

*In our days, religion has once again  
become something alien:*  
Al-Khattabi's Critique  
of the State of Religious Learning  
in Tenth-century Islam<sup>1</sup>

*Sebastian Günther*

Among the modern studies on classical Islamic theology, two articles by George Makdisi deserve special mention: "Ash`ari and the Ash`arites in Islamic Religious History"<sup>2</sup> and "The Juridical Theology of Shafi`i: Origins and Significance of *Usûl al-Fiqh*."<sup>3</sup> In the latter essay, Makdisi divides the development of medieval Islamic theology into three major stages.<sup>4</sup> The FIRST STAGE was characterized by the formation of two distinct groups with contrasting views of Islamic theology: (a) the traditionalists who relied on "faith" and rejected "reason" in theological thought and (b) the rationalists who, in this regard, prioritized "reason" over "faith." The SECOND STAGE was marked by the dramatic emergence of the theologian Abu al-Hasan al-Ash`ari of Basra (324/935), who was initially an active follower of the Mu`tazilites and their rationalistic interpretations but then (around the year 300/912-13) "converted" to orthodoxy. Al-Ash`ari not only rendered reason and the method of "rationalistic dialectic reasoning" (*kalam*) acceptable to traditional Muslim

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Sebastian Günther has just recently been appointed professor and chair in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Göttingen (Germany). Prior to this, he has held positions at the University of Toronto (Canada) and the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg (Germany). In addition, he has been a frequent visiting professor at al-Azhar University, the American University in Beirut, and the United Arab Emirates University. His research interests include the Qur'an, hadith literature, Arabic belles-lettres, and Islamic thought. Currently, he is writing a book surveying educational philosophies from Islam's classical period.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Arabic expressions in the present article follow a simplified transliteration: different apostrophes serve to distinguish between the Arabic consonants *hamza* (´), a voiceless glottal stop, and `ayn (ˁ), a laryngeal voiced fricative. Long vowels are indicated only in transliterated book titles that appear in the article's main text. All translations from the Arabic are my own, unless otherwise specified.

scholars (with the exception of the ultra-conservative Hanbalites, who vehemently opposed it), but also provided Islamic orthodoxy overall with a solid argumentative foundation, especially in theological discussions. The THIRD STAGE began around the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, when the Ash`arites, after a period of insignificance, suddenly reappeared and not only managed to noticeably increase their influence, but also to successfully steer a middle course between the Mu`tazilites and the Hanbalites. Whether the Ash`arites actually “triumphed” as the dominant school of theology in eleventh-century Baghdad, however, is another matter about which modern scholarship has not yet reached a final decision.

Makdisi provides several additional significant insights into the history of classical Islamic thought. First, he recalls that there was more than a century of difference between al-Ash`ari’s work on the one hand, and the activities of the later and then full-grown Ash`ari school of orthodox Islamic theology on the other (in which the strictly traditionalist elements dominated). Second, Ash`ari thought succeeded in establishing itself above all *in*, or more precisely, *through* the Shafi`i school of law.<sup>5</sup> Last, yet importantly, the rich (though still insufficiently studied) anti-*kalam* literature produced by conservative Muslim scholars during that time was not only directed against the Mu`tazilites, but also in part against the Ash`arites.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of these dynamic intellectual and dogmatic developments in medieval Islam, Makdisi briefly mentions the Shafi`i scholar Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi (d. 388/998) and his treatise *The Dispensability of Speculative Theology and Its Followers (Al-Ghunya `an al-Kalâm wa-Ahlihi)*, which is only partly extant.<sup>7</sup> So far, modern scholarship has taken little notice of this, as we will argue, remarkable medieval scholar.<sup>8</sup> The present study is, therefore, devoted to shedding some light on al-Khattabi’s life, work, and scholarly output. This will serve as a prelude to our main objective, which is to take a closer look at his assessment of the state of religious learning in Islam in the second half of the fourth/tenth century. Al-Khattabi’s analysis of the situation of contemporary Muslim scholarship in general, and his critical appraisal of the traditionalist and rationalist groups of orthodox Sunni thinkers in particular, represent valuable firsthand evidence for the intellectual history of Islam at this time. In fact, this study will help us to better understand the complexity of the traditionalist stance held by this adherent of Sunni orthodoxy in the stern debates between Muslim scholars of his time over “tradition and reform” in Islamic thought and society.

For this task, we will concentrate on al-Khattabi’s introduction to his compendium *Auspicious Examples from Prophetic Traditions (Ma`âlim al-Sunan)*, a four-part work in which he endeavors to comment on those

accounts from Abu Dawud al-Sijistani's (d. 275/888) famous *Compendium of Prophetic Traditions (Kitâb al-Sunan)* that, in his opinion, deserve clarification.<sup>9</sup> Remarkably enough, al-Khattabi was a pioneer in the field of hadith studies, for his *Ma`âlim al-Sunan* was the very first commentary on an authoritative Sunni collection of prophetic traditions. This point cannot be stressed enough.

In this context, we will pay special attention to one particularly interesting aspect of al-Khattabi's ideas: his understanding of the relation between religion and reason in Sunni Islam. On the one hand, we will note that he very pointedly criticizes the Mu`tazilite concept of "rationalistic" or "speculative" theology (*kalam*). On the other, however, it will become clear that despite his orthodox position on this matter, he offers several rather measured views on *nazar*, which in al-Khattabi's paradigm of thought (as indicated in the *Ma`âlim*), seems to mean the "careful examination," "logical reasoning," and "research" indispensable to those scholars who seek to arrive at well-reasoned opinions. He thus appears to advocate *nazar* as a legitimate approach, one that was needed especially by scholars of law, rather than to represent it as a method of "philosophical and theological speculation" (a Mu`tazilite practice that most conservative scholars considered an objectionable innovation), or as "spiritual perception" (as some mystics used the term).<sup>10</sup>

### **Al-Khattabi the Scholar**

Who was al-Khattabi? Abu Sulayman Hamd ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Khattab al-Khattabi al-Busti was born in Rajab 319 (July 931) in Bust (now Lashkargah), a city in southern Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> The variant of his first name, Ahmad for Hamd, which is occasionally found in the bibliographical sources, was apparently already used during his lifetime.<sup>12</sup> The *nisbah* "al-Khattabi," by which he came to be known, refers to his great-grandfather, al-Khattab. It is also said that Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi was a descendant of Zayd ibn al-Khattab, a brother of the second Rightly Guided Caliph, `Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 23/644).<sup>13</sup>

Various journeys, whether in search of knowledge and education (*talab al-`ilm*) or for the purpose of trade, by which he earned his living, enabled al-Khattabi to visit many places in the eastern part of the Islamic empire. Yet even as he grew older, al-Khattabi's persistent "thirst for knowledge" inspired him to undertake numerous extended journeys. He traveled between Bust, Nishapur, the Hijaz, Basra, Baghdad (where he spent most of his time during the later stage of his life), and other cities and regions of the

Islamic East. During the final years of his life, he settled in his hometown of Bust and joined a Sufi monastery located at the edge of the river Hilmend (known also as Hindmind) near Bust.<sup>14</sup> He died there at the age of 67 in Rabi` al-Akhir 388 (April 998).<sup>15</sup>

Medieval Muslim biographers unanimously consider Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi to be a leading scholar in the fields of the Islamic Prophetic Tradition (hadith) and Shaf`i jurisprudence. They characterize him as one of the most knowledgeable and acclaimed authorities of his time (*ahad aw`iyat al-`ilm fi zamanihi; imam min a`immat al-sunnah*), a trustworthy and reliable transmitter (*thiqa mutathabbit*), and the author of numerous fine works (*sahib al-tasanif al-hasanah*).<sup>16</sup> In addition, they note that he was a renowned man of letters, philologist, and lexicographer, as well as a master of Samanid poetry (the Samanids ruled between 819-999 in Central Asia and Greater Khorasan.).

Al-Khattabi's colleague and friend, Abu Mansur al-Tha`alibi of Nishapur (d. 429/1037), who is mentioned here as an example of the medieval biographers' overwhelmingly positive remarks on al-Khattabi, draws specific attention to his expertise in belletristic literature (*adab*), asceticism (*zuhd*), piety (*wara`*), and transmission of knowledge and teaching (*tadris*), along with his writing activities (*ta`lif*).<sup>17</sup> Due to these special academic qualifications and skills, al-Khattabi's contemporaries compared him to Abu `Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam al-Harawi (d. 224/838), the well-known Qur'an expert, philologist, and transmitter of traditions.<sup>18</sup> The only difference between the two scholars was, as al-Tha`alibi notes, that in addition to his scientific achievements, al-Khattabi was also an accomplished poet.

