

One might be correct in assuming that in Muslim works dealing with miracles and, especially with *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, the author's primary aim was always "practical," that is

⁶⁵*an yadull huwa 'alayh aw qarīna taqtarin ilayh aw yadull huwa ma'a al-qarīna.* 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part. XVI, p. 360. Cf. Peters, *God's Created Speech*, pp. 304-305.

⁶⁶Peters does not agree with the title "The Createdness of the Qur'ān" (*khalq al-Qur'ān*) given by Dr. Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī, the editor of the Seventh part of *Mughnī*. The former argues that this given title "over-emphasizes one aspect of the discussion." See Peters, *God's Created Speech*, p. 37.

⁶⁷See Peters, *God's Created Speech*, pp. 20-22. 'Abd al-Jabbār deliberately discusses the doctrine of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam in his *Tathbūt*.

⁶⁸'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 318-320.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, p. 318.

to defend and to prove the prophethood of Muḥammad.⁷⁰ 'Abd al-Jabbār's work, however, aside from its practical aim, has also theoretically delved into the nature and conditions of the miracle as such, before examining the Qur'ān. His work is even more systematic and thorough than that of his contemporary adversary, al-Bāqillānī, who scatters his thoughts on the nature of prophecy in his *Tamhīd*, *Bayān* and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*. 'Abd al-Jabbār, on the other hand, studies each topic distinctly and extensively in his systematic work, *Mughnī* parts XV and XVI, which originally belonged together, and were solely devoted to the subject of prophecy. It is not an exaggeration that the author names his work *al-Mughnī*, "The Sufficient Book."

Having listed the four criteria, four conditions which have to be fulfilled to make an act a miracle, 'Abd al-Jabbār articulates that in addition to the sensory miracles, the Qur'ān also serves as Muḥammad's proof of prophethood, since it fulfills all the conditions of a miracle.⁷¹ The Qur'ān, first of all, is from God and was given to Muḥammad as a proof of his prophecy. Muḥammad, who claimed to be a prophet, in turn challenged his contemporaries to produce something similar to the Qur'ān, which they failed to do as it was beyond their *'āda*.⁷²

That Muḥammad challenged his contemporaries is known from both the necessary knowledge and the acquired knowledge. It is known "necessarily" because his challenge

⁷⁰See, for example, the comment of Richard J. McCarthy in his introduction to al-Bāqillānī's *Kitāb al-Bayān*, p. 10; and idem, "al-Bāqillānī's Notion of the Apologetic Miracle," in *Studia Biblica et Orientalia*, vol. 3, *Analecta Biblica*, vol. 12 (1959), p. 248.

⁷¹'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 164.

⁷²*Ibid*, part XVI, p. 246.

was transmitted in many traditions (*khavar*); and transmission, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, proves the occurrence of a challenge. In his discussion about the transmission, 'Abd al-Jabbār says: "We know the absence of something because of the absence of transmission, and if that thing is supposed to exist there must be a record explaining its existence."⁷³ In addition to the transmission, the challenge is also recorded in the verses of challenge in the Qur'ān, whose existence is known necessarily.⁷⁴ The occurrence of the challenge can also be deduced through the acquired knowledge. This knowledge leads us to the hypothesis that Muḥammad could have chosen not to challenge his contemporaries with the Qur'ān for two reasons only. First of all, he could have not challenged them because he did not believe or claim that the Qur'ān is a miracle, or secondly that he claimed the miraculousness of the Qur'ān but did not want to challenge others with it. Neither of the two, however, is correct, since Muḥammad, with his excellent *faṣāḥa*, knew that it is a miracle and hence challenged his people, in order to prove the validity of his prophecy.⁷⁵

The fact that no attempts to rival the Qur'ān were made can also be proven from the absence of transmissions stating otherwise. In this regard, 'Abd al-Jabbār quotes the opinion of his Masters:

"Our Masters (*shuyūkhunā*) say: If the people produced something similar to the

⁷³*annā qad na 'lam intifā' al-shay' li-faḡd al-khavar, idhā kāna dhālik al-shay' min-mā law kāna thābit la-wajab zuhūr al-khavar 'anh.* 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 250.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, p. 238; Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 587.

