THE POLITICS OF THE MIHNA UNDER AL-MA'AMIN AND HIS SUCCESSORS

by

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TO ṢAPITTA

AND OUR SON OSA'A
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This thesis deals with the interaction of religion and politics in early Islam. It aims at an understanding of the implications of the unique phenomenon of Islam as a political religion. The early 'Abbasid period is chosen as the area for study for two good reasons. First because it represents the zenith of Islamic civilization when the Islamic empire reached its prime and the political and religious institutions received their final formulation as fully grown entities. Secondly because it witnessed the first and most serious inquisition in the whole history of Islam which readily furnishes the example of friction between these two institutions and thus helps give us insight into the nature of the problems at issue.

The first section deals with the juristic and political implications of the inquisition (Mi'na), which unfold in the following two sections as characteristics of the instability created by the 'Abbasid revolution.

To begin with the Mi'na was envisaged as an attempt to curb the independent juristic and semi political influence of the religious institutions. Behind this, however, lay the deeper implication of an alleged advent of secularism of non-arab and non-Muslim forces on the expense of Sunnism or the Arab tradition. The labelling of members of the religious institutions (largely Ḥanafites) who endorsed the official policy of the Mi'na Jahmites was based on the analogy between the implications of the inquisition
and the levelling movement of al-Jahm b. Ṣafwān in Khurāsān a century earlier which aimed at benefiting underprivileged Arab settlers, the Mawali and non-Muslims of the eastern provinces in general.

An examination of the structure of politics in early 'Abbasid period would show that a new aristocracy of mixed races and with different religions and cultural traditions was replacing the traditional Arab-Iranian aristocracy. Thus the alleged threat to the religion of Islam envisaged by Ahl al-Ḥadīth as posed by the advent of the "despicable" Mawāli unfolds as a reaction of the traditional aristocracy as the embodiment of Sunnism or the Arab tradition against the wind of change.

The compromise largely pioneered by the Waqīfiyya and the Lafiyya namely Shafi‘ites of the reign of al-Mutawakkil and Ash‘arites of the 4th/10th century retained a diluted form of Sunnism as the basis of the community, but the division between religion and politics was clearly underlined.
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Imāma</td>
<td>Al-Imāma wa s-Siyāsah attributed to Ibn Qutayba.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athīr</td>
<td>Al-Kāmil fi Tārīkh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EI¹</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Islam (first edition).</td>
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<td>EI²</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Islam (the new edition).</td>
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<td>Fīṣal</td>
<td>K. al-Fīṣal fi 1-Mīlal wa-Nīḥal by Ibn Ḥazm.</td>
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<td>Ḥīlya</td>
<td>Ḥīlyat al-Awliya</td>
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<td>IC</td>
<td>Islamic Culture</td>
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<td>Intiṣār</td>
<td>Kitāb al-Intiṣār</td>
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<td>Jahshayārī</td>
<td>Kitāb al-Wuzara' wa l-Kuttāb.</td>
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<td>Jawāhir</td>
<td>Al-Jawāhir al-Muṣliyāh.</td>
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<td>J.N.E.S.</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>Kht.</td>
<td>Al-Khaṭīb, Tārīkh Baghdād.</td>
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<td>Kindi</td>
<td>Al-Kindi, Kitāb al-Wulāt wa Kitāb al-Qudāt</td>
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<td>Manāqib</td>
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<td>Maq.</td>
<td>Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn.</td>
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<td>Mawāqif</td>
<td>Al-Ijī, Kitāb al-Mawāqif.</td>
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<td>Miḥ</td>
<td>Dhikr Miḥnat al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.</td>
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<td>Milal</td>
<td>Al-Shqīrastānī, Kitāb al-Mīlal wa-Nīḥal.</td>
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<td>MW</td>
<td>Muslim World.</td>
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<td>Nujūm</td>
<td>An-Nujūm az-zāhirah fi Mukūt Miṣr wa 1-Qāhirah.</td>
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<td>Sahm</td>
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<td>Shadharāt</td>
<td>Shadharāt adh-Dhahab fi Akhbār man dhabab.</td>
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<td>SI</td>
<td>Studia Islamica</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>Tab.</td>
<td>Tārīkh ar-Rusul wa l-Mulūk</td>
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<td>Tabšīr</td>
<td>At-Tabšīr fid-Dīn.</td>
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<td>Tanbīh</td>
<td>Malāṭī, at-Tanbīh wa r-Radd ‘ala Ahl al-Ahwā‘ wa l-Bida‘.</td>
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<td>Tarj</td>
<td>Tarjumāt al-Imām ʿĀmmad b. Ḥanbāl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.E.I.</td>
<td>Revue des études Islamiques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yaʿla</td>
<td>Abu Yaʿla, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZDMG</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.</td>
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CHAPTER 1

THE MIBNA UNDER AL-MA'‘MUN

It is generally believed that the Caliph al-Ma'‘mūn initiated the inquisition known as the Mībna of khalq al-Qur‘ān in the year 218/833; it is now, however, certain that it started sometime before this date. We now know that al-Ma'‘mūn ordered two inquisitions: the first in the year 212/827 and the second and widely reported one in the year 218/833. It is not clear whether there had been some sort of inquisition before the year 212/827. All that can be said in this respect with certainty is that at the time of the arrival of al-Ma‘mūn in Baghdad in 204/819 the relationship between him and some of the ulema particularly from amongst Ahl al-‘Hadith was far from easy.¹ It is again not certain whether there were continuous persecutions in the period between the inquisition of 212/827 and that of 218/833; but a few incidents of sporadic cases of persecution can be found.²

The Inquisition of the Year 212/827

In the year 211/826 al-Ma‘mūn ordered a public crier to announce in the streets of Baghdad that he who mentions Mu‘āwiya with reverence or holds him superior to any of the companions of Muhammad...
the Prophet puts his life at peril. Abu l-Majāṣin's comment on this is that al-Ṭa'mūn posed as an extreme Shi'ite but did not at this stage hold the Shaykhayn Abu Bakr and 'Umar in bad favour but accepted and believed in their imamate. However, a year later in 212/627 he is said to have proclaimed the preference of 'Ali to Abu Bakr and 'Umar and to have asserted that 'Ali was the best of men after the Prophet. The policy which was enforced in Rabi' of the same year was to declare taqūl of 'Ali and curse Mu'āwiya from the pulpit during the khtagba. In this year too he declared that the Qur'an was created. The sources say the people were dejected by his move but kept silent. Some of the ulema were summoned to the court and punished, some were imprisoned and others were exiled. The sources are quiet about those persecuted at the court, but some information exists with regard to the Miḥna in Kufa and Basra. Letters seem to have been sent from the court at Baghdad to governors in the provincial cities to examine the ulema on the nature of the Qur'an and tashbīh. The main concern seems to have been with jurists who were serving in the judiciary or functions associated with it.

3. Tab., ii, 1098; Dhababi, 'Ibar, i, 359; cp. Nujūm, ii, 201.
4. Nujūm, ii, 203; Tab., ii, 1099; Atḥīr, vi, 288.
5. Nujūm, ii, 203; Dhababi, 'Ibar, i, 361.
6. The inquisition in Basra is not documented but we know that 'Ali al-Ṭadīnī (see Rht, xi, 458f) and al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-'Anbari had been subjected to an inquisition on the nature of the Qur'an in Basra before the year 218/633 and that al-'Abbas was flogged. see Atḥīr, i.
The first from amongst the Kufite ulema to get wind of the coming of the Miḥna to Kufa was ʿAbd allah b. Yunus (d. 227/841). He told Abu Bakr b. Abi Shayba to break the news to Abu Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (d. 219/834). Here we get a first glimpse of the determination to resist in Abu Nuʿaym’s comment that “it was going to be beating with the whips.”

The letter from al-Maʿmūn was read to a big assembly of jurists and traditionists in the cathedral mosque. The following are some of the names of those who were summoned by the governor to explain their position on the nature of the Qurʾān and tashbīḥ: ʿAbd allah b. Yunus, Abu Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Ismāʿīl b. Ṣāmīd b. Abī Ḥanīfa (d. 212/827), and Abu Ghassān Malik b. Ismāʿīl (d. 219/834). The first to be interviewed was Ismāʿīl b. Ṣāmīd b. Abī Ḥanīfa who readily confessed the creation of the Qurʾān. In expectation of co-operation Abu Nuʿaym who was summoned after him was told that Ismāʿīl professed the createdness of the Qurʾān but Abu Nuʿaym is said to have lost his temper and said: “By God I still accuse his grandfather of zandaqa. I was told by Yunus b. Bakayr that his grandfather held that the ṣamārat could be performed by bottles (al-qawārīr) instead of gravel.”

It seems that Abu Nuʿaym refused to confess the createdness of the Qurʾān and to have developed his anti-ṣanafīte argument later as a consequence of the outcome of the Miḥna. He is widely reported to have held that the Qurʾān was uncreated, and to have argued that he had witnessed in

7. Khct., xii, 349.
8. Khct., xii, 349.
Kufa over 300 (sometimes the figure 700 or more is given) Shaykhs from the generation of al-A‘mash and after who held that the Qur‘ān was the uncreated word of God. He is said to have pulled his garment’s button off and said while casting it away: "My neck is as cheap for me to lose as this." 9

It is not clear what punishment was inflicted upon Abu Nu‘aym and those who resisted the official policy in Kufa. It is clear, however, that the Miḥma in Kufa made the traditionists close their ranks as witnessed in the patching up of quarrels between Abu Nu‘aym and Ahmād b. Yunus and their circle including Abu Bakr b. ‘Ayyāsh. Their strength was reflected in the huge gathering of jurists and traditionists in the cathedral mosque to listen to the letter from al-Ma‘mūn. Those around Abu Nu‘aym and Ahmād b. Yunus give the impression that the Miḥma in Kufa was met with strong resistance. Ahmād b. Yunus is said to have told his disciples not to pray behind those who profess the createdness of the Qur‘ān as he believed them to be idolaters. 10 The position of Ahmād b. Yunus and that of Abu Nu‘aym indicate the division of the ulema over the nature of the Qur‘ān. Abu Nu‘aym gives the impression that his quarrel was with Hanafites. He accused Isma‘īl b. ʿUmmād b. Abi Ṣanīfa of saying in the court of al-Ma‘mūn: "The Qur‘ān is created, this is my religion, the religion of my father and my grandfather." 11 This clearly reflects the bitterness among the

9. Kht., xii, 349; Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb, viii, 274.
10. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, i, 362.
ulema caused by the division during the Miḥna. As a matter of fact Ismā'īl was highly praised as capable judge. 12 He served as qādī in the eastern part of Baghdad under the Caliph al-Amīn in 194/609, then in Raqqah and finally in Baṣra in 210/625 for a period of one year. His deposition in 211/626 on the eve of the inquisition could be interpreted as a sign of disfavour and hence explains why he was summoned for inquisition in 212/627. It could be inferred from this that he had not held the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān before his inquisition in 212/627 otherwise his views on the nature of the Qurʾān would not have been questioned.

The inquisition of ‘Affān b. Muslim

Some time between 215/830 and 218/833 ‘Affān b. Muslim (d. 220/835) a traditionist from Baṣra who lived in Baghdad was summoned for inquisition by the governor of Baghdad. 13 A letter ordering his inquisition was sent by al-Muʿmūn who was then in Raqqah to the governor of Baghdad. Hanbal b. Ishaq is quoted in Khatīb as an eye witness of a meeting between ‘Affān, Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Maʿīn when the latter asked ‘Affān to describe to them what went between him and the governor. ‘Affān proudly boasted: "O Abu Zakariyya I have not blackened the faces of your friends" meaning he did not let Ahl al-Ḥadīth down as he refused to

13. For the inquisition of ‘Affān see Kht., xii, 269f.; Miḥ., 25; Dhahabi, Tadhkira, i, 345.
say the Qur'ān was created.\textsuperscript{14} The story goes that the governor summoned 'Affān and read to him the letter from al-Ma'mūn in which he says: "Ask 'Affān to confess the createdness of the Qur'ān and if he does so let him carry on with his tasks but if he refuses suspend his salary."\textsuperscript{15} 'Affān is said to have read: ("Say: He is God, One God, the everlasting refuge who has not begotten, and has not been begotten and equal to Him is not any one." \textsuperscript{112}); and asked the governor: "Is this created?" The governor pointed out to him the gravity of the consequences of his opposition threatening that payment made to him by the Caliph and himself would be withheld. In defiance 'Affān quoted the qur'ānic verse: God provide thee with a better and lasting sustenance.

'Affān used to receive 1,000 dirhams a month, 500 from the central treasury and the other 500 from the governor of Baghdad. When his family (said to have consisted of 40 dependents) heard the news of his sacking they blamed him for their misery. The story goes that one night an oil trader knocked at 'Affān's door and deposited 1,000 dirhams saying "Ya Abu 'Uthman may God strengthen you and preserve the religion, this sum is for you every month."\textsuperscript{16}

'Affān held posts under gādīa as superintendent of masā'il. He served in Basra under the controversial Judge Mu'ādh b. Mu'ādh (d. 196/811) and later in Baghdad. He was generally known as a

\textsuperscript{14} Kht., xii, 271.
\textsuperscript{15} Kht., xii, 271.
\textsuperscript{16} Kht., xii, 272.
trustworthy traditionist but was blamed for charging fees for the
traditions he taught. Ahmad b. Ǧanbal commenting on the
inquisition of ‘Affān and Abu Nu‘aym said: “We used to hear about
their affair what God knows what, but they did for God what nobody
else did.” Ibn Ǧanbal is referring here to the criticism against
‘Affān and Abu Nu‘aym that they charge fees for their teaching.

**Shī‘ism among traditionists**

It is interesting that Abu Nu‘aym was accused of Shī‘ism. He moved
in ‘Alid circles and transmitted traditions about ‘Alids. When he
died an ‘Alid prayed for him, an undertaking which offended the
governor of Baṣra at the time who was also the official leader of
prayers. He blamed Abu Nu‘aym’s family and again offered the
prayer for the deceased. When Abu Nu‘aym visited Baghdad before
his inquisition much concern was shown about his Shī‘ite tendency.
In his circle of Ḥadīths he was once asked by a Khurāsānite student
whether he was a Shī‘ite. His son came home one day weeping and
complained that people rebuke him for his father’s Shī‘ite tendency.
Abu Nu‘aym admitted his veneration for ‘Alī but made it clear that
he was a moderate by his remark: “The angels never recorded against
me that I have cursed Mu‘awiya.” When asked if this could be
reported as his position on this issue he readily gave permission.
In this connection Abu Ghassān too is said to have been a Shī‘ite

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17. *Kht.*, xii, 348-9; *Tabdhīb at-Tabdhīb*, viii, 274.
18. art. Abu Nu‘aym *EL*.
but there is no information about his activity in this respect.  

The conclusion so far is that the inquisition of 212/827 was limited in scale, but is significant in that it was conducted in Kufa and Basra. Some ulema are said to have been imprisoned or exiled but I have not been able to find names. The interesting feature of the inquisition in Kufa is the regrouping among the ulema and the attitude at the time towards Shi'ism.

The regrouping of the ulema was witnessed in the emergence of those traditionalists and jurists who resisted as opposed to those from amongst them who professed the official dogma. It is interesting to note that the latter group included Hanafites who had connections with the judiciary among whom was the grandson of Abu Janifa. The attitude towards Shi'ism is not clear but it appears from the apologetic attitude of Abu Mu'aym that the main opposition was against the preference of ‘Ali to the Shaykhayn and the cursing of Mu‘awiyya. Nevertheless Abu Mu‘aym’s Shi‘ism and that of Abu Ghassan seem to have met with suspension in Baghdad. Ibn al-Athir gives the impression that Abu Mu‘aym led an organised party of Shi‘ites when he describes him as a Shi‘ite with followers known as the Dukayniyya. On the whole the account on the inquisition of 212/827 shows that the questions at issue were not purely religious or juristic but political as well.

22. Kht., xii, 351.
23. Athir, vi, 314.
The 218/833 Inquisition in Egypt

The Caliph al-Ma'mūn left Baghdad to Syria in 215/830. Troubles in Egypt took him there in Muharram 5, 217/832. During most of the 47 to 49 days he spent in Egypt he was occupied in campaigns against Arab and Copt rebels. Before leaving Egypt to return to Syria he is said to have made out a list of Egyptian jurists and traditionists and left orders to Kaydur the then governor of the province to arrest and send to him in Syria to subject them to the inquisition on the nature of the Qur'ān. Nothing further is said by the sources about the outcome of this arrangement. Abu-'l-Maṣāsin says that Kaydur did not send them to Syria because of the sudden death of al-Ma'mūn. Al-Ḥarith b. Miskīn (d. 250/864) who seems to have been included in this list was sent to Baghdad about this time and imprisoned there. The explanation seems to be that al-Ma'mūn decided that they should first undergo a preliminary inquisition in Egypt under the new judge Harūn b. 'Abd-ALLah whom he himself appointed there in 217/832. Thus he wrote to his brother Abu Iṣḥāq (al-Mu'taṣim) the then viceroy of Egypt to write to his client in Egypt to conduct the inquisition.

Al-Mu'taṣim wrote two letters, one to the governor Kaydur dated 20 Jumada I 218/833 and the other to the judge Harūn b.

‘Abd allah. A copy of his letter to the governor is preserved in al-Kindi’s Governors and Judges of Egypt. In this letter he informs the governor of the Caliph’s orders to him to write to the judges in his provinces for the citation of witnesses. The same test was to be applied to traditionists and jurists who were frequented by people for juristic consultations or any kind of guidance. Al-Ma’mūn’s letter made it clear that judges and witnesses who deny the createdness of the Qurʾān and liken God to his creation were to be barred from service in the judiciary. Traditionists and jurists who oppose the official policy were to be forbidden to teach traditions or perform in public or in private any activity of the sort. On the other hand those who profess the createdness of the Qurʾān and deny tashbīh were to be encouraged and rewarded. Mu’tasim then gave his own orders.

"I feel that you should test the judge there so that his position (Madhhabahu) regarding the Qurʾān and tashbīh should be known to others. Then you should ask him to examine witnesses who testify in his court and that only those who confess its createdness should be allowed to give evidence in courts. If the Judge denies that the Qurʾān is created make him resign his post. You should also do what you were told with regard to Ahl al-Hadīth and those who are consulted or frequented by people for juristic purposes. I have written a similar letter to the judge in your province, so do what is expected from you with regard to the execution of this policy. Better still if you set up a body of dignitaries and notable personalities in your province who could help you to see to it that your judge attends to this policy. You should keep me informed of the outcome so that I can convey it to the Caliph."

27. Kindi, 447.
Kaydur summoned the judge Harūn b. 'Abd-allah and explained the position to him and the latter readily complied. Harūn was a follower of the Međenian school of Malik b. Anas. He had an interest in literature and composed poetry. Both his parents were descended from the family of 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. 'Awi. He served as judge for al-Ma'mūn in Muṣayṣa, Raqqā, and Baghdad. He was then transferred to Egypt by al-Ma'mūn in Ramadān 217/832. Egypt had been without a judge since 214/829 when al-Mu'taṣım sacked the then judge Ṣa b. al-Munkādir who had been appointed by 'Abd-allah b. Ṭāhir the former viceroy of Egypt.

Harūn applied the test to semi-official witnesses who were known to the court, and many of them complied. The policy, however, demanded that witnesses who appear during current sittings of the court should be subjected to the test and only approved as witnesses when they confess the official doctrine. It is reported that when two witnesses came to his court Harūn first asked them about the Qur'ān and only approved them as witnesses when they confess its createdness. There seem to have been cases when witnesses denied that the Qur'ān was created and were rejected as witnesses.

The Inquisition in Syria

With regard to the inquisition in Syria al-Mu'tasim then in charge of the armed forces stationed in Syria wrote two letters: the first to the governor of Damascus Ishaq b. Yahya b. Mu'adh b. Muslim al-Khatli and the other to Muhammed b. Yahya b. Samza the commander of the forces stationed in Syria. A copy of the letter to the latter dated Tuesday 24th of Jumada I, 218/17th June 833 is preserved in Ibn 'Asakir's Tarikh Dimashq. It opens with the title: "From Abu Ishaq the son of the commander of the faithful ar-Rashid to Muhammed b. Yahya b. Hamza". In it al-Mu'tasim tells him about his letter to Ishaq b. Yahya in which he informed him of Al-Ma'mun's orders regarding the inquisition in Damascus.

The content of the letter is briefly as follows. Judges in provinces under al-Mu'tasim were to be cited on the nature of the Qur'an and only confirmed in their posts if they confess the official dogma. They were then to be asked to test witnesses who appear before them so that only those who profess the createdness of the Qur'an were to be allowed to testify in courts. If any of the judges denied that the Qur'an was created he was to be forced to quit his post. Such cases were to be reported to the Caliph directly with full explanation of the position of the Judge.

Al-Ma'mun was at the time in Damascus. He arrived there from Egypt in Safar 217/832. It seems that he himself took charge

33. Tahdhib Tarikh Ibn 'Asakir, 11, 455.
34. Ibid.
of the inquisition there. Yaʿqūbī says: "al-Ḥaʾidini examined the people of Damascus on justice and God's unity and wrote to ʿIrāq and other provinces ordering that certain ulema should be sent to him to examine on the nature of the Qurʾān."35

The most distinguished figure among the Syrian doctors who were subjected to the inquisition was the celebrated Abu Mushir ʿAbd al-ʿAla b. Mushir (d. 218/833). He seems to have been sent from Damascus to Raqqā where its governor ʿAbd allah b. Harūn subjected him to rigorous examination on the nature of the Qurʾān but he refused to confess its createdness. He was then interviewed by ʿAlīnūn himself in Raqqā. Al-Ḥaʾidini threatened to imprison him in the remotest corners of the empire. At one stage he accused him of intending to work for the cause of as-Sufyanī (sc. the Umayyad equivalent of the Mahdi), and eventually threatened him with execution.36 Reports say that when Abu Mushir saw the sword and the mat (ʿārī') he gave in meaning confessed the createdness of the Qurʾān. He was then spared his life but al-Ḥaʾidini said to him: "Had you confessed before you were subjected to the sword I should have set you free and let you go back to your home and family but now the moment you leave this place you will say I confessed under fear of death".37 He then gave orders that he should be taken to Baghdad and imprisoned there. He was taken to Baghdad in Rabīʿ II, 218/May 833 and instructions

37. Kht., xi, 72.
went out to Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm the governor of Baghdad to test him and make his confession public. It seems that Abu Mushir again resisted and was imprisoned. He soon died in prison in Rajab of the same year. When his body was taken out to the burial ground at Bāb at-tīnm many Baghdadis flocked to see him buried. The conclusion here is that al-Ma'mūn’s personal concern and that of his senior officials in the inquisition in Egypt and Syria indicate its seriousness for the two regions. His campaigns in Egypt and the part he personally played in the inquisition in Syria where reference to as-Sufyanī was made highlight his fears of the political opposition of the religious institutions in these troubled areas.

The Inquisition in Baghdad

The inquisition in the capital Baghdad was by far the most important and as such received al-Ma'mūn’s utmost attention. It appears from the reports on the outcome of the governor’s preliminary interview of jurists and traditionists and al-Ma'mūn’s comment on it that some of the Baghdad doctors mentioned had been interviewed by al-Ma'mūn sometime before he finally left Baghdad in 215/830. They might have been interviewed during the inquisition of 212/827 or sometime between the year 212/827 and 215/830 before he left on his campaign to Asia Minor. There is also the possibility that some of them might have been sent out to the Caliph in Asia Minor in the period between 215/830 and 218/833. 38

38. This seems to have been the case of al-Jasan b. as-Sabbab who was sent to the caliph al-Ma’mūn in Badandun where he was entrusted to Ashinās but released when Ma’mūn died shortly after. See n. 2 above.
The first letter sent by al-Ma'mūn to the governor of Baghdad was dated Rabi' I, 218/833. In this letter we for the first time come across theological argument in support of the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān. Since this doctrinal issue is dealt with elsewhere in this dissertation I shall pass on to outline the main features of the inquisition itself.

The first letter from al-Ma'mūn included orders to the governor to summon judges of Baghdad and adjacent regions administered from the capital to test them on the nature of the Qur'ān (khalq al-Qur'ān) and its production in time (wa ḥudūthīhi). The governor was to explain to them that the Caliph intended not to enlist the service of those whose religious sincerity and faith in God's unity cannot be trusted. If they confess the createdness of the Qur'ān the governor was to ask them to test witnesses who appear in their courts and to reject the testimony of any who does not confess the createdness of the Qur'ān and its production in time. The Caliph was to be informed of the outcome of the inquisition and the governor was asked to supervise the inquisition of witnesses by the judges in order to ensure the execution of the official policy as planned "so as not to have legal cases decided upon except on the testimony of those knowledgeable in true religion and sincere in their belief in God's unity".

This letter was followed by a summons of seven Baghdadī traditionists to Raqqā where they were tested by al-Ma'mūn himself

39. Tab., iii, 1112; Cp. Nujūm, ii, 218 where this letter is confused with the one sent to Egypt. Also Patton, A.b.H., 65f.
40. Tab., iii, 1116.
on the nature of the Qurʾān. They were: Muḥammad b. Saʿd the secretary of al-Wāqidi (d. 230/844), Abu Muslim ʿAbd ar-Raḥman b. Yunus the amanuensis of Yazīd b. Harūn (d. 246/860). Yahya b. MaʿĪn (d. 233/847), Ismāʿīl b. Dāʿūd, Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbī Masʿūd, ʿAbd b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraq (d. 246/860), and Abu Khaythama Zuhayr b. Ṣarb (d. 234/848). All seven gave in under pressure and were sent to Baghdad where their confession was made public to an assembly of leading jurists and traditionists. These seven traditionists were certainly distinguished scholars in and outside Baghdad but surely not first class. They all belong to the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. Some like ʿAbd ar-Raḥman b. Yunus, and Muḥammad b. Saʿd were secretaries to the famous traditionists Yazīd b. Harūn and al-Waqīdī respectively. They seem to have been carefully picked for inquisition as a test of the strength of the opposition. ʿAbd b. Ḥanbal who was certainly more popular and had close contact with Arab and other influential circles in Baghdad was said to have been dropped from the list. The proposition that the success or the failure of the inquisition depended upon the answers they gave was well made by ʿAbd b. Ḥanbal who said: "Had they shown courage and resisted ... this matter would have ended and the man (sc. al-Maʾmūn) would not have dared to do them harm;
but when they gave in and as they were the dignitaries of the city he dared to lay his hand on others as well."  

Much debate around their confession seems to have followed. As a result of this debate ill feeling grew among traditionists. Some of those who confessed like Yabya b. Ma‘în and Zuhayr b. Harb experienced a tormenting feeling of guilt. Zuhayr is said to have said to a student of his who went to study under him when he returned from Raqqa after his inquisition: "Ya Aba ‘All do you write from those who are apostate?" The student is said to have conciliated him by justifying his confession on basis of taqiyya. Yabya b. Ma‘în who is said to have used this justification argued: "We have confessed for our fear of the sword." A counter argument, however, soon developed. This asserted that taqiyya applies only in case of actual physical danger like torture, imprisonment or the death sentence. None of these conditions existed for any of the seven traditionists. What made this argument conscience biting was the fact that it was led by Ahmad b. Hanbal. He is reported to have ceased to convey traditions on the authority of any of these seven and to have scratched their names from his books.

43. Mîh., 2: Ibn Kathîr says: "acting in accordance with orders from al-Ma’mun the Governor of Baghdad summoned a great assembly of traditionists, jurisconsults, and leaders of prayers, and after informing them of the confession of the seven traditionists asked them to profess the official doctrine and they all did." Al-Bidâya wa ‘l-Miḥâya, x, 272.

44. Kht., viii, 352.

45. Taâskubra Zâda, Miftâh as-Sâ‘âda, ii, 41.

46. Manâqib, 367f. Ibn al-Jawzî says that those who confessed the official doctrine were blamed by Ibn Hanbal because after their confession they accepted patronage and frequented the politicians (al-Qawm) and sought to win their favour. See ibid., 390.
A move to formulate the Sunnite theological point of view on the nature of the Qurʾān eventually emerged under the so-called Mutakallimūn of Ahl as-Sunna, namely, al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥaḍīr al-Bajalī, Ḥānīf, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Makki, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd allāh b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, and al-Ḥarīth b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī. 47 Ḥusayn is said to have enquired about the argument used by al-Maʿmūn against the seven traditionists during their inquisition in Raqqā; and was told by Zuhayr b. Ḥarb that the hardest point against them was the one he (sc. al-Maʿmūn) employed with regard to Jesus Christ being the Word of God and yet a created being. The argument went that it follows that the Qurʾān being the Word of God too is similarly created and those who deny its creation were idolaters. Ḥusayn then told him what he should have said in reply to this argument and added: "‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Makki who knew this area more than any other begged you to listen to him but you dismissed him as a junior; how many times did he advise Ahl al-Ḥadīth to prepare the tools that would one day help them in their fight against their enemies?" 48 Zuhayr and Yahyā b. Maʿīn are said to have regretted not to have learned Kalam. Ḥusayn was then asked to teach the new technique of kalam to the son of Zuhayr who as a youth could make better use of it in future.

This is probably a later defence of kalam but it does reflect the position of Ahl al-Ḥadīth at the time in that they seem to have been caught unprepared by the Muʿtazilite argument on the nature of

47. See below, p. 195.
the Qur'ān. The argument during the Ḥijma might have made them aware of the inefficiency of their techniques. The suggestion to be made here is that Sunnite mutakallimun tried to meet the mu'tazilite argument with similar weapons. By then Ahmad b. Hanbal had emerged as the dominant figure in the debate on the Qur'ān and asserted his leadership through his criticism of those who confessed the createdness of the Qur'ān and his determination to resist. Once his leadership was asserted the argument from the Qur'ān and the traditions became firmly established. The significance of this move by Ahmad b. Hanbal was in warding off the implicit danger in the call of the nascent Sunnite mutakallimun to in effect argue from the position of their adversaries, the Mu'tazilites. In completely reversing the position Ahmad b. Hanbal virtually forced the Mu'tazilites to argue from his own position.

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion in the letter quoted in Tabari as the third from al-Ma'mūn to the governor of Baghdad. This confusion is witnessed for instance in the repetition almost word by word of the theological argument employed in the first letter and the orders regarding the citation of judges and witnesses in Baghdad and its neighbourhood. Nevertheless the letter is certainly not a copy of the first one as one can detect a new line of argument in it such as the analogy between Jesus Christ and the Qur'ān, and the emphasis on the division caused by the difference over the nature of the Qur'ān. In this letter too the judges of Baghdad are mentioned by name. On the whole this

letter shows an advance on the argument used in the first letter though based on the same material used there. The sequence of the letter as the third following on the inquisition of the seven traditionists seems acceptable as the argument used against them (sc. the point based on Christ for instance) is reproduced in this letter.

It is sufficient here to say that the letter mainly emphasised the denial of public service particularly in the judiciary and its tributaries to those who do not confess the createdness of the Qur'ān. The main concern was again with witnesses and those entrusted with semi legal though not official responsibilities. The two judges of Baghdad: Ṭabd ar-Rahmān b. Iṣḥāq and Ja'far b. 'Isa were to be cited on the nature of the Qur'ān. The governor seems to have called the two judges first and received their confession. He then convened an inquisition council in which these two judges and probably others from the districts of Baghdad sat together with some jurists and traditionists who professed the official dogma. Jurists and traditionists who were to be cited on the nature of the Qur'ān and tashbīḥ were then summoned to appear before this inquisition council. We have an idea about the procedure of summons from information on how Ahmad b. Hanbal was summoned for inquisition.⁵⁰ The quarter prefect called one day around sun set at Ahmad's home and asked him to accompany him to the police station. There Ibn Hanbal was told to present himself the following morning at the governor's palace. Ḥanbal b.

⁵⁰. Mīz., 3.
Ishāq, Abmad's cousin advised him to disappear underground but he rejected the idea arguing that his family and other relations might be held responsible.

The list of those who were summoned for inquisition given in Ṭabarī total 26 doctors excluding the two judges of Baghdad but is not exhaustive. It seems that the inquisition was conducted over a period of time when groups of not more than two dozen were interviewed at a time. It could be inferred from the account in Ṭabarī that the first batch which appeared before the inquisition council numbered 21 doctors. After listing these twenty one names Ṭabarī goes on to say: "and also a(another) group including among them ..." and he gave the names of five including the judge 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Ishāq. ⁵¹ It seems from the way Ṭabarī introduced this batch that it included more than those five whom he mentions by name. The inclusion of the judge 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Ishāq in this group indicates his participation in all sittings of the inquisition council as an official inquisitor. The conclusion is that those subjected to the inquisition were certainly more than the names of those given in Ṭabarī which altogether total something around 37 or 39 if the two judges of Baghdad are counted. Those not mentioned by name seem to have been less prominent.

Those mentioned are however fairly representative of the forces at play at the time of the inquisition. The first thing to notice is that the list in Ṭabarī includes men from different circles. The traditionists proper like Abmad b. Hanbal and his

⁵¹. Tab., iii, 1121.
circle were interestingly enough a minority. The majority were
professed followers of Abu Manifa among whom many were judges with
interest in Ḥadīth. Other Manafites and jurists of other schools
mentioned include ex-judges and those connected in one way or the
other with the legal profession. Some held paid posts as
supervisors of Ḥasā'il and similar legal tasks under judges; while
the majority served as professional witnesses, guardians of
orphans, supervisors of uninherited property or property whose
claimants were absent, custodians of valuables and such semi legal
responsibilities. Those like Ahmad b. Zanbaq who were solely
occupied with the science of traditions gave futwa or judgement of
juristic type, and hence they too had something to do with the
legal profession. So far it is fairly clear that the inquisition
has much to do with the judiciary and the legal profession as a
whole.

The Ulama differ among themselves:

Although the scholars named in Ṣabari seem to have much in
common with regard to their juristic outlook and their views on
the nature of the Qurʾān than they have with the authorities yet
differences exist among them. Their differences could best be
brought out by an examination of the testimonies of some of them
regarding the main issues in the inquisition. The inquisition
evolved around two areas. The first was the nature of the Qurʾān
and the second was tashbīḥ literally the likening of God to created
beings.
Taahbih:

With regard to taahbih each doctor was required to say:

"I testify that there is no God but God, one and single; there was nothing before him and nothing will remain after him, none of his creation resembles Him in any sense or in any way whatsoever." Hanafites like Bishr b. al-Walid al-Kindi, Abu Hassan az-Ziyâdi, and Ibn al-Bakkâ' al-akbar readily admitted this as their own position. Bishr b. al-Walid said that he used (meaning when he had been a judge) to scourge those who partly deny this. Abu Hassan az-Ziyâdi said to the governor: "He who does not say this is an idolater." Now the position of Ahmad b. Banbal was certainly different from this. When made to testify to this statement he refused to say "none of his creation resembles him in any way whatsoever" and instead put his own version which read as follows: "None of his creation resembles him and he is the hearer, the seer." A debate ensued when Ibn al-Bakkâ' as-Saghir addressing himself to the governor said: "He (sc. Ahmed) says hearer from the hearing of the ear, seer with the eye." The governor asked Ahmed what he meant by hearer and seer and he replied: "I have said as God almighty has described himself."

On this view Ibn Banbal seems to have been on the minority. This was clearly pointed out in the governor's report to al-Ma'mûn and the latter's reply to it.

52. Tab., iii, 1122; For the issue of taahbih see Jâhiz, "Risala fi nafi at-Taahbih", in Rasa'il aj-Jâhiz, i, pp. 282-308.
53. Tarj., ii.
54. Tab., iii, 1124.
55. Al-Ma'mûn refers to "their agreement (ithbâqihim) on denying taahbih and their disagreement over the nature of the Qur'ân. Tab., iii, 1125.
The nature of the Qur'an:

With regard to the question of the nature of the Qur'an the dominant trend was one of disagreement with the official view. However here too there prevailed some disagreement among the ulama Hanafites like Bishr b. al-Walid al-Kindî, Abu Ḥassān az-Ziyādî, Ibn al-Bakka' and others of a similar outlook tended to argue after the manner of the mutakallimūn. When Bishr was asked whether the Qur'an is created he said: "God is the creator of everything." The governor building on this premise asked him: "Is the Qur'an a thing?" and Bishr admitted that it was a thing. The governor then asked him: "Then is it created?" Bishr replied: It is not a creator. Now what Bishr seems to be doing here is to make it clear that to say the Qur'an is uncreated does not make it one and equal with God as a creator a point which was frequently brought up by al-Ma'mûn and his supporters against those who denied the createdness of the Qur'an.

When Abu Ḥassān az-Ziyādî who held that the Qur'an is the Word of God was further asked if it is created he became evasive and argued that God is the creator of everything and that all things apart from him are created. This was understood by the governor not to have been a confession of the official dogma. Now the explanation seems to be that by maintaining that the Qur'an is the

56. Tab., iii, 1122.
57. Tab., iii, 1123.
Word of God Abu Ḥassān must have meant that as an attribute of God it is not separate from his essence and hence uncreated.

Tabari gives the names of nine altogether who denied that the Qurʾān is the word of God.\(^{58}\) Among those Ibn al-Bakrāʾ al-Akbar said that the Qurʾān was made (majūl) and produced in time (mubdath). He based his argument on the Qurʾānic verses: ('Verily we have made it a Qurʾān in the Arabic language' 43/2) and ('What came to them from their lord was newly produced dhikr.') 21/2) The governor asked him whether made meant created and he agreed; but when pushed along these lines towards the logical conclusion: "Then the Qurʾān is created?" he said: 'I do not say created but I say made.' Now this is the argument of the Waqifiyya.\(^{59}\) Ibn al-Bakrāʾ is attempting here to differentiate between making and producing in time on the one hand and creating on the other. It seems that he was aware of the problem of time and space involved here for to say the Qurʾān is made or produced in time is to presuppose an origin for it. This origin in the case of the Qurʾān could be regarded as God's knowledge which was argued during the inquisition of Ahmad b. Hanbal under al-Muʿtaṣim as an uncreated attribute of God.\(^{60}\) On the other hand to say the Qurʾān is created would only mean its coming into existence.

Eventually Mutakallimūn like Abu Ḥassān az-Ziyāḍī and 'Alī b. Abī Muqāṭātil surrendered out of fear of persecution. Although

\(^{58}\) Tab., 111, 1124.
\(^{59}\) See chapter 7 below.
\(^{60}\) See below pp. 36-37, 39-40, also 101.
they believed that the Qur'an was uncreated they tried their best not to clash with the authorities. Their argument was that differences over the nature of the Qur'an constitute no religious danger and should be allowed to exist. They gave the analogy of differences among the companions in ritual and legal matters, but made it clear that they were willing to surrender their point of view and adopt that of the Caliph if he so commands.

The tone of the fourth letter from al-Ma'mūn grew more aggressive. He severely reproached each doctor individually and threatened to inflict terrible punishment on them. He gave the governor the power to execute Bishr b. al-Walid al-Kindi and Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi (who seem to have been reckoned most dangerous) if they did not confess. He gave orders that others who deny confession were to be sent to him at Raqqā.

At this stage all confessed except Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Hasan b. Ḥammād Sajāda, ‘Ubayd allah b. ‘Umar al-Qawārīrī, and Muḥammad b. Muḥ al-Maqrūb. Those who confessed seem to have been despised by their colleagues as well as the populace at large. Some like Sulayman al-Bazzaz (d. 225/839-840) felt guilty and used to say: 'We have become idolaters and then returned to Islam again.' There were those like Iṣḥāq b. Abī Isrā‘īl and Abu ‘l-‘Awwām Ahmad b. Yazīd who abstained and came to be known as the Waqifiyya.

61. Tab., iii, 1122-1123.
63. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, 1, 360.
64. See Chapter 7, the section on the Waqifiyya.
Almost all who gave in under pressure sought excuses for their confession on basis of *taqiyya*. Here, however, only Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi and Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindi who were threatened with execution; together with al-Qawārsī and Sajāda who were imprisoned were said to have qualified for *taqiyya*. Unlike the others they came to be held by their colleagues and the community at large as defenders of the Sunna.

The ulema's argument that they have confessed on basis of *taqiyya* was reported to al-Ma'mūn by sabīb al-khabār (sc. the secret police). Al-Ma'mūn reacted by ordering that all doctors be sent to him in Raqqa to interview them personally. 65 Ṭabarī gives the names of altogether twenty one doctors who were ordered to present themselves at Raqqa. Meanwhile news of the death of al-Ma'mūn came to them on their way thither. They were then detained in Raqqa until arrangements were made to send them to Baghdad. A group of them including Bishr b. al-Walīd, al-Dhayyāl b. al-Haytham, 'Ali b. Abī Muqātil and a certain Abu 'Awāna left Raqqa without permission from its governor and headed for their homes in Baghdad. On their arrival in Baghdad they were reproached by the governor and put under arrest. The others who comprised the main body arrived in Baghdad under official guard and were confined to their homes but were later allowed to perform their daily affairs.

Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and Muhammad b. Nuḥ were sent to Tarsus. They seem to have arrived there a few days before the Caliph's

65. Tab., iii, 1131-1132.
death. They were then sent to Raqqa and from there escorted by the police together with a group of prisoners to Baghdad. Muhammad b. Nuḥ died on the return journey and was buried in a place called 'Ānāt. On arrival in Baghdad Ahmad b. Hanbal was kept in confined imprisonment in the street of Yasiriyya for a few days then moved to a small stable owned by the brother of the governor of Baghdad and rented as a prison. Owing to health reasons he was eventually moved to the common prison in Darb al-Mawṣiliyya.66

The conclusion for this chapter is that the Minḥa under al-Ḥaẓīm b. al-Ḥirṣān seems to represent an attempt by the rulers to assert official control over the judiciary. It seems that at the time of the Minḥa the encroachment of Ahl al-Ḥadīth upon this area in particular became too dangerous to ignore possibly for the association of many jurists and traditionists with the opposition against al-Ḥaẓīm b. al-Ḥirṣān during and after the civil war. However, the implicit political implications of the Minḥa expressed themselves in the advent of Ḥadīth as the main fountain for juristic judgement—a phenomenon which was fully established at the time. However the inquisition under al-Ḥaẓīm b. al-Ḥirṣān did not run its compass but so far it gave the religious institutions much to quarrel about. The division for instance created at this stage over the issues of the nature of the Qur’ān and tashbīḥ determined the setting for the struggle between the rulers and the ulema, as well as the struggle within the religious institutions for centuries to come.

66. Ḍhahābī, Ṭarja‘at al-Īmām Ahmad, in al-Munṣad, 1, 91.
CHAPTER 2

THE MIJNA UNDER AL-MU'TASIM

The impression among the ulema class seems to have been that with the death of al-Ma'mūn the inquisition was over. There is no information as far as I know that any of those held during the inquisition, apart from Ibn Ḥanbal continued in detention. The Caliph al-Mu'tasim is said to have been less enthusiastic in continuing the inquisition. Perhaps he among many others believed that the inquisition under al-Ma'mūn had served its purpose in so far as the judges and other officials in the legal profession who were inclined towards Ahl al-Ḥadīth had been purged and that leading jurisconsults and traditionists who were reckoned opponents of the administration were forced to confess the official dogma publicly.

The chief judge, Aḥmad b. Abī Du‘ād who was from the beginning closely involved in the inquisition at its legal, theological and political levels understood, however, that the problems at issue were far from being settled. He knew together with Mu'tazilite and Ḥanafite jurisconsults around him that the strength of their opponents lay outside the administration; and that no purge of any number of officials would curb it effectively. It was the influence their opponents as religious leaders exercised over the Muslim community at large which was to be met if the inquisition was to succeed at all. This situation was fully grasped by the Caliph al-Ma'mūn whose main worries as explicitly
stated in his inquisition letters to the capital and the provinces, were about the inclination of 'the ignorant masses' towards Ahl al-Ḥadīth but most importantly about the tendency among many judges and jurisconsults associated with the administration to seek prestige and religious leadership through friendly relationship with Ahl al-Ḥadīth.¹

It is with this understanding of the nature of the dispute that the efforts of Ahl al-Ḥadīth and their supporters within the administration to limit the inquisition to officials working in the legal profession and to allow the difference over the nature of the Qur'ān to exist at least outside the political institutions could be appreciated. It was in this respect that Abu ʿAbd al-Muqqīt Ṭabari when interviewed by the governor of Baghdad argued that the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān could be the belief of the commander of the faithful but that he might not enforce it upon others. 'Ali b. Abi Muqātīl gave the analogy of difference of opinion among the companions of the Prophet on religious duties and the laws of inheritance and added that none of them tried to impose his opinion on the others.² The greater number of those persecuted during the Mihna were mainly taken in for their opposition to the very idea of conducting an inquisition on peoples' beliefs. The point was made by Ahmad's uncle ʿIṣḥāq b. ʿHanbal before the governor of Baghdad when he said to him: "My nephew does not deny the sending down (tanzil) of the Qur'ān, but the difference between

¹ Compare his letter to the governor of Baghdad. Tab., iii, 1112-1114.  
² Tab., iii, 1123.
him and his opponents is one of interpretation (ta'wil)."  

The point was also brought out in what the sources attribute to Buqa al-Kabîr who when conducting Ahmad b. Hanbal to the palace of the Caliph asked his companion: "What do they want from this man?" His companion's reply was that they wanted him to confess that the Qur'ân was created. Buqa rejoined: "I know nothing about this, but I know that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of God and that the commander of the faithful is a relation of the Prophet." The point was well argued by Ahmad b. Hanbal himself in his first interview with the Caliph al-Mu'tasîm when he affirmed his faith as a muslim and supported his position by quoting traditions, making the difference over the nature of the Qur'ân seem a side issue.

The attempt by the religious institutions to limit the inquisition to the small circle of those who were connected with the legal profession can further be seen in the way the inquisition was conducted in Egypt. There the judge Harun b. 'Abdallah who seemed to have been on good terms with the main body of the ulema was at pains to limit the inquisition to those connected with the legal profession. In this respect he reluctantly carried on with the citation of witnesses who testified in his court or those jurisconsults who were closely connected with the legal profession, but was on the whole less willing to apply the test to jurisconsults

5. Tarj., 15; Hilya, ix, 198.
and traditionists at large. When a situation developed in Baghdad and the chief judge Ahmad b. Abi Du‘ād and his associates pressed the Caliph al-Mu‘tasim for a tougher line with regard to the inquisition in Egypt, it was the governor and not the judge Harun b. ‘Abdallah who carried out the new orders. Al-Mu‘tasim is said to have sent orders to Ashinās the then governor of Egypt to supervise the inquisition himself. Later the task fell to Musa b. Abi 1-‘Abbas, the client of Ashinās who was appointed governor to Egypt in (219/834). When the judge Harun was finally pressed by Ibn Abi Du‘ād to test jurisconsults and traditionists in general he openly expressed his reluctance to do so. This gave Ibn Abi Du‘ād the opportunity to consolidate the position of the advocates of the official dogma in Egypt and to speed the inquisition there. He authorised a certain Ibn Abi 1-Layth to take over from the judge Harun the responsibility of conducting the inquisition.

