IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

PH.D. THESIS

EPISTEMOLOGY IN ISLAMIC THEOLOGY IN THE POST-CLASSICAL PERIOD: THE CONCEPT OF EVIDENCE IN THE WORKS OF SAʿD AL-DĪN AL-TAFTĀZĀNĪ

NAVID CHIZARI

THESIS SUPERVISOR
ASST. PROF. AHMET SÜRURİ

İSTANBUL, 2023

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by
NAVID CHIZARI

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies

THESIS SUPERVISOR
ASST. PROF. AHMET SÜRURİ

İSTANBUL, 2023

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies.

Thesis Jury Members

Name Surname	Opinion	Signature
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University:

Date of Submission Seal/Signature

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Signature:

ÖZ

KLASİK SONRASI DÖNEM KELAM İLMİNDE EPİSTEMOLOJİ VE SA‘DÜDDÎN ET-TEFTÂZÂNÎ'NIN ESERLERİNDE DELİL KAVRAMI

Chizari, Navid
Temel İslam Bilimleri Doktora Programı
Öğrenci Numarası: 187052006
Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORC-ID): 0000-0002-3002-4754
Ulusal Tez Merkezi Referans Numarası: 10516505

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ahmet Süruri
İkinci Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Peter Adamson
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Sa‘düddîn et-Teftâzânî’nin (ö. 792/1390) eserleri, İslam düşünce tarihinde bir dönüm noktası oluşturmuş ve son yıllara kadar İslami eğitimin merkezinde yer almıştır. İslam dünyasındaki geleneksel müfredattan kopuş ve 5/11. yüzyıldan sonra teolojideki felsefi araştırmaların sunacak önemli bir şeyi olmadığı şeklindeki aksiyomatik öncül nedeniyle, Taftāzānī'nin eserlerinin merkezi konumu ortadan kalktı. Neyse ki, çağdaş bilim bu öncülleri sorgulamış ve Teftāzānī gibi âlimlerin ortaya çıktığı Klasik Sonrası Döneme ilgi göstermeye başlamıştır. Bununla birlikte, şerh geleneği ve son derece teorik metinler konusundaki anlayış eksikliğinden dolayı şimdiye kadar çok az ilerleme kaydedilmiştir.

Bu araştırma, kelam ilminin en etkili âlimlerinden biri tarafından yazılan en temel konulardan bazılarına ışık tutmaktadır. Birinci amaç, şerh geleneğinin önemli özelliklerini açıklığa kavuşturmak ve aynı yazarın farklı eserlerde aldığı karşıt görüşlere ilişkin kafa karışıklığını ortadan kaldırmaya yardımcı olmaktır. İkinci amaç, müteahhirun dönemi âlimlerinin kelam ilmini nasıl tarif ettiklerini, epistemoloji ve kelam ilmi arasındaki ilişki ile ilgili görüşlerini ve kelam ilminin en temel kavramsal araçlarını nasıl sunduklarını göstermektir. Nihai amaç, bahsi geçen âlimlerin delil kavramını ve akli ve nakli delilin rolünü nasıl tartıştıklarını araştırmaktır. Örnek

çalışmalar, muhtelif kelami konuların daha önce tartışılan epistemoloji ve delil konularıyla nasıl ilişkili olduğunu gösterecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Delil, epistemoloji, kelam, klasik sonrası dönem, Teftâzânî.

ABSTRACT

EPISTEMOLOGY IN ISLAMIC THEOLOGY IN THE POST-CLASSICAL PERIOD: THE CONCEPT OF EVIDENCE IN THE WORKS OF SAʿD AL-DĪN AL-TAFTĀZĀNĪ

Chizari, Navid

PhD in Islamic Studies

Student ID: 187052006

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORC-ID): 0000-0002-3002-4754

National Thesis Center Reference Number: 10516505

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Dr. Ahmet Süruri

Thesis Co-Advisor: Prof. Peter Adamson

July 2023, 150 pages

The works of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) marked a pivotal point in Islamic intellectual history and were central to Islamic education until recent years. Due to the break with the traditional curriculum in the Islamic world and the axiomatic premise that philosophical inquiries in theology after the 5./11. century had nothing substantial to offer, the central position of Taftāzān'īs works vanished. Fortunately, contemporary scholarship questions these premises and shows interest in the Post-classical period in which scholars like Taftāzānī appeared. However, little advancement has been made so far due to the lack of understanding regarding the commentary tradition and highly technical texts.

The present research throws light on some of the most fundamental topics of theology written by one of its most influential scholars. The first aim is to clarify important features of the commentary tradition, which will help eliminate confusion regarding the opposing positions the same author took in different works. The second aim is to show how later theologians defined theology, its connection to epistemology, and how they presented their most fundamental conceptual tools. The final aim is to investigate their definition of evidence and its twofold division into rational and textual evidence.

Case studies will illustrate how different theological issues relate to the previously discussed topics of epistemology and evidence.

Keywords: al-Taftāzānī, epistemology, evidence, kalām, post-classical period.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The title of the present thesis can be read as an abridgment (*mukhtaṣar*), the introduction as its commentary (*sharḥ*), and the three main chapters as its gloss (*ḥāshiyya*). The title "Epistemology in Islamic Theology of the Post-classical Period and the Concept of Evidence in the Works of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī*"* gives a very general conceptualization of what the upcoming chapters will be about. An important part is to determine what the thesis is *not* about. So before providing an overview of the rest of the content, we will start with a foreword (*tamhīd*) to limit the scope. The present work will not focus on the historical development of conceptual tools. It means that there will be no attempt to find out who introduced certain conceptual tools or how and when they changed. The main focus is to throw some light on specific topics discussed by a specific author in specific works. Just as a photo camera is limited and can only capture one area at a time, similarly, this thesis is a snapshot of a moment in the intellectual history of Sunnī theology. The two main topics are the relation between epistemology and *kalām* and the concept of evidence, as discussed by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī in his relevant works. The historical development until his time will barely be touched upon, and given that there is little research about the Post-classical period, characterized by the commentary tradition, it is necessary to limit the scope to the understanding of Taftāzānī and the intellectual current of his time. This shall be achieved by a very careful reading of his works with the aid of the commentaries to his work, which have barely been researched. The aim is to get an idea of what the commentaries contain and understand the fundamentals upon which Taftāzānī builds his theological program. Now, after clarifying the scope of the present thesis, we will turn to an overview of the following chapters.

The study is divided into three chapters, each focusing on one aspect of the title. The first chapter is about Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, his works, and the commentary tradition of the Post-classical period. After the biography and a chronological overview of his

works, the main task is to clarify some features of the commentary tradition to understand how Taftāzānī and other scholars approached their writings. This will be the basis to address the confusion regarding Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *kalām* and *fiqh,* which arises due to a lack of understanding of the commentary tradition.

The second chapter begins the close reading of Taftāzān'īs works and focuses on the topic of epistemology and its relation to *kalām*. The first subchapter is an analysis of a brief history of *kalām,* which Taftāzānī mentions in two of his works. The second subchapter looks at his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* to elucidate the structure of his discourse. An important aspect of the discourse is the distinction between objectives (*maqāṣid*) and principles (*mabādiʾ*). This distinction and a brief history of *kalām* will help to answer the question regarding the relation between epistemology and *kalām*. The following chapter on the introductions (*muqaddimāt*) shows how Taftāzānī discusses the definition of *kalām,* the subject matter, and the debate about it. Again, all of these relate to situating epistemology within the *kalām* discourse. These discussions became more widespread in the Post-classical period in which Taftāzānī played an important role. The last subchapter deals with epistemological questions. The first half revolves around three common questions about the definition of knowledge. The second half focuses on self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*) since they are the most fundamental building blocks of the theological program. In this context, the objections of skeptics become important and will be touched upon.

The last chapter will be about the concept of evidence (*dalīl*). The first part deals with the definition of evidence and its conditions. Then, an analysis of the twofold division into rational (*ʿaqlī*) and textual evidence (*naqlī*) will follow. Since the concept of evidence is discussed rather briefly in the books of *kalām,* several case studies will follow to show how the theory manifests itself in practice.

To situate the present research within the contemporary literature, we will now look at the state of the research.

1.1. State of Research

Contemporary research on Islamic theology differs greatly depending on language and region. It is no exaggeration to describe them as separate discourses, although they investigate the same topics. One of the main reasons for that is the language barrier, especially in the case of Turkish academia, which is more advanced in its research on the Post-classical period. Another reason is the different objectives that authors in different regions have.

Instead of enumerating the works that have been written thus far, it is more beneficial to suggest a classification of the different trends, which will help to give an overview of the available literature and to situate the present thesis. The trends in the relevant literature can be separated into two categories regarding their engagement with contemporary questions related to philosophy, theology, and epistemology. The first trend is an academic endeavor that is descriptive. The main goal is to understand and situate different works and authors. This trend shall be called *non-engaging* since the authors are not engaging and answering contemporary questions. Most works in English, German, and Turkish fall under this category. The literature in English and German is still in its infant state when it comes to the Post-classical period. This sometimes leads to questionable conclusions since the overall picture of this still comes together.[1] An example that relates to the present thesis is Thomas Würtz's book on Taftāzānī,[2] which will be discussed in the first chapter. Furthermore, the research regarding the commentary tradition is also developing slowly. Walid Saleh describes this unfortunate situation by saying:

---

[1] The earliest work on the topic of epistemology is: Josef van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des ʿAḍudaddīn al-Īcī. Übersetzung und Kommentar des Ersten Buches seiner Mawāqif,* (Wiesbaden 1966). He was operating under the orientalist paradigm, which was mainly concerned with finding parallels between the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions.
The most insightful work in recent years in German has been written by Jens Bakker, *Normative Grundstrukturen der Theologie des sunnitischen Islam im 12./18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2012). Unfortunately, it has not reached a lot of attention.
An influential and insightful work in English is the following: Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century. Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2015).

[2] See: Thomas Würtz, *Islamische Theologie im 14. Jahrhundert: Auferstehungslehre, Handlungstheorie und Schöpfungsvorstellungen im Werk von Saʿd ad-Din at-Taftazani* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016).

> Nevertheless, realizing that we need to integrate the gloss in the intellectual history of medieval Islam is easier said than done. In the case of *tafsīr*, we lack any meaningful knowledge about the *ḥāshiyah* beyond a confounding list of authors ' names and titles of works, works that are now never read.[3]s

Although he is speaking about the research in *tafsīr,* his observation applies across the board. On the other hand, Turkish academia is in a better situation concerning the research on the commentary tradition in general and Post-classical *kalām* in particular.[4] Unfortunately, Western academia, by which I am mainly referring to works written in English and German, barely, if ever, pays closer attention to the research in Turkey. The works on Taftāzānī in English and German are also very scarce.[5] Again, the research in Turkey is much more advanced in this regard. In recent years there have been studies on his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*,[6] the glosses for *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*,[7] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*,[8] various topics in these works,[9] and other research relating to his other

[3] Walid Salih, "The Gloss as Intellectual History: The Ḥāshiyahs on al-Kashshāf," in: *Oriens* (2013). 41, 219.