⁷⁵*Ibid*, p. 244-245. Cf. Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 587.

Qur'ān, its [document's] position must be the same as that of the Qur'ān, and, therefore, must have necessarily been transmitted, since both of them occurred at the same time, and their needs and motives were the same. And if that was the case, both of them must have been transmitted on the same level (*'alā ḥadd wāḥid*). [But] when there is no transmission of *mu'āraḍa*, we know that it did not occur."⁷⁶

As for the claim that a *mu'āraḍa* did occur but was not transmitted, 'Abd al-Jabbār maintains that if such an argument is true, we can also argue that at the time of Muḥammad, another more eloquent Qur'ān did exist but unfortunately was not transmitted. Or, we may also say that during the time of Muḥammad, there was another prophet, also supported by miracles, but of whom no transmissions were passed down. The obvious falsity of these statements proves the invalidity of their claim.⁷⁷ Moreover, 'Abd al-Jabbār argues that if the defective and weak imitation of the Qur'ān, made by Musaylama and his friend, was preserved, then surely the real *mu'āraḍa* would have been transmitted too!⁷⁸

The real reason, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, for the absence of *mu'āraḍa* was the recognition of the excellence and power of the Qur'ān, which was beyond the *'āda* of Muḥammad's contemporaries. People like al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra, Labīd and al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith admitted this fact. Al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra, for example, says: "I have heard numerous speeches, poetry and jargon of sorcerers, but all of them are nothing compared

⁷⁶*Ibid*, p. 252. Cf. Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 588.

⁷⁷*Ibid*, p. 254.

⁷⁸*Ibid*, p. 253; Mānkḏīm, *Sharḥ*, p. 589. See the words used by 'Abd al-Jabbār *al-mu'āraḍa al-rakīka al-maḥkiyya*. The last word, *al-maḥkiyya*, proves that the *mu'āraḍa*, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, is not the reproduction or imitation of the Qur'ān, but the production of something similar to the Qur'ān.

to this [the Qur'ān].⁷⁹ Because of their recognition of the superiority of the Qur'ān, they (the adversaries of Muḥammad) did not compete with him in the literary field but in the battlefield.

Having demonstrated the arguments supporting the inimitability of the Qur'ān, 'Abd al-Jabbār then discusses the aspects of its miraculousness, which were still debatable in his time. Without naming his adversaries, 'Abd al-Jabbār lists various theories of *i'jāz*:

"Learned men have differed on the aspect of the inimitability of the Qur'ān. Some make it a miracle on account of its special degree of eloquence, which is beyond the *'āda*. This is the view we take, and we have explained the doctrine of Our Masters on it.

Others hold that because of its special order, quite different from what is known among them, it is a miracle.

Others make it a miracle because men's motives were turned away from producing something similar to it, even though they had the ability to do so.

Others make it a miracle because of the truth of its ideas and their lasting character, upon examination, and their agreement with reason."⁸⁰

'Abd al-Jabbār rejects the doctrine of *ṣarfā* for two main reasons. Firstly, because it contradicts the verse of the Qur'ān stating that neither *jinn* nor human can rival the Qur'ān, and secondly because it makes a miracle of something other than the Qur'ān, that is the *ṣarfā*, the prohibition from production, and not the Qur'ān itself.⁸¹ In addition to this, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the doctrine of *ṣarfā* displays four major weaknesses: (1) it ignores the well-known fact that the Arabs of Muḥammad's time had acknowledged the superior quality of the speech of the Qur'ān, (2) it is in direct contrast to the meaning of

⁷⁹*Ibid*, p. 269. See also Ibn Ishāq's account of al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra in *The Life of Muḥammad*, p. 121.

⁸⁰*Ibid*, p. 318.