Al-Khattabi's remarkable scholarly reputation rests, above all, on his extensive work on the hadith literature, including, in particular, his commentaries on two of the most famous authoritative Sunni hadith collections:

1. *Ma`âlim al-Sunan [fi Sharh "Sahîh" Abî Dâwûd]* (*Auspicious Examples from Prophetic Traditions: [Explaining Abu Dawud's Compendium "The Sound Prophetic Traditions"]*)<sup>19</sup> and
2. *Kitâb A`lâm al-Sunan fi Sharh "Sahîh" al-Bukhârî* (*The Book of Outstanding Examples from the Prophetic Traditions: Explaining al-Bukhari's Compendium "The Sound Prophetic Traditions"*).<sup>20</sup>

In addition, al-Khattabi is also well known for his:

3. *Kitâb Gharîb al-Hadîth* (*The Book of the Unfamiliar in the Prophetic Tradition*), which is, according to the Syrian biographer and geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 626/1229), an excellent and useful book.<sup>21</sup>

In it, al-Khattabi transmits those hadith reports that are not found in the earlier books on the same topic by Abu `Ubayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam al-Harawi (d. 224/838) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889).

With these three major works on hadith, al-Khattabi earned his place in Islam's intellectual history as someone who broke new ground in hadith studies. Several factors support the accuracy of this assessment. First, not only is his *Ma`âlim al-Sunan* one of the most prominent medieval commentaries on an authoritative collection of prophetic traditions in general and Abu Dawud al-Sijistani's (d. 275/889) collection in particular, but it is also the earliest such commentary on what was to become the canonical Sunni hadith literature. Second, his commentary on al-Bukhari's *Sahîh*, which he composed shortly after the *Ma`âlim*, is similarly precious for at least two reasons: (a) it is the earliest commentary on al-Bukhari's *Sahîh*, a collection that came to be recognized as the most important of the five or six canonical Sunni handbooks of traditions, and (b) al-Khattabi's work on al-Bukhari's *Sahîh* is in many respects highly original, as it resulted in a book that should be characterized as a polemical treatise rather than a neutral commentary.<sup>22</sup> In other words, al-Khattabi's commentaries on two of the most important hadith collections are not only the earliest and among the richest in the vast and yet still understudied literature of hadith commentaries, but indeed inaugurated that very genre.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, his *Gharîb al-Hadîth* represents a significant contribution to another type of hadith study, namely, that which examined uncommon and often unique prophetic traditions (and/or such expressions in these accounts) selected from the hadith literature as a whole, instead of from just one individual hadith collection. On the one hand, then, al-Khattabi followed in the footsteps of such prominent scholars as Ibn Sallam al-Harawi and Ibn Qutayba, who are well known for their works in this subcategory of hadith studies, and, on the other, inspired later scholars with his own research in this field, including, most notably, his student Abu `Ubayd al-Harawi (d. 401/1011; see appendix).

### **Al-Khattabi's Scholarly Interests and Works**

The hadith literature and Islamic jurisprudence were at the center of al-Khattabi's scholarly interests. In order to collect traditions, he is said to have studied with the "leading scholars of his time" (*a'immat `asrihi*) and, as Yaqut reports, "to have acquired knowledge from many of those possessing it" on his various study trips.<sup>24</sup>

At a young age, al-Khattabi left Bust<sup>25</sup> for Baghdad, where he studied Islamic jurisprudence with Ibn Abi Hurayrah (d. 345/956),<sup>26</sup> a Shafî'i scholar of law, and Abu Bakr al-Najjad (d. 348/959), a hadith scholar and man of letters. He subsequently joined Abu `Ali al-Saffar's (d. 341/952) study circle, where he devoted himself to studying Arabic literature (*adab*) and Arabic philology. Later on he went to Basra, where he studied with Abu Bakr ibn Dassa (d. 346/957), a well-known scholar of hadith and Islamic law. In Mecca, he studied the hadith literature under the supervision of the hadith scholar Abu Sa`id ibn al-A`rabi (d. 341/952) before leaving for Khorasan and Transoxania.<sup>27</sup> Finally, in Nishapur, he spent several years studying with Abu al-`Abbas al-Asamm (d. 346/957), a rather famous hadith scholar, and Abu Bakr al-Qaffal al-Shashi (d. 365/976), a scholar of Islamic law. Only at this time did he begin to teach. Al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (405/ 1014 or 15), one of his students there, reports in his *Chronicle of Nishapur* that al-Khattabi's lectures were a tremendous success and received much praise.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we find al-Khattabi's scholarly output explicitly acknowledged and incorporated into the works of his numerous students, some of whom went on to become quite prominent: Abu Dharr al-Harawi (d. 435/1044), `Abd al-Ghafir al-Naysaburi (d. 448/1014), al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, and Abu `Ubayd al-Harawi (d. 401/1011). Yet al-Khattabi's wide academic interests are best reflected in the different themes on which he wrote and published (*allafa fî funûn min al-`ilm wa-sannafta*).<sup>28</sup> at least nine of which are extant in manuscripts or are otherwise adequately attested.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the three aforementioned books on hadith, the following are available in print:

1. *Kitâb Islâh Ghalat al-Muhaddithîn (The Book on Correcting the [Language] Mistakes of the Transmitters of Prophetic Traditions)*;
2. *Kitâb Sha`n al-Du`â` (The Book Concerning the Invocation of God)*, a work dealing with the significance and place of prayer in Islam;
3. *Kitâb [al-I`tisam bi] al-`Uzla (The Book of [Adherence to] Solitude)*; and
4. *Bayân I`jâz al-Qur`ân (Elucidating the Miraculous Character of the Qur`an)*, one of his famous treatises.<sup>30</sup>

### **Al-Khattabi's Working Methods and Introduction to the *Ma`âlim***

All of al-Khattabi's lengthier edited works contain an opening statement (*khutbah*) that follows the same pattern. After introducing his audience to the book's main topic, al-Khattabi indicates and elaborates on the various objec-

tives he set himself when compiling it. Finally, he expressly says that his teaching activities have prompted its preparation and publication.

The precision with which al-Khattabi outlines his scholarly objectives, together with his erudite style, are clear evidence of his adherence to his own rigid academic principles. Such a style illustrates his sincere dedication to teaching and clearly demonstrates his considerable literary skill. The mere existence of these sophisticated introductions shows that his academic ambitions went beyond those of a teacher who prepared notes for his lectures. Indeed, in these introductions al-Khattabi confidently presents himself as the “author” of scholarly writings, which he fully conceptualized before dictating and publishing them.

Al-Khattabi's introduction to the *Ma`âlim al-Sunan fî Sharh “Sahîh” Abî Dâwûd* is particularly interesting for it both introduces the audience more generally to Abu Dawud's *Sunan*<sup>31</sup> and includes a pointed discussion on the state of major religious disciplines. He begins his analysis of this complex topic by identifying the two main motives that prompted him to prepare the *Ma`âlim* collection. One reason, he says, was that his brethren had expressly asked him to “clarify what is problematic” (*idah ma yushkil*) in Abu Dawud's *sunan* work with regard to the content and the language of the traditions contained therein. The other rationale was his belief that there was a real need to draw special attention to those legal opinions in the bulk of Abu Dawud's *Sunan* that (a) were evidently of particular importance to Muslims and (b) that offered indispensable guidance, even though their content or expression might not have always been immediately clear to everyone. At the beginning of his introduction, therefore, al-Khattabi states:

Now, my brethren – may God bless you – I have understood your inquiry and that which you requested in respect to the explanation of the *Kitâb al-Sunan* by Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash`ath [regarding]:

- [a] The clarification of what is problematic in its expressions;
- [b] The explanation of what is difficult in its concepts and the guiding principles of its rules;
- [c] The guidance to the passages in its accounts from which one can draw conclusions and find insights; [and]
- [d] The disclosure of the implied interpretations of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in the accounts, so that all may grasp and understand their deeper meaning, in addition to the surface meaning of the account.<sup>32</sup>

As the Qur'an plays the most fundamental role in all aspects of Muslim life and learning, God bestowed upon the Prophet Muhammad, as al-Khattabi highlights, the duty “to make clear to humankind what was sent

down to them; and so haply they will reflect” (Q 16:44). Moreover, the Qur’an left “no question of religion ... without an explanation.”<sup>33</sup> However, al-Khattabi subtly but clearly distances himself from the perceptions that were prevalent among certain Muslim scholars who adhered solely to a literalist interpretation. He reveals his inclination toward Ash`ari thought by indicating that all matters of religion in the Qur’an belong to two principal categories:

- [a] The obvious explanation (*bayan jali*), which the Qur’an expresses literally; [and]
- [b] The hidden explanation (*bayan khafi*), which is implied in the meaning of the Qur’an; whatever is of this [latter] type of explanation was entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad. ... Thus he who acquires [the knowledge] of the Book (i.e., the Qur’an) and the Sunnah (i.e., the Prophet’s Tradition) would have fully received the knowledge of both types of explanations.

In this book of his, Abu Dawud has compiled accounts that deal with the fundamentals of [gaining] knowledge, the most important of the prophetic traditions, and with the rules of Islamic law. About this last, as far as we know, no one before him had ever done anything similar and no one after him had ever matched what he had done.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, the second type of explanation, namely, the initial, foundational interpretation of the Qur’an entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad, as al-Khattabi stresses, is available to the Muslims of later generations in the body of the transmitted hadith materials. Moreover, Abu Dawud compiled these prophetic traditions in a most excellent manner, for which al-Khattabi praises him<sup>35</sup>:

It is related of Abu Dawud that he said: “I did not include in my book any tradition on which the consensus of the people was that it should be left out.” Prior to the time of Abu Dawud, scholars of the Prophetic Tradition classified the traditions in collections of the *jamawi`* type,<sup>36</sup> *masanid* type,<sup>37</sup> and the like. In addition to the prophetic traditions (*sunan*) and legal rules (*ahkam*), these books collect reports (*akhbar*), stories (*qisas*), admonitions (*mawa`iz*), and rules of proper conduct (*adab*).