[4] To give one salient example: In 2020, a three-volume edition of *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid* by Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Isfahānī (d. 749/1349) with the gloss by Jurjānī was published. One of the volumes is a bilingual (Turkish-Arabic) introduction that covers many aspects of the two works and offers insights into the commentary tradition, which will be mentioned in an upcoming chapter. (See: Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Isfahānī, *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2020).
Another example is the *İslam Düşünce Atlası* an "intellectual historiography project" which offers an open-access website with interactive maps. See: https://islamdusunceatlasi.org/ [last access: 07.01.23] They have recently released a six-volume work in which they propose a different periodization of Islamic intellectual history. See: İbrahim Halil Üçer (ed.), *İslam Düşünce Atlası* (Konya: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2022).
Finally, the entries on *sharḥ* and *ḥāshiyya* in the *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, offer more insights than the EI2 entry, which is outdated. (See: https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/serh [last access: 07.01.23] and https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hasiye [last access: 07.01.23])

[5] The most comprehensive work is Würtz's book mentioned earlier.
See also: Thomas Würtz, "Der frühe Saʿd ad-Dīn at-Taftāzānī als māturīditischer Autor," in *Rationalität in der Islamischen Theologie. Band I: Die klassische Phase*, ed. Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth, Reza Hajatpour and Mohammed Abdel Rahem (Berlin: De Gruyter 2019); Zafar Ansari, "Taftāzāni's Views on Taklīf, Ğabr and Qadar: A Note of the Development of Islamic Theological Doctrines," in: *Arabica. Revue d'études Arabes*, 16 (1969), 65–78; Madelung, Wilferd, "At-Taftāzānī und die Philosophie", in: *Logik und Theologie*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005); Wilfred Madelung, "al-Taftāzānī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

[6] Harun Çağlayan, "Şerhu'l-Akâid ve Kelâmî Değeri Üzerine Bir Deneme," in: *Bozok Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 14 / 14 (Aralık 2018): 15-43.

[7] Fatih İbiş, "Bir Cümlenin İzini Sürmek: Şerhu'l-Akâid Hâşiyelerinde Kelam-Felsefe İlişkisi," in: *Pamukkale Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4 (2017): 134-152.

[8] Fatih İbiş, "Bir Felsefî Kelâm Klasiği Olarak Şerhu'l-Makâsıd," in: *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 14 (2018): 383-400.

[9] Mustafa Aykaç, "Osmanlı Kelâmında Mâtürîdîlik Vurgusu: Şerḥu'l-'Aḳâid Haşiyelerindeki Tekvin Tartışmaları Bağlamında Bir İnceleme," in: Kader 18 (2020): 1-30.
Ümmügülsüm Dakkak, "Sa'duddîn et-Teftâzânî'nin Ahiret Hayatına Dair Görüşleri," in: *Tokat İlmiyat Dergisi* 10 / 1 (Haziran 2022): 277-297

books.[10] The closest research in scope to the present paper is the Ph.D. thesis from 2019 by Ziya Erdinç about "Taftāzān'īs Theory of Knowledge."[11] However, he emphasizes epistemology and the historical development of the topics, whereas the present research focuses on the relationship between epistemology and *kalām*.

The second trend engages current discussions and can be further separated into three subgroups. The first subgroup is a classical or traditional approach grounded in the classical discourse. The works in Arabic try to engage modern philosophical questions and show how Muslim theologians thought about these issues.[12] Another trend is an academic approach showing very little grounding in the traditional Islamic sciences but which engages contemporary issues with marginal positions found in the past.[13] The last trend resembles the previous academic approach but is more apologetic. The point of departure is in the Islamization of Knowledge theory articulated in the 1980s and has been very influential in Malaysia.[14]

The present research falls under the first category, that is, the *non-engaging academic* approach. It is too early to put the different traditions into a conversation as it demands a deep understanding of the Islamic theological tradition, which is only possible by grasping the Post-classical period as it is the matured state as far as its conceptual tools.

Bilal Taşkın, *İslam Düşüncesinde Varlık Tartışmaları: Sadeddin et-Teftazanî Merkezli Bir İnceleme* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2020)

[10] Duran Ekizer, "Saʿduddīn et-Teftāzān'ının (ö.792/1390) Şerḥu Dībāceti'l-Miṣbāḥ Adlı Risalesinin Tahkiki ve Nahiv Açısından Değerlendirilmesi," in: *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 62 (2021): 345-416.

Necmettin Öztürk, "Nahiv İlminde İhtisar Geleneği, Teftâzânî'nin el-İrşâd Örneği," in: Universal Journal of Theology 7 / 1 (Haziran 2022): 207-226.

Recep Duran, "Teftazani, Risaletu'l-Hudud," in: *Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5 / 2 (Aralık 2019): 287-316.

Ziya Erdinç, "Teftâzânî'nin Bilginin Tanımlanması Problemine Yaklaşımı," in: *Harran Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* / 42 (Aralık 2019): 257-286.

[11] Ziya Erdinç, *Teftâzânî'de bilgi teorisi* (Sakarya Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2019) https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/TezGoster?key=jNRDC1RLfVd4_T7x7ZXmmZHTR_u6lHjYNDGAbJtv7u12_WT6o5dwQ9fufcw2UDua [last access 08.01.23]

[12] Some examples for that are: Saeed Foudeh, *al-adilla al-ʿaqliyya ʿalā wujūd Allah bayna al-mutakallimīn wal-falāsifa* (Cairo: al-Aṣlayn, 2016) or Ali al-Omari, *Falsafa al-kalām* (Trabzon: Dār al-Qalam, 2020).

[13] See for example: Jamie B. Turner, "An Islamic Account of Reformed Epistemology," in: *Philosophy East and West*. Published electronically December 13, 2019. doi:10.1353/pew.0.0193 or Ramon Harvey, *Transcendent God, Rational World: A Maturidi Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

[14] See for example: Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the metaphysics of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2015).

So the present thesis will provide insights into the Sunnī theological system by analyzing one of its central figures.

CHAPTER II

SAʿD AL-DĪN AL-TAFTĀZĀNĪ

2.1. Biography

The biographical data about Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd b. ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī al-Khorasānī is scarce, as is the case with the majority of the scholars from Transoxiana. Given this scarcity, we will suffice with the key data and address two issues in his biography: His relationship to ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1356) and Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *kalām* and *fiqh*.

Fortunately, Taftāzānī mentions at the end of his works when and where he finished his writings, giving us hints about his travels and places he resided. So we have a chronological order of his books, which will be enumerated in a later chapter. Taftāzānī was born in the year 722/1322 in Taftāzān, a village near Nasā in Khurāsān.[15] Some biographers mention the year 712/1312, but this seems incorrect given that his grandson, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Ḥafīd al-Saʿd al-Taftāzānī (916/1510), mentions the year 722/1322 AH.[16]

Taftāzānī comes from a scholarly household as he refers to himself as "Masʿūd the son of the judge" (Masʿūd b. al-Qāḍī) in his first commentary *Sharḥ Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī* which he wrote at the age of 16.[17] This book is still used to this day and has been reprinted many times by different publishing houses, which shows that Taftāzānī, from a young age, showed the skills of clarity in writing. The point about the scholarly household

[15] See: Şükrü Özen, "Teftâzânî," in: TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/teftazani [last access 07.01.2023]; Wilfred Madelung, "al-Taftāzānī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. [last access 07.01.2023]

[16] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Niʿam al-sawābigh fī sharḥ al-Nawābigh* (Istanbul: Dār al-Lubāb, 2018). From here onwards abbreviated with: *Niʿam*.

[17] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ Taṣrīf al-ʿĪzzī* (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj 2011), 69.

and his first book leads us to the first issue of his biography. Almost all biographers mention that Taftāzānī was a student of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, and some even add a rather anecdotal detail that Taftāzānī was apparently "very slow to learn" in his youth and that he was the "most dull-witted" student in the circle of Ījī.[18] However, there are issues with the story and Taftāzānī being his student. The first biography that mentions the story seems to be Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1679) in his *Shadharāt al-dhahab*. He introduces the story with: "Some virtuous men tell …" (*ḥakā baʿḍ al-afāḍil*), which is more reminiscent of a story than an actual event. Adding the fact that Taftāzānī grew up in a scholarly household and that he wrote his first book at the age of 16 makes it very likely that the story is made up.

Taftāzānī does not mention any of his teachers by name in the books that have reached us.[19] However, five scholars that Taftāzānī apparently studied with are: ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766/1346), Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd Allah al-ʿAfīfī (d. 780/1379), Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (unknown), and ʿAlā al-Dīn al-Sighnānqī (unknown).[20] Probably the most famous of these scholars is Ījī, but there are no indications that Taftāzānī was his student, so it seems questionable that he studied with him.[21] Of the rest of the scholars, the closest to Taftāzānī in his scientific output is Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿAfīfī. It is mentioned that he was among the students of Ījī and well-versed in the Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī school of law. Ibn Ḥajar mentions that he used to issue fatwas in both *madhhabs* and used to say about himself: "I am Ḥanafī in the foundations (*uṣūl*) and Shāfiʿī in the branches (*furūʿ*)."[22] He is probably referring to his method in *uṣūl al-fiqh,* which is according to the jurists (*fuqahāʾ*), that is, the Ḥanafī scholars. This piece of information about Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿAfīf will be important in the following chapter regarding Taftāzān'īs *madhhab*.

From the entries at the end of Taftāzān'īs books, we can see that he traveled frequently and did not reside for too long in one city. However, he does not discuss details

[18] See: Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār min dhahab* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2008), vol 8, 548-549.
[19] See: Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Qālish, *Taftāzānī wa ārāʾuhu al-balāghiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Nawādir, 2010), 36.
[20] See: *Niʿam*, 44. The number of scholars that are mentioned varies.
[21] See: Madelung (2005), 228.
[22] *Niʿam*, 51.

regarding his travels or reasons for them.[23] Although students flocked around him whenever he traveled into a city, some take his frequent travels as a reason for the lack of close students who studied with Taftāzānī for an extended period.[24] Taftāzānī was invited by order of Timur (d. 808/1405) to Samarqand, where he spent the last years of his life.[25] Some sources mention an event that apparently led to his death. He and Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī were invited to have a debate in which Taftāzānī lost.[26] He was struck by "intense grief" to the point that he soon after died. Just like the story about the young "dull-witted" Taftāzānī, it is questionable that a lost debate was a cause for his death, given that he lived a tumultuous life indicated in his introduction to his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid.* He describes how his time tossed him around, how different events tested him, and how the circumstances changed without safety but only with the hope for the better.[27] One could argue that a man who experienced hardship would not die due to grief because of a debate. However, it is also not far-fetched to argue that Taftāzānī was about 70 years of age when the debate took place. His opponent was 29 years younger than him, and Taftāzānī might have felt public humiliation, which can have psychological implications on a man his age, especially when he knew he was right but still lost the debate. This line of reasoning is also possible. At least the last point about him being right can be substantiated by the fact that some of the scholars after Taftāzānī took sides with him and mentioned that he actually held the correct position.[28] This does not mean that the debate itself or the outcome did not occur as mentioned, but to make it the reason for the end of Taftāzān'īs life sounds very far-fetched.

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[23] See: *Niʿam*, 44; Qālish, 31.

[24] Qālish, 38.

[25] Madelung (2005), 228; Qālish, 34; *Niʿam*, 48.
For an investigation into the relationship between Timur and Muslim scholars, see: Mustafa Akkuş and İzzetullah Zeki, "Timur'un âlimlerle ilişkileri" in: *Selçuk Üniversitesi Selçuklu Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2019): 227-244.