⁸¹*Ibid*, p. 219, 322-323.

the verses of the Challenge, (3) it implies that the Qur'ān is not a miracle, (4) it asserts that the Arabs were out of their mind (*khuruj 'an al-'aql*). This doctrine, in fact, claims that they could have produced the rival of the Qur'ān, but they decided against doing so. This means that either there was a contradiction between their motives, or that they were out of their minds.⁸² Therefore, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, the correct meaning of *ṣarfa* is that their motives to rival the Qur'ān disappeared (*inṣarafa*) because of the recognition of their inability to do so.⁸³

As to the *naẓm* of the Qur'ān, 'Abd al-Jabbār, first of all, refers to the view of his Master, Abū Hāshim, who says:

"Any speech is regarded as eloquent (*faṣīḥ*) because of the clearness of its word (*li-jazālat lafẓih*) and the beauty of its meaning (*li-ḥusn ma'nāh*). The two of them must be considered together, because the speech, whose word is clear but whose meaning is weak, is not considered *faṣīḥ*. Therefore, it [the eloquent speech] must combine the two of them. And the eloquent speech does not need a special composition (*naẓm makḥṣūs*), because an orator may be more eloquent than a poet, even though the *naẓm* is different. What I mean by *naẓm* is the difference in styles, even when the composition or genre may be the same. [To sum up] the uniqueness in speech lies in the *faṣāḥa*; the meaning of which we have mentioned."⁸⁴

This view clearly shows that Abū Hāshim does not consider the composition as

⁸²*Ibid*, p. 325. Martin, I think, fails to understand this fourth objection when he translated "it asserted that the Arabs were temporarily deprived of their knowledge of eloquent speech." See Martin, "Mu'tazilite," p. 90.

⁸³See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 324-327. See also Munīr Sulṭān, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān bayna al-mu'tazila wa al-ashā'ira* (Alexandria: Munsha'at al-ma'ārif, 1986), pp. 90-91.

⁸⁴*Ibid*, p. 197.

an aspect of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*.⁸⁵ 'Abd al-Jabbār, however, does not accept this view of his Master,⁸⁶ and being aware of the lack of his Master's theory, he adds:

"Eloquence does not appear in particular words, but it is manifest in the joining (*al-ḍamm*) [together of the words] in a special manner (*fī ṭarīqa makhsūsa*). It is necessary that, together with this combination, each word has its own characteristic (*ṣifa*). This characteristic may be derived from the *muwāḍa'a* [a convention of the people agreeing upon the meaning of an expression] which includes the combination, or from the syntax (*i'rāb*) which is also part of the combination, or from the order of the words and place of each word in that order (*mawqī*). These three kinds do not have a fourth.⁸⁷

The essence of this view is that, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, eloquence does not rely on the clearness of words and the beauty of the meaning alone, as asserted by his Master, Abū Hāshim, but also on the arrangement of the speech (*tartīb al-kalām*), which he names *al-ḍamm*. An eloquent speech must contain these three aspects.⁸⁸ Besides complementing the theory of Abū Hāshim, this view of 'Abd al-Jabbār also complements

⁸⁵See Sulṭān, *I'jāz*, p. 94; Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Balāgha taṭawwur wa tārīkh* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1965), p. 116; Aḥmad Abū Zayd, *al-Manḥā al-i'tizālī fī al-bayān wa i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (Rabat: Maktabat al-ma'ārif, 1986), pp. 291-292; and 'Abd al-Sattār al-Rāwī, *al-'Aql wa al-ḥurriyya: dirāsa fī fikr al-Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-mu'tazilī* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'arabiyya li-al-dirāsāt wa al-nashr, 1980), p. 127.

⁸⁶Issa J. Boullata in his "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: *i'jāz* and Related Topics," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. A. Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 145, does not differentiate between the theory of Abū Hāshim and that of 'Abd al-Jabbār. See also, idem, "I'jāz," *ER*, vol. 7, p. 88; and von Grunebaum, "I'djāz," *EP*, vol. III, p. 1019.

⁸⁷'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 199.

