As the objective crystallization of Divine Revelation for all Muslims and as Islamic sacred scripture, the Noble Quran has naturally exercised great influence upon Islamic theology (kalâm) and philosophy. It is true that in Islam the intellect (ʿaql) plays a central role as the means of acquiring knowledge, but Muslim theologians and philosophers, like all Muslims, look upon the Quran as a most important reality and rely on it in their debates with contending schools of thought. In theological and philosophical disputations, therefore, full attention is paid to Quranic teachings.

In the context of Islam the Quran is the Revelation that has made access to the content of God’s message possible, but for theologians and sometimes philosophers the Quran has been also significant from another perspective. As the crystallization of the Word of God, it is directly connected to discussions about Divine Attributes. Furthermore, the Quran is recognized as the greatest miracle associated with the Prophet of Islam. These truths alone provide the foundation for the historical theological discussions about whether the Quran is uncreated or created and debates about the miracles of the Quran (iʿjāz al-Qurʾān).

The Quran as the Word of God

From the beginning of Islamic theology, kalâm, and parallel with constraining discussions about the eternity of Divine Qualities, the problem of the eternity versus the created nature of the Quran came to be debated by a group considered the founders of kalâm. In the Quran are verses that mention its prior existence in the Preserved Tablet (al-lawḥ al-mahfūz; 85:22), as the Mother of the Book (ʿumm al-kitāb; 43:4), and as a Book that was concealed (maknūn; 56:77–78). Still, there is uncertainty about how and whether the discussion of the eternity of the Quran took place in the first Islamic century or later. The most important indication is a story about Ibn ʿAbbās, a Companion of the Prophet who died in 68/687, in which there is a kind of reference to the uncreated nature of the Quran.¹

During the first decades of the second Islamic century, some began to place emphasis on the createdness of the Quran during the process of the first formulation of kalâm by such figures as Jaʿd ibn Dirham (d. 126/743–44) and Jahm ibn Ṣafwān.
Yet one cannot point to anyone who defended the eternity of the Quran at the end of the first and the first half of the second century amid the debate about its createdness. In any case there are indications that the views of the createdness of the Quran, on the one hand, and its eternity, on the other, did not only take shape during this period, but also prepared the way for intermediate positions. A saying transmitted from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) points to an intermediate position holding that the Quran is created (muḥdath) and at the same time uncreated. This view relies on the description of the Quran as muḥdath and seeks to show that it is at the same time eternal, for it does not consider every being that is muḥdath to also be created (makhlūq).

During the second half of the second century AH debates about the createdness of the Quran intensified, and the Muʿtazilite movement came to be identified as the defenders of the view of the createdness of the Sacred Text. During the caliphate of the Abbasid al-Maʾmūn (198–218/813–33) and as a result of the efforts of his vizier Ahmad ibn Abī Dāʾūd, who had Muʿtazilite tendencies, the view that the Quran was created gained political support and even significance. In a letter to the governor of Baghdad, Caliph al-Maʾmūn openly declared that those who believed in the uncreatedness of the Quran were like Christians who considered Jesus the son of Mary to be uncreated, since he was seen as the Word of God. Following the assertion of this position and through the efforts of Aḥmad ibn Abī Dāʾūd, the event known as al-miḥnah (“the calamity”) took place, in which courts of inquiry were convened to investigate the views of the scholars of Baghdad about this matter, and those who did not adhere to the doctrine were persecuted.

It was during al-miḥnah that the Ḥadīth scholar Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), who despite great pressure refused to accept the idea of the createdness of the Quran, came to be known as a hero and a model for later defenders of the uncreatedness of the Sacred Book. In the writings of Ibn Ḥanbal, for example, in his letter to Musaddid ibn Masrahad, followers of Ḥadīth were presented as leaders in the defense of the uncreatedness of the Quran, and the Jahmites and Muʿtazilites were introduced as leaders of the opposite camp, those who believed in its createdness.

Historical evidence reveals that, in spite of what has been reflected in later sources of the followers of Ḥadīth, or “People of Ḥadīth” (aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth), there was no unified view concerning the uncreatedness of the Quran even among the “People of Ḥadīth.” In the face of the strong theological discussions in favor of the createdness of the Quran, some of the “People of Ḥadīth” could not find firmly established documents against this view and on this issue sided with the Muʿtazilites and Jahmites. Among such figures one must mention the celebrated ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234/848–49). In contrast to Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Madīnī not only confirmed the createdness of the Quran, but also held other beliefs, such as
determinism (qadar), that were close to the Muʿtazilite position.6

The juxtaposition of the ideas of Aḥmad ibn Ḫanbal and ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī began a process that, during the century after the affair of the miḥnah, determined the lines of development of the beliefs held by different theological factions in Sunni circles. Ibn Ḫanbal’s view did of course have followers for many centuries after him. As late as the eighth/fourteenth century, Muhammad Ḫusayn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) rose to defend the position of Ibn Ḫanbal and the “People of Ḥadīth” against those who believed in the createdness of the Quran; without taking more moderate positions into consideration, he completely rejected the belief that the Quran was created.7

Some circles in the Sunni world, however, followed another path. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ibn Kallāb (d. after 240/854–55), one of the first Sunni theologians (mutakallīmūn), put forth his own intellectual position on the problem of the eternity of the Quran, a position that did not take as its starting point the Quran as it was revealed in the Arabic language. He adopted an intermediate position holding that the Word of God is eternal in its essence; it is not composed of letters and sounds, does not have divisions, parts, and particulars, and does not change. Letters are the written forms of the Word of God and are for that reason subject to change. The Word of God is called the Quran when its form—that is, its written language, interpretation, and recitation—is Arabic, in the same way that it is called the Torah when its form is Hebrew.8 In this context one must also mention another Sunni theologian, Ḫusayn al-Karābīsī (d. after 248/862–63), who, in turning the views of the scholars of Ḥadīth (muḥaddithūn) into a theological discussion, introduced the distinction between inner kalām (Word) and literal kalām.9

