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KALĀM AND AL-GHAZĀLĪ 'S CRITIQUE

Akilu Aliyu Muhammad¹, Mu'azu Abdullahi Saulawa²

¹Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Art and Education, Bauchi State University,
P.M.B 65, Gadau, Bauchi, Nigeria
E-mail address: aawaliy82@gmail.com
GSM: +2348038310506

²Faculty of Law, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, P.M.B 2218, Katsina, Nigeria
E-mail address: muazu.abdullahis@gmail.com
GSM: +2348036026220

ABSTRACT

Issues related to justice and mercy, as well as God's attributes have been, for centuries, the focal point of the Muslim theologians' debates. Some theologians interpreted the God's attributes such as hearing and seeing metaphorically used to avoid comparing God to created beings. Another controversial theological debate focused on the question of free will and predestination. One group of Muslim theologians maintained that because God is just, he creates only good and therefore only humans can create evil. The other group argued that God's punishment of humans would be unjust because he himself created their evil deeds. However, this particular view was rejected by other Muslim theologians on the grounds that it limits the scope of God's creation, when the *Qur'ān* clearly states that God is the Creator of everything. Many other theological controversies occupied Muslim thinkers for the first few centuries of Islam, but by the 10th century the views of Islamic theologian al-Ash'arī and his followers, known as Ash'arites, prevailed and were adopted by most Muslims. This study, therefore, traced and explored the growth and development of these theological schools from their first appearance to the period of al-Ghazālī and, moreover, al-Ghazālī's critique of both philosophy and theology were explored and analyzed.

Keywords: philosophy, theology, al-Ghazālī's critique *Kalām*, al-Ghazālī's critique, Muslim theologians, God, God's attributes, Creator of everything, philosophy, theology

1. INTRODUCTION

Kalām has constituted a larger part of the Islamic creeds' discourse. Many groups came into emergence and presented their arguments based on theological grounds. At the initial stage theology was in contrast with philosophy. This opposition, later, disappeared as a result of reciprocal influence, which is seen even in the later Sunni writings. It is argued that, the confusion of *kalām* with philosophy may be on the ground that they share some problems in metaphysics and on this ground the later *mutakallimūn* mixed and confused them. The confusion of theology with philosophy, and misusing of both of them especially by Mu'tazilites are the fundamental reasons that al-Ghazālī (1111 A.D) condemned not only philosophy but even theology itself. In this study, therefore, the development of theology, its relation to philosophy and the critique of philosophy and theology made by al-Ghazālī (1111 A.D) have been discussed extensively.

2. THE MEANING AND THE CONCEPT OF *KALĀM*

Kalām is an Arabic word which is generally viewed as a theology. Certainly, *kalām* in Islamic term is not the same with the theology in the meticulous sense of the Christian tradition, for Islam offers man a will of reasoning and pondering and that his reasoning and pondering should be aided by the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). Further, *Kalām* is generally termed as the science of the fundamental doctrines of Islam (*'ilm uḥūl al-dīn*) and it is also termed as the speculative science (*'ilm naẓar*).¹ R. M Frank argues that:

The *Kalām* does, nonetheless, articulate in analytic form what it sees as essential and fundamental content of Islamic belief, constructing in the form of dialectical discourse, the speculative framework according to which it understands the rational content and coherence of the principles and elements of this belief, the original and the originating problem for Islam, and so for the *kalām* is that of the questions raised and implied in the text of the revelation and the canonical tradition.²

Another meaning given to *'Ilm al-Kalām* was the "science of speculative theology" Ibn Khaldūn (1406 A.D.) pointed out two possible reasons why *kalām* was called 'the science of speculative theology. He argues that the reason why this name was chosen may have been that it included the disputation of the innovations. Or, the reason may have been that the discipline was invented and cultivated as a consequence of dissention concerning the existence of essential speech.³

Furthermore, there are many arguments on the meaning of *kalām* in the Islamic term and its relationship with philosophy, but generally speaking, *kalām* seeks to defend the articles of faith logically and refute against those who try to manipulate them or distort them from their real meaning. Ibn Khaldūn (1406 A.D) points out this focal point of *kalām*. He argues: "[*Kalām*] is a science that involves arguing with logical proofs in defense of the

¹ R. M. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ash'arites school*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), P. 5.

² R. M. Frank, "Kalām and Philosophy, A Perspective from One Problem" in *The Islamic Theological Philosophy* edited by George F. Hourani (New York: Caravan Books 1997), P. 73.

³ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc. 1967), Vol. 3, P. 50

articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy.⁴

2. 1. *Kalām* and Philosophy

In attempt to discuss theology, it is important to point out its divergence and convergence with philosophy. There is an argument among the scholars on whether *kalām* and philosophy denote the same thing as Frank claims: "... theology is not distinguished from philosophy..."⁵ or that their logics are the same and they only differ in terminology,⁶ and or they are two different things but they influenced each other as Seyyed Hossein Nasr Says: "*Kalām* forced *falsafah*, even the Peripatetic school, to deal with certain specifically religious issues, while *falsafah* influenced ever more the formulation and argumentation of *kalām* itself..."⁷

However, initially, philosophy was different from *Kalām* but they were letter on mixed up by the letter scholars, so much so that, one may think they are one thing and dealing with the same thing. Ibn Khaldūn (1406 A.D.) argues:

However, the two approaches have been mixed up by recent scholars. The problems of theology have been confused with those of philosophy. This has gone so far that the one discipline is no longer distinguishable from the other. The student (of theology) cannot learn (theology) from the books of (the recent scholars, and the same situation also confronts the student of (philosophy). Such (mixing of theology and philosophy) was done by al-Baydāwī, in the *Tawali`*, and by later, non-Arab scholars, in all their works. However, some students have occupied themselves with the (mixed) approach (in spite of its uselessness for the study of theology), in order to learn the different school opinions and to become versed in the knowledge of argumentation, which is amply represented in (the works which follow the mixed approach).⁸

However, the mixture of philosophy and *kalām* started – as claimed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr – with al-Juwaynī continuing with al-Ghazālī (1111 A.D), al-Rāzī (932 A.D), and with ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-‘Ijī (1355 A.D), in his *Kitāb al-mawāqif* (The Book of Stations), in which he discussed the philosophical *kalām*. The opposition of *kalām* to philosophy, later, disappeared as a result of this inter-relation and reciprocal influence, which even seen in the later Sunni writings like Ibn Khaldūn who called the later *kalām* as a form of philosophy.⁹

Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out the historical struggle and reciprocal influence between philosophy and theology in Islam as follows:

⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, Op. Cit., 3 P. 34

⁵ R. M. Frank, Al-Ghazālī and the Ash‘arites school, Op. Cit., P. 5.

⁶ Ibid., P. 28

⁷ S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, (Washington: State University of New York Press, 2006), PP. 49-51.

⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, Op. Cit. P. 152

⁹ S. H. Nasr, Op. Cit., P. 49.

- 1- The earliest period, from the beginning to the end of the third/ ninth century, when the Mu‘tazilite School was dominant in *kalām*, and when philosophy was in early development and they were in close relation and association.
- 2- The period from the end of the third/ninth to the fifth/eleventh century, from the rise of Ash‘arite theology and its beginning of adopting certain philosophical arguments into *kalām* by al-Juwaynī (1085 A.D.) and his student al-Ghazālī (1111 A.D.). This was a period of intense opposition and often enmity between *falsafah* and *kalām*.
- 3- From about the fifth/eleventh century to the seventh/thirteenth century the serious opposition between *falsafah* and *kalām* continued. During this period philosophy, began to penetrate into some issues which were strictly central to *kalām* such as the meaning of prophecy and the Divine Word, the question of human and Divine Will connected with the issue of predestination and free will, the Divine Attributes, and so on. In the main time, *kalām* became seriously philosophical in which philosophical ideas and argumentations were employed.
- 4- From the seventh/thirteenth century to the tenth/sixteenth century a more congenial harmony between philosophy and *Kalām* came about. This time, however, marked the emergence of masters in both *kalām* and philosophy in both *Sunnī* and *Shi‘ī* worlds.
- 5- From the tenth/sixteenth century to modern times, the philosophy began to overshadow *kalām* completely in the *shi‘ī* world. While for the *Sunnī* world, especially in India, the teachings of *al-ḥikmah al-muta‘āliyah* (transcendent philosophy) flourished with the exception of Persia where *al-ḥikmah al-muta‘āliyah* (transcendent philosophy) did not completely overshadow *Ash‘arite kalām*, but the two were often integrated together, along with Sufism.¹⁰

It can be argued that, the confusion of *kalām* with philosophy may be on the ground that they share some problems in metaphysics, and on this ground, the later *mutakallimūn* mixed and confused them. Ibn Khaldūn pointed out saying: “Recent speculative theologians, then, confused the problems of theology with those of philosophy, because the investigations of theology and philosophy go in the same direction, and the subject and problems of theology are similar to the subject and problems of metaphysics.”¹¹

3. THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF *KALĀM*

The first serious difference arose in the Muslim *Ummah* was the question of the legitimate Caliph of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). This came about in the wake of the assassination of the third Caliph, ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān, in 656. This act pitted against each other the two claimants to the caliphate, ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. It is argued that as ‘Alī’s army was about to have victory at the Battle of *Ṣiffīn* in 657, Mu‘āwiyah resorted to a delaying tactic and called for arbitration which subsequently divided ‘Alī’s army into two rival factions, the loyalists and the Kharijites.¹² The basic principle

¹⁰ S. H. Nasr, Op. Cit., PP. 49-51.

¹¹ Ibn Khaldūn, Op. Cit., Vol. 3, P. 153.

¹² M. Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism* (Washington: Oneworld Publications, 2000), P. 11.

derived from the *Qur'ān* and which was firmly held by Khārijites was 'no decision but Allah's' (*Lā ḥukma illā lillāh*)¹³ and this was developed to show Caliphate Alī's mistake in his acceptance of arbitration.

The Kharijites, developed the idea that whosoever commits a grave sin (*kabīrah*) is an infidel (*kāfir*) and on that basis, they rejected 'Alī's original consent to arbitration and cast doubt on his rightful claim to the caliphate, and that the Muslim community can topple or even assassinate a Caliph that commits a grave sin. In implementation of this thesis, 'Alī was killed in 661 by a Kharijite assassin. They further, challenged the Qurashites' right to the caliphate and argued that the members of the Muslim community have the right to choose whomsoever they view as worthy of caliphate and that if he changed from good to bad or deviated from the right path his government should be toppled.¹⁴

The Shi'ites were the first people to reject these claims. They therefore, pledged unconditional allegiance to the 'Alī's branch of Quraysh, and argued that the caliphate and subsequently imamate, was divine, so that 'the earth can never be without an Imām.¹⁵ This Imam, for the Shi'ites, was not considered as only the political leader of the community, but also, as its infallible teacher. Otherwise, the purity of religious truth would be jeopardized and the world would be thrown into mayhem and lawlessness. The Shiites argue that the Imam is now in occultation or temporary disappearance (*ghaybah*)' and that he will appear at the end of time to restore justice.¹⁶

Meanwhile, another group called Murji'ites came into emergence and challenged Kharijites. They argue that no act of disobedience or sin could negate right belief, nor any act of obedience profit an infidel. For right belief was entirely a matter of 'inner assent', rather than external performance or practice. Should a true believer commit an act of disobedience or sin, whether menial or grave (*kabīrah*) that would not negate his right belief or his right to enter Paradise. For, 'the true believer is admitted to Paradise by virtue of his sincerity and love, rather than his action or obedience.¹⁷

4. THE ADVENT OF 'ĪLM AL-KALĀM

The belief and political divergence discussed above laid the foundation for theological implications in the Muslim community. Apart from those conflicts transpired out of political divergence, the seventh century witnessed the advent of the Qadarites of Damascus and Basrah such as Ma'bad al-Juhanī (d. 699) and Ghaylān al-Dimashqī (d. 743). The speculation of those scholars turned on the question of *qadar*.¹⁸ It is argued that, an important document for the advent of Qadarism was an epistle said to have been written to Abdul-Malik about the

¹³ W. M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), P. 8.

¹⁴ M. Fakhry, Op. Cit., P. 11.

¹⁵ In shi'ism the concept of imamate is one of their fundamental doctrines. The Imamate began with Ali (R.A) as the First Imam, and his descendants, beginning with his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, continue the line of the Imams until the Twelfth, who is believed to be in occultation and will reappear to establish justice in the world. The Twelve Imams are considered by the Shiites to be not only spiritual but also political successors to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). www.religionfacts.com/shia. Retrieved on 22/05/2015

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 12-13

¹⁷ Ibid. P.13.