⁸⁸In *Qaḍiyyat al-i'jāz al-Qur'ānī wa atharuhā fī tadwīn al-balāgha al-'arabiyya* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-kutub, 1985), p. 425, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī 'Arafā assumes that this view of 'Abd al-Jabbār has been influenced by his Sunnite predecessor, al-Khaṭṭābī and the latter's division of sentences into three parts: dictions (*alfāz*), ideas (*ma'ānī*) and *naẓm*. (See al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān*, p. 24). Even if this assumption is true, 'Abd al-Jabbār's discussion is more rational than that of al-Khaṭṭābī.

the theory of *naẓm* of al-Bāqillānī, his contemporary Ash'arite. The latter, with regards to the *naẓm*, says:

"[The composition of the Qur'ān] exceeds all the known styles of the Arabic tongue, and clearly differs from the customary order of their orations, because it has a special composition (*alladhī lahu uslūb yakhtaṣṣ bih*).⁸⁹

It is as if 'Abd al-Jabbār, by his exposition, wishes to explain the meaning of *uslūb yakhtaṣṣ bih*, which al-Bāqillānī leaves without explanation. Thus, a unique composition, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, derives from three characteristics: a change in the form of words (*al-ibdāl*),⁹⁰ the place of words at the beginning or the end of sentences (*mawqī'*) and the different endings of syntactic vowels (*ḥarakāt al-i'rāb*).⁹¹

As such, one can deduce from 'Abd al-Jabbār's explanations that he lays great stress on the arrangement of the words (*tartīb al-alfāz*). Ideas and meanings (*ma'ānī*), on the other hand, are relegated to a secondary position. He argues that despite their importance, meanings are not a contributing factor to *faṣāḥa*. Therefore, two writers may express the same meaning with varying degrees of *faṣāḥa*.⁹²

In addition to the eloquence of its speech, the disclosure of information on hidden

⁸⁹Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, pp. 50-51.

⁹⁰Boullata defines *muwāḍa'at* as the choice of the words. See, "Rhetorical," p. 145.

⁹¹'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 200. See also 'Alī Mahdī Zaytūn, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān fī taṭāwwur al-naqd al-adabī* (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1992), p. 69; 'Arafa, *Qaḍiyyat*, p. 427.

⁹²*Ibid*, pp. 199-200. See also Zaytūn, *I'jāz*, p. 68; 'Arafa, *Qaḍiyyat*, p. 427; Abū Zayd, *al-Manḥā*, p. 292.

things (*ikhbār 'an al-ghuyūb*) constitutes another aspect of *i'jāz*.⁹³ This information, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, does not only come from God but also from Muḥammad, whom God has favored with the knowledge of these hidden aspects.⁹⁴

'Abd al-Jabbār also supported the theory of his Masters, Abū 'Alī, Abū Hāshim and their predecessors. Like them, he too believes that the Qur'ān is miraculous because of the absence of any contradictions in it, as it is stated in the Qur'ān: "Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy." (Q. 4:82). Abū 'Alī had said that it would be extremely far-fetched to think that even the most careful writers, could avoid errors in their writings. While Abū Hāshim had followed in his father's footsteps by affirming that the faultlessness of the Qur'ān is beyond the *'āda* of human speech (*al-'āda lam tajri bi-mithl dhālik fī kalām al-'ibād*).⁹⁵ Unlike them, however, 'Abd al-Jabbār does not limit himself to the proof found in revelation. Indeed, he tries to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān through rational proof and arguments as well. This attempt is similar to his previous one in confronting the criticism of the Qur'ān raised by the opponents of Islam.⁹⁶

⁹³'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, part XVI, p. 330 ff.; idem, *Tathbūt*, p. 86 ff. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭīb wrongly assumes that 'Abd al-Jabbār did not consider the information on the hidden matters as an aspect of *i'jāz*. (See al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān fī dirāsa kāshifa li-khaṣā'is al-balāgha al-'arabiyya wa ma'āyirihā* (Cairo: Dār al-fīkr al-'arabī, 1964), pp. 214-216).