In the middle of the third/ninth century a tendency toward moderation appeared on both sides of this debate. On the side of the “People of Ḥadīth,” Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), the author of al-Ṣāḥīḥ and one of the greatest scholars of Ḥadīth, adopted an intermediate position. He believed that the uncreatedness of the Quran cannot be extended to the human reading of it. He developed the idea of literal kalām further and believed that the human language of the Quran is created. Because of his beliefs, discussed in detail and with great care in his Kitāb khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād waʾl-radd ʿalaʾl-jahmiyyah (The Book of the Createdness of the Actions of God’s Bondsmen and Refutation of the Jahmites), al-Bukhārī was severely criticized in his own lifetime by extremists among the “People of Ḥadīth,” such as Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Dhahalī (d. 258/872).10

Similar moderation can also be seen among theologians who held views similar to those of the Muʿtazilites. Muḥammad ibn Shujāʿ ibn al-Thaljī (d. 266/879), who was a Ḫanbalite theologian of the “People of Justice” (ahl al-ʿadl), asserted, in contrast to other members of his school, that to talk about the createdness or

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uncreatedness of the Quran is itself an innovation (bidʿah), and one must remain silent about it. In the years leading up to the turn of the fourth/tenth century, Abu’l-Hasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 334/946), the founder of the Ashʿarite school, reexamined the theory of literal (lafẓī) kalām and inner (nafsī) kalām and integrated this discussion into his theological system.

From the beginning of the fourth/tenth century on, as various theological positions became more distinct, the views concerning the createdness of the Quran coalesced into a few distinct positions. These positions consisted of complete denial of the createdness of the Quran by those who claimed to follow the traditions of the “ancestors” (salaf) and extremists among the “People of Ḥadīth,” insistence upon the createdness of the Quran on the part of the Muʿtazilite thinkers, and the proposal of literal kalām by the Ashʿarites. The view of Twelve-Imam Shiites from the fourth/tenth century on favors the createdness of the Quran despite differences of opinion on this matter during the period of the lives of the first eleven Imams.

**The Noble Quran as Miracle**

The belief that the Noble Quran contains an aspect or aspects that are miraculous can be seen in Quranic verses themselves, primarily in the āyāt al-taḥaddi (“verses of challenge,” e.g., 52:33–34). Theological discussion of the miraculous aspect of the Quran began in the middle of the second/eighth century with the famous Muʿtazilite Ibrāhīm Naẓẓām (d. 230/845). He proposed a view that came to be known as the theory of ṣarfah (“redundancy”). He believed that the miraculous aspect of the Quran is not to be found in its eloquence or structure. Rather, the miracle resides in the fact that whenever enemies try to compose words like it, God’s Will that they do so is removed from them; they thereby turn away from it and of necessity fail to achieve their original goal.

After Naẓẓām the theory of ṣarfah had only a few followers among the Muʿtazilites. Outside of the circle of Muʿtazilites a number of figures such as Shiite authorities Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) and Sayyid al-Murtaza (d. 436/1044) supported this view of the miraculous nature of the Quran, but with some further elucidation and expansion. Among Sunni scholars, a number of figures also defended this view to some extent, including Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210).

Another issue pursued by Islamic theologians in relation to the miracle of the Quran is the claim that it provides news of the invisible world, lifting the veil from hidden and unknown events of the past. No theologians oppose this view, although the more limited claim that news of the invisible world is the main factor constituting the reality of the miraculous nature of the Quran has only a few distinct
supporters, among them the Sunni scholar Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭābī (d. 258/872).  

Another miraculous aspect of the Quran, possibly the most important one among theologians and one that was supported especially by some Muʿtazilites, is its order and harmony. Among the first figures to discuss this issue is the celebrated Muʿtazilite theologian and man of letters ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥīz (d. 254/868), who devoted a book entitled Naẓm al-Qurʾān (The Order and Harmony of the Quran), a work that is now lost, to the explanation of this thesis. According to al-Jāḥīz, the Quran itself is miraculous speech the like of which no human beings can produce. This has nothing to do with the theory of šarfah (redundancy). In the theory of al-Jāḥīz and others who have followed his view, what has prevented enemies from producing the like of the Quran is a special characteristic of the Quran itself. That special characteristic resides in the particular order and harmony that can be found in the words of the Divine Text. Al-Jāḥīz believed there was an essential difference between the order and composition of the Quran and those of works composed by human beings. They are two basically different types of composition. Among other early Muʿtazilites who supported and wrote about the order and harmony of the Quran are Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Bāhilī (d. 300/913); Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāṭī (d. 303/915), of the school of Basra; and Muḥammad Zayd al-Wāṣīṭī (d. 306/918), of the school of Baghdad.  

After al-Jāḥīz the thesis that the order and harmony constitute the miracle of the Quran attracted the attention of not only Muʿtazilites, but also that of scholars belonging to different parts of the spectrum of Islamic thought. Among later Muʿtazilites who defended this thesis are Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Akshīd (d. 326/938) and Abū ʿAlī Hasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Naṣr (d. 312/924), both of whom expanded al-Jāḥīz’s thesis and wrote independent works on it. The most important Ashʿarite figure to expand this theory was Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), who in Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān (The Miracle of the Quran) sought to expound extensively upon what al-Jāḥīz had mentioned in summary fashion and to treat delicate aspects of this subject. He believed that the Quran possesses the highest degree of order, harmony, fluency, and beauty, which are miraculous and beyond what human beings are capable of producing. Furthermore, beyond the works of theologians, the exposition of this thesis can also be found in the writings of such men of letters as Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. ca. 400/1010), especially his al-Ṣināʿatayn (The Two Arts), and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 417/1078), especially his Asrār al-balāghah (Mysteries of Eloquence) and al-Risālat al-shāfiyah fī iʿjāz al-Qurʾān (The Salutary Treatise of Healing on the Miracle of the Quran). The efforts of al-Jurjānī in this context were in themselves a foundation for the expansion of the linguistic science of eloquence.
Al-Jurjānī’s tendency toward Ashʿarism has been made clear in various traditional sources.  

