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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE CODE: ISL 245

COURSE TITLE: LLMU 'L-KALAM AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM FIRAQ

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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COURSE CODE / TITLE **ISL245:** *Ilmu `l-Kalām* **and Development of**
Muslim Firaq

**COURSE DEVELOPER
/ WRITER** **Prof. A. F. Ahmed**
Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies,
University of Ibadan
Ibadan.

COURSE EDITOR **Prof. S. U.Balogun,
Crescent University, Abeokuta**

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Introduction

ISL245: *Ilmu `l-Kalām* and Development of Muslim *Firaq* is a one - unit course available in the first semester of second year for the B.A. Islamic Studies programme. The course gives you insight into the development of sectarian movements and their doctrines, and the roles played by prominent theologians in the development of the Muslim creed.

What You Will Learn in this Course

The general aim of this course is to point out the theological traces in the *Qur'ān*, the sacred Book of Islam which formed the nucleus of the science. Then, it provides the internal and external factors which helped in building up the structure of the science. This is followed by further clarification of the theological debates among early Muslim groups. Rationalism in the Islamic belief system and the consequential emergence of orthodoxy are thereafter presented respectively. Biographies of prominent Muslim theologians of the *Jabriyyah*, *Qadariyyah*, Rationalism, Shi'ism and Sunnism inclinations are also included. You will also be familiarized with issues dealing with divine Unity and Justice, created-ness and eternity of the *Qur'ān*, possibility of vision of the Divine Being and various views on anthropomorphic words or expressions found in the Muslim scriptures. Issues of eschatological nature or belief in the unseen or what happens in life after death are also part of what you will learn in this Course.

Course Aims

There are nine Units in the course and each unit has its objectives. You should read the objectives of each Unit and bear them in mind as you go through the Unit. In addition to the objectives of each Unit, the overall aims of this course include:

(i)   To introduce you to the origin and development of the Science of Islamic theology called *'lmu `t-Tawhīd* or *'lmu `l-Kalām* in the Arabic tongue.

(ii)   To familiarize you with the fundamental theological principles in Islam with references to their bases from the Islamic sacred sources and views of various schools of thought.

(iii)   The course will also acquaint you with prominent Muslim theologians and the roles played by them in giving shape to the science and its dissemination.

Course Objectives

Based on the general aims of this course, some objectives of the course as a whole are set out. These are the things you should be able to do by the time you complete the course. If you are able to meet the objectives, you would have achieved the aims of the course. Therefore on your successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

a) Explain the religious, social, and political factors responsible for the emergence of Islamic theology.
b) Highlight the role internal and external factors played in the development of Islamic theology.
c) Discuss the emergence of Mu'tazilism (the thorough going rationalists) and other sectarian tendencies in Islam and the doctrines distinguishing them from other Muslim theological schools.
d) Discuss the emergence of Sunnism (i.e. Islamic orthodoxy), and give account of the contribution of its prominent scholars.
e) Highlight and discuss the contributions of prominent Muslim theologians to the science of Islamic theology.

Working through this Course

You have to work through the study units in the course which are nine units in all.

Course Materials
Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments File
5. Presentation Schedule

Study Units
The nine study units are listed below:

MODULE 1: Development of Muslim *Firaq*
Unit 1: Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology
Unit 2: The Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and the Muslim
        Majority's Opinion on Predestination

Unit 3: The Kharijites (*Khawārij)*
Unit 4:   The *Shī'ah*
Unit 5:   Extremist Shī'ites (*Gulātush-Shī'ah*)

MODULE 3 *AL – MU'TA ZILAH* AND *AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*
        (theMutazilites and the Ash'arites)
Unit 1: The Emergence of the *Mu'tazilah* and Their Fundamental Doctrines
Unit 2: The Prominent Mu'tazilites and More of their Views.
Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines
 Unit 4: Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed

References and Other Resources
Every unit contains a list of references and further reading which are meant to deepen your knowledge of the course. We hereby provide a list containing some of them. Try to get as many as possible of those textbooks and materials.

(1) T. P. Hughes (1895). *Dictionary of Islam*, London, Allen & Co.
(2) Muhammad Ali (n.d.). *The Religion of Islam*, Lahore, Pakistan
 (3) Ahmad A. Ghalwash (1963) *The Religion of Islam*, Cairo, Egypt
(4) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.).*Studies in Muslim Philosophy*, Lahore, Pakistan.
 (5) 'Alī bn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *The Short Creed;* http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal.
(6) Abdalatī, H. (1975) *Islam In Focus,* Indiana, American Trust   Publications
 (7) Hamidullah Muhammad (1979). *Introduction to Islam,* London, MWH
                Publishers
(8) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983).*Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5,
         Cairo, Al- Azhar Colleges Press.
 (9) Ahmed, A. F. (2006); "*Shī'ah*." in the *Encyclopaedia of the Arts*;
http://www.cardinetnigeria com//lasu/arts/publications/index.html/

Assessment
Your assessment will be based on self assessment exercises, tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and a final examination which you will write at the end of the course. The self assessment exercises are to assist you in measuring your understanding of the topics you read in the Course. Take them serious.

Tutor - Marked Assignments (TMA)
Every unit contains at least one or two Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs). You will be asked to answer four of them on-line and submit them for assessment. The four will be Multiple Choice based and constitute 30% of your final grade. The tutor-marked assignments may be presented to you at four separate intervals. It is important you do them as they constitute your continuous assessment.

Final Examination and Grading
At the end of the course, you will write a final examination, which will constitute 70% of your final grade. The examination, which shall be on-line and last for two hours, shall consist of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and Fill in The Blank Questions (FBQ).

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments	Four assignments, best three marks of the four count at 30% of course marks
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Presentation Schedule
The Presentation Schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

Course Overview and Presentation Schedule

Unit	Title of Work	Weeks Activity	
Module 1	**Development of Muslim *Firaq***		
Unit 1	Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology	Week 1	
Unit 2	The Jabarites, the Qadarites , the Murjites and Consequences of Grave sin	Week 2	Assignment 1
Unit 3	Al-*Khawārij*(The Kharijites)	Week 3	
Unit 4	The *Shī'ah*	Week 4	Assignment 2
Unit 5	Extremist Shī'ites (*Gulātush-Shī'ah*)	Week 5	

Module 2	Al –Mu'tazilah and al – Ash'ariyyah) (theMutazilites and the Ash'arites)		
Unit 1	The Emergence of the Mu'tazilah and Their Fundamental Doctrines	Week 6	Assignment 3
Unit 2	The Prominent Mu'tazilah and More of their Views	Week 7	
Unit 3	Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines	Week 8	Assignment 4
Unit 4	Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed	Week 12	
Revision			
Examination			
Total			

How To Get The Most From This Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of its great advantages. You can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read, and which are your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a Reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1.   Read this Course Guide thoroughly, it is your first assignment.
2.   Organize a Study Schedule. Design a 'Course Overview' to guide you through the Course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the Semester is

available from the study centre. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.

3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please, let your tutor know before it is too late for help.

4. Turn to Unit 1, and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.

5. Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you are studying at any point in time.

6. Work through the unit. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.

7. Keep in touch with your Study Centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.

8. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.

9. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.

10. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.

11. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the Assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the Tutor-Marked Assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.

12. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

Tutors and Tutorials
The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name, telephone number and address of your tutor. Your tutor will mark each assignment. Pay close attention to the comments your tutor might make on your assignments as these will help in your progress. Make sure that assignments reach your tutor on or before the due date. Your tutorials are important; therefore try not to skip any. It is an opportunity to meet your tutor and

your fellow students. It is also an opportunity to get the help of your tutor and discuss any difficulties encountered on your reading.

Conclusion

Much as I cannot promise you a too-easy ride on this course, I equally do not envisage much difficulty as long as you play the roles assigned to you in the whole exercise.

Summary

In this Course Guide, we have provided you a general overview of *ISL343: Introduction to Islamic theology* in which students pursuing Diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies programme must earn two credit Units. The Course Aims and Objectives and what learners will gain working through the Course Material and its Study Units are stated clearly at the onset. We have also provided you a list of textbooks and references for your further reading. As an inference in the Guide, to develop an active interest in the Course is a prerequisite for its successful completion. Assess yourself through the Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs). You will equally be assessed for grading purposes through the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs). Thus to do well in the course, you must get yourself organized and try to conform to the presentation schedule.

We wish you success in the course.

MODULE 1: Development of Muslim *Firaq*
Unit 1: Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology
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Unit 4: The *Shī'ah*
Unit 5: Extremist Shī'ites (*Gulātush-Shī'ah*)

Unit 1 Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology

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1. 0. INTRODUCTION

    The Islamic theology is the science which studies religious doctrines and provides logical proofs in defense of faith. It also deals with refutation of innovations made by the groups that deviate from the orthodox creed. It may also be described as the study of the nature of the Divine Being and other Islamic religious creeds. Its religious terminology is *'Ilmu 't-Tawhīd* which will be explained to you after the next few paragraphs.
    Many factors, which are either internal or external, contributed to the emergence and development of this science. Some of the factors, which are internal, emanating from Islam and the Muslims themselves, are hereby presented for your reading and digestion in this Module

2.0 OBJECTIVE
    At the end of this Unit you should be able to
      i.   define concept of theology in Islam
      ii.   identify some theological points in the *Qur'ān*.
      iii.   Discuss the role of the Şaħābah in the emergence of Islamic
           theology.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1: Definition of Term

Ilmu t-*Tawhīd* is the technical term for the study of theology in Islam. *'Ilm* (pronounced *Ilimi by* West African Muslims) is an Arabic word which connotes science while the variant lexical meaning of the word of *a`t-Tawhīd* which is also Arabic includes unification in words, deeds, etc, etc. It derives from the verb *wahhada* from which you also have other derivatives such as *wahdah* (unity), *Waahid* or *Waheed* (being unique, singular, matchless etc). This also denotes that Being which is Unique and Incomparable in His existence, the almighty Allah.

In the Arabic lexicon, the first letter (*waw*) of the Arabic word *wahad* is interchangeable with (*alif*) and thus it becomes *aħad*. This is the word that is used for Allah in the *Sūratu `l-Ikhlāş*, Chapter 112 of the Holy *Qur'ān*. It means that Allah, the most High is Unique and Incomparable in His Being and Attributes. There is no one like Him, either in His Being or Attributes, and even remotely conjoined with Him.

Ilmu` t-Tawhīd connotes Islamic Theology. It studies various beliefs in Islam and probes into the origin and development of theological schools.

At-Tawhīd (Islamic Monotheism) has three aspects (1) Unity in the Being of Allah, (2) Unity in the Worship of Allah, and (3) Unity in the Attributes of Allah. These will be extensively dealt with in a separate unit below.

Ilmu 'l-'Aqidah (Creed), and *Uşūlu d-Dīn* (Bases of Religion) are two other terms interchangeably applied with *Tawhīd* when the science of Islamic theology is intended.

Specialization in this science are mostly offered in Faculties or *Uşūlu d-Dīn* Units in countries where Islamic Universities are established.

Self Assessment Exercise:
Discuss the term ***ilmu `t-Tawhīd***.
Give the terms applicable to Islamic theology.

3.2: Internal Origins of the Emergence of Islamic Theology

(1) *Qur'ān*ic Origin
The *Qur'ān*, as is well-known calls to absolute monotheism and upholding of other
five Islamic articles of faith. It deals with the major sects and religions that were widespread during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It refutes their principles and points to their falsehood. For instance, in 45:24, it mentions the materialists who rejected God, Prophets and religion in its entirety and refutes their arguments by saying, "they have nothing to prove their claim and they are only making conjectures". It discusses polytheism in all its ramifications and condemns it

unequivocally. In 4:48 it says those who associate partners with God have fabricated fatal sin, and in 4:116 it says they have gone far astray. In 4:48/116 it says "shirk" (associating partner with God) is the most unpardonable sin. In 5:17&72, it condemns those who claim divinity of Prophet Īsā (Jesus) and says they are infidels. It also corrects the idea of sonship of Prophet Īsā and says in 3:59 'the likeness of Isa to Allah is truly as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, be, and he was. And on Trinity it says in 4:171 O people of the Book, exceed not the limit in your religion nor speak anything about Allah but the truth. The Messiah, Īsā , son of Maryam, is only a Messenger of Allah and his word, which he communicated to Mary, and Mercy from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not three. Desist, it is better for you. Allah is only one God. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And sufficient is Allah as having charge of affairs.

Furthermore, the Holy Book argues with those who did not believe in the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Judgment when they asked "Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? It replies: "Say, He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first". It also contains issues of predestination and free will and it commands the Prophet to deliver the messages from his Lord and to debate with his opponents when it says in 16:125 "call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and godly exhortation and argue with them in the best manner.

Of course Muslim theologians pursued this *Qur'ān*ic injunctions and examples by going into debate with the opponents of Islam, widening the range of their defense whenever the antagonists widened the range of their attack. Eventually, this led to the emergence and development of speculative theology of Islam known as *Ilmu `l-Kalām*.

(ii) The Role of the Şahābah (Companions of the Prophet Muhammad)

After the demise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims began to raise questions on seemingly contradictory points of the new religion with the view to studying and harmonizing them. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Islam but general to all known religions. Initially, all religions are based on simple but strong doctrines on which adherents will all agree and believe without any tendency for criticism or philosophy. Then, there will follow the period of criticism, reconsideration and application of logical and philosophical rules. The theologians would thus seek the aid of logic and philosophy to strengthen their viewpoints and buttress their ideas. This was the case with Judaism, Christianity; and Islam was not an exception.

For instance, the early Muslims believed in pre-destination of both good and evil. They believed that whatever man did have been predestined for him by God. Their belief in that was total and unflinching. But as time went by, a group of Muslims appeared who collected the verses that are related to the issue in the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* studying and criticizing them. They discovered that there was a verse, which reads:

Those who disbelieve- it is alike to them whether thou warn
them or warn them not, they will not believe. (Q.2:6)

This verse and others like it indicate that some people have been destined to be unbelievers and yet they are requested to believe. On the other hand, the *Qur'ān* is full of verses, which show that nothing prevents any person from believing. He is completely free to make his choice between belief and unbelief.

How will it be possible to harmonize all these verses? Has man freedom of choice or has he been predestined to do certain things? These and other questions are raised on these issues. They were studied thoroughly and with the application of both logic and philosophy. This led to the emergence of various views and schools of thought, which shall be fully examined later.

(iii) Politics i.e. Issue of Succession to the Prophet (S)

Differences of opinion on who should succeed the Prophet in the leadership roles he was playing while he was alive also led to differences of opinion in religious matters. Thus, political parties became religious sects. From the party of Ali emerged the Shiites. Those who disagreed with referring their disputes to arbitration panel (*tahkīm*) among his soldiers formed themselves into a party called *khawārij* while those who resented dispute among the Muslims were known as Murjites.

Self Assessment Exercise:
Discuss the various factors responsible for the emergence of Islamic theology.
emergene

3.3:   External Influence responsible for its growth and development.

The factors enumerated below can be said to be the external sources contributing to the growth and development of the science of Islamic theology (*ilmu `t-Tawhīd*):

(i)   the new converts to Islam from other religions such as Christianity, Judaism, atheism and others manifested the doctrines of their old religions in a new form in their new religion.

(ii)   The Mu 'tazilites took up the defenses of Islam against the attacks of Jews and Christians and equipped themselves with philosophical weapons so as to enable them combat them on their own ground.

(iii)   The need for theologians to use philosophical and logical arguments in defense of faith compelled them to study it and refute their wild claims.

(iv)   Being inspired by the new faith, the Muslims of Arabia underwent a career of
        conquest of one country after another, and wherever they went, they carried

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new   Islam along with them. The Persians embraced the religion and became

and   converts to Islam. The Persians as a nation were superior to the Arabs

own   they, especially the upper class among them, could not shake off their

many   heritage. They developed an idea of superiority complex and introduced

new elements and ideas of their own into Islamic culture. They were responsible for introducing mystic tendencies and theory of divinely appointed *Imām* in Islamic thought.

(v)   When the Muslims flourished in trade and commerce, they came in close contact with the Indians. As a matter of fact, Indian culture, especially Buddhism and Vedantism and their mystic tendency exerted a significant influence on the development of Muslim philosophy, especially Islamic mysticism. It was during the Abbasid period that the Indian ideas reached the
Muslims first.