[26] For a collection about the differences of opinion regarding grammar and rhetoric between the two scholars see: ʿAbd Allah b. ʿUthmān Mastjīzādeh, *Ijtimāʿ al-baḥrayn fī bayān al-ikhtilāf al-saʿdayn* (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥsān, 2019).

[27] See: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Cairo: Dār Mīrāth al-Nubūwa, 2022), vol. 1, 10. The whole introduction is written in very eloquent and high-level Arabic which makes it extremely different to capture in translation.

[28] For an investigation of the debate and its impact on later scholarship, see: Yüksel Çelik, *Sa'düddîn Teftâzânî İle Seyyid Şerif Cürcânî'nin İlmî Münazaraları ve Yankıları*, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, vol. 1, no. 1, 170-183, 2015.

Taftāzānī died in Samarqand in 792/1390 and was taken to Sarakhs due to his wish mentioned in his testament.[29] Some biographers mention 791/1389 or 793/1391 as the date of his death, but these are incorrect for two reasons. First, his grandson, who should be taken as a reliable source given the ancestral and timely closeness, mentions the year 792/1390. Second, Taftāzān'īs grave, which was visited by Tāshköprīzade (d. 968/1561), also mentions the year 792/1390.[30]

2.2. Works

We are in a fortunate situation because many of Taftāzān'īs works have been published or republished with critical editions in the last couple of years.[31] The present chapter will briefly enumerate the books written by Taftāzānī in chronological order.[32] His first book, as mentioned earlier, is *Sharḥ Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī,* a commentary on a work of morphology, which he finished at the age of 16 in the year 738 AH in Tirmidh. Eleven years later, he finished his *Sharḥ Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* (also called *al-Muṭawwal*) in the

[29] *Niʿam*, 48.
[30] *Niʿam*, 48.
[31] To avoid too many footnotes in the chronological enumeration of his works, we will mention the published works in this footnote according to their genre. In case there are multiple editions for one work, we will suffice with one of the critical editions.
Morphology, grammar, rhetoric, and *tafsīr*
Sharḥ Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī (Jeddah: Dār al-Minhāj, 2011)
al-Mukhtaṣar: Sharḥ Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2021)
Sharḥ Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ (Istanbul: Dār al-Lubāb, 2022)
Sharḥ Miftāh al-ʿulūm (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2022)
Irshād al-hādī (Jeedah: Dār al-Bayān al-ʿArabiyya, 1985)
Ḥāshiya Taftāzānī ʿalā al-Kashshāf (Ḥalab: Markaz Jaylānī lil-Buḥūth, 2021)
Niʿam al-sawābigh fī sharḥ al-Nawābigh (Istanbul: Dār al-Lubāb, 2018).
Logic
Sharḥ al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya fī taḥrīr qawāʿid al-manṭiqiyya (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2022)
Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wal-kalām (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2017)
Fiqh and uṣūl al-fiqh
al-Fatāwā al-ḥanafiyya (Karachi: Dār al-Kutub, 2020)
Sharḥ al-talwīḥ ʿalā al-Tawḍīḥ (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2009)
Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā al-uṣūlī wa ʿalayhi majmūʿa ḥawāshin (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2020)
Kalām
Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-nasafiyya (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2020)
Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wal-kalām (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2017)
Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid fī ʿilm al-kalām (Cairo: Dār Mīrāth al-Nubūwwa, 2022) or *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1998). Unfortunately, both have their shortcomings. The first is not a critical edition but has fewer mistakes than the second, in which sometimes whole sentences and passages are missing.
[32] The list follows the list mentioned in the biographical section in *Niʿam*, 46-47. The reason for choosing this contemporary author is that he cites Tāshköprīzade and evaluates the list he mentions with useful additions. For the sake of brevity, we will suffice with the *hijrī* dates in the main text as mentioned by Taftāzānī.

month of Ṣafar 748 in the city of Herat. Tāshköprīzade adds that Taftāzānī started writing it in the year 742 AH. It is a commentary on the famous work on rhetoric *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī (d. 793/1338). Taftāzānī wrote an abridged version of his commentary known as *al-Mukhtaṣar*, which he finished in 756 AH in Bagdad. A year later, in the month of *Jumāda al-Ākhar* 757 AH, he finished his *Sharḥ al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya* in Mizārjām, which is a commentary on a logic textbook by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 675/1276).[33] The following year in 758 AH, he finished his commentary on the Ḥanafī *uṣūl al-fiqh* text *al-Talwīḥ sharḥ al-Tawḍīḥ li-matn al-Tanqīḥ* by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa (d. 747/1346). His first work on *kalām* was *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* which he finished in 768 AH in Khuwārizm. The main text was written by Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Nasafī (d. 508/1108), in which he follows Abū Muʿīn al-Nasaf'īs (d. 508/1114) *Tabṣira al-adilla.* Ḥājī Khalīfa (10671657) described the relationship between the two texts with the following words: "Whoever looks into it realizes that the text of *al-ʿAqāʾid* by ʿUmar al-Nasafī is like an index to this book."[34] Both texts are obviously from the Māturīdī school, which caused confusion about Taftāzān'īs adherence. This topic will be discussed in the following chapter. In the month of *Dhu al-Ḥijja* 770 AH in the city Khuwārizm, Taftāzānī finished his gloss to Ījʾīs commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājibs *Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā al-uṣūlī,* a text on *uṣūl al-fiqh* according to the method of the theologians (*ṭariqat al-mutakallimīn*). Three years later, in Herat, he finished his Ḥanafī *fatwā* collection in 773 AH.[35] In 778AH, again in Khuwārizm, he finished a book on grammar called *al-Irshād*. He started writing his first independent and most comprehensive work on *kalām* called *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* probably around 770 AH in Khuwārizm and finished it 14 years later in 784 AH in Samarqand.[36] Five years later, in Rajab 789 AH, he finished his concise work on logic and *kalām* called *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wal-kalām.* It is important to note that, unlike *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* these two works are not commentaries but independent works. This distinction will become crucial in the following chapters to identify Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *kalām*. His commentary on the

[33] See for a brief biography and overview to his works: Khaled El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic (1200-1800)* (Basel: Schwabe Verlage, 2019), 56-59

[34] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2020), 50.

[35] There is a difference of opinion when he started writing it. Some mentioned the year 769 AH and others 759 AH. (See: *Niʿam*, 47).

[36] In one of his *ijāzāt* from the year 775 AH, he mentions that the student read "parts from *Sharḥ Maqāṣid al-kalām* for which I beseech Allah–the Exalted–to aid me in completing it." (See: *Niʿam*, 63).

third part of *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm,* a work on rhetoric, was finished in 789 AH in Samarqand. Then, he wrote two works in Sarakhs on *fiqh* according to the Shāfiʿī school: *Miftāḥ al-fiqh*, an independent work, which he finished in 782 AH, and three years later, in 785 AH, he finished *Sharḥ Talkhīṣ al-Jāmiʿ*. Finally, he started a gloss on the famous Quran commentary by Jār Allah Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), which he did not finish.

2.3. Commentary Tradition in the Post-Classical Period

Taftāzānī wrote several independent works and commentaries to varying schools of thought. The distinction between these two broad categories is a means to differentiate between works in which the author is primarily voicing his own opinion or acting as a *shāriḥ* (explainer) of a text regardless of his ascription to the position found in the main text. So broadly defined, the meaning of *commentary* in the current usage refers to a work written on a text from a different author regardless of the text being a *matn* (main text), *sharḥ* (commentary), or *ḥāshiyya* (gloss). The term *independent work* refers to every work that is not a commentary on a text by a different author.[37]

The twofold distinction between *independent work* and *commentary* is crucial to avoid confusion regarding Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *fiqh* and *kalām,* which traditional Muslim scholars and academics differed about. Some claim that he follows the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, while others say that he is a Shāfiʿī. Similarly, there is a debate regarding his school of thought in *kalām*. Some claim he is a Māturīdī while others say that he is an Ashʿarī.[38] There is even the opinion that he changed his *kalām* position throughout his life.[39] Although some of the views were due to the inaccessibility of his works, the issue was not simplified after more of his books were published. One could even argue that the accessibility of his works added to the confusion. Due to this circumstance, it is necessary to clarify an essential feature of the commentary tradition starting around the 7th/14th century first. Only then will we get a better understanding

[37] The point of this distinction is to aid the investigation on the *madhhab* of a scholar. It is not a precise conceptual tool but a means to make a broad distinction of the author's work.

[38] See for a concise summary of all the different positions: *Niʿam,* 48-50.

[39] See: Thomas Würtz, "Der frühe Saʿd ad-Dīn at-Taftāzānī als māturīditischer Autor," in *Rationalität in der Islamischen Theologie. Band I: Die klassische Phase*, ed. Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth, Reza Hajatpour and Mohammed Abdel Rahem (Berlin: De Gruyter 2019), 351-372.

of Muslim scholarship of the Post-classical Period in general and of Taftāzān'īs works and position regarding *fiqh* and *kalām* in particular.

The following investigation will first give a brief overview of how and why commentaries and glosses were written. Second, the concept of *taqrīr* and other notions that relate to it will be analyzed. Then, the crucial change of this concept, which started around the 7th/14th century, will be highlighted. Lastly, the conceptual tool with its changes will be pointed out in some of Taftāzān'īs works to show the importance of evaluating an intellectual tradition according to its own standards. As a result, two problems will be resolved. First, the problem of the axiomatic position, which states that the commentary tradition is a sign of stagnation of a tradition. Second, the issue of determining Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *fiqh* and *kalām.* Due to this circumstance, it is necessary to clarify an essential feature of the commentary tradition starting around the 7th/14th century first. Only then will we get a better understanding of Muslim scholarship of the Post-classical Period in general and of Taftāzān'īs works and position regarding *fiqh* and *kalām* in particular.

2.3.1. Commentaries and Glosses: An Overview[40]

Contemporary Western academics have begun to pay more attention to the commentary tradition in its different forms and have abandoned a categorical dismissal of abridgments (*mukhtaṣar*) and glosses (*ḥāshiya*).[41] With that, they concluded that commentaries and glosses are more demanding as they presuppose knowledge of the auxiliary sciences and their terminologies.[42] The following investigation focuses on

[40] For a comprehensive overview on this topic see: Kamāl ʿArafāt Nabhān, *ʿAbqarīyatu al-ʿarab fī al-taʾlīf* (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf wal-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya 2015). For a concise but useful entries see: Tevfik Rüştü Topuzoğlu, "Haşiye", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hasiye [last access 07.01.2023]; Sedat Şensoy, "Şerh", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/serh#1 [last access 07.01.2023]. See also: İsmail Kara, İlim Bilmez Tarih *Hatırlamaz Şerh ve Haşiye Meselesine Dair Birkaç Not* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2022).

[41] See for example: Asad Q. Ahmed and Margaret Larkin. "The Ḥāshiya and Islamic Intellectual History", *Oriens* 41, 3-4 (2013): 213-216 and Wisnovsky, Robert. "Towards a Genealogy of Avicennism", *Oriens* 42, 3-4 (2014): 323-363.