¹⁸ Ibid.14.

year 700. The epistle made it clear that man has freedom to choose good or evil.¹⁹ The official view, favoured by the Umayyad Caliphs, had been that all actions, including the Caliphs', were predestined by God. Accordingly, they could not be held responsible for them, however cruel they were. The charge against Umayyad caliphates that they are adherents to the Greek philosophy or Christian theology, in addition to its political implications fuelled the controversy of Qadarism.²⁰

By the middle of the eighth century, the Qadarite movement succeeded by Mu'tazilite movement. The core founder of the movement was Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' (d. 748), and he was said to be a disciple of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728), but turned away from him, over the question of the 'grave sinner'. As has been discussed above, Khārijites, maintained that whoever commits a grave sin is an infidel, while, contrary to this, the Murji'ites argued that his status should be left to the determination of God at the Day of Judgment. For Wāṣil, the status of a grave sinner should be regarded as in – between or inconclusive neither as a Muslim, nor as a *kāfir*. The position of Wāṣil marked the beginning of Mu'tazilites' advent.²¹

Further, the position of Wāṣil forced them to start struggling against Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān (d. 745) and his followers, who subscribed to *jabr*, or strict predestination. Thus, Jahm repudiated categorically the concept of 'created power', or human free-will to carry out their actions, and attributed it in every form to God. According to him, God, could not be spoken of in any terms in which the creature is spoken of, such as doing, creating, being capable, causing life or death; such speech would amount to anthropomorphism (*tashbih*). Actions, he went on to argue, were attributed to humans figuratively, in the same way that they were attributed to inanimate objects. Moreover, we can see that the conflict between Jahm and Wāṣil tended to sharpen the point of the controversy, splitting the theological ranks into two diametrically opposed camps, the advocates of free will or *qadar* and the advocates of predestination or *jabr*. Almost all later theological developments took the form of variations on these two antithetical positions.

This further development, tends to rationalize the way in which individuals, as free agents, could carry out their actions effectively, some Mu'tazilite theologians, following the lead of Abū al-Hudhayl (d. 841), head of the School of Baṣrah, resorted to a philosophical notion called the causal nexus between the individual as the agent and the freely chosen action as the effect. However, they distinguished between those actions of which the individual knows the modality and those whose modality is not known. The individual, according to this Mu'tazilite group, is rightly designated as the author of the first type of actions, but not the second, God is the real author.

Apart from the above philosophical arguments, another theory was advanced by Ibrahim Naẓẓām (846 A.D), the theory of nature (*tabī'ah*), according to which actions, like all natural occurrences, were forms of motion, and every such motion or occurrence was caused by God through a 'necessity of nature'. For God, according to al-Naẓẓām (846 A.D), has created all things initially together, and imparted to them certain specific powers or faculties, latent in other powers or faculties until such time as they are ready to become manifested in human actions or physical occurrences. This theory of latency and manifestation (*zuhūr wa kumūn*) appears to have been a subtle way of safeguarding the double notion of human freedom and

¹⁹ W. M. Watt, Op. Cit., PP. 27-29.

²⁰ M. Fakhry, Op. Cit., PP. 14-15.

²¹ Ibid. P. 15.

natural efficacy without infringing God's prerogative as the ultimate or primary Agent in the universe.

However, another group under the name Ash'arite came into emergence and challenged Mu'tazilites on their claims. The core founder of Ash'arite school was Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (AH 324). When the Mu'tazilites emphasized God's unity and justice, and strongly advocated the use of reason in the interpretation of *Qur'ānic* doctrines. The Ash'arites on the other hand emphasized God's omnipotence, and in general, stood at the middle ground between Mu'tazilite rationalism and staunchly traditionalist theologico-juristic schools such as the Hanbalites and Zāhirites, who generally rejected the use of reason and interpretation in favour of the literal truth of the *Qur'ān* and the sayings of Prophet (p.b.u.h).²² Regarding political and doctrinal reasons, Ash'arī school eventually outshined its opponent and subsequently became the most influential Islamic theological school.²³

5. AL-GHAZĀLĪ AND *KALĀM*

5. 1. Al-Ghazālī (1058-1111)

Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī al-Ṭūsī was born around (1058 A.D.). He was born in Ṭūs, near Mashhad (Meshed), Persia (now Iran). Having gained an excellent reputation as a scholar, in 1091 al-Ghazālī was appointed by Niẓām al-Mulk vizier to the Seljuk sultan, to teach at Niẓāmiyya University in Baghdād. In 1095, following a personal crisis of faith, he relinquished his position, left his family and became an ascetic. Al-Ghazālī, later, became critic of philosophy and charged it for two things: 1-It is in contrast with its principles since it cannot establish its conclusions based on its premises, and 2- It is irreconcilable with religion since it does not leave room for it.²⁴ He wrote many books on theology and philosophy among which there are *Maqāṣid al-falāsifah* (The Intentions of Philosophers) in which he gives a detailed account on Peripatetic philosophers, and later on the book was followed by *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (The incoherence of philosophers) in which he critiqued twenty of their most problematic claims.²⁵ Apart from these two books, he also wrote many books in which he contributed greatly to the development of Islamic philosophy and theology namely, *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Revival of the religious sciences) *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (The deliverance from error) and others.