As for prophetic traditions [crucial to Islamic law], the *sunan* proper,<sup>38</sup> none of them (i.e., the pre- and post-Abu Dawud scholars) pursued the collection, exhaustive review, clarification, or abbreviation of the lengthier accounts in the way Abu Dawud did; nor did they provide references as to their context (*siyaq*). This is why the leading authorities in [the literature of] the Prophetic Tradition (*a`immat al-hadith*) and the scholars of the Prophetic Heritage (*‘ulama’ al-athar*) viewed this book [of Abu



Dawud's] as a miracle. Hence, it has persisted as the model for those seeking knowledge. [...]<sup>39</sup>

In this book of his, Abu Dawud has compiled from the Prophetic Tradition:

- [a] [Accounts] on the fundamentals of knowledge (*usul al-`ilm*),
- [b] The most important traditions devoted to the *sunnah* proper (*umma-hat al-sunan*), and
- [c] The main regulations of Islamic law (*ahkam al-fiqh*) [in a way] that no one before or after him has ever done, as far as we know.

I have laid out in writing for you what I dictated of the explanation [of these traditions] and clarified of their [individual] parts and their meanings. [In addition,] I have stated what scholars have said about them and their disagreement over them. This is a wealth of knowledge, so be happy with it.<sup>40</sup>

These explicit statements lead al-Khattabi to ponder two questions: (a) why was Abu Dawud's hadith compendium so widely transmitted (he expressly mentions Iraq, Egypt, and the Maghrib as places where this work was particularly well known) and (b) why did the majority of Muslims consider it to be so outstandingly important? (It may be noted here in passing that Abu Dawud's book enjoyed such great esteem during the fourth/tenth century that it was occasionally called "the Qur'an of the hadith scholars.") In seeking answers to these questions, al-Khattabi identifies several specific merits of Abu Dawud's book.

First, as noted above, al-Khattabi states that no other book provides knowledge on matters of religion and law like Abu Dawud's. This was an important reason why it was in such great demand. Al-Khattabi also says that this book even became a paragon of wisdom (*hikmah*) for the different groups of religious scholars and classes of jurisconsults, regardless of their school of thought or geographic area of residence. Second, al-Khattabi stresses that this book covers a remarkably wide spectrum of subjects ranging from the key concepts of the four Sunni law schools to the individual precedents of Islamic law. Third, and most importantly, Abu Dawud's book distinguishes itself from the hadith collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim by (a) its more systematic composition (*ahsan ras-fan*) and (b) its greater use of traditions significant to Islamic law (*akthar fiqhan*).

For these reasons, al-Khattabi concludes, Abu Dawud's collection was preferable to the *sahih* works of al-Bukhari and Muslim. Moreover, this was the reason why the people in Iraq, Egypt, the Maghrib, and most other lands relied on Abu Dawud's collection as "an object of trust" (*mu`awwal*). Only

the people in Khorasan, al-Khattabi's very own homeland, were more attached to the collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim, as he notes expressly but without further comment.<sup>41</sup>

### **Religious Scholarship between Hadith and *Kalam***

Al-Khattabi's introduction to his *Ma`âlim* indicates that he prepared this commentary in response to his co-religionists' "inquiry" about the content of Abu Dawud's hadith collection. Given al-Khattabi's extensive teaching activities, it is very likely that the term he uses here, "brethren," points to his students. In medieval Islam, it was rather common for students pursuing higher learning to direct specific questions to their master. However, let us also not forget that the question-and-answer format was a well-attested stylistic feature in the scholarly literature of the time, including the writings of medieval Muslim theologians and philosophers, as much as the works of Christian scholars, especially certain apologists, writing in Arabic, Syriac, or Greek. (One must note as well, of course, that the question-and-answer scheme is also frequently used in both the Qur'an and the Bible).<sup>42</sup> Although the ample evidence of a question-and-answer scheme in medieval Arabic works has not yet been sufficiently studied by modern researchers,<sup>43</sup> it is safe to say that medieval intellectuals considered it an effective didactic tool. Thus they made conscious use of this ("Socratic") method in their writings to present their ideas in a compelling way and to work toward understanding the world in a fuller and more fundamental manner so that they and their readers could attain wisdom.<sup>44</sup>

Al-Khattabi uses the technique of responding to (actual or fictive) questions not only in the introduction to the *Ma`âlim*, but also in the introductions of his other works. In this way, he immediately draws his readers' attention and directs their interest toward the complex issues he is about to tackle. Furthermore, he shows that his scholarly work is a direct "response" to pressing, real-life issues, rather than a mere academic exercise, and effectively characterizes his commentary on Abu Dawud's hadith collection as a timely and important contribution to searching for solutions to the critical issues in tenth-century Islamic thought and society. Naturally, insights of this kind greatly help us to appreciate the high degree to which a medieval Muslim scholar like al-Khattabi understood the power of words, stylistic devices, and literary techniques, as well as their appropriateness as a means for engaging people in a dynamic and often highly sensitive scholarly discourse.

A close look at this particular introduction reveals a good deal of evidence that supports our preliminary observations. Al-Khattabi expressly articulates here, for example, that the critical state of both religion in general and traditional Sunni scholarship in particular have prompted him to compose this commentary. He even goes one step further by comparing the contemporary state of affairs in this regard to the situation in pre-Islamic times, which Muslims call the *Jahiliyyah* (Age of Religious Ignorance). Remarkably enough, our author effectively employs for this purpose metaphors and images common in pre-Islamic poetry when he laments:

In our days, religion has once again become something alien (*gharib*), as it was when it began; its signposts have been obliterated, the remains of its encampments are empty, its quarters deserted, and the paths to its roads unknown.<sup>45</sup>

As for the religious disciplines, al-Khattabi observes:

I see the scholars in our time divided into two parties and split into two groups:

- [1] The people of the Prophetic Tradition and the Prophetic Heritage (*ashab hadith wa-athar*), and
- [2] The people of juridical knowledge and reflective reasoning (*ashab fiqh wa-nazar*).<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, the Shafi`ite al-Khattabi acts here like an arbitrator when he carefully balances his critiques of these two important parties. As for the scholars of the Prophetic Tradition, he notes that the majority of them are interested only in

the transmissions, the collecting of paths [of transmission], and searching for the uncommon and irregular [accounts and expressions] of the Prophetic Tradition, most of which are either fabricated (*mawdu`*) or distorted (*maqlub*).<sup>47</sup>

He proceeds by suggesting that most hadith scholars of this type would actually not study the traditions seriously or examine their content and meaning critically, nor bring “their treasures and legal regulation to the forefront.” Additionally, they would defame the scholars of Islamic law and accuse them of “diverging from the normative traditions of the Prophet (*sunan*).” Al-Khattabi’s criticism of such scholars culminates in the following statement:

[In so doing,] they (i.e., the scholars of the Prophetic Tradition) do not realize that they cannot reach the level of knowledge which they (i.e., the

jurisconsults) have attained, and that they (i.e., the scholars of the Prophetic Tradition) are sinning by defaming them.<sup>48</sup>

Yet he then appeals directly to both the masters of the Prophetic Tradition and the law experts by urging them to understand that they depend on each other, despite the fact that they form two different groups. This was so because, on the one hand, the Prophetic Tradition (*hadith*) “constitutes the foundation” (*bi-manzilat al-asas*) and the “root” (*asl*) of religious learning, while, on the other hand, “expert legal knowledge” (*fiqh*) is the “building” that rests upon it (*bina*), or its “branch” (*far*). However, any building that does not rest upon a “basis” or a “foundation” is destined to collapse, while “any foundation devoid of a building” is bleak and the equivalent of a “ruin.”<sup>49</sup>

Al-Khattabi affirms that both groups of scholars are in real need of each other’s insights and expertise. In spite of this, he warns, both groups behave like “brothers who are moving away from each other” (*ikhwan mutahajirun*) and who neither support nor assist each other, nor collaborate sincerely on their paths to the truth.<sup>50</sup> The jurisconsults, he states, know only very little of the Prophetic Tradition; in fact, they barely differentiate between “sound” and “defective” traditions and between “accepted” and “rejected” ones. Indeed, they would not even shy away from hadith accounts whose credibility they themselves have already questioned. Hence, they use these weak accounts as supporting evidence in their discussions with opponents, as long as they “are somehow in agreement with their law schools ... or opinions.”<sup>51</sup> Al-Khattabi demonstrates this by saying:

If a statement (*qawl*) is reported to these people – may God grant success to them and us – on the authority of one of the leaders of their law school or a chief of their religious sect, at which he arrived by his own decision (*ijtihad min qibali nafsihi*), they seek [and find] therein reliability and free themselves from any responsibility in this regard.