Ibn Abi 1-Layth who was probably the first to fill the post of official inquisitor in Islam came to Egypt in the year (205/820). Before his migration to Egypt he had been a book seller in Baghdad. In jurisprudence he followed Abu Ḥanifa and the Iraqi jurists. The sources describe him as a leader in the furthering of the inquisition, which is a reference to his conviction that

7. Abu 1-Maṭāsin says: "the Hibna was taken seriously by him; and he exterminated (abāda) the Fuqahā' and ulema of Egypt". Nujum, 11, 230.
the Qur'ān was created. His appointment as inquisitor brought the influence of Ibn Abī Du'ād and his associates to bear directly upon the inquisition dispute in Egypt. Mu'tasilites and Ḥanafites of Egypt who professed the official doctrine closed ranks with Ibn Abī l-Layth and the persecution of their opponents who were mainly Shafī'īites and Malikītes began in earnest. A situation like the one in the capital Baghdad where the whole society became bitterly divided over the issue of the Qur'ān now developed in Egypt too. The joining of hands between the advocates of the inquisition in the capital Baghdad and Egypt brought the whole Islamic community to a confrontation on the issue of the nature of the Qur'ān. Among those called upon by Ibn Abī l-Layth, the new inquisitor to confess the createdness of the Qur'ān were Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, al-Buwayṭī and Khushmān the traditionist.10 Among these Nu'aym b. Ḥammād was the first to be sent to Baghdad to confess the official dogma before the Caliph.

The discrediting of the argument from the traditions

The irresponsible venture of Nu'aym b. Ḥammād

Nu'aym introduces us to the polemical form of the dispute on the nature of the Qur'ān and its implications for the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. He was a Khurāsānīte from Marw but lived in Egypt. He started his career as a secretary to a certain

Khurāsānīte known as Abu ‘Īsma who is said to have been a vehement opponent of the Jahmites from whom Nu‘aym learned the argument against the Jahmiyya.\textsuperscript{11} Nu‘aym is reported to have said: "I have been a Jahmite and that was how I came to know their argument but when I studied the science of traditions I discovered that their ultimate aim was ta‘qīl.\textsuperscript{12} These statements indicate the involvement of Nu‘aym in doctrinal argument against the propagators of the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur’an. His zeal for polemical argument against the Jahmiyya led him into circulating weak or false traditions to support his views. His good intention of fighting the Jahmiyya was naturally appreciated by his friends, the Ahl al-Ḥadīth who credited him with the title ghālib asma; nevertheless they at the same time strongly reproached him for his irresponsible venture in the traditions.\textsuperscript{13} This apart from being an evaluation of traditions circulated by him was essentially a reproachment of him for discrediting the argument from the traditions.

Among his weak traditions which his fellow traditionists rejected was one condemning those who employ analogy (qiyās) in jurisprudence as the arch-enemies of the Muslim community;\textsuperscript{14} and

\textsuperscript{11} Kht., xiii, 307.
\textsuperscript{12} Tabyīn kadbīd al-Muftari, 388; cp. Al-Bidaya wa l-Nihāya, x, 302.
\textsuperscript{13} See Kht., xiii, 307-313.
\textsuperscript{14} Another form of this tradition maintains that the Prophet Muhammad said: "my people will divide into something over seventy sects. The most dangerous of them for my community is the one which judges things by reasoning and legitimises what is prohibited and prohibits what is legitimate". Khaṭīb adds that Yabīya b. Ma‘in rejected this tradition and maintained that Nu‘aym b. Ḥamīd had been misled by stealers of traditions like ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ʿaḍ Dāḥfāk, an-Naḍr b. Tāhir and Suwayd b. al-Anbārī who fabricated it. Kht., xiii, 310-311.
another one on a vision of God which envisages him as a handsome youth with long hair and dressed in golden shoes. The outcome of his venture was to weaken the argument of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. This was the time when they fell an easy prey to the accusation of anthropomorphism. It is striking in this connection to notice the bitter animosity which officials who sponsored the inquisition showed towards Nu‘aym. He was cast into prison in (223/837) for an unspecified period of time; and when he died in prison in (228/842) or (229/843) his body was dragged by the šāhib of Ibn Abi Du‘ād and flung into a ditch with handcuffs still on and with no proper dressing or prayers said for him. This situation which developed on the eve of the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal made it difficult for him to argue his point from the traditions.

The inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal

The council of inquisition held for Ahmad b. Hanbal at the court of al-Mu‘tasim included judges working in Baghdad and probably other judges from neighbouring districts, senior secretaries and court officials as well as jurisconsults and other ulema from Baghdad and Baṣra. The Ḥanbalite report that they included none from Ahl al-Ḥadīth wa l-Athar possibly means that

15. Ḥaḍīth says: "Yahya b. Ma‘in used to scourge Nu‘aym b. Ḥanmād and say: he ought not to have conveyed a tradition like this." The defenders of Nu‘aym attribute responsibility for this tradition to his authority a certain Marwān b. ʿUthman. See Ḥaḍīth., xiii, 311.

16. See Milal, 143 where Nu‘aym is reckoned among the early propagators of anthropomorphism.

17. Ḥaḍīth., xiii, 214.
traditionists reckoned sympathetic with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal were deliberately excluded. Outstanding personalities in the council of the inquisition include the chief judge Ibn Abi Du'ād, a former Baghdad judge known as Muhammad b. Sammā'a and the two judges of Baghdad ‘Abd ar-Rahman b. Ishaq and Shu‘ayb b. Sahl generally known as Sha‘bawayh. Mu‘tazilite members who incidentally were in the minority included Burghuth and a few others to whom Ahmad b. Ḥanbal refers as Baṣrites. Although they were clearly a minority in the council they were nevertheless very influential and occasionally dominated the discussion. Their ability as scholars is conceded by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal himself who frequently refers to the reliance of Ibn Abi Du’ād on them.

The opening debate reflected bitter feeling on both sides and accusations and counter accusations of idolatry (takfīr). The judge ‘Abd ar-Rahman b. Ishaq was officially entrusted to lead the discussion. He began by putting to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal the question: "What do you say about the Qurʾān?" Ahmad responded by asking him the question: "What do you say about God's knowledge?" Ḥanbalite sources claim that ‘Abd ar-Rahman was silenced. Ahmad is said to have commented: "Had he said that God's knowledge was created he would have committed idolatry." Ahmad's explanation was that the Qurʾān is from the knowledge of God and he who says God's

19. Miḥ., 11.
knowledge is created is an idolater. 21 "Abd ar-Rahman, however, continued the discussion along these lines and asked him: "Had God not been in existence when there was no Qur'ān?" Ahmed readily rejoined: "Had God been without knowledge?" The sources again comment that had he said that God existed without knowledge he would have committed idolatry.

This line of argument led to a discussion of the knowledge of God and his speech. Here Ahmed largely relied upon traditions to support his argument. Faced by his opponent's attempt to drag him into traps of rationalistic argument he clung fast to the Qur'ān and traditions. When the Mu'tazilite Burghūth tried to bring in a rational argument and asked him: "What is the body (al-jīm)? Is it not so and so?"; and was at pains to make him follow his point, Ahmed's only response was to say: "I do not know what this is but I know that nothing is like him"; and the dismayed Burghūth had to give up. 22 To force his opponents to argue on his own terms Ahmed constantly challenged them to furnish Qur'ānic verses or traditions which support their point of view. At one stage when Ibn Abī Du'ād is said to have lost his nerve and shouted at him: "You do not say anything but from the Qur'ān and the Sunna?" Ahmed is said to have commented: "Is islam based on anything but the Qur'ān and the Sunna." 23 In this respect the complaint against Ibn Hanbal was that when the argument ran in his

23. Miḥ., 11.
favour he vigorously pressed on with the point but when it turned against him he instantly sought refuge in saying that he was not a scholastic debater.

Consequently the official inquisitors sought to combat his insistence to argue from the traditions by rejecting the traditions as unauthentic. Their first move was to attack his over-reliance on traditions and at the same time demonstrate to him their tendency to argue from the Qur'ān. They eventually accused him of fabricating traditions to support his case and at the same time further demonstrated to him their sole reliance on explicit verses from the Qur'ān (Iḥtajju ‘alayya bi l-ẓāhir min al-Qur'ān wa qālu innaka tantahili l-ḥadīth). In an attempt to defend argument from the traditions vis-a-vis the argument from the Qur'ān Ibn Ḥanbal gave a demonstration of the value of traditions in interpreting and explaining the Qur'ān in the following manner. He asked them about what was meant by the Qur'ānic verse (4/11 'God enjoins you concerning your children: the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; ...'). Their reply was that the law here applies to inheritance among the faithful (khassa biha al-muʾminīn). He then asked: "What will the rule be if he (the inherited) was a murderer, or a slave or a Jew or a Christian?" thus proving his point that traditions interpret the Qur'ān and expound upon what is briefly raised in it.25

The inquisitors are said to have eventually secured the support of traditionists, among whom was the celebrated 'Ali b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/848) to help them check Ibn Ḥanbal's argument from the traditions. 'Ali al-Madīnī was reckoned a great authority on the criticism and weakness (‘īlab) of the traditions. It seems that he first secretly supplied the inquisitors with traditions which prove their point that the Qurʾān was created. Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have been puzzled by the strength of their argument at this stage. He is quoted as saying: "When they argued against me quoting the traditions on the authority of Ibn 'Ar'ara and Ibn ar-Rumāl or (ath-Thumāmī) they silenced me."  

'Ali al-Madīnī is further said to have brought to the attention of Ibn Abī Du‘ād a tradition conveyed on the authority of al-Walīd b. Muslim which read as follows: "0 people follow what has been made explicit to you and work in accordance with it; do not meddle with what you know not but entrust it to its Lord (Allahu ʿala rabbihī)." Ḥanbalite sources claim that the version was distorted by al-Walīd who mistook the last word which was originally its knower (‘alimihi) for the word its lord (rabbīhi). Now to say entrust it to its lord (rabbīhi) would mean its creator and hence affirm the createdness of the Qurʾān whereas to say its knower (‘alimihi) would make the Qurʾān part of God's knowledge and hence uncreated.


27. This is made explicit in Ibn Ḥajar's report that 'Ali al-Madīnī told Ibn Abī Du‘ād that the tradition read as follows: "...entrust it to its creator". Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb, vii, 354.
Hanbalite reports add that 'Ali al-Madīnī had taught this tradition to his students in Baṣra before the inquisition and informed them about the mistake of the transmitter, al-'Abbās. Ḥanbal reports add that 'Ali al-Madīnī sad taught this tradition to his students in Baṣra before the inquisition and informed them about the mistake of the transmitter, al-'Abbās. Ḥanbal is said to have commented: "Yes; he knew that al-'Abbās was mistaken but why did he want to convey to them (Ibn Abī Duʿād and his associates) the wrong version?" 28

What seems to have happened here is that the opponents of Ḥanbal particularly Ibn Abī Duʿād brought into the debate against him traditionists from amongst Ahl al-Ḥadīth whose authority in this field was widely acknowledged in order to prove to him that the argument from traditions is a two-edged sword which they themselves could use. They might have done this with the intention of demonstrating to him that the authenticity of the traditions can be doubted. In this connection referring to 'Ali al-Madīnī Ḥanbal said: "He showed them the book of Yahya (b. Maʿīn) and they came to know about traditions what they had not known before." This is further explained by his statement: "They came to know the background of the traditions and errors in them (akhbār al-Ḥadīth wa ma riha min al-wahm)." 29

The resort of Ibn Abī Duʿād and his associates to traditions to outmanoeuvre Ḥanbal on his own terms eventually succeeded. Ibn Ḥanbal finally reached the point where he called upon his opponents to abandon the argument from traditions where

28. Kht., xi, 469.
they differ and to base their argument on the Qur'ān as they all agree on its authenticity. He is reported to have said: "The traditions (al-khbār) are conveyed on the authority of different transmitters and errors and weakness may occur in them; but you and we agree on the authority of the Qur'ān, indeed there is no difference with regard to it among the whole membership of the Muslim community (ahl al-qibla)." 30 The rest of the debate was exclusively based on the Qur'ān.

**The argument from the Qur'ān**

**The tashbīh and the ǧīfāt:**

Here the argument at one stage evolved around tashbīh. Ahmad b. Manbal quoted Qur'ānic verses to demonstrate that God sees, hears and speaks for which he was accused of likening God to his creation. He reacted by saying: "Is this not the Qur'ān? do you also deny these verses?" As for the attributes of God (ag-ǧīfāt) he affirmed that they are infinite and unknown (ghayr mahdūda wa la ma‘lūma) except in the way God describes himself in the Qur'ān. He pressed his point against them: "Is this doubtful to you (munkarun ‘indakum)?" Here he seemed to have fared successfully. He is said to have commented: "They failed to repel the Qur'ān as they had repelled the kalam and the riwāya"; 31 and mentions that they have been silenced.

The nature of the Qur'ān:

With regard to the creation of the Qur'ān their argument against him was based on the Qur'ānic verse (42/11 'nothing is like him ... ') which they understood to mean everything apart from God including the Qur'ān is created. They further supported this by the verse (13/16 'Say God is the creator of everything ... '). In reply Ahmad b. Ḥanbal admitted that everything apart from God is created but added the qualification that the Qur'ān is the word of God and as such is not separate from his essence and is hence uncreated. To demonstrate his point he cited verses where the Qur'ān is differentiated from things created. He quoted the verses (7/54 'Verily his is the creation and the command'), and (16/43 'Our word for a thing when we intend it, is that we say to it "Be" and it is') and commented: 'Here creating (al-khalaq) is differentiated from command (al-amr) which is his speech, and his will and as such uncreated.'

Shu'ayb then raised the point that the Qur'ānic verse (43/3 'We have made it an arabic Qur'ān ... ') states that it was made and what is made is created. In reply Ibn Ḥanbal argued that the word made (ja'ala) does not mean created. He demonstrated his point by citing the verses (21/58 He broke them into pieces (fa ja'alahum jidhādan) and (105/5 'He rendered them like straw eaten up') and commented: 'Would everything made (maj'tūle) mean created?' They then cited the verse (21/2 'Then comes not to
them a new dhikr from their lord but they hear it while they sport') to demonstrate that the Qur'ān (al-dhikr) is created. Ahmad argued that the word dhikr when not specified with the letters "al" is other than the Qur'ān. He gave the example (38/1 'ṣūd wa l-Qur'ān dhī l dhikr') where it referred to the Qur'ān as it is here specified with the letters "al". 34

The conclusion so far is that the change from the argument from traditions to the argument from the Qur'ān limited Ibn Ḥanbal's scope and virtually put him in the defensive as is clear from his being reduced to the position where he only refuted their argument rather than made the attack on them. Nevertheless even here in so far as he was able to find Qur'ānic verses which support his argument against them he seems to have managed to stand his position.

The forces for conciliation

It has been hinted above that the Caliph al-Mu'ṭaṣim is said to have been indifferent towards the inquisition. This is said particularly in connection with the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal when al-Mu'ṭaṣim is described as not too keen on having him persecuted. He is said to have told Ahmad b. Ḥanbal in his first interview with him that had he not been in the hands of his predecessor he would have set him free. At the same meeting he is said to have put the question to the local judge 'Abd al-Rahman b. Iṣḥāq: "Have I not told you to stop the Miḥna?" Mu'ṭaṣim is even

34 Min., 15. For a presentation of 'Jahmite' views along these lines see Rāzi, al-Arba‘īn fi 'usul ad-Dīn; 180f.
said to have sympathised with Ahmad b. Hanbal. It is said over
and over again that it was Ibn Abi Du’ād and his associates who
were to blame for the inquisition of Ahmad b. Hanbal. They
are said to have urged al-Mu’tasim to take tougher measures against
him. At one stage they are said to have pressed for his
execution, and when they failed to have him executed they pressed
for other forms of persecution to make him confess the official
dogma. It is said that when al-Mu’tasim considered his release
Ibn Abi Du’ād and the governor of Baghdad strongly opposed him
and described it as bad polity arguing that Ahmad’s triumph over
two Caliphs would seriously undermine the position of the state.

Consequently Ibn Hanbal was flogged and pressed to confess the
official dogma but when he showed no signs of giving in al-Mu’tasim
decided to release him. Again Ahmad b. Abi Du’ād and his
associates are said to have objected to his release and argued
that he should be imprisoned or withheld from mixing with the
people. Ahmad b. Hanbal described their pressure on al-Mu’tasim
as amazing when he was overpowered by their argumentation.
Al-Mu’tasim however did not budge from his position and gave orders
that Ahmad should be released immediately. When Ibn Abi Du’ād
tried to persuade him to change his decision he is said to have
shouted: “He should be released this hour”; and walked into
his palace.

35. Miḥ., Passim.
36. ("layya min at-tadbir takhliystubu hakadha, hadha yunawi’u
khaliyatayn, hadha halaku l-’Amma"). Miḥ., 16.
37. Miḥ., 19.
Now what is reflected here is in fact a conglomeration of forces at play for and against the persecution of Ḥamd b. Ḥanbal. It is here that the cautiousness of al-Muṭṭasim towards the persecution of Ḥamd b. Ḥanbal finds explanation. Perhaps the uncertainty of his succession at the time made it necessary for him to make friends rather than create enemies as the policy of the inquisition would certainly have done. In this respect the very move for an official debate on the nature of the Qur'ān with Ḥamd b. Ḥanbal has come on the request of Ḥamd's uncle Isḥāq b. Ḥanbal. He had for some time during his nephew's imprisonment contacted influential circles and personalities in the administration at Baghdad and Samarra to urge his release. His contacts included interview with generals, secretaries and judges whom he personally knew or came to know as former friends and acquaintances of Ḥamd's father and his grandfather who had served in the 'Abbasid forces and administration in Khurāsān. When these preliminary efforts failed to materialise Ḥamd's uncle approached Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm the governor of Baghdad. He appealed to him to release his nephew by past relationship between the two families in Marw. He is quoted as saying to him: "My grandfather was with your grandfather al-Ḥusayn b. Muẓ'ab"; and the governor is said to have responded favourably by saying: "So I have been told."

38. Ḥanbal says: "lamma tāla habbu Ahmad kana Isḥāq b. Ḥanbal yaktalifu fi amrīhi wa yuqallimu i-Quwwāda wa sḥūb as-sūltān fi amrīhi". Miḥ., 6-7.

The contact with Ishaq b. Ibrahîm seems to have materialised. Authorities in Baghdad arranged for Ahmad's uncle to meet his nephew in prison and persuade him to co-operate so as to ease his release. It seems to have been difficult for the government of Baghdad to release him without some public excuse being made. This attitude is witnessed in incessant attempts by the authorities to press Ibn Hanbal to make the necessary move so as to save them the embarrassment of his release being looked upon as a victory for him. Ahmad's resistance of all pressure to make him compromise his position reflects his impressive strength.

Immediately after the conversation between Ibn Hanbal and his uncle, the governor of Baghdad took the matter up with the Caliph al-Ku'tayim. Things began to move in a favourable direction when Ahmad was moved from prison to the governor's palace. While at the palace the governor interviewed him and urged him to concede what the commander of the faithful was asking him to do. The governor is said to have said to him: "I sympathise with you, and remember that intimate relationship existed between our families in the past (wa inna baynena hurma)."

The following morning a deputation of two theologians the first a certain Abu Sa'id or (Shu'ayb) al-'Uajam a member of the circle of Ahl al-Hadîth and Ahmad b. Rabî' arrived at the governor's palace to persuade Ahmad to meet the Caliph's demands, Ibn Hanbal was then moved to the Caliph's court where a council was called.

40. Hist., 8.
together to debate the nature of the Qur'an with him. What is interesting for us is that the council included men who were not of the same opinion as Ibn Abi Du‘ād with regard to the persecution of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. Some of its influential members like the judge of Baghdad, 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Isḥāq, the former judge Muḥammad b. Sammā‘a and a certain aḥ-Navfā‘I knew Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and his uncle personally. 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Isḥāq was certainly not at one with Ibn Abi Du‘ād. Ibn Ḥanbal’s uncle later said to Ahmad that 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Isḥāq had told him that Ibn Abi Du‘ād was embittered against him when in the first day of the inquisition he deliberately avoided to press on with the argument against Ahmad. Ahmad said: "'Abd ar-Rahman only raised the first problem (so. regarding God’s knowledge) and when I answered him he asked me no more."

On the whole 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Isḥāq and Ibn Sammā‘a are shown as mediators. 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Isḥāq is described as the most lenient of the inquisitors and more sympathetic towards Ahmad (wa inna 'Abd ar-Rahman kana alyanahum quawlan wa ashuddahum maylan ila Ahmad.) Ibn Sammā‘a is quoted as saying to al-Mu’taṣim: "He (ibn Ḥanbal) is from an honourable family which has a place in history (innaṣu fi aḥl bayt sharaf wa laḥum qadīm). He might soon come around and concedes what the Caliph wishes him to concede."
When Ibn Hanbal was taken to be flogged Ibn Ṣama‘ī’s said to al-Mu‘taṣīm: “He is a šarīf, and is a man who has a blemless record (finasalī mustur); he might soon give an answer which will meet what the commander of the faithful wants from him.” In closed sessions between him, al-Mu‘taṣīm and Ahmad b. Ḥanbal he said to the Caliph: “Ahmed had for thirty years been showing obedience to you (sc. ‘Abbāsīde), he believes in the performance of pilgrimage and Jihad under your leadership, and he prays to God for you.” al-Mu‘taṣīm is shown to have responded favourably saying: “Surely he is a learned man (innahu la falsīḥa), and it is my wish that he should have been at our court to better our affairs (yustith min shāfin).” If he now gives me a satisfactory answer I myself would untie his collars immediately.” Further ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ḥishāq is said to have spoken in favourable terms about Ahmad’s uncle to al-Mu‘taṣīm. Before the commencement of the second sitting of the debate ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ḥishāq came and sat beside Ahmad’s uncle and said to him: “The commander of the faithful has asked me: ‘In what rank is his uncle?’ and I said to him: ‘O, commander of the faithful, as for his manners and his dignity (wa hay bātuḥu) he is so and so, and that they are an important family with a history behind them (labum cadr wa cādim); so please if the commander of the faithful approaches you do not show any disagreement with him.” Consequently the Caliph sent

44. Kih., 19.
45. Kih., 11-12; cp. Tarj., 17.
a messenger to Ahmad's uncle to inform him of difficulties they were having with Ahmad, and to ask him to mediate. Ahmad's uncle is reported to have tried to persuade his nephew saying to him: "Now that you have been subjected to these hardships you are entitled to *taqiyya.* Your friends have all given in though they suffered far less than what you have suffered." Ahmad is said to have answered: "Dear uncle if the ignorant confesses for his ignorance, and the learned confesses on basis of *taqiyya* when would truth be pointed out?" Members of Ahl al-Ḥadīth who in their turn attempted to persuade him in these terms were told by him: "What would you do with the tradition which says: 'A mischief similar to what had befallen the Israelites would befall you when one's limbs are slowly sawn off and one shows no signs of surrender?" Representatives of official theologians were made to hold unofficial meetings with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and some stayed overnight for several days with him in an attempt to persuade him to confess the official dogma. A certain Ghassān asked leave from the Caliph al-Muṭṣāmīn to talk to Ibn Ḥanbal in an attempt to persuade him saying: "Ahmad comes from my home country (sc. Marw)." Deputations were frequently sent to Ahmad and messengers ran errands between him and the Caliph urging him to co-operate so as to ease his release. Further closed meetings between him,

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al-Mu'tasim and 'Abd ar-Rahman b. Ishāq were held in desperate attempts to persuade him to give in but were all in vain. While he was being lashed the Caliph himself would walk up to him and urge him to show signs of co-operation but he would not budge. Meanwhile senior officials and clerics standing by would press him with: "your Caliph is standing before you; ِ我希望 you answer your Caliph, do you want to defeat all these men?"; but he would turn and say: "O, commander of the faithful, let them give me one verse or a tradition which says the Qur'ān is created, on basis of which I can confess."50

Now Ibn Hanbal's resistance of this tremendous pressure clearly reflects his great strength, but it also reflects the influence of forces favourable to him. Forces opposed to his persecution were to be found within the administration as suggested in the reference to generals and judges sympathetic towards him. Later in this dissertation we will have occasion to mention other elements namely from the secretary class and other branches of the administration who respected and indeed supported him. Forces outside the administration which were favourable to him include members of the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth, dignitaries of Baghdad and possibly other regions and last but not least the populace of Baghdad. I have shown in chapter four, below, that Ahmad maintained friendly relationship with arab families and other dignitaries referred to as the Hashimites and the Anṣār. These arab elements worked together with dignitaries from the circle of

Ahl al-Hadith to effect his release. A case in point is the deputation led by the celebrated traditionist 'Āṣim b. 'Ali b. 'Āṣim referred to below which met al-Haḍramī and pressed for the release of Ahmad b. Hanbal.51 Popular pressure seems to have been organised by these influential elements. In this respect shops in all market places in Baghdad are said to have been shut down and people assembled in great numbers in an open field near the court palace as well as in the streets and nearby lanes during his Inquisition.52 There are reports that there were fears of a popular insurrection. When Ahmad was finally released he was dressed in honorary robes and mounted on a horse. He was escorted on his right hand side by Ibn Abi Ḫadīd and on his left hand side by the governor of Baghdad. The main road which was at the time thronged by the waiting masses was avoided and a by lane to the river Dijla was chosen on the spur of the moment. A boat conveyed them to the palace of the governor. There Ahmad's family, his neighbours, traditionists and other dignitaries (shuyūkh al-majalis) were assembled. The former judge Ibn Sa'am'a was made to address them. He is quoted as to have said to them: "This is Ahmad b. Hanbal, the commander of the faithful had debated certain things with him and has now released him."53 Fear of trouble made the authorities keep Ibn Hanbal at the governor's palace until after

51. See below, p. 53.
52. Minh., 23; Manāqib, 340.
aun set when he was taken to his home under cover of darkness. He was conducted to his home by prominent personalities, officials and a small police force. Irrespective of all precautions when the procession approached the assembled masses there was a sudden charge on Sāhib al-Jīr. The procession came to a halt and the chief of the police a certain 'Ayyāsh is said to have shouted to Sāhib al-Jīr in Persian: "tačīd, tačīd"; meaning an arab, an arab."54

The conclusion for this chapter is that although the debate on the nature of the Qurʾān reflected a lively discussion from both advocates of the official dogma and its opponents; the official point of view was certainly not conclusively convincing. In so far as this intellectual atmosphere prevailed rather than outright coercion the inquisition can be said to have been relatively tolerant.55 This relative tolerance must however be seen in the context of the strength of pressure for his release. The debate with him was not initiated by the state but rather came as a response to a move from his uncle and forces sympathetic with him. Thus the strength of forces at play for and against his persecution must be taken into account when explaining the generally tolerant nature of his inquisition. More forces opposed to his persecution

54. al-Jāhiz, 21.

55. It is in this context that the assertion by al-Jāhiz that the interrogation of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was not a kālīma meaning not severe can be appreciated; but of course his claim that Ibn Ḥanbal confessed the createdness of the Qurʾān is unfounded. See Pellat, The life and works of Jahiz, 48-50. For the attitude of al-Jāhiz towards Ibn Ḥanbal and his circle see especially his Kāf al-Tashbih, and Risāla fi l-Nabīta in Rasāʾīl al-Jāhiz, i, 282-308, li, 7-23.
could be said to have been prompted into the position they took not solely by sympathy with him but rather for differences within the administration and the society at large. Here forces within the administration opposed to Ibn Abi Du'âd could be said to have exploited the occasion of the inquisition to challenge him. Similarly forces outside the administration could have been prompted into the position of supporting Ahmad b. Hanbal by religious as well as political reasons of a general nature. As such the inquisition posed serious religious as well as political issues on which the society of the day came to be bitterly divided.

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56. These were traditionists of the circle of 'Āsim b. 'Ali b. 'Āsim, Abu 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām and Ibrāhīm b. al-Layth. See Kht., xii, 248-249.
CHAPTER 3
THE MINNA UNDER AL-WĀTHIQ

It is reported that al-Wāthiq like al-Mu'tasim did not wish to pursue the persecution of those who opposed the official dogma. The sources again saddle Ibn Abī Du'ād and his circle with responsibility for the renewal of the inquisition under al-Wāthiq. The fact that this report comes from Hanbalite sources should make us hesitate to dismiss it as an apology for al-Wāthiq. My own impression is that the sources are suggesting here the ups and downs in the enforcement of the Mihna under al-Wāthiq as determined by the relative strength of the forces at play for or against the inquisition. By the time al-Wāthiq came to power Abī al-Hadīth seem to have gained a tremendous amount of prestige. The release of Ahmad b. Hanbal by al-Mu'tasim seems to have given them the impression that the inquisition was over. Some of the sources indeed suggest that al-Mu'tasim abandoned the Mihna. In Egypt where the zealous Ibn Abī l-Layth took over the conduct of the inquisition from the moderate Harun b. 'Abdallāh in 226/840 there are reports that the people were not pressed to confess the

1. For the attitude of al-Wāthiq towards the inquisition see Manāqib, 348; Mīr., 26; Patton, A.D.H., 115.

official dogma. The assumption here being that the rulers seem to have been willing to allow differences on the nature of the Qur'an to exist among the ulama. But here the release of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (and the failure of Ibn Abi Du'ād to make al-Mu'taṣim undertake further persecutions of opponents of the official dogma must have been interpreted by the religious institutions and the populace at large as a victory for the opponents of the inquisition. Thus what seems a compromise by the rulers on the issue of the nature of the Qur'an was in effect a concession of the point of the opponents of official dogma, for in so far as disagreement on the nature of the Qur'an was allowed it was all that Ahl al-Ḥadīth wanted to preserve their public image and influence. Once the dispute was removed from official circles and limited to the religious institutions in that the dogma that the Qur'an is created was no more backed by official support its opponents were confident of defeating it.

What seems to have happened from the time of the release of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal to the early years of the reign of al-Wāthiq was the quick recovery of forces opposed to the official dogma so much so that they seem to have threatened to undermine the position of the authorities on the issue of the nature of the Qur'an. The position of Ibn Ḥanbal seems to have been greatly enhanced by his resistance in the Mihna. The fear of the danger of his release and contact with his followers entertained by Ibn Abi Du'ād was

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eventually justified. Ahmad b. Hanbal became in effect the centre of militant opposition. He eventually found himself in the position where he could create or destroy whatever the case may be the prestige and image of any public figure. Those who resisted during the Miḥna or gave in after persecution and threat with execution were praised by him and consequently their public image was greatly enhanced. Now that a jurist like the Ḥanafite Bishr b. al-Walid al-Kindi (who had been prior to the inquisition reckoned among Abū al-bīda’) had resisted he came to be held in high esteem as a member of the circle of Ahmad b. Hanbal. On the other hand those who as a result of temptation or under pressure confessed the official dogma were severely reproached by Ibn Hanbal and consequently their public image was greatly damaged.

This regrouping of the forces within the religious institutions on basis of their attitude toward the inquisition was matched by verdicts on those outside the religious institutions who supported the official dogma. Here many of the rulers and officials in the administration were declared idolaters and their excommunication or rather desertion was urged upon the religious classes and the populace at large. With regard to the Caliph and senior officials Ahmad b. Hanbal is described as a saviour who cared for their salvation. He is said to have prayed for

al-Mu'tasim that God might forgive him for his part in the inquisition. This was done in a manner which shows it as by the grace of Ibn Hanbal for which he was to be rewarded in the afterworld.

It is this revival of Ahl al-Hadith which was most dangerous for the state. An extreme form of this danger was witnessed in traditions which appeared at the time breaching disobedience when a religious justification prevails. The qualification of the prevalence of religious justification seems hardly significant in view of the difficulty of determining what constitutes a breach of the religion particularly in a situation like the one created by the Mi'na at the time. In this respect Ahmād is said to have taught the tradition that obedience to the ruler was compulsory upon Muslims unless their obedience involves disobedience to God for then there would be no grounds for political obligation. He also taught the tradition with the same meaning that "there is no question of obedience to any creature if it involves disobedience to God." The appearance of these traditions and many others of similar voracity at a time when the opposition forces were at the zenith of their strength must have raised serious problems for the rulers - a situation which seems to have provoked the new wave of persecutions under al-Wāthiq.

5. Tarj., 22-23; Manāqib, 343-44.
6. For these traditions see Miḥ., 30-38; Laoust, La Profession, (arabic text) passim.
The sheer magnitude of the new persecutions is an indication of the strength of the opposition that the administration faced. The inquisition under al-Wāthiq was for the first time extended to sectors of the religious institutions other than jurists and traditionists to include leaders of prayers, reciters of the Qur'an, muezzins and teachers. The scale of persecutions can be appreciated from reports of the inquisition in the provinces. The inquisition in Egypt for instance was likened to a fire set ablaze. The prisons were said to have been filled with those who opposed the official dogma, many fled the country or went underground.

The Inquisition in Egypt

The inquisition in Egypt still aimed at the breaking of the independent semi-legal powers of the religious institutions. The main concern of the rulers in Egypt was to deny to those who refuse to profess the official dogma, to testify before courts or perform any legal or semi-legal tasks. In this respect the judge Ibn Abi l-Layth issued orders for all executors entrusted with wills involving property or the running of estates to deliver the property and register accounts of estates in the court treasury. Reports showing up-to-date accounts were instantly demanded from executors. Ibn Abi l-Layth seemed here to be changing the law of wills for before the inquisition the ruler was only the executor

of those who had no executors or guardians. Many testators seem to have disagreed with this policy and kept money and property entrusted to them on behalf of the legitimate heirs with them. Their defiance provoked a wave of arrests and many were imprisoned. This dispute was dominated by an important case of inheritance left by a certain testator known as Ibn Abi 'Umayya to his only daughter with five legatees. One of the legatees is said to have paid off some of his debts from the amount entrusted with him. The others probably to avoid responsibility for the lost amount deposited the lot with one of them - a distinguished doctor named Yunus b. 'Abd al-A'la (d. 264/877) who served as witness for sixty years during which he had established a reputation of an upright man. The judge Ibn Abi l-Layth is said to have accused him of appropriating the money for himself. Witnesses who testified against him were found and he was imprisoned for an unspecified period of time.

The inquisition of Yusuf b. Yahya al-Buwayti represents a serious development when the official dogma seems to have been exploited by members of the same school to discredit one another. al-Buwayti who was known to have disputed the chair of al-Shafi‘i with his fellow Shafi‘ites is said to have been reported to Ibn Abi Du‘ād by his colleagues al-Muzanni, Harmala and Muḥammad b.

9. See the poem addressed to Ibn Abi l-Layth on this occasion by aj-Jamal in Kindi, 406.
al-Shaf'i as opposed to the official dogma. The governor of Egypt arrested him and held an inquisition for him. al-Buwayti is said to have refused to confess the createdness of the Qur'an and argued: "God created creation by the word "Be" (kun); now if the word "Be" is itself created then a created being creates." He was subsequently summoned for inquisition in Baghdad. An iron collar was put around his neck. His feet were shackled with fetters which were connected to the iron collar by a chain to which a brick weighing forty pounds was tied. He is said to have pledged himself to die in irons so that posterity should know that he had chosen to die rather than confess the official dogma. In Baghdad after years of imprisonment he died in iron in 231/845.

The general trend of persecutions in Egypt was against Malikites and Shafi'ites. The judge Ibn Abi l-Layth is said to have expelled followers of Malik and al-Shafi'i from the cathedral mosque at Fusṭāṭ and ordered them not to appear in the vicinity. The contemporary Egyptian poet al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abd as-Salām al-Jamal praised Ibn Abi l-Layth as defender of the views of Abu Ḥanifa and his followers and Ibn 'ulayya against the views of ash Shafi'I and Malik b. Anas. Eventually the conflict degenerated into bitter animosity. The mode among the religious dignitaries of Egypt was to wear tall hats which seem to have carried for them much respect in society. Ibn Abi l-Layth however, looked upon the wearing of

13. Subki., Ṭamqīt, i, 276.
such hats as a sign of opposition and gave orders that the ulema should give them up and dress themselves after the manner of the judge. A majority of the doctors seem not to have taken his orders seriously and continued to wear them. Ibn Abi 1-Layth is said to have arranged during the assembly in the mosque for his attendants to club the ulema on their heads and topple their hats off. He had a certain 1Harün b. Sa’Id al-‘Illi pulled by a turban which was tied around his neck and paraded through the streets shouting by the top of his voice: "The Qur’ān is created." Muḥammad b. ‘Abd allah b. ‘Abd al-Hakam was treated in a like manner. He is said to have been sitting in the mosque when Maṭar the ghulām of Ibn Abi 1-Layth held him by the foot with the intention of manhandling him. Muḥammad is said to have jumped to his feet and picked his hat before Maṭar could reach to it. He was then paraded through the streets of Fustat shouting: "The Qur’ān is created." Maṭar is said to have taken him to the circle of the Muʿtazilites who, pleased to hear him confess the createdness of the Qur’ān, said to him: "Praise be unto God who showed you the true faith Ya Aba ‘Abd allah."19

This intensely bitter degradation of the opponents of the official dogma created a strong feeling of animosity against Ibn Abi 1-Layth. A few days after the incident of the headgears he was mobbed by a group of people of Fustat who pulled his hat

17. Kindī, 460-61
off his head and kicked it around like a ball before tearing it to pieces. 20 A certain Yahya b. Zakariyya circulated rumours that Ibn Abi 1-Layth was sacked and that an order to this effect was arriving from Baghdad and similar remarks with the intention of discrediting him. Probably deputations were sent to Baghdad to press for his deposition. Ibn Abi 1-Layth is said to have cautioned Yahya and eventually had him lashed and imprisoned. 21 A certain Sa'id b. Ziyad known as al-Qattas who was known for religiosity and exquisiteness was reported to Ibn Abi 1-Layth to have cursed him. A man is said to have informed Ibn Abi 1-Layth that al-Qattas was an unfreed slave. Ibn Abi 1-Layth arranged a public auction where al-Qattas would be sold to the highest bidder. It turned out that Ibn Abi 1-Layth himself purchased him for one dinar, then set him free. 22 This amazing public degradation of opponents speaks for the deep animosity created by the inquisition in Egypt.

The Minhā in Baghdad

In the capital Baghdad similar incidents of degradation also took place. A certain Faḍl al-Anmāṭi and Ibn Abi Ṣaliḥ were forced to divorce their wives for refusing to confess the createdness of the Qur'ān. 23 Hanbal b. Ishaq says: "When the affair became too

exacting on the people of Baghdad and the Judges persecuted the people with strange energy and zeal Ahmad b. Hanbal attended the public Friday prayers and when he returned home he said these prayers all over again. **24** Ahmad stated that prayers should be repeated when said behind those who profess the createdness of the Qurʾān. He is also said to have urged against giving evidence before a jahmite judge. **25**

Al-Wāthiq had ordered that the phrase: "There is no God but God the Lord of the Qurʾān and its Creator." be written in the entrances of cathedral mosques in the capital and the provinces. This was met in Baghdad with violent reaction from the populace at large and according to al-Yaʿqūbī from the ranks of the fighting forces as well (**waʿwāmm al-jund**). **26** On Friday 27 of Rabiʾ I 227/14 January 842 a group of people attacked two men described as Jahmites in the mosque of Ruṣāfa and caused them much bodily harm. They then marched to the mosque of Shuʿayb b. Sahl (d. 246/860) the judge of the eastern side of Baghdad with the intention of scratching what he had written in the mosque stating that the Qurʾān is created. The servant of Shuʿayb is said to have shot arrows at the approaching demonstrators and they reacted by forcing their way into the judge's house which they sacked and burnt. They wanted to get hold of the judge but he managed to escape from them. **27**

24. Mih., 26; also Dhahabi, in Musnad, 1, 105.
26. Yaʿqūbī, Tārīkh, iii, 213.
27. See the report on these two incidents in Kht., ix, 243.
This type of public reaction against the Miḥna seems to have provoked even tougher measures from the authorities. When matters came to a head a group of Baghdadi jurists and traditionists held a meeting with Āḥmad b. Ḥanbal at his home and argued the point with him that positive action must be taken against al-Wāthiq.28 They told him that Ibn Abī Du‘ād was planning to teach children at school the doctrine that the Qur’ān was created. They generally emphasised that matters could not be tolerated any more. They then put the point to him: "We do not accept his imamate or sultanate." Āḥmad presumably aware of the effectiveness of passive resistance rejected their idea of the use of force. When they failed to secure his support they considered to use his name to attract supporters for their cause. They asked Ḥanbal b. Ishaq Āḥmad’s cousin to accompany them on their tour to canvass for support; but Āḥmad is said to have ordered him not to accompany them.29

After this meeting a messenger of the governor Ishaq b. Ibrāhīm a certain Ya‘qūb al-Ḥarati came to Āḥmad in the middle of the night and said to him: "The governor tells you that your name was mentioned by the commander of the faithful who says to you see that no one holds a meeting with you or comes to you, and that he does not want you to live in the same territory or town

where he lives so go wherever you like in the land of God."

Ahmad disappeared underground for the rest of the reign of al-Wathiq. Meanwhile the planned rebellion was uncovered before it matured. It seems to have been led by Ahmad b. Naqr al-Khuza'i the grandson of Malik b. al-Haytham one of the naqibs of the 'Abbasid movement which brought the 'Abbasid family to power. His followers are said to have gained much support in Baghdad and practically controlled it (ila an malaku Baghdad). The movement was organized in both sides of the capital. In the eastern side it was financed and led by a certain rich merchant known as Tālib. Another well off activist known as Ibn Ḥārūn or (Abu Ḥarun al-Shaddākh) financed the movement on the west bank. The insurrection was to start in both areas simultaneously on a specified day in Sha'ban 231/845 but the movement was betrayed and reported to the governor of Baghdad a few days before zero hour. The leader Ahmad b. Naqr and his two lieutenants Tālib and Abu Ḥārūn were captured and executed. A servant of Ahmad b. Naqr gave information of the secret meetings and the names of those who took part in them. Many of those who were connected with the movement were tracked down, captured and imprisoned.

The impact of the movement seems to have forced the ruling institutions to adopt a policy of reconciliation. Ibn Abi Du'ād is presented as opposed to the execution of Ahmad b. Naqr khuza'i.

32. Tab. iii, 1348.
al-Karkh the centre of opposition where the revolution is said to have been bred received the attention of the authorities. Its inhabitants are said to have received financial aid from the Caliph and Ibn Abi Du‘ād after a devastating fire (the cause of which was not ascertained) had swept over their quarter and caused much damage. Immediately after the trial of the leaders of the abortive coup large sums of money were said to have been distributed among Hashimites. The extent of reconciliation is echoed in reports that al-Wāthiq changed his mind before his death and brought the inquisition to an end.

I have tried to show in this chapter that the inquisition under al-Wāthiq was the main issue on which politics at the capital as well as the provinces was fought. It certainly marks the zenith of the confrontation between the religious and political institutions which was eventually going to affect the position of the Caliph and many of his senior officials. Although the rulers seem to have been on top in this confrontation the long term effects were certainly not in their favour. The strength of the passive opposition of the religious institutions could not be fully grasped unless by an examination of its long term results which would show in their complete victory under al-Mutawakkil.

33. Ya‘qūbī says... al-Wāthiq distributed enormous sums of money among Hashimites and Qurayshites of Meccas, Medina and other places. To the people of Baghdad he gave the greatest amount time and time again. People from outstanding families as well as those of humble origin received grants in aid from him for it was at a time when Baghdad experienced many devastating fires. He also gave enormous grants to traders. He erected building for some of them and cancelled the duty tax (al-‘umār) which was imposed on trade from China. Tārīkh, iii, 216; op. Athīr, vii, 21; Kht., iv, 146.

34. Kht., iv, 151f; Subkī, Tabaqāt, i, 216.
It is generally believed that al-Mutawakkil reversed the policy of his predecessors regarding the inquisition. He is believed to have favoured the Sunnites and persecuted their opponents the Mu’tazilites. I wish to demonstrate in this chapter that such a conception of al-Mutawakkil is a misrepresentation of his position regarding the Miṣna. The change in the official policy towards the religious institutions did not come until late during his reign and when it finally came it was not a reversion of the previous policy nor prompted by religious convictions but rather by certain political circumstances and developments at the time. Under al-Mutawakkil the inquisition continued in Egypt and when a change of the policy was introduced it was dominated by economic and political issues rather than by the dispute over the nature of the Qur’an. Although al-Ḥarith b. Miskīn was appointed judge in Egypt by al-Mutawakkil in 231/851 his “Sunnite” policy was not welcomed at the court and he was eventually forced to resign his post.

1. The dominant issue then was state’s claim of the property of the former governor ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. al-Wazir al-Jurawi who rebelled in 199/814-815. See Kindi, 455-57, 463f. Similar issues include the case of inheritance of a certain Ibn Abi Umayya, (see above p. 59) and the administration of ‘Alid property (see Note 2 below). It is true that the official inquisitor Ibn Abi 1-Laysh was at one stage prosecuted under al-Mutawakkil but it was for his mishandling of a case of inheritance and not at all for his conduct of the inquisition sp. Kindi, 463-4.

2. al-Ḥarith is said to have ruled against official trustees of ‘Alid property and thus antagonised the authorities in Egypt who reported him to the Caliph at Baghdad. See Kindi, 372f, 502-4.
By the time al-Mutawakkil came to power, the struggle between Ahl al-Jadîth and the supporters of the official dogma seems to have been intensified. Faced by a situation in which the whole society seems to divide at all levels at a time when his own succession was disputed al-Mutawakkil must have concerned himself first and foremost with the prevalence of peace and order. The question of succession seems to have provoked internal struggle within the administration as reflected in the purge of the senior minister Nuḥamad b. ‘Abd al-Malik az-Zayyāt and of other secretaries and scribes a little later. Forces outside the administration particularly the religious institutions must have interested themselves in the succession disputes in one way or the other but their role is difficult to assess. The purge of the secretaries which seemed an internal tackling of the succession dispute was, however, followed in 234/848 by an attempt to deal with the wider situation created by the dispute around the nature of the Qurʾān. Here al-Mutawakkil did not back the position of the Sunnites against that of their opponents the Muʿtazilites as is commonly believed but as a matter of fact forbade argumentation on the nature of the Qurʾān by both sides. This apparent concern with law and order might in an indirect way have

3. Ibn as-Zayyāt was sacked in 233/847, Tab. iii, 1370f; other secretaries including: ‘Umar b. al-Faraj al-Rakhjī and his brother, also Ibrahim b. al-Jumayl al-Nugrāni, al-Haytham b. Khalid al-Nugrāni and his cousin Saʿdūn b. ‘Ali. Tab., iii, 1377f.

4. Yaʿqubi says: "wa naha al-Mutawakkil an-naṣa an aj-jīdāl fi l-Qurʾān". Tārīkh, iii, 217. cp. Tab., iii, 1412; Athīr, vii, 43.
affected the position of the Mu'tazilites and benefited their adversaries the Sunnites; but it should not be seen in terms of victory and defeat for at this stage hardly any Mu'tazilites or those who sympathised with them were removed from office for reasons based on the dispute on the Qur'an. Even those "sunnites" who were patronised by the regime were not members of the circle of Ahl al-Hadith around Ahmad b. Hanbal.5

The division of the empire by al-Mutawakkil among his three children al-Muntaṣir, al-Mu'tazz and al-Mu'ayyad in 235/849 marked a new development in the succession dispute.6 In this respect the role of forces outside the administration seems to have been taken into consideration by al-Mutawakkil but up to this stage it was not clear what these forces were nor what role they played in the dispute. It was only towards the end of the year 237/851 when al-Mutawakkil favoured his son al-Mu'tazz against his elder son al-Muntaṣir that we come across information that it was 'Alids or rather Hashimites who were the main opponents of al-Mutawakkil. This information was later confirmed by al-Mutawakkil's persecution of 'Alids on the one hand and the conciliatory policy of al-Muntaṣir towards them on the other.7 The reference to this opposition as Hashimite rather than 'Alid is significant. They

5. The traditional opponents of Ibn Hanbal continued their intrigues against him under al-Mutawakkil. Their labouring to discredit him is witnessed in reports that they told al-Mutawakkil that he rejects his food, drink and patronage and that he curses the Caliph's father and his other predecessors and accuses them of Zandaqa see Ibn Kathir, al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya, Beirut, 1966, x, 340. For the division among Ahl al-Hadith see below, pp. 189f.


certainly included members of ‘Alid families living in Hijaz, Egypt, Baghdad and possibly other provinces but there is no reference here to their partisan followers generally known as the Shi’a of the family of ‘Alī. Those ‘Alid dignitaries seem to have much in common with certain groups of well to do families in Baghdad which include ‘Abbasids as the main body and the Arab contingent living there as well as distinguished jurists and traditionists. Both the ‘Alid families and what we may call the aristocracy and elite of Baghdad shared a common feeling as well as the claim of Arab descent. For convenience I shall refer to all of them as Hashimites though the term Hashimite when used at the time referred to ‘Abbasids. These Hashimites enjoyed the support of a wider sector of the community including the populace of Baghdad which as a whole are interestingly enough referred to as Sunnites. Their support to the Hashimites was demonstrated in their veneration of ‘Alid tombs and more interesting the body of Ahmad b. Naṣr al-Khūṣaynī.