5. 2. Al-Ghazālī's encounter with Philosophy

Before focusing on al-Ghazālī's encounter with *kalām*, it is important to outline his encounter with philosophy and his deliverance from it. However, al-Ghazālī resorted to engage in philosophy as a result of his encounter with traditional theologians in both Nishapur and at the court of Niẓām al-mulk, and when he realized that they could not satisfy his needs rationally, he passed his quests to philosophy.²⁶ Even though al-Ghazālī's resort to study philosophy came about due to his own intellectual problems, he was, at the same time, aware that theology was in a weak position to solve his philosophical problems. For over two

²² P. S. Groff, Op. Cit. P. 206.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ O. Leaman, Op. Cit. P.7.

²⁵ P. S. Groff, Islamic Philosophy A-Z, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007), P. 45.

²⁶ W. M. Watt, Op. Cit., P. 87.

hundred years the religious scholars were trying to make attacks on philosophy but without a proper understanding of its problem, and in that way, they suffered disdain from philosophers.²⁷ After spending less than two years reading and comprehending philosophy, he came up with a very vast knowledge in it. He, later on, spent another one year reckoning and pondering upon what he studied in philosophy, then he wrote excellent book entitled as *Maqāṣid al-falāsifah* (the intentions of philosophers), in which he offered a clear exposition of philosophers. This book was followed by another book, namely, *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* (Inconsistency of the philosophers) in which he critiqued twenty of their problematic claims. According to him, there are three philosophical theses which amount to unbelief, (*kufr*) and they are: (1) the assertion of the pre-eternity of the world, (2) the claim that God knows the temporal entities and events of this world only as universals and not as particulars, and (3) the denial of bodily resurrection.²⁸

However, al-Ghazālī's study of philosophy had a fantastic result, among the positive results was that, disciplines associated with philosophy and largely regarded as neutral with regard to Islamic doctrine, al-Ghazālī made it possible for at least the more rationally – minded theologians to accept much of their content. This included the metaphysical conceptions. As a result of all this the later rational Muslim theologians tend to give their theology much of philosophical basis.²⁹ It should be noted that Al-Ghazālī's critique of philosophy did not mean that he put an end to philosophy, but rather, he encouraged *Sunnī* theologians to become more philosophically minded, and indeed, one can find that there was the incorporation of philosophical conceptions and methods into *kalām*, especially by Ash'arites.³⁰

6. AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S CRITIQUE OF *KALĀM*

Confusing the discipline of theology with that of philosophy, adopting Greek philosophy and Christian theology into Islam and vague arguments of some theological groups like Mu'tazilites, are all the reasons why al-Ghazālī condemned both philosophy and theology. In the first place, theologians did not use rational argument in their discussions. The only thing that forced them to employ it – as ibn Khaldūn argues- was the discussion of heretics who opposed the early Muslim articles of faith with speculative innovations. Thus, they had to repudiate these heretics with the same kind of arguments. This phenomenon called for using speculative arguments and checking on the early Muslim articles of faith with these arguments.³¹

However, Al-Gazālī's critique of philosophy in general, and the schools of *kalĒm* in particular have been the focal point and the main subject of discussion amongst the scholars, to the extent that, ibn Khaldūn says: "Those who want to inject a refutation of the philosophers into their dogmatic beliefs must use the books of al-Gazālī and the Imām ibn al-Khaṭīb...."³²

²⁷ Ibid. P.89.

²⁸ P. S. Groff, Op. Cit., P. 45.

²⁹ W. M. Watt. Op. Cit., P. 90.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 91.

³¹ Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, Op. Cit., Vol. 3. P. 155.

³² Ibn Khaldūn, Op. Cit., P. 54

It has to be understood that, al-Ghazālī's critique was not to all kinds of *kalām* in Islam because, the main aim of *kalām* is the protection of the traditional Islamic belief rooted in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* against innovators and their innovations,³³ but rather, the *kalām* which al-Ghazālī rejected was that which deviated from the right path like that of Mu'tazilites.