Thus, you will find that the followers of MALIK<sup>52</sup> rely only on those aspects of his school of law (*madhhab*) that were transmitted by IBN AL-QASIM,<sup>53</sup> AL-ASHHAB,<sup>54</sup> or similarly respected senior companions of his (i.e., Malik’s). However, they consider useless anything transmitted by `ABD ALLAH IBN `ABD AL-HAKAM<sup>55</sup> and others like him.

[Similarly,] you will see that the followers of ABU HANIFAH<sup>56</sup> accept only what has been transmitted on his authority by ABU YUSUF,<sup>57</sup> MUHAMMAD IBN AL-HASAN,<sup>58</sup> and [other] high-ranking, distinguished students of his. If a statement from AL-HASAN IBN ZIYAD AL-LU’LU’I<sup>59</sup> and his supporters reaches them, they do not accept it or rely on it.<sup>60</sup>

[Likewise,] you will also find that in his school of law the followers of AL-SHAFI'Ī<sup>61</sup> rely only on the transmissions by AL-MUZANI<sup>62</sup> and al-Rabi' ibn Sulayman AL-MURADI.<sup>63</sup> However, if they come across a transmission by HARMALA,<sup>64</sup> AL-JIZI,<sup>65</sup> and the like, they do not take it into account or consider it to be among his statements. As such, this is the habit of each group of scholars when [considering] the rulings of the [different followers] of their religious leaders and teachers.

If this is their habit (*da'b*) – [and] one cannot convince them in the matter of positive law (*furu'*)<sup>66</sup> of the transmission [of these laws] on the authority of [their] masters, except by ascribing [this transmission] to the [aforementioned] scholars, [as related by them] in a written document (*wathiqah*) or an authentic, reliable statement (*thabat*) – then how can they be allowed not to care in the most important matter, or rather the most significant issue (*al-khatb al-a'zam*), and to be indifferent to the communication and the transmission (*al-riwayah wa-al-naql*) from the highest leader (*imam al-a'immah*), the Messenger of the Lord of Power, whose judgment is binding and to whom obedience is obligatory; and whose judgment we have to accept and whose order we have to follow, without distress in our souls for what he (i.e., Muhammad) has judged or resentment in our hearts for anything he has ratified or concluded?<sup>67</sup>

While al-Khattabi treats these two groups of scholars with candid though constructive criticism (and even seems to show some compassion for them), he has only disapproval and disdainful scorn for a third group. Although he does not immediately name this group, it is obvious that he polemicizes against a certain type of “speculative theologian” (*mutakallim*) when he warns his audience<sup>68</sup>:

However, there are people who may find the path to the truth rough, and the time to gain fortune long if they love speedy gain. Thus they shorten the path to knowledge and content themselves with bits and pieces detached from the sense of the foundations of jurisprudence, calling them “causes” (*ilal*).<sup>69</sup> They take them as banners for themselves in pretending to be knowledgeable and use them as a shield in their meetings with their opponents, and as a target for them [in order] to start discussing and arguing [with them] in debates and clashes over them. At the end of the discussion, the “winner” will have been accredited with “astuteness” and “superiority.” He is said to be the “distinguished jurisconsult of his time” (*al-faqih al-madhkur fi `asrihi*), the “glorified leader of his country and region.” However, with this the Devil (*shaytan*) has already introduced a “fine trick” to them and drawn them into a grave plot. He (i.e., this so-called “distinguished jurisconsult”) then says to them: “That, which is in

your hands, is [only] insignificant knowledge and an inferior commodity; it does not reach the level of what is “necessary” and “satisfactory” [in this regard]. Therefore, you should seek the assistance of *kalam*, add a few items (*muqatta`at*) thereof, and seek the support of the foundations of the knowledge of the speculative theologians (*usul al-mutakallimin*)! With this, the method of examination (*madhhab al-khawd*) and the field of rationalist reflection (*majal al-nazar*) will increase!”

He (i.e., the “mischievous jurisconsult”) was right in his assumption (*zann*) about them. Many of them obeyed and followed him, with the exception of one group of believers. Oh, what men and what intellects! Where the Devil leads them and how he tricks them out of their luck and their intelligence! It is only God who grants help!

I have completed with diligence – may God bless you – what you have requested. [With this] I have responded to your request as best I could. I hope that if a jurisconsult (*faqih*) looks at what I assert in this book regarding the meanings of the prophetic traditions, and what I follow of the many methods of jurisprudence, that he will feel prompted [by this] to study the Prophetic Tradition and to pursue its knowledge. [I also hope that,] if a scholar of the Prophetic Tradition (*sahib al-hadith*) considers it attentively, it will increase his interest in jurisprudence and its study. May God grant him success! [For myself] I wish that God may consider it a good deed for Him and that, because of it, He may grant me His mercy to preserve me from mistakes.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi lived at a time when Islamic civilization in the eastern parts of the empire underwent particularly decisive and even dramatic change. On the one hand, the (proto-) Sunni components of Muslim society had increased their influence to such a degree that they were about to win the battle for political authority and power. On the other hand, the Abbasid dynasty – although already weakening politically – had become a “symbol of religious unity” and a “champion of perceived orthodoxy.”<sup>71</sup> The methods and approaches, however, that religious scholars (*ulama`*) in general and legal experts (*fuqaha`*) in particular would use to determine the “right religious path” (*shari`ah*, Q 45:18) governing Muslim life and society was of the utmost concern to both Muslim intellectuals and rulers.

Al-Khattabi’s scholarly oeuvre as a whole and, importantly enough, his explicit statements in the introduction to his *Ma`âlim al-Sunan* commentary attest that he, like other scholars of his time, sincerely strove to help define this “right religious path.” By highlighting core principals of the Shafi`i juridical tradition, for example, he reaffirms the unqualified authority of

divine revelation as expressed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In addition, he articulately defends the central role that the literature of the Prophetic Tradition (*hadith*) and the ideals of a Prophetic Heritage (*athar*) must play materially and spiritually in an Islamic society. Remarkably enough, however, as an active scholar in the Shafi'i law school, al-Khattabi also highlights the indispensable role that all legal experts must play in any collective attempt to understand revelation and designate the rules and regulations according to which Muslims ought to live.

More specifically, several points are worth recalling in view of al-Khattabi's critical assessment of the state of religious learning at the beginning of the *Ma`âlim*. First, while he leaves no doubt that Muslim scholarship in the fourth/tenth-century Islamic East was in a crisis, his remarks also indicate that the "faith vs. reason debates" in religious discussions were, at his time, more inclusive than often believed by modern researchers. In other words, they were not limited to the Mu`atizilites, Ash`arites, and the ultra-conservative Hanbalites, as Mu`tazili and Ash`ari sources from later times often suggest. In fact, al-Khattabi's statements appear to support Makdisi's position that during this early stage in the development of Islamic thought, Ash`arism's significance has probably been overvalued by modern research, whereas the role of traditionalism has been underestimated.<sup>72</sup>

Second, although al-Khattabi is an outspoken and sometimes even sarcastic critic of a certain type of speculative theologian, it is not completely clear (from what he says in the *Ma`âlim*) what exact type of *mutakallim* his co-religionists should avoid. Actually, his concerns display a certain subtlety and nuance in tone that suggest that he was not generally troubled by scholars who apply rationalistic methods in scholarship. Rather, he specifically advises caution when dealing with those who apply the method of *kalam* without the knowledge and the experience it requires. In so doing, he identifies himself in the *Ma`âlim* as a Shafi'i scholar in agreement with the major characteristics of classical Ash`arism by advocating the upholding of traditional religious credos through (a) making full use of formal textual study and analysis on the one hand and (b) using a careful application of a certain type of reflective reasoning (*nazar*) on the other.

Moreover, he explicitly appeals to both hadith scholars and jurisconsults to learn from and support each other. He thus implicitly promotes a balanced combination of their different research approaches and methodologies. This is worth noting, given the government's strong support for Ash`ari thought in the Islamic East during al-Khattabi's time, when the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 486/1092) appointed a large number of masters of Ash`ari thought to chairs in Shafi'i law at the newly established *madrasahs* (colleges

of law). As is well known, this development enabled traditional Sunni thought to have a fundamentally increased impact on Islamic society.