Self Assessment Exercise:
Enumerate, with explanation, some of the external factors that may be regarded as contributing to the emergence of *Ilmu `t-Tawhīd*. (Islamic Theology).

4. 0. Conclusion:
      Thus we conclude that *'Ilmu `t-Tawhīd* is the term for Islamic theology. *'Ilmu `l- 'Aqidah*, (Study of Creed), *Uşūlu `d-īn* (Basis of Religion) and *'Ilmu `l-Kalām* are other terms interchangeably used for the science. The science originated from the *Qur'ān*ic discussion of the Islamic articles of faith, the views of the atheists, polytheists, Jews and beliefs of the Christians. Debates by the Companions on seemingly contradicting issues in the *Qur'ān* and crises arising from the question of who would succeed the Prophet Muhammad after his death further contributed to the emergence of the Science. Converts to Islam from Christianity and Judaism, the need for theologians to use philosophical and logical arguments in defence of faith, and the influence of the Persian and Indian cultures are external factors that helped the growth of the science.

5.0: SUMMARY

This unit traces the origin of the Muslim theology to the *Qur'ān* and the early Muslims who were Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Its suggests that its subsequent development was not due to single but different factors both internal and external. It concludes that the external factors should not be regarded as the

soul source of the Muslim theology. They merely helped its growth and development at a later stage.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
1. Define Islamic theology and highlight its origin.
2. Islamic theology emerged from internal factors. Discuss.
3. Expatiate on the external origin of the Islamic theology.

7.0:   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) A. J. Wensick (1932). *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, CambridgeUniversity Press.
(3) W. M. Watt (1948). *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*, London, Luzac,
(4) W. M. Watt (1962). *Islamic Survey, Series 1, Islamic Philosophy and Theology*. Edimburgh, University Press.
(5) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in MuslimPhilosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar Lahore.
(6) Hasan Sayyid Mutawalli (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al- Azhar Colleges Press.

UNIT 2: THE JABARITES, THE QADARITES, THE MURJITES AND THE MUSLIM MAJORITY'S OPINION ON PREDESTINATION

CONTENTS

1.0:   INTRODUCTION

As you should have expected, there were people who usually engaged in religious pursuits and discussions as early as the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The *Ahlu `l-Suffah* (People of the Platform i.e. in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina) could be cited as example. This group generally did discuss matters religious applying reason where needed. It may not be out of place to mention Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Aishah, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal along with them. Perhaps the report that the Prophet Muhammad (Ş) once met some Companions arguing on the issue of *Qadar* and discouraged them refers to them. In this unit, three early theological movements associated with discussion on predestination shall be presented to you.

2.0:   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you will be able to
1. identify the Jabarites and highlight their views on predestination
2. identify the Qadarites and highlight their views on predestination
3. highlight the Muslim Majority's opinion on predestination
4. enumerate what are regarded as grave sin and its consequences.

3.0:   MAIN CONTENTS

3.1: The Jabariyyah (Jabarites)

In the pre-Mutazilite era, before 105 A.H./732 A.D., certain Muslims held the belief that what man will be or do on earth has been predetermined by God. So, no matter how pious or impious he was on earth, the decree of God on him would prevail. In fact, his uprightness or otherwise was regarded as manifestation

of God's will. That somebody was a saint or a sinner was therefore not his own making but what God wanted him to be.

To such people, man is so weak that he cannot take any action independently. He is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of God Who manipulates him the way He likes. People of such belief often supported their stand with quotations from both *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. An instance of such quotation is *Qur'ān* chapter 35 verse 8, which says 'verily God leads astray whom He pleases and guides to the right path whom He pleases'; and Chapter 10 verse 26, which says ' God calls to the abode of peace and guides whom He wills into the right path'; and Chapter 42 verse 14 which also asserts that 'God elects for Himself whom He pleases and guides unto Himself who turns to repentance.

An example of quotations from the prophetic traditions (Ḥadīth) is the one which says 'what hits you could not possibly have missed you and what misses you could not probably have hit you, the pens have been raised and the papers are dry'.

Another Ḥadīth stipulates that 'a man during the process of his growth in the womb gets his life span and where he would be after death by the decree of God ever before he was born'.

Since God creates man, since God directs his actions, he has no choice but to behave according to what has been predestined for him.

The people who believed in pre-destination are known as the Jabarites.

Self Assessment Exercise
Who were the Jabarites? Provide some *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* passages they cite to support their views.

3. 2. The Qadariyyah (Qadarites)

The opponents of the predestination argued that certainly, God does not do evil and does not condone evil practices. That is why He punishes evildoers and rewards righteous people. God does not create anybody to be rich or to be poor; success or failure, wealth or poverty are results of each man's advantages and initiatives. God does not create anyone to do evils. If He were to do this, it would be injustice on His part to turn round and punish evildoers. Furthermore, God does not guide certain people aright and lead others astray. If He were to do this, it would amount to arbitrariness and partiality on His part.

Thus the opponents asserted that man has his own volition, independence and free will to do what he likes and be rewarded accordingly, good or bad, depending solely on his choice and freewill. Because of the emphasis they laid on freewill of the people thus negating the control of God on man, the opponents of predestination were called Qadarites.

Surprisingly, the opponents of predestination used the word Qadarites for the upholders of predestination. The Qadarites refused being called this epithet because the prophet once said that the Qadarites are enemies of God.

According to the promoters of free will, God has given man the faculty to reason and differentiate between what is good and what is bad. Besides that, 104 holy books have explained elaborately what is good and what is bad. Furthermore, that was the purpose of sending 124000 prophets like Ibrahim, Musa, Dawud and Isa to different peoples and nations at different times; and also that was why Prophet Muhammad was sent as the last of the prophets. They go further to say that that is why the *Qur'ān* asserts that everybody will be responsible for his own deeds. *Qur'ān* 17 verse 15 says: 'he who receives guidance receives it for his own benefit and he who goes astray does it at his own risk. No bearer of burden will bear the burden of another nor would we give out punishment to any group of people until we have sent an apostle to give warning'.

To argue further that God does not predestine anybody to do evil, promoters of free will, the *Qadariyyah* quotes *Qur'ān* chapter 41 verse 46 which says ' whoever is righteous benefits his own soul and whoever does evil does it against his own soul. Your Lord is never unjust to His servants'.

They also point to *Qur'ān* chapter 76 verse 3, which says: 'God has certainly shown man the way, it's for him to accept or reject'. They therefore reject the arguments put forward by their opponents and assert that anything contrary to their view is misinterpretation.

The pre-determinists who were surprisingly supported by the majority of the Muslims rejected the argument of free-will group saying that the latter were dualists who had set up the human being as a co-creator with God by believing that human beings can initiate their own actions and thereby determine their own fate. Some of the protagonists were; Ma'bad al Juhani, a citizen of Basra who was killed in 699 AD. Another was Ghaylan ibn Abd al Malik al-Dimashqi who was killed in about 743 AD. So also was Shabib al Najrani, who was killed almost during the same period.

Self Assessment Exercise
Who were the Qadarites? Provide some *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* passages the quoted in support of their views.

3.3: The Muslim Majority's Opinion
From the Sunni point of view, it is incumbent upon every Mukallaf (one on whose religious duty is imposed) to believe that it is possible for God to create good and evil; to create Islam in Zayd and unbelief in 'Amr, knowledge in one of them and ignorance in the other.

It is also incumbent upon every Mukallaf, to believe that the good and the bad of things are by act of Destiny (*qaḍā'*) and act of Decree (*qadar*). And there is a difference of opinion as to their meaning. It is said that Destiny (*qaḍā'*) is the will of God and the

eternal connection of that will (*azali*), and Decree (*qadar*) is God's bringing into existence the thing in agreement with the will. So the Will of God that is connected eternally with your becoming a learned man or a Sultan is destiny, and the bringing of knowledge into existence in you, after your existence, or the Sultanship in agreement with the Will, is decree. And it is said that Destiny is God's eternal knowledge and its connection with the thing known, and Decree is bringing things into a man after he enters existence.

Furthermore to the Sunnis, this belief belongs to the category of things the doing of which is only possible for God. By this, they assert that there is nothing incumbent upon God. He creates faith in Zayd, for example, and gives him knowledge out of His grace without there being any necessity upon Him. Hence the saying: كل نعمة منه فضل، وكل نقمة منه عدل (God's rewarding the obedient is a grace from Him, and His punishing the rebellious is justice by Him). Obedience does not advantage Him nor does rebellion injure Him. And these acts of obedience or rebellion are only signs of God's rewarding or punishing those described by them. The ones whom He wills to draw near to Himself, He helps to obedience, and in Him who's abandoning and rejecting He wills, He creates rebellion. And all acts of good and bad are by the creation of God, for He creates the creature and that which the creature does as He has said (Q37: 9): "and God has created you and that which ye do". (al-Fudali)

And the proof that possible things are possible in the case of God is that there is a general agreement on their possibility. If the doing of any possible thing was incumbent upon God, the possible would be turned into a necessary thing, if they were hindered from Him, the possible would be turned into an impossible. But the turning of the possible attribute into a necessary or an impossible one is false.

Self Assessment Exercise
Give and expatiate on the Islamic theological aphorism which summarizes Sunni stand on man's actions and fortune.

3.4: The Murjites and Consequences of Grave sin
Out of the discussion of the nature of the Islamic community and fate of its members in the hereafter, another theological sect called the Murjites emerged. Their theological view was that whether a man will enter hell or Paradise could not be settled in this world. It should therefore be postponed to the Day of Judgment when God will decide everybody's fate. For postponing such a decision, the group earned their name Murjites.

They argued that the worldliness of the Ummayah caliphs and their lukewarm attitude towards Islam as compared with the orthodox caliphs were not sufficient for anyone to refuse them recognition as leaders of Islamic community. The question of whether they are religiously qualified to rule the Islamic empire and whether the majority of the citizens were sinners who should be ostracized (banished or shut out from society) should be left in the hands of God.

This is not to say that criminals should not be punished but the fate of individual citizens who are considered sinners should be left to God, the Supreme authority. They often quoted *Qur'ān* chapter 4 verse 48 and chapter 4 verse 116 which say that God will not forgive the association of anything with Himself, and that apart from that He could forgive any other form of sins.   The Murjites therefore consider as Muslims anyone who did not oppose the Unity of God and denounce Muhammad as His final messenger. This theological belief of leaving the matters of sinners in the hands of God puts the Murjites in a separate arm from the Kharijites who held the view that a grave sinner should be killed as you will see later.

In sum, grave sins are: the association of partners with God (*shirk*), deliberate killing of human beings without any justification (*qatlu nafs min ghayr haqq*), adultery (*zina*)and wrong accusation of a married woman of adultery (*qadhfu `l-muhsanāt*), apostasy (*riddah*), running away from Jihad (*firār min al-Jihād*), magic (*siħr*), unlawful misappropriation of the wealth of the orphans (*aklu māl al-yatīm*), persistence in unlawful things (*iṣrār alā dhamb*) etc, etc.

The Murjites were not only tolerant to sinners but also hesitant to declare anyone a good or bad Muslim simply because he committed sins. Their argument is that anyone who believes in One God and professes the *Kalimat al-Shahadah* i.e. formula by which a person attests to the unity of God – could not be easily declared a non-Muslim simply because he committed a sin.

Self Assessment Exercise
Enumerate sins that are considered grave in Islam ; then discuss the attitude of the Murjiites towards grave-sinners.

4.0: CONCLUSION

The *Ahlu `l-Suffah* usually engaged in theological pursuits during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Where needed, they tried to work out religious doctrines in the light of reason.

The Jabariyyah and Qadariyyah were two other groups that argued the problem of pre-destination and free-will before 105 A.H./732 C. E. using reason and supporting their views with passages from the *Qur'ān* and *Ħadīth* thus constituting another nucleus of Islamic theological movements during te Prophet's life-time.

In the opinion of the (*Ahlu `s-Sunnah*) the Muslim Majority, it is incumbent upon every *Mukallaf*, to believe that the good and the bad of things are by act of Destiny (*qaḍā'*) and act of Decree (qadar). To them also كل نـعمة منه فـضل، وكل نـقمة منـه عدل) God's rewarding the obedient is a grace from Him, and His punishing the rebellious is justice by Him).

Another pre-Mutazilite era theological sect was the Murjites. Their theological view was that whether a man will enter hell or Paradise could not be settled in this world. It should therefore be postponed to the Day of Judgment when God will decide everybody's fate.

5.0: SUMMARY

   This unit suggests that the *Ahlu `s-Suffah*, the *Jabariyyah* and the *Qadariyyah* were thelogical groups found discussing the problem of predestination and free – will during the time of the Prophet Muhammad or before the appearance of the Mutazilah. Where needed, they did try to work out religious doctrines in the light of *Qur'ān* , *Ḥadīth* and reason. They could be regarded as people who prepared the ground for the school of Mu'tazilism. The unit also highlights the Muslim Majority's view on *Qadā'* and *Qadar* and discusses the Murjiites and their views on grave sin and its consequences.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. The Jabarites and the Qadarites were two precursors of theological movements in Islam. Introduce them and their views.
2. Give a highlight of the views of the Muslim Majority on the issue of man's destiny and free-will.
3. Discuss the Murjiites and their theological ideology.

7.0: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Muhammad al-Fuḏalī, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalam,*Eng. trans. by
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(3) A. J. Wensick (1932). *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical
    Development*, CambridgeUniversity Press.
(4) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in MuslimPhilosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar
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    Al- Azhar Colleges Press.

UNIT 3: THE KHARIJITES (*KHAWĀRIJ*)

CONTENTS

1. 0.   INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we shall trace the origin of a political cum theological movement known as the Kharijite in early Islam. We will identify the Azraqites and the Najdites as its two main sub-divisions. There after you will be presented a highlight of the doctrines propounded by the political cum religious sect who has serious theological implications on the course of developments in early Islam.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to
1. trace the origin of the Kharijites
 2. discuss its division into sub-sects
 3. highlight its political cum theological doctrines.

3.0:   MAIN CONTENTS

3.1: Emergence of the Kharijites

Subsequent to the murder of Uthman b. Affan, the third caliph in Islam on June 17, 656 AD, Ali b. Abi Talib was proclaimed the 4th caliph at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on June 24, 566 AD. Practically, the whole Muslim states acknowledged this succession. (The new caliph was the first cousin of Muhammad and first Muslim youth. He offered himself to be assassinated in place of the prophet by the Makkan idolaters and was later renowned as a fearless combatant in the struggle of Muslims against the polytheists. He was above all a scribe of the Holy *Qur'ān*, a Hafiz, exegete and a great Sahabi). The new caliph was in addition the first cousin of the Prophet, a husband of his favorite daughter Fatimah, the father of his surviving male descendants, Hasan and Husayn. Yet, however, the succession met opposition from certain circles.

Among the opponents was Mu'awiyyah, the governor of his predecessor in charge of Syria. He determined as a relation of the assassinated caliph to take

revenge and suspected that if the new caliph was not the assassin, he was a party to the assassination. He thus mobilized supporters from among the people of the territory where he governed and presented the new caliph with a task designed to engender crisis. He boldly asked him to produce the assassins of late Uthman or otherwise he would be held as an accomplice who thereby was not qualified to rule in Islamic territory.

At this point, war became imminent between supporters of Ali and Mu'awiyyah and at a place called Siffin, on the West bank of river Euphrates soldiers of the two parties clashed. When it was becoming clear that victory was swinging to Ali's side, Mu'awiyyah's supporters thought of a trick to avert defeat. They fastened copies of the Holy *Qur'ān* to their lances, which they held upright for everybody to see. The gesture meant that they wanted *Qur'ān*, rather than the sword to settle the dispute between them. They shouted: 'Judgment belongs to Allah'. Thus, Ali the caliph accordingly ordered the use of weapon to stop.

However, Ali's agreement to a peace talk wounded the feeling of a large section of his supporters. These supporters angrily broke away from his party. They seceded and were called Khawarij – Kharijites meaning seceders. (Singular: khariji). There were people who however tenaciously attached themselves to Ali and sworn never to part with him. They were the Shi'ah whose identity and doctrines will be studied in the next unit. .

The Kharijites later developed certain theological doctrines, under the leadership of Abdullah b. Wahab al-Rasibi. They considered Ali and his descendants as fallible as any other human being. To them, anybody who committed a sin should be brought to book according to *Qur'ān*ic teachings.