Finally, one must recall that some theologians, such as ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994), the great Muʿtazilite scholar, were among those who sought to present the multiple factors that make the Quran miraculous. In a treatise entitled al-Nukat fi iʿjāz al-Qurʾān (Points Concerning the Miracle of the Quran) he expanded his composite view of this subject.  

The Noble Quran as Source of Knowledge

Obviously Muslim scholars cannot discuss or provide answers to religious questions without making use of the Quran as the most basic transmitted source of Islam or recalling its message in the intellectual content of their theology. It is for this reason that all theological sources have made use of Quranic references to one degree or another, depending on the circumstances. But because the number and uses to be made of Quranic verses related to theological questions (in the sense of kalām) are limited, references to Quranic verses in theological and doctrinal sources, although basic, have been few in number. Even the “People of Hadīth” have made much greater use of the Prophetic tradition (aḥādīth) than Quranic verses. This is also true for a large number of the discussions by theologians more attracted to rational argumentation; they have been more concerned with aḥādīth because of the very nature of theological reasoning.  

Basing arguments extensively upon Quranic verses occurs especially in debates between the “People of Hadīth” and theologians. In this case it appears that the extensive use of Quranic verses is due to the fact that the Quran is shared in common in a basic manner by theologians and scholars of Hadīth, and in fact all Muslims. An outstanding example of this kind of writing is al-Ḥaydah (Projection) by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kanānī (d. 240/854), which contains the debate between himself and Bishr al-Marīsī (d. 218/833), one of the theologians of the “People of Justice” (ahl al-ʿadl). This text is one of a small number of theological works filled with references to Quranic verses.  

In the case of certain particular branches of theology, such as the one concerned with the imamate, debates carried out between Sunnis and Shiites again reveal great interest in Quranic verses. From the Shiites’ side, usually in defense of their position concerning the “Household of the Prophet” (ahl al-bayt), what was of special interest to the authors were the conditions surrounding the revelation (shaʿn al-nuzūl) of certain verses. In such cases obviously the citation of Quranic verses by Shiite scholars was accompanied by a collection of aḥādīth concerning the reason for the revelation of those verses, aḥādīth that were usually drawn from
Sunni sources so that they would be accepted by the Sunnis who held opposing views. This procedure produced many works with the title *Mā nazala min al-Qurʾān fī ahl al-bayt* (What Has Been Revealed Within the Quran Concerning the Household of the Prophet). Furthermore, one can see the same situation in certain other works of a theological nature, such as *al-Shāfī (The Salutary)* of Sayyid al-Murtada.

In addition, references to the Quran can also be found in Quranic commentaries written from a theological or philosophical point of view. Works of this kind with a theological perspective are as old as texts on the science of theology itself, but philosophical commentaries appeared later and are also few in number. One of the first among those theologians seeking to write a Quranic commentary was Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728). Al-Baṣrī was an influential teacher whose students included Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ (d. 130/748) and ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd al-Baṣrī (d. 144/761), two scholars who would go on to become the founders of the Muʿtazilite school. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was in fact the author of a book of Quranic commentary.25

### Quranic Commentaries Among the Muʿtazilites

The first Muʿtazilite Quranic commentary was that of ʿAmr ibn ʿUbayd al-Baṣrī, one of two founders of the Muʿtazilite school. Apparently this work was voluminous. At present there is no known manuscript of the book, but citations from it can be found in other commentaries. Parallel with the spread of the Muʿtazilite school was an increase in the number of Quranic commentaries. Toward the end of the second/eighth century, ʿAmr ibn Fāʾid al-Aswārī (d. after 200/815–16), a Muʿtazilite theologian, composed a major commentary, manuscripts of which were still available in the fourth/tenth century.26 Also in the beginning of the third/ninth century Abū Bakr al-ʿAṣamm, a scholar who branched out from Muʿtazilism and had certain theses of his own, wrote a book of Quranic commentary.27

The years marking the transition from the third/ninth to the fourth/tenth century were witness to increased activity among Muʿtazilite theologians in the field of Quranic commentary. Among scholars of this period one must mention Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915), the great theologian of Basra who, according to the fourth/tenth-century *al-Fihrist (The Catalogue)* of Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn al-Nadīm, wrote a book of Quranic exegesis considered to be of much importance for centuries not only by the Muʿtazilites, but also by Imāmī Shiites. Many quotations from this commentary appear in the works of Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn al-Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192) and Sayyid ibn al-ṭāʿūs (d. 664/1266).28 Also of note during this period was Abuʾl-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Balkhī (d. 319/931), the great theologian of Baghdad, whose book *Jāmiʿ*...
ʿilm al-Qurān (Comprehensive Science of the Quran) or Tafsīr al-kabīr (The Grand Commentary) was welcomed more by Shiite scholars than the commentary of al-Jubbāʾī. This work was one of the main sources of al-Tibyān (The Declaration) of Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) and was also used during later centuries by such scholars as Ibn al-Shahrāshūb and Ibn al-Ṭāʾūs. In this context we must also mention the great Muʿtazilite commentator Abū Muslim Muḥammad ibn Bahr al-Īsfahānī (d. 322/933–34), whose major commentary in fourteen volumes, Jāmiʿ al-tawīl li-ḥukm al-nuzūl (Comprehensive Hermeneutics of the Decree of Revelation), was used by such outstanding Shiite figures as Sayyid al-Murtaḍā and al-Ṭūsī.