⁹⁴*Ibid*, pp. 333-334. See also *Mughnī*, part XV, p. 193.

⁹⁵*Ibid*, p. 328. See also Martin, "Mu'tazilite," p. 85.

⁹⁶See *Ibid*, pp. 336-406.

D. 'Abd al-Jabbār's Influence on Future Generations

While it is justified to claim that 'Abd al-Jabbār has benefitted from the works of his predecessors and his contemporaries, it is also true to assert that he has influenced the later generation, be they Ash'arites or Mu'tazilites. In this section, I will briefly discuss his influence on the work of the leading scholars of the fifth/eleventh century from each of these Schools, respectively represented in *Dalā'il al-i'jāz* of 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī⁹⁷ (d. 470/1078) and *Sirr al-faṣāḥa* of his contemporary, Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī⁹⁸ (d. 465/1073).

'Abd al-Jabbār's theory, and in particular the section on *naẓm*, is quite evident in al-Jurjānī's *Dalā'il*.⁹⁹ However, being an Ash'arite, al-Jurjānī quotes 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory in order to refute it and to elaborate upon the theory of *naẓm* in accordance with his School's doctrine.

⁹⁷Besides *Dalā'il*, al-Jurjānī has another book *Asrār al-balāgha* dealing with the figures of speech. His doctrine has been studied extensively by K. Abu Deeb in *al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (London: Aris & Phillips Ltd, 1979) and "'Abd-al-Qāher Jorjānī," *ELr*, vol. I, pp. 134-137. In addition to the works on al-Jurjānī listed in the above article, the work of Margaret Larkin, "The Inimitability of the Qur'an: Two Perspectives," in *Religion & Literature*, vol. 20.1 (1988), pp. 31-47 should also be considered.

⁹⁸Vicente Cantarino has partly translated this work into English in *Arabic Poetics in the Golden Age* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), pp. 152-156. Al-Khafājī's theory of *faṣāḥa*, has also been summarized by G. von Grunebaum in "Faṣāḥa," *EL²*, vol. II, p. 825.

⁹⁹Both Muḥammad Zaghlūl Sallām and Iḥsān 'Abbās do not admit the influence of al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār on the work of al-Jurjānī. See Sallām, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-'arabī min al-qarn al-khāmis ilā al-'āshir al-hijrī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, n.d.), p. 214; and 'Abbās, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī 'inda al-'arab: naqd al-shi'r min al-qarn al-thānī ḥattā al-qarn al-thāmin al-hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1978), p. 421. Abu Deeb and Larkin, however, assert 'Abd al-Jabbār's influence. See Abu Deeb, *Poetic*, p. 6 and 8; idem, "'Abd-al-Qāher," p. 135; and Larkin, "Inimitability," p. 39 ff.

In rejecting the theory of *tartīb al-alfāz* of 'Abd al-Jabbār which is not concerned with meanings, al-Jurjānī, while distinguishing between the arrangement of letters and words, writes:

"The arrangement (*naẓm*) of the words, however, is not like that [the arrangement of letters], for in placing them, you follow the tracks of meanings, and you arrange (*turattib*) them in accordance with the way the meanings are arranged in your mind. Therefore, it is a [kind of] ordering (*naẓm*) in which the situation of one part of it in relation to the rest is taken into consideration; it is not that kind of ordering (*naẓm*) that means joining (*ḍamm*) one thing to another in a random manner.¹⁰⁰

Meanings are very important in the theory of al-Jurjānī. In *Asrār*, he says that the words are servants (*khadam*) to the meanings; and to let the words win over the meaning is to cause things to deviate from their normal way.¹⁰¹ In fact, he goes as far as accusing others of heresy, when they declare that the same meaning can be expressed in two different ways, one being more eloquent than the other.¹⁰²

These statements clearly show that al-Jurjānī has read 'Abd al-Jabbār's work and that he modified and elaborated upon the work of the latter. Al-Jurjānī's argument could also be seen as a defence of the Ash'arite concept of *kalām nafsī* (inner speech) and *kalām lafẓī* (audible speech). This appears in his premise that the arrangement of words follows the meaning in one's mind.