They thought Ali had such qualities, called charisma or supernatural powers; and that was why they followed him in the first instance. But when he went off the track and did not live up to expectation, they abandoned him. For, they could not get a fulfillment of such high quality they anticipated from a charismatic leader.

Muhammad's community was considered to have got that charisma and was regarded charismatic, a member of which was entitled to Salvation and Paradise.

Anyone who committed a great sin, the Kharijites argued would go to hell in the hereafter and should therefore be expelled from Muslim community in this world otherwise he would pollute the community and thereby prevent the law-abiding members from getting Salvation.

Their ambition to have a puritanical society made the Kharijites condemned the Shiites in their impression that both Ali and his sons were infallible leaders.

The Kharijites also opposed the prerogative leadership conferred on the Quraysh i.e. that rulers should come from the Quraysh. The Kharijites condemned this. According to them, any Muslim could be the head of an Islamic state provided that he was morally and religiously irreproachable. This standard of

righteousness made the Kharijites to hold to the slogan…"La hukmah illa lillah" (Govenance belong to Allah alone.

Self Assessment Exercise
(i) State the genesis of the Kharijites.
(ii) Identify their few political cum theological doctrines.

3.2: Division into Sects

Later on, many sub-sects emerged within the rank and file of the Kharijites. The most important among them were the Azraqites and the Najdites.

(i) **The *Azariqah,*** an Arabic sectarian name whose English equivalent is Azraqites, were the most militant among them all under their leader called Nafiu b. Azraq. They often found fault with the government of the day because according to them, many members of the ruling class were sinners who should be fought. They often invited other Muslims who were not Kharijites to join forces with them in order to attack the government. To avoid being arrested, they often withdrew from the society and lived in camps called *Dar-al-Islam* (House of Islam). In other words, they often alienated themselves from the society because they thought the society was infested. They lived in their camps so that they could maintain purity. More often than not, they encouraged other Muslims to dissert their sinful community and migrate to their camp. Those who refused to do so were called sinners and unbelievers who deserved to be killed and whose wives and children should also be killed. They constituted themselves into a terrorist gang because of their extreme puritanical theology.

(ii)**The Najdites:** The other sub-sect, known in Arabic as Al-Najdat, took their name from their leader Najdat ibn Amir. This sub-sect did not only oppose the government of the day but they also succeeded between 686 AD and 692 AD in establishing an autonomous government. Their tentacles spread over a large area in central Arabia i.e. Bahrayn, Umman, Yemen and the Hadramawt.

Like the Azraqites, the Najdites views were harsh, but their experience of government in large area made them introduce some innovation e.g. Muslims who did not migrate to them and live among them were not called unbelievers (kufar) but hypocrites (munafiqun). They also told their members who as of necessity have to live under a non-Kharijite government to conceal their religious view so as to avoid persecution and victimization. This is called Taqiyyah.

It was not without reason that the Najdites were softer than the Azraqites. They realized that the harsh theological views of the Azraqites could only be put into practice in camp with small population. In a large community, it will be difficult to identify a righteous Muslim from unrighteous ones.

They classified sins under two headings – fundamental and non-fundamental. According to them, it is only Muslims who committed fundamental

sins that should be expelled from the community while those who committed non-fundamental sins could be punished only. They also believed that Allah will punish all sinners in the hereafter but He will not allow them to remain permanently in punishment. He will grant respite to all and sundry.

Self Assessment Exercise
Write short notes on the two most important Kharijites sub-sects highlighting the differences in their doctrines among other things.

3.3: Summary of their Political cum Theological Doctrines
1. The Kharijites opposed the Shiites who believed that the head of state was infallible. According to the Kharijites, anyone could make a mistake and once a leader does this, he should be deposed.
2. The head of state should not come from Quraysh tribe alone. Any Muslim, whether coloured or white could rule provided he was morally and religiously irreproachable.
3. None of the leaders of the Kharijites was from the Quraysh and each of them rather than being referred to as Caliph was called Amir-al-*Mūmin* in – the Commander of the Faithful.
4. Abu-Bakr and Umar were recognized as caliphs. Uthman was also recognized up to the first six years of his reign and Ali was recognized as a caliph up to the battle of Siffin.
5. According to them, any Muslim who commits a grave sin was an apostate. According to the Azraqite faction, such a Muslim, his wife and his children should be fought.
6. All non-Kharijite Muslims were, in the view of the Kharijites, apostates. They upheld that the conscience of the Kharijite was the only pure conscience and they regarded pure conscience as indispensable complement to purity of the body with which the act of worship could be valid.

Self Assessment Exercise
Give a list of the main political cum theological doctrines of the Kharijites

4.0: CONCLUSION
The Kharijites were a group of supporters of Ali who broke away as a result of his agreement to a peace talk at the Battle of Siffin. They further broke into sub-sects two of which were known as Azraqites and Najdites.

To them the Prophet Muhammad's community was considered charismatic, a member of which was entitled to Salvation and Paradise.

Anyone who committed a grave sin, the Kharijites argued would go to hell in the hereafter and should therefore be expelled from Muslim community.

The Kharijites condemned the Shiites in their impression that both Ali and his sons were infallible leaders.

The Kharijites also opposed the prerogative leadership conferred on the Quraysh According to them, any morally and irreproachable Muslim could be the head of an Islamic state. The Kharijites used the title Amir for their leader; and adopted "*La hukmah illa lillah*" as their slogan.

5.0: SUMMARY
The Kharijites were early Muslim theological groups. Their two major sub-divisions wee the Azraqites and the Najdites. They opposed the Shites in their infallible Imam doctrine as well as the Sunnis who conferred prerogative leadership on the Quraysh alone. They recognized the caliphate of Abubakr and Umar; and those of Uthman and Ali to a large extent. They regarded kharijism as the only pure conscience complementary to purity of the body required for validity of worship. To them non-Kharijites were apostates and grave sinners should be ostracized.

6.0:   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
 1. Give an account of the emergence of the Kharijites
        2. Write short notes on the Azraqites and the Najdites.
        3. Discuss the main politico-theological doctrines of the Kharijites.

7.0:   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS
(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
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      Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press. Vol. 3

UNIT 4: THE *SHĪ'AH*

1. 0. INTRODUCTION

The word *Shī'ah* in the Arabic tongue connotes followers, allies, party or factions. As an Islamic theological term, the Shī'ah are those who swore allegiance with 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, (the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad) in particular and believe that his Imamate, Caliphate or Muslim leadership is testamentary; who consider him the only rightful successor of the Prophet in the temporal and spiritual matters, and deny this right to all who did not belong to his House. It applies also to his loyalists during his struggles with Mu'āwiyyah and supporters of the members of his household after im.[2]

The Shī'ah did not surface as a conspicuous entity during the lifetime of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib; nor did they adopt the nomenclature. It was his murder and the murder of his son Husain at Karbala that made them politico - religious entity supporting his descendants and working towards establishing a state in their name by regarding them the rightful Caliph and formulating principles and doctrines peculiar to them.[3]

2.0. OBJECTIVES
At the end of this unit you will be able to
   (i) define shiism and identify its main creeds.
   (ii) discuss the *Ithna'ashariyyah, Sab-'iyyah* and *Zaydiyyah* Shiite sub-sects
(iv)   distinguish between the creeds of the various.

3.0: MAIN CONTENTS

The Main *Shī'ah* Creeds:
The creeds general to all Shī'ah groups are in connection with five issues; viz.
(i) the Imamate (ii) Relationship between Ali, the Sahabah and the rest of
Muslims. (iii) *'Ismah* of the Imams (iv) *Taqiyyah* and (v) *Raj 'ah* or Mahdism.

(i) Imāmah (Imamate): To them, as belief in God is an Article of Faith, so also is
the belief that Imamah (the temporal and spiritual leadership of the Muslim
Ummah) after Prophet Muhammad is hereditary in the House-hold of Ali. This,
they argue is because Ali as a nephew to the Prophet Muhammad (S) and husband
of Fatimah his daughter, must have inherited the rights to rule the Ummah and
interpret the Shariah from the Prophet. Their children too should have been
bequeathed such divine rights by their parents. Such powers could only be found
in the descendants of Fatima and Ali[4].

The *Shī'ah* even hold that the Prophet appointed 'Alī as his vicegerent in his
Sermon delivered before thousands of his disciples at Ghadīru `l-Khum on the
outskirts of Madina in 10 A.H. (632 C.E.) when he said: *fa man kuntu mawlāhu,
fa 'Aliyyun mawlāhu*, meaning "hence whoever recognizes me as his Master, for
him 'Alī (too) is Master," With that statement the appointment (naşş) of 'Alī as his
vicegerent was completed and never revoked. In fact, later incidents mentioned by
Shī'ī authors show that the Prophet confirmed and acted on the assumption that
'Alī was the heir apparent of the spiritual kingdom.[5] The salvation of man is in the
love and devotion to the Imam. This is known as '*walāya*h.'[6]

Self Assessment Exercise
Explain the Imamate Creed of the *Shī'ah*

(ii) Relationship between Ali, the *Şahābah* and the rest of Muslims.

The moderate Shiites are of the view that all the adversaries and opponents of
Ali are sinners and will be perpetual in the hell fire like the infidels unless their
repentance is established and they die on love and devotion to Ali.

As for the Muhājirs, the Ansārs, and the Righteous Caliphs before him, since
Ali acknowledged them, related well with them and did not raise sword against
them or invite anybody to do so, they cannot condemn them.

Since 'Alī accepted their leadership and observed Salāt behind them, he has to
be emulated and none can go beyond reports about his attitude to them.

Since it was established that 'Alī did not curse the Sahabis the moderate Shiites
will also treat them in likewise manner. To the moderate Shiah also, the rank of
Prophethood was higher than the rank of the Imam.[7]

But there are Shiites who called the Chosen Sahabis infidels; and call the
Caliphs before him usurpers of his right. They claim that when the Prophet was

aware his death was imminent, he sent Abu Bakr and ʻUmar away in Usamah ibn Zayd's expedition, in order to clear the city of all possible opposition and paving the way of securing bayʻah (pledge of allegiance) for him from the remaining people. Usamah;s troops however dilly dallied for days against the wish of the Prophet and the aim was not achieved.[8]

In their attempts to defend their doctrines, some Shiites formulated dangerous ideas, raising doubts about the authenticity of the Qur ʻān and Hadīth in the hands of the generality of Muslims; and claiming that only their scholars are in custody of the authentic ones.

Self Assessment Exercise
Explain the Shiite creeds relating to the relationship between Ali, the Şahābah and the rest of Muslims
(iii) *'Ismah* (Infallibility of the Imāms):
The Shī‘ah believe that the Imām was infallible (maʻsūm); he can never commit minor nor major sins because he is the link between God and humanity like the Prophets and Apostles of God. He receives revelations though of an invisible nature.[10]

It however seems the early Imām did not conceive the ʻIsmah doctrine and that the extremist Shī‘ah developed the idea later; a situation which led the Imām to be going into hiding and obscurity as a result of which people were denied access to evaluate their actions.

Meanwhile, the Shī‘ah claims the Imāms do things through divine inspiration and Commandment. They see the Imām as the lawgiver and law enforcer who cannot be censored. He is the proof of God (Hujjatullah) and sign of God (Ayatullah).

(iv) *Taqiyyah*:
The *Shī‘ah* believe in the expediency of *Taqiyyah*, (i.e.dissimulation or concealment of proper religious identity and theological feeling by a Shī‘ī) when dwelling in a non-*Shī‘ah* State or under threat of injury to his life or property.[13] This also means pretension, deceit and saying something contrary to what one harbours in mind. The Shī‘ah theologians find basis for this belief. They quote Q.3:28 & Q.16:106 to buttress the doctrine. They regard ʻAli's silence on the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and ʻUmar, his prayer behind them and association with them as acts of Taqiyyah.[14]

Self Assessment Exercise
Explain the Ismah and Taqiyah doctrines of the *Shi 'ah.*

(v) *Raj‘ah* or Mahdism.
The *Shī‘ah* believe their Imām is deathless; has miraculously remained alive since

his **ghaybah** (absence), and is an Expected Messiah who will return to fill the earth with justice, equity and prosperity.[15] Perhaps the first to innovate this doctrine was Abdullah b. Sabai, when he claimed that 'Ali was not killed; he was a Mahdi, an Expected Messiah who is coming back to the world to avenge his enemies. This idea then passed from his group (the Saba;iyyah) to the Kīsāniyyah who made Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah their Mahdī; despite the fact that he has died, Abban ibn 'Uthmān the then Governor of Madina said the funeral prayer on him; and was buried at Baqī' near the Prophet's Mosque in Madina [16]

The Ithnā 'Asharīs (Twelvers) believe in **ghaybah**, that is, the disappearance of the Imām from the world; not so the Ismā'īlīs. They believe there can be no **ghaybah** in this world. The Imām cannot completely disappear, even if to the profane eyes of the people he is invisible **(mastūr)**, hidden from the sight of those whose vision does not possess the penetration of the true adept. If the Imām were to disappear from the world even for a moment, "verily, the earth would perish with all their in." [17] This Mahdism is sometimes termed 'Raj'ah Doctrine,' meaning the returning of the Imām. Some Shī'ah have however interpreted it to mean return of States and not return of deceased Imams.[18]
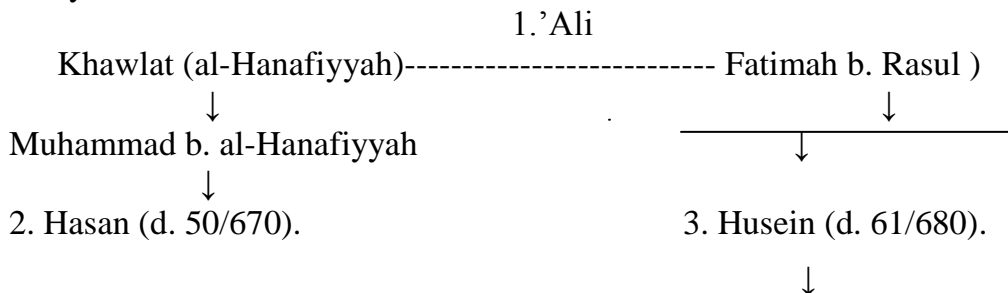
Self Assessment Exercise
Discuss *Raj'ah* or Mahdism as a doctrine of the various shiah denominations**.**

3. 2. Ithnā 'Ashariyyah (The Twelvers)
**Meanwhile the *Shī'ah* are divided into several schools of theological thought and the principal case for the division was the succession after 'Alī Zaynu `l-'Ābidīn, the fourth Imām

The majority of the *Shī'ah* followed Muhammad al-Bāqir and after him Ja'far al-Şādiq. After the death of Ja'far, another split took place, the majority followed Musā al-Kāzim and six Imāms after him, thus making twelve Imāms in all hence, the name *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* ("Twelvers"). The *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* school, sometimes called the *Ja'fariyyah*, deriving from the name of the sixth Imām , Ja'far, spread widely in Persia especially during the Safawid rulers era (908-1148 A.H. when every ruler claimed to be descendant of Musa Kāzim, the seventh Imām.
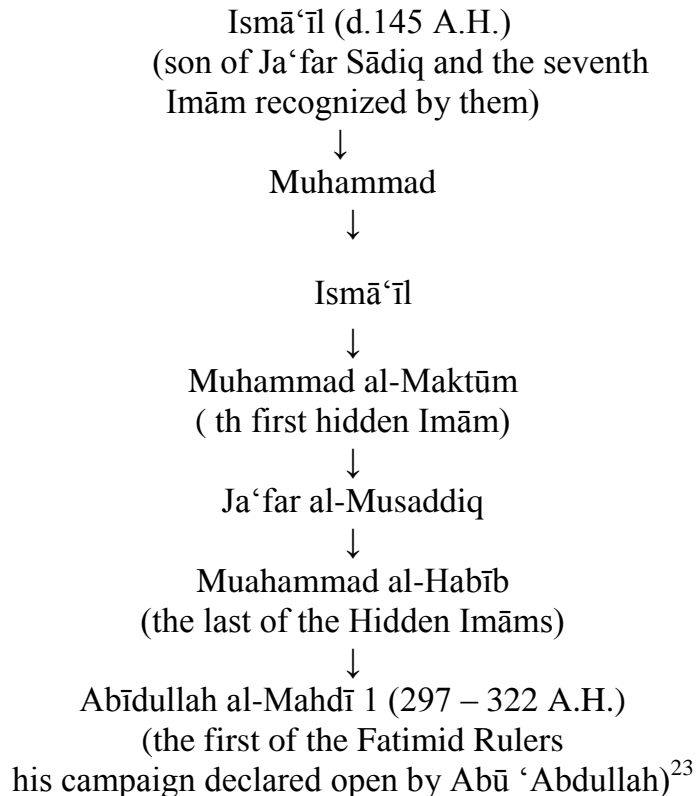And its spirit permeates a large number of articles in the Iranian Constitution till today. [20]

1.'Ali
Khawlat (al-Hanafiyyah)-------------------------- Fatimah b. Rasul)
↓   .   ↓
Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah   ↓
↓
2. Hasan (d. 50/670).   3. Husein (d. 61/680).