Also during the fourth/tenth century such Muʿtazilite figures as Abū Bakr Qaffāl al-Shāshī (d. 384/994–95) and ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994) continued this tradition by writing commentaries. In his Jāmiʿ aḥkam al-Qurān (Synthesis of the Commands of the Quran), the Mālikī commentator Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭūbī (d. 671/1272) quotes this latter commentator with reference to his name. Moreover, Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadānī (d. 415/1024), the famous Muʿtazilite scholar of Rayy, wrote such works as Mutashābih al-Qurān (Metaphorical Verses of the Quran) and Tanzīh al-Qurān ʿan al-maṭāʿin (The Purity of the Quran Beyond All Tarnish), in which he sought to respond to questions that had arisen concerning certain verses of the Quran. Moreover, he also composed a third work dealing with Quranic commentary in general.

During the fifth/eleventh century a new wave of Muʿtazilite commentaries began. One of the most significant is the commentary of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Mihrzād al-Īsfahānī (d. 459/1067), who was followed by Abuʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṣandalī al-Naysābūrī (d. 484/1091–92), one of the companions of Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣaymarī (d. 315/927), who began a commentary and succeeded in finishing half of the Quran. Another important figure is Abū Yūsuf ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (d. 488/1095), who was the leader of the Muʿtazilites of his day in Baghdad. He composed a voluminous commentary that, if not an exaggeration, has been said to comprise three hundred and according to some five hundred volumes. His commentary on al-Fāṭiḥah (“The Opening”) alone was seven volumes. Aḥmad al-Samʿānī (d. 534/1140), who had studied this commentary, mentions that among all commentaries none was longer or of greater value. Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245), the Baghdādī historian, states that al-Qazwīnī’s principal expertise was in fact the field of Quranic commentary.

The last outstanding Quranic commentary by Muʿtazilite scholars is al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl (The Unveiler of the Truths of Revelation) by Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), who was considered by Abū ʿAbbās Shams al-Dīn ibn Khallakān (d. 681/1282) as the leader of the Muʿtazilites of his day. This book, which has been printed many times, is one of the most
enduring commentaries not only among Muʿtazilite works, but in the field of Quranic commentary in general. Many summaries of this book and commentaries on it appeared during later centuries. Despite theological differences between many Sunnis and Muʿtazilites, al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary never lost its pertinence for Sunnis and was also constantly studied by Shiite scholars. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿIrāqī (d. 640/1242–43), who later joined the circle of the Muʿtazilites, wrote a response entitled al-ʾIntiṣār liʾl-Zamakhsharī (The Revenge of al-Zamakhsharī) to refute the Muʿtazilite aspects of al-Kashshāf. This response is one of the last endeavors of Muʿtazilites to write Quranic commentaries. The date of the decline of Muʿtazilite commentaries coincides in fact with the decline of Muʿtazilism itself.

Quranic Commentaries Among the Ashʿarites

The earliest Ashʿarites paid little direct attention to Quranic commentary. In some sources there is reference to a Quranic commentary entitled al-Mukhtazan (The Preserved) written by Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī himself. A century after him the celebrated Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), who was an Ashʿarite, showed special interest in this subject and composed several works, of which the most important is the well-known kalāmī commentary Jawāhir al-Qurʾān (Jewels of the Quran). The famous man of letters ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, who was also an Ashʿarite, in addition to writing on the miracle (iʿjāz) of the Quran, also wrote a commentary on it. Considering the scholars of that period, one must also mention ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yūsuf al-Juwaynī (d. 438/1047), an Ashʿarite of Khurasan, who wrote a large Quranic commentary. He was followed on this path by his son, Imam al-Ḥaramayn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), who is one of the best-known Ashʿarite theologians.

The peak of Ashʿarite writings in the field of Quranic commentary occurred in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century, and the most outstanding figure of this epoch is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). In the Sunni world his Tafsīr al-kabīr (The Grand Commentary), consisting of many volumes, is considered the most outstanding kalāmī commentary. This work is among his last writings. As he wrote in the introduction, he sought to reinterpret Ashʿarite kalām on the basis of the Quran and the direct understanding of its verses. To judge the extent to which he succeeded in the task of directly comprehending the meaning of Quranic verses while avoiding a priori kalāmī judgments is beyond the bounds of this brief presentation. In any case the distance between al-Rāzī’s kalāmī positions in his purely theological works and other Ashʿarite writings and those in his commentary demonstrates that he had taken some strides on this path.

In the latter part of this century, Abū Ḥāmid ʿUthmān ibn ʿUmar al-Fīrūzābādī
(d. 675/1276–77), an Ashʿarite theologian from the province of Fars in Persia, wrote a work entitled *Farāʾid al-tafsīr* (Precious Gems of Exegesis) as a gloss upon the *Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī. In this work al-Fīrūzābādī sought to respond to al-Zamakhsharī’s Muʿtazilite interpretations from the Ashʿarite point of view.44

This wave of Ashʿarite scholarship continued into the eighth/fourteenth century among such figures as Sharaf al-Dīn Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Ṭayyibī (d. 743/1342), who wrote the voluminous *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (Commentary on the Quran) and glosses upon the *Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī,45 and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Lubān al-Miṣrī (d. 749/1348–49), the author of *Radd al-mutashābih ila'l-muḥkam* (The Refutation of the Metaphorical by the Firm).46 A notable figure belonging to this current of thought is Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), who composed glosses upon the *Kashshāf*. This theologian also wrote another Quranic commentary, this time in Persian with the title of *Kashf al-asrār* (Unveiling of Secrets).47 Even after this period Ashʿarite commentaries continued to appear. In connection with similar theological currents, one can mention Akmal al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bābartī (d. 786/1384), a follower of the school of al-Māturīdī, who wrote glosses upon the *Kashshāf* as well as an independent Quranic commentary.48