The concept of *kalām nafsī* and *kalām lafẓī* was certainly not accepted by 'Abd

¹⁰⁰Al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il*, p. 94. Cf. Larkin's translation in "The Inimitability," p. 39.

¹⁰¹Idem, *Asrār*, p. 8. Cf. H. Ritter's introduction to *Asrār*, p. 7; Cantarino, *Arabic*, p. 50; and Boullata, "Rhetorical," p. 146.

¹⁰²See Abu Deeb, "'Abd-al-Qāher," p. 135. Cf. 'Abd al-Jabbār's opinion in *Mughnī*, part XVI, pp. 199-200.

al-Jabbār; therefore, Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī rose to the defence of 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory. In his book *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*,¹⁰³ which refutes the theory of *al-kalām al-naḥsī* which al-Khafājī attributes to the *Mujbira*, he holds that speech is the genus of the articulated sounds (*al-aṣwāt al-mutaqaṭṭi'a*).¹⁰⁴ This definition re-affirms that *faṣāḥa* can be attributed to the *alfāz*, if certain requirements (*shurūṭ*) are met. He then explains those conditions which make the words eloquent, whether in isolation (*al-alfāz al-wāḥida fī infirādiḥā*) or in combination with each other (*al-alfāz al-manzūma ba'duhā ma'a ba'd*).¹⁰⁵

Finally, although he does not discuss in detail the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, al-Khafājī seems to argue that the inimitability of the Qur'ān lies in the degree of eloquence it achieves. Interestingly, however, al-Khafājī also believes in the *ṣarfa*.¹⁰⁶ Is there any contradiction between his theory of *faṣāḥa* and *ṣarfa*? No, because he does not differentiate between the eloquence of the Qur'ān and that of human speech.¹⁰⁷ Both of them are in the same level. The speech of humans becomes eloquent when its words

¹⁰³D. Gimaret has remarked upon the importance of this book in understanding the theory of speech in "the School of Jubbā'ī." Gimaret writes, "les quarante premières pages comportent un exposé remarquablement informé de la théorie de la parole dans l'école ḡubbā'ite." See *JA*, vol 264 (1976), p. 308, n. 15; *ibid*, vol. 265 (1977), p. 398.

¹⁰⁴Al-Khafājī, *Sirr*, pp. 30-31. See also Zaytūn, *I'jāz*, 121; al-Rāwī, *al-'Aql*, p. 129. Cf. Peters's discussion of "the articulated sound" in his *God's Created Speech*, p. 296, 302.

¹⁰⁵Al-Khafājī, *Sirr*, pp. 54-100. See also von Grunebaum, "Faṣāḥa," p. 825.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid*, p. 89. See also Sallām, *Tārīkh*, p. 253, 261; and al-Khaṭīb, *I'jāz*, pp. 347-350.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 89-90. Cf. al-Rummānī who holds the theory of *ṣarfa* but at the same time believes that the Qur'ān is in the highest level of eloquence. See al-Rummānī, *Nukat*, p. 75.

meet the conditions of eloquence, and contains five perfect elements as well. According to al-Khafājī, the perfection of all arts consists in five elements: subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*), agent (*ṣāniʿ*), form (*ṣūra*), instrument (*ālā*) and aim (*gharaḥ*).¹⁰⁸ The application of these elements in the discourse are the words, the person who joins together the words in the discourse, the form of discourse, the composer's natural gift and the sciences that he has learned beyond these natural gifts, and the aim determined by the discourse.¹⁰⁹ The theory of *ṣarfā* is explained when the person's natural gift and sciences are deprived (*sulibā*) so that he cannot produce a document similar to the Qur'ān.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid*, pp. 82-83. Cantarino believes that these five elements were based on the five Aristotelian *causae*: *materialis*, *efficiens*, *formalis*, *instrumentalis* and *finalis*. See Cantarino, *Arabic*, p. 67.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid*, pp. 83-84. See also Cantarino, *Arabic*, pp. 67-68, 152.