This claim can be substantiated with two arguments: (1) although al-Ghazālī refuted *kalām* in his book *ihyā' ulūm al-dīn* (Revival of the religious sciences) and others, he also pointed out that sometimes seeking the knowledge of *kalām* can be *farḍ kifāyah*,³⁴ and also claims that there is benefit and harm in it,³⁵ and (2), his enormous advocate of Ash'arite *kalām* and its permeation of his major works.³⁶ These two reasons can demonstrate the kind of *kalām* which al-Ghazālī rejected and discouraged Muslims from participating in, even though there are some issues raised by him regarding the Ash'arite school of *kalām*.³⁷

However, underlying al-Ghazālī's criticisms of *kalām* is a primary thesis, namely that the main function of *kalām* is the protection of the traditional Islamic belief rooted in the *Qur'ān* and guided by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) against any vague argument.³⁸ *Kalām* to al-Ghazālī is not an end in itself and it is error to think that, the mere engagement in it constitutes the experientially religious or that it is always needed for attaining salvation in the Day of Judgment.³⁹ Its role is like that of arms guards protecting the pilgrims' caravan against the bedouin marauders. It is needed but only as a means to an end.⁴⁰ Again, is like medicine, which a time is certainly needed. But when not needed, or when needed but not accurately used it can be harmful.⁴¹ As such the common believers whose faith consists largely in the literal, uncritical acceptance of religious teaching and who are incapable of understanding *kalām* arguments must not be exposed to them. It should be used in a gentle manner only to the few: those sincerely troubled by the problematic in religion and who are capable of understanding *kalām* argument- this to restore them their faith.⁴²

Al-Ghazālī argues that, to engage in *kalām* is *farḍ kifāyah*, like medicine is only incumbent on some not all.⁴³ Hence every region should have a theologian who will defend its faith.⁴⁴ Considering the criticisms of al-Ghazālī, it will be clear that the *mutakallim* that he bears in mind is not the one belongs to the deviated group who are not on the right path, but rather, he means those *mutakallimūn* from *ahl al-sunnah* group to which al-Ghazālī himself belongs.

In al-Ghazālī's further critique to *kalām*, he wrote his well Known book *al-munqidh min al-ḍalāl* in which he exposed the defects of *mutakallimūn*, but there is no clear indication that

³³ Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazālī and Ash'arism Revisited" in *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, Edited by I. R. Netton (New York: Routledge, 2007), P. 258.

³⁴ Al-Ghazālī, *ihyā' ulūm al-dīn*, (Beyrūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), Vol. 1, P22.

³⁵ Ibid. P. 91.

³⁶ I. R. Netton, Op. Cit., P. 250.

³⁷ For example, Al-Ghazālī, was unsatisfied with his Ash'arite predecessors' occasionalism. For more detail on the issues raised by al-Ghazālī regarding the *kalām* of Ash'arite school and his conflict with the school see his books *Fayṣal al-Tafriqah* and *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*.

³⁸ M. E. Marmur, *Islamic philosophy and Theology*, Op. Cit., P. 258.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, P. 23.

⁴¹ Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtisād fī al-i'tiqād*, (Beyrūt: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 2004), P. 9.

⁴² Ibid. P. 11.

⁴³ Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, Op. Cit. Vol. P. 23.

⁴⁴ Ibid. P. 14.

he abandoned Ash'arite school. Watt argued that, a few days before al-Ghazālī's death he completed a short work in which he opined that it was wrong to expose ordinary people to the subtleties of *kalām*, and that from this point it seems certain that al-Ghazālī remained the advocator of ash'arī school of *kalām* until the end of his life even though he used philosophical grounds and arguments to defend the Ash'arī school.⁴⁵

7. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, in the above discussion we found that recurring debates among theologians led to the emergence of different groups of theology in the Islamic community. Some theologians interpreted the God's attributes such as hearing and seeing metaphorically, so as, to avoid comparing God to created beings. Another controversial theological debate focused on the issue of Free Will and Predestination. One group of Muslim theologians maintained that because God is just, he creates only good and therefore only humans can create evil. The other group argued God's punishment of humans would be unjust because He Himself created their evil deeds. However, this particular view was rejected by other Muslim theologians on the grounds that it limits the scope of God's creation. Further, it is also found that, although Al-Ghazālī made a critique against philosophy he did not mean that he put an end to it, but rather he encouraged *Sunnī* theologians to become more philosophically minded, and that the philosophy he criticized was that which deviated from the right direction. Another important thing discussed in this research was Al-Ghazālī's critique of *kalām*. It is argued that the *kalām* which he criticized was that which deviated from the right direction, not the right one.

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