The veneration of the corpse of Ahmad b. Naṣr by these ‘Sunnites’ explains why it was left in a state of crucifixion from 231/651 to as late as the year 237/851 which always seemed inconsistent with the view that al-Mutawakkil favoured the Sunnites. In general the whole policy of al-Mutawakkil against the veneration of tombs can now be appreciated as dealing with political opposition (not necessarily of ‘Alids) demonstrated in a religious context.

6. For the use of the term see Lewis, B. art., Hashimiyya El2.
form. In this respect it is interesting to note that the head of Ahmad b. Nasr which had been on display in Baghdad since 231/845 was kept under heavy guard. Veneration for Ahmad b. Nasr was reflected in fables that the severed head recited the Qur'ān. A friend of the deceased is said to have heard it recite: (29/2 "Do men think that they will be left alone on saying we believe, and not be tried?"). The watchman who was guarding the head is said to have seen it turn towards the qibla during times of prayers, and recite verses of the Qur'ān.

These fables reflect an indirect expression of opposition by the masses against the authorities. It was generally believed that Ahmad b. Nasr died a martyr. Ţabari says that when al-Mutawakkil came to power he prohibited argumentation on the Qur'ān and other things and wrote to this effect to the provinces. He adds: "He also considered the lowering of the corpses of Ahmad b. Nasr from the post on which it had been crucified but the rabble and rowdies (al-ghawghā' wa l-ra'ā') flocked to the site in great numbers. Their demonstration was reported to al-Mutawakkil who sent a contingent of armed soldiers led by Nasr b. al-Layth against them." Nasr managed to disperse them and arrested twenty of their leaders. These were flogged and given long terms of imprisonment. When more reports about the excitement of the populace were received by the Caliph from his agents in Baghdad

9. Manāqib, 399; Patton, A.b.Š., 116-17; Ya'la, 1, 82.
10. Tab., iii, 1413.
he ordered that the corpse be left crucified. When the corpse was finally taken down in 237/651 and delivered to its relatives to be buried the situation has not changed very much.

The remains of the body were taken by a member of the family called ‘Abd ar-Rahman b. Ṣamza. They were washed and tied in a handkerchief. When prayers were offered to them they were lowered into the grave by members of the family and a certain merchant known as Ibn al-İbzârî. The Caliph al-Mutawakkil is said to have expressed anxiety for the participation of Ibn al-İbzârî in the burial ceremony. It was explained to him that he took part as an old friend of the deceased. The objection of al-Mutawakkil is said to have been against the declining of the tribe of Khuzâ‘a to those who were not members of the tribe to perform rituals usually left to the close of kin. It is clear here that the mourning of Ahmed b. Naṣr was not limited to his family or even the whole tribe of Khuzâ‘a but was equally shared by many others who had no blood relationship with him. The significance of this episode is in that it shows the commitment at a late date to the cause for which Ahmed b. Naṣr had been fighting. The worries of al-Mutawakkil in this respect give us insight into the seriousness of the opposition active in the name of Ahmed b. Naṣr well after his disappearance.

The popular reaction against the authorities during the burial ceremony was reflected in reports sent by Ibn al-Kalbi,

11. Tab., iii, 1413.
Sabib al-Barid to the Caliph describing the huge assembly of the populace (al-‘amma) who rubbed themselves against the body and touched the head for benediction. There is in this connection the curious report by Tabari that somebody instructed his son that if his death came he (sc. his son) should excite the populace into rebellion. This apparently vague statement probably means that this man had pledged himself to lead a rebellion at a definite time but his fear of a premature death led him to entrust the task to his son. It rather fits very well into the troubled situation in Baghdad and Samarra during the burial ceremony. al-Mutawakkil is said to have ordered a curfew and wrote to the governor of Baghdad to ban public gatherings and movements. The conclusion so far is that Ahmad b. Naqr who had been the centre of armed resistance for so long was feared long after his death. The fear of the authorities is justified by the fact that the cause for which Ahmad b. Naqr died lived after him and his supporters still maintained an organised movement capable of staging armed resistance.

Now it was the involvement of ‘Alids, ‘Arabs and religious dignitaries or in general the Hashimites and their supporters in such expressions of discontent which threatened al-Mutawakkil and aroused his fears against these groups. This Hashimite and popular pressure could best be understood by examining friction between Ahmad b. Hanbal and the ruling authorities at the time.

12. Tab., iii, 1413.
14. Tab., iii, 1414.
Some time between 234/648 and 235/649 Ahmad b. Hanbal was summoned by Ishāq b. Ibrahim the governor of Baghdad and told that the commander of the faithful had mentioned him by name and wanted an interview with him.\textsuperscript{15} In his meeting with the governor Ibn Hanbal was sounded on his position on the nature of the Qur'ān. He is said to have avoided giving his opinion arguing that the commander of the faithful had prohibited argumentation on the question of the Qur'ān. He seems to have made the point that the state as well as the religious institutions were anxious to avoid the danger that might arise from further discussion of the question. The governor is said to have assured him that what transpires between them would be treated as secret. Hanbalite sources say that the governor intended to enlighten himself on the subject.\textsuperscript{16} The plausible explanation is perhaps that the Caliph and his client the governor wanted to know where Ahmad stood on the current dispute with the authorities. This hypothesis presupposes that the ruling institutions still used the question of the nature of the Qur'ān to mark out and persecute their opponents. This is supported by the outcome of Ibn Hanbal's interview with the governor. When Ibn Hanbal said to him: "The Qur'ān is not created in whatsoever respect"; the governor is said to have asked him about his authority. In reply he said: "Ga'far b. Muhammad said the Qur'ān is not created nor is it a creator."\textsuperscript{17} The following day

\textsuperscript{15} Mīḥ., 28; Tarj., 31; Manṣūqib, 356f.
\textsuperscript{16} Mīḥ., 28; Tarj., 31; Manṣūqib, 359.
\textsuperscript{17} Tarj., 31.
however he was again summoned by the governor who asked him:

"Who did you say was your authority that the Qurʾān is uncreated? Did you say it was Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya?" Ibn Ḥanbal who was apparently disturbed by the governor's intentions said: "No, I said my authority was Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. 'Ali b. al-ʿAbdāsīn b. 'Ali b. Abī Ṭalib." It can be inferred from this that 'Alids active at the time as opposition were reckoned followers of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya and that the rulers suspected that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was in touch with them. There is, however, the possibility that the reference to the two 'Alids was made here in the context of their intellectual leadership in the science of jurisprudence. This would be in line with our argument here that the rulers were not quarrelling with 'Alid families in particular but rather with the religious leadership of a wider body of people and their supporters whom we called Hashimītes and Sunnītes respectively. Whatever the case may be the relationship of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal with the rulers at the time could at best be described as strained.

After his interview with the governor Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was ordered to present himself before the Caliph in Samarra. The governor himself went out to Samarra probably in accordance with an arrangement to interview him with the Caliph there. Ibn Ḥanbal who was apparently crossed for his interview by the governor made directly for Samarra without calling at the governor's palace in

the usual manner in such occasions. The governor's deputy who was then his son Muḥammad b. Ishaq reported him to his father in Samarra.19 Ishaq who interpreted Ibn Ḥanbal's action as defiance of his authority reported the incident to the Caliph. al-Mutawakkil readily backed his governor and gave orders that Ibn Ḥanbal should return to Baghdad. He is reported to have said: "He (sc. Ibn Ḥanbal) should return even if he had already trod my carpet."20 Ibn Ḥanbal had by then halted for the night at a place called Buṣra.21 It is said that he was awakened in the small hours of the morning and ordered to return to Baghdad.

Shortly after, the accusation of associating with 'Alid activists was openly made against him. A letter is said to have been sent by the Caliph to Yaḥya b. Khāqān to inform Ibn Ḥanbal of the accusation. Yaḥya broke the news to him in the following manner: "I received a letter from the commander of the faithful in which he sends you his greetings and says that if only one person is blameless it would be you; but here is a man now kept in custody who raised the accusation against you that you have sent one of your friends to meet an 'Alid who was arriving (at Baghdad) from Khurāsān. The man is now confined in prison and should you like to interview him we can arrange to send him to you."22 Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have denied the accusation and refrained from saying anything against the man who raised it

20. Mih., 29; Manāqib, 359.
22. Ḫāliya, ix, 215; Manāqib, 362.
against him.

Immediately after this he was accused of harbouring an 'Alid who was wanted by the authorities with the intention to advance him for the Caliphate. The association of Ibn Ḥanbal with 'Alid activists seems strange in view of his family connections with 'Abbasids, nevertheless there seem to have been some grounds for his involvement in the politics of the day. In this connection he is said to have recommended the 'Abbasid Sulayman b. Dā'ūd b. 'Ali al-Hashimī (d. 219/834) as qualified for the Caliphate. With respect to his pro-'Alid feeling it is said that during the reign of al-Mu'tawakkil he declared the *tarbi* that is confirmed upon 'Ali the fourth place among the early successors of the Prophet. This move was said to have reconciled him with Shiʿites one of whom is quoted to have said to his informer: "You have removed from my heart half of my hatred towards Ahmad b. Ḥanbal." His son Ṣaleh once asked him: "What is the answer if somebody said: "Why do you assert the Caliphate of 'Ali? Is it an obligation to concede a fourth Caliph?" Ibn Ḥanbal replied: "Shall we follow what has been reported or the

23. A student is said to have followed Ibn Ḥanbal to his house with the intention of receiving some instruction from him but he was amazed to see him disappear in his house, and urge him to move on away from the area. Somebody explained to the student that Ahmad had been accused of harbouring an 'Alid. Shortly after a police force led by a certain Muḥammad b. Naqr surrounded the place and Ibn Ḥanbal was virtually prohibited from contacting other people. See *Manāqib*, 361; cp. *Miḥ.*, 29; *Tarj.* 32f; *Ḩilya*, ix, 206-7.


25. cp. *Tarj.*, 28; Yaʿīla, i, 393; In this respect he is said to have urged the excommunication of those who refuse to acknowledge 'Ali as the fourth Caliph after the Prophet. Yaʿīla, i, 45.

26. cp. Yaʿīla, i, 186.
opinion of those who deny the Caliphate of ‘Ali? It is my belief that ‘Ali was one of the rightly guided Caliphs, he called himself the commander of the faithful, and the people of Badre unanimously agreed in calling him so, he led the pilgrimage, executed the law (the cutting of hands and stoning).”27 Ṣaleḥ then rejoined: “What if somebody said a Kharijite may execute the law (ṣad yahidd al-Kharijī) and calls himself the commander of the faithful?” In reply Ibn Ḥanbal attacked this view violently as the view of the extremists who reckon ‘Ali Kharijite.28

The views raised here are connected with the question of tāblīl in which Ibn Ḥanbal’s position also shifted with the circulation of traditions which have become current at the time. Among these the most important were two traditions. The first was on the authority of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar which counts Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali as the four successors of the Prophet. This tradition seems to have superseded the one by the same authority which ran as follows: “The Prophet used to hear us count the Caliphs as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman and he expressed no objection.”29 The other tradition says: “The Caliphate ran for a span of thirty years, Abu Bakr ruled for two years, ‘Umar ruled for ten years, ‘Uthman for twelve years and ‘Ali for six years.”30 On the whole the argument that ‘Ali was the best suited for the Caliphate after ‘Uthman was significantly enough forcefully

27. Tarj., 28.
29. Tarj., 28; cp. Ya‘la, i, 243.
put forward by Ibn Ḥanbal at the time, that is during the reign of al-Mutawakkil. 'Ali's quarrel with Mu‘awiya and other contemporaries was on the other hand dodged as bygone and a matter not suited for later generations to discuss. It is reported that Ibn Ḥanbal was once asked about the dispute between 'Ali and Mu‘awiya by somebody whom he first ignored but when told that the enquirer was a Hashimite he smiled in his face and explained the matter to him. This incident further indicates a like mind among Hashimites on this issue of ta’lil. The association of Ibn Ḥanbal with Hashimites was occasionally referred to above. He was occasionally frequented by Hashimites during his inquisition and particularly when his health deteriorated. When he died only Hashimites and close friends were allowed to share the ceremonial rituals with the family. The conclusion from what we have learnt so far is that Ibn Ḥanbal's pro-'Ali utterances and contact with 'Alids and Hashimites of a similar outlook had political implications at the time. At least the rulers seem justified in interpreting his views on 'Ali b. Abi Ṭālib at a time when the official policy against 'Alids was at full swing.

When Ibn Ḥanbal was made to return to Baghdad as a punishment for his deliberate undermining of the authorities at Baghdad he is said to have refrained from teaching traditions. Before his

31. Ya‘la, 1, 97.
32. Miḥ., 38.
33. Ḥanbal says that Ahmad b. Ḥanbal decided not to teach traditions in order to resist pressure by al-Mutawakkil and his officials to make him teach at the court. Miḥ., 37-8; cp. Manāqib, 368-69.
clash with the governor of Baghdad he had been active in this field and was quoted as saying: "People need the traditions at this time more than ever before." A little later he was ordered by the governor Ishaq b. Ibrahim to confine himself to his home and not to attend the weekly Friday prayers, other public prayers or public gatherings of any sort. He was threatened that "otherwise something similar to what happened to you during the reign of Abu Ishaq (sc. al-Mu'tasim) would befall you again."

The accusation that he was harbouring an 'Alid to advance him for the Caliphate was made by a certain Muhammad b. Shuja' ath-Thalji (d. 266/879) on the testimony of a man said to have been from the jibila. Hanbalite sources dismiss Ibn ath-Thalji as an insignificant innovator but he seems to have been a leading jurist at the time. Beside his eminence in jurisprudence he was interested in traditions and Qur'anic studies. A list of his works includes a pamphlet against the Mushabbiha. It seems to have been written against Ahmad b. Hanbal and his circle who were at the time accused of tashbih. Hanbalite sources accuse him of fabricating traditions on tashbih and passing them on the authority of Ahl al-Hadith so as to discredit them.

34. These restrictions were imposed upon him shortly after his return from Buṣra for failing to pay respects to the deputy-governor at Baghdad. See Tarj., 33; Hilya, ix, 207.
35. Miḥ., 30; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya wa l-Nihaya, x, 337.
37. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, ix, 220.
This information suggests that Ibn ath-Thaljl was among the main opponents of Ahmad b. Hanbal and his circle. He is further said to have been inclined towards the Mu’tazilites. Thus he seems to have been involved in the movement led by Ibn Abi Du’ād and his associates against Ahl al-Ḥadīth. He is said to have been advanced by Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm for appointment as a judge in Baghdad. In this connection we get a glimpse of the struggle of the forces at the court. ‘Ali b. al-Jahm who was known as a follower of Ahmad b. Hanbal and moved in the circle of Arab Khurasanites is said to have cautioned al-Mutawakkil against the appointment of Ibn ath-Thaljl because he was a follower of Bishr al-Marisī. His appointment was consequently suspended. Reports sympathetic to Ibn ath-Thaljl claim that he himself declined the post. We are interested at this stage in the existence in places of authority in the administration of elements like ‘Ali b. al-Jahm and others who sympathised with Ahmad b. Hanbal and the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. We had occasion earlier on to detect tendencies inside the administration.

39. Dhahabi, Mizān, iii, 577.
40. Dhahabi reports that ‘Ali b. al-Jahm said to Ahmad b. Hanbal: “The affair of Ibn ath-Thaljl is that the governor Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm had pleaded with the Caliph al-Mutawakkil to appoint him judge in Baghdad, and that al-Mutawakkil nearly did so for when I entered his chamber he was about to dispatch the letter of appointment. He asked me about the character of Ibn ath-Thaljl and told me that Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm had recommended him for the post. I then told him that Ibn ath-Thaljl was a follower of Bishr al-Marisī and he destroyed the letter.” Dhahabi, Mizān, iii, 577-8.
41. Jawāhir, ii, 61; also below, pp. 90, 188.
in favour of Ahmad b. Ǧanbal working against Ibn Abi Duʿād and his circle. ‘Ali b. al-Jahm was quoted as saying that his ventures against Iipation b. Ibrahim had caused his exile to Khurāsān and imprisonment there.42 The exile of ‘Ali b. al-Jahm suggests a temporary victory for Ibn Abi Duʿād and his associates over those who sympathised with Ahmad b. Ǧanbal. This seems to have encouraged Ibn ath-Thaljī possibly in acquiescence with Ibn Abi Duʿād to discredit Ahmad b. Ǧanbal and turn the authorities against him by accusing him of intriguing with ‘Alid activists against the Caliph. The reference here is to his accusation of Ibn Ǧanbal of harbouring an ‘Alid wanted by the authorities which was made against him immediately after these developments.

Late one night during the summer season in the year (237/851) a small contingent of police inspectors including two women and accompanied by Ǧahib al-Khabar who came from Samarra called at Ibn Ǧanbal’s home and faced him with the charge that an ‘Alid wanted by the Caliph was said to have been hiding in his home. Ibn Ǧanbal denied knowing anything about the affair and affirmed his obedience to the Caliph. The police officer sent by the governor of Baghdad wanted to record the defence made by Ibn Ǧanbal but Ǧahib al-Khabar disagreed with him. He, however, insisted and recorded Ibn Ǧanbal’s statements in full arguing “I shall report this to my master” meaning the Governor of Baghdad.43

42. Dhahabi, Mizān, 111, 578.
43. Kf., 29.
The Fall of the Opponents of Ibn Ḥanbal

Meanwhile things began to move in favour of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. Ahmad b. Abi Du‘ād had fallen from power and the forces against Ahl al-Ḥadīth were weakened. 'Ali b. al-Jahm was back at the court after his exile for a year in Khurāsān. Ibn Ḥanbal’s uncle went to Samarra and made contacts in an attempt to establish his nephew’s innocence. His efforts seem to have materialised. Two days after the search of his house Ibn Ḥanbal received a letter signed by ‘Ali b. al-Jahm breaking to him the news that his innocence had been established and that the Caliph had arranged to send him a present and an invitation to Samarra. A day later, the messenger of the Caliph, Ya‘qūb Qawsara arrived with the present and the invitation. On his arrival in Samarra Ibn Ḥanbal was greeted by generals and senior secretaries and scribes including Wāṣиф, ‘Ali b. al-Jahm, Muḥammad b. Mu‘āwiya, Muḥammad b. al-Jarrah, Yaḥyā b. Ḥaqāṣ, Yaḥyā b. Ḥarthama and many others. These were the elements who rejoiced at the fall of Ahmad b. Abi Du‘ād and were now openly reckoned the supporters of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and Ahl al-Ḥadīth or more exactly the Hashimites. There was rejoicing among them that the opponents of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal failed to discredit him. ‘Ali b. al-Jahm, Qawsara, and Wāṣиф referred to the failure of Ibn Ḥanbal’s opponents to rejoice at his misfortune. There were attempts by

44. Tab., 111, 1410f.
45. Miḥ., 33-4; Tarj., 33; Ḥilya, ix, 207.
46. Miḥ., passim.
47. Miḥ., 34-5; Ḥilya, ix, 208.
these elements to entice the Caliph against the opponents of Ibn Ḥanbal. Qawṣara who conducted Ibn Ḥanbal to Samarra tried in vain all the way thither to provoke him against Ibn ath-Thalīḥ. Ibn Ḥanbal's restraint led someone in the company to put it bluntly to him saying: "Qawṣara wants to report what you say about Ibn ath-Thalīḥ to the commander of the faithful." Ibn Ḥanbal, however, remained silent. At one stage Qawṣara said to him: "I was told by 'Abdallah b. Ishāq (sc. the governor of Baghdad) that al-Muwābīḥ had told him that he was willing to testify that Ibn ath-Thalīḥ said Ahmad worshipped Ḥānī." Ibn ath-Thalīḥ was bound to be judged by God in the after world.

Disawayed by Ibn Ḥanbal's reluctance to speak against his opponents Qawṣara turned to Ṣalīḥ (Ibn Ḥanbal's son) and said: "This is amazing, I ask him to utter one word against them that I can report to the Caliph and he does not do so!"

Ibn Ḥanbal and the Politics of the Court

Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was eventually drawn into court politics. On his arrival in Samarra Waṣīf sent him Yaḥya b. Harthama with the message: "The Emir sends you his greetings and thanks God that Ahl al-bidā' were not availed the opportunity of rejoicing at your misfortune. Now that you know what happened to Ibn Abī Duʿād you must speak for the sake of what is due to God.

48. Tarj., 35; cp. Dhahabi, Mizān, iii, 578 where Ibn ath-Thalīḥ is reported to have said that Ibn Ḥanbal possessed books of Zandāqa.

49. Tarj., 35; Ḥilya, ix, 208.
While in Samarra Ibn Hanbal received daily reports on the development of the position of Ibn Abi Du'ād. It seems that his advice was sought on the legality of the confiscation of the property of Ibn Abi Du'ād. It was during his presence in Samarra that Ibn Abi Du'ād was sent down to Baghdad and final arrangements for the selling of his property were made. So far it seems that personalities like 'Ali b. al-Jahm, Waḏīf and other secretaries and generals were for their own part interested in winning Ibn Hanbal's favour. It was 'Ali b. al-Jahm and Qawṣara who pressed Ahmad b. Ḥanbal to accept the Caliph's gift of 10,000 dirhams. When ǧāḥib al-Barīd reported to al-Mutawakkil that Ahmad b. Ḥanbal got rid of the money 'Ali b. al-Jahm came to his defence and said to the Caliph: "What would he do with the money? It is true that he gave it away; but the people now know that he had accepted it from you."  

The intention of al-Mutawakkil was to secure Ibn Ḥanbal's support at a time when opposition against him was gaining momentum. Even before Ibn Ḥanbal's arrival in Samarra al-Mutawakkil had asked his ruling on questions of general belief. More interesting however was his attempt to persuade him to reside in Samarra to teach traditions there. Muḥammad b. Mu'āwiya was asked to do the persuasion and he told Ibn Ḥanbal: "The commander of the faithful

50. Tarj., 35; Manāqib, 364; Ḥilya, ix, 208; cp. Mīḥ., 35.
52. Tarj., 34; Ḥilya, ix, 208, cp. Manāqib, 362.
is fond of you and he says you should reside here in Samarra and teach traditions. He also told Ṣalih Ibn Ḥanbal's elder son that the commander of the faithful had ordered that the sum of 4,000 dirhams should be paid monthly to the family and relatives.

The main aim in keeping Ahmad b. Ḥanbal in Samarra was, however, to secure his support for the advancement of al-Mu'tazz as successor. Yaḥya b. Khāqān is quoted as saying to him: "I have orders from the commander of the faithful to come to you to take you to Abu 'Abdallah (sc. al-Mu'tazz) and to bestow upon you one of the highest ranks and that Abu 'Abdallah should be entrusted to you (li yakun fi hijrīka)." Ibn Ḥanbal was eventually led to the palace where a ceremonial reception was held for the occasion of entrusting al-Mu'tazz to him. Al-Mu'tazz himself was seated on a high throne. Ibn Ḥanbal was made to approach the prince and salute him. Ibn Ḥanbal's family and friends were seated in an adjacent hall from where they could watch the ceremony. Al-Mutawakkil was said to have watched from behind a curtain. Ibn Ḥanbal was made to ascend stairs and approach the prince. When beside the prince Yaḥya b. Khāqān addressed Ibn Ḥanbal: "Ya Abu 'Abdallah the commander of the faithful has brought you here to have the blessing of your company and to entrust Abu 'Abdallah (al-Mu'turz) to you." A butler then approached with honorary robes and a headgear with which Yaḥya b. Khāqān dressed.

53. Tarj., 36; Manāqib, 364.
54. Tarj., 36; Ḥilya, ix, 209; Manāqib, 364.
55. Tarj., 37.
Ibn Hanbal. Eventually the black dress of the 'Abbasid's was confirmed on him. It was composed of a black outer garment (ṣurrā'a) and a shawl (ṭaylasān). 56

The reaction of Ibn Hanbal

Ahmad b. Hanbal was seriously disturbed by these developments. He said to his son Ṣalih: "I have avoided these people all these years and now when the term of my life is almost at its end I am afflicted with them." 57 He was crossed with his family for their acceptance of the monthly pension. He had first been made to reside in a house which he later discovered to have belonged to the Turkish general Itākh. He then insisted that he should be moved from it. It was suggested to him that another home be evacuated for him but he would have nothing of the sort. At length a temporary house was rented for him for 200 dirhems per month. It was especially decorated but he rejected its comfort and luxuries and insisted that he should be allowed to return to his home in Baghdad. When he got wind of plans that a bigger house was to be bought for him he strongly opposed the idea and cautioned his sons against accepting it telling them: "They want to make this place (sc. Samarra) my home." 58 At the time he was suffering from toothache and his eyes gave him trouble too. He also exhausted his physical strength by adhering to a strict discipline of continuous fasting.

56. Tarj., 36-7; Manāqib, 365.
57. Tarj., 37; Manāqib, 365.
58. Tarj., 37; ʿilya, ix, 210-11.
and prayers. The court doctor Ibn Masawayh who examined him reported to al-Mutawakkil that he was suffering from malnutrition and general exhaustion.

It was on the strength of this medical report that he was eventually allowed to return to Baghdad. He did not wait for official preparations to conduct him thither in a specially built boat, but stole away unnoticed. On his arrival in Baghdad he disappeared into his home and withdrew from public life.

The failure to reconcile Ahmad b. Hanbal and his circle

The conclusion so far is that al-Mutawakkil did not reverse the policy of his predecessors regarding the inquisition for his religious convictions and piety as is commonly believed but as a result of developments in the political scene and the existing conditions at the time. His alleged anti-'Alid policy when closely examined seems to have been directed against the whole body of opposition groups active against him at the time. These include 'Alids, 'Abbāsids, the Arab contingent in Baghdad as well as jurists and traditionists. Their opposition was expressed in its public phase in religious form as witnessed in the veneration of 'Alid tombs, the corpse of Ahmad b. Naqr and the rallying around the figure of Ahmad b. Hanbal. The switch in the official policy came as a result of changes inside the administration and conditions in the political scene as a whole which made it necessary to conciliate the religious institutions and the Hashimites. The
conciliation of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and his circle and the patronisation of some of Aḥl al-Ḥadīth was as a matter of fact an official attempt to split the opposition particularly inside the religious institutions and make the execution of certain policies regarding succession and other matters feasible. Many traditionists and jurisconsults of the circle of Aḥl al-Ḥadīth largely from Bāṣra welcomed the official approach. They were patronised and made to reside in Samarra or Baghdad to give public lectures and advise the government. 59

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, however, kept his aloofness and withdrew from public life. He declined to associate with the governors of Baghdad who are said to have attempted very hard to draw him to their palace. 60 Similarly he avoided the court at Samarra and the Caliphs' retinue. When al-Mutawakkil passed through Baghdad on his way to Madā'in he was expected to meet him to pay his respects together with the other dignitaries of Baghdad but he did not show up and is said to have cautioned his elder son Ṣaḥḥ against joining the reception party. 61 This negative attitude most likely reflects his disapproval of association with the rulers. In this respect he is said to have disapproved of those ulema who accepted patronage and took residence in Samarra or Baghdad. It is reported that when he discovered that al-Mutawakkil wanted to keep him in Samarra he remarked: "What they (sc. the rulers) want is

60. cp. Manāqib, 379, 405, 422; Ḥilya, ix, 213.
61. Manāqib, 376.
that this place (sic. Samarra) be my prison (habal). The reason
why those who took residence in this town (did so) is because
when they were patronised (literally given, 'u'tu) they accepted;
and when ordered (to convey certain traditions) they conveyed
them." In this connection it is significant that he decided
to stop teaching at this point in time, precisely when he was
summoned to Samarra by al-Mutawakkil. It will be shown in
Chapter Seven that these jurisconsults and traditionists who were
patronised by al-Mutawakkil represent the forerunners of the
Waqifiyya and the Lafijiyya who came to be strongly denounced by
Ibn Ḥanbal as Jahmites. It is sufficient here to say that they
include Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl who was then reckoned the arch enemy
of Ibn Ḥanbal.64

This way of looking at things may seem to contradict with
reports which assert contact between Ibn Ḥanbal and the court of
al-Mutawakkil. The explanation, however, is that the policy of
al-Mutawakkil was designed to woo jurisconsults and Abī al-Ḥadīth
and to this extent might have presented Ibn Ḥanbal with the
opportunity to fight his opponents among the ulama class;65 but

62. Ḥilya, ix, 211.
63. Mīh., 29.
64. The group include beside Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl the following
traditionists: Muḥammad az-Zubayrī, Ḥabīb b. Ḥabīb
al-Ḥarawi, the two brothers Ḥabīb Allah and 'Uthman the sons
of Ibn Abī Shayba. See Ḥanāqīb, 357 ff. See further Kht., ii,
344 for others. For Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl see Chapter Seven
below, also Kht., vi, 356 ff; Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb, i, 223 ff.
65. We now know that his opponents remained influential under
al-Mutawakkil. See note 5 above.
in so far as he understood its political implications for the religious institutions he seems to have remained unreconciled with the regime. The advice he is said to have rendered to this administration was largely of religious nature and rather reflects close connections between him and a certain group at the court namely Khurāsanītes like 'Ali b. al-Jahm, Yahya b. Mirthama, Yahya b. Khāqān and his son 'Ubayd Allah and men of similar outlook rather than with the administration as a whole. The fact that on political matters a wide gap existed between him and the government of al-Mutawakkil is apparent in his reactions while at Samarra but more explicitly in the Caliph's statement: "I have exempted you from appearance in the black dress, and the frequenting of heir-apparents and the court (a‘faytuka min liba as-sawād wa an-rukubi ila wulat al-‘uhūd wa ila ad-Dār." 

It is interesting to note that during his sickness which caused his death judges and officials who went to visit him were turned back while Hashimites and indeed ordinary citizens of Baghdad were admitted to his bedroom to bid him farewell. At the time Ḥanbalites emerged as a strong force in Baghdad and were destined to play a leading role in the long period of unrest which marked the following history of the city. The reaction of the

66. See for example the issues of adh-Dhabhī in Farj., 35; and um al-Qur'ān in Manāqib, 377.
67. For his relationship with those officials see above p. 83. also Mīḥ., passim.
68. Hīlyā, ix, 211; Manāqib, 368.
69. Manāqib, 403f; op. al-Mānṣūrī al-ʿĀqīd fi ṭārīḵī asgūb Ahmad Fl8; Manāqib 413-4. For the special treatment of Hashimites and those of a similar outlook see Manāqib, 403f.
authorities towards them was cautious but naturally concerned with law and order. When at the time of his sickness the authorities at Baghdad and Samarra heard of people flocking to his home and filling the nearby streets and lanes they sent spies and organised a network of fast post to keep watch over any development and eventually sealed the area off. The burial ceremony posed an even more serious threat to law and order when 'Azanbalites shouted the praise of Sunnism and cursed their opponents namely Bishr al-Karīsī, al-Karābīsī (who was then still alive) and the so-called Ahl al-Bida' in general. al-Mutawakkil is said to have asked al-Karābīsī to remain at home and to have subsequently stationed troops at the burial ground to keep the people off the area.

This trend of opposition fits very well with the argument that the circle in which Ibn 'Azanbal moved namely the Arab aristocracy in Baghdad remained the main opposition right down to the end of the reign of al-Mutawakkil. D. Sourdel has shown that jurists and Hashimites were opposed to the policy of al-Mutawakkil and seem to have been in touch with al-Muntasīr who was at the time contemplating the cessation of power. It is significant that al-Mutawakkil is said to have avoided on the last Friday before he was killed to conduct the prayers because of

70. Manāqib, 464.
71. Manāqib, 417.
72. Manāqib, 418.
the arrival in Samarra of many Hashimites from Baghdad to put forward some revendications to him. 74 This indeed ties up very well with the report that when Ibn Hanbal was going out to Samarra in 237/651-852 to meet al-Mutawakkil he promised a group of Ansar and Hashimites who came to see him off that he would talk to the Caliph about his obligation towards his relatives (sc. Hashimites), the Ansar, the Khuja'irIn and the good of the Muslim community. 75 When at the court in Samarra he made it clear to his followers and those officials who were pressing him to appear before the Caliph that if he was to see him he would do nothing other than reproach him for his maltreatment of the descendants of the Khuja'irIn and the Ansar. 76 It is here that what usually seem disconnected episodes of active opposition by Hashimites and their associated among the Khuja'irites and the circle of Ahl al-Kadith since the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mun and possibly for some time before can now be seen in perspective as one long drawn struggle. Certainly the movement of the Mutawwi'a which began under Ahmad b. Nu'ayr and the more subtle opposition of the circle of Ahl al-Kadith led by Ahmad b. Janbal represent an old opposition trend which continued under al-Mutawakkil and was hardly reconciled by him as is commonly believed.

74. Ibid., 9.
75. Manāqib, 359.
76. Manāqib, 375.
CHAPTER 5

JAHM B. ŞAFWÂN

This chapter examines the curious assertion made by Hanbalites of the 3rd/9th century that some of their contemporaries were the followers of Jahm. My main concern will be to try to understand the intention behind their attribution to Jahm of ideas that can be proved to have been developed centuries later. The name Jahmites given to those alleged followers of Jahm would not be disputed by me at this stage.

The search for a source for the alleged views of Jahm

The first problem that one faces in a study of Jahm is the unanimous report by Hanbalite sources that he took the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an from al-Ja'd b. Dirham. To make the assertion of student-teacher relationship between the two sound convincing the sources assert that they have met. There is for instance the statement that al-Ja'd was from Khurasan and hence the possibility that Jahm might have met him there. Other places like Syria, and Kufa are also mentioned. With respect to Syria there is the report that while in Syria Jahm was asked: "Whither art thou going?" He replied: "I am going to search for a God to worship." The suggestion that they met in Kufa sounds more emphatic:

1. Shadharat, i, 169; Dhahabi, Tārikh al-Islam, iv, 239. al-Ja'd is said to have propagated the doctrine of KHALQ al-Qur'ān during the reign of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik (105/723 - 125/742) see Athīr, v, 196.
3. Lacouste, La Profession, (arabic text), 91.
"When al-Ja‘d propagated his doctrine (so that the Qur‘ān is created) the Umayyad rulers wanted to take him but he took abode in Kufa where Jahm b. Ṣafwān met him and took it over from him." There is no doubt that these statements are mere fabrications intended for slander. It would, however, be worth while to speculate on the intention of the sources in maintaining that Jahm was a student of al-Ja‘d. As al-Ja‘d was connected with Syria one suspects that the sources are attempting to establish through him a link between Jahm and Syria and hence a Christian, Jewish or pagan source for his ideas.

A Christian source is doubtful; and the allusion to it by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Ma‘mūn during the Miḥra and again in connection with the release of prisoners of war captured by Byzantines was certainly made with reference to ideas current in the 3rd/9th century. The tracing by the Islamic sources of the question of the createdness of the Qur‘ān to a Jewish source where the name of Labīd is given can readily be dismissed as intended for slander. The hint at Christian and Jewish sources that merits attention is the reported argument of Jahm against Muqātil b. Sulaymān who is said to have used Christian and Jewish sources in

5. Ibn Ḥanbal’s statement in ar-Radd ‘ala l-Jahmiyya evolves around the argument used by the Caliph al-Ma‘mūn against the seven traditionists interviewed by him in 218/833 op. TabyyIn Kadhib al-Muftari, 353. The ransoming of prisoners took place under al-Wāthiq who made confession of the official doctrine the condition for their release from Byzantines. Ya‘qūbi, Tārīkh, iii, 215.
his Qur'anic studies. Their argument is however reported by a
certain al-‘Abbas b. Muṣ‘ab in his book on the history of Marw
as follows: "Muqāṭil used to tell pious stories in the cathedral
mosque at Marw when Jahm b. Ṣafwān arrived and joined his circle.
After some time they fell out with each other (fawqa‘at al-
‘aṣabiyya baynahuma) and each reacted by composing a refutation
of the views of the other."7 Now the mentioning of ‘aṣabiyya and
the fact that Muqāṭil stood in the opposite camp to that of Jahm
in the struggle between Naqr b. Sayyār and al-Ḍārīth b. Surayj make
one suspects that the polemic between them was political rather
than religious. The Jahmiyya of earlier times were as a matter of
fact distinguished from Christians and Jews where the latter two
were interestingly enough preferred to them.

The rebuke of Jahmites as worse than Christians and Jews
could be helpful in leading us to suspect a pagan influence on
Jahm. It is not an easy matter, however, to establish Jahm's
acquaintance with Greek thought let alone to assert that he
antedates the introduction of neoplatonism by the philosophers.
Professor R.M. Frank's argument to this effect suffers from failure
to distinguish between later views described by Sunnites as Jahmite
and those views that can be attributed to Jahm himself.8 The time
factor is essential here as it is the only criterion by which we
can distinguish between neoplatonic and other ideas. The report

7. Quoted in Al-‘Qāsimī, Tārīkh al-Jahmiyya, 8.
8. Frank, R.M. "The neoplatonism of al-Jahm b. Ṣafwān", Museum, 76,
1965, 399-424.
by Ibn Taymiyya that the views of Jahm were derived from Sabaeans
Philosophers is interesting in so far as it focuses attention on
local pagan sources. 9 In this connection al-Ja’d too is said to
have come under Sabaean influence. 10 Further it is significant
that Ibn Taymiyya generalises on this pagan philosophical
influence on Jahm in that he identifies the Summaniiyya or
Buddhists with Sabaean Philosophers. 11 Early reports including a
statement by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal also assert Summanite influence on
Jahm. 12 The influence of the Summaniiyya on him seems more
convincing in view of the likelihood of his contact with its
adherents in Khurāsān or the regions adjacent to it.

The alleged views of Jahm

It would help in this respect to examine ideas attributed
to Jahm, as well as his activities in Khurāsān before we attempt
to explore the nature of his relationship with the Summaniiyya.

Jahm is said to have been the first to propagate the doctrine
of the createdness of the Qur’ān. 13 As the question of the nature
of the Qur’ān is related to the doctrine of God’s knowledge it
would be more convenient to start with an examination of what the

ZDMG, 53, 1899, p. 72; al-Qāsimī, Tārīkh al-Jahmiyya, 34.
10. Dāhibi says al-Ja’d was originally from Harrān. Tārīkh al-Islam,
iv, 239; al-Alusi, Jalā’ al-‘aynayn, 129.
12. Ibn Ḥanbal, ar-Radd, f 26-3a; Malaṭi, Tanbīh, 99.
sources attribute to him in this respect and then approach the main issue of the nature of the Qur'ān.

God's knowledge

It is not at all clear what Jahm held with regard to the knowledge of God. The ambiguity comes from the attitude of our sources which are unanimously opposed to the Jahmiyya being largely Ḥanbalite. In most cases the views presented by the sources are not precisely those of Jahm but are rather a reflection of what the sources think that Jahmites and Rafiḍites have held. The ambiguity here is caused by what seems to have been a deliberate confusion of views attributed to Jahm with those attributed to Hisham b. al-Ḥakam and an anonymous sect known as the Sukūniyya or Sakaniyya.

On the whole the sources attribute the following three views to Jahm and Hisham b. al-Ḥakam: 1) That God does not know the thing until it comes into existence. 2) That he knows things at the moment of their coming into being. 3) That he knows things in their entirety prior to their coming into being through a created knowledge. The first is the frequently reported view. Number 2 and 3 are usually mentioned with less certainty to be

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14. These are refutations of the Jahmiyya by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) [GALS, 1, 310, 7]; his son ‘Abd allāh (d. 291/903) [GALS, 1, 310, 3a]; Khushaysh b. Agram whose work is largely incorporated in Tanbīḥ by Maḥāfiẓ; ad-Barimi (d. 282/895) ed. by G. Vitestam, Lund, 1960; Ibn Qutayba ed. Kawthāri, Cairo, 1349 E., new edition 1388/1968. For sources drawing on these and further works see lists in Ibn Taymiyya, op.cit., 74; Ṭāsimī, Tārīkh al-Jahmiyya, 31.

15. op. Kayyāt, Al-İntisār, 92; Shahrastānī, İqdām, 215f; Maq., 37, 222, 493-94.
They certainly echo later philosophical views mainly that God knows through his Omnipresence in the Universe and by knowing himself as creation is embodied in him. The striking feature, however, is the obvious contradiction between them for whereas in Numbers 1 and 2 the assumption is that God does not know the thing until it comes into being, or at the moment of its coming into being, that in Number 3 is that "It is possible for Jahm that God knows things prior to their existence through a created knowledge". This indicates that the sources are not certain about the position of Jahm on this issue. al-Ash'ari makes the uncertainty of the sources more clear when he says: "the contrary of this is reported of al-Jahm, mainly that he did not say that God knows things before they exist because prior to their coming into being they were nothing to be known or unknown."17 The fact that this is immediately followed by the statement: "his opponents charge him with holding the view that God's knowledge is produced in time ('ilm Allah muhdath)", makes one suspect that these reports are mere speculations on the part of the sources. The suggestion that heresiographers are trying to find a place for later views in the alleged system of Jahm is supported by their hostile deduction that on the basis of his premise Jahm must hold the same view regarding God's power and life (al-qudra wa l-ḥayat). 18

16. op. Al-Intisār, 92; Shahrastānī, Iqdām, 215f; Milal, 60; Maq. 222, 494.
17. Maq. 222, 494.
18. Maq. 494. compare the sources' deductions regarding the attribute of Qudra. See for example Mawāqif, viii, 398-99.
It is significant that Ḥanbalite sources in particular seem more concerned with the attribute of knowledge than with other attributes. We now know that the question of God’s knowledge was raised during the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal under al-Mu’tasim. The assumption here would be that the emphasis on the attribute of knowledge was because of its connection with the dispute over the nature of the Qur’ān. Looking at the issue in this perspective we can begin to appreciate why the sources are at pains to establish that Jahm held that God’s knowledge was created. With this background in mind one notices that although earlier sources and those drawing from sources contemporary with the Mihna are more concerned with the issue, they significantly enough make no reference to Jahm in this connection. A glaring example of this is the absence of the name of Jahm from the fuller treatment of the subject by ad-Darimi.19 Similarly contemporary sources like the work on refutation of the Jahmiyya attributed to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, the report on the Mihna by Ḥanbal b. Iṣḥāq and the biography of Ibn Ḥanbal by his son Ṣaleh discuss the attribute of knowledge in the context of the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal of 220/635 but make no reference to Jahm.20 In this context the uncreatedness of the attribute of knowledge is taken for granted and the Qur’ān, which is disputed, is related to it so as to prove that it too is uncreated.21

19. Darimi, ar-Radd ‘ala l-Jahmiyya, 58f.
20. Miḥ., passim; Ibn Ḥanbal, ar-Radd, f.17a-17b; Tarj., 15.
It is significant that up to the time of the inquisition of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in 220/335 none of the "Jahmiyya", Mu.tazilites or others, who took part in the debate against Ibn Ḥanbal believed the knowledge of God to be created. As a matter of fact this was the inquisitors’ weakest point which Ibn Ḥanbal exploited and in effect put them in the defensive.  

This would mean that up to the year 220/335 the opponents of Ibn Ḥanbal did not formulate any definite ideas about the attribute of knowledge. It seems that all they could do in order to combat his argument of relating the Qur’ān to the attribute of knowledge was to deny the link between them. Thus a certain an-Nawfaly who seems to have been brought later on in the debate against Ibn Ḥanbal, is reported to have said to the contingent of Ibn Abī Dū’ād in the inquisition council set by al-Muṭṭāṣim: "this ignorant (man) (so. Ibn Ḥanbal) makes a fuss about (God’s) knowledge, what is the connection between the knowledge (of God) and the Qur’ān?"  

The suggestion that can be put here is that it seems that it was at the earliest in the course of the debate of the nature of the Qur’ān during the Miḥna that the "Jahmiyya" were eventually forced into the position of having to assert that the knowledge of God is created. This would have eased the pressure on the opponents of Ibn Ḥanbal and put him in the defensive by shifting the discussion from relating the Qur’ān to God’s knowledge to having to establish first of all that the knowledge of God is itself

22. cp. Tarj., 15; Mīh., 11; Manāqib, 321.
uncreated. The shift is actually indicated by ad-Darimi's critique against the 'Jahmiyya' that he who confesses the uncreatedness of knowledge defeats his position (man asarrara bi l-'ilm fa qad khaṣīm). The suggestion is that it was about this time that some of the views attributed to Jahm were formulated. Ad-Darimi (d. 282/895) appears when dealing with this issue to be cautioning his own contemporaries against the danger of views which had just come into circulation. Thus he says: "why should we doubt that in the near future (literally tomorrow) some people may go to the extent of denying the attributes of God (taʿtil qifat Allah) which this band (iqāba) had already set the pace for until (when) they denied God's prior knowledge of his creation, and of what acts created beings would do before they do them". This echoes the first view attributed to Jahm namely that God does not know the thing until it comes into existence. Ad-Darimi's concern with the implications of this view for his time is stated in his following exposition of it. "The interpretation of their assertion and belief (madhhabihim) that every time God produces creatures a knowledge is produced for him through his coming to know what he did not know, is as they assert that God existed with no knowledge until the creatures (al-khalaq) came into being and enlightened him with knowledge so that every time a creature is produced a coinciding knowledge is produced for God: so according to them he is knowing

25. Ibid., 59.
of what exists but not knowing of what does not exist until it comes into being". 26

Ad-Darimi also shows fuller understanding of the view that God knows the thing at the moment of its coming into being. In this regard he says: "according to this view the position of the Jahmiyya is that he (God) creates his act of knowing at the coming of the thing into being." Further this view receives the following elaborate treatment by ad-Darimi: "They (sc. the Jahmiyya) then said: we do not believe that God knows, from his seat on his throne, what goes on in the world for according to them the knowledge of God is God. They assert that God is in every place, and that he possesses no knowledge with which to know; he does not hear with hearing (capacity), does not see with sight and allege that his hearing, sight, and knowing are one and the same. According to them hearing is not distinct from sight, nor is sight other than hearing, or hearing different from sight for according to them he is totally hearing, sight, and knowing, and is in his totality in every place. If he knows, he knows in his entirety, if he hears, he hears in his entirety, and if he sees, he sees in his entirety. They assert that God's knowing is in the manner of beholding and witnessing so that when the thing comes into being he knows it through a knowledge of its being and not by an eternal knowledge subsistent in his essence prior to its (the thing's) coming into being; rather when the thing is produced (hadatha) he himself is

26. Ibid., 65.
present with 'the thing' and 'the thing' itself is with him. If he wills the thing to be he is present to designate it in its place. This according to them is the knowing of things by God, not that he knew any of them (through an eternal knowledge subsistent) in his essence prior to the coming to being of this knowledge. 27

The proposition that these views were, at the earliest, formulated towards the end of the first half of the 3rd/9th century is supported by the interest shown at the time in Greek thought following recent translations of Greek works under al-Ma'mūn. Those responsible for their circulation were probably the students of Abu l-Madhayl al-'Allāf who seem to have much in common with the 'Jahmiyya'. On the whole neoplatonic philosophical jargon permeate the later elaboration of these views by heresiographers particularly by the philosophically minded among them. 28

The third view namely that God knows things in their entirety prior to their existence is probably the view of the Sunnites but is distorted here as that of Jahm and Ḫisham b. al-Ŷakam by the qualification that this knowledge is through a created knowledge which God creates for himself. It is echoed in the alleged argument of Ḫisham b. al-Ŷakam with Sunnites which goes as follows:

"Do you not infer that he (God) has knowledge from his being knowing? So do we infer the origination of his knowledge from the renewal of his being knowing so that if it is said that he knew in eternity that the world would exist would be impossible; but if

27. Ibid., 59.
28. Like Ash-Shahrastānī, for instance, cp. his Iqdām especially 218f.
the world was not known in eternity to exist, then became known at the time it existed, and that God did not eternally know that it will be but knew at the time of its coming into existence then this would indicate the origination of his knowledge (ta'addud 'ilmih). 29

Now this exposition is more likely a product of a later stage of kalam when God's attributes of power and knowledge were related to his act in time and space. It is analogous with the Ash'arite distinction of an eternal meaning (kalam nafsi) as distinct from the written form of the Qur'ān. As such theoargo-philosophical views on the relation of God's attributes to problems of time and space current in the 3rd/9th century and after were for one reason or the other projected back to Jahm b. Ṣafwān.