Third, al-Khattabi's use of the term *nazar* is intriguing in several ways. Not only does he present it as one of the most distinct qualities of the legal experts (*fuqaha'*), but he also indicates that, for him, it means "text-critical study," "forensic examination," and "reflective reasoning" rather than "[theological] speculation." This finding deserves our attention, for other sources contain additional evidence that suggest that a rather "neutral" understanding of *nazar* might not have been as uncommon in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries as modern scholars often believe.<sup>73</sup> In addition, we may note here in passing that Ibn Khaldun's (d. 808/1406) much later application of the term to an historical context correlates with al-Khattabi's use of it in a legal framework. Ibn Khaldun states:

The *ahl al-nazar* – i.e., critical scholars – consider absurdity to be inherent in the literal meaning of historical information, and that an interpretation that is unacceptable to the intellect is something that makes such information suspect.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, we should note that al-Khattabi uses *nazar* as the counterpart of *athar*. In other words, a traditionalist Shaf'i scholar like al-Khattabi presents "reflective reasoning" as complementary to, rather than conflicting with, adherence to the "cultural and spiritual legacy" of the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions, and their immediate Followers.<sup>75</sup>

Given these insights, one wonders what effect al-Khattabi's analytical appeal may have had on the course of Islamic thought in the Islamic East. Naturally, a detailed answer to this question requires a separate study. However, certain observations made in Iran around 1064 (i.e., only one generation after al-Khattabi) by the famous Isma'ili philosopher, poet, writer, and noted traveler Nasir-i Khusraw (d. c. 465/1072) provides some indications. Nasir, a Khorasanian by birth like al-Khattabi, felt that there was an alarming urgency to defend the rights of philosophic thought against the overpowering influence of literalist scholars.<sup>76</sup> These scholars, he states, already brand as an "unbeliever" (*kafir*) anyone who claims to know that objects have causal properties (e.g., that the sun will set because of its nature). Although Nasir's scholarly background is utterly different from al-Khattabi's, he expresses his dissatisfaction with the state of contemporary Muslim learning in the following terms:

The seekers after the how and why have become silent and the expounders of this science have also remained mute, so that ignorance has mastered all



the people, especially the inhabitants of our land of Khorasan and the territories of the east. ... [In fact,] nobody now remains who is capable of uniting (*jam`*) the science of true religion, which is a product of the Holy Spirit, with the science of creation, which is an appendage of philosophy. For the philosopher relegates these so-called scholars to the rank of the beasts, and on account of their ignorance despises the religion of Islam; while these so-called scholars declare the philosopher to be an infidel. As a result, neither true religion nor philosophy remains any more in this land.<sup>77</sup>

## Appendix

### I. Al-Khattabi's Most Important Teachers<sup>78</sup>

- (1) Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ziyad ibn Bishr ibn Dirham, known as **Abu Sa`id ibn al-A`rabi** (d. 341/952):
  - ⌚ A historian and scholar of the Prophetic Tradition, he spent much of his youth studying hadith and, later on, wrote several books on Islamic jurisprudence, history, and mysticism.
  - ⌚ He was a well-known student of Abu Dawud who knew the latter's *Kitab al-Sunan* knew by heart (*hamala ... `anhu*). His copy of this work, however, is said to have been incomplete.
  - ⌚ He was al-Khattabi's most important teacher in hadith studies. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Mecca.
  
- (2) Ahmad ibn Salman (Sulayman) ibn al-Hasan ibn Isra'il ibn Yunus al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr al-Hanbali, known as **Ibn al-Najjad** (b. 253/867; d. 348/959):
  - ⌚ A respected scholar of the Prophetic Tradition and Hanbali law from Baghdad, known as "shaykh of Iraq," he is said to have held a weekly study circle (*khalqah*) before and after the Friday prayer at Baghdad's Mansur Mosque.
  - ⌚ He attended Abu Dawud's lectures and became known for composing a voluminous and systematically arranged work on *sunan* (*sannaifa ... kitaban kabiran*). His fame, however, rests on his *Musnad* compilation.
  - ⌚ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in hadith and belles-lettres (*adab*). Al-Khattabi studied with him in Baghdad.
  
- (3) Ja`far ibn Muhammad ibn Nusayr ibn al-Qasim, Abu Muhammad al-Hawwas, known as **al-Khuldi** (b. 253/866 in Baghdad; d. 348/959).

- ﺉ A reliable hadith expert and well-known Sufi master in Baghdad, he studied with the famous al-Junayd al-Baghdadi.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in Sufism and belles-lettres (*adab*).
  
- (4) Al-Hasan ibn al-Husayn al-Baghdadi, Abu `Ali **Ibn Abi Hurayrah** al-Faqih al-Qadi (d. 345/956):
  - ﺉ A respected scholar of Shafi`i law.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in Islamic jurisprudence. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Baghdad.
  
- (5) Isma`il ibn Muhammad ibn Isma`il ibn Salih al-Baghdadi, known as **Abu `Ali al-Saffar** (d. 341/952 at the age of 94 years):
  - ﺉ A knowledgeable grammarian and philologist.
  - ﺉ Al-Khattabi's teacher in hadith, belles-lettres, and grammar. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Baghdad.
  
- (6) Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahid ibn Abi Hashim al-Mutarriz al-Bawardi al-Baghdadi, known as **Abu `Umar al-Baghawi** al-Zahid as well as Ghulam Tha`lab (d. 345/957):
  - ﺉ A Baghdad philologist and man of letters who reportedly dictated all of his books from memory. His books, however, are said to have lacked organization (*wa-jami` kutubihi innama amla'aha bi-ghayr tasnif*).
  - ﺉ He was the author of *Kitâb Gharîb al-Hadîth*.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher of Arabic language and belles-lettres.
  
- (7) Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Isma`il, known as Abu Bakr al-Qaffal al-Shashi al-Kabir (b. 291/903 or 904; d. 365/975 or 976 in Shash):
  - ﺉ Al-Qaffal ("the locksmith") from Shash (or "Tash," which, with the common Sogdian suffix *-kent*, became Shashkent or Tashkent). Known as a particularly knowledgeable scholar of Islamic law and one of the most important Shafi`i authors of the fourth/tenth century, he was as well versed in the Prophetic Tradition and the exegesis of the Qur'an as he was in belles-lettres, philology, mysticism, and "rationalistic theology" (*kalam*). In his youth, when he was in Baghdad, he studied with the famous historian and exegete Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310/923).
  - ﺉ Initially a Mu`tazilite, he "converted" to Ash`arism and orthodoxy.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in Islamic jurisprudence. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Transoxania, probably in Nishapur.

- (8) Muhammad ibn `Amr ibn al-Bukhturi ibn Mudrik ibn Abi Sulayman, known as **Abu Ja`far al-Razzaz** Musnid Baghdad (b. 251/865; d. 339/950):
- ﺉ Al-Khattabi's teacher in the Prophetic Tradition. He studied with him in Iraq, most likely in Baghdad.
- (9) Muhammad ibn Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Razzaq al-Basri al-Tammar, known as **Abu Bakr Ibn Dassa** (d. 346/957 in Basra):
- ﺉ He was reportedly the last scholar who transmitted Abu Dawud's *Sunan* as a whole (*haddatha ... kamilan*). Due to his superior knowledge of this book, he was known as *rawi al-sunan*. His copy of the work is said to have been the most exact. Based on Ibn Dassa's copy, Abu Dawud's *Sunan* became known especially in the Maghrib. Moreover, a duplicate of Ibn Dassa's copy of Abu Dawud's *Sunan* was with al-Khattabi when he composed his commentary on it.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in hadith. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Basra.
- (10) Muhammad ibn Ya`qub ibn Yusuf ibn Ma`qil ibn Sinan al-Umawi al-Naysaburi, known as **Abu al-`Abbas al-Asamm** (d. 346/957 at the age of 77 in Nishapur):
- ﺉ A noted transmitter of prophetic traditions, he traveled extensively for the purpose to study with scholars in Mecca, Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, Kufa, and Baghdad. At the age of 30, he returned to Nishapur where, shortly thereafter, he went deaf and then blind.
  - ﺉ He was an important teacher of al-Khattabi's in the Prophetic Tradition and in belles-lettres. Al-Khattabi studied with him in Nishapur.
- (11) **Mukarram** ibn Ahmad ibn Mukarram al-Qadi, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi **al-Bazzaz** (d. 345/956):
- ﺉ A reliable transmitter of prophetic traditions and scholar of Islamic law in Baghdad.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi's teacher in belles-lettres and the Arabic language.
- (12) `Uthman ibn Ahmad ibn `Abdallah ibn Yazid, Abu `Amr, known as **Ibn al-Sammak al-Baghdadi** al-Daqqaq (d. 344/955):
- ﺉ Known as a particularly reliable transmitter of prophetic traditions in Baghdad.

- ﺉ He authored many works that, as has been expressly noted, he “wrote with his own hand” (*kataba al-musannafat al-kathira bi-khattihi*).
- ﺉ He was al-Khattabi’s teacher in belles-lettres.

## II. Al-Khattabi’s Most Important Students

- (1) `Abd (Allah) ibn Ahmad (ibn Muhammad) ibn `Abd Allah ibn Jufayr al-Ansari al-Khurasani al-Maliki, known as **Abu Dharr al-Harawi** and as Ibn al-Sammak al-Mujawwid (d. 435/1044 in Mecca):
  - ﺉ A Maliki jurisconsult who was considered a knowledgeable and reliable transmitter of prophetic traditions, a pious mystic, and Ash`ari theologian. He was from Herat (Afghanistan), but spent most of his life in Mecca.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Khorasan.
- (2) `Abd al-Ghafir ( `Abd al-Ghifar) ibn Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Ghafir al-Farisi **al-Naysaburi**, Abu al-Husayn (b. 350/961; d. 448/1056):
  - ﺉ A respected transmitter of prophetic traditions, historian, and Qur’an expert.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Nishapur and reportedly transmitted the *Kitâb Gharîb al-Hadîth* from him.
- (3) `Abd al-Wahhab ibn Abi Sahl al-Khattabi, Abu al-Qasim:
  - ﺉ He was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
- (4) Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rahman al-Bashani, known as **Abu `Ubayd al-Harawi** (d. 401/1011):
  - ﺉ A philologist and author of *Kitâb al-Gharîbayn fî al-Qur’ân wa-al-Hadîth*.<sup>79</sup> He was already well known in medieval times.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi at Bust and is said to have transmitted from him extensively.
- (5) Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad, known as **Abu Hamid al-Isfara’ini** (b. 344/955; d. 406/1015 or 1016):
  - ﺉ One of the most respected scholars of his time and a well-known authority on Shafi’i law.<sup>80</sup> Recognized as the “Leader of the Sha-fi`ites” (*shaykh al-Shafi`iyyah*) in Baghdad, he was originally from Isfara’in (Khorasan) but went to Baghdad at a young age.
  - ﺉ He was al-Khattabi’s student (probably) in Baghdad.