[42]" [W]e have lost the skills required to read and understand the gloss tradition. We simply have no way handling the gloss in *tafsīr*, and therefore we have been incapable of advancing our knowledge (...) of the entire scholastic Qurʾān commentary tradition that was written mainly in the form of the gloss. (...) We simply are not equipped to read glosses now." (Walid A. Saleh, "The Ḥāshiya of Ibn al-Munayyir

some of the features of the commentary tradition and will give a general overview of what Muslim scholars mentioned regarding the motivation for writing a book, commentary, or gloss and their criteria.

Islamic scholarship has its parameters of what constitutes originality. It is not always about producing something unprecedented and completely new but also about improving or advancing a written work.[43] This notion can be illustrated by the seven reasons a new work is written. The following points are a list that can be found in Ibn Khaldūn's *al-Muqaddima*:

1. Bringing forth something new [that includes new sciences as al-Shāfiʿī did with his *al-Risālā* for *uṣūl al-fiqh*]
2. Correcting what is deficient
3. Pointing out different mistakes
4. Explaining what is difficult to understand due to exercise brevity.
5. Shortening tedious and long passages without making the work more complicated and leaving out passages necessary for comprehension.
6. Restructuring what is poorly structured in a way that the original structure is not disturbed
7. The proper arrangement of materials which were badly arranged in the work of a predecessor in an intelligent manner which would make the new work more suitable for didactic purposes.[44]

It is noteworthy that almost all of the reasons presuppose a work or tradition that a new book relates to and departs from. Even something novel, like the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* or *ʿilm al-waḍʿ*, is not detached from the other sciences but embedded in them. In other words, the notion of *originality* and *novelty* does not manifest itself only in something completely new, which detaches itself from everything that has preceded it. In this context, it makes sense that a well-written and well-structured *mukhtaṣar* (abridgment) is desirable even if it does not add something

(d. 683/1284) on al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī". In *Books and Written Culture of the Islamic World*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 87-88.)
Saleh's observation applies to the commentary tradition as a whole not only to *tafsīr*.

[43] See: Franz Rosenthal: The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship. In: *Analecta Orientalia*, (Rom: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947), 64.

[44] See Rosenthal (1947), 64. For a more comprehensive presentation with similar points see: Ibn Khaldūn: *Al-Muqaddima* (2005), vol 3, 206-208; Ibn Khaldūn: *The Muqaddima* (New Jersey 2006), 413-414.
The difference between points two and three is that the latter can happen through an appendix which leaves the mistake and points it out, whereas the first happens, for example, by revising the next after which the mistake is not there anymore.

"new" in the modern sense. Scholars have observed the following criteria to consider a book a successful *mukhtaṣar*.

1. Brevity of Expressions (*ikhtiṣār al-lafẓ*)
2. The presence of the same meanings as in the main text (*tamṯīl al-maʿānī al-mawǧūda bi al-naṣṣ*)
3. Removing things like (a.) filler words and prolixity, (b.) examples, evidence, reasons, and similes unless there is a need to mention them, (c.) some chapters, (d.) obscure definitions, and (e.) repetitions
4. Carefulness in style (*al-ihtimām bil-uslūb*), which includes: Good mode of expression and taking into account the reading level for which the abridgment is written.
5. Explanation (*tawḍīḥ*) such as: (a.) using clearer definitions, (b.) making it easier to understand, and (c.) clarifying what is important.
6. Criticism and comparison (*al-naqd wal-muqāranah*), i.e.: (a.) presenting one's own opinion and discussing that of the main text, (b.) commenting and comparing, (c.) weighing up between the opinions and choosing the better and more obvious one.
7. Correction and vocalization of difficult words (*al-taṣḥīḥ wa ḍabṭ al-mushkil*)
8. Verification, specification, and scrutiny (*al-taḥqīq wal-tadqīq wa al-taqaṣṣī*)
9. Checking the structure of the main text (*iʿādat al-tartīb*)
10. Being guided by the example of previous abridgments of the same work.[45]

Once a *mukhtaṣar* is accepted by the scientific community, which manifests itself by being taught and commented on, it has the potential to become a new pivotal point for later generations and replace the original work(s) it was based on. A prime example of that is Taftāzānī.[46] Even within his lifetime, scholars recognized and acknowledged the value and benefits of his books. Ibn Khaldūn, who was a contemporary of Taftāzānī, says about him:

> In Egypt, I have come across several writings by a man from the greats of Herat who is known as Saʿd al-Din al-Taftāzānī. [His works] include *kalām, uṣūl al-fiqh*, and *balāgha*, attesting that he has a firm mastery of these sciences. In them, there is evidence that he has knowledge of the *ʿulūm ḥikmiyya* and a deep understanding of the rational sciences.[47]

[45] Nabhān, 209-212.
The observations of the author are mainly based on classical scholars that have written encyclopedic works in which they also touch upon the way scholars write and evaluate the works.

[46] Another great example is the text *Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid* by Nāsr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, which became a central text for Sunnī and Shia scholars. For a detailed analysis of this work, its commentaries, glosses, and its influence on the intellectual tradition, see: Maḥmūd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Isfahānī, *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2020), vol. 1.

[47] Ibn Khaldūn, vol 3, 1091.

Contrary to Ibn Khaldūn's assessment, some modern academics say that "his originality as a thinker was limited."[48] This view is based on the notion that works of the later period, especially commentaries, are perceived as a sign or reason for intellectual stagnation and decadence.[49] However, once this axiomatic position is questioned and one starts to read and analyze commentaries in their different forms, it becomes clear that they are, on the one hand, the place where many subtle discussions are taking place and, on the other hand, the means to understand the discussions and issues the author of the main text is reacting to. Commentaries clarify and disclose the implicit questions lurking between the lines that the main text's author or *mukhtaṣar* does not mention explicitly. Generally speaking, there are three things a *shāriḥ* (explainer) does: He explains the meanings of the main text, discusses the different views on the subject, and presents objections.[50]

Glosses can serve a similar function depending on the author's goal. They can be very brief annotations about the main text or the commentary,[51] and at other times they become the ground for detailed discussions.[52] Scholars observed the following features of the glosses.

1. Explanation and clarification of difficult-to-understand parts of the text
2. Valid verifications and close examinations of the text
3. Explanation of parts that are kept short
4. References to sources
5. Derivation and highlighting of valuable things in the text
6. Correction of the text, correction of errors or criticism, and refutations of the author.[53]

Another important observation is that the "*matn-sharḥ-ḥāshiya* string" is a "tradition of understanding" that explain each other and move from concise to detailed and from ambiguous to clarified. Short texts, like the *ʿAqāʾid nasafiyya*, become clearer and

[48] Madelung (2005), 227.

[49] See: Walid A. Saleh, "Marginalia and Peripheries: A Tunisian Historian and the History of Qurʾanic Exegesis," in Numen 58 (2011), 304-305; Asad Q. Ahmed and Margaret Larkin (2013), 213-216.

[50] See: *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid*, vol. 1, 124. For a general overview see: Sedat Şensoy, "Şerh", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/serh

[51] See: Şükrü Özen, "Teftâzânî", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hasiye

[52] A prime example of that are the various glosses on *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*. For an overview of them, see: İbiş (2017), 134-152; Çağlayan (2018), 15-43.

[53] Nabhān, 334-335.

more understandable with the commentary, and his commentary also becomes more accessible through the glosses. This is a general observation, so it does not mean that every gloss only aims at explaining the text.[54] All of the features and criteria for the *mukhtaṣar*, *sharḥ*, and *ḥāshiya* show that, in many cases, an author advances the discourse with his contribution. As mentioned earlier, notions of *novelty* or *advancement* must be understood within a framework other than the predominating modern understanding. After this brief overview, we will examine a concept central to the commentary tradition.

2.3.2. The Concept of *taqrīr*

In the context of the commentary tradition, the notion of *taqrīr* needs to be investigated. It is essential to clarify this concept as it was a widespread practice among later scholars, especially from the 7th/13th century onwards. First, we will look at the linguistic meaning, other concepts that relate to it, and how this notion was understood in the early period. Second, we will focus on changes around the 7th/13th century concerning the idea of *taqrīr* and how it relates to the commentaries. After these investigations, the aim is to see how the findings apply to Taftāzān'īs works and how they help to resolve the issue about his *madhhab* in *fiqh* and *kalām.*

2.3.3. Linguistic and Technical Meaning of *taqrīr* and Similar Concepts

The linguistic meaning of *taqrīr* is *taḥqīq* and *tathbīt*. As the following analysis will show, the term *tathbīt* is also used to explain *taḥqīq* and *tadqīq*.[55] So linguistically, the three terms (*taqrīr*, *taḥqīq*, and *tadqīq*) can be used as synonyms. In their technical usage, however, they are more distinct but still close in meaning. *Taqrīr,* in the technical sense, means "a pure clarification insofar as the addressee and anyone who is listening can understand it with ease."[56] The technical term of *taḥqīq* can be used synonymously for *taqrīr* but also more specific with the following meaning:

[54] See: İbiş (2017), 148.
[55] This chapter is based on the following paper: Hamzeh al-Bakri, *Uslūb al-taqrīr fī rasāʾil Ibn Kamāl Bāshā*, in *Kemalpaşazade Felsefe-Din-Edebiyat Araştırmaları,* ed. Murat Demirkol, Yusuf Şen, Hayriye Özlem Sürer, Ahmet Şehit Tuna (Ankara: Fecr, 2022), vol 2, 250-265.
[56] al-Bakri, 251.

"Establishing an issue (*tathbīt al-masʾala*) with its evidence or cause and repelling its criticism."[57] Now, *tadqīq* is even more specific: "It means precisely establishing (*al-tathabbut bi diqqa).* So it is establishing something through evidence with precision. Hence, it is more specific than *taḥqīq*."[58] Here is another important term which is *taḥrīr.* To do *taḥrīr* of something means "to abstract it from that which is attached to it and to free it from its accidents (*aʿrāḍ*)."[59] A common usage in the classical texts is the expression *taḥrīr maḥall al-nizāʿ* which, if translated literally, means: to isolate the point of contention. This phrase is used when scholars investigate the exact matter of debate without all the other propositions that branch off of it.[60]

The following section will focus on the usage of the term *taqrīr* among the early scholars and then show how it slightly changed from the 7th/14th century onwards in the commentary tradition.

2.3.4. *Taqrīr* Before and After the 7th-13th Century

The term *taqrīr* can be found in works as early as the 5th/11th century. Scholars like Juwaynī (d. 478/1085 AH), Ghazālī (d. 505/1111 AH), Shahristānī (d. 548/1153 AH), Rāzī (d. 606/1210 AH), Āmidī (d. 631/1233 AH), and others used it in their works.[61] The context in which they used it differs, but all of them have the meaning of *tathabbut* (establishing). *Taqrīr* is used in different expressions, like *taqrīr al-ḥukm*, *taqrīr al-madhhab,* or *taqrīr al-dalīl.* The common point between all of them is the meaning of establishing the judgment (*ḥukm*), position in the school (*madhhab*), or the evidence (*dalīl*) irrespective of the opinion of the author insofar as he agrees with it or not. So when, for example, Āmidī says: "According to what has been earlier established of the school (*taqrīr al-madhhab*) from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and his

[57] al-Bakri, 251.