↓

4 'Ali Zaynu `l-'Ābidīn (d.c. 94/712)

↓

5.Muhammad Bāqir(d.113/731)

↓

6. Ja'fa Şādiq (.148/765)

↓

7.Musa Kāzim (d.183/790)

↓

8. 'Ali Rida (d. 202/810)

↓

9. Muhammad Taqi (d.220/835)

↓

10. 'Ali Naqi (d.254/868)

↓

11.Hasan 'Askari (d. 260/874)

↓

12. Mahdi (disappeared 260/874)

Shah Ismā'īl, on ascending the thrown in 909 A.H. ordered the inclusion of the names of their Imāms in Friday sermons and **ash-hadu anna Aliyyan waliyyullah** in the *Adhān* (call to Şalāt-prayer*)*; and the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* doctrine has so widely dominated the Iranian society and governance that it has become the Official religious school in Iran' and the constitution stipulates that the Shah was ruling on behalf of the Expected Mahdi.[21] That was the status quo until the Iranian revolution of 198 ? The *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* also constitute the majority of the Shī'ah and are also to be found in Iraq and in smaller groups in India.

Self Assessment Exercise
Examine the Ithna 'ashariyyah/ Jafariyyah as having majority of the shi 'ah follower-ship.

3.3. Ismā'īliyyah(the Seveners)
        The minority of the *Shī'ah*, after the death of Ja'far, did not acknowledge Mūsā al-Kāzim but followed his elder brother, Ismā'īl, as the seventh Imām and have since then been known as Ismā'īlīs or " *Sab'iyyah*, Seveners." The basis of the *Ismā'īliyyah* creed as crystallized under Fatimids of Egypt is the belief that there are two aspects of knowledge, namely the exoteric (*zāhir*) and the esoteric (*bātin*), hence the Ismā'īlis name, *bātiniyyah*). The *zāhir* of the Qur'ān is *tanzīl* while the **bātin** is **tawil** known to the Prophet who imparted it to his Imāms They are mostly to be found in India, but small groups of them live in Central Asia, Iran, Syria, and the Persian gulf emirates.[22] The *Ismailiyyah* were operating underground under the leadership of propagandists listed below until they founded the Fatimid State in Egypt (297 – 567 / 909-1171).

Ismā'īl (d.145 A.H.)
(son of Ja'far Sādiq and the seventh
Imām recognized by them)
↓
Muhammad
↓

Ismā'īl
↓
Muhammad al-Maktūm
(th first hidden Imām)
↓
Ja'far al-Musaddiq
↓
Muahammad al-Habīb
(the last of the Hidden Imāms)
↓
Abīdullah al-Mahdī 1 (297 – 322 A.H.)
(the first of the Fatimid Rulers
his campaign declared open by Abū 'Abdullah)[23]

The Ismā'īlis dominated the history of Islam for a long period; adopting neo-platonic philosophy as presented by the Ikhwānu 'l-Safā (Brethren of Purity) in their Rasā'il (Episles) and applying it to their Shiite theology.

Self Assessment Exercise
Expound Isma'ilism and state their impact on the history of Islam

3. 4. *Zaydiyyah* ---(the Zaydites)
        After the death of 'Ali Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, his son Zayd (d.122 A.H /742 C.E.) who was living in Madina was invited to Kufa to become the Imām. He accepted the invitation and his group were called the Zaydiyyah (Zaydis).
        On his arrival at Kufah in 120 A.H. / 740 C.E., over 15,000 people pledged loyalty to him. He and his supporters thus revolted and made a realistic attempt to make an alternative government to that of the Umayyads in Damascus. Their first attack was made upon the Umayyad governor in Iraq – Yusuf ibn 'Umar al-Thaqafi. When the war broke out, Zayd was deserted by a large number of his soldiers who had previously given him assurance on the ground that he gave concession to Abubakr and Umar. He therefore suffered utter defeat from the hands of his opponent and as a result of the wound he sustained during the war, Zayd eventually died in 123 A.H. / 743 C.E. He was succeeded in the Shiite Imamate by his son, Yahya , who was also killed during the battle against the

Umayyad forces in 126 A.H. / 746 C.E. [25] A few doctrines and ideologies of the Zaydiyyah are as follows:

They recognized the principle of election as basis for succession. This must however be from the erudite scholars among the offspring of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet only.[26] Thus they did not recognize Imāmate of Muhammad, son of 'Ali from Khawlah of the al-Hanafiyyah tribe.

1   They believed in the superiority of 'Ali's Imāmate over Abubakr and 'Umar's caliphate. To some of them, the Imāmate of the inferior (Imāmat al-Mafdūl) was permissible. It is this concession however that seemed to have alienated the more thorough going Shiites within the *Zaydiyyah*.[27]
2. It was conditioned to them that to become an Imām, a revolt must be staged. Thus the y moved Imāmate from being a secret affair to an open one.[28]
3. The majority of the Zaydis disapprove the principles of ***'Ismah***, ***Taqiyyah*** and ***Raj'ah***.[29]
4. Some Zaydīs were Mu'tazilites while some were salafīs [30]
5. Most of them belong to the HanafīsSchool of Islamic law while some are Shāfiites.[31]

Within a thousand years, many Zaydis were killed in the battlefields and many succeeded in establishing Shiite states and died naturally. In 1322 A.H/1901 C. E. the Zaydis were able to re- establish a ZaydiyyahState in Yemen after a revolt against the Turkish Ottomans which Yemen revolution of 1962 terminated. Yemen however still remains the stronghold and center of the Zaydīs. [32]

Self Assessment Exercise
Give a highlight of their doctrines; and a brief statement on their history.

4.0:   CONCLUSION
The Shi'ah are a politico-religious sect in Islam who believed among other things that leadership of the Muslims should be from Ali and his descendants. They are divided into several schools of theological thought and the principal case for the division was the succession after 'Alī Zaynu `l-'Ābidīn, the fourth Imām . The three prominent groups among them are the Ithna 'ashariyyah /Ja'fariyyah, the Ismailiyyah, and the Zaydiyyah who all played and are still playing significant roles in the politics and history of the Muslim world.

5.0: SUMMARY
A summary of the fundermental politico-theological doctrines of the *Shi'ah* could be given as follows:

(i) Imamate is a pillar of Islam. It is not a matter for public consideration. Thus it was an incumbent duty of Prophet Muhammad to appoint an infallible Imam for the Ummah.

   (ii) The Prophet (S) designated Ali as his *Wasiyy*. He was thus Imam by Testamentary Statement and not by election. The Imamate should be hereditary among his descendants.

   (iii) Ali is the best of the creatures in the two abodes after Prophet Muhammad. Whoever antagonizes him or harbours hatred for him is an enemy of God.

6.0:   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
(i) Discuss the fundamental doctrines of the Shiites in detail.
(ii) Who are the Twelver and Sevener Shi 'ah? Provide their beliefs among other
     things.

7.0:   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

 (1) Louis Massignon (1936), art. 'Nusairi' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, vol. iii
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UNIT 5:   EXTREMIST SHĪ'ITES (*GULĀTUSH-SHĪ'AH*)

CONTENTS

1. 0. INTRODUCTION

In Unit Two, shi'isn was defined and its major doctrines discussed. The fundamental doctrines of the *Ithnā-'Ashariyyah* (Twelvers) popularly known as *Ja'fariyyah*, the *Ismā 'iliyyah*, also called (the Seveners), and the *Zaydiyyah* and their history were presented in brief. These three are usually regarded as main *Shī'ah* groups and generally moderate. This Unit aims at dealing with six groups that are regarded as extremists.

2.0.   OBJECTIVES

After a thorough digestion of this unit you will be able to
   (i)   expound on the seven extremist *Shī'ah* groups
   (ii)   trace their origin and expose their extremism
   (iii)   discuss their history and pinpoint their location.

3.0: MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1. The *Saba'iyyah* :
        The *Saba'iyyah* was one of the first extremist *Shī'ah* group who were heretical in ideology and perhaps harboured evil intentions against Islam. It was named after Abdullah b Saba'i, a former Jew who came from Yemen. When 'Alī was appointed to succeed 'Uthmān, he was one of the first people to pay homage to him and soon afterwards, he started to weave doctrines that were completely strange to Islam around 'Alī's personality. He alleged that Muhammad will come back to the world and he had as his own slogan, the following statement:

'It is amazing for people to believe that Jesus will come back and to disbelieve in the coming back of Muhammad, whereas God says in the *Qur'ān* chapter 28 verse 85 that – certainly the one who revealed the *Qur'ān* on you will return you back to your place'.

He also alleged that he saw in the Torah (Taorah) that every prophet usually had a successor and therefore 'Alī was the successor to Muhammad and as Muhammad was the best of the prophets, 'Alī was the best of the successors. He went to the extent of proclaiming 'Alī as a prophet. Worst still, he called him *Juz'u min Allah* (divine part) or God incarnate.

When 'Alī was assassinated another doctrine innovated by ibn Saba'i for his group was that 'Alī was not killed. He claimed that it was the devil that appeared in 'Alī's shape and got killed in his place. As Jews and Christians lied in their claim that prophet Īsā (Jesus) was put to death on the cross whereas it was only made to appear to them as such, so also was the case with 'Alī. 'Alī was raised to the heaven and he is coming back to rule the world.

Self Assessment Exercise
Examine the claim that the extinct *Saba'iyyah* was an extremist Shiite group.

3.2. The *Kīsaniyyah or Mukhtāriyyah*:

This is another heretical sub-sect of the *Shī'ah*, which called people to accept Muhammad uncle of 'Alī, popularly known as al-Hanafiyyah (16 A.H. to 81 A.H.) as the *Imām*. The leader of this sub-sect was al Mukhtār b. Abī Abīd al-Thaqafī nicknamed Kisān, hence the appellation *Kisāniyyah*. This sub-sect is sometimes called *Mukhtāriyyah* which is a title derived from Mukhtār, the proper name of its leader.

When Mukhtār has achieved his aims, he started talking like a soothsayer imitating the *Qur'ān* in form and contents in his utterances. Then he claimed that he was a prophet receiving revelations. When some of his followers realized that they had been misled, they decamped but al-Mukhtār was then still enjoying the support of the *Saba'iyyah* and many other Shiites.

Al-Mukhtār had an ancient chair expensively decorated, which he claimed to be part of 'Alī's heritage. Whenever he went for war, he carried the chair along with him as the Jews used to do with their arch. Al-Mukhtār however met his death in the battle against Abdullah b. Zubayr in 67 A.H. at Kufah.

Self Assessment Exercise
Who were the *Kīsāniyyah/MukhtariyyahShī'ah*? Expose their heretical beliefs.

3. 3. The *Agha Khāniyyah*:

The founder of this sect, Hasan a `s-Sabaħ was born in Rayy in the 5th Century A.H. He emerged in India and was accused of working for the Fatimids by the vizier of Malik Shah. He thus fled to 'Alamut in Qazwin where he founded a well-fortified location, training disciples and spreading *Bātiniyyah* doctrines. He succeeded in raising strong followership and became influential in the region. He established beautiful gardens to entice neghbouring people. He induced them to smoke weeds (*Hashīsh*) and his followers were notorious as ***Hashshāshīn.*** Sultan Malik Shah sent a large army to fight them when they became dangerous but they resisted and assassinated his vizier; and this act possibly led the Europeans to call them the Assassins. They remained a strong force in their location until the Mongol warriors under their Commander Holako massacred them. The sect's followers in Shām also played prominent role in fighting the Crusaders. Şalāhu `d-Dīn, the Ayyubid had to fight them till they surrender when the Muslims also were not safe from their danger. Members scattered all over Syria, Persia, Oman, Zanzibar and India. They were called Khojas in India and they accepted Agha Khan of Bombay as their titular head because Agha Khan himself took Ismā'il, the seventh *Imām* as his ancestor.

In the Bahrain the *Bātiniyyah* were known as ***al-Qarāmiţah*** (the Qarmatians), a word derived from the name of their leader Hamdān Qarmat, an Iraqi national who claim to have got the ability to read the stars. In 890 C.E., he built a residence near Kufah which he called Daru `l-Muhājirūn i.e. Abode of Emigrants. When his sub-sect grew large they became dangerous to the inhabitant of Hijāz, Shām and Irāq. In 930 C.E. the Qarmatians entered Makkah and carried away the Black Stone and kept it in their custody for twenty years. It was only returned at the order of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mansūr. The Ismāilīs of Persia, India, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Oman and the ArabGulf now are bātinīs. The descendants of Agha Khān in India who regards himself a descendant of Hasan al-Şabaħ is their acknowledged leader. They are now in peaceful and cordial relations with Muslims.

Self Assessment Exercise
Would you regard the *Aghakhāniyyah* a heterodox or orthodox Shiite Muslims? Trace their origins briefly and give reasons for your view.

3. 4. The Durūz :

The Durūz sect was named after Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl Durzī (d. 411 A.H.); but the adherents call themselves '*Muwahhidūn*' (Unitarians). It is a sub-sect which emerged during the reign of al-Hākim bi Amrillah who claimed divinity, and whom Muhammad Durzī visited in 408 A.H. He later sojourned in Shām concentrating his propaganda on behalf of the ruler among the Jews and the Christians.

The major doctrine of the Durūz is divinity of their ruler and his Second coming at the end of time. The sub-sect has recently published a book entitled *Mas-hafu `d-Durūz* (The Durūz Scripture) in which attempt is made to imitate the *Qur`ān* as did Musaylimah in the past. It is a recent publication but the authour attempt to ascribe it to some early Durūz Imams; he was however exposed by some modern words. The *Durūz* reside today in Lebanon, Baniyas and Mountains of the Hurān Hill usually called DurūzMountains.

3. 5. The Bhoras

The name Bhoras, an ancient Indian word meaning Traders, derives for this Ismā'īlī sub-sect because its early adherents were converts among the Hindu Traders. The sub-sect has its center in India, Pakistan and Southern Yemen. Their main doctrine is the divinity of their *Imām*. They maintain special places for their *Ṣalāt*, which they call "Jamiu Khānah". They pray for the *Ismaīliyyah* hidden *Imām* from among the descendants of Al-Tayyib b. al-Āmir and are thus like idolaters. They take Ka'bah to be symbol of their *Imām*. **T**wo of their scriptures containing biographies of their Propagandists and some of their aphorisms are *Da'ā'imu `l-Islām* and *Al-Haqā'iq*.

Self Assessment Exercise
Trace the origins of the Durūz and the Bhoras. Would you regard them as heterodox or orthodox Shiite Muslims? Give reasons for your view.

3. 6. *Al-Nuṣayriyyah*(the Nuṣayrīs)

The founder of *Nuṣayriyyah* was Muhammad ibn Nuṣayr al-Numayrī a follower of al-Hasan al-'Askrī, the eleventh of the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah Imām*s. After the death of Hasan, he first claimed to be his Bāb (Representative of his son). He then claimed to be an apostle and a prophet sent by God. He later disapproved the Imāmate of al-Hasan and his son and claimed transfiguration and incarnation and made prohibited practices permissible for his followers. He died in 260 A.H.

The real propagandist and author of the Nuṣayriyyah doctrines was al-Hasan ibn Hamdān al-Khusaybī (260-346 A.H.) He stayed in Baghdad and moved from one place to another until he settled finally in Syria in the city of Halab. Later, al-Ladhiqiyyah, on the mountain known by the name of the sub-sect became their main center.