- (6) **ʿAli ibn al-Hasan al-Sijzi**, Abu al-Hasan:
- ﺉ A jurisconsult who was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Sijistan (or Sistan, a region of eastern Iran, south of Khorasan).
- (7) Al-Husayn (al-Hasan) ibn Muhammad al-Busti, known as **Abu Masʿud al-Karabisi**:
- ﺉ He was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Bust.
- (8) Muhammad ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Husayn ibn Musa, known as **Abu ʿAmr al-Razjahi** al-Bastami<sup>81</sup> (b. 341/952; d. 426/1035 in Bastam, where he went in his old age):
- ﺉ A transmitter of prophetic traditions, man of letters, and Shafiʿi law expert. His study circle (*khalqah*) is said to have enjoyed remarkable attention.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Nishapur.
- (9) Muhammad ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Hamdawayh ibn Nuʿaym ibn al-Hakam, Abu ʿAbdallah [(ibn Muhammad) ibn al-Rabiʿ al-Dabbi] al-Hafiz, known as **al-Hakim al-Naysaburi** or Ibn Bayyī (d. 405/1014-5 at the age of 84 years in Nishapur):
- ﺉ A renowned scholar with Shiʿi tendencies. He authored so many books in the field of the Prophetic Tradition that he was considered “the leader of the hadith scholars at this time” (*imam ahl al-hadith fi waqtihi*). He was also a famous chronicler of Nishapur.
  - He studied with al-Khattabi in Khorasan, most likely in Nishapur.
- (10) Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Sulayman **al-Balkhi al-Ghaznawi**, Abu Nasr:
- ﺉ He was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
  - ﺉ He taught in Ghazna, a town in eastern Afghanistan.
- (11) Muhammad ibn ʿAli ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (ʿAbd Allah) **al-Farisi al-Fasawi**, Abu ʿAbd Allah:
- ﺉ He was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
  - ﺉ He studied with al-Khattabi in Iran.

(12) Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (al-Husayn) **al-Muqri'**, Abu Bakr:

- z He was still alive at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.
- z He studied with al-Khattabi in Ghazna.

### Endnotes

1. The quotation in the title comes from a statement al-Khattabi makes at the beginning of his commentary on Abu Dawud's famous compilation of prophetic traditions. See Abu Sulayman Hamd ibn Muhammad al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim al-Sunan: Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud*, ed. `Abd al-Salam `Abd al-Shafi Muhammad, iv parts in 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1411/1991), i, 3.  
I also wish to note that the present article revisits and continues research on a topic first dealt with in my study "Der šafi`itische Traditionalist Abu Sulaiman al-Ḥattabi und die Situation der religiösen Wissenschaften im 10. Jahrhundert," in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 146. no. 1 (1996): 61-91. I warmly thank Ms. Sonja Adrianovska (Toronto) for her assistance in translating several passages from the original German article into English; these passages are included here in revised form.
2. *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 37-80 [part 1]; and 18 (1963), 19-39 [part 2].
3. *Studia Islamica* 59 (1984), 5-47.
4. *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 38-40.
5. H. Halm, *Die Ausbreitung der šafi`itischen Rechtsschule von den Anfängen bis zum 8./14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: 1974), 32-41 ("Schafi`iya und Asch`ariya"), and 51 passim.
6. "ʿIlm al-kalam is the discipline which brings to the service of religious beliefs (ʿaqa'id) discursive arguments, which thus provides a place for reflection and meditation, and hence for reason, in the elucidation and defence of the content of the faith. ... It seems ... likely that *kalam* referred at first to discursive arguments, and [that] the *mutakallimun* ('loquentes') were 'reasoners.' This was the case as early as the time of Ma`bad al-Juhani (d. 80/699-700). *Kalam* became a regular discipline when these arguments and discussions dealt with the content of the faith. It is this character of discursive and reasoned apologia which was to attract the attacks both of the traditionists and of the *falasifa*;" cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2, iii, 114 (L. Gardet). See furthermore M. E. Marmura, "Avicenna on the *Kalam*," in *Probing in Islamic Philosophy: Studies in the Philosophies of Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali and other Major Muslim Thinkers* (Binghamton: 2005), 97-130; W. Madelung, "Der *Kalam*," in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie (GAPh)*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: 1982-92), ii, 326-37 and the literature given there; T. Nagel, *Geschichte der islamischen Theologie: Von Mohammed bis zur Gegenwart* (München: 1994), 86-94 ("Der *kalam*"); T. Ibrahim and A. Sagadeev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy* (Moscow: 1990), 17-28; D. Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ash`ari* (Paris: 1990); M. A. Cook: "The

- Origin of *Kalam*,” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980), 32-43; and H. Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: 1993 [French original: 1964]), 105-22 (“The Sunni *Kalam*”).
7. *Studia Islamica* 17, 48-49. Makdisi mentions al-Khattabi along with the Hanbalite mystic al-Ansari al-Harawi (d. 481/1088), who wrote *Dhamm al-Kalam (The Condemnation of Speculative Theology)*, and the Hanbalite Ibn Qudama (d. 620/1223), who authored *Tahrim al-Nazar fi Kutub Ahl al-Kalam (Prohibiting the Study of Books Composed by Adherents of Speculative Theology)*.
  8. This fact is evident from the short and partly inaccurate entry on Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI<sup>2</sup>)* iv, 1131-32; s.v.). The *Encyclopedia Iranica (EI<sup>r</sup>)* does not list him, at least not among the scholars categorized under “al-Bosti.” Halm, *Die Ausbreitung*, mentions him briefly on page 119. For al-Khattabi, see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur (GAL)*, 3 vols. plus 2 supplementary vols. (repr. Leiden: 1996), i, 174; and *GAL* supplement i, 275. See also S. Günther, “Der šafi`itische Traditionalist” (cf. endnote 1); C. F. Audebert, *al-Hattabi et l’Inimitabilité du Coran: traduction et introduction au Bayan i`gaz al-Qur’an* (Damascus 1417/1996), 19-53; and, more recently, the important study by V. Tokatly, “The *A`lam al-hadith* of al-Khattabi: A Commentary on al-Bukhari’s *Sahih* or a Polemical Treatise?” *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001), 53-91; this article presents the results of a Jerusalem Ph.D. thesis.
  9. See endnote 1.
  10. For a fuller appreciation of the concept of *nazar* (and its relation to *kalam*), we may recall that one of *kalam*’s epistemological doctrines includes a distinction between “necessary knowledge” (which includes knowledge of one’s own existence, inner states, self-evident logical principles, and the senses’ direct knowledge of the external world) and “theoretical knowledge” (basically logical inference [*istidlal*] based on necessary knowledge). The history of *nazar* as such, however, has still to be written. In addition to my findings in the present article, see the article “Nazar” in *EF* vii, 1050 (T. Boer; H. Daiber); Gimaret, *La Doctrine*, 183-91; and Tokatly, “The *A`lam*,” 61-64, esp. his reference to al-Asha`ri’s *Kitab al-Hathth `ala al-Bahth (A Book of Exhortation to Investigation)*, in which al-`Ashari discusses the antagonism between *nazar* and *taqlid*. For *nazar* and *qiyas*, see J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert der Hidschra: Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols., (Berlin and New York: 1997), i, 340; ii, 418, 456; iii, 85; and B. Ducati, “Rationalismus und Tradition im mohammedanischen Recht,” in *Islamica* (Leipzig) 3 (1927): 214-28. For the use of *nazar* in later times, see the T. Nagel, *Ibn al-`Arabi und das Ash`aritentum, in Gottes ist der Orient. Gottes ist der Okzident. Festschrift für A. Falaturi zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. U. Tworuschka (Cologne et al.: 1991), 212 passim. See also note 73 in the present article.
  11. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Bughyat al-Wu`ah fi Tabaqat al-Lughawiyyin wa-al-Nuhah*, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 2 vols. (Cairo: Matba`at `Isa al-