[58] al-Bakri, 251-252. An alternative meaning is: "Establishing a topic with its evidence is *taḥqīq* and establishing it with a different evidence is *tadqīq."* See: Ibid.

[59] al-Bakri, 251-252.

[60] A good example for that is the difference of opinion between the Ashʿar'īs and Māturīd'īs regarding the attribute of *takwīn*. The actual point of contention starts from the attribute of *qudra* (power). See, for example, how the arguments regarding *takwīn* between the two schools keep coming back to the attribute of *qudra:* Shaykhzādeh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAlī, *Naẓm al-farāʾid wa jamʿ al-fawāʾid* (Egypt, 1317 AH) 17-21.

[61] al-Bakri, 252.

followers."[62] he is pointing to what he has clarified and explained based on Ashʿar'īs *madhhab* which does not tell us if Āmidī agrees or not. This is not stating the obvious since Āmidī is an Ashʿarī but is not necessarily following him regarding this matter.

From the 7th/13th century onwards, the term *taqrīr* got a new meaning in the commentary tradition. Explaining a text according to the author's opinion without intervening became a goal of writing an explanation (*sharḥ*). In other words, the primary purpose of the commentator was to clarify and explain the intention of the author, no matter if he agreed with the judgment, school, or evidence. If the commentator chose to discuss and argue against the main text, he was free to do so, but only after fulfilling his duty of explaining the text. So the discussion became secondary, whereas the explaining or *taqrīr* was the primary purpose of the commentary (*sharḥ*). To illustrate this point: Naṣr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī criticized Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāz'īs commentary of Ibn Sīn'ās *al-Tanbīh wal-ishārāt* for neglecting his duty as a commentator and exaggerating in his critic. In his introduction, al-Ṭūsī, after praising Rāzī for his "utmost level of investigation," says

> (…) except that during his writing, he went too far in refuting its author, and in contradicting its fundamental precepts, he transgressed the bounds of fairness. With these efforts, he did nothing more than undermine. For this reason, a certain wag labeled his commentary a "calumny" (…) It is a prerequisite for the commentators that they expend every effort, to the extent possible, for the sake of what they have committed themselves to comment on and to defend, by means of whichever defenses the founder of that discipline uses, what they have burdened themselves with elucidating, in order that they be commentators and not contradictors, interpreters and not objectors.[63]

Ṭūṣī speaking of the "prerequisite of the commentators" clearly shows that the duty in a commentary is first and foremost "elucidating" the main text. Ḥājī Khalīfa even used Rāz'īs commentary as a case study when he talked about "the etiquettes of the commentator and his prerequisites" (*min ādāb al-shāriḥ wa sharṭihi*).[64] It does not mean that criticism and discussion are not a part of the commentary. As mentioned earlier, it is up to the commentator if he chooses to argue against the author of the main text. Still, he does so only after establishing (*taqrīr*) the author's position with the most charitable reading. Hence, there are two distinct approaches: *taqrīr* without objection

[62] al-Bakri, 253.
[63] Wisnovsky, 370.
[64] See: al-Bakri, 255.

or with objection. Later scholars clearly distinguished between these two positions (*maqām*). That is why we find scholars like al-Isfahānī, who is a Ḥanafī, explain an *uṣul al-fiqh* text of Ibn Ḥājib, which is according to the Mālikī *madhhab* without arguing for or defending the Ḥanafī position.[65] So the distinction between the two approaches has to be considered, especially when it comes to identifying the *madhhab* of a scholar like Taftāzānī about whom there is a debate. The investigation prepared the ground to take a closer look at Taftāzān'īs works to identify his *madhhab* in *fiqh* and *kalām*.

2.4. Taftāzān'īs School of Thought

There is no doubt that social circumstances influence scholarship to a certain extent, but it would be shortsighted to assume that these circumstances always explain Muslim scholars 'position. Unfortunately, it is quite common that academics in the field of Islamic Studies sometimes overemphasize societal factors to explain theological discourses. This overemphasis, combined with disregarding the commentary tradition, will inevitably produce insufficient, if not misleading, results.

The recent and most comprehensive work on Taftāzānī in Western academia by Thomas Würtz is an example of the issues mentioned above. In his book on Taftāzānī, he did not consult a single commentary or gloss on Taftāzān'īs works.[66] Additionally, he assumes that Taftāzānī changed his stance toward the Māturīdī school from a commentator of the *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya* to a critic in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*.[67] In an article, he even suggests that Taftāzānī used to be a Māturīdī but later in his life became an Ashʿarī.[68] Würtz, in his book and paper, neither consults the commentaries nor glosses on Taftāzān'īs works but tries to find an explanation in the societal circumstance, which, as he implicitly admits, does not solve the issue.[69] Considering the earlier findings regarding the commentary tradition and the concept of *taqrīr,* it becomes easier to put forth a convincing explanation for Taftāzān'īs affiliation.

[65] al-Bakri, 255.
[66] Würtz (2016).
[67] Würtz (2016), 279-280.
[68] Würtz (2019)
[69] Würtz (2016), 279.

The previous investigation argued that there are two types of *taqrīr* in the commentaries: Those that are limited to establishing the author's position without intervening and those that do *taqrīr* (establish) and then add their own critique and discussion later. A careful reading of *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* carefully will reveal that his commentary is from the second type. Taftāzānī says in his introduction:

> I tried to explain it in a way that puts forth in detail its generalities, clarifies its puzzles, opens up its folded, and discloses its concealed meanings while directing the statements with clarification, verifying the topics after establishing (*taḥqīq lil-masāʾil ghibba taqrīr*), explicating the evidences after freeing them up (*tadqīq lil-dalāʾil ithra taḥrīr*), revealing the objectives after introducing (*tafsīr lil-Maqāṣid baʿda tamhīd*), and increasing the benefits after isolating.[70]

Taftāzānī explicitly states what he sets out to do. Due to the brevity of Nasaf'īs text, which he compares to jewels and precious stones, Taftāzān'īs first aim is to explain (*sharḥ*) the meanings embedded in the text by *clarifying*, *opening up*, and *exposing* them. The following keywords include the concepts discussed earlier. Taftāzānī says that he first does *taqrīr* (establish) and then *taḥqīq* (verify). In other words, he first establishes the topics as the author, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī, intended because Taftāzānī is first and foremost a *shāriḥ* (explainer). After finishing this task, he moves on and does *taḥqīq* (verify). Similarly, he says that he will first free up (*taḥrīr*) a topic, that is, from that which is not part of it, and then do *tadqīq* (explicate). Lastly, he mentions how he starts paving the way to the objectives (*maqāṣid*) after he starts with an introduction (*tamhīd*), which relates to the crucial distinction between the topics which are objectives (*maqāṣid*) of a science and those that are introductions (*mabādiʾ*). Chapter 2.2. will discuss this distinction in detail.

The first preliminary conclusion from Taftāzān'īs introduction in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* tells us that he is following the second type of *taqrīr* approach in which a commentator of a text first establishes the position of the author and then adds his opinion or position. That is why the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* is first and foremost according to Māturīdī *madhhab* but includes, at least in some instances, the objections and opinions of Taftāzānī. To substantiate this claim further, a brief but very important statement from one of the glossers will be mentioned. Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣtafā al- Kastalī (d. 910) says

[70] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 98.

in his gloss on *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*: "The *shāriḥ* (explainer) based many of his statements on their *madhhab* following the author. So beware of that."[71] Kastalī refers to the Māturīdī *madhhab*, which is Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasaf'īs school of thought. Kastal'īs statement shows that scholars were aware of the distinction between an independent work, a commentary, and the responsibility of a commentator.

In conclusion, Würtz observed that Taftāzānī has Ashʿarī leanings in his commentary but could not provide a sufficient explanation. Considering the second *taqrīr* approach makes it possible to make a strong case. Taftāzānī first establishes the Māturīdī position, and whenever he feels the need to offer his opinion or level a critique, he will do so. As a *shāriḥ* (explainer), his primary aim and duty are to do the first, that is, to explain the main text. His critique and opinion are secondary. Therefore, it is misleading to assume that all of Taftāzān'īs works are equal insofar as they reveal his position. This applies to all scholars from the 7th/13th century onwards. That is why the distinction between the independent works and commentaries (*sharḥ* and *ḥashiyya*) is necessary for identifying Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* in *kalām* and *fiqh* by allocating his works correctly, which is the topic of the next chapter.

2.4.1. Ashʿarī or Māturīdī?

Based on the findings in the previous chapters, the books by Taftāzānī will be divided into independent works and commentaries. A detailed analysis of the *kalām* books will help identify his *madhhab*. To achieve this goal, various topics of dispute (*masāʿil khilāfiyya*)[72] will be highlighted to see what position Taftāzānī took. Additionally, specific statements in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* will be highlighted to substantiate the claim that he is first and foremost acting as a *shāriḥ* (explainer) for a Māturīdī text.

Taftāzānī has three works of *kalām*: *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* and *Tahdhīb al-kalām*. The first is a commentary on the Māturīdī text by Abū Ḥafẓ al-Nasafī. The

[71] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *al-Majmūʿa al-saniyya* (Lebanon: Dār Nūr al-Ṣabāḥ, 2012), 543. From here on abbreviated with: *al-Majmūʿa.*

[72] See for example: Ibn Kamāl Bāshā, *Masāʾil al-ikhtilāf bayna al-ashāʿira wal-māturīdiyya* (Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2009) and Shaykhzādeh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAlī, *Naẓm al-farāʾid wa jamʿ al-fawāʾid*.

previous chapter showed that Taftāzānī explicitly mentions in the introduction that he sets out to explain the text first and to do *taḥqīq* afterward. So this work is obviously a commentary in the sense that it is not an independent work. *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* is actually two works: The main text and a commentary. According to our terminology, both are independent works since he is not commenting on another author's text.[73] Lastly, his *Tahdhīb al-kalām* is also an independent work similar in length to his *al-Maqāṣid*.

The claim here is that if we want to identify Taftāzān'īs adherence, the primary sources should be his independent works. It does not negate that he might voice his opinion even in his commentaries, but, as discussed earlier, the primary task of a *shāriḥ* is explaining the main text regardless if he agrees with the author or not. Voicing his opinion is only secondary and an option he might choose to do throughout the work, never do, or sometimes do.

Reading *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* carefully reveals that Taftāzānī only voiced his opinion in some cases and not throughout the work. Two examples will substantiate this claim. The first example will use Taftāzān'īs discussion on the attribute of *takwīn* (bring into existence), which is one of the main topics that Ashʿar'īs and Māturīd'īs differ about.[74] In *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya,* Nasafī affirms that "*takwīn* is an eternal attribute of God."[75] In the commentary, Taftāzānī explains the Māturīdī position and mentions the arguments. He points out the position of the *muḥaqqiqūn* (verifiers) and their objections.[76] In this case, the term *muḥaqqiqūn* refers to the Ashʿarī position. He then continues with detailed discussions on some objections and the answers to them.[77] At the end of the section on *takwīn*, Taftāzānī concludes with the *taḥqīq* and affirms the Ashʿarī position, which states that *takwīn* is not an attribute (*ṣifa*) but a connection (*nisba*) between the attribute of power and the created thing (*maqdūr*).[78]

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[73] Although in its form *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* is a commentary there should be no confusion in terminology. As mentioned earlier, the word *commentary*, according to our usage here, is in opposition to an independent work. This is a different usage of the term *commentary* which is in opposition to a main text (*matn*).