CONCLUSION

Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries who discussed the subject of prophecy in a partial and sporadic manner, 'Abd al-Jabbār has examined the topics he dealt with extensively and systematically in his *magnum opus*, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa al-'adl* parts XV and XVI. These two parts, which originally belonged together, delved into the possibility of prophethood, the proofs validating prophethood and the prophecy of Muḥammad. As far as the title of the *Mughnī*, part XVI, is concerned, however, I have shown that "*I'jāz al-Qur'ān*," the title which was given by Dr. Amīn al-Khūlī, is not quite appropriate, since it overemphasizes one section of the book and, accordingly, does not reflect its entire content. I am suggesting in this thesis that the title should be "The Prophecy of Muḥammad," which encompasses all aspects of the latter's prophetic office.¹

In the discussion of *mu'jiza*, although 'Abd al-Jabbār's idea is remarkably similar to that of the Ash'arites, it is quite apparent that this conception is not the product of his being an Ash'arite during the first years of his life. The similarity between the two, however, lies in their occasionalistic view of the world, meaning, that occurrences in this world are a mere *'āda* (habit) created arbitrarily by God and which, only He can miraculously change.² This view is in contrast to that of the Baghdād Mu'tazilite, who

¹Cf. Chapter III, pp. 66-68.

²Cf. Chapter One, p. 15, 19-20. It should be remembered, however, that 'Abd al-Jabbār's occasionalistic view is not as "absolute" as that of the Ash'arites, since the former, in agreement with most Mu'tazilīs, believes in the volitional cause of man. Cf. Chapter One, pp. 12-13, 17-18. Concerning the Ash'arite rejection of this causality, see p. 21 of the same chapter.

assert that all things in this world have their own nature. Accordingly, the supposed miraculous events are rejected by the Baghdādī Mu'tazilīs since they contradict the laws of nature.³

However, apart from this similarity, all other Ash'arite doctrines differ significantly from 'Abd al-Jabbār's. Firstly, 'Abd al-Jabbār denies the occurrence of a miracle, such as *karāma*, at the hands of non-prophets.⁴ He, moreover, strongly insists on the presence of qualities in whoever is assigned by God as a prophet. Prophethood is not God's gift to whom He wills, but rather His recompense or reward to someone's actions.⁵

Finally, I must point out that 'Abd al-Jabbār's exposition on *i'jāz al-Qur'ān*, exhibits a number of "*mu'tazilist*" features and is in line with the general tendencies of that School. Furthermore, in order to demonstrate the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, not only does 'Abd al-Jabbār base his argument on *sam'* (revelation), but also on reason. Similarly, he maintains that the *āyāt mutashābihāt*, should be interpreted (*ta'wīl*) on the basis of "the unambiguous verses" and reason.⁶ His theory of *i'jāz*, moreover, is firmly grounded in the belief that the Qur'ān is created (*makhlūq*) and that speech is the genus of the articulated sound. Therefore, the uniqueness of the Qur'ān, according to him, lies in the *faṣāḥa* of its words; since meanings and ideas, do not really enhance the

³Cf. Chapter One, pp. 10-11, 23-25.

⁴Cf. Chapter One, pp. 30-31.

⁵Cf. Chapter One, p. 27.

⁶Cf. Chapter Three, pp. 82-84. It should be noted here that 'Abd al-Jabbār considers the Qur'ān's motivation to use reasoning as one aspect of its *i'jāz*.

inimitability of the Qur'ān.⁷

Besides, the consulted sources clearly demonstrate that 'Abd al-Jabbār also pays special attention to the criticism of the Qur'ān by his opponents. In order to save the miraculousness of the Qur'ān from any weaknesses, he takes much pain to swiftly refute this criticism.⁸

⁷Cf. Chapter Three, pp. 89-91.

⁸Cf. Chapter Three, p. 79 ff.

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