- Babi al-Halabi, 1384/1964), i, 547. In Yaqt al-Hamawi's *Mu`jam al-Buldan*, ed. F. Wüsterfeld, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1866-70), i, 612 ff, Bust is described as a big city with numerous rivers and gardens, located in the area of al-Harra, between Sijistan, Ghaznayn, and Herat; see also G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge: 1905), 344 ff. For Lashkargah, see *Elr*, iv, 383-86.
12. This information is given in statements attributed to al-Khattabi himself; cf. al-Khattabi, *Islah al-Akhta' al-Hadithiyyah*, ed. Husayn Isma`il Husayn al-Jamal (Beirut: Mu`assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah, 1409/1988), 5.
  13. The correctness of this link in al-Khattabi's lineage is uncertain; cf. Taj al-Din al-Subki, *Tabaqat al-Shafi`iyyah al-Kubra*, 3 vols. (Cairo: 1324/1906) ii, 218.
  14. Yaqt al-Hamawi, *Irshad al-Arib ila Ma`rifat al-Adib*, ed. D. S. Margoliouth, 7 vols. (London and Leiden: 1907-26) ii, 81.
  15. Abu Sa`id `Abd al-Karim al-Sam`ani, *Al-Ansab*, ed. `Abd Allah `Umar al-Barudi, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1408/1988) ii, 380 (with reference to al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, a student of al-Khattabi's); and Yaqt, *Irshad*, ii, 81. However, according to al-Suyuti, *Bughya*, i, 547, he died on Saturday, 16 Rabi` al-Akhir 386 (8 April 996); according to Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam*, ed. Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Qadir `Ata', xviii parts in 6 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1412/1992) xiv, 129, in the year 394 (1004); and according to al-Qifti, *Inbah al-Ruwat*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1369-93/1932-39) i, 125, "around 400 (1009-10)".
  16. `Abd al-Hayy ibn `Imad, *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, 8 parts (Cairo: 1350-51/1931-32), iii, 127; al-Subki, *Tabaqat*, ii, 218; Abu `Abd Allah al-Dhahabi, *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, n.d.), iii, 1019.
  17. Yaqt, *Irshad*, ii, 81.
  18. Ed. Beirut, 2 vols. (Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1406/1986) i, 5-12; see also *GAL*, i, 106-07.
  19. See also A. Hasan (transl.), *Sunan Abu Dawud: English Translation with Explanatory Notes*, 3 vols. (New Delhi: 1993 [new ed.]), vol. i, p. viii; and J. Robson, "The Transmission of Abu Dawud's *Sunan*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14 (1952): 579-88.
  20. Tokatly, "The *A`lam*," 53-91.
  21. *Mumti` mufid*; see Yaqt, *Irshad*, ii, 83.
  22. For the main differences between al-Khattabi's *A`lam* and other early hadith commentaries, see Tokatly, "The *A`lam*," 55-58 and 87-88.
  23. The many subsequent commentaries on Abu Dawud's hadith collection include, for example, those by `Abd al-`Azim al-Mundhiri (d. 656/1258), `Umar ibn Raslan al-Bulqini (d. 805/1402), Ahmad ibn Husayn al-Ramli (d. 844/1440), Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-`Ayni (d. 855/1451), the prominent al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505), and other later scholars. See F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums (GAS)*, 9 vols. (Leiden: 1967-84), i, 150-52. As for commentaries on al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, see *GAS* i, 118-26, where over fifty such works are listed. Next to Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi's *A`lam al-*



*Hadith*, mention needs to be made of the early commentary by Ibn Battal (449/1057), as well as the later ones by al-Nawawi (d. 676/1278), al-Kirmani (d. 786/1384), al-`Asqalani (d. 852/1448), al-Ayni (d. 855/1451) and al-Qastallani (d. 923/1517). Cf. Tokatly, "The A`lam," 53-54.

24. Yaqut, *Irshad*, ii, 82.
25. For his educational journeys, see the editor's forewords in al-Khattabi, *Islah*, 13-14 and al-Khattabi, *Sha'n al-Du'a'*, ed. Ahmad ibn Yusuf al-Daqqaq (Damascus: Dar al-Ma'mun li-al-Turath, 1404/1984), 34-35.
26. For al-Khattabi's teachers and students, see the appendix of the present article.
27. Yaqut, *Irshad*, ii, 82.
28. *Ibid.*, ii, 83.
29. *GAS* i, 211; Yaqut, *Irshad*, ii, 83, also mentions *Kitab al-`Arus*; see also Günther, "Der šafi`itische Traditionalist," 62 (endnote 33).
30. For more information on these works and editions, see Günther, "Der šafi`itische Traditionalist," 67-68.
31. The *Kitab al-Sahih* or *Sunan* by Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash`ath al-Sijistani is one of Sunni Islam's six canonical hadith collections. In addition to its intense focus on Prophetic Traditions significant to Islamic law, Muslim scholars have come to value this work for the fact that Abu Dawud was one of the first hadith scholars to provide explicit criteria to (a) assess the traditions' authenticity/reliability and (b) classify them accordingly.  
It is of interest in our context that Abu Dawud had traveled to several cities "in search of knowledge" before settling in Basra at the request of the Amir Abu Ahmad al-Muwaffaq, the politically adept brother of the Abbasid caliph al-Muwaffaq. Al-Khattabi reports the reasons for this highly official "request" in some detail. It seems, for instance, that al-Muwaffaq hoped to give a boost to the intellectual life in Basra, which had been severely damaged by various revolts (including the temporary capture and occupation of the city by the Zanj in 257/871). If the famous Abu Dawud made Basra his home, he would draw scholars from different parts of the Islamic empire to Basra to study with him. Cf. al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim* i, 7.
32. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim* i, 3.
33. *Ibid.*, i, 7.
34. *Ibid.*, i, 7-8.
35. *Ibid.*, i, 6-7.
36. *Jami`* works (plural: *jawami`*) are hadith compendia that (a) include traditions concerning a large variety of thematic areas (dogmatics, law, mysticism, history, or rules of conduct, for example); and (b) arrange this information in chapters that are devoted to specific topics. See also Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Halle: 1888), ii, 228-31, 249; and *id.*, *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols. in one (London: 1971), ii, 211-13, 229.
37. *Musnad* works (plural: *masanid*) are hadith compendia that (a) include traditions that (via an uninterrupted chain of transmitters) relate statements of the

Prophet himself or those of a Companion. In this general sense, the term came to be applied to all hadith collections that contained such traditions. More specifically, the term stands for those collections that (b) organize traditions according to the name of the earliest (or oldest) authority mentioned in an isnad. This type of hadith collection ignores the hadiths' thematic contents. Examples are the early *musnad* works by Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (d. 204/812), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 233/847), `Abd Allah ibn Abi Shayba (d. 235/849), `Uthman ibn Abi Shayba (d. 237/851), and Abu Khaythama (d. 234/844). It may also be noted that these works differ greatly in terms of their internal organization. Some arrange the quoted authorities alphabetically, others according to the recognition that people earned for their contribution to the spread of Islam, to their participation in important events in Islamic history, or to the degree of solidarity their tribe showed toward to the Prophet Muhammad. See also Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, ii, 228-30; id. *Muslim Studies*, ii, 211-13.

38. *Sunan* works are hadith collections that exclusively contain prophetic traditions that deal with the *sunnah* proper, that is, the legally binding statements in the Prophetic Tradition. For this reason, *sunan* works generally do not include traditions of historical, ethical, and dogmatic relevance. See also Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, ii, 249; id. *Muslim Studies*, ii, 229-30.
39. *Fa-duribat fihi akbad al-ibal wa-damat ilayhi al-ruhal*; cf. al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 7. See also Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, ii, 256; id. *Muslim Studies*, ii, 235-236.
40. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 8.
41. *Ibid.*, i, 6 and 8.
42. See, for example, Burke O. Long, "Two Question and Answer Schemata in the Prophets," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90, no. 2 (1971): 129-39. For the question-and-answer scheme in Christian disputations on Islam, mainly written in Greek, see Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra, *Kommentierte griechisch-deutsche Textausgabe*, eds. R. Gleis and A. Th. Khoury (Würzburg: 1995) (*Corpus Islamo-Christianum, Series Graeca* 3).
43. In Islamic jurisprudence, for example, the question-and-answer scheme helped develop the genre of legal responsa, with its earliest evidence dating back to the beginning of the second/eighth century (cf. H. Motzki, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz. Ihre Entwicklung in Mekka bis zur Mitte des 2./8. Jahrhunderts* [Stuttgart: 1991], 72 and 98). For *quaestiones* (Arabic: *masa'il*) as a literary genre, see G. Endress, in *GAPh* ii, 464. Aside from the medieval context, it may be noted in passing that the question-and-answer scheme continued to feature prominently in the influential educational periodicals of the nineteenth-century Arabic press. Cf. D. Glass, "Die Masa'il-Kolumne in al-Muqtataf. Ein Indikator für die Rezeption einer arabischen Wissenschaftszeitschrift des 19. Jahrhunderts?" in Ch. Herzog et al. (eds.), *Presse und Öffentlichkeit im Nahen Osten* (Heidelberg: 1995), 59-82.