The createdness of the Qur'ān

With regard to the nature of the Qur'ān it is also difficult to accept the unanimous report by the Islamic sources that Jahm held that the Qur'ān was created. The first thing to notice in this respect is the small space given to this doctrine when reported as being held by Jahm. It is generally referred to by late sources as one of a number of doctrines on which Jahm was in agreement with the Mu'tazilites and Ḥisham b. al-Ṣakam. The frequently reported form is that "Jahm agreed with the Mu'tazilites in denying the beautiful vision, in maintaining that the Qur'ān is created and that knowledge is obligatory upon reason before the hearing of the message." 30

29. Iqdām, 217. Compare the English translation in p. 79 which does not render the exact meaning.
30. Mawāqif, viii, 399; Milal, 61.
This makes one suspect that this doctrine might have been attributed to Jahm by later Sunnites during their quarrel with the Mu'tazilites or ahl al-kalam in general say after 220/635 presumably to rebuke them as Jahmites. It could have been a deduction made by those Sunnites from Jahm's alleged denial of the attributes. The emphasis here would be on what they believe that he and al-Ja'đ have held with regard to the knowledge and speech of God. It is doubtful whether al-Ja'đ engaged himself with the question of the nature of the Qur'an in the manner the sources would have us believe. It could, however, be inferred from his alleged denial of the speaking of God to Moses that the Qur'an is created. The difficulty here is in whether the relation of the speech of God to the Qur'an as understood by later scholars was at all made by either al-Ja'đ or Jahm?! Even if it is conceded that al-Ja'đ denied that God had Abraham as his friend and spoke to Moses the plausible explanation would be that he was merely concerned here with refuting the possibility of physical contact or direct communication between man and God as such. This is in line with the debate on the beautiful vision which seem to have preceded that of the nature of the Qur'an.

In this connection too the attempt by the sources to present Jahm as making the distinction between the speech of God and the Qur'an as reflected in reports like "al-Jahm held that the speech of God (sc. the Qur'an) is created but it should not be said that he speaks it"; or "al-Jahm held together with the Qadariyya (sc. Mu'tazilites) that the Qur'an is created but did not say that God speaks it";\(^\text{31}\) is in fact a distortion of Mu'tazilite, Ḥanafite

\(^{31}\) Tabṣīr, 64.
and Ash'arite arguments developed centuries after Jahm. What the sources are doing here is to present the views of these contemporary schools in the form they here describe as Jahmite or Mu'tazilite which establishes that the Qur'an is created and then by playing on the question of its relation to the speech of God (by saying that God does not speak it) makes for instance the eternal meaning (kalam al-nafs) or the uncreated Qur'an as exposed by the Ash'arites seem absurd.

Similarly the attempt by heresiographers to find a place for the Qur'an in the system of Jahm is further proof that the question of the nature of the Qur'an did not arise for him. This attempt comes out clearly in the interesting report in Maqalat of al-Ash'ari on the authority of Zurqan which says: "Al-Jahm b. Šafwān argued that motion is material substance as it is impossible that it can be other than substance because the non-material is only God and nothing is like him." He also says: "al-Jahm used to say that the Qur'an is a substance and it is the act of God and that movements are substances and that there is no agent (fā'īl) but God." Now the attempt to find a place for motion in the system of Jahm is presumably made with the intention of arriving at the point that for Jahm the Qur'an is similarly a substance or body (jism) and hence created. There is, however, ample proof that the argument whether the Qur'an is a substance or non-substance, a body or an accident emerged well after the time of al-Jahm.

32. Maq., 346.
33. Maq., 589.
34. cp. Maq., 589f, where these views are presented as the views of the generation of Abu l-Hadhayl and after.
The conclusion that can be drawn from what we have learned so far is that the assertion frequently made by Ḥanbalītes that Jahm b. Ṣafwān held that the Qurʾān is created is groundless. It appears that the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān as suggested earlier on was attributed to Jahm mainly by Ḥanbalītes of the 3rd/9th century and after with the intention to rebuke their own contemporaries who propagated this doctrine as Jahmites. Now that ideas attributed to Jahm and al-Jaʿd can be suspected as later projections the association between the two men is still to be explained.

The nature of the association between Jahm and al-Jaʿd b. Dirham

Al-Jaʿd is said to have belonged to the Qadarītes who were favoured by some of the Umayyads. He was known to have accompanied and influenced Marwān b. Muḥammad during the latter’s governorship of the Jazīra. The Caliph Hisām b. ʿAbd al-Malik was interested in having him executed. This scant information suggests that al-Jaʿd was active against the Umayyad rulers of the day possibly in league with other Umayyad claimants. Now if al-Jaʿd was politically active the question of how far his political activity was the basis for the link, in the minds of the rulers and the ulema (Sunnites as well as Muʿtazilites), between him and Jahm presents itself to our minds. In other words how far could the association

35. Samaʿāni, ansāb, 131A; Ibn al-Bītrīq, at-Tārīkh al-Majmuʿ, ii, 47; Dhanabi, Tārīkh al-Islaḥ, iv, 238.
of Jahm with al-Ja‘d be explained in the context of the political and religious ferment of the time the Ḥanbalites wrote their books of radd?

It is interesting to note that both men were attacked and rebuked by the rulers as dahris. Al-Ja‘d is frequently referred to as Zindīq. Both men seem to have antagonised the Mu‘tazilites who accuse them of advancing non-islamic ideologies. The Mu‘tazilites as well as the Sunnites accuse both men of having derived their respective systems from heretics of early Islam. Their so-called doctrine of the denial of the attributes is condemned by Sunnites and Mu‘tazilites as conducive to ta‘ṣīl. Their alleged respective followers were accused of propagating new religions.

What I am trying to suggest here is the complexity of the question of the association of Jahm with al-Ja‘d, and that an insight into it can be gained by an examination of the reaction of the rulers and the ulema to the respective activities of the two men. This I shall elucidate later after the examination of the political attitudes of Jahm.

The Political attitudes of Jahm b. Ṣafwān

Jahm is known to have championed al-amr bi ‘l-ma‘ruf wa ‘l-naby‘an al-munkar. He associated himself with al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj who rebelled against the Umayyad government in Khurāsān
from the year 116/734 to the year 128/745. The reference to him as as-Samarqandi then at-Tirmidhi indicates a short sojourn in Samarqand followed by an extended one in Tirmidh. It was in Tirmidh where he first made his ideas public. He then moved to Balkh where he met the famous exegist Muqātil b. Sulaymān and frequented his mosque for prayers. He is said to have made enemies in Balkh and was consequently expelled and exiled to Tirmidh. For the rest of his life he was occupied in the rebellion led by al-Ḥārith b. Surayj.

The Politics of Khurāsān.

The background to the revolt of al-Ḥārith must be sought in the situation in Khurāsān at the time. Dr. Sha'ban has shown that the instability in the province on the eve of the 'Abbāsid revolution was brought about by a variety of reasons other than the traditional jealousy of the 'Arab tribes and their resentment to the authority of government. An examination of the relevant data in Tabari will reveal some of the factors at play.

1. The first factor to consider is the resentment to the control of the province from Iraq. A governor like al-Ḥajjāj b. Yusuf who had Syrian troops close at hand was able to put more and

37. Tab., ii, 1565f; Athīr, v, 135-6; art al-Ḥarīth b. Sarayj, EI².
38. On the life of Jahm see Watt, art. Jahm, EI²; al-Qāsimī, Tārīkh al-Jahmiyya, 7. There is a published M. Litt Thesis Titled, al-Jahm b. Ṣafwān and his place in Islamic thought, Baghdad, 1965 by Khalid al-‘Asali, but is uncritical and need not be referred to any more.
more Arab fighters in Khurāsān and control the province through them and their leaders. When a group of tribes became too dominant to threaten central hegemony the balance was kept by the advancement of yet another governor who could muster the support of other tribes. Governors like the Muṣarite Qutayba b. Muslim and Ḍaʾūr b. Sawayr who carried less tribal support in the province naturally depended more and more on support from Iraq or the imperial government of Damascus.

Centralism was also exercised through the control of the treasury of Khurāsān. Here kharāj farmed in the province was taken to Iraq or Damascus. A further development along these lines is witnessed in the control of local government and the administration of finance. The idea here was to incorporate local administration into the structure of Arab government through the new offices of Marzubān of Ḍarw and of native chamberlain in charge of the seal. The new administrative structure together with the already existing system of attaching Arab representatives to native rulers gave Iraq a tighter control over the administration of the province at all levels.

The strain which resulted from administrative control by the central authority was witnessed in tribal coalitions where for instance supporters of the government of Iraq or the imperial government would be opposed by other tribes which feel underprivileged. The latter group hoping for a change in the central province of ‘Iraq or the imperial government itself would

44. Ibid., 176-79; cp. Tab., 11, 1462.
interest itself in partisan conflicts or succession disputes in the imperial court at Damascus or the provinces and hence what seems local conflict in the province of Khurasan could have serious repercussions for the empire as a whole.

2. The other area of conflict arose from resentment that money farmed in the province should go to Iraq or Damascus. This was partly a resentment of the control of the province from outside but its direct background was the suspension of the fiscal policy of 'Umar II. The policy of Umar of encouraging the native population to accept Islam in return for remission of the jizya, equality with the Arabs and incorporation in the muqāṭila had produced a measure of social integration in the province. At the same time there was the trend of the assimilation of Arabs into the native community. This was unintentionally encouraged by Hisam b. 'Abd al-Malik who in reaction against the reluctance of Arabs who were registered in the dīwān to participate in military campaigns, established the regular muqāṭila and dropped the other Arabs as settlers. His policy encouraged further settlement of Arabs among local populations inside the towns and their engagement in trade and other occupations. One could speak of the growth of identity of interests between Arab settlers and the local population in view of permanent attachment of the Arabs to the country. Permanent settlement seems to have been rewarding.

42. cp. Gibb, "The fiscal rescript of 'Umar II", Arabica, 1955, 1-16; Wellhausen, the Arab Kingdom, 266f.
43. cp. Sha'ban, 191-98.
for the Arabs in view of chances for trade open to them with Soghdia and indeed in the east to west trade between China and the Islamic empire.

Now whereas 'Umar II arranged that money farmed in Khurāsān be kept in the province and indeed offered to balance the budget of the province if and when its kharāj does not meet the stipends; Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik on the other hand denied stipends to the natives as well as those Arabs who were labelled settlers by him. Moreover Arabs and natives continued to pay the land tax to the local authorities. Poll-tax legally intended to be paid by non-Muslims was paid by natives who became Muslims as well. Thus the imperial policy in Khurāsān antagonised both natives and settlers and drew them closer together in their common resentment to the authorities. A modern writer describes the absorption of the revenue of the province by Iraq as "illegal and unfair exploitation which was harmful to both the natives and the colonists. It had its bad results upon both the military and the civil administration in the country."

3. The situation was made more serious by the impact of internal tensions on the power position of the province vis-à-vis its neighbouring enemies. The internal discord showed more than anything else in the falling of the Arabs in the defensive against Turgesh incursion. This defensive attitude was reflected in

44. cp. Sha'ban, 191-98.
attempts by the government of Khurasan to strike an alliance with the Ephthalites against the Turgesh, in the moving of more tribal forces from Kufa into the province and more importantly in the establishment of Rābita or garrisons of horsemen in frontier districts to which were attached contingents of Syrian troops to ensure their allegiance to the imperial government. It was these fighting elements in frontier garrisons and the settled populations of the cities who expressed discontent against central control, the administration of the taxes of the province and the privileged position of the Syrian troops and the newcomers from Kufa.

Now both al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj and Jahm b. Saʿfān were commanders in these frontier garrisons. Al-Ḥarīth rebelled in Juzijān in 116/734 and was later joined by Jahm b. Saʿfān. It is interesting to note that the Ephthalite princes of Jurnān, Faryāb and Ṭāliqān also joined the rebellion. Al-Ḥarīth was also joined by forces stationed in the garrison of Marw ar-Rudh and received support from native and Arab communities in Marw and other cities. The government of Khurasan looked shattered when

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46. This was the period of the westward expansion of Chinese say after 97/715 and the advent of the tribes of Turgesh. See Gibb, The Arab Conquest, 60f. For the new defence arrangement first introduced by Ashras possibly in 109/805. See Tab., ii, 1504; Shaʿban, 184f.

47. Al-Ḥarīth was in Juzijān but the case of Jahm is not clear. It can however be inferred from the report of Ibn Khallikān regarding the fate of Yahya b. Zayd (d. 125/742) that Jahm was a commander in the same frontier. Ibn Khallikān says that Yahya b. Zayd was slain in Juzijān by Ṣalm b. Ahwāz al-Māzīnī. Some say that he fell by the hand of Jahm b. Saʿfān (ṣāḥib al-Jahmīyya) the commander of the troops employed to guard the frontier. Wafiyat al-Aʿyan, ii, 564; cp. the fuller report in the English translation by de Slane, iii, 276.


Balkh fell to him. The governor ʿĀṣim b. ʿAbd Allah failing to
get al-Ḥārith to accept negotiations evacuated Harw and withdrew
to Nisāpūr where he awaited assistance from the Caliph.

It is against this background that many of the reports
about the association of al-Ḥārith with the mawāli and non-muslims
find explanation. The often reported association of al-Ḥārith
with the rebellion of a certain Abu Ṣayda who fought for the rights
of the mawāli and the subsequent participation of the followers
of the latter in the rebellion of al-Ḥārith were the outcome of
this situation. 50

Abu Ṣayda was sent by Ashras to the Soghdians
with credentials to offer them terms similar to those laid down
by ʿUmar II where in return for their acceptance of Islam they
were promised the remission of the jizya. It is said that when
the governor changed his mind and withdrew the offer Abu Ṣayda and
7,000 Soghdians rebelled and were interestingly enough supported
by infuriated Arabs among whom was al-Ḥārith b. Surayj. 51

The view that the rebellion of al-Ḥārith represented the
aspirations of what may now be termed the neo-Khurāsānian
nationalism of the natives and the integrated Arabs is supported
by strong emphasis by those who led the revolt on economic and
social justice and the call for a return to the policy of ʿUmar II.
This was strongly reiterated now and again by al-Ḥārith and his

50. art. al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, EI²; The man entrusted to lead the
remnants of the forces of Abu Ṣayda namely Abu Faṭma al-Azdi
became later a commander in the army of al-Ḥārith b. Surayj
see Tab., ii, 1586-9, 1568, 1563.
followers. It is sufficient here to mention requests to this effect made by the delegation sent by Sa'ār b. Sayyār to Damascus to plead for amnesty for al-Jārîth and his associates. The delegation though sent by the governor of Khurāsān was certainly acceptable to al-Jārîth b. Surayj. They are reported to have said to Yazīd III when interviewed by him: "You have killed your cousin in order to restore the rule of the Book (the Qur'ān), but your clients cheat and commit injustice." He is said to have replied that he himself disapproved of them but found no substitutes for them. They then suggested to him to choose his clients from men with good family background (ahl al-butāt) and to attach to each of them a pious man from the righteous men of learning (ahl al-khayr wa l-fiqh) to check them on the basis of his contract. To this Yazīd acceded saying: "This I shall do." On their way back to Khurāsān they called at Kufa and had an interview with 'Abd-Allah b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz the governor of Iraq of which Khurāsān was then a province and asked him to give orders to his provincial and district administrators to follow the tradition of his father 'Umar II. The governor is said to have told them that the tradition of 'Umar II was well known to need any recommendation from him. They then rejoined: "What good does it do for the people if it is not officially implemented?" The call for pious men to be attached to the rulers and the revival of the tradition

52. Tab., ii, 1570f, 1867, 1889f, 1931f.
53. Tab., ii, 1867.
54. Tab., ii, 1868.
of 'Umar II were the very demands which al-Ḥarīth put to Naṣr b. Sayyār as conditions for his support to him. The failure of Naṣr to meet these conditions and the death of Yazīd III made al-Ḥarīth resume his rebellion.

More interesting in this respect are the religious justifications for the rebellion of al-Ḥarīth and their later presentation by unsympathetic sources. It is here that an understanding of the reports that both al-Ḥarīth and Jahan b. Ṣafwān were reckoned the Ṣurja of Khurāsān can be gained. Jahan is said to have held that belief (ʿImān) is of intellectual nature in that it is primarily a knowledge of God in the heart. Once a person knows God in his heart he becomes a believer. His belief is never prejudiced by adverse utterances against the Deity or by pronouncement and practising of other religions or any form of animism within or outside the territory of Islam for faith as knowledge in the heart could not be removed by outward utterances or actions. Now the corollary of such a statement is that in so far as belief is not elaborated into belief in the heart, expression by the tongue and performance of actions then the exercise of ritual works and ethical forms of Islam become of little importance, and hence Persians, Turks and indeed people of other religions could as well belong to the Islamic community. They belong not as

55. Tab., ii, 1889-90.
56. Kaq., 132; Lilal, 61; Ibn Ḥazm, al-Fīgal, iv, 204.
57. This doctrine is in tune with nominal adherence to Islam to avoid the jizya then current among non-Muslims of the region Tab., iii, 1508.
subjects or second class citizens but as full and equal members of the community; for again Jahm is said to have held that there were no degrees of preference in Imān in that the belief of a prophet in no way excels over that of an ordinary man for belief as knowledge is basically the same.

The Summaniyya

It is high time now to return to the Summaniyya. Summaniyya was the name given to the Buddhists by the 'Arabs. At the time of the Arab invasion of Sind there seems to have been internal discord between Buddhists or Summaniyya and the Brahmans as a result of which the Summaniyya of Sind, Afghanistan, Turkistan, and regions across the Indus seem to have come to terms with Islam. Some Summaniyya doctors are said to have sent ambassadors to al-Ḥajjaj, the governor of Iraq and secured warrants for peace. In view of thriving commerce in this part of the Sasanian empire the motive for their acceptance of Islam is probably economic. Like the case in Khurāsān, those engaged in commerce in these regions must have realised in course of time that they could maintain and indeed further their becoming full members of the Islamic community. We have just seen that al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj and his associates sympathised with the discontent of the inhabitants of Soghdia against Umayyad policy. This explains the concern of

Jahm b. Ṣafwān in missionary work among the Summaniyya. Hanbalite sources however misrepresent his intentions. In this respect they assert that he was asked by the Summaniyya whether a thing can be perceived by anything other than the senses. When he answered in the negative the Summaniyya are said to have confronted him with the question: "Then tell us whether you can perceive your God by any of your senses?" His answer was that he could not and they concluded that his God does not exist.  

The sources say that Jahm was perplexed and that he stopped prayers for forty days for his doubts who to pray to. Mu'tazilite sources claim that he sought the help of Wāsil b. 'Aṭā who readily furnished the argument that not all things are comprehended by the senses. Hanbalite sources, on the other hand, accuse Jahm of employing an argument similar to that of the Christians. What Mu'tazilites and Hanbalites are in fact doing here is to present from their respective point of view the problem in the context of contemporary polemic between them. The Hanbalites certainly have some basic facts about Jahm's political contact with the mawāli and non-Muslims, presumably to secure their support for the movement of al-Ḥarīth, on which they build a not altogether convincing argument. A more articulated argument of the influence of the Summaniyya on Jahm is presented by Khushaysh quoted by Malāṭi. Here Jahm is said to have argued that movements of created beings would eventually cease, that paradise and hell would perish

60. Ibn Ḥanbal, ar-Radd, 226.
61. Ibn al-Murtadā, Tabaqāt al-Mu'tazila, 34, 42.
together with their respective dwellers so that God would remain all by himself as he had originally been before creation. He is also reported to have rejected the punishment of the tomb and to have denied that God would be seen by men either in this world or the after world. Now this exposition of the views of Jahm makes them not much different from the position of the Summaniyya who are said to have denied resurrection after death, believed in transmigration of souls and final absorption into the deity. Generally speaking this way of arguing the influence of the Summaniyya on Jahm is an exaggerated form of presenting him as accepting their atheistic position. Underlying this whole argument is the point that the political involvement of Jahm with non-Muslims has led him to sacrifice his religion. In this connection the discrediting of al-Ḥarith b. Surayj and his followers as polytheists is primarily a reflection of disapproval of the kind of engagement they had with non-Muslims.

The Politics of Qadar

Now Yazīd III is known to have granted amnesty to al-Ḥarith b. Surayj in 126/743. Why he gave it to him at that particular time is not clear. The explanation given by Ṭabari that Ṣayr b. Sayyār the then governor of Ḵhorāsān wanted to tip the balance of power in the province in his favour and ward off the danger of a sudden attack by al-Ḥarith and his Turkish allies does not explain

63. cp. the poem in Tab. 11, 1576.
why al-Ḥarīth accepted the offer at a time when his chances of winning a victory were greater than ever. My own explanation is that the coming of Yazīd III to power in 126/743 and the propaganda he made about the religiosity of his cause made it possible for him to approach al-Ḥarīth and made al-Ḥarīth less suspicious of the intentions of the court administration. Yazīd was at pains to project an image of a pious and just ruler. Further the text of the amnesty itself reflects the understanding he had with al-Ḥarīth. It reads as follows: "We (sc. Yazīd) have been moved by anger for the sake of God when his decrees had been suspended and when his servants suffered what they had suffered and when blood was unjustly shed, property illegally confiscated; we then pledged ourselves to rule this umma by the Book of God and the Sunna of his prophet. There is no power but the power from God. We have now made our intentions clear to you; so come in peace, you and those with you for you are our brothers and helpers (aʿwanuma). I have sent orders in writing to ʿAbd allah b. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd ʿAzīz to release members of your family and return to you all property and belongings which had been taken from you." A common understanding between Yazīd and al-Ḥarīth is further witnessed in al-Ḥarīth's prompt acceptance of the amnesty and his later conclusion that with the death of Yazīd the agreement became null and void.

64. Tab., ii, 1827.
65. Tab., ii, 1867-8.
Now an understanding between al-Ḥarīth and Yāṣīd III on basis of Qadar seems contradictory with reports that Jahm the chief propagandist of the movement of al-Ḥarīth held the opposite view of Qadar or indeed an extreme form of Jabr. On second thoughts however there seems to be no contradiction at all.

Jabr like the other ideas examined above was attributed to Jahm by scholars of the 3rd/9th century and after possibly when his role in the political and intellectual life of Ḥurāsān somehow became relevant to their own situation. At the time a doctrine of Qadar or freedom of the human will was advocated by Qadarites and Muʿtazilites; and opposed by Sunnites or ahl al-Ḥadīth. The terms Qadarite and Muʿtazilite must not be confused as synonymous for the distinction between them which, incidentally the Islamic sources make is significant as will become apparent shortly. These Sunnite opponents are rebuked by Qadarites as Jabrites. Similarly people who moved in the circle of ideas of Bishr al-Maṭrīsī namely members of the Marīsiyya, Burquthiyya, Najjāriyya, and Ḥirāriyya are labelled Jabrites and associated with Jahm b. Ṣafwān as the Jahmiyya.66

Now it is doubtful whether either these Sunnites or "Jahmites" held a doctrine of jabr. Sunnites seem to have been labelled Jabrites for their opposition to Qadarites rather than for their propagation of a doctrine of Jabr as such. As a matter of fact Qadar was a term of rebuke applied to those who held the

66. Fihrist, 268; These are occasionally reckoned extreme Jabrites while the Kullābiyya and Ashʿarites are reckoned moderate Jabrites cp. Milal, 60.
freedom of the will as well as to their opponents. As such it reflected accusations and counter accusations by Mu’tazilites and their opponents.

The case of the so called Jahmiyya is even more interesting in so far as they seem to have been labelled Jabriyya for no reason other than to link them up with Jahm b. Ṣafwān. This is clearly demonstrated by al-Ījī who treats the alleged sect of the Jahmiyya under the title Jabriyya. The common report is that Jahm and Bishr al-Mārisī are the heads of the Jabriyya, and hence the frequent association between the Jabriyya of Khurāsān and Iraq. This is, however, contradicted by the statement of Ibn Ḥajar that it was not Jabr in particular that the predecessors (as-Salaf) disapproved of against the Jahmiyya; they rather disparaged them for their denial of the attributes of God which led them to deny that the Qur’ān is the word of God and to assert that it is created. Further the heresiographers appear to be hesitant to treat the Jahmiyya as Jabriyya and present the case as deatable.

Is it then that Jahmites (like the Sunnites) were labelled Jabriyya because of their opposition to contemporary Qadarites and Mu’tazilites? In this respect it is interesting to note that the Mu’tazilites are more critical of Jahmite Jabrites than

68. Mawāqif, viii, 396.
69. Quoted in Qāsimī, Tārikh al-Jahmiyya, 21.
70. cp. Ḥhilal, 60; Mawāqif, viii, 396; Baghdādi, Farq, 208f.
were the Sunnites. There is, however, the difficulty that this way of looking at things assumes that Sunnites and "Jahmites" had a common view towards Qadar, while it is certain that there was no common ground between them for although Mu'tazilites rebuke their opponents (sc. the Sunnites) as Jabrites they do not associate them with Jahm b. Ṣafwān whose doctrine of Jabr is detested by both sides as extreme and ultra religious. It must then be something other than the strictly theological meaning of Qadar that can help us understand how Sunnites and "Jahmites" who are both reckoned Jabriyya react differently towards their opponent Qadarites. Such an explanation will also help clarify how Yāsīd III who is reckoned Qadarite can be said to have reached an understanding with al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj and his jabrite associates on basis of Qadar. Similarly we need to explain the widely reported teacher-student relationship between al-Ja'd b. Dirham and Jahm b. Ṣafwān in spite of the fact that the former is said to have propagated a doctrine of Qadar while the latter held its opposite form of Jabr. Along these lines an explanation could also be found for the puzzling situation whereby al-Wawān b. Muḥammad who is said to have been influenced by al-Ja'd b. Dirham and is thus nicknamed al-Ja'di came to say: "I will gird up my lions against Qadarites and smite them with my sword".

Now if we recall that Qadar has served under the Umayyads

71. Baghdaḍī, ʿUṣul ad-Dīn, 333; Tabṣīr, 64.
72. Tab., 11, 1851; For the rebuke of al-Wawān b. Muḥammad as Ja'di see Athīr, v, 329.
as an issue on which people divide politically\textsuperscript{73} we can begin to see that what seems a contradiction from the theological point of view can find explanation in the political context of the term. For instance the report that Harwan b. Muhammed was influenced by al-Ja'd b. Dirham can be interpreted as implying his adherence to a party or cause of Qadarites at some stage of his political career but when he eventually emerged as the main contender for the throne against Yazid III and his party of Qadarites he came to be reckoned anti-Qadarite. We are, however, interested in the association between Jahu and al-Ja'd as well as in how Yazid III who is reckoned Qadarite can be said to have reached an understanding with al-Hasith b. Saraj and his associates who are labelled Jabrites.

It can now be assumed that Qadar and Jabr are attitudes of mind or rather reactions to certain political situations, and as such do not necessarily stand to one another in the relationship of opposites as their respective theological meaning imply. With this background in mind it is significant that the Mu'tazilites are said to have been more bitter towards Jahmite Jabrites than were the Sunnites. An insight into the motive for their bitterness can be gained from their well known fight against the so called Zanadiqas. The suggestion is that Jabr had something to do with the intellectual ferment of ideas in the mixed society of the early 'Abbasid Period. The assumption here would be that Jabr

\textsuperscript{73} Qasim, main aspects, Chapter iv; Watt, The Formative Period (typescript) 136f.
was envisaged by its opponents as a levelling movement to benefit peoples of other religions already living within the Islamic community but not on equal footing with the Muslims.

Now the identification of some of the mawāli and non-Muslims as Jahmite jabrites fits very well with the inclination of our sources to associate them with Jahm b. Safwān. I have argued above that the movement of al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj was aimed at achieving justice for the less fortunate or underprivileged Arabs, the mawāli as well as non-Muslims. Jahm must have used religious justifications for his argument. Unfortunately we cannot say with any degree of certainty what his argument was. Nevertheless the reaction of his opponents also envisaged his alleged doctrine of jabr as an attempt to level devout Muslims with non-Muslims on religious basis where the more religious and devout are made to seem worse off, fits very well with our present analysis. Thus his critics assert that he said that it is up to God if he wished to punish his obedient servants in hell and instead send sinners and idolaterors to paradise. This is supported by the assertion that he said that so long as human beings are his servants, God could do what he pleases with them. A similar criticism is the argument that if man has no freedom of will then it is absurd for God to address a message to him and that reward and punishment would be invalid for man in the same way as they are invalid with regard to solid minerals (al-Jamād). This is further highlighted in

75. Tabṣīr, 63.
the criticism that by asserting a doctrine of extreme Jabr Jahm is in effect saying that God punishes man for his (sc. God's) own acts.76 The more frequent criticism is that al-Jahm in effect relegates man to the level of wild animals.

Now in so far as communalistic thinking is prominent in Islam this concern with one's place in the after world in relation to other members of the community is most probably indicative of concern with something more than salvation as such in that at the same time it reflects that worldly social, economic and political interests are at stake. Thus the critics of Jahm's alleged doctrine of Jabr could be said to have been concerned with the implications of the movement of al-Ḫarīth b. Sarayj for the Arab aristocracy in Khurāsān.

Similarly the association of later Iraqi elements with Jahm b. Ṣafwān seems to be indicative of fear among their contemporaries that they were creating a situation similar to the one created by al-Ḫarīth b. Sarayj and Jahm in Khurāsān. In this respect the relevance of Muʿtazilite opposition towards Jahmite Jabrites to the situation in early 'Abbasid period can be sought in the social and political implications of the intellectual movement of the Shuʿubiyya and the secretary class. Thus the bitterness of the Muʿtazilites compared with the relatively milder reaction of the Sunnites towards Jahmite-Jabrites could be appreciated as indicative of closer Muʿtazilite involvement in secretarial or generally speaking political competition with the mawāli and non-Muslim intellectuals.

This way of looking at things makes it possible for us to distinguish between different types of Qadar; that is to say different situations which produce a political stand labelled Qadarite or Jabrite. (We can for instance speak of Yazīd III and his supporters as the Umayyad Qadarites, and their opponents as non-Qadarites; the Muʿtazilites and others as the Qadarites of the 'Abbasid period, and their opponents, Ahl al-Ḥadīth as well as the "Jahmites", apparently from their different stand points, as Jabrites and Jahmite-Jabrites respectively; and finally the Jahmiyya as the Jabrites of Khurāsān and Iraq.) Thus the reaction of Sunnites and that of Jahmites towards Muʿtazilite Qadarites does not have to be the same as is generally implied by their common theological definition as Jabr; for whereas Jahmites could be said to have been concerned with the implications of Qadar for the position of the mawāli and non-Muslims in the Islamic society, the Sunnites seem to have been largely concerned with its theological and juristic implications for the religious institutions in relation to the ruling institutions.

Similarly the doctrine of Jabr attributed to Jahm does not necessarily signify the opposite theological meaning of Qadar-Further the context in which Qadar was at the time used in Syria was related to the denial of a theory of obligation to divine rule, while Jabr attributed to Jahm seems to have more to do with Umayyad power structure and the policy of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd II who are held responsible for injustice done to some Khurasānīte Arabs and native subjects. On the contrary both
movements in spite of being labelled Qadarite and Jabrite respectively seem to have much in common in so far as each was a reaction against the same political situation. Both movements give the impression of moving in the same set of ideas, and of sharing the same economic grievances. They are both reckoned Murj’ite movements. This seems to have something to do with the readiness of the leaders of the respective movements to advocate Shura as opposed to genealogical basis for the Caliphate and to associate with the underprivileged. Both movements were at pains to appeal to the common people. Yazîd III is said to have staged his rebellion in a mosque on a Friday. It is significant that Yemenites were dominant in both movements. Yazîd’s supporters include elements from Kalb, Ghassân, Lakhon and Kinda, all less fortunate South Arabian clans. Kalbites in Damascus including high ranking military officers attached themselves to Khâlid al-Qasâri and his sons. They eventually emerged under Mansûr b. Jumhur who acted on concert with Yazîd III. The rebuke of Mansûr b. Jumhur as uncouth bedouin (a rábiyyan jîfân) was probably made in the context of the distinction between the underprivileged bedouin and the Kuhajir or he who was listed in the dîwân as a fighter and was entitled for ‘Aṭā’. Such a person lived in towns or military camps, shared in the spoils of war and participated in political life. On the whole there is much to support a common understanding between the movement which brought

77. Tab., ii, 1778f, 1837.
78. Tab., ii, 1837.
Yazid III to power and that of al-Šarir b. Surayj in Khorasān particularly when they are examined in the background of the social and economic situation in Syria and the provinces at the time.

Al-Ja'd b. Dirham who is said to have been Khorasānīte was active under the same conditions and situation which provoked the grumbling in Khorasān and Syria. He seems to have been critical of the policy of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik and had to flee to the Jazīra and Kufa. His reputed imprisonment in Kufa followed by his alleged dramatic execution by Khalid al-Qaṣrī seem doubtful. The fictitious nature of the report betray the intentions of the Hanbalites and men of similar outlook like Qutayba b. Sa'īd, al-Hasan b. as-Šabbāh and 'Uthman b. Sa'īd ad-Dārīmi on whose authority it is reported. The Hanbalite concern with his rebuke also noted in the way they couple him with Jahm b. Saffwān can, however, be appreciated in view of his involvement in the politics of Khorasān.

The conclusion for this chapter is that an understanding of the motive behind the attribution of certain, and in most cases, later theological views to Jahm b. Saffwān and for this reason al-Ja'd b. Dirham too can be gained when these views are examined against the background of the political activities of these two men. In this context the association of those labelled Jawmites with

79. Dhahabi, Tārīkh al-Islam, iv, 239. It is significant to note that Qutayba b. Sa'īd and al-Hasan b. as-Šabbāh were persecuted during the inquisition under al-Ma'mūn. Ad-Dārīmi is known as a student and a follower of Ibn Ḥanbal.
Jahm b. Ṣafwān is not based on any direct doctrinal link between them but rather on the assumption that the situation in Iraq which culminated in the Miḥna championed by "Jahmites" was similar to the motives and aims of the movement led by Jahm in Khurāsān. Thus it unfolds that the campaign against Jahm and to some extent al-Jaʿd too launched almost a century later was as a matter of fact aimed at the discrediting of contemporary opponents. As such the "anti-Jahmite" campaign was varied and complex as any act or person of which or of whom Ahl al-Hadīth disapproved was labelled Jahmite.

On the whole two general trends can be detected. First the campaign against Jahm seem to have been aimed at contemporary jurists who furnished juristic rulings or justifications for the acts of the rulers. The opponents of Jahmites, that is the Sunnites, as they would call themselves, are engaged here in a battle to preserve the supremacy of the religious institutions. Their attitude is reflected in the general reluctance among eminent doctors to associate with the rulers or to serve in religious institutions, like the judiciary, controlled by the state. Some doctors would resist the acts of the rulers in legal, economic and military matters by open criticism (al-ṣawma n-nahy), counter judgement (fatwa) or even by incitement of the masses. The motives for their attitude must be sought in early 'Abbasid politics say from the reign of Harun ar-Rashīd to the disputes current during the Miḥna (212/827, 234/848).

This dispute eventually divided the society into professed Sunnites or self appointed upholders of the so called true religion.
on the one hand and those who were singled out as the opponents of the sunna on the other. It was under these conditions that many were at pains to establish that they were the true Sunnites by labelling themselves as Ahl al-Hadîth, Ahl-as-Sunna wa'-Jamâ‘a, * Ahl al-Jaqq, Ahl al-Ithbat...etc. At the same time as many struggled to belong to the people of the Sunna a campaign was waged to exclude others as Ahl wal-Ahwâ‘, or heralds of ultra religious innovations incompatible with Islam. When reporting the views of Jahm Khushaysh simply draws up an exhaustive list of Sunnite creeds and present Jahm as denying them one after the other in order to discredit him as an idolater. 60 It is here that much of the current arbitrary accusations of takfîr and excommunications find explanation. Similarly the voluminous quotations from the Qur’ân and the Hadîth, which seem out of context in so far as they were being used against rationalists, can be appreciated.

Secondly the campaign against Jahm reflects an even more violent reaction against the political and military influence of non-Arabs and non-muslîms. It is here that accusations against the respective followers of Jahm and al-Ja‘d of furthering non-Islamic religions make sense. The association of "Jahmites" with non-muslîms through Jahm b. Ṣafwân explained above is coupled with a similar accusation of alleged followers of al-Ja‘d who are distinguished from professed muslîms by their description as "beardless men who accuse the prophet of lying and deny resurrection". 61

60. Mâlaţi, Tamîh, 99f.
61. art. al-Ja‘d b. Dirham, EI².
In this respect Ibn Taymiyya’s association of the Sufi brotherhood with the Sabean philosophers of Harran can now be appreciated as made in the context of the general orientation of the secretary class towards ancient Iraqi culture and other religions.

To sum up Ḥanbalite works of radd against the ‘Jahmiyya’ seem to play upon the established fact of Jahm’s politico-religious association with non-Arabs and non-Muslims in such a way which enables them to rebuke contemporary opponents particularly those who co-operate with the rulers as Jahmites, as well as to express disapproval of the political and military influence of non-Arabs and Ahl adh-Dhimmah. The Jahmiyya will be examined more closely in the following chapter and a better understanding of the motive behind the Ḥanbalite campaign can be gained.
CHAPTER 6

THE JAHMIYYA

The alleged sect of the Jahmiyya has been closely looked into by Professor Montgomery Watt on different occasions.\(^1\) It would be helpful here to list his conclusions and make a few remarks on some of them. Professor Watt notices that whereas the sect occupies a prominent place in early sources it occupies a relatively small space in later heresiographical literature. This would mean that it was prominent at an early date. In this connection he notes that since the mu'tazilite Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825) rejected any connection with the Jahmiyya the term Jahmîte seems to have been in use before 210/825; but possibly not in connection with the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ân. His general conclusion is that the term came into use in connection with the nature of the Qur'ân during the Mihna (218/833 - 234/848). It was then used as a term of abuse mainly by Hanbalîtes against their opponents. In this respect almost all information we have on the Jahmiyya is largely by Hanbalîtes or men of a similar outlook.\(^2\) Further many of these Hanbalîte works are in form of refutations of alleged views of the Jahmiyya. The

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2. For authors who wrote refutations against the Jahmiyya see Ibn Taymiyya, 'Aqída Hanawiyya, in ZDMG, 53, 1899, 72f. See further n.14. on p. 98 above.
main conclusion which Professor Watt arrives at after a review of the source material on the Jahmiyya is that there never was such a sect. Those labelled Jahmites are in fact people we already know as members of other sects namely Mu'tazilites and Ḥanafites.

This is now certainly an established fact and my argument above that the term Jahmite was used in the 3rd/9th century for rebuke fits here very well. I am, however, inclined to think that the term Jahmite came into use after the Miḥna possibly from the year (237/851) onwards or mainly with the advent of "Sunmites" and men of similar outlook who were patronised by the state at about this time and came to launch an officially backed campaign against supporters of the then discredited dogma of the createdness of the Qur'ān. It was during the course of this campaign that opponents of Ḥanbalites were labelled Jahmites apparently for reasons which only became fully apparent then. These reasons can generally be described as arising from the situation created by the policy of the Miḥna under the predecessors of al-Mutawakkil. The Miḥna was envisaged at the time as being geared towards the weakening of the religious institutions with the view of strengthening political control over them. To put it in other words it was seen as a move towards secularism which would favour non-arabs and non-muslims in places of power in the army and the administration. The labelling of supporters of such a policy Jahmites was then made on the assumption of its similarity to the movement championed by Jahm b. Ṣafwān in league with al-Ḥarīth
b. Surayj to create a situation in Khurāsān which would benefit the underprivileged prominent among whom were the mawali and non-muslims.

In this connection I have noticed that the term Jahmīte does not occur in contemporary accounts of the Miḥna like the report written by Ḥanbal b. Ishaq the cousin of ʿĀmmad b. Ḥanbal. It occurs twice in the biography of Ḥamad b. Ḥanbal written by his son ʿAṣāl the first time in connection with the division of Jahmites by Ḥamad b. Ḥanbal into three categories; and the second time in connection with the report that Ḥamad b. Ḥanbal advised witnesses against giving evidence before a Jahmite judge. These could well be later additions by scribes who copied the biography possibly to enlist the authority of Ḥamad b. Ḥanbal. The work itself was certainly written after the Miḥna. In any case even if the term appeared during the life time of Ibn Ḥanbal it was certainly not widely used until later. In these contemporary and similar earlier works the term used to describe opponents of Ibn Ḥanbal apart from Qadarītes and Raḍīdītes was Aḥl al-Bīda' or more fully Aḥl al-Aḥwā′ wa l-Bīda', whereas later works are dominated by the term Jahmīte. The use of the term Jahmīte before 210/825 in connection with other beliefs as Professor Watt suggests hardly excludes its connection at any early stage with the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān as it can be proved that this dogma had been propagated well before this date. Bishr al-Marṣālī who

3. Tarj., 26, 27.
certainly maintained the view that the Qurʾān is created is reported to have said at about the beginning of the 3rd/9th century that he had propagated it for forty years. 4 We know for certain that he was subjected to an inquisition in the year 202/617 or 203/618 for propagating this doctrine. 5 We now know that there had been an inquisition in the year 212/827 on this very issue. In this connection the reference in some reports to scholars who flourished in the second half of the 2nd/8th century as Jahmites for their denial of the beatific vision is probably later projection presumably made with the view to discredit students of these elderly scholars as Jahmites. 6

The conclusion then is that the term Jahmite did not come into use in connection with any set of ideas including the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān but rather to describe supporters of a situation created by the official policy of the Mihra which was envisaged by its opponents to be analogous to the movement championed by Jahm b. Ṣafwān. As such it came into use well after the Mihra when the political implications of the official policy made it necessary for al-Mutawakkil to abandon it. 7

5. See n. 40 below.
6. Those are generally referred to as Qudarites. See the case of Bishr al-Afwah (d. 195/810) who was labelled Jahmite for dismissing a tradition on the beatific vision and ridiculing the idea embodied in it. Dhahabi, Misān, 1, 317. If this is read in conjunction with the debate between Abu Yusuf and Bishr al-Marīsī (see below p. 154) it would confirm my assertion that traditions on the beatific vision came into circulation towards the end of the 2nd/8th century or after. Compare further the report that when al-Ḥusayn al-Juʾfī conveyed the tradition on the beatific vision he added the comment: "In spite of (the opposition of) Bishr al-Marīsī (ʿala raghm anf Bishr al-Marīsī) Kht., vii, 66.
7. See Chapter 4pp. 83f.
Professor Watt tends to believe that the term Jahmite was used by Ḥanbalites mainly against Ḥu‘tazilites. This might well have been the case but I am inclined to see the link of the term with Ḥu‘tazilites as an indirect one mainly for their being pioneers of philosophical theology as such. It is in this sense that Ḥanafites with interest in kalām are reckoned Ḥu‘tazilites too. My own feeling is that the term Jahmite was used by Ḥanbalites against in the first place certain jurists of the Ḥanafite and later Shafi‘ite rites. This is supported by my argument above and in the following chapters that the main dispute between Ḥanbalites and their opponents was of juristic nature. Thus I would say only those Ḥu‘tazilites who were connected with the legal profession or the political institutions in general were labelled Jahmites. In this respect it is interesting to note that “Ḥu‘tazilite Jahmites” are not dominant and indeed many Ḥu‘tazilites are said to have declined to serve in the judiciary even under the auspices of their great patron Ṭāhir b. Abī Dū‘ād.

Now this way of looking at things would make attempts by al-Khayyāṭ to disassociate Ḥu‘tazilites from the Jahmiyya sound acceptable. By the time of Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923) the Ḥanbalite quarrel was interestingly enough not with Ḥu‘tazilites but rather with Ḥanafites and Shafi‘ites who were reckoned members of the school of the Mutakallimun. This further establishes the continuity of the Ḥanbalite-Jahmite dispute on legal basis naturally.

7. See below, pp. 196-197.
with the political implication arising from it. These introductory remarks would be further clarified by a close examination of Ḥanafites and Muʿtazilite Jahmites and by a further examination of other forces labelled Jahmites in the following chapter on the waqifiyya and the lafṣīyya.

The Ḥanafite and Muʿtazilite Jahmites

Abu Ḥanīfa

Abu Ḥanīfa was accused mainly by Ḥanbalites and men of a similar outlook of holding the doctrine that the Qurʾān is created. The earliest report of this accusation is by al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (d. 219/834) and his generation. Later Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) coupled Abu Ḥanīfa with Jaḥm b. Šaftān as the early innovators to have spoken in this manner about the Qurʾān. In this respect early followers of Abu Ḥanīfa namely Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, Zufar and a few others are also accused of maintaining this view. Perhaps the truth is in the report by Khāṭīb that "it is not Abu Ḥanīfa nor his early followers like Abu Yusuf, Zufar, Muḥammad or their contemporary companions (who said the Qurʾān is created) but it was Bihṣr al-Ḫarīṣ and Ibn Abī Duʿād who said so and it is these two who are responsible for the discrediting of the followers of Abu Ḥanīfa." It is significant that the responsibility for raising the issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān is limited here to Ḥanafites. The question that needs to be answered here is why

10. Kht., xii, 349; vi, 245; xiii, 378.
the accusation was in the first place made against Abu Ḥanīfa and his followers? For matters of convenience I shall limit myself to an examination of accusations against Abu Ḥanīfa and later examine ideas of Diāb al-Maṣīḥī to try and understand the intentions behind these accusations.

The biographical note on Abu Ḥanīfa in tarīkh Baghdad of Ibn al-Khaṭīb will help as a basis for an evaluation of the motives behind such an accusation. The main accusations in the account given by Khaṭīb evolve around Abu Ḥanīfa’s alleged views on the Qurʾān and his independent juristic judgement. An examination of the structure through which these accusations are reported will reveal that they were made after the Miḥna and largely aimed against certain followers of Abu Ḥanīfa rather than Abu Ḥanīfa himself.