The belief of the Nuṣayrīs:

1. The pivot of *Nuṣayriyyah* doctrine is the divinity of ʿAlī. They argue that this is not unreasonable. Good, represented by Jibril, appeared in form of man; while evil, represented by devil appeared in form of man; so also is Jin, it appeared in form of man and spoke in man's tongue; hence their belief that God appeared in form of man and ʿAlī was God incarnate. No doubt, it is a faulty analogy and an absurdity that Allah, the Creator incarnated in His creature. He, the Almighty has said : *laisa kamithlihi shay'un"* (Nothing is like him).

2. The *Nusairiyyah* also believe that ʿAlī is higher in rank than the Prophet. They argue that Allah gave ʿAlī exclusive knowledge of the secret whereas the Prophet was only judging the apparent. They fabricated traditions and created events in support of this doctrine of theirs. God is exalted above their claim.

3. They created a Trinity of ʿAlī, the Meaning, as the Ultimate Secret (Allah?); Muhammad, the Name, as the Manifest Picture; and Salmān al-Farisī as the Bāb (Gate to the Meaning). ʿAyin, Mīm and Sīn are made to symbolize this Code/Combination. This idea seems to be influence of Christian Trinity on the sub-sect or some ancient Syrian pagan belief which made the trio of Sun, Moon and Heaven divine and worshipped them.

4. They believe in Transfiguration or Transmigration of Souls from one body to another. If the soul is righteous it then goes to the Sun, Planet or God; but if it is devilish it enters the body of a woman or devilish person or dirty animals like pig or monkey. One of their theologians explains the idea as meaning that the Faithful transmigrates seven times before taking his place among the stars; and that if a man dies devilish, he is born again Christian or Muslim until he is purified and cleansed of his sins. Those who disbelieve in divinity of ʿAlī are born again in form of dogs, camels, donkeys or sheep. Thus, neither resurrection nor accountability will take place hereafter; punishment or reward, paradise or hell are in this world.

5. They reproach and curse the *Ṣahābah*, some Ṣūfīs and scholars of Jurisprudence and all their opponents. Such people benefit from ʿAlī`s providence and worship other than him. They praise Ibnu Maljam, the murderer of ʿAlī, for separating ʿAlī, the divine, from ʿAlī, the human.

They constitute ten percent of the Syrian population today and are also found in Southern Turkey and ʿAka district in Lebanon.

Self Assessment Exercise
Who was the real propagandist of the *Nuṣayriyyah*? Discuss their beliefs.

4.0: CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it may be concluded that many obnoxious characters among converts to Islam and others who under the pretext of love for *Ahl al-Bayt* have exploited Shiism. They have introduced their former doctrines into it. Such characters include Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Indians; and those who wanted to carve independent Kingdom or State for themselves. That fire will not burn a Shiite, for instance, was that of the Jews when they say : "*lan tamassanā `l-nāru illā ayāman ma'dudāt*".

The doctrines of **Raj'ah** (Expected Mahdi) and Second Coming of an *Imām* and Incarnation are Christians. Under the cover of Shiism, transfiguration of souls found among the Brahamas and the Magians found its way. Number Seven enjoys divine importance in the Ismā'īlī system as it does among the old Pythagorians who divided natural phenomena into seven: viz; Allah, Intellect, Soul, Al-Hayula, Form, Time and Place.

5.0 SUMMARY

This Unit treats the *Saba'iyyah*, *Mukhtariyyyah*, *AghaKhaniyyah, Nuşayriyyah* and the Durūz as constituting heretical groups based on doctrines not only extraneous to Islam but also blasphemous and outrageous.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Enumerate the extremist Shiites. Give a detailed account of the Nuşayrīs.
2. Discuss the doctrines that make Muslims to regard some Shiites as heretics and extremists.

7.0: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) Louis Massignon (1936), art. 'Nusairi' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden, vol. iii

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Section 2 pp. 135-146

MODULE 3 *AL – MU'TA ZILAH* **AND** *AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*
          (the Mutazilites and the Ash'arites)
Unit 1: The Emergence of the *Mu'tazilah* and Their Fundamental Doctrines
Unit 2: The Prominent Mu'tazilites and More of their Views.
Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines
 Unit 4: Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed

UNIT 1: THE EMERGENCE OF THE *MUTAZILAH* AND THEIR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

CONTENTS
1.0:   Introduction
2.0:   Objectives
3.0:   Main Contents
          3.1 Origin of the *Mu'tazilah* and their Fundamental Principles
          3.2 The *Mu 'tazilah* and the Principle of Divine Unity
          3.3 Divine Justice (Free will and Predestination)
           3. 4 The Promise of Reward and the Threat of Punishment (Divine Justice)
          3. 5 The State between the States of Belief and Unbelief.
        3.6. To Order the doing of right and Forbid the doing of Wrong.
4.0:   Conclusion
5.0:   Summary
6.0:   Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0:   References/Further Readings

1. 0. INTRODUCTION
        The *Mu'tazilah* were a movement in Islam which placed the use of reason over revelation on religious matters. Although it was during the time of Hasan al-Başrī that Mutazilism (thorough going ratioalization of Islamic beliefs came to the lime-light the origin of the use of reasoning in religious pursuits can be traced back to an earlier date. The *Ahlu `l-Suffah* (People of the Platform i.e.in the Mosque of the Prophet in Madina) who had been ealier mentioned could be cited as example. When needed, they tried to work out religious doctrines in the light of reason. Perhaps the report that the Prophet Muhammad (S) once met some Companions arguing on the issue of Qadar and discouraged them refers to them. These were the people who prepared the ground for the school of Mu'tazilism. The Kharijites and the Shiites are other examples. Although these two sects came into prominence with marked political reasons, they also had theological beliefs. Meanwhile, what is Mutazilism and who were the Mutazilites? Come along for the answer.

2.0. OBJECTIVES

After you have gone through this unit you should be able to
(i)   define Mutazilism
(ii)   trace origin of the Mutazilah movement.
(iii)   enumerate the fundamental doctrines of the Mutazilites
(iv)   discuss them critically.

3.0: MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1. Origin of the *Mu'tazilah* and their Fundamental Principles

The school of the Qadarites discussed in Modul Two Unit One could be regarded as the real founders of Mu'tazilism. Like the Kharijites and Shiites it had its foundation in the political development of the day. The first man who dared proclaim doctrines of the Qadarites was Ma'bad al-Juhani. He lived in the early days of Umayyads' cruelty, relentless persecution of opponents and ruthless blood-shedding.

Historians report that Ma'bad al-Juhani with 'Ata ibn Yaseer, one of his companions came one day to the celebrated Hasan al-Basri and said: 'O Abu Sa'id, these rulers shed blood of the Muslims and commit grievous sins and say their work are by the decree of Allah'. To this Hasan replied: 'The enemies of God! they are liars.'

Thus the first doctrine laid down by the early Mu'tazilites was: Man is accountable for his own evil doings; these should not be ascribed to God.' You have come across this under discussion on the doctrine of *qadar* of the Qadarites.Hence the the designation Qadarites given to the early Mu'taziltes who for the same reason were also called the Adalites, that is, the holders of the justice of God. For justice of God can be vouch safe only by holding man responsible for his actions. Mabad al-Juhani preached this doctrine publicly and was therefore put to death by Hajjāj in 80/699 under orders of caliph Abdu `l-Malik.

After Ma'bad al-Juhanī, it was a Copt named Ghaylān Dimashqī, who promulgated similar views. He further added that it was incumbent on every Muslim to urge people to do right actions and to check them from doing wrong. This addition by Ghaylān overtly interfered with and threatened the maintenance of the Umayyad rule. As a consequence he met his death at the hands of Hishām ibn Malik soon after his ascendancy to the Caliphal seat in 105/723.

The deaths of Ma'bad and Ghaylān put life into their cause. Their teachings became current and exerted an ever-growing influence. Thousands of people came to subscribe to the Mu'tazilite views and outlook.

At this time two great personages born in the same year 80/699 appeared like two stars on the horizon of Mu'tazilism. These two were Wāşil bn 'Atā and 'Amr bn' Ubayd. Both of them were the pupils of Hasan al-Başrī who used to give his lectures in the great mosque of Başrah.

One day when Hasan was busy discussing some problems with his pupils, someone came to him with a question regarding the conflicting standpoints of the Murji'ites and the Wa'idites. The first held that the perpetrator of a grave sin should be reckoned as a Muslim and not labeled a *Kāfir* (unbeliever) and that his case should be left to God . The second, laying more emphasis on the threats in the *Qur'ān*, maintained that the committer of a mortal sin, having ipso facto deviated from the right path, could not possibly be considered a *Mūmin* (believer). Before Hasan could give a reply, either Wāşil or 'Amr broke out with the assertion of a middle position, i.e. such a one was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. Hasan took it ill and said: *i'tazala'annā* (i.e. he has seceded from us). So Wāşil and 'Amr left the circle of the master, went to another corner of the mosque and began teaching their own views. Those who gathered around them came to be known as the Mu'tazilah the Mutazilites.

Mu'tazilism was essentially a movement to interpret the dogmas of religion in terms of reason. The Mu'tazilites were mostly independent thinkers and had quite individualistic views with regard to various religious and philosophical problems. We shall consider here some of their fundamental doctrines. Abu al-Husayn al-Khayyat, a great Mu'tazilite authority, gave five fundamental principles which one claiming to be a Mu'tazilite must subscribe to in their entirety. These are:
   (1) Divine unity (*a`t-Tawhīd*).
   (2) Divine justice (*al-'adl*).
   (3) The promise of reward and the threat of punishment (*al-wa'd wa'l-wa'īd*).
   (4) The state between states of belief and unbelief (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*).
    (5) To order the doing of right and to prohibit the doing or wrong (*al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf
       wa `n-nahy'an al-munkar*).

Self Assessment Exercise
Define Mutazilism and trace the origin of the movement.

3. 2. The *Mu'tazilah* and the Principle of Divine Unity
   The doctrines of Divine Unity and Divine Justice are more central to the Mutazilites than the rest of them; hence they preferred the ascription *Ahlu `t-Tawhīd wa `l-Adl* (the people of unity and justice) for themselves'. Specifically, they raised the following four issues, each of which has important bearing on the problem of divine unity:
        (a) Relation of the attributes of God with His Essence.
        (b) Created-ness or Uncreated-ness of the Holy *Qur'ān*.
        (c) Possibility of Vision of God (the Beatific Vision)
        (d) Interpretation of the anthropomorphic verses of the *Qur'ān*.

(A) Relation of the attributes of God with His Essence.

The Mu'tazilites explained the divine attributes such as the knowing, the powerful, the living and so on and so forth, as referring to His Being; and not that He possesses the qualities of knowledge, power, life, etc., apart from His essence. The fear to them was that should the qualities be considered as entities apart from the Divine Being that certainly would amount to polytheism because it will amount to plurality of eternals.

Thus the Mu'tazilites reduced God to an absolute unity divested of all qualities. The orthodox, on the other hand, look for nothing less than a personal God.

This whole problem of the relation of God's attributes with His essence is entirely above human reason: revelation alone is to guide us.

(B) Created-ness and Uncreated-ness of the Qur'ān.

To the generality of the Muslims the *Qur'ān* is the word of God revealed to the holy Prophet. Thus the *Qur'ān* is also called the divine speech or the speech of God (i.e. Kalam Allah). Pious Muslims further hold that the *Qur'ān* is uncreated and has existed from eternity with God; its revelation to the Prophet, of course, was peasce-meal as occasions demanded.

The Mu'tazilites very strongly denied the eternity of the *Qur'ān* on the plea that God alone is eternal. According to them, those who believed in the uncreated-ness of the *Qur'ān* and make it co-eternal with God take unto themselves two gods and hence are polytheists.

Self Assessment Exercise

Relate the implications of the Mutazilites principles of divine unity to the attributes of God and the concept of the eternity of the *Qur'ān* .

(C) *Possibility of the Beatific Vision of God*.

Abu `l-Hudhayl and the majority of other Mu'tazilites maintained: 'We would see God only with our mind's eye, i.e. we would know Him only through the heart.'

The proofs they provided in support of their view on the impossibility of vision of God may be summed up under the following heads:

Proof from the Qur'ān.

(i) Vision comprehendeth Him not but He comprehendeth all vision (Q.vi. 103)

The verse, according to them, is of general application and means that the physical eyes see God neither in this world nor in the next.

(ii) In reply to Moses' supplication: My Lord, show me Thyself so that I may gaze upon Thee' (Q.vii. 143), God said with an emphatic negation: 'Thou wilt not see Me'.

(iii)   They asked a greater thing of Moses than that; for they said: 'Show us Allah manifestly'; a storm of lighting seized them for their wrongdoing (iv. 153)

Had the people of Moses asked for a possible thing from God, they would not

have been called wrongdoers and would not have been consequently overtaken by the storm of lightning.

Proof from the Optical Sciences

The Mu'tazilites maintained that the following conditions were necessary in order to see a thing:

(i)   One must possess sound sight.
(ii)   The objects to be seen must be in front or opposite to the eye just as a thing to be reflected in a mirror must need to be opposite it.
(iii) It must not be too distant from the eye.
(iv)   It must not be too near the eye either.
(v)   It must not be too fine to be looked at, i.e. it must be a coloured object or one sufficiently coarse.

In the opinion of the Mu'tazilites, since God as an object of vision does not satisfy the relevant conditions mentioned above, He cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

Proof from the Ḥadīth.

As for the saying ascribed to the holy Prophet: 'You will see your Lord as you see the full moon while you will not disagree amongst yourself in regard to His vision' (*Tirmidhi*), the Mu'tazilites hold that the tradition in question is of the category of *ahādī* and not that of *Mutawātir*, i.e. it comes only through a single channel of transmitters and as such is not acceptable when in conflict with an explicit verse of the *Qur'ān* such as : Vision comprehends Him not but He comprehends vision'. (vi.103). They, on the other hand, alluded to a saying of Āishah according to which she questioned even the Prophet having seen God here in this world: "He who says the Prophet saw God in person tells a lie' (Bukhārī).

Self Assessment Execise

As a corollary from their principle of divine unity the Mutazilites denied the Beatific Vision. State their arguemnts.

(D)Interpretation of the Anthropomorphic Verses of the Qur'ān

In the Holy *Qur'ān* we find many anthropomorphic expressions about God such as the following:

(i)   So glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things (Q.34:83).
(ii)   That which I have created with My hands (Q.38:75)

(iii) Which swims forth under Our eyes (Q.54:14)

(iv) And the contenance of thy Lord would abide full of majesty and glory (Q.55:27).

(v) The Merciful God has seated himself on His throne (Q.20:5).

(vi) Thou shall see the angels circling the throne uttering the praises of their Lord (Q.39:75).

As may be expected an inference may be gathered easily from their view of the beatific vision, the Mutazilites naturally interpreted the anthropomorphic statements in the Holy *Qur'ān* such as the face, the hand and the eyes of God or His sitting upon the throne as merely metaphorical expressions. They repudiated literalism of all types in order to maintain the pure unity of God. The Mutazilites hence applied the principle of interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the verses of the holy *Qur'ān*. The Mutazilites also denied the Prophets Ascension to the heavens in the physical sense.

Self Assessment Execise
The Mutazilites attitude towards the Anthropomorphic Verses of the *Qur'ān* was negative. Expatiate on this statement.

3. 3 Divine Justice (Free will and Predestination)
The orthodox maintain that there can be no necessity for God even to do justice. He is absolutely free in what He does. Good and evil have their nature by God's will and man can know them only through God's injunctions and commands.

The Mutazilites opposed this view by holding that good and evil can be known through reasoning.

Al-Nazzam, in particular, taught that God can do nothing to a creature either in this world or in the next that would not be for the creautre's own good and as justice may demand. He does not even have power to do it. It is important to note that according to the Holy *Qur'ān*, God is essentially just and righteous.

Verses of the Holy *Qur'ān* quoted by the Mu 'tazilites to support their views are as the following :

(i) God is not unjust to His servants (Q.12:10; 40: 31).

(ii) Lo, Allah is never unjust to mankind in anything (Q.10:44).

(iii) God truly will not wrong anybody the weight of an atom and if there be any deed   He will repay it (Q.21:47).

(iv) They further maintained that "The Holy *Qur'ān* says: God does not impose (any task) on the soul but to the extent of its capacity. (Q.2:286).

Thus like the Qadarites, both man's freedom and God's justice must go together. Man should be considered responsible for his actions; otherwise God will not be justified in punishing the sinners.