44. B. Englisch, *Die Artes liberales im frühen Mittelalter (5.-9. Jh.)* (Stuttgart: 1994), 408 passim.
45. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 3.
46. Ibid. The Arabic term *fiqh* originally meant “understanding,” “knowledge,” and “intelligence.” Initially, it applied to any branch of knowledge (as in *fiqh al-lughah* [the discipline of lexicography], for example). In later times, it gradually became the technical term for jurisprudence, “the discipline of religious law” in Islam. Like the Roman *iurisprudentia*, *fiqh* covers all aspects of religious, political, and civil life (cf. “Fikh,” in *EP* ii, 886 [Goldziher/Schacht]).
47. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 4.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., i, 3.
50. Ibid., i, 4.
51. Ibid.
52. Abu `Abd Allah Malik ibn Anas ibn Abi `Amir ibn al-Harith al-Asbahi (d. 179/762 in Medina), one of the most highly respected scholars of Islamic law in Sunni Islam. His main work, *Kitab al-Muwatta`* (*The Well-Trodden Path*), offers a systematic description of legal and religious practice based on Medina's common law. The Malikis view reliance on a literal interpretation of the prophetic traditions as superior to an expert legal opinion. See also *GAS*, i, 457-64.
53. Abu `Abd Allah `Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Qasim ibn Khalid al-`Utaqi (d. 191/806), probably Imam Malik's most important student (he is said to have studied with Malik in Medina for twenty years) and the important transmitter of Malik's teachings in Egypt. He, in turn, was the teacher of the later famous Maliki scholar Sahnun. See also *GAS*, i, 465-66.
54. Abu `Amr Ashhab ibn `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Dawud al-Qaysi (d. 204/819), a highly respected jurisconsult and noted transmitter of Imam Malik's teachings in Egypt. See also *GAS*, i, 466-65.
55. Abu Muhammad `Abd Allah ibn `Abd al-Hakam ibn A`yan ibn Layth al-Misri (d. 214/829), a student of Imam Malik in Medina. After he returned to Egypt, he became a famous jurisconsult. His *Al-Mukhtasar al-Kabir fi al-Fiqh* served especially the Malikites in Iraq as the basis for their legal system. In addition, this book seems to be the first systematic work of Maliki law. See also *GAS*, i, 467-568.
56. Abu Hanifah al-Nu`man ibn Thabit (d. 150/767), eponym of the law school that bears his name. The Hanafi law school, the most liberal Sunni law school, accepts individual legal expert opinion (*ra`y*) in the absence of precedent as a primary source of Islamic law. See also *GAS*, i, 409-19.
57. Abu Yusuf Ya`qub ibn Ibrahim ibn Habib al-Kufi (d. 182/798), a student of Imam Abu Hanifah. He acknowledged *ra`y*, but differed from his master in that he considered the Prophetic Traditions to be more important. Under the `Abbasid caliph al-Hadi (r. 16670/782-3-86), he became the supreme judge of Baghdad (cf. *GAS*, i, 419-21).

58. Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Farqad al-Shaybani (d. 189/796), one of the actual “founders” of the Hanafi law school. Caliph Harun al-Rashid appointed him judge of Raqqa. See also *GAS* i, 421-33.
59. Abu `Ali al-Hasan ibn Ziyad al-Lu`lu`i (d. 204/819), one of Imam Abu Hanifah’s most important students and a vehement defender of *ra’y*. He was appointed judge of Kufa (cf. *GAS* i, 433).
60. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 4-5.
61. Abu `Ali al-Hasan ibn Idris ibn al-`Abbas al-Shafi`i (d. 204/820), founder of the school of law school after him. A student of Imam Malik in Medina, he is credited with establishing the consensus of the scholars’ opinions (*ijma`*) as the third pillar of Islamic law, next to the Qur’an and the Sunnah. See also *GAS*, i, 484-490.
62. Abu Ibrahim Isma`il ibn Yahya al-Muzani (d. 264/877), an important student of Imam al-Shafi`i in Egypt, even though he differed from his master in certain views. See also *GAS*, i, 492-93.
63. Abu Muhammad al-Rabi` ibn Sulayman ibn `Abd al-Jabbar ibn Kamil al-Muradi (d. 270/884), an important student of Imam al-Shafi`i in Egypt. See also *GAS*, i, 487; under al-Shafi`i).
64. Abu `Abd Allah Harmala ibn Yahya al-Tughibi (d. 243/858), a well-known student of Imam al-Shafi`i. See Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhib*, ii, 229; Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat*, ii, 64-65; and al-Subki, *Tabaqat*, i, 257).
65. Abu Muhammad al-Rabi` ibn Sulayman ibn Dawud al-Jizi (d. 256/870), a student of Imam al-Shafi`i and an “upright legal scholar.” See al-Subki, *Tabaqat*, i, 251 and Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat*, ii, 292.
66. For *furu`* meaning “positive law” (literally: the “branches,” i.e., the law’s practical norms) as opposed to *usul*, “legal theory” (literally: the “roots” of the law), see J. Schacht, “*Ahkam*,” in *EF*, i, 256; and id., “*Usul al-Fiqh*,” x, 931.
67. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 4-5.
68. For the early meaning(s) of *mutakallim/mutakallimun*, see Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, i, esp. 46-56.
69. Certain Muslim scholars adopted the Arabic terms *`illa* and its plural *`ilal* from the Aristotelian Theory of Causality, i.e. the logical explanation of the relationship between one “event” (the “cause”) and another “event” (the “effect”). In this sense, both Shi`i thinkers and the peripatetic Islamic philosophers (the *falasifah*, i.e., those belonging to the Aristotelian school of philosophy) used them. Yet these two terms also play an important role for the various groups among the *mutakallimun* who use them in their resumes and refutations of philosophy. Furthermore, see “*‘Illa*,” in: *EF*, iii, 1127 (L. Gardet).
70. Al-Khattabi, *Ma`alim*, i, 5-6.
71. A. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: 2001), 33.
72. *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963): 37.
73. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, includes several pieces of information specifically relevant to a fuller appreciation of *nazar*. See, for example i, 340

(on al-Shahrastani's mention of *nazar* as a way of "knowledge acquisition" not needed by the Shi'i Imams since they possess this knowledge *a priori*); ii, 456 (where it is noted that in the second half of the third/ninth century a group of Mu'tazilites in Askar Mukram, a city in Khuzistan, claimed that knowledge was "identical" with *nazar* ("thinking") and not simply its "product"); as well as iii, 85 (on the acquisition of knowledge as a result of *nazar* ["contemplation"] and *tamthil* ["comparison"] in the atomism of the early Mu'tazilite Mu'ammarr al-Sulami of Basra [d. 215/830]).

74. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, transl. F. Rosenthal, 3 vols. (London: 1958), i, 76 (slightly adjusted); *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1984), 37.
75. Particularly conservative groups, however, came to understand *athar* as something that was not just a source of study and inspiration, but rather the "only possible" way of life, from which deviation and change was not allowed. This is why the designation *ahl al-athar* is sometimes used as a synonym for the ultra-conservative Hanbalites. Abu Hatim Muhammad ibn Idris al-Hanzali al-Razi (d. 277/891), however, presents a more inclusive and perhaps more representative understanding of this term when he states: "Our way of life and our choice are [1.] to follow the Messenger of God (may God be pleased with him and grant him salvation), his Companions, and the Generation [immediately] following them; and [2.] to adhere to the legal traditions (*madhahib*) of the *ahl al-athar* like al-Shafi'i [d. 204/820], Ahmad [ibn Hanbal, d. 241/855], Ishaq [ibn Ibrahim, known as Ibn Rahawayh, d. 238/84; a founding pillar of hadith studies], and Abu Ubayd [al-Qasim Ibn Sallam al-Harawi, d. 224/838; a noted hadith scholar and philologist]." Cf. Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, 23 vols., ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut et al. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1413/1992), xiii, 260; cf. similarly Abu Muhammad Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi, *Ithbat Sifat al-Uluww*, ed. Badr Abdallah al-Badr (Kuwait: Dar al-Salafiyyah, 1406/1985), 126.
76. Nasir calls these literalist scholars "*ahl-e-tafsir*," "*ahl-e taqlid*," "*hashwiyân-e ommâ*," and "*foqahâ-ye dîn-e Islâm*."
77. Transl. George F. Hourani. See his *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy: A translation, with introduction and notes of Ibn Rushd's Kitab Fasl al-maqal, with its appendix (Damina) and an extract from Kitab al-Kashf an manahij al-adilla* (London: Luzac, 1967), 4-5. Hourani refers there to Nasir-e Khosraw, *Kitab Jami' al-hikmatayn, Le livre réunissant les deux sagesses; ou, Harmonie de la philosophie grecque et de la théosophie ismaélienne. Texte persan édité avec une double étude préliminaire en français et en persan par Henry Corbin et Mohammed Mo'in* (Teheran/Paris: Département d'Iranologie de l'Institut Franco-Iranien, 1933), 60-64 (introduction).
78. For the Arabic sources consulted to establish this data, see my "Der šafi'itische Traditionalist," 83-91.

79. Al-Harawi is said to have been the first scholar who collected “uncommon” (*gharib*) words from both the Qur’an and the Prophetic Tradition in order to study them in one work (*GAS*, viii, 225). He is not to be confused with his namesake, the earlier Qur’an expert Abu `Ubayd al-Harawi (d. 224/838).
80. *Jabal min jibal al-`ilm*, cf. al-Subki, *Tabaqat*, iii, 24.
81. Razgah, a town near Bastam (or Bistam, cf. *EP* i, 1247), which in the fourth/tenth century was an important trade city of the province of Qumis/Khorasan and an old stronghold of Shafi`i law. In addition, it is to be noted that the Bastami family was also one of the most important Shafi`i families of Nishapur; cf. Halm, *Die Ausbreitung*, 53.