One can detect two trends in this biographical note. There is in the first place an apologetic trend largely reported on the authority of Ḥanafites; and in the second place there are accusations or outright attacks on Abu Ḥanīfa largely reported on the authority of traditionists. In both trends those on whose authority certain remarks are made are mostly contemporaries of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. The Ḥanafite authorities could further be divided into two categories. There are in the first place Ḥanafites like Muḥammad b. Shujā’ ath-Thalji and Muḥammad b. Sammā’ who were closely associated with the official policy of the Miḥna and the campaign against Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. On the other hand

there is what can be described as the polemical Ḥanafite group which includes men like Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī, al-Faḍl b. Ghānim and men of a similar outlook who believed that the Qur'ān was the uncreated word of God and had much in common with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and his circle as attested in their common opposition to the official policy of the Muhāra. Apparently on taṣbīḥ they held a different view from that of the Ḥanbalites but apart from this difference they had much in common with them and indeed some like Bishr b. al-Walīd are said to have had close relationship with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. Now an examination of statements reported in Khaṭṭāb on the authority of members of these respective groups, namely the traditionists and the two categories of the Ḥanafites would reveal their respective intentions in attributing certain views and remarks to Abu Ḥanīfa.

a) The Traditionists

To begin with statements reported on the authority of traditionists or rather Ḥanbalites one notices an attempt to link Abu Ḥanīfa with Jahm b. Ṣafwān presumably to rebuke contemporary Ḥanafites who took part in the inquisition as Jahmites. The link between Abu Ḥanīfa and Jahm is hinted at in different ways. There is to begin with the hint at a direct contact between him and Jahm or the associates of Jahm. These come out in statements reported by traditionists on the authority of Abu Yusuf presumably to make them seem convincing. A typical statement is the one which says: "Abu Yusuf was asked: 'Was Abu Ḥanīfa a Murjī‘īte?' and he said:
'Yes'. Then he was asked: 'Was he a jahmite?' and he said:
'Yes'." (375/8-9). A similar statement asserts that Abu Yusuf
was asked about Abu Ǧanīfa and he told his questioner: "Why do you
take interest in him he died a Jahmite?" (375 1.14). Other reports
claim that Abu Ǧanīfa was heard saying: "The wife of Jahm b. Ǧafwān
came to us and educated our women folk." (375 1.17). A similar
report asserts that Abu Ǧanīfa was seen in the outskirts of al-Kufa
holding the reins of the camel of a female servant of Jahm who had
recently arrived from Khurāsān (375 1s.20-21).

The more subtle forms of associating Abu Ǧanīfa with Jahm
are based on doctrinal views. Here Abu Ǧanīfa is to begin with
distinguished from the Muʿtazilites in that as a Ḥarjīte he is
said to have disagreed with them on the 'threat' (waʿla), and
that as a believer in Qadar he disagreed with them on the freedom
of the will; but only to link him on these very doctrines with
Jahm b. Ǧafwān. His theory of Ḥijjā for instance is defined as
belief in God in the heart and that as such it does not increase
or decrease. Abu Ǧanīfa might have held something along these
lines but it is certain here that his view is being deliberately
distorted by Ḥanbalites and men of a similar outlook to allow them
to arrive at certain conclusions. This is for instance witnessed
in statements that according to him a man who has this knowledge
of God in his heart and worships a shoe (ṣuḥna) in no way
prejudices his faith (372 1s.9-10). Similarly the statement that
if a man knew the Prophet and the Kaʿba without knowing the exact
location of the grave of the Prophet or the site of the Kaʿba his
faith is in no way decreased (371-372). Further the belief of such a man is not affected by the fact that he does not say his prayers (372 1.17). Now these suppositions are certainly made with the view to establish that Abu Ṣanīfa's view on Irjā' is identical with the one attributed to Jahm. The fact that these suppositions are mere fabrications can be inferred from the comment on the statement that Abu Ṣanīfa held that the belief (imān) of Abu Bakr and that of Ḥablīs are the same which says: "For he who is a Ḥanāfīte and does not say his prayers this defeats his own argument." (373 1.5). The conclusion here is that Abu Ṣanīfa's theory of Irjā' was of a certain type and an essential feature of it is the division between belief in the heart and Islamic practice or rituals, but is here being twisted to suit the argument of Ḥanbalites which are presumably intended to rebuke contemporary Ḥanafite opponents.

The Ḥanbalite attempt to discredit Abu Ṣanīfa and through him his followers is further witnessed in quoting alleged statements by prominent traditionists of the generation of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and those before him declaring Abu Ṣanīfa idolater. In this connection prominent traditionists are said to have asked Abu Ṣanīfa: "What is your opinion on the position of a man who killed his father, took his mother for a wife, and drank alcohol?" He said: "He (so the man) is a believer (mu'min)." (374 1b.3-4). Abu Ṣanīfa might have held the view that the committer of a grave sin is not excluded from the community but his idea is again deliberately distorted presumably to discredit his followers.
Abu Ḥanīfa is further attacked as a believer in the use of force against established authority. In this respect he is associated with the rebellion of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd allāh b. al-Ḥasan better known as the martyr of Bakhamra. It is interesting to note that Ḥanafite apologists too did not approve of his association with this rebellion and tend to cover it up by arguing that the Caliph al-Ḥasanūr persecuted him for other reasons. Here too his alleged advocacy of the use of force is linked up with the attitude of Jahm b. Ṣafwān in this respect. The argument here is to connect his alleged belief in the use of force with his likewise alleged theory of Irjā'. In this respect it is stated that he was "a Murj'ite who believed in the use of the sword." (385 1.19) - (386 1.2). The link with Jahm is explicitly made in the statement of a certain reporter who asserted: "'I said to Abu Yusuf I have heard the people of Khurāsān say that Abu Ḥanīfa was a Murj'ite Jahmīte.' Abu Yusuf agreed and added: 'They are right and he believes in the sword too.'" (386 1s. 7-8). In this connection Abu Ḥanīfa is said to have rejected traditions which urge against the use of force and dismissed them as fables (387 1s.8-14). The conclusion so far is that traditionists or more precisely the Ḥanbalītes among them are deliberately striving to rebuke Abu Ḥanīfa as a Jahmīte presumably to discredit his legal system and those who followed it.

b) Ḥanafite Apologists

To turn for a moment to statements reported on the authority of Ḥanafite apologists one finds them arguing that Abu Ḥanīfa refused to serve as a judge under Umayyad and 'Abbasid rulers and
as a result was severely persecuted by them. The move here is
certainly to white wash Abu Ḫanīfa and hence defeat Ḥanbalite
charges against him; but more interestingly to claim for him a
similar if not higher degree of veneration to that enjoyed by
Āḥmad b. Ḥanbal as a consequence of his resistance during the Miḥna.
Abu Ḫanīfa is here said to have argued against the insistence of
the Caliph al-Mansūr that he should serve as a judge saying:
"Suppose my ruling contradicts your wish and you threaten to
drown me in the river Furāt or I should concede your judgement,
I should then willingly choose to drown than do so; and further
you have your associates (wa laka ḥāshiya) for whom you need some¬
body who would show generosity towards them and I certainly do not
qualify for that." (326 lā21-22; 329 l.1). This is further
supported by the statement which asserts that "when Āḥmad b. Ḥanbal
recalled the flogging of Abu Ḫanīfa he wept and prayed for him.
That was after Āḥmad b. Ḥanbal himself had been flogged during
the Miḥna." (327 l.s. 12-13). On the other hand the reaction of
the Ḥanbalites is naturally negative. Their comment on this
statement is: "They say Abu Ḫanīfa was flogged for refusing to
serve as a judge; nay he was flogged because he refused to serve
as an overseer of ṭuruz made by silk tailors." (409 l.s. 4-10).

3) Ḥanafite "Jahmites" used as authorities.

Statements reported on the authority of Ḥanafites who
supported the inquisition appear at a first glance to be confusing
but can on further scrutiny be appreciated. In order to understand
the intention behind such statements we need to remember that this
group of Hanafites is discredited by both the Hanbalites as well as the apologetic Hanafites. Now when Hanbalites speak of Abu Hanifa in discrediting terms they would be addressing themselves indirectly against this group of Hanafites. The apologetic Hanafites on the other hand would in their own way report statements allegedly on the authority of Abu Hanifa which would condemn or at least contradict the position of this group of Hanafites. For instance the report on the authority of Muhammad b. Shujā‘ ath-Thaljī and Muhammad b. Sammā‘a (both followers of Abu Hanifa) that Abu Yusuf said: "I have debated the question of the nature of the Qur‘ān with Abu Ḥanīfa for six months until he finally agreed with me that he who says the Qur‘ān is created is an idolater" (377 Is.13-14); sounds confusing in that it is being reported here by Ibn ath-Thaljī and Ibn Sammā‘a who have both supported the Miḥna. The confusion however is soon removed when we see the report as an attempt by Hanbalites as well as apologetic Hanafites to discredit Hanafites who professed the createdness of the Qur‘ān but most importantly to rebuke these two men in particular for their part in the inquisition. This explanation can be further clarified by the report on the authority of the Hanafite apologist Bishr b. al-Wālīd that Abu Ḥanīfa said: "He who says the Qur‘ān is created is an innovator, he should not be listened to and prayers are not to be said behind him." (377 Is. 16-17); which can be appreciated as a projection of the attitude of apologetic Hanafites towards those Hanafites who professed the official doctrine or supported the inquisition back to Abu Ḥanīfa presumably to claim his authority
in their fight against them. The assumption here is that by using Ḥanafites who supported the inquisition as authorities for such statements they are made to defeat their own position.

This way of looking at things would become more convincing when seen in the context of the pressure on this group of Ḥanafites to repent. In this connection the situation that Ḥanafites who supported the inquisition were in after the change of policy under al-Mutawakkil must be appreciated. The pressure on Ḥanafites who supported the Miḥna to repent can be inferred from reports that Abu Ḥanīfa’s followers, his teacher Ḥammād b. Sulaymān, as well as the Umayyad governors Khālid al-Qasri, Ibn Hubayra, Yusuf b. ‘Umar and the ‘Abbasid governor of Kufa ʾĪsa b. Mūsa asked Abu Ḥanīfa to repent.14 Along these lines the statement reported on the authority of Ismā‘īl b. Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfa and his brother ‘Umar that their grandfather held the doctrine that the Qurʾān is created (379 ls. 9-10) reflects the quarrel of Ḥanbalites and men of a similar outlook with contemporary Ḥanafites who professed the official doctrine rather than any direct concern with Abu Ḥanīfa himself. This is made clear by the reproachment of Ismā‘īl by his contemporary traditionist al-Faḍl b. Dukayn for his confession of the official doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān during the inquisition of the year 212/827 in Kufa. Al-Faḍl accused him of being an agent of the Caliph al-ʾMaʿmūn; and circulated the

14. The more frequent reports claim that Abu Ḥanīfa was forced to repent from believing that the Qurʾān is created; but extreme reports assert that he was asked to repent from Zandāqa and ad-Dahr cp. Kht., xiii, 379-84.
discrediting statement that he said that the doctrine that the Qurʾān is created "is my religion, the religion of my father and my grandfather." It is clear so far that adverse remarks against Abu Ḥanifa are indirectly meant against his followers. I shall return to this trend later after an examination of a prominent Ḥanafite who is also labelled Jahmite.

**Bishr al-Marisî**

The information we have about Bishr al-Marîsî is too scanty to allow for a satisfactory understanding of his position. The general trend among islamic sources is to dismiss him as an innovator. He is generally reckoned as the forerunner of the Murjīʿites of Baghdad and is said to have revived the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān or according to some reports to have been the first to propagate it.

Some help for an understanding of his position can however be gained from an examination of his activities as a jurist. In this respect he is said to have studied jurisprudence under Abu Yusuf and to have excelled in it. He is said to have conveyed many juristic views and traditions on the authority of Abu Yusuf and was generally known for piety and asceticism. Now this description of him makes him in no way different from the main body of devout clerics of his generation. It is thus worth while to

15. Kht., vi, 245; see above p. 4.
16. cp. Milal, 107, Tabârî, 61; Shadharât, ii, 44; Kht., vii, 56; Dhahabi, Mizân, i, 322.
17. Jawâhir, i, 164; cp. Dhahabi, Mizân, i, 323.
scrutinize adverse remarks about him. These adverse statements are generally reported on the authority of traditionists of the circle of Ahmad b. Hanbal and men of a similar outlook. Ahmad b. Hanbal is said to have described him as argumentative, occasionally interrupting his teacher Abu Yusuf and questioning his views. Since Ibn Hanbal studied under Abu Yusuf in the late seventies of the 2nd/8th century it could be inferred that Bishr reached his zenith between the years 160/776-218/833. His description as argumentative, however, points to something more than his maturity as a scholar and possibly describes his dissent from generally accepted views at the time. In this respect he is said to have distinguished himself in jurisprudence then looked into kalam and philosophy. Almost all reports in this connection make the distinction between his early activity as a jurist and his later interest in speculative theology. His interest in kalam is further described as the cause of the dichotomy between him and his fellow jurists. A typical report says: "He propagated objectionable views which gained him the aversion of the people of learning who came to have a low opinion of him and reckoned him idolater." 19

His relation with ash-Shafi'i

More illuminating are the statements which describe the relation between him and the celebrated ash-Shafi'i. Bishr's

mother is said to have asked ash-Shafi‘i to persuade her son to refrain from kalam and interest himself in matters which were less controversial. Ash-Shafi‘i is said to have responded by advising Bishr to limit himself to the science of traditions and fiqh in order to secure for himself the respect and favour of the great masses.20 This information so far suggests close relationship between Bishr and ash-Shafi‘i. It is fairly established that ash-Shafi‘i met Bishr and debated certain juristic questions with him. His contact with Bishr could have been during his two visits to Baghdad towards the turn of the 2nd/6th century. Bishr’s mother is further said to have testified in courts along with the mother of ash-Shafi‘i;21 which further indicates friendly relations between the two families. When ash-Shafi‘i visited Baghdad he is said to have stayed with Bishr as his guest.

**Juristic debates between Bishr and ash-Shafi‘i**

Now it seems curious to find at the middle of this friendly relationship contradictory reports like the statements that Bishr was imprisoned and scourged by Harūn ar-Rashīd and that ash-Shafi‘i and Ḥumayd at-Tūsī silenced him in discussions at the court of this Caliph.22 Perhaps the best way to gain an insight into what was taking place is to look into the main issue which was debated by ash-Shafi‘i and Bishr. This is said to have been the legitimacy

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22. For his alleged imprisonment see Kht., vii, 64; Dhahabi, Mizān, i, 322. For his debate with ash-Shafi‘i and Ḥumayd at-Tūsī see Kht., vii, 60-61.
of the casting of the lot (al-qur'a) to decide the ownership of an article in absence of evidence. The position of Bishr is that qur'a is nothing but gambling. On the other hand ash-Sahfi'i is said to have maintained its legitimacy. He is said to have reported Bishr to the then judge of al-Ruṣāfa a certain Abu 1-Bakhtari who told him that if he could secure another witness to testify with him he would execute Bishr. It is significant that the argument of those who maintained the legitimacy of the qur'a is supported by traditions and citations from the Qur'an. Judging by the space allotted to this case in early sources and the emphasis on the difference of the two points of view it must have posed a serious problem for Islamic jurisprudence. It helps to note in this respect that Bishr al-Marīs reluctantly accepted analogy (qiyaṣ) and individual judgement (ar-ra' unimaginable) and argued that a jurist who judges wrongly sins and the punishment for his sin is immortality in hell. It is only here that the disproportionate concern with al-qur'a can be justified as not mere waste of time and effort for here is the only area where error is more probable. If casting of the lot is to be the deciding factor for instance for ownership of disputed property there is no guarantee that justice could be done to the real owner.

23. On Qur'a see Shafi'i, al-Umm, vii, 16-17. For a Hanbalite view see Ya'la, i, 254; at-Turuq al-Askmiyya, 71, 195, 265-307; and the interesting remarks about its use in the choice between two Caliphs as inferred from its application by Ibn Ḥanbal in choosing between two Mu'addhdbins. See Far'ā', al-Ahmām ash-Sūlṭāniyya, 9.

24. Rāzi, 'Aḍāb ash-Shafi'i, 175, Dhahabi, Mizān, i, 323.


26. See the full argument in Ghazālī, Mustaʃfa, ii, 109.
Now what we have learned so far shows ash-Shafi‘i and Bishr al-Mar‘isi as the main dominant figures in legal debates at the time. The challenge of qiyya and ra‘y by Bishr al-Mar‘isi must not be seen as a contradiction of his own position as a forerunner of kalam for apparently what he is attacking here is the freedom of judgement of what Joseph Schacht calls the ancient schools of law which preceded the firm establishment of legal argument from the traditions (al-Hadith). The point here being that his main concern was with uniformity. This explains the animosity of the religious institutions towards him as well as why he was welcomed by the Caliph al-Ma‘mun whom we know to have wanted to check the influence of these institutions on the legal profession.

This whole activity describes the emergence of a new era in the formative period of Islamic law when the ancient system of law was proving inadequate possibly for political reasons and was in the point of being superseded by a new era. In this context Bishr was a dissident in the sense that he pioneered this new phase which naturally antagonised the ancient schools of law and checked their freedom of judgement as well as their methods. Now ash-Shafi‘i comes into the picture at this stage as a compromiser who wanted to preserve the authority of the religious institutions on juristic matters but at the same time meet the need for uniformity by basing legal judgement on authentic traditions which are sayings of the Prophet, reported by a direct chain of transmitters.

27. cp. Schacht, Origins esp. part 1.
28. Ibid., 36f.
Eventually the attempt of Ḥaš-Shafi‘ī proved successful but it gave the more politically conscious elements of the religious institutions namely the emerging ahl al-Ḥadith of the circle of Ḥāmid b. Ḥanbal the opportunity to emerge as the dominant group in the discussion.

The Forces at Play

The Ḥanafite Jahmites

Ḥanafite sources which claim Bishr as a member of the school put the case against him mildly as that "he held views which were objectionable to the madhhāb."29 Non-Ḥanafite sources, however, make the curious remark that he was detested by both parties.30 The two parties could possibly mean the "moderate" Ḥanafites on the one hand and others including followers of Malik b. Anas Ḥaš-Shafi‘ī and later Ḥāmid b. Ḥanbal on the other. This is certainly a later way of putting things for it is difficult at the time to speak of divisions into these schools. Nevertheless the point is useful in leading us to detect the forces at play. The general impression that one gets from the sources is that Bishr started his career as a follower of Abu Yusuf but eventually differed with him. This is highlighted by Ibn Ḥanbal's description of Bishr's arguments with Abu Yusuf. These reports claim that Abu Yusuf cautioned Bishr that if he continued to hold objectionable views he would end up in being crucified. Ḥanbalite

30. Tabṣīr, 61.
sources in general differentiate between Abu Yusuf on the one hand and other Ḥanafites on the other including Abu Ḥanifa himself, Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan and Bishr al-Marīṣī whom they reckon Jahmites and seem to have reasons for their quarrel with them. Abu Yusuf is even said to have argued from traditions and shared the Ḥanbalite point of view on the beatific vision. He is said to have told Bishr: "I believe in the tradition of the beatific vision but your friends (wa aṣḥābukā) deny it?"31

What we have learned so far shows that Bishr represents dissent from the Ḥanafites proper as well as the main body of jurists of his time. Political factors involved in his dissent will be briefly looked into shortly but they are here presupposed in order to draw the conclusion that it was on their implications that he was labelled Jahmite. For purpose of convenience I shall call those who are reckoned his followers Ḥanafite Jahmites. To have an idea about who those alleged followers were we need to recall what I have said above with regard to certain Ḥanafites who came to prominence during the inquisition. Those Ḥanafites are jurisconsults and judges like Ibn ath-Thalji, Ibn Sāmā‘a, ‘Abd ar-Raḥman b. Iṣḥāq the two sons of al-Bakkā’, and many others who supported al-Ka‘mún, his immediate successors, and their chief judge Ḥamad b. Abi Du‘ād in their fight against the religious institutions. On the other hand Ḥanafites like Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindi, ‘Ali b. Abi Muqāṭil, al-Paḍl b. Ghānim and others who

31 Kht., vii, 66.
opposed the official doctrine and took the position of Ahmad b. Hanbal and his circle are praised by Hanbalites as ḥāšib ūnna and differentiated from their Jahmite counterparts.

The "Mu'ātallite" Jahmites

Now by referring to the friends of Bishr al-Marīsī Abu Yusuf could have meant the Mu'ātallites. I am, however, inclined to think of the emergence at the time of a group of jurists-consults from the main body of the hitherto respected Muslim clerics who, most probably for political as well as purely intellectual reasons came to differ with their compatriots on juristic matters or questions of dogma with a bearing on jurisprudence. Some of them could have shared views with those loosely called Mu'ātallites but were on the whole distinguished from them. This would be in line with al-Khayyat's reluctance to accept those reckoned Jahmites as Mu'ātallites. Now those men are reckoned Jahmites for their involvement in politics but more precisely for their relationship with the Hanafite Jahmites. A case in point is Ḥafṣ al-Fard; for whereas Ibn ar-Rawandi reckons him Mu'ātallite al-Khayyat dismisses him as a Jahmite and a believer in jabr.\(^{32}\)

Al-Khayyat's argument sounds convincing in so far as Ḥafṣ seems to have had much in common with Hanafite Jahmites than with Mu'ātallites. In this respect Ḥafṣ is said to have had doctrinal differences with Mu'ātallites; and to have quarrelled with Abu 1-Hudhayl al-'Allāf.\(^{33}\)

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32. Khayyat, Intiṣār, 97.
33. Shibrist, 255.
On the other hand he seems to have held similar views to those who were reckoned Jahmites, \(^{34}\) and to have had close connections with the political institutions. In this respect he is said to have held the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān and is known to have represented while in Egypt the official theological position during the Mīha. \(^{35}\) His views on Imān are very much similar to those attributed to Abu Ḫanifa and Ḥanafite Jahmites. \(^{36}\) The often reported debate between him and ash-Shafi‘i evolves around his dissent from the generally accepted views at the time, \(^{37}\) and thus ash-Shafi‘i is said to have nicknamed him Ḥafṣ al-Munfarid. Now these are presumably the same situation and issues which ash-Shafi‘i debated with Bishr al-Marīṣ. Thus Ḥafṣ al-Fard seems to belong to the nascent movement of jurist mutakallimun like Bishr al-Marīṣ and his generation who were later rebuked as Jahmites.

Along these lines the influence which the Mu‘tazilite Thumāma b. Ashras enjoyed at the court of al-Ma‘mūn can be explained in the context of the dominance of the Ḥanafite juristic school particularly in view of Thumāma’s close relationship with Bishr al-Marīṣ. Similarly Mu‘tazilites who sponsored the Mīna of Khalq al-Qur‘ān namely the chief judge Ibn Abī Du‘ād and the so called Mu‘tazilites of al-Baṣra led by Būghurth belong to the

\(^{34}\) Maq., 317, 407-8.

\(^{35}\) art. Ḥafṣ al-Fard, EI\(^2\); op. Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftari, 339ff.

\(^{36}\) Rāzī, ’Adāb ash-Shafi‘i, 192; Ḥilya, ix, 115.

\(^{37}\) Rāzī, ’Adāb ash-Shafi‘i, 118; Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftari, 336-338.
same juristic movement of the Hanafites, particularly the circle of Bishr al-Marisi. This includes Ibn 'Ulayya, al-Hasayn an-Najjar, Pirar b. 'Amr, Sufyan b. Sakhtan and Burghuth and their followers. 38

Now we can begin to see that those labelled Mu'tazilite Jahmites were in fact men of similar outlook to Hanafites Jahmites or those interested in kalam.

This way of looking at things can be further highlighted by a brief examination of the lists of Jahmites produced by Ibn Battâ and Ibn al-Jawzi. The Mu'tazilite Jahmites in the list of Ibn Battâ are not all those known to us as Mu'tazilites but include a majority of non-entities about whom virtually nothing is known. 39

It could be inferred from this that their sudden prominence as Jahmites must have been for political reasons. They seem to have been involved in the Miḥna in one way or the other. I have managed to identify Abu Shu'ayb al-Ḥajjam and Abu 'Abd Allah al-Armani who participated in the inquisition councils under al-Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq respectively. 40

The case of Abu Shu'ayb is more interesting in that he seems to have originally belonged to the circle of Ahl al-Hadîth. He was one of two official inquisitors who first interviewed Ahmad b. Ḥanbal


40. See below, pp. 229-230.
at the palace of the governor of Baghdad before his inquisition at
the court of al-Mu'tasim. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal is said to have been
amazed to see him join the opposing party of Ibn Abi Du'ād. He
is reported to have said to him: "Waybak! what made you do this
after you have studied the Ḥadīth and Fiqh"? Abu Shu'ayb did
not only join the party of the "Mu'tazilites" but went further
than they would dare go at the time to declare that God's knowledge
is created. When his partner a certain Ahmad b. Rabah was told
this by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal he is said to have been startled and to have
reproached him severely.

More illuminating is the list of Jahmites produced by Ibn
al-Jawzi, in his Manaqib Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. All in all he gives
the names of ten Jahmites, namely Ahmad b. Rabah, 'Abd Allah b.
Muhammad al-Khalanji, Shu'ayb b. Sahl, 'Ubayd Allah b. Ahmad,
It could be learned from the existent information on these men
that they were all involved in the inquisition in Baghdad or the
provinces largely as judges or officials in the legal profession.
Now all of them are Ẓanafites who are referred to as followers of
Bishr al-Marīṣ or Ibn Abi Du'ād. Thus the conclusion so far
is that those labelled Mu'tazilite Jahmites are essentially men
from the main body of the Ẓanafite school of law. They are

41. Mih., 7; Ḥilya, ix, 197.
42. Mih., 8.
43. Mih., 8; Ḥilya, ix, 197.
reckoned Jahmites by Ahl al-Hadîth for the simple fact of belonging to the opposing party namely that of Hanafite Jahmites or men of similar outlook who were associated with the regimes of al-Ma'mûn and his immediate successors. On the whole Jahmites are Iraqi jurists who were by and large followers of Abu Hanifa. They were for the very fact of serving in the legal profession closely connected with the political institutions. Their relationship with the rulers seem to have led them to seek to free the legal profession from religious overtones and control by the forces of Ahl al-Hadîth.

The opponents of the Jahmiyya.

I have hinted above that the outcome of the debate of al-Shafi'i with both Bishr al-Marsîl and Hâfîz al-Fard had enabled the circle of Ahmad b. Hanbal and other traditionists conscious of the political implications of the movement of Bishr and his generation to emerge as the main dominant group in the debate. Their emergence as an opposing school to the juristic movement of Bishr is witnessed in the rise of the science of traditions as a discipline. In this respect Nu'aym b. Hammad is said to have been the first to compose the musnad. Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Mu'In are known for their voluminous collections of Hadîth and reckoned the founders of the criticism of the science of Hadîth. Ibn Hanbal is further said to have been most knowledgeable in

juristic rules embodied in the traditions. This point is of great significance as it shows the new move under Ḥanbalites to base juristic judgement on traditions which was interestingly enough still disputed as late as the time of the famous at-Ṭabarî (d.310/922) who did not acknowledge Ahmad b. Ḥanbal as a jurist. Thus what is generally dismissed by early as well as modern students as Ḥanbalite fanaticism against at-Ṭabarî must be appreciated in view of the seriousness of his remark for the situation at the time. Similarly another member of the circle of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal namely ‘Ubayd allah al-Qāsim b. Sallām is said to have unlocked the complex meanings of traditions. In this context the rise of the science of criticism of Ḥadīth is most significant. The criticism of Ḥadīth seems to have been aimed at the elimination of certain opponents as transmitters or authorities of Ḥadīth. It may seem dubious that the rejection of certain transmitters of traditions is based on assumptions (mainly ethical) other than factual data of the Ḥadīth in question, but we must appreciate it as an attempt to discredit the religious grounds of the argument of one’s opponents. My own opinion is that a large proportion of the literature on criticism of Ḥadīth aims at the suppression of certain traditions which support views of opponent jurists on the one hand and the promotion of traditions supporting one’s own point of view.

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45. Ya‘la, 1, 6.

46. The Ḥanbalite’s quarrel with at-Ṭabarî was provoked by the latter’s omission of the name of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal from his book on juristic differences among jurisconsults on the pretext that Ibn Ḥanbal was a traditionist and not a jurisconsult. His act implies the objection to Ḥanbalite attempts to base juristic rules on traditions.
on the other. In such circumstances the authenticity of a
tradition in question becomes in effect a secondary matter. It
is only here that an explanation of the existence of traditions
known to its reporters to have been fabricated or weak can be
found. The later relaxation of the rules of criticism of ḥadīth
when contrasting traditions of different schools of thought came
to be accepted is itself a reaction against attempts during the
Miṣna to undermine the traditions as such.

The Inquisition of Bishr al-Marīṣl

The direct reaction of ahī al-Ḥadīth against the movement of
Bishr al-Marīṣl is witnessed in their animosity against him personally.
This is witnessed in remarks by leading traditionists like Yazīd
b. Hārūn, Ibn al-Mubārak and men of their generation that Bishr was
an idolater. Yazīd b. Hārūn is said to have encouraged the
populace of Baghdad to kill him.47 The more reasoned reports
say that he urged the authorities to persecute him. It was during
the turbulent Caliphate of Mašur b. al-Mahdī and his brother
Ibrāhīm that ahī al-Ḥadīth and the populace of Baghdad pressed for
an inquisition of Bishr al-Marīṣl. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī ordered
his inquisition which was conducted by the judge Qutayba b. Ziyād
in the mosque of al-Ruṣāfa in the year 203/818.48 An eye witness
described the scene as follows: A great assembly was held in the
mosque and Bishr was made to stand in a huge box adjacent to a rear

47. Kht., vii, 63.
48. For the inquisition see Kht., xi, 464.
door which led to the servants' quarter in which copies of the Qur'ān were usually deposited. Abu Muslim 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yunus the amanuensis of Ibn 'Uyayna and Harun b. Musa the amanuensis of Yazid b. Harun announced in a loud voice for all to hear that the commander of the faithful Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdi had ordered his judge Qutayba b. Ziyād to ask Bishr al-Marisū to repent. They named some of his abominable beliefs including that of the createdness of the Qur'ān and declared that Bishr had repented. On hearing this Bishr raised his voice and said: "Nay I repent not; (muḍdh Allah inni lastu bi tā'ib)." There was an immediate onslaught by greater numbers of people on him until they nearly killed him had he not been quickly smuggled out of the mosque through the servants' door.

The Hanafite system of law and the state

Now with this background in mind the animosity of Ḥanbalites and men of similar outlook against Abu Ḥanifa, Bishr al-Marisū and Ḥanafites in general must have some grounds. We are here concerned with motives that made Ḥanbalites and others of a similar outlook adopt an aggressive attitude towards some of their contemporary Ḥanafites. It is not helpful to dismiss these bitter animosities between jurists of the time as inexplicable academic jealousies. In this connection the first thing that captures the attention of the student of this period is the high proportion of Ḥanafites who held posts in the legal profession and its subsidiary branches. The explanation for this must be
sought in the suitability of the Ḥanafite juristic theory for the rulers. To demonstrate this point I list below a table of Ḥanafite rulings on various issues along with the corresponding rulings on the same issues by other schools of law.\(^49\) In order to allow for comparison at a glance the Ḥanafite ruling is marked with the letter (a) and that of those who differ with them is marked with letter (b):

1. Ḥanafite (a) If an owner of a piece of land fails to put it to use and cannot pay the Kharāj on it, the ruler has the right to rent it and collect the kharāj due from the rent. If no person was found to rent it the ruler can then sell it and collect the kharāj from the price in spite of the disagreement of its owner.

   (b) Others disagreed with this arrangement.

2. Ḥanafite (a) If somebody made use of a piece of land and brought life to it by cultivating it without the permission of the ruler he owns it not.

   (b) Others held that he who cultivates a land ipso facto owns it without any licence from the ruler.

3. Ḥanafite (a) A ruler who captures a territory of dār al-Kufr has the right to drop the jizya from its inhabitants and to allow them to keep their property instead of distributing it among the victorious troops as a booty.

   (b) Others held that the ruler has no right to do so unless authorised by his troops, otherwise it is the right of

these troops that the booty should be distributed among them.

4. Ḥanafites (a) A Muslim warrior who kills an idolater in battle is not entitled to his possessions unless the ruler explicitly states that he who kills an enemy is entitled to his property.
   (b) Others held that booty goes to the victor without any permission from the ruler.

5. Ḥanafites (a) Zakāt given to the poor in cash can be withdrawn from him by the ruler.
   (b) Others held the ruler has no right to take it back.

6. Ḥanafites (a) A slave who commits fornication, drinks liquor or steals shall be punished by the ruler and not by his owner.
   (b) Others held the slave's owner should execute the law on his slave.

7. Ḥanafites (a) If a criminal is punished by the ruler and dies from the effects of punishment the ruler is not held responsible for compensations.
   (b) Others held the ruler responsible for compensations.

8. Ḥanafites (a) If a man kills a foundling (laqīf) intentionally the ruler is to castigate him.
   (b) Others ruled otherwise.

This is a random selection of Ḥanafite ruling on various matters chosen to demonstrate the point rather than as an exhaustive comparison of the place of Ḥanafite and other schools of law in relation to the political institutions. As such the
list shows beyond any doubt that Hanafite law tends to strengthen the authority of the ruler and establish his control over public and private areas of law whereas the tendency of those who differ with them is clearly opposed to control by the ruler and on the whole attempt to limit or whenever possible reduce his right to act in all these areas.

The attack on Abu Hanifa's use of qiṣṣa and his individual judgement must now be appreciated. In this respect he is said to have rejected the traditions and to have declined to follow the rulings of the successors of the Sahāba claiming that they were not better qualified than him and that as they had their own opinion he too was entitled to his own. This is further supported by accusations against him of being arrogant and deviating from the true tradition of Islam. The point usually made in this connection is that it was with the advent of Abu Hanifa in Kufa, Rabī'a in Medina and 'Uthman al-Batī in Baṣra that the use of opinion as opposed to the established tradition came to pose a serious threat to Islam. The argument here is not against the use of opinion as such but rather against the individual judgement of these elements who as non-Arabs are reckoned a threat to the traditional Arab aristocracy or the so-called representatives of Sunnism.

In this connection Abu Hanifa's Kitab al-qiṣṣa came under heavy fire from his opponents. It is even more interesting to note the caution against it and the rebuke of those who use it as heavy.

50. Kht., xiii, 368.
51. These jurisconsults are rebuked as Sabāya abnā' al-Umam. See Kht., xiii, 403.
witnessed in the statement: "He who has in his home the book of Ḥiyal by Abu Ḥanifa, and uses it for ṣutiya is an idolater, his wife is no more legitimate wife for him, and his pilgrimage is abrogated."52 This is linked to the rejection by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal of most of contemporary legal works including those by the celebrated ash-Šafi‘i; Malik b. Anas, Sufyan ath-Thawrī, Ishāq b. Rahawayh and Abu ‘Ubayd a phenomenon which is explained in the chapter on the Waqīfiyya and the Ḥafṣiyya.

Conclusion
(a) An examination of the motives behind the official doctrine of the createdness of the Qur‘ān would reveal the concern of the rulers with the consolidation of their power over judicial matters. It seems that some of the Ḥanafites who held posts in the judiciary believed that their interests could best be served through their association with ahl al-Ḥadīth. This explains their break with those who came to be reckoned Ḥanafite Ḥāmites. One gets the impression from the inquisition letters which were sent by the Caliph al-Ma‘mūn to the governor of Baghdad that his main concern was with this group of Ḥanafites who for reasons of desire for leadership and social status as he puts it came to accept the position of ahl al-Ḥadīth and to associate with them.54 On the whole this boils down to the fact that traditionists and certain Ḥanafites in the legal profession opposed control by the rulers on

52. Kht., xiii, 403.
53. Ya‘la, i, 57.
54. Tab., iii, esp. p. 1114.
judicial matters. It is here that al-Ma'mūn is found addressing himself to 'Ali b. Abi Muqātil in the following manner: "You once said to me that the commander of the faithful can legitimise and prohibit (yuhallil wa yuharrim)." This point will be further illuminated later. It is sufficient here to say that the struggle between al-Ma'mūn on the one hand and traditionists and certain Ḥanafites who opposed the official policy of the Mihna on the other was over his bid for more say in judicial and semi judicial matters. The inquisition of Bishr al-Ka'īlī by the opponents of al-Ma'mūn and on the other hand his reception at the court of this Caliph highlight this development.

(b) I should now like to draw attention to the remarkable relevance of areas dealt with in 1, 3 and 4 in the above list on Ḥanafite rules to situations in conquered territories and Khurāsān in particular. In this respect the ruling in No. 3 is of special significance for us as it echoes the fiscal policy of 'Umar II which we know that al-Ḥārith b. Surayj and Abu Ṣaydā had endeavoured to implement. Perhaps the relationship of al-Ma'mūn with Khurāsān and Khurāsānite forces had something to do with the new situation in Iraq which was reckoned favourable to non-Arabs and non-muslims. In this connection those around al-Amīn are generally reckoned Arabs or more precisely Khurāsānite Arabs. The latter in particular were not happy about the movement of Jahm and al-Ḥārith b. Surayj described above. Perhaps a similar

55. Tab., 111, 1127.
situation to that of Khurāsān during the opening of the 2nd/3rd century has now developed in Irāq too.

It is interesting to note in this connection that both Abu Ḥanīfa and Bishr al-Marīsī are reckoned Murjī‘ite Jahmites. Their theory of Īmān is tailored to resemble that of Jahm b. Ṣafwān. The three of them are said to have restricted Īmān to belief in God and hence differentiated between membership of the Islamic body politic and the religious practice. There are grounds to suppose that both Abu Ḥanīfa and Bishr being from mawālī stock are here concerned with the position of non-Muslims and the mawālī in the Islamic empire. The similarity between their venture and that of Jahm and al-Ḥārith b. Surayj readily comes to the mind. The sources even suggest direct connection between Abu Ḥanīfa and al-Ḥārith b. Surayj. The messengers sent to present the case for an amnesty for al-Ḥārith and his associates to Yazīd III are said to have called on Abu Ḥanīfa at al-Kufa and secured letters of recommendation from him to facilitate their interview with the Caliph in Damascus.56 If this report is genuine it would establish Abu Ḥanīfa’s contact with the fight for the rights of the mawālī and the settled Arabs in Khurāsān. One is inclined to believe that at least here the attempt to link Abu Ḥanīfa with Jahm has some historical validity; but even if this historical link is doubted the argument still remains that the comparison between Abu Ḥanīfa and Ḥanafite Jahmites like Bishr al-Marīsī and his circle on the one hand, and Jahm b. Ṣafwān and his associates

56. Tab., iii, 1867.
on the other sounds convincing in so far as they were all attempting to respond to similar situations. In this context the Jāḥmiyya could be seen as a levelling movement aimed at the accommodation of the mawālī and non-muslims in the Islamic society in which they were already integrated but not on equal footing with the Arabs. As such it seems to have embodied the Shuʿubiyya movement but was more broader in that it was sponsored by the rulers who sought to benefit from its adverse social and political effect for the forces of Sunnism, or those (including Arabs and others) who benefitted from the old, and now decaying, structure of politics in the centre and the provinces of the Islamic empire.

There are here two issues at stake which are closely related: one is legal as described above and the other is social. The social issue evolves around the status of the mawālī and Ahl adh-Dhimma but generally speaking represents a transformation in the power structure of the Islamic society which consequently necessitated an adjustment of the legal system particularly with regard to its administration in order to match the new development. The forces engaged in this movement are described as Jahmite but need not be of the same mind in all the issues involved for the Muʿtazilites for instance seem reluctant and indeed are traditionally opposed to the strengthening of the position of non-Muslims, but are on the other hand anxious to strengthen the political institutions against the encroachment of the circle of Ahl al-Hadith and their associates.
CHAPTER 7

THE WĀQIFIYYA AND THE LAPZIYYA

The Wāqifiyya

The Wāqifiyya is the name given to describe those jurists and traditionists who for one reason or the other did not commit themselves to either side in the debate on the nature of the Qur'ān. Their position is that the Qur'ān is the Word of God but they would not say whether it is created or uncreated. They were accused by traditionists around Ahmad b. Hanbal of doubting the nature of the Qur'ān. In defence against this accusation they denied having been prompted in the position they took by doubt and argued that in withholding from discussing the nature of the Qur'ān they were following the orthodox position of the predecessors. They are, however, different groups and the best way to gain an understanding of their respective standpoints is to begin by examining brief biographical notes on some of them.

‘Abdallah b. Dā‘ūd (121/738 – 213/825)

The earliest to be reckoned among the Wāqifiyya was the Ḥanafite Abu ‘Abd ar-Rahman ‘Abdallah b. Dā‘ūd b. ‘Āmir al-Khuraybi. The reference to him as al-Khuraybi indicates his residence in al-Khurayba, a quarter in Baṣra. Ibn Sa‘d describes him as ascetic and trustworthy.1 He is described in similar terms by the Ḥanbalite ad-Daraquṭni.2 His Baṣrite student Ibn-‘Uyayna

1. Ibn Sa‘d, Tabaqāt, vii, 49.
2. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, v, 200.
held him in high esteem. The critics of hadith including Abu Zurʿa, Yahya b. Maʿin, ad-Darimi and an-NisāʿI describe him as a trustworthy traditionist. Abu Ḥātim ar-Rāzi, however, says he was inclined towards opinion (ar-raʿy). In this connection when he was told that Abu Ḥanifa had changed his mind about many questions (masāʿīl) he is said to have commented: "The scholar changes his opinion when his knowledge increases."

Now this scant information indicates that al-Khuraybi was generally accepted by Ahl al-Hadīth. The reference to his use of opinion further substantiated by his rejection of the presumably critical remark about Abu Ḥanifa however place him in the Iraqi school of law as a follower of Abu Ḥanifa.

Dhahabi says: "He was one of those who abstained on the question of the Qurʿān for reasons of piety and fear." He gives the date of his death as the year 213/628. This could mean that during the inquisition of 212/827 in Bagh al-Khuraybi avoided persecution by remaining silent on the issue of the Qurʿān possibly for the reasons given by Dhahabi. In some reports however, the date of his death is given as 211/826, and here the argument that he abstained for fear of persecution becomes less convincing in so far as the inquisition was not officially conducted before 212/827. Probably the proclamation at the time of the official policy and the declaration of the opposing view as heretical prompted

3. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, v, 200.
4. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, i, 208; Jawāhir, i, 275.
5. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, i, 208.
his silence. This would be in line with Dhahabi's report that he stopped teaching towards the end of his life.

Al-Hārith b. Surayj (or Shurayj), d. 230/844 or 236/850

Al-Hārith was originally from Khawārizm but lived in Baghdad. He is said to have interested himself in traditions but his authority in this field seems to have been doubted. Abu Zur'a is said to have received traditions from him but stopped conveying them on his authority. There are conflicting reports which at one time assert that Yahya b. Ma'In described him as trustworthy and at other times as a liar. An-Nisā'ī, however, dismisses him as untrustworthy. Perhaps the illuminating description of him is the one by Abu Zakariyya who said: "He is not one of the liars but he has no luck." in that this statement conveys that adverse Ḥanbalite remarks against him were prompted by animosity. On the question of the Qur'ān al-Ḥarīth is said to have been a vehement believer in abstaining. He was asked: "What do you say about the Qur'ān?" and his answer was: "It is the word of God; I say no more." When he was told (presumably to entice him into changing his position) that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal held that it was the uncreated word of God, his comment was that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was honest and trustworthy.

The reason for adverse Ḥanbalite remarks against him can further be explained by his relationship with the judge ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Ishāq. We have noticed above that the latter was a member of the inquisition council under al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāthiq. Al-Ḥarīth is said to have administered the property of ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Ishāq and ran his estate for him. Now it seems that his abstention on the question of the Qurʾān at a time when he had close connections with men like ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Ishāq who were involved in the Miḥna was interpreted by Ḥanbalites as acquiescence with the position of their opponents.

Yaʿqūb b. Shayba (162/778 - 262/875)

Yaʿqūb was an Iraqi jurist who followed the Medinan school of Malik b. Anas. He did not see Malik but studied under scholars who met him. Those include among others Aḥmad b. al-Muʿaddil, Ishāq b. al-Faraj, al-Ḥarīth b. Miskīn and Saʿīd b. Abī Zunbūr. He is said to have excelled in Maliki law and composed many treatises on it. He is however, better known as a traditionist. He taught traditions in Baghdad and Samarra and is reckoned first among the founders of the science of traditions and the musnad. He is mentioned by historians as the first of three scholars whose works on ʿilal al-Ḥadīth have not been surpassed in the whole history of Islam. A celebrated musnad

12. Ibid., 355-56.
he is said to have engaged in composing was, however, not finished but an idea of its size can be gained from remarks about the scale of its preparation and the description of parts of it which were accomplished. With respect to its preparation it is said that Ya‘qūb kept forty mattresses in his home for scribes who stayed overnight to copy the chain of transmitters (al-musnad). The part of the work which was finished was said to have cost 10,000 dinars. This finished part comprised traditions on the authority of the ten companions, namely Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Ammār, ‘Utba b. Ghazwān, al-‘Abbas and some of the mawālī. A part of this finished work transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurayra is said to have run into two hundred chapters (juz’).

This account presents Ya‘qūb as a celebrated traditionist by any standard; yet it is said that Ahmad b. Ḥanbal accused him of innovation and iniquity. Now this can only be explained in the context of contemporary disputes. Nothing is however known about Ya‘qūb’s reaction towards the Miḥna under al-Ma‘mūn, al-Mu‘taṣim or al-Wāṭiqī. He was certainly on bad terms with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, according to Khaṭīb, because of his abstention during the Miḥna. Yahyā b. Khāqān reported that Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was asked by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil to recommend candidates for service in the judiciary and that he gave the names

of some scholars but when asked to give his opinion on Ya‘qūb b. Shayba who had been advanced by the authorities as a candidate for the post of judge he advised against his appointment and described him as an innovator and dissenter (Mubtadi‘ wa gāhib hawa). Khaṭīb says that Ahmad b. Ḥanbal described him thus because he abstained on the question of the Qur’ān. One notices that the accusation of Ya‘qūb by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal of innovation and heresy carries more than the blame for his passive attitude towards the Miḥna. If al-Khaṭīb’s explanation can be accepted and there is no reason to doubt it then the term waqifiyya must have meant more than neutrality or passive attitude towards the official doctrine.