Among later scholars who continued the school of the “People of Ḥadīth” and the Salaḥī school (followers of the ancestors) in disputing *kalāmī* positions, some were themselves engaged in *kalām*. Among this group is first of all the Egyptian scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Maṣūr (d. 673/1274–75), who in addition to an independent Quranic commentary composed a work entitled *al-Intiṣāf min al-Kashshāf* (Taking Revenge from al-Kashshāf), which seeks to refute the Muʿtazilite views of al-Zamakhsharī in his *Kashshāf*.49 The most important Salaḥī scholar within this current of theological (*kalāmī*) studies and commentaries is, however, the famous scholar Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328), who took important steps in this field by writing a number of works on Quranic commentary and the “principles of commentary” (*uṣūl al-tafsīr*).

**Quranic Commentaries Among Imamite Theologians**

On the basis of Imamite (Twelve-Imam Shiite) bibliographical sources, it can be asserted that some of the earliest Imamite theologians were concerned with and wrote works of Quranic commentary. Among these works one can mention the commentary of Sawā ibn ʿAbdik al-Jurjānī (d. 360/971) and Abū Maṣūr al-Naysābūrī (d. 429/1038), who were near contemporaries of Abū Sahl Nawbakhtī (d. 311/923).50 Also from the first half of the fourth/tenth century one can mention Muḥammad ibn Baḥr al-Rahnī (d. ca. 330/941–42), who contributed to this current
with his commentary entitled *Kitāb al-burhān al-sadīd min ʿawn al-madīd* (*The Book of Salutary Demonstration from the Extended Help*).  

With the formation of the Imamite school of theology in Baghdad, Quranic commentary became one of the major subjects of concern. Sayyid Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 408/1018), who belonged to this school, wrote an extensive commentary in some ten volumes entitled *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl* (*Truths of Revelation*). The five volumes that survive from this work clearly reveal its *kalāmī* character. As for Shaykh al-Muḥīd, the founder of the Imamite school of theology, we only know that he wrote a refutation of the commentary of Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāṭī. Another scholar of this school, Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, deals in a selective manner in his celebrated book *al-Amāli* (*Summary Sayings*) with discussions of Quranic commentary and comments in a theological as well as literary manner upon certain verses.  

Although Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Sulaymān al-Ṣahrashtī (fifth/eleventh century) were not exactly members of the Baghdādī school, they were nevertheless trained in that school. The *Kitāb al-tībyān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* (*The Book of Declaration in Exegesis of the Quran*) by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in ten volumes, contains extensive selections from earlier theological commentaries, especially those of the Muʿtazilites. Depending on the nature of the verses concerned, it contains extensive *kalāmī* discussions. This work is in fact the oldest commentary of its kind and one of the most extensive Imamite commentaries that have survived. Later Imamite commentaries such as *Majmaʾ al-bayān* (*Concourse of Explanation*) of Abū ʿAlī al-Ṭabrīsī (d. 548/1153–54) and *Rawḍ al-jīnān* (*Meadow of Paradise*) of Abuʾl-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (d. 525/1131) were deeply influenced by it. In speaking of the scholar Sulaymān al-Ṣahrashūṭī, who lived in the latter part of the fifth/eleventh century, one must also mention his refutation of the commentary of the Muʿtazilite theologian Abū Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī, to which Ibn al-Shahrāshūṭī refers.  

During the middle centuries of Islamic history, among Imamites, as among Sunnis, preaching came to predominate over the writing of commentaries, and *kalāmī* commentaries became rare. Among works on commentary that were nevertheless written during this period, one must mention *Mutashābihāt al-Qurʾān* (*Metaphorical Verses of the Quran*) by Ibn al-Shahrāshūṭī, which is one of the few commentaries organized according to subject matter. In a manner that is unprecedented among older commentaries, the author comments upon verses of the Quran based on subject matter rather than the order of the verses as they appear in the Quran.  

In later centuries, although Imamite theology entered a new period of expansion and prominence through the efforts of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) and others, *kalāmī* commentary became less prevalent. Among the limited number of works in this field after al-Ṭūsī, one can note the efforts of Qūṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī (d. 766/1365). He wrote glosses upon the *Kashshāf* of al-
Zamakhsharī and evaluated the theological (kalāmī) interpretation of the author. These glosses were later criticized by Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Āqsarāʾī (d. 771/1369 or 791/1389).55

Needless to say, the writing of Quranic commentaries among both Sunnis and Shiites continued after the classical period into the fourteenth/twentieth century; examples are the commentaries of Badīʿ al-Zamān Saʿīd al-Nūrsī (d. 1379/1960), Abuʾl-Kalām Āzād (d. 1377/1958), Mawlānā Mawdūdī (d. 1399/1979), Sayyīc Qǔb (d. 1386/1966), and Muḥammad Ḥūsayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1401/1981). Moreover, commentaries continue to be written today. Although these commentaries are not strictly speaking kalāmī, they nevertheless contain some kalāmī discussions and need to be mentioned. Most such works continue classical currents of Quranic commentary, but in a new context.

Quranic Commentaries Among the Philosophers and Some Sufīs

The Quranic revelation created the worldview within which Islamic philosophers philosophized even if they continued to make use of ideas inherited from Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus.56 Such questions as the relation between faith and reason, the eternity or newness of the world, the relation between revealed and rational knowledge, the epistemological meaning of revelation as understood in relation to the Quran, and many other issues discussed extensively by Islamic philosophers were related directly to the Quran as source of both ethics and knowledge for Muslims. Even the name of philosophy in Arabic, al-falsafah, taken from the Greek word philosophia, came to be complemented by the word ḥikmah (“wisdom”), taken from the Quran, and many a later Islamic philosopher came to be known as a ḥakīm, that is, a possessor of ḥikmah.