Self Assessment Execise
Articulate the stands of the Mutazilites as against those of the Orthodox in regards to divine justice.

3. 4 The Promise of Reward and the Threat of the Punishment
    This doctrine is related to that of divine justice. Since God is just, He should punish the sinners and reward the virtuous in life after death. Has not God himself given the promise of reward and the threat of punishment in the holy *Qur'ān*?
    (1) Allah has promised the believers, men and women, Gardens (Q.9:72).
    (2) And lo! The wicked verily will be in hell (Q.82:14).
    (3) Whosoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whosoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it (Q.99: 7-8).

    The Mu'tazilites maintain that it is obligatory on God to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked and that He cannot do otherwise. Contrary to this, the Orthodox and particularly the Ash'arites believe that reward and punishment are entirely God's grace. He can reward whom He wills and punish whom He wills. It is certain, that He will favour the righteous and punish the wicked as He has promised to do so; but no consideration can bind His discretion and compel Him to do this or that. To impose compulsion on Him is to reduce Him to a dependent being or even to a machine, which must move and act without any choice of its own. There will be no difference between God and a courts majistrate whose decisions are guided by a penal code if He is compelled to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked.
    On the other hand, according to the Mutazilites, the *Qur'ān*ic promise of reward and threats of punishment cannot go unfulfilled; otherwise God's truthfulness becomes doubtful. God never changes His words and so it is given in the Holy *Qur'ān*: "There is no changing in the words of Allah" (Q.10:64).
    The Orthodox agrees with the Mutzilites that the virtuous will go to paradise and the wicket to hell. But, according to the Mutazilites, the conclusion is necessary and irresistible. According to the Orthodox, it is only conditional and probable. God is absolutely free to do what He wills. The orthodox insists that, should He so will the virtuous might go to hell or, at least, the wicked to paradise. According to the Mu 'tazilites, God's justice would in that case be unpredictable and His justice would loose all meaning.

Self Assessment Exercise
Explain Mutazilites view of divine promise of rewards and theats of punishment.

3. 5 The State between the States of Belief and Unbelief.

This doctrine, the acceptance of which gave the very name to the Mu'tazilites, was more political than theological in nature. The Mutazilites formulated it to express their perception of the Umayyads who were then rulers of the Muslim nation. They submitted that as soon as a Man commits a mortal sin he neither remains a believer nor becomes an unbeliever; but occupies a middle position (*manzilah baynamanzilatayn*). Should he die without repentance, he would be condemned to hell-fire, with the only difference that the punishment inflicted upon him would be less severe than that inflicted on an unbeliever. They based this doctrine also on the authority of the *Qur'ān* and the *Ħadīth*. Is he who is a believer like him who is an evildoer? They are not alike' (Q.32:18) Again the holy Prophet is reported to have said: 'He who is not against a mortal sin has no faith, nor is he an unbeliever,'

Self-Assessment Exercise
The doctrine of *manzilah bayna manzilatayn* gave birth to Mutazilism. Explain the doctrine briefly.

3. 6 To Order the doing of right and forbid the doing of Wrong.

This doctrine belongs to the practical theology of the Mu'tazilites. The orthodox also admit the need to urge people to do good and to check them from doing wrong. But the Muatazilites considered this incumbent upon every Muslim (*farđ 'ayn*, i.e. a duty obligatory on the individual. The orthodox on the other hand, holds that it is only a fard kifayah, i.e. it would suffice if someone carried out this injunction on behalf of the community.

Because of this doctrine the Mu'tazilites deemedit necessary to spread their creed not only I words but also – though this was quite contrary to the spirit of Islam- by force of state authority, under the glorious patronage of al-Ma'mūn, this doctrine of the Mu'tazilites led to the institution of inquisition *miħnah* against all those who did not subscribe to their religious view, particularly that of the createdness of the *Qur'ān*.

Al-Mamūn issued a letter of authority to all the *Qāđī*s of the State to test the beliefs of officials with regard to the created-ness of the *Qur'ān*. The Caliph ordered that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon those who even refused to take the test. This naturally led to very strong feeling against Mu'tazilism and was consequently one of the reasons for its downfall.

Self-Assessment Exercise
Dis cuss the extent to which 'to order the doing of right and forbid the doing of evil' is fundamental in Mutazilism.

4.0: CONCLUSION

According to the Mutazilites, both reason and revelation are the criteria of knowledge; and therefore they must be in proper harmony. In the event of any inconsistency, revelation should be tested by reason. Thus the Mutazilites lay emphasis upon reason than revelation. Religion in their opinion, should be based on logical truth so as to become universally acceptable.

5.0: SUMMARY

The Mutazilites believed that God's attributes are identical with His essence.The face, hands and eyes of God; and His settling on His Throne should be taken in metaphorical senses. Man has free-will and he is the author of his actions. He will be rewarded according to the merits of his deeds; and punished according to their demerits. They denied the possibility of the Beatific Vision of God. They agree with the idea of intercession of the Prophet on behalf of the guilty Muslims on the Day of Judgment.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Specify the four issues raised by the Mutazlites, each of which has important bearing on the problem of divine unity; then present the issue of Beatific Vision in detail.

2. Below are two theological issues in the *Qur'ān* ; Write notes on the position of the Mutazilites on them.

(i) The promise of reward and the threat of the punishment
(ii) To order the doing of right and forbid the doing of wrong.

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UNIT 2: THE PROMINENT MU'TAZILITES AND MORE OF THEIR VIEWS.

CONTENTS

1. 0. INTRODUCTION

The renowned Mutazilites were Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.), Abu `l-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D), A `n-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.), al-Jāhiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D), Bishr-Ibn-Mutamir (d. 848 A.D.) , Mu 'ammar ibn 'Abbād, A `s-Sulamī, Thumāmah ibn al-Ashras, Abu 'Alī Al-Jubbā'ī (b. 235/849). The details of their views are discussed in this unit.

3.0. OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you will be able to
        (i) identify the renowned Mutazilites
        (ii) state the theological views of each of them
        (iii) appraise the validity of such view-points.

3.0: MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1. Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.}

Wāşil ibn 'Aţā was a Persian disciple of al-Hasan al-Başrī. He differed from his teacher as to the question whether a believer, after he had committed a *kabīrah* (major sin), still deserved to be called a believer. Wāşil held that such a person could neither be called a believer nor an unbeliever but should be regarded as occupying a middle position between the two, (*manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). He withdrew to a corner of the mosque to expound his own views to his fellow students. His teacher, al-Hasan al-Başrī remarked, *'i'tazala 'anā*. (He has

decamped or seceded from us). Consequent of this remark he is called Mutazilite and his school Mutazilism. His other views are that :

1. The attributes of God cannot be considered to be separate from His essence.
2. Prophet Muhammad was the author of the *Qur'ān* under divine influences.
3. Reason is the criterion of knowledge and it is higher than tradition and revelation.
4. Man has free will; so he is responsible for his actions.
5. God is just and cannot act arbitrarily.
6. The Muslim who commits a grave sin occupies a position between that of infidel and a Muslim.
7. Right and wrong cannot be referred to the will of God.
8. The Muslims who fought on the side of 'Alī and those who stood against him cannot both be right as was suggested by some theologians. One party must be wrong and the other must be right.

Self Assessment Exercise
Who was Wāşil ibn al-'ţā? Enumerate his theological views.

3. 2. Abu `l-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D)
He lived about a hundred years. He is considered as one of the greatest scholars of the earliest Mu'tazilite thinkers. He was gifted with art of delivering speech through which he converted many non-Muslims to Islam. He wrote many works but most of them are lost. He differed from other Mutazillites including his teacher Wāşil ibn 'Aţā in a number of disputed points. His views in brief are:

1. He recognizes Divine Attributes as not in the essence of God but as identical with His essence.
2. God's will to create is creation. His will is not external to Him as He is absolute Unity. His will to create is quite distinct and different from the will of created objects.
3. Man has free will but only in this world. He has no activities either in hell or heaven in the hereafter. Everything there shall be done by the divine decree. Thus man is not free in the next world to come.
4. The world has a beginning and must have an end. All motions must come to a close of everlasting rest.
5, Man is mortal, he must die in definite hour; he cannot avoid death.
6. Man is rational, it is his duty to reflect and know God, Those who fail to do so deserve punishment.
7. Divine mercy protects men and women from committing sins.
8. Man's knowledge comes to him from God; partly through revelation and partly through the light of Nature.

Self Assessment Exercise
Discuss the contributions of Abu `l-Hudhayl al -`Allāf as a prominent Mutazilite.

3. 3. Ibrahim ibn Sayyar An-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.)

Abu Isħāq Ibrahim ibn Sayyār called al-Nazzām was a renowned theologian, philosopher, and prolific author. He was brought up at Başra but spent the latter part of his life at Baghdad where he died. He was one of the most interesting figures in the culture of the Abbasid period. He studied under Abu `l-Hudhyl al-'Allāf and afterwards established his own independent school. God cannot be compared to anything; He is above everything .The office of the prophet is not restricted to any nation but open to all. His views, in brief, are:

1. God cannot do evil because He Himself is not evil. Evil is repugnant with His nature. He can do only that which He knows to be best for His creatures. He can do only good things in this world as well as in the next world.
2. By the act of mental reflection and self-study man can know God and distinguish between what is right and what is wrong without seeking help from revelation.
3. Creation is an act performed once and for all but various specimens are being manifested in time. Thus every thing to be in future exists hidden in nature.
4. Reason helps us to attain the knowledge of God and morality.
5. The miracle of the *Qur'ān* lies in its teaching and not in its beauty of style.

Self Assaeement Exercise

Write what you know about Ibrahim ibn Sayyār A`n-Nazzām and his theological views.

3.4. Amr ibn Baħr (called al-Jāħiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D)

Jāħiz real name was 'Amr ibn Baħr. He was one of the leading pupils of al-Nazzām. His teacher described him as the encyclopedic Jāħiz of al-Basra. He was a great littérateur, philosopher, theologian and a writer of repute. The orthodox Muslims regarded him a freethinker.

He did not believe in speculative deduction. His system was empirical and it was mainly based on experiment and historical facts. His views in brief, are:

1. He believed matter to be eternal. (i.e. World has no beginning)
2. God has no form. So His knowledge is impossible to attain by man.
3. God is good and just. He cannot be the cause of evils.
4. Good and evil are connected with the man. Man is responsible for good and evil.
5. A Muslim who is not intellectually developed to reflect on God and His creation and yet believes God as his creator and follows His prophet is not to blame.

Self Assessment Exercise

Who was al-Jāħiz? Highlight his Mutazilite doctrines.

3. 5. Bishr-Ibn-Mu'tamir (d. 848 A.D.)

Bishr ibn Mu'tamir discussed mainly the problem of free will. Man has free will and he is responsible for his action. But if he is forced to act in a certain way against his own will how he is going to be held responsible was a grave question with Bishr. He gave a good deal of thought over the question determining the moral value of action. The world is a place of soul-making. The presence of evils and suffering does not imply God inability in the making of a better world. God could have made a better world but he did not. Freedom of will necessitated a world like this. God created the universe with a definite purpose. So, He has given man free will and revelation. There are two ways open to man: good and evil. He can choose either of the two by exercise of his free will. Thus, the presence of evil provides man with a chance of self-development and soul-making. His views are:

1. The infant should not be punished, as they cannot make use of free will.
2. The infidel should be held responsible for their activities as they are endowed with the faculty of reason.
3. There are laws of nature and man should discover them by exercising reason.
4. Man who could not meet a prophet or did not get any chance to have any knowledge of revelation is not unfit to lead a peaceful life provided that he follows the light of nature.

Self Assessment Exercise

Elaborate the statement 'Bishr ibn Mu'tamir discussed mainly the problem of free will'.

3.6. Abū 'Ali Al-Jubbā'ī (b. 235/849)

Abū 'Alī al-Jubbāī was born in 235/849 at Jubba, a town in Khuzistan. He belonged to the later Mu'tazilites. He was the teacher of Abu `l-Hasan al-Ash'arī with whom he had discussion in respect of the Theory of the Salutary; that the wise will always do what is salutary (al-şalāħ wa `l-aşlaħ) and good, and that God's wisdom always keeps in view what is salutary for His servant; therefore He cannot be cruel to them. He cannot bring to effect evil deeds. He cannot renounce that which is salutary. He cannot ask His servants to do that which is impossible.

Another report says that al-Jubbāī asked *Imām* al-Ash'arī about the meaning of obedience to which the *Imām* replied that obedience is assent to a command and then asked for al-Jubbāī `s own opinion in the matter. Al-Jubbāī said: the essence of obedience is agreement to the will, and whoever fulfills the will of another, obeys him." The *Imām* answered; "according to this, one must conclude that God is obedient to His servant if He fulfils his will. Holding this view is blasphemous. For if God is obedient to His servant, then He must be subject to him, but God is above this.

Further, al-Jubbāī was of the opinion that the names of God are subject to the regular rules of grammar. He therefore considered it possible to derive a name for Him from every deed which He performs contrary to the view of the majority that the attributes of God are *tawqīfī* (i.e. restricted to the testamentary ones). On this, Imam al-Ashʿarī said: "according to this view, God should be named the producer of pregnancy in women; because he creates pregnancy. This heresy of yours is worse than that of the Christians in calling God the father of Jesus, even though they do not hold that He produced pregnancy in Mary."

The following are other notable views of al-Jubbāī:

1. Like other Mutazilites, he denies the Divine Attributes which subsists besides his essence. Neither does he believe in "states" as proposed by his son, i. e. to say that God is all-hearing and all-seeing really means that God is alife and there is no defect of any kind in Him.. The attributes of hearing and seeing in God originate at the time of the origination of what is seen and what is heard.
2. He regards the world as originated and the will of God as the cause of its being originated. Like other Muʿtazilites he also thought that the will of God too is something originated.
3. The speech of God is composed of letters and sounds and God creates it in somebody. The speaker is He Himself and not the body in which it subsists. The Speech is necessarily something originated. Therefore the speech of God is a thing originated and not eternal.
4. He denies the beatific vision; for that is impossible because whatever is not physical cannot fulfill the condition of vision.
5. He equally agrees with other Muʿtazilites regarding the knowledge of good and evil, and the destiny of those who commit grave sins. With them, he holds that man is the author of his own actions and that it lies in his power to produce good or evil or commit sins and wrong and that it is compulsory for God to punish the sinner and reward the obedient.
6. In the matter of Imamate, al-Jubbāī supports the belief of the Sunnīs viz: the appointment of an *Imām* is to be founded on the consensus.

Self Assessment Exercise
Where does al-Jubbāī agree or differ from other Muʿtazillah?

3. 7. More of Beliefs of the *Muʿtazilah*
The following is the summary of some more beliefs of the Muʿtazilites:
(3) (i) Denial of punishment and reward to be meted out to the dead in the grave and the questioning by Angel Munkar and Nakīr.
(ii) Denial of the indication of the Day of Judgement; Gog and Magog (Yājūj and Mājūj) and of the appearance of the anti-christ (al-Masīħ al Dajjāh)

(iii) Some Mu'tazilites believe in the concrete reality of balance (*al-Mīzān*) for weighing
 actions on the Day of Judgment. Some say that it is impossible for it to be a reality and think that mention made in the *Qur'ān* of the *Mīzān* means 'only that full justice will be done on the day of judgment.
(iv) The Mu'tzilites also deny the existence of the recording angels called *kirāman kātibīn* in the Holy *Qur'ān*. The reason they gave for this is that God is well aware of all the deeds of His servants.Thus the recording Angels are dispensable.
(v) The Mu'tazilites also denied the physical existence of (*al-ħawđ*) the pond and
   (*a`ş şirāt*) the bridge. Further, they will not admit that paradise and hell exist now but they will exist on the Judgement Day.
(vi) They deny the miracles of saints; for if admitted, they would be mixed up with those of the prophets and cause confusion.
(vii) The Mu'tazilites also denied the ascension (*al-mīrāj*) of the prophet of Islam
     because its proof is based on a testimony of individual traditions which cannot necessitate any act or belief; but they do not deny the Holy prophet's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (*al-Isrā'*).
(viii) As Divine decree cannot be altered, supplications served no purpose for one gains nothing by them because if the objects for which prayers are offered is in conformity with destiny it is needless to ask for it. And if the object conflicts with destiny it is impossible to secure.
(ix) They recognized, the possibility of resurrection of the body, as well as paradise and its sensuous pleasure, and Hell and its bodily torments.