Iṣḥāq b. Abī Isrā‘īl (151/768 - 245/859)

Iṣḥāq b. Abī Isrā‘īl was a celebrated traditionist from Marw who lived in Baghdad. He is described by critics of Ḥadīth including his opponents as trustworthy and pious. He was sixty-two years of age when the inquisition of 212/827 took place, and had by then established his name as an eminent authority on traditions. When he adopted the position of the waqifiyya during the Miḥna those who took a positive role against the official policy found it difficult to sever relations with him or drop the many traditions they possessed on his authority. In this respect Ahmad b. Ḥanbal is reported to have said that Iṣḥāq was an ill-omened abstainer but a shrewd traditionist. Other similar remarks say of him:

"He is truthful in traditions but he says the Qur'ān is the word of God and stops."; or "They deserted him for abstaining but he was truthful." 19 One traditionist taught his students a tradition on the authority of Ishāq and when one of his students asked him about the character of Ishāq he said to him: "Do not ask about things which when made known to you would displease you." 20 Those around Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who found themselves obliged to boycott Ishāq particularly after his quarrel with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal found it difficult to do so. When Abu Bakr al-Marwazī a close friend of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal boycotted traditions conveyed by Ishāq a friend of his namely Mubayyib b. Mubashhabar told him not to do so because he had seen a collection of traditions on the authority of Ishāq in the possession of Yahya b. Ma‘In. Abu Bakr then asked Yahya: "Ya Aba Zakariyya have you written from Ishāq?" Yahya told him that he did and in all wrote twenty-seven chapters on his authority. 21 Ad-Darimi who studied under Ishāq found it difficult to explain his position. He is reported to have said: "I asked Yahya b. Ma‘In about Ishāq and he told me that he was trustworthy"; and then added: "but this was before he abstained and when I first wrote from him he had a blameless record." 22 The apologetic trend is further noticed in attempts to find excuses for Ishāq or to play down the animosity against him. In this respect a certain ‘Abdūs an-Nisāpūrī seems not to have seen the

19. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, 1, 233.
22. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, 1, 224; Kht., vi, 359.
point for bitterness against Iṣḥāq in view of his eminence as a traditionist. He is reported to have said: "He (sc. Iṣḥāq) is extremely capable, no person is like him in knowledge or piety and after all he studied under the early masḥā'ikh." When told that Iṣḥāq had been accused of abstaining, he said: "He was accused but he was blameless (lam yakum bi muttaham)." 23

The Waqifiyya of the circle of Aḥl al-Ḥadīth

It is clear from these biographical notes that the Waqifiyya were distinguished members of the circle of Aḥl al-Ḥadīth. Their authority in jurisprudence and the science of traditions as well as their relatively advanced age point towards the position of leadership they must have held in the society of the time. It is probably in view of their eminence that Ḥanbalites were critical of their failure to join them in their fight against the imposition of the official doctrine.

On deeper level the danger of the attitude of the Waqifiyya for the position of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and his associates is in their dictum that it is relegosity and piety not to discuss the nature of the Qur'ān. Iṣḥāq b. Abi Isrā'īl for instance was at pains to establish that his abstention was not prompted by doubt in the nature of the Qur'ān, but that in withholding judgement he was following the orthodox position of the predecessors. 24 More interesting is his attack on Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and his circle for

23. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, 1, 224; Kht., vi, 360.
24. Kht., vi, 361; Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, 1, 224.
arguing the point with the Jahmiyya. He is reported to have said while pointing towards the home of Ahmad b. Hanbal: "Those kids say the Qur'ān is the uncreated word of God, would it not have been better to say that it is the word of God and stop."25

Now what we have here is not a passive position of neutrality, but rather a positive attempt by people like Ishāq b. Abi Isrā'īl not only to disassociate themselves from the two disputing parties but to criticise them for subjecting the Qur'ān to disputation. This comes out clearly in the report of the Ḥanbalite ad-Darimi who says: "They (so. the Waqīfīyya) were not contented with abstention but declared innovators all who disagreed with them or held either view on the Qur'ān."26 The seriousness of this situation is that it marks the development of the dispute within the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. This is echoed in Ḥanbalite grief that they had to come to blows with this group of men and particularly with Ishāq b. Abi Isrā'īl whom they held in high esteem. Their attitude is clearly demonstrated by their respect for him as a traditionist; but as they saw the implications of his position for their fight against the rulers they are reported to have said: "He is our trustworthy master but he has a weak mind"; a statement which indicates their disapproval of his abstention which they conceived as a passive attitude. In this respect when a friend defended the position of Ishāq as prompted by

25. Kht., vi, 360; Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, i, 224.
26. Darimi, ar-Radd 'ala l-Jahmiyya, 89.
piety and quoted lines of poetry to this effect an opponent is said to have commented: "This man collected all these traditions and he still does not move beyond this poetry". 27

It seems that at least here the Ḥanbalites were justified in asserting that the failure of the Waqifiyya to confirm that the Qurʾān was uncreated weakens the position of the religious institutions in their fight against the rulers. It was this situation which left the main body of the religious institutions open to political manoeuvre by a new administration with a new line of policy such as that of al-Mutawakkil. It will be pointed out presently that although al-Mutawakkil abandoned the policy of his predecessors regarding the Mihna he nevertheless faced the same problem which they had faced and consequently found himself in the position of having to meet it in his own way. Thus his forbidding of the debate of the nature of the Qurʾān by both disputing parties in 234/848 was in effect an attempt to win the Waqifiyya. This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that Ishāq b. Abi Isrāʾīl and Yaʿqūb b. Shayba were among others patronised by him. 28 They received gifts and salaries and were brought to Samarra to teach there. Yaʿqūb was further as we have just seen offered the post of judge. On the other hand Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who was similarly approached and persuaded to co-operate resisted as

27. Kht., vi, 361.
28. For Ishāq see Manāqib, 357; For Yaʿqūb see Kht., xiv, 282, and p. 173 above.
we know all sorts of pressure and was at the same time critical of those who acquiesced and accepted patronage. The report by the Ḥanbalite ad-Daraqūṭni that Iṣḥāq b. Aḥmad b. Abī Isrā’īl abstained at first but eventually gave in highlights this development.

Similarly the famous Bishr b. al-Walid al-Kindi who resisted during the inquisition of 218/833 under al-Ḥāfiz and only gave in under threat of execution on basis of taqiyya and was consequently held in high esteem by Abū Ḥamid al-Ṭūsī. He is said to have changed his position under al-Mutawakkil and adopted a position of abstention. He had been forbidden to give fatwa and kept under house arrest by the order of the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim for continuing his opposition to the official doctrine; but when al-Mutawakkil came to power he was set free and authorised to give fatwa a move which explains his change of mind. This is said to have antagonised the traditionists (sc. Ḥanbalites) who dropped traditions conveyed on his authority.

The Wāqifiyya of the circle of the Mutakallimun

This leads us to consider another group of the Wāqifiyya namely Ḥanafites and Murjīʿites like Muḥammad b. Šuǧaʿ ath-Thalji, Abū Ḥassān az-Ziyādi, the two sons of al-Bakrāʾ, 'Alī b. Abī Muqāṭil, Zuhayr al-Athari, and Abu Muʿādh at-Tawmānī who held that the Qurʾān is the word of God produced in time (muhdath);

29. For his criticism see Tarj., 9-10.
30. Quoted in Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, 1, 224.
33. Dhahabi, Mizān, 1, 327.
but would not say whether it is created or uncreated. The Murjites like Zuhayr and Abu Mu‘ādh as we already know are reckoned Jahmites and they fit into the following account on the lafṣiyya.

The group of the Ḥanafites is led by Ibn ath-Thalji whom we know to have been involved in the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal and to have opposed him personally. Al-Ash‘ari says: “Muḥammad b. Shu‘ā‘ ath-Thalji and the Waqifiyya who agreed with him held that the Qur‘ān is the word of God and that it was produced in time (muḥdath), and that it was not then it was (kana ba‘da an lam yakun). It was subsistent in God’s essence and he produced it. They refrained from saying whether it is created or uncreated”. Their anxiety not to antagonise the rulers over the issue of the nature of the Qur‘ān was made clear in the testimony of Abu Ḥassān az-Ziyādi and ‘Ali b. Abī Muqātīl during their inquisition in 218/633. The above Ya‘qub b. Shayba seem to have moved in this circle of Ḥanafites and is said to have been a close friend of Abu Ḥassān az-Ziyādi. Al-Khuraybi who was himself a Ḥanafite and al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj who was closely associated with ‘Abd ar-Raḥman b. Isḥāq could have belonged to this group too.

It is most important to close this section by noting that the Waqifiyya are generally linked up with the Lafṣiyya. In his Ibana al-Ash‘ari treats the Waqifiyya and the Lafṣiyya as one

34. cp. Tab., iii, 1124; Maq. 583, 602.
35. Maq., 583.
36. Tab., iii, 1123; see also above, pp. 25-26.
school of thought. This is further supported by the definition of the Waqifiyya by the Ḥanbalite Ibn Abī Ya‘la who says: "the Waqifiyya confess that the Qur’ān is the word of God, but they say that their utterance and recitation of it are created. They are iniquitous Jahmites (Jaḥmiyyatun fussāq)."

The Lafṣiyya

The Lafṣiyya seem to have emerged from the group of the Waqifiyya. They are generally followers of ash-Shafi‘i, Abu Ẓanīfa or men of independent mind. Almost all of them are reckoned among Ahl al-Ḥadīth and as distinguished juristconsults. The first to have propagated the doctrine that the utterance of the Qur’ān (lafṣ al-Qur’ān) is created is the distinguished Baghdadi juristconsult al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ali al-Karābīṣī (d. 248/862). In some reports the Muhammadi Muḥammad b. Shujā‘ ath-Thalji (d. 266/879) is mentioned along with him as the co-author of the new doctrine.

In this respect it is said that it was reported to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that al-Karābīṣī and Ibn ath-Thalji spoke about the utterance of the Qur’ān (lafṣ al-Qur’ān) and maintained that it was created. Some reports mention that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said that al-Ḥarīth al-Muḥāṣibī was the man responsible for the new doctrine. The main quarrel over this issue is however with al-Karābīṣī, and those who held the same view are generally reckoned his followers. The most

38. Ya‘la, 1, 32.
39. The story goes that it was reported to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that he said that the Qur’ān is the uncreated word of God but its utterance is created. Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have reacted violently and declared this view as the view of Jaḥm b. Ṣafwān. Kht., viii, 56-66; cp. Subki, Ṭabaqāt, 1, 252; Ya‘la, 1, 75.
40. Ya‘la, 1, 120.
41. Ya‘la, 1, 62-3; cp. Subki, Ṭabaqāt, ii, 39f.
distinguished among these are Dāʿūd b. ʿAlī al-Iṣbahānī and ʿAbd al-лах b. Saʿīd b. Kullāb. There are others like the celebrated al-Bukhārī and Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazi who are said to have held the same view but it is not stated whether they followed al-Karābīs or somebody else. Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazi is however known to have moved in the circle of al-Ḥarīth al-Muḥāṣibī and is reckoned follower of ash-Shaḥīfī but al-Bukhārī's case is difficult to explain.

Al-Karābīs's argument is briefly that the Qurʾān is not created but its utterance is created. ʿĀḥmad b. Ḥanbal's reaction was immediate. He is said to have denied that the utterance of the Qurʾān (al-Lafz bi l-Qurʾān) is created and to have declared al-Karābīs a Jahmite and the successor of Bishr al-Marāsī. Now this would mean that the createdness of the utterance of the Qurʾān implied the createdness of the Qurʾān. It is interesting in this connection to see the apologetic as-Subki reproaching his teacher adh-Dhahabi as ignorant in these subtle questions for stating that the doctrine of the createdness of the utterance (al-lafz) was derived from the views of Jahm b. Ṣafwān.

To do justice to adh-Dhahabi his statement reflects an understanding of what the new doctrine implied to ʿĀḥmad b. Ḥanbal

42. Subki, Ṭabaqāt, i, 252.

43. Accusations against al-Bukhārī seem to have been prompted by personal animosity. cp. Yaʿla, i, 277-8; Qaṣṭalānī, Irshād as-Sārī, i, 38-39; al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya, xi, 27f.

44. He is reported to have said: "Bishr al-Marāsī had passed and was succeeded by al-Karābīs", Yaʿla, i, 62.

45. Subki, Ṭabaqāt, i, 252-53.
and his contemporaries. Ibn Hanbal is reported to have said: "He who says my utterance of the Qurʾān (lafżī biʾl-Qurʾān) is created or the Qurʾān uttered by me (al-Qurʾān bi lafżī) is created is a Jahmite."\(^4^6\) Now this makes it clear that the view that one's utterance of the Qurʾān is created is an indirect way of saying the Qurʾān is created. When Ibn Hanbal was asked: "Is the holder of this doctrine (sic the createdness of the utterance of the Qurʾān) a propagator of the views of Jahm?" he replied: "If one says his utterance of the Qurʾān is created (lafżahu biʾl-Qurʾān makhlūq) what else is left them?\(^4^7\) This is further clarified by the report that Ibn Ḥanbal said: "The saying of al-Karābīsī: my utterance of the Qurʾān is created is the doctrine of Jahm for God says: (9:6 'And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah ...'); now from whom would he hear the word of God?..."\(^4^8\)

An even more illuminating statement of the implications of the createdness of the utterance is the report that Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm ad-Dawraqī asked Ahmad b. Ḥanbal about the position of those who held that the utterance of the Qurʾān is created and the latter replied: "This is worse than the doctrine of the Jahmites. He who believes this virtually asserts that Gabriel came down with a created (makhlūq) thing and that what the Prophet uttered was

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46. Yaʿla, 1, 142.
47. Yaʿla, 1, 111.
48. Yaʿla, 1, 75.
These reports make it clear that to say the utterance of the Qur'ān is created implies that the Qur'ān itself is created. This appears to have been understood to be so by the propagators of the doctrine of al-Lafṣ as well as by their opponents.

The implications of the doctrine of al-Lafṣ.

An examination of the implications of the doctrine of al-Lafṣ could further clarify that it implied the createdness of the Qur'ān. Such an understanding can best be gained by an examination of the relationship of its propagators with the political institutions. It is sufficient here to limit ourselves to its main proponents namely Ibn ath-Thalji and al-Karābīl. Others of the same generation or later generations who held the same view could be related to these two forerunners.

Ibn ath-Thalji as we have noted in an earlier occasion was reckoned among the opponents of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. He associated himself with Ibn Abi Du'ād and officials around him who sponsored the inquisition of traditionists and jurists who opposed the official dogma of the createdness of the Qur'ān. He is said to have been inclined towards the Muʿtazilites. He seems to have been on good terms with Ishāq b. Ibrāhil the governor of Baghdad from 206/821 – 235/850, who is said to have occasionally entrusted to him the distribution of official grants in aid of the religious institutions.50 His animosity with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was described

49. Yaʿla, i, 21.
above when it was said that he reported to the authorities alleged contacts between Aḥmad and ‘Alīd activists. It was also remarked that he accused Ibn Ḥanbal of worshipping Mānī which could be interpreted as an indication of his suspicion that he was in touch with undesirable Persian elements.⁵¹

What we have learned so far about Ibn ath-Thalji supports reports that he held that the Qurʾān was produced in time (mahdath). By holding this position he is reckoned among the Waqifiyya and hence distinguished from the Muʿtazilites.⁵² We now know that Ibn ath-Thalji held along with al-Karbāsī the view that the utterance of the Qurʾān is created. This latter view as we have just shown was believed to have been a concealed way of saying that the uttered Qurʾān is created. For Ibn ath-Thalji his new position is in fact not different from the original one. This would mean that to say the Qurʾān is produced in time (mahdath) is the same as saying the uttered Qurʾān is created. Now both these views differ from the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān, though the conclusion in all of them is basically the same. The assumption here would be that Ibn ath-Thalji did not accept the Muʿtazilite view because it implied that God's knowledge is created. The relation of the knowledge of God to the Qurʾān was as noted above made during the Miḥna and the Muʿtazilites failed to challenge it. The paradox in the Muʿtazilite position must be appreciated in view of the belief among its very proponents that God's knowledge is not created.

⁵¹ See above, p. 84.
⁵² Maq., 583.
The new policy of al-Mutawakkil

This fits very well with my argument in Chapter 4 that al-Mutawakkil did not support the Ḥanbalites against their opponents in the dispute over the nature of the Qur'ān but merely prohibited disputation on the Qur'ān by either side. Furthermore al-Mutawakkil as we have seen faced the opposition of the "Sunnites", and is known to have persecuted them.53 He probably faced the same difficulties posed by the imposing activities of the traditionists which had previously made it difficult for his immediate predecessors to assert their will with regard to legislation and the administration of law. Thus it is probable that he too looked for a formula through which he could limit the influence of jurisconsults and traditionists who claimed to be the upholders of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. It would have been, however, very difficult for him in view of the division of power precipitated by his policy regarding the dispute over the nature of the Qur'ān to reverse his decision and impose the official doctrine of his predecessors. The doctrine of the createdness of the utterance of the Qur'ān or more exactly of the uttered Qur'ān, however, served the same purpose and could prove less abhorrent. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the new doctrine was tolerated by both the rulers and a large sector of the religious institutions. Unlike the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān it was as a matter of fact accepted and propagated by respectable members of the circle of Aḥl al-Ḥadīth.

53. See above, pp. 70f.
Ibn ath-Thalji and the administration of al-Mutawakkil

In this connection there is no indication as far as I know that al-Mutawakkil or those who succeeded him persecuted Ibn ath-Thalji or disapproved of him or of jurists' consults of his circle. It was the governor of Baghdad with the concurrence of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil himself who offered him the post of judgeship of Baghdad. The report that Ahmad b. Hanbal was consulted about the appointment and that his advice against him was accepted could well be true, but it still does not show that Ibn ath-Thalji was held in bad favour by the authorities. Ibn ath-Thalji's own version of this episode as reported in sympathetic sources is that he had been persuaded to accept the office of judge but he declined to do so. This would indicate that his juristic eminence which is incidentally conceded by his opponents was put under the service of the state. The distribution of official grants to the religious institutions through him fits here very well. The Hanbalite accusation against him that he worked laboriously to suspend the traditions of the Prophet and occasionally rejected them so as to make the opinions of Abu Ḥanifa, or as in some reports his own opinions triumph proves his eminence but more importantly the flexibility of his legal views which were presumably more suitable for the political institutions.

54. Jawāhir, 1, 61. Abu Ḥassan az-Ziyādi a member of this circle served as judge under al-Mutawakkil, see al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya, x, 344. It is interesting that he received this post in the later date of 241/855. See Jawāhir, 1, 197.

55. Tahdhīb at-Tahdīb, ix, 22.
Ahl al-Hadith and the new policy of al-Mutawakkil

The Caliph al-Mutawakkil as we have seen in Chapter 4 sought to secure the support of the main opposition faction within the religious institutions. In this respect he is known to have reconciled the circle of Ahl al-Hadith; but probably for their rigidity or the failure of the Ḥanbalites among them to co-operate fully they were matched by members of other legal rites particularly by Shafi’ites and Ḥanafites whose juristic as well as political outlook was more in line with that of the state. In this connection the ruling authorities are said to have continuously sought juristic advice from al-Karabīṣī (wa kanat futwa al-Sultan tadurū ‘alayhi). 56

Like Ibn ath-Thalji al-Karabīṣī is also described as an eminent jurisconsult. He is said to have written extensively and in all composed about 200 books which al-Khaḍīb rightly says indicate his immense knowledge and depth of judgement. He particularly excelled in the principles of jurisprudence and its application. 57 A great number of students were instructed in jurisprudence by him. In this branch of knowledge he followed the Iraqi School of Law. He is said to have accompanied ash-Shafi‘i when the latter visited Baghdad and his companionship with him is reckoned to have established much respect for him. Ibn Khallikan says he occasionally replaced ash-Shafi‘i at his course of lectures and

56. Tahdīb at-Tahdīb, ii, 360.
possessed extensive knowledge of his doctrines. The apologia of Al-Karabisi also belonged to the circle of the Mutakallimmun of Ahl as-Sunna and is said to have been skilled in the science of traditions. Ibn Khallikan mentions that he wrote works on invalidation and justification (al-jarh wa l-ta’alil) which is the science of the criticism of transmitters of Hadith and the inquest into the character of witnesses.

It is in the context of this career of Al-Karabisi and his reported association with the legal institutions that the implications of his doctrine of al-Lafz can be fully appreciated. In this connection Ibn Hibban is quoted as saying: "Al-Karabisi was one of those who collected enormous material and wrote various works. He was counted among the few who excelled in jurisprudence and traditions but he was a fool (afaadahu qillat ‘aqlihi)." Now the concluding remark in this statement more probably refers to the political implications of his doctrine of al-Lafz. This is further clarified by the report that an elderly Shafi’ite cautioned young students of the School of ash-Shafi’i against the position of Al-Karabisi who landed himself in trouble as follows: "Take warning from the example of these two men, al-Husayn al-Karabisi, and Abu Thawr; al-Husayn was by far superior in knowledge, Abu Thawr knows not one tenth of his knowledge but Ahmad b. Hanbal admonished him for his views on al-Lafz, and he sank down while he praised Abu Thawr for holding fast to the sunna and he (sc. Abu Thawr) was exalted."

58. Ibid.
59. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, ii, 361.
60. Tahdhib at-Tahdhib, ii, 360.
The doctrine of al-Lafz seems to have been developed in the late thirties or early forties of the 3rd/9th century. By then scholastic theology was firmly established. Kalam was at the time pursued by elements reckoned as members of Ahl al-Jadidāth. The Lafiyya were certainly among these elements and could well be the forerunners of the so-called the Mutakallimun of Ahl as-Sunna.

Those mentioned by name as belonging to this group include al-Ḫārith al-Muṣāsibī (d. 243/857), al-Karāǧī (d. 243/857), 'Abd allāh b. Sa‘īd b. Kullāb (d. after 240/854) and Dā’ūd b. ‘Ali al-Iṣbahānī (d. 270/883). It is interesting to note that they are all reckoned Lafiyya, and largely follow the legal school of ash-Shafī‘ī. They are also said to have combined a masterly knowledge of scholastic theology with an authoritative knowledge of the science of traditions.

In this connection Ibn Qutayba in a special essay on the Lafiyya describes the atmosphere under which this doctrine emerged as one of transformation from traditionalism where only matters of ritual or religious importance were discussed and explained, to scholasticism which was marked by hair splitting argumentation on obscure puzzles of no or very little bearing on one's religion or life. In this respect Ahmad b. Hanbal referring to the Lafiyya said: "Their trouble came from these books which they have written. They turned their backs to the traditions of the

Prophet (ṣāḥib rasūl Allāh) and his companions and engaged themselves in these books instead.  

The accusation of deviation from traditionalism to scholasticism seems to have first been made against al-Ḥarīrī al-Muḥāsibī and those around him. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal as we noted above attacked al-Ḥarīrī as the source of the problem of the doctrine of al-Lafz. He is said to have cautioned students of traditions against him in the following strong terms: "Be on your guard against Ḥarīrī, there is no one more pernicious in his influence than Ḥarīrī."  

The reaction of those around Ḥarīrī to these attacks was strikingly apologetic. They asserted here that Ḥarīrī supported his ideas by Qur'ānic verses and traditions. In this respect some one is reported to have said: "I told Abu 'Abd Allāh (sc. Ibn Ḥanbal) that al-Muḥāsibī had gone to Kufa and was writing down traditions and had declared that he repented of all that Ibn Ḥanbal disapproved of in him."  

Apologetic Ṣufi sources as well as al-Khāṭīb claim that Ibn Ḥanbal secretly inspected the teaching of al-Ḥarīrī and had nothing but praise for him. Khāṭīb, however, adds that he still cautioned the followers of al-Ḥarīrī and others against him.

63. Ya'la, 1, 62-3.
64. Sha'rānī, Tabaqāt as-Ṣufiyya, 1, 58.
Al-Muhāsibī is said to have possessed the science of the exterior and the science of the interior (‘ilm az-zahir wa l-bāṭin). He wrote works on asceticism, the principles of religions and the wars among the companions of the Prophet. Most importantly he is said to have written refutations against the Mu‘tazilites and Rāfidītes. It is probably his engagement in debates with the Mu‘tazilites which provoked strong disapproval by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. In this respect Ḥarīth is said to have advocated the use of reason and to have employed dialectical vocabulary of the Mu‘tazilites in his writings against them. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal is said to have banned his writings and made him seek concealment from public indignation so much so that on his death only four persons are said to have attended his funeral service.

Al-Muhāsibī too is reckoned a master of scholastic theology, jurisprudence and the science of traditions. His authority in dogmatic theology particularly the doctrines of the different sects of the Khwārij and those of heretical tendencies (Ahl al-Ahwā’) was widely acknowledged. He is said to have been followed by his disciple ‘Abd Allah b. Kullāb. Ibn Kullāb was also the companion or friend of al-Ḥarīth al-Muhāsibī and the teacher of the celebrated Ṣufist aj-Junayd. In this respect aj-Junayd is described as the leader of the professors of the unity of God.

67. Massignon seems to suggest that al-Ḥarīth was involved in the inquisition of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. See art. al-Muhāsibī, EI.
69. Baghdādi, Usul ad-Dīn, 308.
He wrote an essay on the unity of God which was based on the principles of the Mutakallimun and the vocabulary of Sufists.

Ibn Kullāb, who is described as a vehement opponent of the Mu'tazilites, held that the speech of God is an attribute subsistent in his essence, and that it is not of the nature of letters or reverberation. It is indivisible and unchangeable as it is one meaning subsistent in God's essence. He maintained that what is uttered by the reciters is an expression of the speech of God and its meaning but not the speech itself. According to him "the utterance is created and produced by the reciter and is the acquisition of man." 70

Another follower of al-Karābīsī is Dā'ūd al-Iṣbahānī Sahīb az-Zāhir (d. 270/883). As a teacher of jurisprudence he followed ash-Shafi'i but eventually emerged as a founder of an independent school. It was reported to Ahmad b. Ḥanbal that while in Nisābūr, Dā'ūd affirmed that the Qur'ān was produced in time (mahdath) and that the utterance of the Qur'ān was created. When he was back in Baghdad and sought to come into friendly relation with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal the latter repelled him strongly. 71 Dā'ūd's son Abu Bakr, a well known belleletterist is said to have similarly combined a knowledge of jurisprudence and the principles (al-ugul) with kalam.

Another member of this school is Abu 1-'Abbās b. Shurayj who is described by Baghdādī as the most industrious among the lot.

70. Maq., 584.
71. Ya'la, 1, 58.
in the science of kalam. He is famous for his book called Kitab aj-Jārūf which is a refutation of those who maintain the mutual correspondence of proofs (takefu' al-hujj wa l'adilla). He is reckoned the best among those who refuted Ibn ar-Rawandi. He wrote extensively in jurisprudence and Baghdādi adjoins that only God knows the enormous number of his works in this field.  

These members are incidentally linked up with the Mutakallimun of ahl al-Sunnah who flourished during the reign of al-Ma'mūn whom we have mentioned earlier on. The most noted among those is 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Nakki who is said to have put the Mu'tazilites to shame in the presence of al-Ma'mūn. His student al-Ḥusayn b. al-Faql al-Bajali is described as the champion of kalam, principles (al-uṣūl) and exegesis. He is particularly noted for his work on the Qur'ān which is described as the main source for many later exegetists. When he accompanied 'Abd allah b. Ṭahīr to Khurāsān it was said that Baghdad was made void of the sciences.  

Conclusion  

Thus the Latfīyya seem to have been the forerunners of the Mutakallimun who emerged from the Wāqifīyya or elements among the class of ahl al-Ḥadīth. They are largely jurisconsults of the Shaafi'ite and to some extent the Ḥanafite rites who presumably were willing to co-operate with the rulers particularly in the legal

72. Baghdādi, uṣūl ad-Dīn, 309.  
73. Baghdādi, uṣūl ad-Dīn, 309.
profession but were hesitant to accept Mu'tazilite and Hanafite doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān. They subsequently differentiated between the Qurʾān now in our hands and God's knowledge and speech or in other words its divine source in that the former is created but the latter two are subsistent in God and hence uncreated. It was left to Abu l-Hasan al-Ashʿari who is incidentally reckoned a member of this school of the Sunnite Mutakallimun to state this formula more explicitly as one of differentiating between the uncreated meaning (al-kalam an-nafsi) which is subsistent in God and the uttered speech (al-kalam al-lafzi) which is the created form and meaning of the former. The doctrine of al-Lafz in so far as it brought about Mutakallimun from amongst Ahl al-Ḥadīth came to be firmly established and seems to have met the wishes of the political institutions. Nevertheless it caused permanent division within the religious institutions. In this connection it is interesting to note that Ḥanbalites and Mu'tazilites were drawn by the second half of the 3rd/9th century closer to one another as opposed to the Mutakallimun which indicate that by then the latter supplemented the Mu'tazilites and Ḥanafite Jahmites as the link between the religious and political institutions. The Ḥanbalite-Mu'tazilite mutual relationship can best be demonstrated by the friendly association between the Ḥanbalite Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923) and a certain Mu'tazilite called Mansur at-Tusi in opposition to the Mutakallimun among the very students of Ibn Khuzayma. The Mu'tazilite Mansur is said to have reported to Ibn Khuzayma that three of his (sc. Ibn Khuzayma's)
students affirmed the views of the Mutakallimun with regard to the nature of the speech of God. It is said to have provoked Ibn Khuzayma against them by saying: "Have I not told you that they believe in the method (madhhab) of the Mutakallimun and accept it as theirs?" Ibn Khuzayma is said to have taken his word and became violently cross with his students whom he repudiated and rebuked as followers of Ibn Kullab and his companions al-Harith al-Muhasibi and the others.74 In this connection al-Hasan b. Muhammed as-Ṣabbah az-Za′farani who is reckoned Ḥanbalite by Ibn Abiyad ila but is known to have followed ash-Shafi′i was denounced as believer in the createdness of al-Lat.75

These developments make it necessary for us to suspect reports that the Mu′tazilites were the outcasts of the religious institutions. A careful examination of the position of the different groups labelled Mu′tazilites, Ḥanafites, Shafi′ites would reveal that each was rebuked largely for political reasons. Thus early Ḥanafites and Mu′tazilites were labelled Jahmites for their close connections with the political institutions under al-Ya′mūn and his successors, but when the Kha′na was abandoned and they fell from favour they were no more a target for rebuke. Instead the Waqifiyya and the Lafżiyya who replaced them under al-Mutawakkil and his successors now became the target for rebuke naturally enough by the Ḥanbalites as well as the so called Jahmites or early Ḥanafites and Mu′tazilites.

74. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, ii, 164f.
75. Ya′la, 1, 136; Subki, Tabaqat, i, 250; Kht., vii, 407f, cp. Dhahabi, Tadhkira, ii, 270.
CHAPTER 8

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CREATED QUR'ĀN

The dispute over the nature of the Qur'ān evolves around the nature of the speech of God. The argument here is a two-edged one for to say the speech of God is uncreated would contradict the property of speech as an accident of the genus of sound and letters. Further the Qur'ān is known to have been addressed to the prophet Muhammad at a definite point in time and is known to be comprised of command, prohibition and narration of events which took place in time and space. To avoid the contradiction different hypothesis were advanced by different sects.

The Mu'tazilites or the Jahmiyya

For the Mu'tazilites, however, there was no problem as they maintain that the speech of God is created and hence the Qur'ān which they believe to be the word of God is created too. Their argument is that the speech of God is of the same nature as the speech of man. It is divisible into command, prohibition, narration and all possible divisions of speech; and as such is an accident which God creates in a substrate in such a way that it can be heard and comprehended. Thus they deny the predication of an eternal attribute of speech to God arguing that it is absurd to reckon eternal what is basically of the nature of accidents. To substantiate their point of view they give the analogy of motion.1

1. Maq., 582, 602.
The Waqifiyya and the Lafziyya

The Waqifiyya reject the Mu'tazilite (sc. Jahmite) view that the Qur'ān is created and instead hold that it is the uncreated word of God produced in time. The difference between their standpoint and that of the Mu'tazilites is that unlike them they predicate an eternal attribute of speech to God. According to them the Qur'ān or the uncreated word of God produced in time is not of the nature of human speech. Their position is clarified by the Lafziyya who maintain that the speech of God or the Qur'ān is uncreated but the utterance (al-Lafs) or more precisely the Qur'ān is created. Their view was fully formulated by 'Abd al-lah b. Kullāb and later Abu l-Hasan al-Ash'ari and his followers.

Ibn Kullāb

Ibn Kullāb maintained that the speech of God is an eternal attribute in the same way as his attributes of will and power. As such it is a speech not of the genus of sound or letters and does not divide or change, but is one unitary meaning subsistent in his essence. Its expression, that is to say the way it is conveyed to created beings, however, suffers division and change. He demonstrated his point by the example that one praises God or virtually mentions his name in many different ways but God who is described or praised does not change. Similarly what changes with respect to the speech of God is its expression but the speech

3. For the Lafziyya see Chapter 7.
itself does not change. It can be produced in different ways or languages but it does not change. When it is said to be in arabic or hebrew it is the arabic or hebrew forms as expressions of it which change and are thus referred to as created but not the speech of God itself. It is being called arabic or hebrew speech for a reason, literary weakness ('illa), as it is also called command, prohibition or narration for certain reasons also, whereas the eternal speech of God had been in existence before the occurrence of these reasons which necessitated command, prohibition, or narration. He maintained along these lines that what reciters recite is an expression ('ibāra) of the speech of God. The Qur'anic verse (9/6 ... until he hears the word of God...) which seems to contradict his thesis was interpreted by him as meaning until he understands the speech of God, thus maintaining that the eternal speech of God cannot be heard but can be understood. 4

The Ash'arites

The Ash'arites building on what Ibn Kullāb had said made the distinction between the arabic Qur'ān and an eternal meaning (kalam nafsi) subsistent in God's essence. They seem to have accepted the Mu'tazilite (sc. Jahmīte) view with regard to the arabic Qur'ān now in our hands, but maintained that behind it there is the true speech of God (kalāmuhu haqiqatan) which is an eternal meaning subsistent in his essence. As such the eternal meaning is a speech not of the genus of letters and hence unaffected by

4. For the views of Ibn Kullāb see Haq., 584f, also above p. 194.
time and space. The Qur'ān which is written, recited or
memorised by human beings is but an expression of it.⁵ The
eternal meaning (al-kalām an-nafsī) that is the true speech of God
is further described by them as an attribute of God which is
distinct from his attributes of knowledge and power or will (al-‘ilm
wa l-irāda).⁶

The Jahmiyya criticised

a) The Ḥanbalites: These Mu’tazilite and Ash‘arite (sc. "Jahmite")
views came under heavy fire from contemporary Ḥanbalites and the
Karāmiyya who in reaction against them came to hold an extreme
opposite position. The Ḥanbalites deny that the Qur’ān is
created and maintain that the speech of God is of the genus of
sound and letters but the letters are uncreated and the voice of
God is unlike the voice of created beings.⁷

b) The Karāmiyya: A more articulated argument along these lines
is that of the Karāmiyya who admit that the speech of God is an
accident of the genus of sound and letters but argue that accidents
subsist in God’s essence.⁸ They maintain that accidents which
subsist in his essence are those needed by him in his act of
creating. They, however, differ among themselves over what these
accidents are. Some maintain that with respect to the Qur’ān the

⁵. The standard Ash‘arite account is found in Baqillānī, Insāf,
71f; cp. Shahrastānī, Iqdām, 268; Taftazānī, Sharḥ, 77f.
(Eng. tr., 56f).
⁶. Mawāqif, viii, 95.
⁷. Mawāqif, viii, 92; Shahrastānī, Iqdām, 313.
⁸. Mawāqif, viii, 92-93; Taftazānī, Sharḥ, 79f.
accident is God's will, while others hold that it is the word 'be' (kun). Accidents which are not needed by God in his act of creating do not subsist in his essence. They call accidents subsistent in God's essence ādīth and accidents not subsistent in his essence muḥdath. In this context they maintain that speech when predicated of God describes either: a) his power of speech, or b) what is spoken by him. In both cases speech is subsistent in his essence but in the former case it is eternal and one unitary meaning while in the latter it is an accident divisible into command, prohibition and narration.

On deeper level what the Ḥanbalites and the Karameyya are doing here is to affirm the eternal nature of the Qurʾān in face of what they see as its secularization by the Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites. Their intention to preserve for the uttered Qurʾān the speciality of being in its tangible form the true speech of God (kālam Allāh ʿala al-ṣāliḥ) can be inferred from the reaction of their opponents. The argument that to say the Qurʾān is uncreated is to make it one and the same as God was made against Ahl al-Ḥadīth during the Kifna and in defence the latter maintained that the Qurʾān is neither created nor the creator. Muḥammad b. Shujāʿ ath-Thalji reported that some among Ahl al-Ḥadīth assert that the Qurʾān is the divine deity itself (al-ḵāliq). Ashʿari quotes Zurqān as his authority for the report that some

10. Shahrastānī, Iqdām, 288; Alusi, Jālāʾ, 288.
believed that God is part of the Qur'ān. The argument along these lines was raised in the following manner: God is named in the Qur'ān and thus his names are embodied in it; but his names are the same as him (al-ism huwa al-muṣamma), then the divine being is in the Qur'ān, hence the Qur'ān is uncreated. The same argument is used to prove that the Arabic alphabet is uncreated. This is put as follows: "the letter A is from the name of God which is Allāh, the letter B is from his name the Bāri, the letter J is from his name al-Jalīl, the letter Th is from his name al-wārith... etc.; and that his names, be he exalted are uncreated so it follows that the alphabet is uncreated." The aim here is to refute the argument of the Lafiyya by establishing that the Qur'ān in its Arabic form is uncreated.

The Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite Apology

The Mu'tazilites: It was under this pressure that some of the later Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites tended to become apologetic and eventually compromised their respective positions. The Mu'tazilites came to differ among themselves on whether the narration of a thing is the same as the thing narrated (al-ḥikaya hiya al-maḥki). Those who held that the narration of a thing is the very thing narrated further differ among themselves on the divine and human role with respect to the utterance of the Qur'ān. Abu 1-Hudhayl al-'Allāf is said to have maintained that when we utter the verse:

14. Alusi, Jalāl 311; compare the presentation of Baqillānī, Insāf, 125f.
"Praise be unto God the Lord of the Universe," the voice produced by us is ours but the letters we utter are from God and thus the inimitability (al-\textit{i}j\textit{a}z) of the Qur'\text{"a}n comes from this nature of the letters. He is said to have differentiated between the letters and their pronunciation in that whereas the letters are eternal their utterance by us perishes. \footnote{16} Abu Hashim, 'Abd \textit{aj}-Jabb\text{"a}r, and the majority of later Mu'tazilites are said to have maintained that the letters and their utterance cannot be separated; and that when one utters: 'Praise be unto God the Lord of the Universe,' the result is one's speech in that one does it or brings it forth (\textit{fa'}alahu wa awjadahu), while it is in fact the speech of God in that it originated from him (ibtada'ahu) and thus its production (\textit{i}j\textit{ad}) by one of us is but a reproduction or retelling of what is God's just as when one reads lines from a poem by Imri'ul-Qays one reproduces what is reckoned the speech of this poet. \footnote{17} Abu 'Ali \textit{aj}-Jubb\text{"a}I maintained along these lines that the utterance of letters requires the existence of organs of speech in both the human and the divine beings but his son Abu H\text{"a}shim denied the necessity of such a condition for God. \textit{Aj}-Jubb\text{"a}I is said to have maintained that the letters are one and the same for God as well as for the created beings but the pronunciation of human beings and that of God differ. \footnote{18}

\footnote{16} Sahm, 3b.  
\footnote{17} Sahm, 3b.  
\footnote{18} The views of Jubb\text{"a}I and his son Abu Hashim seem to have been taken over by Ash'ari op. Alusi, Jal\text{"a}', 27f. compare also similarity between the views of Jubb\text{"a}I and the Kar\text{"a}miyya in Alusi, Jal\text{"a}', 261-2.
The Lafiyya: The Lafiyya particularly the Ash'arites among them came under an even heavier fire. The standard attack against them is the one by the Zahirite Ibn Ḥazm who referring to Ash'arites says: "they all maintain that the Qur'ān was not brought down by Gabriel and revealed to the prophet in his heart, but that Gabriel came down with something other than it, which is the expression (al-'ibāra) of the speech of God; and that the Qur'ān is not with us except in an allegorical sense and that what we see in the book (al-mushaf), and hear recited, said in prayers or memorised is not the Qur'ān at all, it is not even partly the speech of God, it is but a different thing, for the speech of God does not impart from his essence." Further al-Baqillānī and his teachers are said to have maintained that "the prophet Muḥammad gave the name the Qur'ān to what had been sent down to him in the sense that it is an expression of the speech of God and that from it is understood his command and prohibition." Examples of criticism along these lines can be multiplied but what we have said so far is sufficient to make us appreciate the apology of the Ash'arites.

It is interesting to note that some Ash'arites who presumably embarrassed by the implications of their doctrine of the created utterance were at great pains to rephrase it or virtually abandon it altogether. Thus they argue that when al-Ash'arī spoke of an eternal meaning (kalam nafsi) he meant the

19. Fīṣal, iii, 4.
uttered speech as well. 21 Those Ash'arites who maintained that their master said the eternal meaning is only the speech of God and that its expression in words (sc. the Arabic Qur'ān) is created and not his true speech were reproached by their apologetic colleagues who argued that such an understanding of what he had said would mean that they (sc. Ash'arites) "can not declare he who denies that what is contained between the two covers of the book (sc. al-Mushaf) is the Qur'ān idolaters; and that non-believers cannot be challenged by the true speech of God neither can it be proved that what is recited or memorised is the true speech of God. It then became a must to make the doctrine of the master (sc. al-Ash'ari) mean that the eternal meaning comprises both the lafz and its meaning and that both are subsistent in God's essence. 22 Faced by difficulties posed by their original argument that letters are accidents as they are uttered in sequence and over a period of time, they came to argue very much like later Mu'tazilites that this condition applies to human utterance because of the human incapacity as mortals. 23 They now maintained that it is this act of mortals which is created but not what is uttered by them. At length Ash'arites came to assert with the Ḥanbalites and the Karamiyya that Gabriel came down with an expressed form (‘ibāra) of the eternal word of God. 24

22. Sahm, 3a; also quoted in Alusi, Jalā’, 269.
23. Sahm, 3a; cp. Shahristānī, Iqdām, 310f, 315–16.
24. Sahm, 46; Taftazānī, Sharh, 83.
Revelation reconsidered

This whole approach to the utterance of the Qur'ān provoked a discussion of revelation and how it was revealed to the prophet Muḥammad. The Ḥadīthahite Abu Hashim is said to have stated that although the dispute over the nature of the Qur'ān occurred in the 3rd/9th century it was related to the challenge of the prophethood of Muḥammad by Mekkanī. The dispute at the time of the prophet was over whether the Qur'ān was the speech of God or one made by Muḥammad and is thus his own eloquence. The analogy was later made with the view attributed to the sufists and philosophers namely that the speech of God is the communication and emanation of his concealed knowledge to be whom he favours (Ifādatīhi wa Ifādatīhi maknūnati ʾilmīhi ʿala man yurīdu ikramahu). The celebrated al-Ghazālī who shared this sufist view on revelation is accused of making the remark: "he who asserts that prophethood is through the coming of the angel to the human being is a liar, for it is the emanation and unveiling (al-fayḍ wa l-kashf) (of the message)." His view is severely criticised as rendering the Qur'ān other than the speech of God. The sole aim here is to stress the point that what was revealed to the prophet Muḥammad was the arabic Qur'ān that is the uttered speech of God (al-kalam al-lafżi). Hence forms which suggest that revelation was

26. Quoted in Sahm from Risāla of Abd ar-Rahman al-Jāmi, see Sahm, 5a.
27. This is mocked as what al-Ghazālī has learned during his monastic life in the Dome at Jerusalem for 11 years, see Sahm, 5a.
received by the prophet in dream or as a meaning in his heart are dismissed.

The discussion here would naturally start with the sending down of the Qur'ān. There is general agreement among Muslim scholars that the Qur'ān is the word of God sent down to the prophet; but they differ on its nature and hence the manner in which it was sent down. The concern here is with the technical meaning of terms like anzala and mazzala. What is interesting for us is the argument that what was sent down was the reading of the Qur'ān or the Arabic text we now possess. Apparently this is an attempt to confirm divine status upon the utterance (al-lafz). The difficulty here is that sending down involves a physical movement of the object from up downwards. For those who hold that the Qur'ān is an eternal meaning subsistent in God's essence its sending down would be for God to produce the letters and words which express this meaning and fix this expression on the preserved tablet; whereas for those who maintain that the eternal Qur'ān is the uttered words (al-lafz) its sending down would be its mere placing in the preserved tablet. The following step in its sending down would be to place it in the lower heaven (as-Sama' ad-Dunya). The universe seems to be in between as it is said that it is first sent down to the universe as a completed text on the night of power (laylat al-Qadr). A tradition on the

28. For a discussion of these terms in conjunction with awha see Richard Bell, Introduction to the Qurān, 29f; Watt, Islamic Revelation, 11f.
29. Suyūṭī, Itqān, 100; Sahm, 12b.
authority of Ibn 'Abbas describes how it was separated from ḍaḥ-Dhikr (God's knowledge) and placed in bayt al-'izza in the lower heaven. From there Gabriel came down with it and revealed it to the prophet Muhammad in portions over a period of twenty or twenty-three years. Qur'anic verses which indicate this process are (25/33 'And they shall not bring to thee any argument but we have brought to thee one with truth and best in significance'); (17/106 'And it is a Qur'ān which we have sent down in portions so that you mayest read it to the people by slow degrees and we have revealed it, revealing in portions').

To establish that what was sent down was the very utterance of the Qur'ān that is its Arabic form the angel responsible for conveying it to the prophet is said to have received it spiritually (ruhaniyyan) from God; or alternatively to have memorised it from the preserved Tablet. Other views along these lines assert that God has inspired (alhama) Gabriel the Qur'ān while in heaven and taught him its reading in a manner not affected by time and space, then Gabriel came down with it and conveyed it to the prophet. Aj-Juwayni is said to have divided the speech of God which has been sent down to the prophet into two categories: 'There is in the first place the case when God says to Gabriel: 'tell the prophet to whom you are sent that God says to you do this and that, and

30. See the full description in Suyūṭī, Itqān, 100f; Sahm, 13b.
31. Suyūṭī, Itqān, 201-2; Sahm, 12b.
32. Suyūṭī, Itqān, 99.
command this and that', Gabriel understands the message and comes down to convey it to the prophet presumably in a different expression. Secondly there is the case when God says to Gabriel: 'read this book (to the prophet)'; and Gabriel comes down with the word of God and tells it to the prophet without making any alterations or change in it." Suyuți explains that the Qur'ān is the second category and the sunna is the first.33

Now that the Qur'ān was sent down in the Arabic text Gabriel is said to have taught it to the prophet Muḥammad. The first time the prophet experienced the coming of revelation is said to have been by hearing a voice calling: ('O, Muḥammad, prepare thyself'). At a later stage the voice said to him: ('recite in the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate'). The standard form of what he had been asked to recite is usually given as the opening verses of Sura 96: ('Recite in the name of thy lord who created ...'). In this respect the prophet is said to have been anxious that he might forget verses which had been taught to him by Gabriel and is said to have pressed him to allow him time to memorise them. Thus it is believed that a Qur'ānic verse assured him that he would not forget what he learns: (75/16-19 move not thy tongue with revelation to hasten to preserve it, ours it is to collect it and to recite it. Therefore when we recite it, follow thou its recitation. Then ours it is to explain it.'). In this connection Gabriel is said to have occasionally checked what the prophet had

so far learned of the Qur'ān (wa kana ar-Rasul ya‘riq al-Qur'ān ‘ala Gibrīl). 34

Qur'ānic verses which imply that revelation was sent down in ways or means other than in the Arabic form are interpreted in such a way that will make them fit into this line of thought. Thus the verse (26/193 'The faithful spirit brought it down upon thy heart') is interpreted as: "not that the apostle came down with the meaning because God says: (26/195 'in plain Arabic language'). Similarly the verse (61/19 'Truly this is the word of an honoured apostle') is explained as being the word of the apostle in the sense that "he is its receiver, not that it is his own word." 35 In this connection the sound described in some traditions as reverberation of a bell, (sc. not plain Arabic language), which the prophet is said to have heard when receiving revelation is explained as the flapping of the wings of the angel which is meant as a signal of his approach. Another explanation is that it is a warning sound which accompanies verses of threat. 36 Along these lines the Arabic alphabet is said to be uncreated. The contention here is that God has a voice and that he speaks in the Arabic language and hence the Arabic alphabet is uncreated.