In addition to this general influence of the Quran on the whole Islamic philosophical tradition, some Islamic philosophers also wrote direct commentaries on certain verses or sūrahs of the Sacred Book. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), the second major Islamic Peripatetic (mashshāʾī) philosopher following Abū Yaʿqi al-Kindī (d. ca. 252/856), not only discussed the meaning of revelation from the point of view of epistemology, but also in his Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikmah (Ringstones of Wisdom) commented upon certain Quranic verses. His successor in this school and the most influential of Islamic philosophers, Abū ṣAlī ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037), took it a step further and wrote separate works of commentary on certain sūrahs of the Quran, including al-Ikhlāṣ (“Sincerity”), al-Falaq (“The Daybreak”), al-ʿAʾlā (“The Most High”), and part of al-Fuṣilat (“Expounded”).57 In addition, in the Risālat al-nayrūziyyah (The Nayrūzī Treatise), attributed to
him, there is a commentary on the single letters that appear at the beginning of some of the sūrah of the Quran.

The most influential commentary of Ibn Sīnā, however, is his philosophical commentary on the Light Verse (āyat al-nūr; 24:35). This commentary appears not as a separate work, but as part of his last philosophical masterpiece, Kitāb al-ṭabarānī (The Book of Directives and Remarks). This work influenced many later philosophers, and even the theologian and Sufi al-Ghazzālī, the author of Mishkāt al-anwār (Niche of Lights). This latter work itself played an important role in the teachings of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and the founding of the School of Illumination (al-ishrāq) and definitely influenced the magisterial commentary of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā; d. 1050/1640) on the Light Verse.

Among other Peripatetics who commented upon certain verses of the Quran and tried to correlate their meaning with philosophical teachings, one must mention Abu’l-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Rushd (Averroës, d. 595/1198), who in his Faṣl al-maqaṣīl (The Decisive Treatise) sought to harmonize the Divine Law (al-Sharīʿah) and philosophy (al-ḥikmah). In this task he was joined by many Ismāʿīlī philosophers before him such as Nāṣīr-i Khusraw (d. ca. 470/1077). In fact, other Ismāʿīlī philosophers also quoted Quranic verses and sought to comment on them philosophically. As an example one can cite the famous Rasāʾīl (Epistles) of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ (“Brethren of Purity”), written during the fourth/tenth century, a work of general Shiite character claimed by Ismāʿīlīs as their own.

One can see a greater interest in philosophical commentary on the Quran in the School of Illumination, whose founder, Suhrawardī, turned to the Quran more than any of his predecessors or contemporaries. Almost all the works of Suhrawardī cite Quranic verses, upon which he then comments. This is especially true of al-Alwāḥ al-ʿimādiyyah (The ʿImādī Tablets), which is in reality itself a Quranic commentary. The first commentator on Suhrawardī, Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī (d. after 687/1288), also mentions a work by Suhrawardī with the title Tafsīr al-Qurʾān (Commentary on the Quran), which, however, is lost. It is also notable that Suhrawardī used specific Quranic terms for some of the most important ideas expressed in his works, terms such as nūr (“light”), which he uses as the central concept of Illuminationist philosophy, referring directly to the Quranic usage of this term. He also uses the Quranic termghasaq (“obscurity”), by which he means the physical body, for the first time in Islamic philosophy.

Before proceeding any further, it is important to say something about the method used by the Islamic philosophers in their commentaries on the Quran. This method, called taʾwīl, which literally means taking something back to its origin, is central to both Shiite and Sufi methodology. According to these schools, not only is God both al-Bāṭin (“the Inward”) and al-Ẓāhir (“the Outward”), as asserted by the Quran, but also all things have an inward and an outward aspect, especially the Word of
God, the Quran, according to the text of the Quran itself.

One must not, however, confuse the philosophical method of Quranic commentary and the Shiite or Sufi method. There is a long tradition of Sufi commentaries that includes such works as the Tafsīr of Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896); Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr (Truths of Quranic Commentary) of ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021); Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt (Subtleties of Indications) of Abuʾl-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072); Kashf al-asrār wa-ʿuddat al-abrār (The Unveiling of Mysteries and Provision for the Pious) of Rashīd al-Dīn al-Maybūdī (d. 520/1126); ʿArāʾis al-bayān (Brides of Elucidation) of Rūzbihān al-Baqlī al-Shirāzī (d. 606/1209); several commentaries attributed to Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) as well as al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah (The Meccan Openings), which is in reality a commentary on the Quran; Taʾwil al-Qurʾān (Hermeneutics of the Quran) of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736/1336); and Mawāhib-i ʿaliyyah (Lofty Gifts) of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Kāshīfī (d. 910/1504). This tradition was later continued by such figures as Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi (d. 1176/1762), Sulṭān ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1327/1909), Ṣafī ʿAlī Shāh (d. 1361/1899), Mawlānā ʿAlī Thanwī (d. 1362/1943), and many others. The Sufi tradition, along with the tradition of Shiite commentaries, was also to influence later philosophical commentaries, especially those of Mullā Ṣadrā, but must not be confused with philosophical commentaries strictly speaking.