[74] See for example: Ibn Kamāl Bāshā, 20.

[75] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 82.

[76] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 191-193.

[77] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 193-198.

[78] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 198.

The structure of his discussion follows the template mentioned in the previous chapter: Establishing and explaining the author's position (*taqrīr*), mentioning the difference of opinion, followed by a critical discussion and his position. Taftāzān'īs investigation of *takwīn* in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* is a prime example of a typical procedure in a commentary (*sharḥ*) according to the second *taqrīr* approach.

The second example illustrates that Taftāzānī sometimes suffices with the primary task as a *shāriḥ* (explainer), that is, establishing and explaining the text without adding his own opinion. In his discussion on the topic of *taklīf mā lā yuṭāq* (unbearable obligation), he again clarifies and expands the brief statement in the main text and mentions the point of contention and the position of the Muʿtazila and the Ashʿarīs. The rest of the section investigates the validity of certain inferences.[79] Taftāzānī does not mention his position at any point. So based on this commentary, it is not possible to know whose opinion he affirms. But in his *Tahdhīb al-kalām*, his independent work, he explicitly states: "Our position is that *taklīf* [*mā lā yuṭaq*] is possible because of the negation of that which is evil by the intellect (*qabīḥ ʿaqlī*). However, it does not occur."[80] In *al-Maqāṣid*, he says: "The unbearable obligation is not impossible," and in the commentary, he aligns himself with the Ashʿarī position in which he calls them "our peers" (*aṣḥābunā*).[81]

Regarding this matter, the two independent works show a clear affiliation with the Ashʿarīs, whereas his commentary does not. To substantiate this point further, the topic of *taklīf* is also discussed in the works of *uṣul al-fiqh*. In the gloss on the Ḥanafī book *al-Tawḍīḥ li-matn al-tanqīḥ* by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿya, one of the most important Ḥanafī/Māturīdī figures of the later scholars, Taftāzānī aligns with the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī position and affirms it as "our position" (*ʿindanā*) contrary to "his position" by which he means Ashʿarī.[82]

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[79] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 229-331.

[80] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wal-kalām* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2017), 346. From here on abbreviated with: *al-Tahdhīb.*

[81] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 1502.

[82] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-talwīḥ ʿalā al-Tawḍīḥ* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2009), vol. 1, 412. In Taftāzān'īs gloss on Ījʾīs *Sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar al-uṣūlī*, he discusses detailed questions with regards to what *unbearable responsibility* means and does not go into a difference of opinion with the Māturīdī position. See: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā al-uṣūlī wa ʿalayhi majmūʿa ḥawāshin* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2020), vol 2, 567-583.

Thus far, we have reached two conclusions. First, Taftāzānī does not always disclose his position in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* since he is first and foremost a *shāriḥ*. Second, his position can primarily be found in his independent works. If we consider his independent works only, then it is clear that generally speaking, he should be counted among the Ashʿarī scholars.

2.4.2. Ḥanafī or Shāfiʿī?[83]

The difference of opinion regarding Taftāzān'īs *madhhab* reaches back to the Post-classical period and has continued to this day.[84] This chapter will briefly analyze and evaluate the different positions to show which conclusion is most convincing. Taftāzānī commented on Ḥanafī and Shafiʿī *uṣūl al-fiqh* works, has a Ḥanafī *fatwā* collection, a commentary on a Shāfiʿī textbook, and an independent work according to the Shāfʿī *madhhab*.[85]

In his commentary on the *uṣūl al-fiqh* text, he follows the method of *taqrīr* mentioned in the previous chapter. So he refers to himself as a Shāfiʿī in the Shāfiʿī *uṣūl* work and as a Ḥanafī in the Ḥanafī *uṣūl* book.[86] Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) points out that one cannot assume that Taftāzānī is either on due to the nature of being a commentator (*shāriḥ*) in those works.

> It should not be judged that some of the positions a scholar speaks about in an investigative manner are his *madhhab,*even if he exaggerates in his support for it, because the concern of the author is only speaking about the evidence and what it leads to without looking at his own belief.[87]

Taftāzānī is considered to be a verifier (*muḥaqqiq*) in the *uṣūl* of both schools of law, and he was able to give fatwa according to both. He resembles his teacher Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn, who was also a verifier of both schools.[88] However, the question about

[83] The present chapter is based on the findings of Hamzeh al-Bakri's comprehensive investigation on this topic in his introduction to *Niʿam*. He evaluated all the positions and reached a convincing conclusion, which will be discussed here.
[84] See: *Niʿam*, 48-50.
[85] See: *Niʿam*, 52-59.
[86] See: *Niʿam*, 53-54.
[87] *Niʿam*, 55.
[88] *Niʿam*, 55-56.

Taftāzān'īs personal *madhhab* remains. As we saw earlier, it is one thing to be able to do *taḥqīq* and investigate both schools of *kalām*, but it does not tell us about his personal adherence. So the commentaries (in the sense that they are not independent) do not solve this question. Just as we saw in the previous chapter, it is helpful to look at independent works. As mentioned earlier, Taftāzānī wrote a textbook according to the Shafiʿī *madhhab* and a fatwa collection according to the Ḥanafī *madhhab*. The latter contains answers to questions he received while staying in Herat, which was predominantly Ḥanafī. So the *fatwā* collection is according to the *madhhab* of the people in the area.[89] The Shafiʿī textbook, on the other hand, is an independent work in the sense of not being motivated by specific circumstances, like the fatwā collection, and not based on another text in the sense of being a commentary.

In conclusion, Taftāzānī mastered both schools in Sunnī *kalām* and two schools in *uṣūl fiqh*. His commentaries follow the method of *taqrīr,* which first and foremost clarify the text according to the author's *madhhab*. Keeping these two factors in mind and making his independent works the criterion to determine his personal adherence leads to the conclusion that he is an Ashʿarī in *kalām* and Shafiʿī in *fiqh*.

[89] *Niʿam*, 59.

CHAPTER III

EPISTEMOLOGY AND *KALĀM*

The present chapter begins with a brief history of *kalām* as presented by Taftāzānī. After the discussion on the historical development of *kalām*, the following chapter will present an overview of how the *kalām* discourse at the time of Taftāzānī was structured. The distinction between principles (*mabādiʾ*) and objectives (*maqāṣid*) will be highlighted as it helps to draw a line between philosophical and creedal matters. The following chapter will take a closer look at the discussion about the subject matter of *kalām* and the debates surrounding it. The last chapter will focus on epistemological questions discussed by Taftāzānī in his different works.

3.1. A Brief History of *Kalām*

The focus of this chapter is the brief historical account of the development of the Islamic sciences in general and *kalām* in particular, which Taftāzānī mentions in his two works *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*. It is noteworthy that he talks about history while investigating the introductions of this science. Later theologians (*mutaʾakhkhirūn*) usually sufficed with the definition, rank, and aim of a science or mentioned all the eight headings (*al-ruʾūs al-thamāniya*).

The hypothesis in this chapter is that Taftāzān'īs historical account gives us insights that relate to the subject matter of *kalām* and how it shifted over time. This shift relates to epistemology insofar as some scholars suggested that the epistemological introductions are part of *kalām*, especially logic. Taftāzānī disagreed. The chapter shows that Taftāzān'īs historical account includes implicit arguments, one of which is a part of and leads to his position about the subject matter of *kalām*. Although he writes chronologically and mentions a few key figures, his narrative is so general that the focus is not primarily on individuals, times, and places, as we would expect from a historical account. Nonetheless, it is a concise historical map that includes the most

important data points that glossers could elaborate on. It is also noteworthy that Taftāzānī places his narrative into the introductory part of his two works which deal with topics like the name of a science, its definition, subject matter, aim, and rank. It is not farfetched to consider it a novelty to expand the introductory part of a science with the historical development of the science.

The following investigation includes a translation and comments on Taftāzān'īs historical account in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*. Since the narrative in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* is almost the same, there will be no in-depth comparison between the two. Another reason for choosing the account in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* is the glosses which facilitate the text and unfold the implicit meanings and pointers. They also show that the hypothesis of this chapter is in line with the commentary of the glossers.

Taftāzān'īs *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* starts with a brief introduction, i.e., praise of God, blessings for the Prophet, his approach in the commentary, and praises for the author. He then presents a twofold division of the sciences similar to philosophy.

> Know that of religious rulings (*al-aḥkām al-sharʿiyya*), there are some which are connected to practice and are called branches (*farʿiyya*) and practical (*ʿamaliyya*), and there are others that are related to belief (*al-iʿtiqād*) and are called fundamental (*al-aṣliyya*) and creedal (*al-iʿtiqādiyya*).
> The science connected with the first is called the science of laws and judgments (*ʿilm al-sharāʾiʿ wal-aḥkām*) because these things are not acquired except through the revelation (*al-sharʿ*), and understanding without further conditions turns to this [meaning] only when the [term] judgment (*al-aḥkām*) is mentioned.
> [The science connected with] the second is the science of unity and attributes (*ʿilm al-tawḥīd wal-ṣifāt*) since this is the widely known investigation and its noblest objective.[90]

In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, he gives a more detailed analysis of the twofold distinction, which will follow in an upcoming chapter. His commentary on the *al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyya* is supposed to be brief, so he contents himself with this general introduction and moves right into his historical account.

> The earliest of the Companions (*al-ṣaḥāba*) and their Followers (*al-tābiʿīn*)–May Allah be pleased with them all–because the articles of their belief were pure through the blessing of the association with the Prophet–on him be peace; because the period in which they lived was near to his time; because there were few occasions of attack and disagreement and because they were able to go back to

[90] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 99. For the English translation see: Earl Edgar Elder, *A commentary on the creed of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 5-6.

> authorities (*thiqāt*); well, because of all these things they dispensed with putting down in writing the material of the two sciences and with dividing it into divisions and sections, and they also dispensed with the statement of their investigations in these two sciences both as to developments and fundamentals.[91]

Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Khayālī (d. 871/1467) says that the following account starts with the companions to refute a typical argument raised against *kalām*:

> [The first sentence] is a preface to explain the nobility of the science and its aim with a pointer (*ishāra*) to those who say that this science was neither written down in his time–peace and blessings upon him–nor at the time of the companions and the following generation (*al-tābiʿūn*). They would not have neglected it if it was noble and its goal praiseworthy.[92]

Another gloss from al-Jundī mentions similar pointers and adds:

> His statement: {**Because the articles of their belief were pure**} is a pointer to the reason for not putting *ʿilm al-kalām* to writing.
> His statement: {**Because there were few occasions …**} is a pointer to the reason for not putting *ʿilm al-fiqh* to writing. From it, one knows the reason for not putting *uṣūl al-fiqh* into writing.[93]

This argument is in line with what Taftāzānī mentions at the end of this introduction.[94] Furthermore, both glosses affirm the thesis of the present chapter that Taftāzān'īs account is not just for historical benefit but includes implicit arguments.

In terms of epistemology, Taftāzān'īs statement includes the idea that as long as knowledgeable authorities (*thiqāt*) were present, there was no need to develop any sciences or to write books about the correct way of religious beliefs and practice. Epistemological certainty was protected by the presence of the companions and their followers. But with time, the situation changed, and the scientific approach became necessary to safeguard a correct understanding.