34. cp. Suyūṭī, Itqān, 99, 116; Sahm, 11a.
35. Sahm, 8a; Contrast Baqillānī, Inṣāf, 96f.
36. Sahm, 13a.
The threat to the religious institutions

With this Ḥanbalite argument in mind we can now begin to understand why Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites came to feel that their former positions can no more be tenable. What seems to have happened is that the argument originally put forward by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that to say the Arabic Qurʾān is not the true word of God would discredit the prophethood of Muḥammad and the very religion of islam became more convincing for one reason or the other. Probably what was originally envisaged by the Jahmiyya including the Lafiṣiya as an harmless attempt to give the political institutions more say in juristic matters gradually posed serious problems for the religion of islam as a whole. It is clear that what seem to have originally been a concern with juristic matters eventually became a concern with the inimitability of the Qurʾān, the prophethood of Muḥammad, and the religious basis of the community. Probably the shift in emphasis was a natural development of the discussion of the nature of the Qurʾān, or that the waning of Arab influence in the imperial army and the bureaucracy and its replacement by that of the Turks made the debate on the Qurʾān more risky or to say the least sensitive. It seems that the advent of the "Sunnites" under al-Mutawakkil has reinforced orthodoxy that is to say the Arabian tradition against a foreseeable foreign danger. The fear of a danger to islam might have been an exaggeration on the part of the Ḥanbalites but contemporary events give the impression that it was genuine at least as far as the religious institutions were concerned. What is presented here as Ḥanbalite
argument actually finds support in the persecution of Ahl adh-Dhimma, in the purge of non-muslim secretaries and in polemics written in defence of Islam during the reign of al-Mutawakkil when the forces of Sunnism were known to have been in the ascendancy. The reference here is to the edict of the year 235/849 issued by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil which imposed severe restrictions on the non-muslim community. The assumption here is that this policy was provoked by the politico-religious activities of those persecuted. The treatise on the defence of Islam written at the command of al-Mutawakkil to which I just referred was written by a former Christian namely 'Ali at-Tabari. What is of particular interest to us in this apology is the chapter titled: "The Prophet was an unlettered man, and the Book which God sent to him and made him recite is a sign of his prophethood", in that it implies that the utterance of the Qur'an was sent down to the prophet. This is further clarified by the argument that the inimitability of the Qur'an is in its language as the writer goes on to say: "who has ever written since the creation of the world, a book with such prerogatives and qualities, with such influence, sweetness and charm upon the heart, and with such attraction, felicity, and success, while its producer, the man to whom it was revealed, was unlettered, not even knowing how to write and having no eloquence whatsoever?" The conclusion so far is that the Hanbalite exposition of the

37. Tab., iii, 1389f.
38. At-Tabari, The Book of religion and Empire, 50.
39. Ibid., 50-51.
implications of a created Qur'ān can, however extreme it may seem, be appreciated in view of the situation at the time.

**At-Ta'tīl**

To carry the argument a step further along these lines it is interesting to note that the Ḥanbalites see the views of their opponents on the nature of the Qur'ān as conducive to ta'tīl. In this respect two lines of thought with apparently a common base can be detected. There is in the first place an extreme form of ta'tīl which they envisage as the stripping of God of all his attributes and capabilities as a creator and in effect rendering him bare unity. The ultimate aim here is reckoned to be the destruction of the religion of Islam. The other, and apparently milder form of ta'tīl is described as a move towards secularism or in effect towards the suspension of the rulings of the Qur'ān, the traditions of the prophet, of his companions, their successors and the people of Ṭabar or Ahl ar-Ḥadīth in general.

_Jahm and the extreme form of ta'tīl:_ It is interesting that both these forms of ta'tīl are seen by Ḥanbalites and men of a similar outlook to have originated with Jahm b. Ṣafwān. With respect to the first or extreme form of ta'tīl Jahm is said to have asserted that the powers (maqūrūtūt) and knowledge (ma'lūmāt) of God have a terminal point and an end (ghāya wa nihāya), which when reached he ceases to act. 40 His view that God being the last in

40. op. Milal, 61; Ṣaq., 164, 564.
that he remains all by himself with no other things beside him is understood as rendering him lacking in qualities and capabilities of an immortally active God.\footnote{41} This is further supported by his alleged view that paradise and hell will perish with their respective dwellers.\footnote{42}

Jahm and the milder form of ta‘lil: With respect to the second or milder form of ta‘lil Jahm is said to have rejected the rulings of the Qur'ān and traditions. This is summed up in a report by Yafi‘i in which he asserts that Jahm gave a legal ruling in which he contradicted the Qur'ān. This is supported by the accusation that he made fun of the Qur'ān. Reading the verse (20/5 'The merciful settled himself on the throne'), he commented: "Could I scratch that out, I would." Reading Sura 28 when he came to the word Moses he said: "What is this? he (sc. Muḥammad) told this story in one place and he did not finish it, then he told it again."\footnote{43}

The juristic implications of a created Qur'ān have been highlighted above and there is no need to repeat them here. They will, however, be indirectly illuminated as we reflect upon the other form of ta‘lil described here as extreme.

The relevance of ta‘lil to the situation of the Mihna: The question to be asked at this stage is: how far are these accusations of ta‘lil relevant to the situation of the Mihna? Nobody could claim

\footnote{41. Maq., 564; Milal, 61.}
\footnote{42. Maq., 164, 542.}
\footnote{43. Yafi‘i quoted in Tritton, Muslim Theology, 62f.}
that this question can be answered with any degree of certainty, but reading these accusations in the context in which they were made mainly as a rebuke of "Jahmites" whom we now know to have flourished in the first half of the 3rd/9th century I am inclined to think of taʿtil as envisaged by Ḥanbalite and men of a similar outlook as a move by exponents of raʿy and qiṣṣā (largely non-Arabs) to give more power to the rulers as well as to benefit non-Arabs and non-Muslims on the expense, on both accounts of the religious institutions, particularly Ahl al-ṣadīqīn or the upholders of the Sunna.44 As we are dealing here with alleged threat to Arab hegemony and pre-eminence in the political and religious spheres the word Sunna must be understood in the broader context of the living tradition of the Arabs.45 In order to gain a better insight into the nature of the conflict we need to examine contemporary concepts of Irjā' which are relevant to the situation.

Irjā': A review of the sources shows that generally speaking there are two trends of Irjā': the first evolves around the position of 'Ali b. Abī Ṭālib and his adversaries, and the second with which we are directly concerned here is described by our sources as heresy and is largely propagated by the Murjī'īs proper as well as by Murjī'īs who combine Irjā' with Qadar.

44. cp. Yaʿla, i, 47.
45. See Wensinck, art. Sunna, EJ1; Goldziher, Muḥammadīja Studien, ii, 1-27; Schacht, art. Ahl al-ṣadīqīn, EJ2.
a) *Irjā* of the Sunnites

The first trend of *Irjā* is exhibited in different forms. Perhaps the whole movement of *Irjā* started, as suggested by modern research, as a reaction against the Kharijite concept of *takfīr* of the grave sinner and his exclusion from the community.\(^46\)

The relevance of this concept to the position of ‘Ali and his adversaries is apparent in the Kharijite’s disassociation with a leader whom they accuse of committing a grave sin. Among Kharijites themselves those who take up arms against the rulers of the day reckon their Kharijite brethren who fail to do so and in effect co-exist with the established political order, Murj’ites. Along these lines those who had originally backed ‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalib but after his death declined to support ‘Alid cause and instead acknowledged Umayyad rule came to be rebuked by Shi’ites as Murj’ites. This trend of *Irjā* is highlighted by the following statement attributed to an-Nawbakhtī: "After ‘Ali had been killed, the sect that was with him and the sect that was with Ṭalḥa, Zubayr and ‘A’isha combined to form one sect with Mu’āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, except for a small number of his (sc. ‘Ali’s) party and those who asserted his imamate after the prophet.... They (sc. those who declined to support ‘Alid cause) constitute the multitude and majority of the community and Ahl al-Ŷashā, the followers of kings and supporters of he who emerges victorious.... They are altogether called the Murj’ites because they associated (tawallu) with all disputants

\(^{46}\) Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, esp. Chapter III;
(sc. 'Ali and his opponents) and claimed that all Ahl al-Qibla are believers by their public confession, and hoped for pardon for them all."47

Those rebuked here as Ḥāshawīya and sometimes as Shukkak but are in fact the main body of traditionists and jurisconsults of the first half of the 2nd/8th century and after, further introduce us to another form of Irjā' connected with the theory of preference (tafdīl) among the companions of the prophet. Here Irjā' generally means the denial for 'Ali the first place after the prophet and his placement fourth among the successors of the prophet as of equal merit with the people of the Shura.48

Now both these forms of Irjā' seem to have divided the main body of traditionists and jurisconsults. It is interesting however to notice that during the Ĥiʾmā this division was bridged when these two forms of Irjā' came to be tolerated as the Irjā' of Ahl as-Sunna. This is attested by the fact that moderate Shi'ites and Sunnite Murt'jites mixed freely though of course the difficulty for either group to disclose their respective convictions publicly in places predominantly of the other opinion must be appreciated. Thus the traditionist 'Ali al-Madīnī is said to have been in the habit of passing as a Shi'ite when in Kufa and as a Murt'jite (sc. he who defers 'Ali to the fourth place) when in

47. Nawbakhti, Fīrāq ash-Shī'a, 6; Al-Qummi, Kitāb al-Maqālāt, 5-6.
Baghdad. 49 Yahya b. Ma‘īn, a distinguished traditionist of the circle of Ahmad b. Hanbal is reported to have said the following about the moderate Shi‘ite Abu Nu‘aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn: "If Abu Nu‘aym approves of somebody and praises him as good, know that he is a Shi‘ite, whereas if he says that a certain man is a Murjī‘ite know that this man is a Sunnite and that there is nothing wrong with him." 50 Dhahabi who reports this statement makes the comment: "this indicates that Yahya was inclined towards Irjā‘ which is by far better than Qadar." 51

The conclusion so far is that in spite of the difference in attitude between moderate Shi‘ites and the so called Sunnite Murjī‘ites they were nevertheless reconciled. Moderate Shi‘ites like Abu Nu‘aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn and Abu Ghassān Malik b. Ismā‘Il had as a matter of fact much in common with 'Sunnite Murjī‘ites' and are known to have opposed the official doctrine of the createdness of the Qur‘ān. 52 I have given this rather lengthy description of this form of Irjā‘ so as to draw attention to the distinction between it and the form of Irjā‘ generally described as heresy. We are in fact interested in Irjā‘ as heresy which, as can be inferred from the above account, flourished outside the circle of Ahl al-Hadīth proper.

49. Tadhkīr at-Tadhkīr, vii, 353.
50. Dhahabi, Mizān, iii, 350-1.
51. Dhahabi, Mizān, iii, 351.
52. For their inquisition see p. 3-4 above.
b) \textit{Irjā'} as heresy

Irjā' as heresy is generally attributed to Jahm b. Ṣafwān, Abu Ḥanifa and his followers as well as to a group of men who are reckoned Qadurites.\(^{53}\) I shall here base my treatment of this form of Irjā' on the account given by Māṭi. The choice of Māṭi is made for the good reason that most of the material in his book at-Tanbih was drawn from a work of a theologian who flourished during the period of our study namely Khushaysh b. Aṣram generally known as Abu ‘Aṣim. Although Māṭi's exposition of Irjā' will be used as the basis for our discussion early sources particularly Ḥanafite creed as well as Ḥanbalite critique will be taken into consideration to supplement it.

Māṭi starts off by asserting that there are 12 groups of Murj'ites but in fact manages to produce 11 only. The number is, however, insignificant as he appears to be dealing with different views of one main body rather than with distinct groups or sects. I shall first produce a translation of Māṭi's exposition of the views of the Murj'a and his comments on them and then attempt to analyse them.

Section 1. p. 146, ls. 1-3.

'There is a group of them who assert that he who confesses the Shahāda enters paradise in spite of committing all contrary acts, their argument being that as good acts are

\(^{53}\) cp. Fīṣal, ii, 111f.; iv, 204; Ṭabāṣr, 59f.; Farq, 202f.; Maq., 132-154; Tanbih, 146f.
useless so long as they are coupled with Shirk, it follows that sin (sawyi'a) does no harm when one confesses God's unity (at-Tawhid). They assert that one would not be committed to hell even if he does prodigious acts, neglects religious duties or commits sin."

Commentary pp. 146-149:
Quoting Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions Malaṭi stresses the point that ritual duties are part and parcel of Imān. He elaborates Imān as involving sincerity of belief, performance of religious duties including prayers, the giving of alms (zakat), upright conduct, belief in resurrection, the angels, the Qur'ān, the Apostles, the conducting of Jihad and the performance of Pilgrimage. He stresses prayers as the pillar of Islam stating that he who does not say it has no religion. On p. 149 he makes a brief attack on those who deny Qadar that is: the power of God over human acts as a whole.

Section 2. p. 149, ls. 11-15.
Among them there are those who assert that Imān is exclusively knowledge in the heart, and is neither confession with the tongue nor a bodily action so that he who knows that nothing is like God is a believer whether he prays facing the east or the west or ties a zunnar around his waist. They argue that if confession by the tongue is made obligatory it would follow that bodily actions (sc. performance of religious rituals) would become
obligatory too. Some among them went to the extent of saying that prayers is a sign of weak belief and that he who says prayers weakens his belief.

Commentary p. 149 Is. 16-19.
Malati mock the idea of prayers towards the east and quotes Qur'ānic verses which authorize the prophet Muḥammad to change the Qibla towards Mecca.

p. 150 He bases his commentary on Zunnar on the tradition: 'he who resembles a people (meaning non-muslims) becomes one of them', to show his disapproval. He also rejects that mere knowledge in the heart constitutes belief arguing that the Qur'ān stresses obedience to God, the apostle, and those in authority (he possibly means the ulama rather than the rulers) and that this obedience can only be displayed by qawl wa ṣamāl.

p. 150 l. 18 - p. 151 ls. 1-2. He quotes a tradition which asserts that the rights and duties of a muslim are to be bestowed only upon 'he who answers the call to islam, says the prayers of the muslims while facing their Qibla, and eats the meat slaughtered in the muslim manner'.

Section 3. p. 151, ls. 3-5.
There is a group of them who assert that confession of the shahada by the tongue and the acknowledgement of the apostles and what they brought from God are obligatory conditions for Iman, nevertheless if after confessing this
one declines to perform part of the religious rituals he
remains a believer and his belief is in no way lacking.

Commentary

p. 151. ls. 6-16. Malați stresses the point that İmān improves
with the performance of works, (sc. rituals) and the display
of righteousness.

Section 4, p. 151, ls. 17-20.

There are those who assert that İmān is the initial
confession of what came down from God (ṣṭ-Tanzīl), even
though one does not acknowledge it in its detail or is
not aware of its interpretation (taʾwīl). That is if a
group of people say we confess that there is no God but
Allah and that Muḥammad is his messenger but we do not know
whether Muḥammad is the one in Mecca and Medīna or a prophet
in Khurāsān? they are still believers. Similarly if they say:
we acknowledge that the performance of pilgrimage is
obligatory but we are not aware of the fact that it should
be made to (the kaʿba) at Mecca or to a shrine (bayt) in
Khurāsān; they are still believers. Similarly if they
acknowledge that pork [p.151, l.1] is forbidden (ḥaram) but
say we do not know whether what is meant is a pig in
particular or an ass; they are believers.

Commentary pp.152-153.

p. 152. Malați notes that when they were told that even Iblīs may
qualify for this type of confession their answer was to
stress knowledge by arguing that his confession is but
hallucination as he does not know what he confesses.

He further refutes denial of particularism and asserts that knowledge of the prophet 'Ummad, his Arab descent and a full awareness of his life until his death is essential for belief. In this respect he stresses acknowledgement of the prophethood of 'Ummad anducked Kūrāsān in that it witnessed no prophets. This is followed by an assertion of the universalism of the religion of Islam and the argument that he who hears of the prophet 'Ummad and his religion, be he a Jew or a Christian and does not believe in it until such a time when he dies he dies an unbeliever and is destined to hell. This argument is coupled with the assertion of the obligation to swear allegiance to fight the enemies of the prophet be they Arabs or 'Alam.

p. 153. Allegiance to the prophet 'Ummad is elaborated to involve obedience to those (Arabs) who are by right entitled to a privileged position and to refrain from disputing their rights (wa la tumizi'ū la amr ahlahu)


There are those who assert that their belief is similar to the belief of Gabriel, Michael and the favoured angels and apostles.

Commentary, p. 153, Is. 15-16.

Alaâqi refutes the above assertion on the ground that angels commit no sin and that apostles are the chosen of God.
Section 6, p. 153, ls. 17-20.

There are those who assert that their belief is complete and is in no way lacking or prejudiced by committing fornication with one's mother or sister or by the doing of prodigious and monstrous acts, the committing of grave sins, the drinking of alcohol or by manslaughter, homicide, the eating of what is forbidden, the acceptance of usury; nor by the suspension of prayers, the withholding of zakat and negligence of religious duties.


Malati argues that belief is lacking when its principles and rules are transgressed; and that sin terminates belief though repentance brings hope but it is up to God to punish the sinner or forgive him.

Section 7, p. 154, ls. 8-9.

There are those who affirm confidence in their belief and liken it to the belief of the 'people of Paradise' about whom God says (8/4 'they are the believers in truth').

Commentary, p. 154, ls. 9-10.

Malati argues that he who claims that he is destined to go to paradise would go to hell, and he who boasts about knowledge testifies to his ignorance; and similarly he who affirms his belief is a liar.

Section 8, p. 154, ls. 11-14.

There are those who assert that their belief is one and the same in that it does not change. They say that ones belief
does not increase with his performance of good deeds or his refraining from what is prohibited. That is it does not increase with his performance of pilgrimage, prayers, fasting even for all his life; and does not decrease with his committing sin, evil, or monstrous acts, nor with his doing openly what is prohibited, or his suspension of prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage.

Commentary, p. 155, ls. 1-4.

Malatī argues that the above assertion contradicts the Qur'ān which states that perfection of belief is achieved by due performance of religious duties.

Section 9, p. 155, ls. 5-7.

There are those who assert that Īmān increases indefinitely with the number of good acts performed, but does not decrease with evil deeds, the suspension of religious duties and the behaviour of tyrants and oppressors (az-Zalimūn).

Commentary,

p.155, ls. 8-18. Malatī reasserts that Īmān increases and decreases. He is however interested in its decrease which he emphasises as corresponding to hypocrisy.

p.156, ls.1-2. He asserts that the committer of sin, can, however, repent and regain his belief.

Section 10, p. 156, ls. 3-4.

There are those who deny that hypocrisy (nifāq) prevails in the community of the day.

Commentary, p. 156.

Malatī refutes the above apology and quotes a definition
of hypocrisy by a certain Mudhayfa as the failure to perform what one confesses by the tongue.

Section 11, p. 156, ls. 5-6.

There are those who assert that Iman and Islam are synonymous that is to say are one and the same and that Iman is in no way superior to Islam.

Commentary, p. 156, ls. 6-10.

Malaṭi says "but Saʿd b. Abi Waqqās tells the story that he witnessed the apostle Muḥammad apportioning articles among some members of the community and that when he noticed that he (sc. the apostle) denied one of them his share he said to him: 'you did not give this man his share although he is a muslim'. The apostle turned and said: 'Is he a believer?' He repeated this three times, thus proving that Iman is confession by the tongue and Islam is the observance of the duties. Malaṭi's point is that Iman and Islam are complementary with Islam being superior.

Now this exposition of Irajā' by Malaṭi is very similar to the standard account of Irajā' as heresy by the heresiographers. Of the 12 Murjīite sects in Maqālāt al Islamiyīn of al-Ashʿari only the position of Ghaylan ad-Dimashqi and Ibn Harrām are not directly reported but of course it could be said that their respective standpoints are embodied in one way or the other. All other views reported by Malaṭi are reproduced either directly or in a slightly different form in the accounts of the heresiographers.
The only noticeable difference between his account and that of the heresiographers is reflected in the concern in the accounts of the latter with the way things are made to read as witnessed in the definition of knowledge of God as love of him in the heart, and submissiveness to him as opposed to haughtiness towards him. 54

There is also in the books of sects the point regarding the tafa'il of the sinner which some Murj'ites seem to have accepted but with the important qualification that a sinner does not become outrightly fasiq on account of a particular sin he commits, but is rather said to have strayed from the right path (tasaa'a). 55 On the whole the Murj'ite position of deferring works as excluded from Iman, and the rejection of the Kharijite notion of takfir and excommunication of the grave sinner are maintained in both the accounts of Ma'atsi and the heresiographers.

Who are the Murj'ites?

Concepts reproduced in almost the exact form include those attributed to Abu Hanifa and his followers, to Ghassan, ash-Shimzi, as-Salih, the followers of Yunus, Abu Shamr, Bishr al-Marisi, an-Najjar, Ghaylan ad-Dimashqi, Abu Thawban, and Abu Mu'adh at-Tawmani. 56 Now all these men apart from those labelled Hanafite Jahmites (namely Abu Hanifa, his followers, and men of a similar outlook like Bishr al-Marisi and an-Najjar) and Qadarites

54. op. Milal, 104, 107; Ta'beir, 60.
55. See Milal, 107.
56. op. Maq., 132f.
(Mu’tazilite Jahmites)?, are nonentities about whom very little is known. Perhaps those nonentities are not different in outlook from those in the list known to us as Jahmites, Ḥanafites or others! In this connection nonentities appear in Ibn Bāṭṭa’s list of Jahmites and in a further list of predominantly Ḥanafite Jahmites produced by Ibn aj-Jawzi in his Manāqib Ahmad b. Ḥanbal. In view of the animosity of our sources (being mostly Ḥanbalite) towards the Jahmiyya, it is not curious that they are generally unidentifiable. It is also possible that Jahmites are largely second rate scholars being mostly state officials or associates of distinguished members of the administrations of al-Ma’mūn and his successors. The assumption here is that they only came to prominence during the Mīḥna for their endorsement of the official policy of the inquisition.

I have managed to identify two of the seven nonentities in the list of Ibn Bāṭṭa namely Abu Shu‘ayb al-Ḥajjām, and Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Armanī. Both these men were court officials and associates of the Chief Judge Ahmad b. Abī Du‘ād at the time of the Mīḥna. Abu Shu‘ayb al-Ḥajjām had at one stage belonged to the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth but during the Mīḥna joined the circle of Ahmad b. Abī Du‘ād and was commissioned to debate the nature of the Qurʾān with Ahmad b. Ḥanbal before the latter’s appearance for inquisition at the court of al-Mu’taṣim. Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Armanī was a member of the Court Council which tried Ahmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā’ī

57. Laoust, La Profession, 81f; Manāqib, 183-184.
58. For Abu Shu‘ayb see pp.157-158 above. For al-Armanī see al-Bidāya wa l-Miḥāya, x, 305.
in 231/845 for planning to overthrow al-Wāthiq by force. Now nonentities in the list of Ibn aj-Jawzi appear alongside those described as the followers of Bishr al-Marrīsī or associates of Ibn Abī Du‘ād who were all involved in one way or the other in the inquisition of traditionists and jurists consults in the capital or the provinces. The conclusion then is that nonentities in the lists of Ibn Bāṭtā and Ibn aj-Jawzi seem to belong to the period and situation of the Miḥna in which those who are known to us were involved. Similarly it can be inferred that nonentities in the list of Murj’ites produced by al-Ash‘arī belong to this period and situation too. This is supported by the similarity of Murj’ite views described by earlier Ḥanbalites like Khushaysh with the later accounts of the heresiographers where fortunately names of nonentities are given. Further most of these Murj’ites are referred to as Waqīfīyya or as Ḥanbalites would call them Jahmiyya.

Iṣṭa‘ and the Jahmiyya

Now if the above conclusion is accepted it remains for me to demonstrate in the rest of this chapter that the exposition of Iṣṭa‘ by Malaṭī is relevant to the situation of the Miḥna. It helps in this connection to remember that most of the views in Malaṭī’s book at-Tanbīh are either directly or indirectly drawn from a work

59. See Manāqib, 183-184; Kht., x, 73-4; Jawāhir, 290, 337.
60. Compare for example the views of Zuhayr al-Ahbar and Abu Mu‘adh at-Tawmānī in Maq., 583.
by Khushaysh whom we said had flourished during the Mi'na. He was among traditionists patronised by al-Mutawakkil after the abandonment of the inquisition and authorised to teach traditions which refute the argument of the Jahmiyya. 61

It has been argued above that the projection of ideas current in the 3rd/9th century back to Jahm b. Ṣafwān reflects an awareness of a similarity between the situation in Iraq brought to a head by the policy of the Mi'na and the situation in Khurāsān which provoked the movement of al-Ḥarīth b. Surayj. Now projections of this sort permeate Ḥanbalite as well as heresiographers' accounts of Irjā' as heresy. In this connection it is interesting to note the report that Murjī'ites were referred to in the presence of ʿAbmad b. Ḥanbal when somebody said: "they assert that if one knows God in his heart one is a believer". Itn Ḥanbal is said to have commented: "the Murjī'ites do not say this, it is the Jahmiyya who say it". 62 In this respect the view reported in Maqālāt of al-Ashʿari as that of Jahm b. Ṣafwān and the Jahmiyya is in fact not different from the Ḥanafite view. The account in Maqālāt is as follows: "Jahm b. Ṣafwān and his followers the Jahmiyya hold that belief in God is knowledge of him, his apostles, and all that has come down from him". It further states that belief is indivisible into parts and that believers do not excell one another in respect to Imān. Now this definition of Imān as a whole is typically the

61. see Kawthari's note in Ṭanbih, 101.
62. Yaʿla, 1, 309.
position of Abu Ḥanifa and his followers as presented by Ḥanbalites and men of a similar outlook. Now that this trend of projecting later Murjī’ite views to Jahm b. Ṣafwān is detected it will be rewarding to concentrate on the era of the Jahmites, that is the first half of the 3rd/9th century and to try to see how far Irjā as heresy was a product of this period.

The closest views in the account of Irjā by Malaṭi to the standard view attributed to Jahm occurs in Sections 1 and 2. It is echoed in Section 1 in the statement that mere confession of the Shahāda constitutes belief. This is rephrased in the statement in Section 2 which says that belief (īmān) is knowledge of the Unity of God. Malaṭi’s comment on the statement in Section 1 stresses the performance of rituals as essential condition of īmān and finishes with an attack on Qadarites. Now it can be said that his emphasis on religious rituals is most likely directed against Ḥanafites or to use the terminology of the time Ḥanafite Jahmites, while his remarks about Ahl al-Qadar can be understood as directed against Mu’tazilite Jahmites.

Similarly his comment on the statement in Section 2 most probably deals with the era of the Jahmites, possibly the period of al-Mutawakkil, say after 234/648 the date when the official policy of the Mihna was abandoned. This can be inferred from the fact that non-muslims are the main target for attack. The

63. Maq., 132, 138-139; op. Ya’la, i, 24-25; compare further with Ḥanafite views in Fiqh Akbar II, arts.1 and 2; Wasiyyat Abu Ḥanifa, arts. 1-5 in Wensink, Muslim Creed, 188, 125-6.
relevance of the puzzling reference to the past where the change of the Qibla by the prophet is mentioned, to the period of the Mi'na is suggested in Mala'î's ridicule of prayers towards the east, roughly Persia. More illuminating, however, is the reference to Zunnar which certainly echoes contemporary measures against Ahl adh-Dhimma issued by al-Mutawakkil in 235/849. Since this edict dealt with the status and place of non-Muslims in the society of the day Mala'î's statement of the conditions for qualifying for the rights and duties of a Muslim fits here very well.

Along these lines the statement in Section 4 and the commentary on it can now be appreciated as dealing with Persians as opposed to Arabs. It is worth mentioning here that this section deals with the view attributed to Abu Ūamî and his followers roughly sympathisers with Persians. The suggested interpretation is supported by the query whether the prophet Muhammad is the one of Mecca and Medina or a prophet in Khorasan; and similarly by the query whether pilgrimage is to be made to the ka'ba in Mecca or to a shrine in Khorasan. The references to pork, the Jews and Christians also fit here as they indicate that the dispute against the Arab tradition was not limited to Persians only. It rather reflects identity of interests among non-Muslims and non-Arabs at the time possibly as a secretary class but most probably as a widely discontented tax payer.

64. The earliest mention of Zunnâr seems to have been in the reign of ar-Rashîd which is roughly the beginning of the tension that came to a head during the period of our study. See Abu Yusuf, Kitâb al-Kharâj, 72-3.

65. Op. Ibid., where the main issue seems to have been the organization of payment of taxes by Ahl adh-Dhimma.
The issue of the prophethood of Muḥammad raised in the commentary is also relevant. Here Malatı asserts the prophethood of Muḥammad and ridicules Khurāsan in that it witnessed no prophets. It is significant that this is further emphasised in the assertion that awareness of the arab origin of the prophet Muḥammad is a condition of belief. The assertion of the prophethood of Muḥammad reminds one of the contemporary apology written in the very subject for al-Mutawakkil by a former christian namely 'Ali aš-Ṭabarî. The same question is further highlighted by Malatı's assertion of the universalism of islam. Here he makes the point that all peoples including Jews and Christians (sc. followers of acknowledged religions) must profess islam otherwise they would be doomed to hell. The assertion of universalism of islam is coupled with emphasis on allegiance to the prophet Muḥammad and through him to the Arabs, possibly to Hashimites in particular as can be inferred from Malatı's assertion that it is a sign of good belief not to dispute the rights of those entitled to them (wa la tūnāzi'u l-amra ablahu).

Membership of the Community

The Ḥanbalite critique

We can at this stage bring in the Ḥanbalite critique of Irjā' as heresy to supplement the exposition of Malatı. The Ḥanbalite critique of Irjā' is mainly against the deferring of works as separate from Ḥiṣn. Thus their definition of Ḥiṣn

66. For Ḥanbalite critique of Murjıtes see Yā'la, 1, 31-32, Laoust, La Profession, 47f.
takes into account the intellectual element of confession as well as the performance of external duties, hence the increase and decrease of İmān and its corollary of grades of excellence where the belief of certain individuals is superior to that of others. This argument is essentially against the Murj'ites' assertion in Section 5 and Section 6 mainly that their belief is similar to the belief of angels and prophets, and that it is complete and in no way affected by sin. In this respect Ahmad b. Ḥambal who had been asked to comment upon the Murj'ites' assertion that islam is confession by the tongue (al-qawl) is reported to have said:

"They make all this similar, and reckon muslim and Mu'mūn one and the same, and liken their belief to the belief of Gabriel, that is see it as complete İmān". He was then asked: "is it on the grounds of these assumptions that our objection is made against them?" and he answered: "Yes".67

In order to establish that İmān increases and decreases, Ḥanbalites had to distinguish it from islam. However the distinction between İmān and islam, and the superiority of one over the other is not at all clear or consistent.68 For instance Malati's exposition in Section 11 makes islam superior to İmān as can be inferred from his commentary. Apparently this is contradicted in Ibn Baṭṭa where on the contrary İmān is made to seem superior to

67. Ya‘la, 1, 24.

Islam in that "a person whose belief is prejudiced moves from Imān to Islam; Islam being the body politic (al-Milla) whereas Imān is counting true (tāṣdīq) that is belief in religion". 69

The implications of increase and decrease of Imān are apparent in Malaši's definition in Section 9 of its decrease as corresponding to hypocrisy. Now this would mean that those whose Imān decreases, that is becomes inferior are hypocrites. Thus hypocrisy is denied by Murj'iteś in Section 10 but reasserted in the commentary where it is defined as failure to perform what one confesses by the tongue (sc. religious rituals). It is implied here that hypocrisy of the time is analogous to hypocrisy of non-muslims of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. Nevertheless Ḣanbaliteś allow membership of the community for hypocrites. There is however the important qualification, for according to them the committer of sin should repent to regain his belief. 70

This is further complicated by their notion of Istithnā'. Their main concern here is with the salvation of the individual or his position in the after world. This is made explicit in Ibn Baṭṭa's statement that "Istithnā' has to do with life after death because when one says I am a believer if God wills one means if God accepts my belief and that until such a time when my death comes he makes me die a believer". 71 Thus Istithnā' is the referring of judgement of the Imān of the believer to God. It is essentially

69. Laoust, La Profession, 49-50.
70. cp. Ya'la, 1, 213.
71. Laoust, La Profession, 49.
intended to counter the haughtiness and confidence of Murj'ites of the sort in Section 7. The Ḥanbalite formula of īmān would be to say I am a believer if God wills. This is further in line with their notion of hope for forgiveness of sins as opposed to the Kharijite notion of takfīr and exclusion from the community. Thus the Ḥanbalites acknowledge membership of the sinner though with the qualification mentioned above. Their position is clearly stated in Ibn Bāttā as follows: "we reckon men believers in respect of inheritance and legal rights, but we do not know God's Judgement regarding them nor in what religion they will die."\textsuperscript{72}

It is only extreme forms of shirk committed in haughtiness to God or in deliberate defiance of him which terminates membership of the community. However, when shirk is committed as a result of negligence it does not constitute exclusion from the community.\textsuperscript{73}

This shows that Ḥanbalites are obviously not opposed to membership of the grave sinner. If we can free ourselves from Ḥanbalite prejudice against Abu Ḥanīfa and his followers in that in view of his concern with Islamic rituals he could not have possibly advocated their neglect, we can begin to see that Murj'ites like him were primarily concerned with membership of the Islamic community. Now if the main concern of the Murj'ites is membership of the community and that their critics, the Ḥanbalites are not at loggerheads with them over what constitutes qualification for membership of the community, what then is the quarrel between them about?

\textsuperscript{72} Laoust, La Profession, 49.
\textsuperscript{73} Laoust, La Profession, 50.
The transcendent value of Iman

It must be remembered here that although Sunnites (sc. Hanbalites) reject the Kharjite and Mu'tazilite standpoints on the grave sinner, they nevertheless retain a certain degree of the emphasis made by both these sects on the transcendent value of moral conduct. It is in this sense that Hanbalites insist that Iman increases and decreases, that it is different from islam, and more significantly that although the grave sinner is admittedly a member of the islamic community, the transcendent value of his membership is nevertheless uncertain as can be inferred from their notions of Istithnā', Shafa'a, and hope for pardon by God. Then the difference between them and the Murji'ites is one of degree for although each side is concerned with membership of the grave sinner and subsequently his ultimate destiny in the afterworld, the Hanbalites unlike the Murji'ites emphasise high moral attainment as an attribute of Iman and its assumed transcendent significance as determining the quality of ones membership of the islamic community.

The argument here is that those who sin, in other words those whose Iman decreases when compared with the strictly observant or pious (sc. those whose Iman increases), the latter are entitled to a superior position in the community. Thus 'Abd Allah b. Tahir is said to have been appalled by the haughtiness of the Murji'ites who claim that their belief is similar to that of Gabriel and to have added: "I dare not say that my belief is like the belief of Ahmad b. Hanbal or Yahya b. Ma'In". 74

74. Al-Minhāj al-Abād, f.48.
What we are dealing with here is in fact the basis of
carismtata or religious authority in Islam. The Hanbalite argument
of better Muslims in contrast to bad Muslims would in social terms
enhance the position of Sunnites and their supporters as opposed
to the Yahmites or the so-called advocates of ultra-religious
tendencies. It is here that the Hanbalite attack on the levelling
movement of the Shu‘ubiyya can be appreciated. This is further
highlighted by the Sunnites’ assertion of the Caliphate as
exclusive right of Qurayshites who: “are not to be competed against,
forcefully opposed or deposed until doomsday”. The Arabs come
into the picture through Qurayshites as Hanbalites are found to
assert that one should “acknowledge the Arabs’ right, their
superiority (fadil), and precedence. One should like them for the
saying of the prophet: "liking them is Iman, and hating them is
hypocrisy (nifāq)”. One should not follow the haughtiness of
the Shu‘ubiyya and despicable Mawāli who do not like the Arabs and
deny them credit; surely this is innovation, hypocrisy and
dissention”.

This attitude of mind must not be conceived as racialistic
for when seen against the background of the Mihna and the change
in the structure of power it was intended to bring about would
become apparent as a reaction, in particular of Arab Khurasanites
and their supporters including indeed some non-Arabs, to the

75. Ya‘la, 1, 26.
76. Ya‘la, 1, 30. For an understanding of the Shu‘ubiyya in this
context see Gibb, “The Social Significance of the Shu‘ubiyya”,
Studies on the Civilization of Islam, 62–73; Duri, al-Judhur
al-Tarikhiya li l-Shu‘ubiyya. cp. Goldziher, Muhammedanische
Studien, 1, 14ff.
changing tide against their hegemony and pre-eminence in both the religious and political institutions which they seek to reassert in the wider Islamic context of the Sunna.
CHAPTER 9

THE POLITICAL FORM OF THE STRUGGLE

This last chapter attempts to pull things together and to explain the reaction of the traditional forces of Sunnism against the threat of new forces and a new political situation.

The aristocracy of the early Abbasid Period

The 'Abbasid aristocracy can be said to have included members of the 'Abbasid family and their equals among 'Alids, and the group of the Muhajirun and the Ansār or the descendents of the companions of the prophet including 'Uthmanites and Umayyads. The 'Abbasid circle of Hashimites include Arab and Mawāli associates who were largely connected with the province of Khurāsān. They are referred to as Abnā' ad-Da'wa, or Abnā' ad-Dawla, and more frequently as Abnā' Khurāsān but usually by the short epithet al-Abnā'. Eventually the term Abnā' seems to have gained the technical connotations of referring to soldiers or ex-servicemen of Khurāsānites origin living in Baghdad especially in the quarter of al-Ḥarbiyya.¹ I shall limit myself here to two groups of Arab Khurāsānites in order to demonstrate their connections with the main body of Arab and native Khurāsānites aristocracy. As we are here interested in the circle of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuza‘, they can be picked to demonstrate our point of view.

¹. For earlier reference to al-Abnā' see Ya'qubi, Tarīkh, iii, 104, Kht., xiv, 63-66; Dḥahabi, Tarjamāt al-Imām Ahmad in al-Munṣad, i, 61; See further B. Lewis, Ṣa‘īda, Abnā' al-dawla EL; Jahiẓ, Manāqib at-Turk, in Rasa'il, i, 9, 12, 25f. Compare D. Ayalon, "The military reforms of the Caliph al-Ḥu’tasim", pp. 6f, 21.
Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the arab-Iranian aristocracy

We now know that the family of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal had past connections with the province of Khurāsān. His father and grandfather held senior posts in the 'Abbasid army and administration. His grandfather served as a governor of Sarkhas, and seems to have been active in the politics of the eastern provinces.² We have noted above that the family’s past connections in Khurāsān had gained for it a prominent place among the aristocracy of Baghdad. When canvassing for support among the ministers and generals of the administration of al-Mu’tasim to secure the release of his nephew Aḥmad’s uncle used the family’s past connections in Khurāsān.

We have also seen that senior arab and native Khurāsānī generals and officials of the administration of al-Mutawakkil had close contacts with Ibn Ḥanbal. Their circle include the arab Khurāsānī ‘Ali b. al-Jahm and prominent native Khurāsānītes like Yahya b. Khāqān, his son ‘Ubayd Allah, Muḥammad b. aj-Jarāḥ, and Yahya b. Harthama b. A’yan among many others.³ His apparently close connections with native Khurāsānītes was best highlighted by Ibn ath-Thalji’s abusive accusation against him that he worshipped Mani and possessed Manichaean books.⁴

Ibn Ḥanbal and the arab aristocracy of the central provinces.

We have also examined Ibn Ḥanbal’s contacts with ‘Alids, the

². He is said to have been flogged by al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr in Bukhara for inciting the soldiers to riots. See Dhahabi, Tarjamat al-Imam Aḥmad, in al-Ḥusnād, i, 61.
³. See above, pp. 83, 67.
⁴. See above, pp. 84, 186.
Muhajirun and the Ansār. More significant was the close affinity between him and the Hashimites or 'Abbasids of Baghdad. Among those he had a special relationship with the family of 'Ali b. 'Abd-roughb b. 'Abbas. He is said to have studied under Sulayman b. Dā'ūd al-Hashimi (d. 219/834) and conveyed traditions on his authority. His relationship with him continued to be close and intimate. When Ibn Ḥanbal was released from prison after his inquisition in 220/835 Sulayman and a certain Ibrahīm az-Zuhri of the family of 'Abd ar-Rahman b. 'Awf are said to have kissed his forehead as a token of honouring his resistance. The celebrated ash-Shafi‘ī singled out Sulayman b. Dā'ūd and Ahmad b. Ḥanbal as the most respectable personalities in Baghdad at the time. We can now begin to appreciate the seriousness of the statement of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal that Sulayman b. Dā'ūd was the best qualified candidate for the caliphate at the time especially when it is seen in the light of past claims for the caliphate by members of the family of Sulayman since the rise of 'Abd al-roughb b. 'Ali against al-Mansūr.

Ahmad b. Nasr al-Khuzā‘ī and the Arab-Iranian aristocracy

Ahmad b. Nasr was an Arab Khurāsānīte of the influential Yemenite tribe of Khuzā‘a. Yemenites in general were very prominent in the 'Abbasid movement but Ahmad's tribe and in particular his

5. Manāqib, 341.
7. Manāqib, 341.
family and its associates occupied a distinguished place in the 'Abbasid Establishment. His grandfather Malik b. al-Haytham was an outstanding Dā'ī in the 'Abbasid movement. Other senior Dā'ī from the same tribe of Khuzā‘a include Sulayman b. Kathīr, Ziyad b. Ṣalih, Ṭalḥa b. Qurayš and 'Amr b. A‘yan.

Ahmed's family was largely influential in Khurāsān and later Iraq and Egypt. The founder of the family Malik b. al-Haytham was a close associate of Abu Muslim al-Khurāsānī and practically emerged as his right hand man. He later served as governor of al-Mawṣil and as chief of Police under Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. His family seems to have inherited his influence at the court and in the region of al-Mawṣil. Ahmed's father Ṣaqr b. Malik became chief of Police under al-Mahdi and Harun ar-Rashīd. Ahmed's brother Thabit undertook as a governor of Thughur different campaigns against Byzantines and supervised the exchange of prisoners of war. Ahmed's uncles Ḥamza (d. 161/779) and 'Abdallah (d. 212/826) held similar military and administrative posts in al-Mawṣil and other provinces as well as at the court. Ḥamza became chief of Police and later governor of Jazīra, Adhrabayjān, and Khurāsān. Ḥamza's son Ṣaqr became governor of the eastern bank of Baghdad in the turbulent year of 201/816-817. 'Abdallah b. Malik also served

10. Kht., xiv, 64.
11. Tab., 111, 730; Athīr, vi, 142-143.
as chief of Police and the Palace Guards. He similarly served as governor of al-Mawṣil, Ṭabaristan and the adjoining regions of Ḫuŷa, ar-Rayy, Ḥamdān and Qumis. He led campaigns against the Byzantines and fought the Khurramiyya rebels. His sons al-Muṭṭalib, Ḥarun, and al-FAqīl were prominent generals and officials of the administrations of al-Amīn and al-MA’Mūn. Al-Muṭṭalib was by far the most outstanding among them. He served as governor of al-Mawṣil and Egypt and was involved in the civil war between al-Amīn and al-MA’Mūn and the disturbances which followed in Egypt.15

The Mawāli of the family of Malik b. al-Haytham

The family had many non-arab supporters, clients and associates. Among their senior clients was Zuhayr at-Turki with whom Malik b. al-Haytham sought refuge when he escaped from al-Manṣūr. He seems to have persuaded Malik to surrender after securing a general pardon for him from al-Manṣūr.16 Another outstanding client of the family a certain Abu Mu’aym b. Musa generally known as the mawla of Bani Naṣr is described as one of their powerful officers (min aṣbaḍdi quwwadihim) stationed as Rabiṭa in the Jazira.17 This gives us insight into the semi independent military and administrative organizations which prominent politicians were allowed to maintain to enhance their position as rulers. Al-Muṭṭalib b. ‘Abd Allah dealt with the serious disturbances in Egypt during the

15. For al-Muṭṭalib see Tab., iii, years 195-202; Nujūm, ii, 157-165.
16. Al-Imāma, ii, 137; op. Tab., iii, 119.
civil war between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn with the help of his clients and associates. During the same civil war in Baghdad he nearly lost his life had it not been for his Mawāli and Aṣḥāb who are said to have protected him and facilitated his escape.

The prominent place the family occupied in Khurāsān, Iraq and Egypt was greatly enhanced by the client relationship which Ṭahīr b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusayn and his cousins had with the tribe of Khuzā‘. The founder of the family of Ṭahīr was his great grandfather Rāziq. Rāziq was the first to enter into client relationship with the Khuzā‘ite governor of Sīstān namely Abu Muḥammad Ṭalḥa b. ʿAbdallāh. Rāziq’s son Muḥammad served as a scribe for Sulaymān b. Kāthīr al-Khuzā‘ī and participated in Abu Muslim’s campaigns against the Umayyads. His son al-Ḥusayn was a dominant figure in the politics of Khurāsān under al-Raḥīd. Ṭahīr b. ʿAbdallāh and Ṭalḥa and their cousins Ishaq and Muḥammad the sons of Ibrāhīm al-Khuzā‘ī dominated the politics of Iraq, Khurāsān and Egypt under al-Ma’mūn and his successors. They were most influential in Khurāsān and the eastern provinces where they in effect established themselves as the ruling dynasty.

In conclusion to this account I should like to stress two main aspects. The first is that these two groups and their respective associates represent the main body of the circle of Ahl al-Ḥadīth. The second point is that other groups of the traditional

18. Kindī, 152-161; Nujum, i, 162f.
19. Tab., iii, 1028-1029.
20. For the family of Ṭahīr see Barthold, art., Ṭahīr b. al-Ḥusayn, E11; also Tahirids [q.v.]
aristocracy similarly had clients and associates mostly among the business and secretarial class of Iranian origin.

**The continuity of the aristocracy of the Umayyad period**

The assumption here is that the 'Abbasid aristocracy was largely of the same structure as the aristocracy of the Umayyad Period. We now know that 'Aḥmad b. lığınıbal and his circle had close connections with Hashimites of the family of 'Ali b. 'Abdallah b. 'Abbas. We similarly know that Malik b. al-Haytham, the founder of the family of 'Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī was a close associate of Abu Muslim al-Khurāṣāni. Now both Abu Muslim and the family of 'Ali b. 'Abdallah b. 'Abbas had much in common with the aristocracy of the late Umayyad Period. In fact their main respective supporters were Syrians and Jazirites living in Khurāṣān or the central provinces of Syria and Iraq.

It is in this context that I have called the 'Abbasid aristocracy and its Umayyad associates the traditional aristocracy. The link between Abbasids and Umayyads as a traditional aristocracy helps us understand the politico-religious debate around Umayyad caliphs long after their disappearance. It will also show that the demise of the traditional aristocracy was brought about by the 'Abbasid revolution.

**The demise of the traditional aristocracy**

As the continuity of the aristocracy of the Umayyad Period is assumed here the demise of the traditional aristocracy could be
said to have been brought about by the 'Abbasid Revolution. The assumption here is that as the traditional aristocracy included pro-Umayyad elements its demise was related to the defeat and persecution of the Umayyads by the victorious 'Abbasids.