One can see commentaries on some Quranic verses in the works of the members of the School of Shiraz, which was the central locus of philosophical activity from the seventh/thirteenth through the tenth/sixteenth century. But the peak of philosophical commentary on the Quran is to be found in the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640). In the introduction to his magnum opus, al-Asfār al-arbaʿah (The Four Journeys), he reminds readers that the goal of the Transcendent Theosophy/Philosophy, or al-ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyah, which is the name of the new philosophical school established by him, is to integrate qurʾān, ʿirfān, and burhān, that is, the Quran, gnostic knowledge, and philosophical demonstration. And indeed we find references to the Quran and the Hadīth throughout his works. Moreover, with the aim of bringing out the philosophical meaning of the Quran, he composed commentaries on specific sūrah verses that have been assembled together in seven large volumes as Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm (Commentary on the Noble Quran).59

Mullā Ṣadrā also wrote Asrār al-āyāt (Mysteries of Quranic Verses), in which he discusses his understanding of the method of hermeneutic interpretation (tawʾīl), which does not follow completely the methods of earlier works of Quranic commentary.60 Finally, one must also mention another major work of Mullā Ṣadrā, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (Keys of the Invisible World), which deals with the inner meaning of the Quran.61

These works influenced many Qajar philosophers of the thirteenth/nineteenth century, such as Mullā ʿAlī Nūrī (d. 1246/1830–31), who wrote glosses upon them.
Perhaps the greatest Islamic philosopher of that period, Ḥājjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1289/1872), also followed Mullā Ṣadrā in commenting on Quranic verses. He did not, however, compose a separate work dedicated only to Quranic commentary, although he did write well-known commentaries on famous Shiite prayers that were themselves based on the Quran.

Many scholars, including a number from Egypt, have severely criticized the whole tradition of philosophical commentaries on the Quran. We can find allusions to this matter as early as the work of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035). The greatest opposition, however, came from Ibn Taymiyyah, who again and again turned to the criticism of the philosophers’ understanding of the Quran. Not did such criticism cease in the eighth/fourteenth century. It has continued among certain jurists and theologians to this day, as has opposition in certain circles to Sufi commentaries.

In conclusion, it is necessary to say a few words about the major contemporary scholar, gnostic, and philosopher Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1401/1981), the author of the twenty-seven-volume Quranic commentary al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān (The Balance in the Exegesis of the Quran). In composing this most extensive of fourteenth/twentieth-century commentaries, he drew from all the different approaches of earlier commentators, whether they were historians, linguists, jurists, theologians, philosophers, or Sufis. Being the great philosopher that he was, he interpreted many verses philosophically, so that al-Mīzān may be considered to some extent part of the tradition of philosophical commentaries on the Quran. Nevertheless, he opposed strongly imposing certain theological or philosophical ideas upon Quranic verses. He sought to interpret the verses of the Quran through other verses of the Quran itself, and yet the result is a commentary that is at once theological, philosophical, and mystical. It also deals with the language of the Quran, the meaning of the sacred history contained in it, and its legal, ethical, metaphysical, cosmological, and eschatological doctrines.

Translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr
The Qur'an as Source of Islamic Law

By Ahmad Muhammad al-Tayyib

Notes

1. According to the majority of scholars (ʿulamāʾ), verses revealed during the Prophet’s migration to Madinah, prior to his arrival, are classified as Makkan, and verses revealed after the Prophet’s migration to and travels outside of Madinah after his migration there are classified as Madinan.

2. These fundamentals invite people to virtue, noble character traits (makārim), and good manners (adab) and warn them against acts of vice (radhāʾil) and vileness (qabāʾīḥ) in speech and deed.

3. Of course, the Quran can certainly be explored through literary-critical means—the results of such inquiry will be further testament to its “inimitability” or miraculous nature—but an integral understanding of the Sacred Text requires it to be read as such, making use of the full breadth and depth offered by the traditional Quranic disciplines.


6. The ḥajj may be left undone if one is unable to perform it (for financial or health reasons) or in the case of a lack of security on the road; prayers may be shortened during travel; dry ablution may take the place of water ablution; two canonical prayers may be combined; prayer may be discontinued and made up later in case of fear or danger; carrion meat may be eaten in case of need; and wine may be drunk to remedy choking.


13. The Quran draws attention to the law of “change” in 13:11 (Truly God alters not what is in a people until they alter what is in themselves). We note here that awareness of the principle of becoming and continuous change in this world is deeply rooted in Islamic thinking, most of all in the sciences of wisdom (ʿulūm al-ḥikmah): falsafah (philosophy), kalam (theology), and taṣawwuf (mysticism). The theologians of Islam (al-mutakallimūn) have been conscious, from the very early days of philosophical meditation in Islamic civilization, that the universe is in a state of flux, becoming, and change. Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935) emphasized that no accident can occur twice; the Muʿtazilites took a similar view. The theosopher of great genius Mullā Ṣadrā al-Shirāzī (d. 1050/1640) departed from philosophical convention by introducing a profound theory about substantial motion (al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah). Whereas Ibn Sīnā and the philosophers of the Middle Ages, Eastern and Western, maintained that motion occurs only in the category of accidents (time, place, quantity, quality, etc.), Mullā Ṣadrā added to these the category of substance, demonstrating that motion occurs in the category of substance itself and not only in the category of accidents. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, change and renewal from moment to moment is a definite law in the cosmos, in both the celestial (the planets and the heavenly bodies) and the terrestrial realms—in this matter, “The condition of the sun and the moon is similar to persons, such as Zayd or ʿAmr; all are subject to change, evanescence, and perishing”—and this insight was inspired specifically by verses of the Quran, such as the following: And thou seest the mountains that thou dost suppose are solid pass away like clouds (27:88); Nay, but they are in doubt regarding a new creation (50:15); and All affairs are journeying unto God (42:53).


15. Aḥādīth also play a crucial role in the determination of laws based on the Quranic Text; this will be discussed in the final section of the essay.