 Self Assessment Exercise
List some theological views of the *Mu'tazillah* which appear to be at variant todisagree with genral Islamic creeds.

4.0:   CONCLUSION
   The Mu'tzilites were a group of rationalists who judged all Islamic beliefs by reason. They hardly realized the fact that reason like any other faculty with which man is endowed has its limitations and cannot be expected to comprehend reality in all its details.
   Meanwhile the Mu'tazilites deemedit necessary to spread their creed by force of state authority, under the glorious patronage of al-Ma'mūn. This led to the institution of inquisition *mihnah* byAl-Mamūn issued a letter of authority to all the Qādīs of the state to test the beliefs of officials with regard to the created-ness of the *Qur'ān*. The Caliph commanded that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon those who even refused to take the test. This naturally led to very strong feeling against Mu'tazilism and was consequently one of the reasons for its downfall.

5.0:   SUMMARY

By the middle of the 3rd hijrah century corresponding to middle of the 9th in the Christian era many Mutazilites had become prominent. Their inquiries in which they gave preference to reason over revelation cut across theological issues such as God and His Attributes, predestination and freewill, Eternity and Createdness of the world and the *Qur'ān* , Consequence of grave sin and Miracle. They also touched on doctrines relating to belief in the unseen and what happens in life after death.

6.0:   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
1. Write short notes on the following two Mu'tazilites and their roles in the development of Islamic theology.
    (i) Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.}   (ii) Abu Ali Al-Jubbā'ī (b. 235/849)
2. Give a profile of the following *Mu 'tazilah*
    (i)   Abu `l-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D)
    (ii)   Ibrahim ibn Sayyār An-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.)
    (iii) 'Amr ibn Bahr (called al-Jāhiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D)
3.   Enumerate with brief explanations some creedal issues upheld by orthodox Muslims but denied by the *Mu 'tazilah*

7.0:   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
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UNIT 3: ASH'ARISM AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

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    3.1 Origin and Fundamental Principles of al-*Ash'ariyyah*
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    3.3 Created-ness or Uncreated-ness of the Holy *Qur'ān*
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1. 0. INTRODUCTION
Ash'arism is the name of a theological school of thought in Islam that surfaced during the 4th -5th /10th – 11th centuries. It was "an effort not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the theological teachings of the religion. "It laid the foundation of Sunnism (Orthodoxy) putting divine revelation above reason. Its origin and fundamental doctrines are presented for you in this Unit.

4.0. OBJECTIVES
After you have gone through this unit you should be able to
(v)   define Ash'arism
(vi)   trace origin of the Ash 'arites movement.
(vii)   enumerate the fundamental doctrines of the Ash 'arites
(viii)   discuss them critically.

3.0: MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1. Origin and Fundamental Principles of al-*Ash'ariyyah* (Ash'arism)
A'sharism is a departure from a system of purely rationalistic theology to reliance upon the word of God (*Qur'ān*), the Tradition (*Ħadīth*) and the usage (Sunnah) of the pracvtice of the Holy Prophet and the pattern of life of early Muslim *Ummah* (*salaf*).

At first, it was only a gradual and unconscious shifting of attitude. Afterwards the tendency of human mind to ascribe broad movements to single men asserted itself and the whole was attributed to the name of Abu `l-Hasan 'Alī

bn Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī (d.c. 330/945). It is true that with his efforts the change became generally felt, but it had already been long in progress. As a matter of fact, many schools of theology, similar to that of al-Ashʿarī, arose simultaneously in different countries, e.g. the Zahirites' school in Spain, the Taḥāwī's school in Egypt, and al-Māturidīs school in Samarqanda.

Al-Ashʿarī's School superseded them all and flourished because it had among its adherents and exponents such able thinkers as al-Bāqilānī, *Imām* al-Haramayn, Al-Ghazzālī, Fakhru `d-Dīn a`r-Rāzī, etc, etc.

The fundamental doctrines in which the Ashʿarites vehemently refuted the Mu 'tazilites may be summed up as follows:

(1) God's attributes are real and separate entities from him.
(2) The Glorious *Qurʾān* is uncreated; i. e. eternal;
(3) Possibility of the Beatific Vision.
(4) God's seating himself on the Throne.
(5) Freedom of will.
(6) Divine law/Revelation is the way to acquisition of compulsory knowledge.
(7) The world is originated not eternal.
(8) Faith is conviction; work is only complimentary to faith.
(9) God is not compelled to do anything
(10)   Reward and Punishment, sending of Messengers and Beatific vision of Divine Being are in the category of possible matters.
(11)   God wills good and evil.
(12)   Non - voluntary deeds of man are in accordance with *qađāʾ* and *qadar*.
(13)   God creates man's voluntary deeds.
(14)   Only Prophets are infallible.
(15)   The questioning, joy and punishment in the grave are real.
(16)   Resurrection will be both in body and soul.
(17)   Intercession for the grave sinners are real.
(18)   Paradise and Hell exist perpetually.
(19)   Imamate is not an essential pillar of Religion.

We hereby give the Ash'arites' arguments on some of the principles in some details.

Self Assessment Exercise
Give a brief account of the origin of Ashʿarism and enumerate its fundamental doctrines.

3.2 Attributes of God and Their Relation with His Essence
(i) The Asharites admitted that God has qualities but with the qualifications of *mukhālafah lil-hawādith* and *bilā kayfa walā tashbih*, i. e. the qualities and attributes ascribed to God must be understood to be inapplicable to human beings

and so we should 'not ask how and draw comparisons'. Terms used for human beings must have quite different meaning when applied to God. God's attributes not only defer to those of mankind in degree but they defer in their whole nature. Expressions or ideas regarding God should be divested of all human elements, according to the Asharite principle of *tanzīh*.

(ii) Al-Ashʿarī is reported to have refuted Abu ʾl-Hudhayl ʿAllāf's identification of God's attributes with His essence in the following manner: Abu ʾl-Hudhayl ʿAllāf says that God's knowledge is God, and so he makes God knowledge. He must be asked to invoke knowledge instead of God, both being identical, and say in his prayers: "O knowledge, forgive me". He made this remark in all seriousness.

Self Assessment Exercise
Discuss the Asharites' view on the relation between the attributes of God and His essence.

3. 3. Createdness or Uncreatedness of the Holy *Qur'ān*
(i) The Orthodox Ashʿarites very strongly upheld the eternity and the uncreated-ness of the *Qur'ān* . They based their view, not on Jewish or Christian doctrine of the Logos, as some of the Orientalists and even the Mutazilites have alleged, but on the verses of the holy *Qur'ān* such as:

(a) The command is God's first and last' (Q.30. 4), that is the command which indeed is through God's word (*Kalām Allah*) is eternal and uncreated.

(b) Are not the creation and the command His?' (Q.5:5). They say: Here God speaks of the command as something other than the act of creation which, according to the Ash'arites, implies that God's command does not belong to the category of created things. Further, God's command, by its very nature, is through His word or His speech; hence *kalām Allah* or the *Qur'ān* is uncreated.

(c) God says: 'Our word to a thing when we intend it is only that We say to it, "Be" and it is (*kun fayakūn*) . Al-Ash'arī argued, if the *Qur'ān* were supposed to be created, 'the word 'Be' must have been uttered to it before it could have come to existence. If God should say 'Be" to the *Qur'ān* which is itself the 'word of God' a word will be said to another word. From the very logic of this position it would become necessary that a word should be uttered to another word for the latter to come into being. Thus one word would depend on another and the other upon next and so on and so forth to an infinite regression which, according to the Ash'arites, is unthinkable and impossible. Thus by reducing supposition to an absurdity, they claimed to have proved that the *Qur'ān* is uncreated.

(ii) The Mutazilites made the allegation that the Asharites, by preaching the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the *Qur'ān* , were advocating the Christian idea of Logos and tripping into *shirk*, i. e. polytheism. They argued that, should Ashʿarites

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insist upon the uncreatedness of the *Qur'ān* they would make it co-eternal with God and thus teach that He has His partner co-existent with Him from eternity.

Interestingly enough, the Ash'arites made a similar charge against the Mu 'tazilites and called them 'the polytheists of the first order". They argued that whosoever insists on the created-ness of the *Qur'ān* comes very close to favouring the view of the infidels that the *Qur'ān* was a product of Prophet's own mind. The Ash'arites alluded to a verse of the holy *Qur'ān* in which God has spoken of the polytheists' belief about the *Qur'ān* that 'it is merely the word of a mortal' (Q.74: 25).

Self Assessment Exercise
Examine the polemics between the Asharites and the Mutazilites on the problem of the eternity of the *Qur'ān*.

3.4 Possibility of the Beatific Vision.
The Asharites advanced the following proofs in support of their view about the possibility of Beatific Vision even in the physical sense.

(A) *Proof from the Qur'ān.* References were made to the following verses of the *Qur'ān* in support of their position:
*(i) That day will faces be splendid, looking towards their Lord (*Q.75: *22, 23).*
The possibility of Beatific Vision is clearly indicated herein, according to the Ash 'arites, as a gift which would be granted by God to the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.
   (ii) He Moses said: *O my Lord, show me thyself so that I may gaze upon Thee* (Q. 7:143)
   Al-Ash'arī contended that had the vision of God been impossible of realization, Moses would not have asked for it. Moses was an Apostle of God and thus free from sin or gross error. How could he ask for an absurd and impossible thing?

(B) *Proof from the Ħadīth.* The Asharites called the attention of the Mutazilites to the following saying of the Prophet in which, in reply to a question about the possibility of seeing God on the Day of Resurrection, he is reported to have said: "You will see your Lord as you see the full moon while you will not disagree among yourselves"

(C) *Proof from Logic.* The logical arguments in favour of Beatific Vision are listed below:
   (i) God can show us every thing that exists. Therefore he can show himself to us.
   (ii) He who sees things sees himself. God sees things. Therefore God sees himself.
   (iii) He who sees himself can make himself seen. God sees Himself. Therefore He can make Himself seen.

(iv) The Highest good is realizable in the highest world. The Beatific Vision is the highest good. Therefore Beatific Vision is realizable in the highest world.

Al-Ash'arī asserted that those who denied the **B**eatific Vision of God reduced God to a mere philosophical abstraction and even to a nonentity.

Self Assessment Exercise
Explain the views of the Ash 'arites on the Beatific Vision.

3.5 God's Seating Himself upon the Throne.
From the following verses of the *Qur'ān* it was quite clear to the Ash'arites that God is seated on His throne high up in the heavens:

(i) The Merciful is seated on the throne (Q.20:4)
(ii) The good word rises up to Him (Q.35:11)
(iii) God took him (Jesus) up to Him (Q.4:156).
(iv) Hereafter shall they come up to Him (Q.19:95)
(v) What! Are you sure that He who is in the heaven will not cleave the earth beneath you? (Q.67:16)
(vi) And thou shall see the Angels circling around the throne uttering the praises of their Lord (Q.30:74-75)

These verses of the *Qur'ān* were further corroborated by a tradition of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said that God descends every night to the lower heavens and asks: Is there anyone who is to make a request? I am here to grant it to him. Is there any one who asks for forgiveness? I am here to forgive him. This goes until dawn.

In addition to the above evidence from the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth* for God's seating Himself upon the throne al-Ash 'arī advanced the following argument: If God is at all places as the Mu'tazilites have maintained, this would compel one to admit that God is under the depths and the created beings are below Him. If this is true, He must be under that above which He is and above that under which He is. Since this is a complete absurdity, one cannot say that God is at all places.

Al-Ash 'arī attacked the Mu'tazilites and others who made use of allegorical interpretations and asserted that God is at all places, by saying that if this interpretation were true then it might be logically concluded that God is also in the womb of Mary.

Self Assessment Exercise
What are the doctrines of the Ash'arites on the *Qur'ān*ic verse "*The Merciful (God) is seated on His throne high up in the Heaven*".

3.6 Free- Will
On the issue of free – will the old orthodox position was absolutely fatalistic (jabarism). The Mutazilites, following the principle of divine justice,

made out a case for man's free – will. Al-Ash 'arī struck a middle course. 'Man cannot create any thing; God is the only Creator; nor does man's power produce any effect on his actions at all. God creates in His creature power (*qudrah*) and choice (*ikhtiyār*). Then He creates in him his actions corresponding to the power and choice thus created.' According to al-Ash'arī, though the action of the creature is created by God both as to its initiative and as to its production yet it is acquired by the creature. Acquisition (*kasb*) corresponds to the creature's power and choice previously created in him; he is only the locus (*mahall*) or subject of his action. In this way al-Ash'arī is supposed to have accounted for free will and made man responsible for his actions. For example he says, a man writes with a pen on a piece of paper. God creates in his mind the will to write and at the same time He grants him the power to write thus bringing about the apparent motion of the hand and the pen and the appearance of the words on the paper. Thus the whole theory of acquisition amounts to al-Ash'arī saying that the significance of man's freedom lies in his consciousness of freedom in himself. Man gives assent to the works, which are accomplished in him by God, and claims this as his own.

Self Assessment Exercise
Summarise the discussion on man's power and free – will as taught by al-Ash'arī.

4.0: CONCLUSION
The whole of the third *hijrah* century was the era of powerful reaction to Mu'tazilites'rationalist teachings. The Traditionalists adhered strictly to literal interpretation of the *Qur'ān* and refused to allow reasoning in-road to religious docytrines. They even regarded any theological discussion as (*bid'ah*); Their reaction against the Mutazilites went to such an extent that even the anthropomorphic verses of the *Qur'ān* were interpreted by them in a purely literal sense. For instance "Gods settling Himself upon His Throne" is understood literally; the how of it is unknown, belief in it is obligatory and questioning about it is an innovation. Every dogma was to be believed in without raising question 'how' or 'why'.

But such an attitude of blind faith could not be maintained for any length of time. Islam, which is meant to be a Universal religion and a force, had to adapt itself to new thoughts and new environments. So, there arose gradually a party from among the *Ahlu `s-Sunnah wa `l-Jama 'ah*, the Traditionalists and the majority opinion (i.e. the orthodox section of the *Ummah*) who realized the necessity of putting Islam on a solid ground by advancing reasons for the traditional beliefs and defending beliefs against all sorts of attacks, internal and external; and thus purging the Islamic faith of all the non-Islamic elements that has crept into it. They founded the orthodox theology of Islam by using *kalām*-the philosophical method, in order to meat the dialectical reasoning of the

Mu 'tazilites. These theologians who employed *Kalām* for the defense of their faith were therefore known as *Mutakallimun*.

5.0: SUMMARY

Ash 'arism was the school of *Ahlu `s- Sunnah wa 'l-Jamā 'ah*. It was begun almost at the same time in different places of Muslim World; in Mesopotamia, by ʿAlī bn Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī (d.circa 941-945 A. D.); in Egypt, by al-Ťaħāwī (d.942 A. D.); and in Muslim East i. e. Iraq, Iran, Sind and Hind, by Mansūr al-Māturidī. Among these three al-Ash ʿarī was the most popular hero before whom Muʿtazilite system crumbled; and he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox theology. The school founded by him was known after him as *al-Ash'ariyyah* (Asharism).

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. (i) Highlight the events that led to the emergence of Ashʿarism.
   (ii) Enumerate the fundamental doctrines of the theological school.
2. Compare the views of the Mutazilites and the Asharites on Divine Unity or Divine Justice.
3. Write notes on
      (i) Attributes of God and Their Relation with His Essence
      (ii) God's seating Himself on the Throne

7.0: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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(4) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in MuslimPhilosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar Lahore.
(5) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al- Azhar Colleges Press.

UNIT 4: BIOGRAPHY OF AL-ASH'ARĪ AND HIS SHORT CREED

CONTENTS

1.0:   INTRODUCTION

As you have been told in the previous Unit, Ash'arism was attributed to the name of Abu `l-Hasan Ali ibn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī (d.c. 330/945). As it has also been indicated al-Māturidī and a't-Tahāwī's schools of theology similar to that of al-Ash'arī arose at the same time in Samarqanda and Egypt respectively. All the three produced treatises which were been used as text books in schools. This Unit gives a biographical account of *Imām* Abu `l-Hasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī  and a translation of his catechism as a sample of the treatises of the *Ahlu Sunnah wa `l-Jamā'ah* movement.