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[91] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾīd*, 99; Elder, 6.
In the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* he mentions the same account with minor variations that do not change the meanings significantly (see *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 5).
[92] *al-Majmūʿa*, 64 (Khayālī).
[93] *Majmūʿa al-Ḥawāshi ʿalā sharḥ al-ʿaqāīd*, vol. 1, 15 [Molla Ahmad al-Jandī]. From here onwards abbreviated with: *al-Ḥawāshī*.
This collection of glosses has been published with different names and can be found online: https://archive.org/details/7wachibahia/hbahia0/mode/1up
[94] See: *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 105.

> This condition continued until dissensions arose among the Muslims, pride prevailed among the leaders of the religion (*al-dīn*), and there appeared a clashing of opinions and a tendency to innovations (*al-bidaʿ*) and desires. There was a multiplicity of legal decisions (*al-fatāwā*) and occasions from which the cases arose, and much referring to the scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) in important matters. So they busied themselves with reflection (*naẓar*), reasoning (*istidlāl*), *ijithād*, deduction (*instinbāṭ*), with laying down the foundations (*qawāʿid*), and principles (*uṣūl*), with the arrangement of [the material related to them in] chapters (*abwāb*) and sections (*fuṣūl*), with multiplying of topics (*masāʾil*) and their proofs, with stating spurious arguments (*shubah*) and giving the answers, determining the conventional usage of terms (*awḍāʿ*) and technical terms (*iṣṭilāḥāt*) and with the expositions of different schools (*madhāhib*) and the differences (*ikhtilāfāt*).[95]

Taftāzānī gives an overview of the processes, conceptual tools, and forms that shaped the Islamic sciences in the course of putting them into writing. Putting this passage in the introductions has a pedagogical benefit as the reader gets an overview of key conceptual tools in all Islamic sciences.

Next, he explains the twofold division of theoretical and practical sciences, contrasting them to philosophy. In his *Sharḥ al-maqaṣid,* he relates this division to the two human potentials of thinking and acting, as we will see later.

> They gave the name of *al-fiqh* to that which pertained to the science of the practical judgments derived from their detailed evidence, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* to the science of the terms of the evidence taken together as a whole in proving the judgments, and the science of the articles of belief as they come straight from their proofs they called *al-kalām*.[96]

He then lists eight explanations for why this science came to be called *al-kalām*. It is noteworthy how Taftāzānī patches together a historical account with the introductory section of a science in which–among other things–the name of the science is explained. For the present investigation, two reasons for the name will be highlighted as they are significant regarding the structure of the *kalām* discourse.

> The reason for [naming] this [science *kalām*] is [1] because of the subject of its investigation was their saying: "the discourse (*al-kalām*) about such-and-such"; [2] because the problem of [the meaning of the term] Speech [predicated of Allah] was the most famous of its investigations, the most strongly disputed, and the subject of the most controversy, so much so that, some of the leaders killed many of the People of Truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) because they failed to admit the creation of the Quran; [3] because it imparts ability in speech in verifying religious matters (*sharʿiyyāt*) and in compelling adversaries to submit just as logic for philosophy; [4] because it is the first of the sciences which can be taught and learned by speech only, so this term [speech] was applied to this science, and then it was exclusively

[95] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾīd*, 99-100; Elder, 6-7.
[96] *Sharh al-ʿaqāʾid*, 100; Elder, 7.

> used for it and not applied to any other science for the sake of distinction; [5] because it can be verified only by discussion and interchange of speech from two sides, whereas others are sometimes verified by reflection and the perusal of books; [6] because it is the most disputatious and controversial of the sciences, so speech was greatly needed for conversing with those of opposite view and for refuting them; [7] because of the strength of its arguments it has become, so to speak, ʻthe speech ʼto the exclusion of all other sciences, just as is said of the stronger of two statements, "This is the right statement!"; [8] and because it is based on decisive proofs (*adilla qaṭʿiyya*), most of which are supported by proofs from revelation (*al-samʿiyya*), it is consequently the strongest in its influence on and penetration into the heart. So it is called *al-kalām,* derived from *al-kalm*, that is, "the wound." This is the [the science of] *kalām* according to the early theologians (*al-qudamāʾ*).[97]

In terms of epistemology, explanations three and eight are of interest. Both relate to the method of the early (*mutaqaddimūn*) and later theologians (*mutaʾakhkhirūn*). This comparison between *kalām* and logic leads to investigations on the subject matter of *kalām* and the relationship between it and epistemology, which will be discussed in an upcoming chapter.

Back to the two explanations for naming this science *kalām*. The first relates to the method of the early theologians (*mutaqaddimūn*):

> (…) Since it [*kalām*] is based on decisive proofs (*adilla qaṭʿiyya*), most of which are supported by revelation (*samʿiyyāt*), it is consequently the strongest in its influence on and the penetration into the heart. So it is called *al-kalām* as though derived from *al-kalm*, that is, "the wound."
> This is the *kalām* of the Early Theologians (*al-qudamāʾ*).

According to the glossers, the *kalām* of the early theologians refers to the last explanation he gave.[98] In other words, the *kalām* of the early scholars was based on decisive proofs and supported mainly by revelation.

Khayālī (d. 871) says: "{This is the kalām of the Early Theologians} That is: What conveys the knowledge of the creeds without mixing it with the philosophical issues. This is the kalām of the predecessors (salāf)."[99]

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[97] *Sharh al-ʿaqāʾid*, 101; Elder, 7-8.
[98] Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Farhārī, *al-Nibrās sharḥ Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* (Istanbul: Mizan Basım Yayın, no date) 32; *al-Majmūʿa*, 77.
[99] *al-Majmūʿ*, 77 (Khayālī).

Muṣtafā ibn Muḥammad al-Kastalī (d. 901/1496) adds: "In their books [i. e. Early Theologians] the religious creeds are mentioned and that which their explanations are based upon without mentioning more than that."[100]

A more detailed explanation comes from Biqāʿī (d. 885/1481):

> This refers to the science of *tawḥīd* and the attributes which were mentioned earlier in his statement: {Secondly: The science of *tawḥīd* and the attributes} this means that the science of *kalām,* according to the Early Theologians, is the topics about the essence and attributes only. When the books of philosophy were translated into Arabic, they dealt with many of them, including the topics about prophethood and eschatology–as it is going to be mentioned in the commentary [by Taftāzānī].[101]

It becomes clear from the glosses that for the Early Theologians, philosophical topics, epistemology included, were not part of the subject matter of *kalām*. According to Biqāʿī, even topics about prophethood and eschatology were added later since the main topics were about the essence and attributes of the Creator. So major shifts started to happen with the influence of philosophy.

In Taftāzān'īs account, the phase of the philosophers has not been reached yet, so we need to take a step back. The first group he discusses is the Muʿtazila. He argues that their importance is due to their comprehensive theological foundations that other Islamic groups (*islāmiyyūn*) did not have.

> Most of the differences of opinion about *kalām* occurred among the Islamic sects (*al-firaq al-islāmiyya*), especially the Muʿtazila because they were the first sect that laid the foundation for both: That which contradicts the outward meaning of the *sunna* (*ṭāhir al-sunna*) and that which the community of the companions–may Allah be content with them–followed in the matter of belief.[102]

The term *islāmiyyūn* will reappear a few times in his account, so it is useful to give it some attention. The glosser al-Nibrās gives a few examples and mentions *al-rawāfiḍ, al-khawārij,* and *al-muʿtazila* as being from the Islamic sects and gives three explanations for the usage of the words. He says that attributing them to Islam by calling them Islamic sects is obvious, according to those who do not declare them non-

[100] *al-Majmūʿ*, 77 (Kastalī).
[101] Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqāʿī, *al-Nukat wal-fawāʾid ʿalā sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿaṣriyya, 2012), 189.
[102] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 102; Elder, 9.

Muslims. But according to those who do not consider certain sects Muslims, the name *islāmiyyūn* refers to the groups attributing themselves to Islam or because only a few of them are declared non-Muslims.[103] Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631) has a very detailed investigation of this topic and connects it to the narration about the splitting of the Muslim community into 73 sects. He takes the number literally and splits the Islamic sects into eight broad groups, each of which has a number of subgroups to reach the number 73.[104] For the present purpose, al-Āmid'īs investigation is relevant as his main concern is to identify, as the title of the chapter indicates, if the one contradicting the truth is considered to be from the Muslim community (*ahl al-qibla*) or not. Now, as the following chapter will show, theologians distinguished between fundamental beliefs and secondary principles that lead to these beliefs. Al-Āmidī summarizes this in a concise statement: "The ignorance of that which is not a condition for belief and upon which belief does not rest is not disbelief."[105] He gives plenty of examples, one of which should suffice at this point to explain al-Āmid'īs principle. Some of the Muʿtazila believed that the non-existent is a thing (*al-maʿdūm shayʾ*). This belief, according to al-Āmidi, does not make them unbelievers but rather: "Unbelief is the conviction that substances and accidents exist eternally. It does not follow from their eternal subsistence (*qidam thubūtuhā*) their eternal existence (*qidam wujūdihā*) since subsistence is broader than existence."[106]

The point of this example is to show the important distinction between primary and secondary matters of belief. The following section will get into more detail about the principle al-Āmidī mentioned.

Returning to Taftāzān'īs account, from the Islamic sects, only the Muʿtazila receive special attention. He says that the importance of the Muʿtazila is due to their comprehensive theological foundations, which others did not have. An example is their position on the distinction between subsistence and existence. Another glosser, Molla

[103] *al-Nibrās*, 32.
[104] Ṣayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya, 2019), vol 5, 37-111.
[105] *Abkār al-afkār*, vol 5, 100.
[106] *Abkār al-afkār,* vol 5, 101.

Aḥmad al-Jandī, gives a reason why most of the differences of opinion occurred among Muslims and not among non-Muslims:

> It means the differences about the topics of *kalām*–before mixing the philosophical issues with it–were among the Islamic groups (*al-islāmiyyūn*). They are the ones who turn to the *qibla* and hold steadfast to the Quran and the Sunna.
> Early theologians rarely attempted to refute [the positions] of other than the Islamic groups. They [i. e. the early theologians] did not occupy themselves debating and discussing with them. They did not deem them significant since their evidences were not supported by the revelation (*sharʿ).* Unlike the Islamic groups since most of their evidences are supported by transmissions and revelation.[107]

Taftāzānī then reconstructs the beginning of the Muʿtazila and the incident between al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (110/728) and Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭā (131/748), the details of which will be skipped here.[108]

Next, Taftāzānī briefly describes the name of the Muʿtazila and some of their central beliefs, which he interestingly connects to the philosophers.