16. Among the examples scholars posit of equivocal and unequivocal verses one can mention: (1) Divorced women shall wait by themselves for three courses (2:228). The word translated courses (qurʾ) here possesses the two contrary meanings of both “a menstruation” and “a state of purity from menstrual discharge.” If the first is intended, then a (nonpregnant) divorced woman must wait for three menstruation periods before remarrying; if the second, then for three periods of purity following menstruation. The first suggests a period shorter than the second, and legal opinion differs as to which is correct. (2) Forbidden unto you [as wives] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your fathers’
sisters, your mothers’ sisters, your brothers’ daughters, your sisters’ daughters, your milk-mothers and milk-sisters, the mothers of your wives, the stepdaughters in your care—born of your wives with whom you have consummated marriage, but if you have not consummated the marriage with them, then there is no blame on you—and the wives of your sons who are from your loins, and two sisters together, save for what is past. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful (4:23). This text indicates that marrying both a mother and daughter is prohibited unequivocally, but determining what a “daughter” is is equivocal. Does it mean a natural daughter or the linguistic term “daughter,” which includes a foster daughter?


18. Muslim scholars do not speak of the terms of the Quran (alfāz al-Qurān), but of Quranic composition (al-naẓm al-qurānī). Naẓm signifies the ordering of pearls (naẓm al-durr) on a string, which sense is more consonant with the words of the Quran, which are strung together in a subtle order like a string of pearls. Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, Sharḥ al-talwīḥ ʿalaʾl-tawdīḥ (Beirut), 1:30.

19. Naturally, it is not possible to recount all of the subtle and deep studies that have resulted from research into how words indicate meanings; nor can we summarize them in this essay. It is extremely difficult in our present age for nonspecialists to master the intellectual foundations necessary for the movement of intellectual renewal (ijtihād) that constitutes an essential attribute of Islamic civilization and is in the spirit of the Quran and the Sunnah. Seeking to understand the Quran and the Sunnah in the absence of these fundamentals leads to the abuse and distortion of Islam that negate the learned consciousness of the ummah and lead to the flattening and superficialization of the religion—whether this comes from those working to bring an end to the Quran and the Sunnah as the sources that form the Muslim mind, imagination, and sentiment or from those limited by their own deviant premises, which they believe to be genuine knowledge. The final objectives of both of these camps coincide in their desire to see the Noble Quran reduced to a petrified relic severed from present-day reality. Perhaps one can diagnose the mystery of the affliction that has befallen the ummah by understanding the intentions of these kinds of people, whom the Prophet described when he said: “They recite the Quran, but it does not go beyond their throats; they stray from religion like a shaft strays from its mark” (al-Bukhārī, K. faḍāʾil al-Qurān, chap. 36, no. 5058). It will suffice readers to study the subtle inquiries in the science of the principles of jurisprudence, which abound in hundreds of masterly works and are capable of helping people learn how to deal with the Quran and the
Sunnah in an adequate intellectual manner, opening up the vistas of learning that previously succeeded in inspiring Muslims and non-Muslims alike and changing the face of history and the march of civilizations.


21. What is meant by Divine Address, in both Sunni and Shiite circles, is the eternal Word of God (al-kalām al-azalī alqadīm), not word in the sense of letters or written text. Thus the legal rulings of God that we know as the Sharīʿah are actually the eternal Word that is spoken within God (al-kalām al-nafsī al-qadīm), and the Quranic composition that we recite refers to the eternal rule governing God’s Word. As for the Muʿtazilites, who believe the Quran to be created and who deny the uncreated and eternal nature of the Quran, the legal rulings of the Sharīʿah are not Divine Speech or Word, but the actions that the Lawgiver establishes in accordance with intrinsic beauty and goodness (ḥusn) or ugliness and evil (qubh) of actions. What is beautiful He commands us to do; what is ugly He forbids us to do. This is the inverse position from that of the people of the Sunnah, who maintain that it is God’s Address that makes commands beautiful and God’s Interdiction that makes it ugly; acts themselves, before the arrival of the indications from Sharīʿite rulings, may not be described as either beautiful or ugly. Therefore, we find the question of the beauty or the ugliness of acts and whether they are determined by reason or by the Sharīʿah taught in the prologues to the science of the principles of jurisprudence, because it is directly linked to Sharīʿite rulings and their effects on the acts of those obliged to follow them. Whether these rulings create the nature of acts, as the people of the Sunnah say, or simply reveal their intrinsic nature, as the Muʿtazilites say, is explained in these sources. See ʿAbd al-ʿAlī ibn Nizām al-Dīn al-Laknawī, Fawātīḥ alrahmūt bi-sharḥ musallam al-thubūt (Beirut, 2002), 2:3; Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Shalabī, Uṣūl al-fiqh al-islāmī (Beirut, 1986), 56; and Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥakīm, Uṣūl al-fiqh al-muqārin (Beirut, 2001), 1:5–2.


23. Also see the greater division of the ḥukm taklīfī and its subcategories in al-Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī al-Ḥakīm, al-Uṣūl al-ʿāmmah liʿl-fiqh al-muqārin (Beirut, 1422/2001), 53–64.


29. Muslim, K. al-īmān.
30. Al-Bukhārī, book 55, chap. 23 (no. 2766); also book 86, chap. 44 (no. 6857).
32. To reiterate the point made earlier, Muslims believe that the Quran fulfills uniquely all of the conditions necessary for the preservation of the authentic, original text, an authenticity that is guaranteed by the fact that it has been preserved unaltered over the ages in hearts as well as in written form.
33. Shaʿbān, Minhaj al-Qurʿān, 58.
34. Al-Taftāzānī, Sharḥ al-talwīḥ, 2:1.
37. Concerning these subjects see al-Ḥakīm, al-Uṣūl al-ʿāmmah. This is a precise and valuable work in explaining sources upon which Sunnis, Shiites, and Muʿtazilites agree and those upon which they differ. See also Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah, ʿIlm uṣūl al-fiqh fi thawbh al-jadīd (Beirut, 1975); Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, Uṣūl al-fiqh (Cairo, 1997); and Shalabī, Uṣūl al-fiqh.