2.0:   OBJECTIVES

Having digested this unit you would be able to
- (i)   identify three representatives of orthodox school of Islamic theology
- (ii)   give a biographical account of al-Ash'arī and sum up his treatise on the Sunni creed.

3.0:   MAIN CONTENTS

3. 1. Abu `l- Hasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī:

His full name is Abu `l-Hasan 'Alībn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī a seventh generation descendant of Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī the reputable Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. He was born in Başrah in 260 a.h. In his early youth he was attending the sittings of Traditionalists and Jurists but always with his tutor Abu 'Alī al-Jubbāī taking lessons in the Science of Islamic Creed (*'ilmu al-Aqā'id*). As a disciple of al-Jubbāī, he became a member of the Mutazilite's school and champion of Mutazilism. Because he was an eloquent speaker while his mentor was only a good authour, he represented him at discussion and debate forums on many occasions until he was forty.

Al-Ash'arī then disagreed with his teacher on some issues such as the question of *a`ş-şalāħ wa`l-aşlaħ*, which implies that it is incumbent on God to do what is in the best interest of man and for which his tutor could not provide him with a convincing answer. Al-Ash'arī came to al-Jubbā'ī and presented the case of three brothers; one being God-fearing, another godless and a third having died as a child, and asked him as to what would be their positions on the Resurrection. Al-Ash'arī thus boycotted the Mu'tazilites' camp as his teacher was unable to give a satisfactory answer.

He secluded in his house for some time comparing the proofs of mutazilism with other existing views. He then came out on a Friday and mounted the pulpit in the Central Mosque of Basrah and declared: He who knows me knows who I am, and he who does not know me let him know that I am Abu al-Ħasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī; I used to maintain that the *Qur'ān* is created, that eyes of men shall not see God and that the creatures create their actions. Lo! I repent that I have been a Mu'tazilī. I renounce these opinions and I take the engagement to refute the Mutazilah and expose their infamy and turpitude." O men: I have been away from you all these days because I compared notes and the proofs were seen as balance and none carried weight above the other. Then I sought for guidance from Allah and he guided me to what I have preserved in these my books. I have divested myself of all the creeds I was holding as I am divesting myself from this cloth. He then presented what he authored from the point of view of the Majority of Jurists and Traditionists. Whatever might be the cause of al-Ash'arī's change, he became terribly in earnest for the task set before himself when he changed.

Al-Ash'arī pursued his adversaries, the Mu'tazilah and all men of selfish interest wherever they were found; spread the tentacles of his supporters to nooks and corners.. Most scholars called him the *Imām Ahlu `s-Sunnah wa `l-Jamā'ah* (Leader of the Sunnis and Muslim Majority) because he accepted all the creeds contained in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* and approves apparent meaning of the seemingly ambiguous verses not necessarily comparing God's Attributes and qualities with those of men.

The various groups of the people who read his books took him to be their leader, ascribed themselves to his system. The followers of his system are popularly known by the name *al-Ashā'irah*. He died in 230 a. h.

Al-Ash'arī was reported to be a prolific writer being ascribed the authourship of about three hundred books; but one of his biographers, Ibn Asakir, mentions only nineyty-three of his works. Brockelmann, in his Gazetteer Arabischan Littérateur, enumerates a few of these. Three that are in print and may be found on some Muslim websites are: *Al-Ibānah 'an Uşūl a`d-Diyānah; A`r-Risālah fi Istiħsān al-Khawđ fi 'l-Kalām and Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*. The *Maqālāt* has been said to be the most authentic book on the views of different schools about religious dogmas and doctrines.

Self Assessment Exercise
Write a biography of al-Ash'arī; mention some of his contribution to Islamic theology among other things.

3.2 Al-Ash'arī's Muslim Catechism
Below is a complete translation

Our doctrine which we teach and our religion (*diyāna*) which we follow consists in holding fast to the Book of God and the Usage (*sunna*) of His Prophet and to that which is handed down from the Companions, their immediate followers (*tābi's*) and from the leaders (*imāms*) in tradition--with that we take refuge; and we teach that which Ahmad ibn Hanbal--may God illumine his face, exalt his rank and make great his reward--followed; and we shun that which is opposed to his doctrine. For he is the excellent leader, the perfect chief, through whom God made plain the truth, when error was made manifest, and showed the path and smote down the innovations of the innovators, the deviations of the deviators and the doubts of the doubters. So, the mercy of God be upon him for an appointed leader and an instructed chief, and upon all the leaders of the Muslims.

The sum of our doctrine is this,

that we believe in God, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, in all that has come from God, and what trustworthy men (*thiqah*) have reported from the Apostles of God; we oppose nothing thereof.

That God is One God, Single, One, Eternal; beside Him no God exists; He has taken to Himself no wife (*şāhibah*), nor child (*walad*); and that Muhammad is His Servant ('*abd*) and His Apostle.

That Paradise and Hell are Verity and that the Hour (*as-sā'ah*) will come without doubt, and God will resurrect those that are in the graves.

That God has settled Himself (*istawā*) upon His throne, as He has said, (Qur. 20, 4); "the *Rahmān* has settled Himself upon His throne."

That God has a countenance, as He has said, (Qur. 55, 27); "and the countenance of thy Lord will abide, full of majesty and glory;"

and two hands, as He has said, (Qur. 5, 69); "much more! both His hands are spread out," and (Qur. 38, 75); "that which I have created with both My hands;" and two eyes, without asking how (*bila kayfa*), as He has said, (Qur. 54, 14'); "which swims forth under Our eyes."

That whoever thinks that God's name is other than He, is in error.

That God has Knowledge (*'ilm*), as He has said, (Qur. 35, 12); "Not one woman becomes pregnant and brings forth, except by His knowledge."

We maintain that God has Power (*qudrah*), as He has said, (Qur. 41, 14); "and have they not seen that God who created them is stronger than they?"

We maintain that God has Hearing (*sam'u*) and Seeing (*başar*) and do not deny it, as do the Mu'tazilites, Jahmites and Kharijites.

We teach that God's Word (*kalām*) is uncreated, and that He has never created anything except by saying to it, "Be!" and it forthwith became, as He has said, (Qur, 16, 42); "Our speech to anything when We willed it was, 'Be' and it was."

Nothing exists upon earth, be it good or bad, but that which, God wills; but all things are by God's Will (*mashī 'ah*). No one is able to do anything before God does it, neither is anyone independent of God, nor can he withdraw himself from God's Knowledge.

There is no Creator but God. The works (*a' māl*) of creatures are created and predestined by God, as He said, (Qur. 37, 94); "and God has created you and what ye do." Man is able to create nothing; but they are created, as He has said, (Qur. 35, 31); "Is there any Creator except God?" and (Qur. 16, 17) "and is He who created like him who created not?" and (Qur. 52, 35); "were they created out of nothing, or are they the creators?" and such passages are many in the *Qur'ān*.

And God maintains the believers in obedience to Him, is gracious unto them, cares for them, reforms them, and guides them aright; but the unbelievers He leads astray, guides them not aright, vouchsafes them not Faith (*īmān*), by His Grace, as the People of error and pride maintain. For should He be gracious unto them and help them aright, then would they be pious, and should He guide them aright, then would they allow themselves to be guided aright, as He has said, (Qur. 7, 177); "whom God guideth aright, he allows himself to be guided aright, and whom He leads astray, they are the losers." God is able to help the unbelieving aright and to be gracious unto them, so that they shall become believing, but He wills that they shall be unbelieving as is known; for He has made them unyielding to all help and sealed their hearts.

Good and Evil happen according to the Destiny (*qaḍā*) and Decree (*qadar*) of God for good and. evil, for the sweet and the bitter. We know that the misfortune that befalls us is not in order that we may go astray, and that the good fortune which befalls us is not in order that we may go aright. We have no control

over that which is good or hurtful to us, except so far as God wills. We flee from our anxieties to God and commit at all times our distress and poverty to Him.

We teach that the *Qur'ān* is God's Word, and that it is uncreated, and that whosoever says that it is created is an unbeliever (*kāfir*).

We believe that God at the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāmah*) will be visible to the eyes, as the moon is seen upon the night of the full moon; the believers will see Him, according to Traditions, which have come down from the Prophet.

We teach that while the believers will see Him, the unbelievers will be separated from Him by a wall of division, as God has said, (Qur. 83, 15); "Surely not! They will be separated from their Lord, upon that Day."

We teach that Moses besought God that he might see Him in this world; then God revealed Himself to the mountain and turned it into dust and taught Moses thereby that he could not see Him in this world (Qur. 7, 139).

We are of the opinion that we may not accuse anyone of unbelief (*kufr*), who prays towards Mecca, on account of sin committed by him, such as unchastity, theft, wine drinking, as the Kharijites believe, who judge that these thereby become unbelievers.

We teach that whoever commits a great sin (*kabīrah*), or anything like it, holding it to be allowed, is an unbeliever, since he does not believe in its prohibition.

We teach that Islam is a wider idea than Faith (*īmān*), so that not every Islam is Faith.

We believe that God turns the hearts upside down, and holds them between two of His fingers, that He lays the heavens upon a finger and the earth upon a finger, according to the tradition from the Prophet.

We believe that God will not leave in Hell any of those who confess His Unity (*muwahhid*) and hold fast to the Faith, and that there is no Hell for him whom the Prophet has by his witness appointed to Paradise.

We hope for Paradise for sinners and fear on their account, that they will be punished in Hell.

We teach that God will release a few out of Hell, on account of Muhammad's intercession (*shafaʻah*) after they have been scorched there.

We believe in the punishment of the grave.

We believe that the Tank (*ḥawḍ*) and the Weight (*Mīzān*) are Verities: that the Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāt)* is a Verity; that Resurrection (*ba'th*) after death is a Verity; that God will set up His creatures in a place (*mawqif*) and will hold a reckoning with the Believers.

We believe that Faith (*īmān*) consists in word (*qawl*) and in work (*'amal*) and that it increases and diminishes.

We trust in the sound Traditions handed down from the Apostle of God, transmitted by trustworthy people (*thiqah*), man of integrity from man of integrity, up to the Apostle.

We hold by the love of the early Believers (*salaf*), whom God chose to be Companions to the Prophet, and we praise them with the praise with which God praised them, and we carry on their succession.

We assert that the *Imām* succeeding the Apostle of God was Abu Bakr; that God made Religion (*dīn*) great by him, and caused him to conquer the Apostates (*murtadds*). The Muslims made him their *Imām*, just as Muhammad had made him *Imām* at prayers.

Then followed [as recognized *Imām*] 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb; then 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān; his murderers killed him out of wickedness and enmity;

then 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib. These are the *Imām*s after the Apostle, and their caliphate is that of the Prophetic office [*i.e.*, they are, though not prophets, successors of the Prophet].

We bear witness of Paradise for the Ten (*al-asharatu-l-mubashsharah*), to whom the Apostle bore witness of it, and we carry on the succession of the other Companions of the Prophet and hold ourselves far from that which was in dispute between them.

We hold that the four *Imām*s were in the true way, were rightly guided and excellent, so that no one equals them in excellence.

We hold as true the traditions, which the People of Tradition (*naql*) have established, concerning the descent of God to the lowest heaven (*samā ad-dunyā*), and that the Lord will say, "Is there a supplicant? Is there a seeker for forgiveness?" and the rest of that which they have handed down and established, contrary to that which the mistaken and misled opined.

We ground ourselves in our opposition on the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the agreement of the Muslims and what is in accordance therewith, but put forth no novelty (*bid'a*) not sanctioned by God, and we opine of God nothing that we have not been taught.

We teach that God will come on the Day of Resurrection, as He has said, (Qur. 89, 23); "When the earth shall be turned to dust, and the Lord shall appear and the Angels, rank on rank,"

and that God is near to His servants, in what way (*kayfa*) He wills, as He has said, (Qur. 50, 15); "and We are nearer to him than the artery in his neck;" and (Qur. 53, 8); "Then He approached and came near and was two bows' length distant or even nearer."

To our Religion (*dīn*) belongs further, that we on Fridays and on festival days pray behind every person, pious and profane--so are the conditions for congregational prayers, as it is handed down from Abd Allah ibn 'Umar that he prayed behind al-Hajjāj.

To our Religion belongs the wiping (*masħ*) of the inner boots (*khuffs*) upon a journey and at home, in contradiction to the deniers of this.

We uphold the prayer for peace for the *Imām*s of the Muslims, submission to their office, and maintain the error of those who hold it right to rise against them whenever there may be apparent in them a falling away from right. We are against armed rebellion against them and civil war.

We believe in the appearance of anti-Christ (*al-Masīħad-Dajjal*) according to the tradition handed down from the Prophet; in the punishment of the grave, and in Munkar and Nakīr and in their questions to the buried in their graves.

We hold the tradition of the journey to heaven (*mi'rāj*, Qur. 17) of Muhammad as true, and declare many of the visions in sleep to be true, and we say that there is an explanation for them.

We uphold the alms for the dead of the Muslims and prayer for them, and believe that God will help them therewith.

We hold as true that there are enchanters in the world, and that enchantment is and exists.

We hold as a religious duty the prayer which is held over the dead of those who have prayed toward Mecca, whether they have been believers or godless; we uphold also that it is their right to inherit them.

We acknowledge that Paradise and Hell are created,

and that whoever dies or is killed, dies or is killed at his appointed time (*ajal*);

that articles of sustenance (*rizq*) from God, with which He sustains His creatures, consist of the lawful (*ḥalāl*) and the forbidden (*ḥarām*);

that Satan makes evil suggestions to men, and puts them in doubt, and causes them to be possessed, contrary to that which the Muʻtazilites and the Jahmites maintain, as God said, (Qur. 2, 276); "Those who take usury will [at the Resurrection] stand there like one whom Satan causes to be possessed by madness," and (Qur. 114, 4 *ff.*); "I take my refuge in God, from the evil suggestion, from the stealthy one who makes suggestions in the hearts of men, by means of men and Jinn."

We affirm that God may distinguish the pious by signs, which He manifests through them.

Our teaching concerning the little children of the polytheists (*mushriks*) is this, that God will kindle a fire in the other world for them, and will say, "Run in there;"--as the tradition says.

We believe that God knows what men do and what they will to do, what happens and how that which does not happen, if it should happen, would happen.

We believe in the obedience of the *Imām*s and in their counsel of the Muslims. We consider right the separation from every inciter to innovation (*bidʻah*) and the turning aside from the People of wandering desires (*ahl al-ahwāʼ*).

--Translated from the Arabic text in Spitta's Zur Geschichte al-Asʻari's, pp. 133 *ff.*

Self Assessment Exercise
Identify the first twenty articles of belief in al-Ashʻarī's catechism.
Highlight the last twenty five articles of faith in the Muslim creed by al-Ashʻarī.

4.0: CONCLUSION

The above English translation of al-Ashʿarī's Muslim catechism has been downloaded and adapted from http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal . The translation of similar catechisms authored by al-Ghazzālī(d. 1111 c.e.) an-Nasafī (d.) and al-Fuđalī (d.) can also be downloaded from the same website. Their original Arabic texts are in print in various forms and in wide circulation with commentaries and glossaries added to some of them. So also are the catechisms of aʾt-Taħāwī ((229 – 321 (844 – 933)); aʾs-Sanūsī (c. 1430 - 1490), *al-Wāsitiyyah* of the celebrated theologian, ibn Taymiyyah. Kitabu `t-Tawhid, the catechism written by al-Māturidī(238 – 332/ 853 – 949) is also in print and in various forms, with or without commentaries, and as prescribed text-books in Muslim religious Institutions of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Zaytunah Institute in Tunis etc. etc..

5.0: SUMMARY

This unit presents the biography of al-Ashʿarī, one of the celebrated Muslim theologian after whom Islamic orthodox movement is named. The unit also provides a complete translation of his catechism. Published catechisms, similar to that of al-Ash'arī, with translation and commentaries are enumerated as concluding remarks.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Enumerate twenty Articles of faith giving their *Qur'ān*ic references as contained in the Ash 'arī's Muslim catechism.
2. Mention the names of prominent Muslim theologians whose book of Islamic creed are extant and in use in our contemporary times.

7.0: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
 (2) Ali bn Ismāʿīl al-Ash'arī http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal.
 (3) Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in Muslim Philosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar Lahore.
 (4) M. M. Sharif   A History of Muslim Philosophy
 (5) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press.