It is interesting to note that for some time during the course of the revolution the 'Abbasids had much in common with the opponents of Marwan II. The early policy of Abu 1-'Abbas which he seems to have formulated in full consultation with his brother Abu Ja'far was to win members of the Umayyad administration and other elements opposed to Marwan II. This policy was reflected in the confirmation of Umayyad administrators who broke away from Marwan II and displayed the black banner of the 'Abbasids in their posts.21 Outside the administration of Marwan II the general trend among Syrians opposed to him was to join hands with the new regime. Many Syrians are said to have rallied around Ŝaliḥ b. 'Abdallah when they found out that he was a relative of the new caliph Abu 1-'Abbas.22 The inhabitants of al-Mawṣil and Damascus are said to have been divided and that many among them supported the 'Abbasids and facilitated the capture of the two cities.23 At this stage Abu 1-'Abbas is said to have sent orders to 'Abd allah b. 'Ali the commander in chief of 'Abbasid forces in Syria to appease the Umayyad aristocracy and register them in the Diwan al-'Aṭā'.24

21. Dhaḥabi, Tārīkh al-Islam, v, 204; Tab., iii, 18, 47f; Athīr, v, 336-337.
22. Al-Imāma, 11, 118.
23. Tab., iii, 47, 48.
24. Al-Imāma, 11, 121, 123.
Abu 1-‘Abbas also won over to his side prominent opponents of al-Walîd b. Yazîd and Harwan II including Sulayman b. Hishâm and the Kalbite general Mansûr b. Jumbar and his associates among the family of ‘Abdallâh al-Qasârî. He was similarly anxious to win yemenite elements then holding out with Ibn Habayra at Waṣīt.

The persecution of the Umayyads

Now it is curious that this policy of reconciliation was suddenly dropped by Abu 1-‘Abbas when he reversed to the extreme opposite of alienating and persecuting Umayyads and their supporters. The explanation that it was dropped because of opposition from pro-‘Alîd forces who wanted to avenge the murder of al-Ḥusayn and Zayd, hence the two poems addressed to Abu 1-‘Abbas and his deputy in Syria respectively, is unsatisfactory.

It is interesting that this breach with the Umayyads necessitated the destruction of their power structure. In this respect the defeat of Ibn Hubayra at Waṣīt the biggest military garrison of the Umayyads is significant in that it marks the final destruction of Umayyad power structure. It was the Umayyad forces at this garrison which were disbanded and their names stricken off the Dîwân al-‘Aṣâ. A public orier announced to them: "he who wants to stay should reside in aj-Jabiya, and he who wants to depart

25. Al-Imâmâ, 11, 119; Ya‘qûbî, Tarîkh, iii, 98; Tab., iii, 72.
27. Al-Imâmâ, 11, 123.
should leave now". When Ibn Hubayra was killed the announcement made to Ahl ash-Sham was: "go to your Sham, we need you not." It was at this stage that Syrians and Jazirites found it difficult to remain reconciled with the 'Abbasid regime. Sulayman b. Hisham escaped and put up a show of force but was eventually killed. Mansur b. Jumhuz led an arab contingent in Sind into rebellion but was crushed. The reaction against 'Abbasid change of heart was felt nearer home at al-Mawil where Syrians and Jazirites erupted into waves of rebellions. The capital Damascus and Himy attempted to advance their own caliph by invoking the cult of the Umayyad as-Sufyani. Similar violence erupted among pro-Umayyad tribes in Egypt and the Magrib and continued to harass the 'Abbasids for a long time to come.

The plausible explanation of the dropping of the policy of appeasement of the Umayyads seems to be to ward off their threat to the Revolution. The presence of Umayyads among 'Abbasids was bound to affect the balance of power and internal feuds among members of the 'Abbasid family and senior politicians of the administration. It is here that we begin to see the form of the internal struggle among the Abbasids and the relevance of Umayyad forces to it. We can at this stage relate the demise of the traditional aristocracy to the emergence of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur and his victory over

31. See F. Omar, the 'Abbasid Caliphate, 19ff.
32. Al-Bidaya wa n-Nihaya, x, 52.
'Abdallah b. 'Ali, Abu Muslim, the Æasanids and the Umayyad forces around them.

**Abu Ja'far versus Abu Muslim**

We can now appreciate why Abu Ja'far was so anxious to appease Ibn Hubayra and the remnant forces of Nâṣr b. Sayyar then holding for Marwan II at Wâṣīt and why Abu Muslim was so adamant against his move. The remnant forces of Nâṣr b. Sayyar and the forces of Ibn Hubayra were the very elements which had recently been beaten by the forces of Abu Muslim and held under tight siege at Wâṣīt. The partisan support which Abu Ja'far seems to have secured among the forces besieging Ibn Hubayra and his eventual take over of command from the officers of Abu Muslim highlight this power struggle. A delegation of officers from this front are said to have visited the court at Kufa and pressed the Caliph Abu l-'Abbas to appoint a commander in chief from Ahl al-Bayt to lead them in battle, and were only satisfied when Abu l-'Abbas advanced his brother Abu Ja'far.34

The confrontation between Abu Ja'far and Abu Muslim came to the open during the hajj season of 136/753-754 and after the defeat of the rebel 'Abdallah b. 'Ali in Syria. As Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Manṣūr was able to destroy Abu Muslim. Generals and officials faithful to Abu Muslim prominent among whom were the families of

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33. Al-Imāma, ii, 126f.
34. Tab., iii, 64; Athīr, v, 337.
Qaṭṭaba b. Shabīb, Malik b. al-Haytham, Abu l-Jahm b. 'Atiyya and many others were faced with the alternative of co-operating with al-Mansur or suffer death.

Once Abu Muslim was murdered his troops were neutralised before the situation got out of hand. The troops were offered the option of residing with the Caliph in the Capital (where presumably they were to be watched or absorbed into dependable units) and receive the high pension of 1,000 dirham; or depart to Khurāsān where apparently they were to be dropped from the Muqatila but receive a pension of 500 dirham while they sit at their homes. 35

Al-Mansur and 'Abdallah b. 'Ali

An even more formidable challenge to al-Mansur came from his uncle 'Abdallah b. 'Ali who rebelled in Syria claiming that Abu l-'Abbas had designated him his successor. It is significant that in spite of the anti-Umayyad Policy of the 'Abbasid regime 'Abdallah b. 'Ali understood that his strength lay in rallying Umayyad forces behind him. He is said to have "attracted the followers (mawāli) of Bani Umayya to him, fed them and secured their frontier and that after withholding the Kharāj he adopted a war posture against the Caliph". 36 It is interesting to note that his right hand man was the Azdite 'Uthman b. Surāqa, the very man who had only recently advanced the Umayyad Hisham b. Yazīd

35. Al-Imāma, 11, 136.
36. Al-Imāma, 124.
as as-Sufyani and cursed the Abbasids from the pulpit of the cathedral mosque at Damascus.\(^\text{37}\) His breach with Khurāsānītes in his ranks made him more dependent on Ahl ash-Sham who are described as numerous and well equipped (wa Ahl ash-Sham aktharu fīrsanān wa akmalu 'udda).\(^\text{38}\) When he was defeated his confident 'Uthman b. Surāqā accompanied him to al-Bagāra where they found asylum with Sulayman b. 'Ali.

The apparent understanding between 'Abdallah b. 'Ali and his brothers and cousins who were influential in Syria and Iraq explains al-Manṣūr's infuriation against Sulayman b. 'Ali, and 'Īsā b. 'Ali and his demand that they surrender 'Abdallah to him. It is significant that they proved reluctant to co-operate with al-Manṣūr and that he reacted by securing his control over Bāṣra. Sulayman and his associates were then forced into having to persuade 'Abdallah b. 'Ali to acknowledge the Caliphate of al-Manṣūr which he did in 138 or 139/755-756.\(^\text{39}\) This, however, did not remove the danger posed by 'Abdallah nor did it end the collaboration of his brothers with him hence the understanding of the deposition of Sulayman and 'Īsā b. Musa in 139/756-757.\(^\text{40}\) The entrustment of a much more strengthened military and administrative control of al-Bagāra to the Muhallabīids which followed left 'Abdallah b. 'Ali and his associates in no doubt as to the intentions of the Caliph,

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38. Tab., iii, 96.
39. Tab., iii, 122.
40. Tab., iii, 125-126; Tārīkh Khalīfa b. al-Khayyāt, ii, 461-462.
and they subsequently disappeared underground. It was at this stage that further firm but tactful policy followed by al-Mansūr forced his uncles Sulayman b. ‘Ali and ‘Isa b. ‘Ali to surrender their brother ‘Abdallah to him. ‘Abdallah was confined to prison where he eventually perished under mysterious circumstances. Many of his followers were executed at the court or significantly enough sent out to Khurāsān and executed there.41

We can now see how the traditional aristocracy was alienated and driven into the position of opposition. Its steady demise can now be traced in the deliberate weakening and dividing of prominent families and related groups of families, in the use of one faction against the other and finally in the promotion of a new aristocracy to replace it as the political and military elite.

The weakening of the family of ‘Ali b. ‘Abdallah

The policy of al-Mansūr and his successors towards members of the family of ‘Ali b. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Abbas can now be described as aimed at dividing and weakening them. The posting of ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamad and Ṣaliḥ with their brother ‘Abdallah b. ‘Ali in Syria and the adjoining provinces seems to have been intended as a check on him. Ṣaliḥ competed with him in Syria and virtually sealed him off from Egypt. In this respect it is interesting to note that Ṣaliḥ was ordered to reduce to order Syrian and Ja'irite rebels who were the very supporters of his brother ‘Abdallah. He was

41. Tab., iii, 127.
further entrusted with the hunting down of 'Abdallah's supporters during the latter's disappearance in Baṣra. Paradoxically enough when the Caliph al-Ma'ṣūr eventually reconciled Yemenite leaders who had supported 'Abdallah b. 'Ali Ṣalīḥ appeared to be their main opponent.42

After the rebellion of 'Abdallah b. 'Ali al-Ma'ṣūr suspected the family as a group. Although members of the family continued to hold high posts in the administration until the reign of al-Ma'mūn their influence was greatly reduced and they were watched over by spies, dependable officers of the Barid and in some cases political representatives of the Caliph who were posted with them at their seats of government.43 Ṣalīḥ b. 'Ali was imprisoned three times in one year. Many members of this family were accused of entertaining rebellion and of bidding for the caliphate a development which explains the persecution of the family as a group under Harun ar-Raṣūl.44

The weakening of related families.

Another pattern of these manoeuvres was to weaken groups of related families by using one against the other. It is here that members of the family of 'Ali b. 'Abdallah b. 'Abbas were used against their cousin 'Īsa b. Musa and his associates and vice versa.

42. Azdī, Tārīkh al-Mawṣīl, 170.
44. See for example, Nujum, ii, 62, 75, 78-79, 90-91; Yaʿqūbī, iii, 160 f.
The report that al-Mangur entrusted 'Abdallah b. 'Ali to 'Isa b. Musa to kill him in order to incriminate him before the family of the former highlights these manoeuvres. When 'Isa b. Musa was sacked from the governorship of al-Kufa Muhammad b. Sulayman b. 'Ali is said to have been appointed in his place in order to humiliate him. This must be viewed in conjunction with the report that when al-Mangur wanted to persecute Muhammad b. Sulayman he conferred with 'Isa b. Musa about the punishment to be meted to him.

The pressure on 'Isa b. Musa was to make him decline his right for succession to al-Mahdi. In this connection al-Mangur is said to have appeased Yemenite leaders who had rebelled with 'Abdallah b. 'Ali when they expressed their willingness to back the succession of al-Mahdi against 'Isa b. Musa. They are said to have approached al-Mangur and said to him: "O, Commander of the faithful, the impression among the majority of us and the desire of our people as a whole is that the son of our sister (sc. al-Mahdi) should be the one from amongst us invested with this affair (inna min a'zam al-mawaqil 'inda 'ummatina wa ahabiha ila jama'atina an yakuuna ibnu 'ukhtina al-ladhi yaliya dhalika minna)."

Similarly both the families of 'Ali b. 'Abdallah and 'Isa b. Musa were used to suppress Hasanid opposition. It is significant in this respect that Sulayman b. 'Ali is said to have objected to

45. Tab., i, 329ff.
46. Tab., i, 352.
47. Al-Biday'a wa-n-Nihaya, x, 113.
the suppression of the Ḥasanids while his sons Muḥammad and Jaʿfar endorsed the policy of al-Maʾṣūr and co-operated with him. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān surrendered Musa b. ʿAbdallah b. al-Ḥasan to al-Maʾṣūr. Both Muḥammad and his brother Jaʿfar participated in reducing Ibrahim b. ʿAbdallah b. al-Ḥasan to order in al-Baṣra.49

Along these lines Harūn ar-Rashīd who persecuted the family of ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallah as a group at one stage put Ibrahim b. al-Mahdī and al-ʿAbbas b. Muḥammad governors in Syria presumably to cut members of this family off from their influence in that region.50 In this respect this family seems to have been involved in the tribal wars between Yemenites and Ḥudarites of Syria of 176/792-793 and 180/796, and in al-Mawṣil in 177/793 which the authorities were anxious to stop.51

The involvement of members of this family in the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Maʿmūn in the side of al-Amīn naturally affected their position under al-Maʿmūn, no wonder that their influence ceased during his reign. On the other hand those around ʿĪsā b. Musa are said to have sided with al-Maʿmūn and hence the continuation of their influence for a longer period. An idea about the supporters of ʿĪsā b. Musa can be gained from the report that they were arrested under al-Maṣūr in Kūrāsān and sent to the court in Iraq.52 They include Harṭama b. Aʿyān, ʿAbbād Mawla

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49. Taβ., iii, 300, 304, 306f.
51. Taβ., iii years 176/793, 180/796 for al-Mawṣil see Athīr, v, 96.
52. This was in 153/770 see Athīr, v, 476; Taβ., iii, 371.
al-Mansur and Yusuf b. Ulwān. We shall hear more about their role in the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mūn presently.

The weakening of 'Alids and their supporters

The supporters of Hasanids must be seen in the context of the coalition system of Islamic politics. They are treated here as members of the traditional aristocracy rather than as a distinct Shi'ite group. Those were mainly elements of the Muhajirun and the Ānār, (largely members of the religious institutions in Hijaz and Kufa) and Arab and native Khurasanites.

Support for 'Alids can best be seen in the context of faction disputes in Khurāsān. 'Abd al-Jabbar b. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-'Azdi who seems to have been introduced into the province by the Caliph al-Mansur to establish a dependable administration is presented by the sources as harsh towards the Arab and native aristocracy of the province especially the pro-'Alids among them. Later on however the same sources see him as furthering the very contrary of this.53 Now these fluctuations in his policy are in line with the nature of faction politics of the coalition system. These developments must be seen in the light of the growing tension between al-Mansur and Hasandād at the centre. It was at this stage that al-Mansur tried to weaken 'Abd al-Jabbar by moving units of the provincial army to Iraq or sending imperial troops into the province. 'Abd al-Jabbar reacted by moving openly to the side of the 'Alid group.54 It was under these circumstances that Khurāsān eventually

53. Ya‘qubi, Tārikh, iii, 115; Al-Bidāya wa-n-Nihāya, x, 75; Tab., iii, 134-135.
54. Tab., iii, 134-135.
received a reliable administration under the Caliph's own son Muḥammad who was installed governor of the province under the title al-Mahdi presumably to outmanoeuvre Mahdiastic claims by the Ḥasanid Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh.  

The faction politics in which ‘Alids were involved is further noticed in accusations against the circle of ‘Īsa b. Musa particularly Harthama b. A‘yan of pro-‘Alid inclination. In Iraq the Governor of al-Mawṣil Malik b. al-Haytham al-Khuzayfī seems to have been sacked under the pretext that Ibrahim b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Hasan found refuge there during his governorship. Eventually the administration of al-Mawṣil was similarly entrusted to a son of al-Mangūr namely Ja‘far who was aided by the dependable Ḥarb b. ‘Abdallāh to establish a reliable administration there.

The use of factions within the traditional aristocracy

The rulers' attempt to isolate their opponents within the traditional aristocracy is further apparent in the appeasement of discredited Umayyad generals and tribal leaders, and the promotion of groups or factions willing to support them to the highest posts in the administration. The first group include Ma‘n b. Zā‘ida and Riyaḥ b. ‘Uthman al-Mazni who were won over by al-Mangūr at a time when the battle between him and his opponents among Yemenites, Hashimites, and ‘Alids was at its zenith. The second group

55. Tab., iii, 134–135.
56. Tab., iii, 998.
58. Ibid., 194.
59. Tab., iii, 131f; for Riyaḥ see Tab., iii, 143f.
include the Muhallabids, the families of al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr, Khāzim b. Khuzayma, Ḥarb b. 'Abdallah and many others who were promoted to the favourable position of court ṣāḥaba and the entourage of al-Mahdi and Ja'far, the two sons of al-Mansūr.

Ma'īn and Khazim were known for their opposition to Yemenites who dominated the 'Abbasid administration under Abu l-'Abbās. Riyāḥ b. 'Uthman was mainly used against Ḥasanīde and their associates in Hijaz. The attitude of the Muhallabids towards Hashimites and the way al-Mansūr used them against the family of 'Ali b. 'Abāllah in Iraq, Egypt and the Maghrib has been referred to above. Similarly al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr and his brother 'Amr were used against Hashimites of the family of 'Ali b. 'Abdallah and Ḥaṣa b. Musa as well as against 'Alids. Khāzim b. Khuzayma and Ḥarb b. 'Abdallah and generals of their circle formed the court ṣāḥaba and the entourage of al-Mahdi and Ja'far.

Al-Mahdi retained the ṣāḥaba entrusted to him by his father especially the Muhallabids and the family of Khazim b. Khuzayma but he also appeased groups alienated by his father and freed many prisoners. More interesting was his marriage to Ruqayya bint 'Amr al-'Uthmaniyya and the selection of 500 persons from her family and relations to serve as his personal bodyguard and supporters (aŋār) in Iraq. He paid them salaries and gave them pensions, grants and fiefs carrying their names.60

60. Al-Bidāya wa n-Nihāya, x, 132.
The groupings under al-Hādi and ar-Rashīd were determined by the dispute between them. Al-Hādi seems to have been pressed by generals around him to designate his son Ja'far successor instead of his brother Harun. This was opposed by Khurāsānīte generals led by Kartham b. A'yan and the Barnakid family with the support of Harun's influential mother al-Khayzuran who eventually managed to secure the caliphate for Harun ar-Rashīd. 61 Al-Ma'mūn won over Arab and native Khurāsānīte while al-Amīn surrounded himself with Hashimites of the families of 'Ali b. 'Abdollah and al-Nahdi and through them their associates in Syria and Iraq.

The new aristocracy

Mašūr's suspicion of the main body of the Traditional aristocracy eventually led him to promote dependable Mawāli and Mamlūks of his Personal domain to places of responsibility in the administration, an innovation which as Maš'ūdī notes was followed by his successors. 62 Now this step marks the advent of a new aristocracy on the expense of the traditional aristocracy which had already been weakened. It is here that an understanding of the tension and instability which marked the following decades of 'Abbasid politics can be gained.

When al-Nahdi was made governor of Khurāsān under his father al-Mašūr he seems to have been encouraged to win natives of the

eastern provinces. It is interesting that when his general Khazim b. Khuzayma defeated Istadhāsī the captured prisoners were freed and each was given two garments. Attempts to win natives of the eastern provinces and recruit them into the army became more frequent afterwards.

During the reign of ar-Rashīd native Khurāsānītes emerged as a strong political force against the ruling governor 'Ali b. 'Īsa b. Māhān. Those include al-Ḥusayn b. Muṣʿab and Hisham b. Farrāhusru. It is significant that 'Ali b. 'Īsa accused them of animosity towards Islam. He is said to have rebuked al-Ḥusayn b. Muṣʿab as heretic and a son of a heretic (mulḥīd ibn mulḥīd). Eventually ar-Rashīd sacked 'Īsa and put Harthama b. Aʾyan in his place as governor.

It is significant that al-Maʾmūn treated Harthama b. Aʾyan as a junior to Ṭahir b. al-Ḥusayn, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and al-FAḍl b. Sahl. Harthama was by far their senior and in fact at one stage Ṭahir b. al-Ḥusayn served under him. More significant, however, is the fact that Harthama had much in common with the traditional aristocracy. We now know that he moved in the circle of Hashimites of the family of 'Īsa b. Musa. He served as governor of Khurāsān, then al-Mawṣil from 183/799 to 184/800. He seems to have played a leading role in bringing ar-Rashīd to power. He was

63. Tab., iii, 358.
64. See for instance Tab., iii, 444; Yaʿqūbi, Tārīkh, iii, 135f; Al-Bidāya wa n-Nihāya, x, 172.
65. See Athīr, vi, 139-140.
66. Athīr, vi, 143.
chosen by ar-Rashīd as the most suitable general to pacify Egypt
and the Maghrib because of his influence among arab Khurāsānītes
in that region (limāhalihi min ahl khurāsān). He had close
relationship with the Baramki and is said to have served as an
officer of the guards under Ja'far b. Yaḥya al-Barmaki.67

We can now appreciate why the Baghdadis looked upon him as
having much in common with them in comparison with Ṭahir b. āl-Ḥusayn.
It is here that we can appreciate why al-ʿĀmin opted to surrender to
him than to Ṭahir b. āl-Ḥusayn. This attitude is further highlighted
by the infuriation of Baghdadis against Ṭahir for his execution of
al-ʿĀmin. More illuminating was the remark of the rebel Maṣr b.
Shabath then fighting against Ṭahir b. āl-Ḥusayn that his sympathy
was with the 'Abbasids rather than with the Umayyads or 'Alids
but that he was fighting against them in order to defend the arabs
whom they had alienated and gave the 'Ājam precedence over them.68

Compared with al-ʿAḍāl b. Sahl and his brother al-Ḥasan,
Ṭahir was, however, reckoned more closer to the traditional
aristocracy than them. This can perhaps be explained by his
client relationship with the family of Malik b. al-Haytham
al-Khuṣaynī. It is here that Ḥarthama and Ṭahir are presented as
the common opponents of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and his brother al-ʿAḍāl.
It is significant in this respect that al-ʿAḍāl b. Sahl is said to
have removed Ḥarthama and Ṭahir from the Baghdad front69 presumably

67. For Ḥarthama see Azdī, Tārīkh al-Mawṣīl, 261, 294; Athīr, vi, index.
68. Athīr, vi, 216.
69. Al-Bidāya wa n-Nihāya, x, 244; Athīr, vi, 208-209.
to reduce the chances of intrigue between them and the aristocracy of Baghdad. We can now appreciate why Harthama and Tahir were both reluctant to accept their new assignments which took them away from Baghdad.

More interesting was the attitude of Harthama b. A‘yan and the traditional aristocracy and its supporters in Baghdad towards al-Hasan b. Sahl and his brother al-Faql. It is important here to remember that al-Faql and his brother al-Hasan were relatively new recruits in the service of the Islamic empire and had only accepted Islam recently. 70

The beginning of the conflict between Harthama and al-Hasan b. Sahl is not clear but it seems to have evolved around the former’s contacts with Hashimites of Baghdad and ‘Alid activists around his former officer Abu s-Sarāya. Harthama who had much in common with the Hashimites and ‘Alids of Iraq was certainly inclined towards appeasing them. He is said to have won Ahmad b. Mazīd from Abu s-Sarāya and to have secured through him the support of arabs of the Jazīra from amongst whom he organised a force of two thousand horsemen. 71 The assumption here is that like Tahir al-Hasan b. Sahl was sensitive towards these contacts between Harthama and the traditional aristocracy in Iraq.

Harthama gives the impression of undermining the authority

70. Al-Faql accepted Islam under al-Ma‘mūn as late as 191/806-807 See Al-Bidāya wa n-Nihāya, x, 206.
71. Atbīr, vi, 212.
of al-Hasan b. Sahl who was officially the senior political representative of al-Ma’mun in Iraq. When he eventually dealt with Abu S-Saraya he did so on his own terms and through the co-operation of Hashimites like Dā‘ūd b. ‘Isa b. Musa, Mansur b. al-Mahdi and other members of the traditional aristocracy including dignitaries from al-Kufa. When he captured al-Kufa he appointed his own men to its government. When al-Hasan b. Sahl summoned him to al-Madain he refused to report and instead made for Khurāsān presumably to convey to al-Ma’mun the feeling of the aristocracy in Iraq towards the policy of al-Faql b. Sahl and his brother al-Hasan. Al-Faql who seems to have been aware of the activities of Harthama and the traditional aristocracy in Iraq against him and his brother persuaded al-Ma’mun to send orders to Harthama to return to Syria or Hijaz possibly as a governor but the latter is said to have ignored these orders arguing: "I will not return unless I see the Commander of the Faithful and disclose to him the plans of al-Faql b. Sahl and the developments (in Iraq) which he (al-Faql) has suppressed from him, and I shall not leave him until I bring him back to Baghdad to be in the centre of his domain". Al-Faql is said to have provoked al-Ma’mun against him and he was discredited and eventually perished in prison.

73. Athīr, vi, 218.
74. Athīr, vi, 221.
75. Athīr, vi, 221.
76. Tab., iii, 997-998.
Now this marks the victory of the new forces around al-Faḍl b. Sahl and his brother al-Ḥasan over the traditional aristocracy of the central provinces. When Harthama made for Khurāsān the Abnā' of the Ḥarbiyya are said to have adopted his cause. They rose in arms and drove al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and his deputies from Baghdad and put Isḥaq b. Musa al-Ḥadi as deputy for al-Ma'āmūn instead.77 Eventually al-Ḥasan b. Sahl sent 'Ali b. Hishām and Muḥammad b. Abi Khalid to Baghdad. It seems that when he eventually knew of the downfall of Harthama he attempted to crush the opposition in Baghdad. In this respect he is said to have written to 'Ali b. Hishām, his deputy in Baghdad to suspend the salaries and the Kharāj of aj-Jund.78 It is interesting to note that the Baghdadis trusted Muḥammad b. Abi Khalid and preferred him to 'Ali b. Hishām. Eventually Muḥammad b. Abi Khalid differed with 'Ali b. Hishām and joined hands with the Ḥarbiyya against him.79 It helps in this respect to note that Ẓāhir b. al-Ḥusayn whom we know to have been related to the family of Malik b. Al-Haytham allowed 'Īsa b. Muḥammad b. Abi Khalid to go to Baghdad to help his father in his campaign against al-Ḥasan b. Sahl.80 Muḥammad b. Abi Khalid and his sons were entrusted with the campaign against al-Ḥasan b. Sahl. Saʾīd b. al-Ḥasan b. Qaṭṭaba was

77. Tab., iii, 998-999.
78. Athīr, vi, 222; Tab., iii, 998.
79. Athīr, vi, 223; Tab., iii, 1000, 1002.
80. Athīr, vi, 226.
appointed governor of the eastern side of Baghdad and Nāṣr b. Ḥamza b. Mālik al-Khuzā‘i over the western part. Mānṣūr b. al-Mahdi was chosen representative of al-Ma‘mūn in Baghdad. 81

We can now identify forces opposed to al-Ḥasan b. Sahl as including Hashimites of the families of al-Hadi and al-Mahdi namely Ishaq b. Musa al-Hadi Mānṣūr b. al-Mahdi and his brother Ibrahīm and their circle including Khuzayma b. Khazim and al-Faḍl b. ar-Rabī‘. There were also prominent Yemenite generals (largely Arab Khurāsānites) of the families of Qaḥṭaba b. Shabīb and Mālik b. al-Haytham al-Khuzā‘i and their followers possibly including Ṭahir b. al-ṣuṣayn himself and certainly his generals of the family of Mūḥammad b. Abī Khālid. There were also Arab Khurāsānites of the circle of the Muhajirun and the Anṣār and last but not least the populace of Baghdad particularly those of the Ḥarbiyya.

These groups were by no means united except as an old aristocracy fighting not against al-Ma‘mūn but in fact against the new aristocracy of the circle of al-Faḍl b. Sahl and his brother al-Ḥasan. The designation of ‘Ali ar-Raḍa successor of al-Ma‘mūn was understood by them as engineered by al-Faḍl b. Sahl whom they single out as their main enemy. 82 Their argument sounds convincing in so far as al-Faḍl b. Sahl and his brother al-Ḥasan must have felt the need to split their opponents among members of the traditional aristocracy or better still to secure

81. Athīr, vi, 226.
82. Tab., iii, 1013-1014; cp. Maqātil, 562f.
the support of a weighty group such as the 'Alids against them. The disunity among the Hashimites of Baghdad over the setting up of a caliph from amongst them highlight the belief among some of them that al-Ma'mūn was not to blame for these developments as he was thought to have been acting under the influence of al-Faḍl b. Sahl. It is significant in this respect that they differed whether the man they were to elect was to act as a caliph or as a representative of al-Ma'mūn in Iraq. 83

The new structure of the armed forces and the palace guards

The demise of the traditional aristocracy was also hastened by the steady change in the structure of the imperial army and the palace guards. The old forces in these institutions were steadily replaced by slaves and mamlūks of the caliphs' personal domain and by new non-arab and in some cases non-muslim recruits from the eastern provinces of the empire and the vicinity. This process began with the advent of the Mawāli and the Mamlūks in the administration under Abu Ja'far al-Mansur but was hastened under al-Mahdi and his successors. Its adverse effects for the traditional aristocracy must be appreciated even at this early stage as al-Mahdi was then engaged in the consolidation of his position in Khurāsān vis-à-vis the administrative structure of Abu Muslim and the activities of pro-Hashimite and 'Alid forces. The reaction of the traditional aristocracy was in fact echoed in the

83. op. Tab., iii, 1001, 1005-1006, 1028; Athīr, vi, 226-230.
caution of al-Mahdi by the Hashimite 'Abd as-Samad b. 'Ali that his preference of the Mawāli would antagonise members of the traditional aristocracy whom he identified as the Arab Khurāsānites. 84

Al-Ḥaḍār who was in an even more precarious position needed more than al-Mahdi to consolidate his power in Khurāsān and its neighbourhood against eminent threat from his opponents who were firmly entrenched in the central provinces of the empire. Hence his policy of expansion into Soghdia, Usārūsān and Farghana. The similarity between his attitude towards non-muslims of the neighbouring regions and that of al-Jahm b. Saifwān and al-Ḥarīth b. Suraij is remarkable. Like these two he is said to have invited non-muslims of the neighbouring regions to accept islam and be incorporated into the muslim community. 85 A reminiscent of al-Ḥarīth b. Suraij was Maʾmūn's appeasement of Rāfiʿ b. al-Layth the grandson of Nāṣr b. Sāyyār and his turkic supporters. He also won to his side Mazyar of Tabaristān, and the Samanid princes of Samarqand, Farghana and Shāsh. 86

These were the contacts which resulted in the flooding of the islamic armed forces with new recruits under al-Ḥaḍār and later his brother al-Muʿtaṣim and their successors. 87 Perhaps it was these new recruits which formed the backbone of the forces under

84. Tab., iii, 531.
85. See Barthold, Turkestan, 212.
86. Tab., iii, 777.
87. For the indiscriminate use of the term Turk for these recruits see Ismaʿīl, Osman S.A., "Al-Muʿtaṣim and his Turks", BSOS, 29, 1966, 14.
al-Ḥasan b. Sahl and provoked the animosity of the traditional aristocracy and their supporters. It was probably in this context that the Abnāʾ of Baghdad and the forces of Tāhir b. al-Ḥusayn which had much in common with the traditional aristocracy are said to have regretted the murder of al-Amīn. 88

The demise of the traditional aristocracy actually began with the disbanding of the Umayyad forces in the early years of the ʿAbbasid regime, and with the formation of carefully balanced and disunited Arab contingents. 89 The precautionary measures reflected in securely built military posts, garrisoned cities and strategically planned capital were in fact the last milestones in the final alienation of the traditional aristocracy and its supporters. 90

The Period of the Miḥna witnessed a wide scale review of the structure and payment rolls of the old armed forces in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. The period from 214/829 to 218/833 witnessed something like a state of military rule in Iraq and Syria where control over huge gatherings of troops was entrusted to al-Muʿtaṣim, al-ʿAbbās b. al-Maʿmūn and ʿAbdallah b. Tāhir. Al-Maʿmūn himself went out to Syria in 215/830 and engaged himself in arduous survey of Ajnād ash-Sham. Tribal leaders and religious dignitaries whom

88. Tab., iii, 924.
89. See for example Tab., iii, 366f.
90. Cp. Tab., iii, 366f. This theme has been studied by J. Lassner see for instance his articles: "some speculative thoughts on the search for an Abbāsid capital", Hist. Wiss., 55/965, pp. 135-144; Idem: "why did the caliph al-Mansūr build ar-Ruṣafa", JNES, 24, 1965, 95-99.
he had brought from Jazira, al-Mawṣil and Raqq to undertake this task eventually pressed for exemption, and he had to bring Kussāb from Iraq, al-Ahwāz and ar-Rayy to do the job for him. The power struggle which ensued at the time was reflected in the distribution of enormous sums of money as patronage to certain groups in Syria, but more importantly in the complaint of Syrian Arabs against the new policy of al-Ma'mūn. A Syrian Arab is said to have approached al-Ma'mūn and said to him: O Commander of the Faithful have consideration for the Arabs of Syria as you do for the 'Ajam of Khurāsān'. Al-Ma'mūn is said to have replied: "Wallahi ma anzaltu Qaysan min zuhuri l-khayl illa wa ans ara annahu lam yabq'a fi bayti wāli dirhamun wāhid wa amma al-Yemen fa wallahi ma abbatuba wa la aḥabbatnī qaṭ, wa amma Qudā' fasadstuha tantaziru as-Sufyani wa khurūjahu fatakūn min ashya'īhi, wa amma Rabī'a fi sākhitatum 'ala Allah mundhu ba'atba nabiyyahu min Mu'jar wa lam yakhruj ithmān illa kharaja aḥadhuma shariyān. I'zub ša 'ala Allahu bika".  

The same period saw central forces under 'Abdallah b. Ṭahir and the Turks of al-Ma'tasim in action in Egypt against Arab and native rebels. The forces recruited from these northern regions to be placed under al-'Abbas b. al-Ma'mūn at the proposed new garrison city of Tuwwana were disbanded and the city was abandoned.

92. Tab., i, 111; ii, 114; Tayfur, Kitāb Baghdad, 144-145.
93. Nujūm, 11, 181f, 208-209; Kindi, 188.
immediately after the death of al-Ma'mūn. On his accession al-Mu'tasim sent orders to the governor of Egypt to drop the Arabs from the Dīwān aj-Junud and to stop their 'Aṭā'.

This seems to have been the general policy under this Caliph as it is said that "he ousted the Arabs, the prophet's people with whom God established the Muslim religion, from the Dīwān, and stopped their pay, and they were never registered for 'Aṭā' ever since. Instead he introduced the Turks, and took off the dress and the attire of the Arabs and put on that of the 'Ajam against whom God sent his prophet to fight and kill. The Arab rule ceased under him and because of him. Since his reign the Turks, against whom the Prophet called to fight, became the rulers of the kingdom." This quotation highlights the promotion of the new recruits from the eastern provinces of the empire to the highest posts in the administration and the army under al-Mu'tasim until they practically replaced the traditional aristocracy in the centre as well as at the provinces as the military and political elite of the empire. It is convenient to close this section here and to look briefly into the related issue of the quest for absolute power to the ruler on the expense of the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions. The best way to do this is by a critical examination of the significance of Shi'ism.

94. Tab., 111, 1164.
95. Nujūm, 11, 223.
The significance of Shi'ism

It seems that 'Alids entered politics as groups or factions of the traditional aristocracy rather than as a family (as they themselves were disunited) or as a Shi'ite party for in all probabilities there seem to have been nothing of the sort. It would follow from this that the so-called Shi'ite doctors come into the picture as members of the religious institutions or the traditional aristocracy rather than as 'Alid partisans.

This way of looking at things is supported by my argument above regarding the diverse support the Ḥasanid rebellion of 145/762 enjoyed among the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions. 97 It can be further supported by critical examination of other similar contemporary movements. The rebellion of Abu s-Saraya for example when seen in the context of faction politics of the time would similarly unfold as a rising of indignant groups of the traditional aristocracy. 98 We now know that Harthama b. A'yan had much in common with the leaders of this rebellion including Abu s-Saraya himself who had been an ex-officer under him. Ahmad b. Mazīd who was won over from Abu s-Saraya together with his arab supporters by Harthama b. A'yan is said to have served as a commander of an arab contingent organised by al-Amīn. 99 This fits very well with the general

97. See above, pp. 258-259.

98. Mas'ūdi refers to Abu s-Saraya as Hashimite see Murūj, vii, 59. The rebellion is further presented as a general reaction among the aristocracy against al-Ḥasan b. Sahl see Tab., iii, 987.

99. Tab., iii, 836-839.
revulsion shown by members of the traditional aristocracy including Harthama b. A‘yan and Tahir b. al-‘usayn towards al-‘asam b. Sahl and his brother al-Fa‘l. It is significant that al-Fa‘l b. Sahl and his brother al-‘asam accused Harthama of encouraging the rebellion, and that the latter was reluctant to reduce it to order when told to do so by al-‘asam b. Sahl. 100 The eventual confrontation between ‘Alids and ‘Abbasids precipitated by this rebellion appears to have been provoked by differences between certain factions of the traditional aristocracy which emerged during the course of the rebellion. Other contemporary "Shi‘ite" movements can similarly be seen in this context. Along these lines it has been shown that during the following period roughly from 203/818 to 261/874 the so-called Shi‘ite imams took no active part in politics and that there were no traces of any underground movement connected with them. 101

The conclusion then is that there seem to have been no distinct ‘Alid or Shi‘ite attempt in this period to cease the Caliphate by force, and that the so-called ‘Alid rebellions which took place when examined in the context in which they emerged would appear to be broader movements of indignant groups of the traditional aristocracy rather than strictly Shi‘ite movements.

Now if Shi‘ism (whether in its allegedly organised form or

100. Tab., iii, 976.
in the form of splinter groups) did not mean partisan support for members of the ‘Alid family what then was it all about?

Perhaps the main characteristic of shi‘ism is, as noted by Goldziher, its emphasis on a greater degree of absolutism. The assumption here is that Shi‘ism in this form was largely exercised through a body of juristic rulings and theological views which were cultivated independently of ‘Alids and their political aspirations. It is here that we can gain an understanding of the independent position of Shi‘ites like Abu Nu‘aym al-Fadl b. Dukayn, Ghassan and others as well as the quietism of an ‘Alid doctor like Ja‘far as-Sadiq and the attitude of both the political and religious institutions towards them.

Now in the troubled situation of the early ‘Abbasid period absolutism could have been the answer for the political institutions to bring some order into the unwieldy situation created by the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions. However as this absolutism is expressed in religious form the rulers would have to find the religious justification for it. Al-Manṣūr’s attempt to rely upon the support of his dependable mawāli and wālīs undermined the significance of the religious basis of absolutism and hence the search for this basis under al-Mahdi. Now Shi‘ite factions within the religious institutions would readily welcome the idea of an absolute ruler through whom their juristic and theological views would triumph over those of their opponents.

102. Goldziher, volesungen, 350 foot. See further the discussion by Professor Watt in op.cit., 117f.
Similarly feuds among members of the traditional aristocracy or the very nature of faction and coalition politics would lead an Imam that is to say a doctor of the 'Alid family to associate with the ruler of the day so as to further his own interests as against those of his opponents.

It is only here that things begin to fall into shape. We can now see the link between the presence of Rafi'dite and Zaydite theologians around al-Mahdi and his claim for Mahdism. When al-Mahdi quarrelled with his Rafi'dite and Zaydite theologians and secretaries and based his claim for absolute power on the direct relationship of 'Abbasids with the prophet his sons and their associates among members of the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions emerged as the 'Abbasid party as opposed to the Rafi'dite or 'Alid party. It is here that a Rafi'dite came to be described as one who asserts that 'Ali b. Abi Talib was better than al-'Abbās and that his descendents were better than the descendents of al-'Abbās.

We can now understand why al-Ma'mūn associated with 'Alids and Shi'ites and was reckoned Rafi'dite by his opponents of the 'Abbasid party. It is interesting that al-Ma'mūn hailed from Khurasan (where he had been declared imam) much like a Zaydite imam whose succession had been obstructed by an inferior (al-imam al-mafḍūl) and fought his way to the caliphate by force. It is in this context that he surrounded himself with Rafi'dite, Zaydite and indeed Jahmīte jurists and theologians who were willing to acknowledge

103. Firaq ash-Shī'a, 43f.
104. Mas'ūdī, murūj, vii, 239.
his imamate. This fits very well with our interpretation of the policy of the Miḥna as geared towards the neutralization of the religious institutions and the achievement of religious uniformity which would give the ruler absolute power. The successors of al-Ḥaḍra who continued his policy of the inquisition were naturally guided by the same motive. So was al-Mutawakkil and his successors though the means through which they attempted to achieve uniformity and exercise absolute power were different from those of al-Ḥaḍra and his immediate successors. 105

The reaction of the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions

The reaction of the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions towards the new aristocracy of humble origin, and the drive for absolute power to the ruler is best highlighted by Ibn al-Muqatta‘ in his Kitab aṣ-Ṣahaba. The review of this work by Coitein (Studies in Islamic History... ch. 6, pp. 149-167) can serve as the basis for our discussion although his conclusions that Ibn al-Muqatta‘ wanted the caliph to become the ultimate authority in religious matters, a codifier of Islamic laws and creed as well as the author of a short but complete catechism for his soldiers are questioned here.

105. The poet 'Ali b. al-Jahm says in an interesting verse: "Imagine these (silly) Rāfīḍītes who believe in a hidden imām in Sha‘b Raḍwa..... The imām is he (sc. al-Mutawakkil) who has a body guard of twenty thousand Turks ready with pointed arrows. Abu l-Fida, al-Mukhtasar fi Tārikh al-Bashar, ii, 41; see further Al-Tikriti, Bahjat, The religious policy of al-Mutawakkil, ch. v, pp. 56-77.
To begin with it is important to remember that Ibn al-
Muqaffa' like many other Persians of aristocratic origin had much
in common with the traditional aristocracy. He seems to have
been closely associated with Hashimites of the family of 'Ali b.
Abdallah b. 'Abbas, and is said to have served as a secretary for
'Isa b. 'Ali.106 It is here that his involvement in the amnesty
given by al-Manṣūr to his uncle 'Abdallah b. 'Ali can be
appreciated.107

When Ibn-al-Muqaffa' speaks in the highest terms about
the discipline of the old forces (155) he is in fact referring to
the military structure of the Umayyad Period which comprised arabs
of Syria, Iraq and other regions as well as natives of Iraq and
Khurāsān who together form the traditional aristocracy. The
continuity of this aristocracy argued above is supported by Ibn al-
Muqaffa'â's political wisdom regarding the treatment of the newly
conquered population of Syria (164). His remarks about
Khurāsānite arabs mixing freely with native Iraqi population,
and the amalgamation between arab and Iranian natives (159-160),
are essentially references to the main body of the traditional
arab-native aristocracy.

We can now appreciate his criticism of al-Manṣūr's promotion
of elements of humble origin from amongst the Mawāli and Mamlūks

106. Jahshayārī, 103.
107. For the aman see Ya'qubi, Tārīkh, iii, 108; Jahshayārī, 103-104.
of his personal domain to the highest posts in the administration. According to Ibn al-Muqaffa’ these posts belong to the aristocracy by right (160). The infuriation of the aristocracy about the threat of the new usurpers is expressed by him in the following strong terms:

"They (sc. the aristocracy) were deprived of their natural prerogative by people who were neither educated nor of noble birth, persons of poor intelligence, well known for their crimes, without merit in either peace or war and most shocking of all, persons who had passed most of their lives as labourers having done manual work (160-161)."

This is further highlighted by his statement that

"such people (sc. those of humble origin) obtained access to the Caliphate, and precedence over the old aristocracy... (161)"

What Ibn al-Muqaffa’ is fighting against here is the serious precedence of promotion to the status of the aristocracy through governmental service. It is here that he argues that these elements were neither qualified for such promotion nor entitled to state grants and honours they were receiving (161). This comes out more clearly in his contemptuous dig that their only importance was that they served as scribes and doorkeepers and used their offices to acquire power (161). It is further highlighted by his strong reminder to al-Mansur that

"a ruler was not in the same position as a private who could promote or neglect any of his freed men according to his whims (161)."

The conclusion so far is that the reaction here is one of an indignant aristocracy against the threat of new forces of humble origin. This fits very well with above reaction against the Turks
and the earlier argument of Ahl al-Ḥadīth against the Jahmiyya and the so called despicable Mawāli.

The religious connotations of the memorandum of Ibn al-Muqaffa

In order to appreciate the religious connotations of the memorandum of Ibn al-Muqaffa we need to remember that the arab aristocracy represent together with their non-arab associates the main islamic cultural tradition referred to as Sunnism and best expressed intellectually by Ahl al-Ḥadīth particularly of the circle of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzaʿi.

The traditional aristocracy is described by Ibn al-Muqaffa as comprising the Muhajirun and the Anṣār, the scions of noble arab houses which include the Caliphs' own family (161). He is referring here to the traditional aristocracy in which Ahl al-Ḥadīth particularly of the circle of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Aḥmad b. Naṣr moved. It is here that he further describes the traditional aristocracy as comprising deserving officers who should be promoted from the military to the order of the Ṣaḥaba, jurisconsults whose religious knowledge is essential for the leadership of the community and finally the nobility (sc. non-arab aristocracy) (161). This description of members of the traditional aristocracy as elite, well cultivated in literature, the religious sciences and as expert in military affairs highlight their representation of the islamic cultural and political tradition.

If the starting point for Ibn al-Muqaffa is to reject extreme messanisic ideas of the type of the Rawandiyya which attribute to the
ruler divine power and practically reckon him the divine deity itself (ar-Rab) (156-157) then the logical conclusion to draw is that he intended to curb these notions of absolute power. Now if this is what he intended to do it would not be logical for him to end up advocating ultimate religious nor indeed secular authority for the Caliph (157) which in both accounts could have provided the basis for legitimate exercise of absolute power. Thus his emphasis on the definition of beliefs to be held by the officers and men of the imperial army containing proofs supporting these articles of belief, and that officers and men should be given instructions on the Qur'an, the traditions and the basic religious tenets, and that they be bound to lead austere life according to the example set by the Caliph (157), do not indicate that he was advocating religious power for the Caliph as Goitein maintains but rather the very contrary of this in that he is attempting to reassert the authority of Sunnism as represented by the religious institutions of the circle of Ahl al-ṣadīth.

If the Caliph was to enhance his power he must acknowledge the prerogatives of the traditional aristocracy which embody the religious tradition. He can only do so by moving over to the side of this aristocracy to which he belongs and by exercising his authority through the religious institutions. The legal code to be supervised by the Caliph (157) is suggested by Ibn al-Muqaffa' in this context and is in effect aimed at strengthening the movement of Ahl al-ṣadīth as can be envisaged from its emphasis on
Siyar, traditions and analogy (163). The emphasis on traditions transmitted directly from the prophet and the Ṣaḥaba (163) echoes the movement of ash-Shafi‘ī and later Ahl-al-Ḥadīth of the circle of Ahmad b. Ḥanbal against Bishr al-Marīṣī and the Jahmiyya. Thus this whole movement fits very well with the opposition to the policy of the Mihna. Generally speaking it is a reaction of the traditional aristocracy and the religious institutions against the threatening rise of the new aristocracy and the drive for absolute power to the rulers and the political institutions in general. Faced by the realities of the decline of the empire during the following centuries the religious institutions acknowledged the political authority of war lords but insisted on the religious basis of the community, and the Sharī‘a as the binding law.

108. See above, pp. 150 ff.
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