> They called themselves People of Justice and Divine Unity (*aṣḥāb al-ʿadl wal-tawḥīd*) because they said that the reward of the obedient and the punishment of the disobedient are incumbent on Allah, and they denied that He has eternal attributes.
> Then they went deeper and deeper into the science of *kalām* and hung on the fringes of the philosophers in many principles.[109]

The famous Shāfiʿī jurist and theologian Zakariyya al-Anṣārī (926/1520) gives three examples of how the Muʿtazila resembled the philosophers and mentions the negation of God's attributes, the obligation of humane welfare upon God (*wujūb al-aṣlaḥ*) and the negation of the vision of God in the hereafter.[110] The editor provides helpful footnotes in which he investigates this claim in more detail. About the second example, he says:

> How the philosophers influenced them is the following: From the principles of the philosophers (*qawāʿid al-falasifa*) is that "influence is by causation (*al-taʾthīr bil-taʿlīl*) and the negation of choice is by affirming necessity (*nafiy al-ikhtiyār bi-ithbāt al-luzūm*)." Fārābī says regarding this: "Things only appeared through Him

[107] *al-Ḥawāshi ʿalā sharḥ al-ʿaqāīd*, vol. 4, 20 [Jandī].
[108] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 102-103.
[109] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 103; Elder, 9.
[110] Zakariyya al-Anṣārī, *Fatḥ al-ilāh al-mājid bi-īdāḥ sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2013), 151. From here onwards abbreviated with: *Fatḥ*.

> because He knows by His essence and because He is the origin of the best order in existence as it has to be (*ʿalā mā yajib an yakūna ʿalayhi*)."[111]

This is another good example of how Taftāzān'īs brief commentary includes indications proving the historical awareness of his field. Another glosser, Biqāʿī, explains the historical background of the influence, why Taftāzānī connects the Muʿtazila to the Muslim philosophers, and how it relates to the following stages of *kalām*:

> The reason for it [i.e., the influence of the Ancient Philosophers on the Muʿtazila] is that the translation of [the books of] Philosophy from Greek to Arabic took place at the time of the Abbasid Caliphate who loved them [i.e., the books of Philosophy], especially al-Maʾmūn. And in their time, the regime used to be Muʿtazilite.
> These words [by Taftāzānī] are a preface to the reason why Philosophy was mixed with the science of *kalām*. The commentator [Taftāzānī] mentioned two perspectives in this regard: First, the Muʿtazila [used] it [i.e., philosophy] to infer their principles. Second, they [i.e., the books of philosophy] were translated, and the people occupied themselves with philosophy, although there were things that contradicted the revelation (*al-sharīʿa*).[112]

Biqāʿ'īs gloss supports the hypothesis that Taftāzānī is using the historical development to investigate the shift in the subject matter of *kalām* and why it occurred.

After talking about the emergence and positions of the Muʿtazila, Taftāzānī turns to the incident between Abū ʿAlī al-Jubāʾī (d. 303/916) and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (324/935) and the story of the three brothers which made Ashʿarī abandon the Muʿtazila and establish a different school. This marks the beginning of *ahl al-sunna wal-jamāʿa*.[113] It is noteworthy that Taftāzānī does not mention Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) in his historical account, although he is commenting on a text from the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī tradition. There could be several reasons for that: First, the historical data on the history and scholarship of the Transoxiana region (*bilād mā warāʾ al-nahr*) were not as widespread as those from the central Muslim lands in the

[111] *Fatḥ*, footnote 3. The editor affirms the first two claims but says that the third seems not to be in line with what the philosophers believe. He quotes a statement by al-Fārābī in which he allows the possibility for the vision of God (see: *Fatḥ*, footnote 4). This does not necessarily negate Zakariyya al-Anṣārī's view since he might have had someone else in mind.
[112] al-Biqāʿī, 36.
[113] See *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 103; Elder, 9.

Middle East.[114] Second, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī was still not established as a pivotal point of the Transoxiana tradition. Although Abū Ḥafẓ al-Nasafī started to move Māturīdī into the spotlight and make him a central reference point in his works in the 6th century, it would take about one or two more centuries until scholars started to refer to themselves as Māturīd'īs.[115] Third, from the perspective of the Ashʿarī scholars in the central Muslim lands in the east, the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī tradition was not perceived as a distinct theological school of the *ahl al-sunna*. Taftāzānī played a vital role in widening the term *ahl al-sunna* to integrate the Transoxanian tradition. His *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* was a key text in this regard. When glossers of his text reach the section quoted above, they mention the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī school. Khayālī, in his very influential gloss, says:

> {They are called *ahl al-sunna wal-jamāʿa*} They are the Ashʿarīs. This is the widespread [usage of the term] in the lands of Khorāsān, Iraq, Shām, and most of the regions. In the lands of Transoxania, *ahl al-sunna* are the Māturīd'īs, the followers of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī. *Māturīd* is one of the cities of Samarqand. There is a difference of opinion between the two groups regarding some topics, like *takwīn* and other matters.[116]

Kastalī quotes Khayālī and adds further details. When he reaches the section about Māturīdī, he adds the student-teacher chain of him back to Abū Ḥanīfa.[117] This can be seen as a strategy to show that Māturīdī is a continuation of a tradition reaching back to Abū Ḥanīfa. Furthermore, it solidifies Māturīd'īs position within the tradition.

The next paragraph in Taftāzān'īs commentary is central to the present investigation and lays the basis for the following chapters. In it, Taftāzānī mentions the translation movement and its impact on the science of *kalām*:

> Then, when philosophy was translated into Arabic, and the followers of Islam (*islāmiyyun*) plunged into it, they attempted to refute the Philosophers on the points in which they contradicted the revelation (*al-sharīʿa*). So they mixed *kalām*

[114] See: Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr Imam Zāde, *ʿUqūd al-ʿaqāʾid fī funūn al-fawāʾid* (Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2018), 7.

[115] To substantiate these claims it is necessary to survey the development of the books in the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī tradition, which is a project in work.

[116] *al-Majmūʿa*, 81-82 (Khayālī).

[117] " And in the lands of Transoxiana [the *ahl al-sunna* are] the Māturīdīs, the followers of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, student of Abū Naṣr al-ʿIyāḍī, the student of Abū Bakr al-Jurjānī, the student of Salmān al-Jurjānī, the student of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī from the followers of the Imām Abū Ḥanīfa." See: *al-Majmūʿa*, 82 (Kastalī).

> with much of philosophy in order to explore the goals of it thoroughly and to be in a position to refute it. This went on until they included in *kalām* most of physics (*ṭabīʿiyyāt*) and metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*) and delved into mathematics (*riyāḍiyyāt*) until *kalām* was hardly distinguishable from philosophy had it not been that it included revealed knowledge (*samʿiyyāt*). This is the *kalām* of the Later Theologians (*mutaʾakhkhirūn*).[118]

Two topics the glossers mention regarding this paragraph are the shift of the subject matter in *kalām* and the difference between philosophy and *kalām*. Biqāʿī says:

"Every generation of Sharia scholars (*ʿulamāʾ al-sharīʿa*) kept adding something from *falsafa* to *ʿilm kalām.* They kept mixing it bit by bit until everything they needed was accomplished."[119]

Kastalī comments along the same lines and adds how the addition of philosophical topics relates to spurious arguments:

> Since the foundations of *ʿilm al-kalām* are based on the inference from the existence of contingent things and their states to the existence of the Creator and his states, surely, metaphysics and natural philosophy share many fields of investigation. But since the thinking process of the mind (*naẓar al-ʿaql*) in *kalām* is according to the path of its guidance and in philosophy contend with what it inclines to, a difference between the two sciences occurred when [the thinking process of the mind] went astray in the deserts of his whims, and his feet slipped in the first steps. Thus, those delusions became spurious arguments against the foundations of *kalām,* so the theologians mentioned them to clarify their flaws and to fortify the deficient intellects from slipping. Since they [i. e. spurious arguments] were connected to some others, it led to their inclusion. This went on until they plunged into mathematics. The science to which most natural philosophy and mathematics were added is the discipline called *al-kalām.* It was a gradual transformation from the early to the later theologians. Just as a difference of opinion occurred about the writing of its topics [a difference of opinion] occurred in specifying its subject matter. [120]

According to Kastalī, including different topics relates to spurious arguments against the foundations the theologians addressed by mentioning them in their books. This process of integration and widening the scope led to the point that the subject matter of *kalām* became a point of discussion among the later theologians. Another gloss with more details regarding the topics and authors of the later period comes from Farhārī:

> {**They attempted**} i.e., sought {**to refute the Philosophers on the points in which they contradict the revelation**} such as the eternity of the Universe, the

[118] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* 104; Elder, 9-10.
[119] al-Biqāʿī, 191.
[120] *al-Majmūʿ*, 83.

> necessity of creation, the negation of the bodily resurrection, and the negation of Allah's knowledge of the particulars–Exalted is He. (…) {**So they mixed *kalām* with much of philosophy to explore its goals thoroughly**} the pronoun refers to philosophy. (…) {**and to be in a position to refute it**} i.e., to be capable of it since the refutation of the schools of thought (*madhāhib*) is not possible without knowing its essence first. (…)
> In summary: The Islamic groups (*islāmiyyun*) kept adding topics to *kalām* from philosophy bit by bit {**until they included in *kalām* most of physics and metaphysics**} i.e., most of it {**and delved into mathematics**} indicating that what they mentioned from mathematics are just a few investigations. (…)
> {**Until**} at the pinnacle of the integration, *kalām* {**was hardly distinguishable from philosophy had it not been that it included revealed knowledge.**} These are the investigations in which most of the topics revolve around transmitted evidence, like the investigations about prophethood, angels, the grave, paradise, hellfire, bodily resurrection, the path (*ṣirāṭ*), the scale, *imāma*, and so on.
> {**This**} i.e., what is mixed with philosophy {**is the *kalām* of the later theologians**}, like Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, al-Imām al-Rāzī, the author of *al-Mawāqif*, [the author of] *al-Ṣaḥāʾif*, the commentator of *al-Maqāṣid* and *al-Tahdhīb* and al-Bayḍāwī in *al-Ṭawāliʿ*. Hence, their philosophical investigations are more than the religious investigations (*al-mabāḥith al-sharʿiyya*).[121]

The last sentence contains the same idea mentioned earlier: The books of *kalām,* especially in the later period, include topics that are not religious in the sense that one has to believe in them but are philosophical investigations upon which the main topics rest. It is also noteworthy that the later theologians are not necessarily indicated by a specific period but by their writings. In other words, it is obvious that all of the authors in the quote above are from the 6th century onwards, but what connects them is that the philosophical investigations in them prevail. So the distinction between earlier and later theologians has to be handled with care.

Another key notion that relates to the difference between *kalām* and philosophy is *qānūn islām* or *qānūn sharīʿa* (principles of Islam or revelation). According to Jandī, the philosophers contradicted the revelation insofar as their approach was not "according to the principles of the revelation (*qānūn al-sharīʿa*)."[122] A detailed discussion about this notion and the subject matter will be the topic of the coming chapter. Taftāzān'īs historical account ends with a statement about the later theologians.

[121] *al-Nibrās*, 41.
[122] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 4, 21 (Jandī)

On the basis that he is writing a brief commentary and therefore chooses his word very carefully, it is telling that right after his historical account, he speaks about the rank, subject, and aim of *kalām*:

> In general: *Kalām* is the noblest of sciences. First, because it is the foundation of the legal judgments and the chief of the religious sciences. Second, because its subject matter is the articles of belief of Islam. Third, its aim is to attain happiness in this life and the next. Fourth, because its proofs are the decisive arguments, most of which are aided by evidence based on revelation (*adilla samʿiyya*).[123]

The transition from history to rank and subject matter does not appear accidental. Taftāzānī seems to suggest that the discussion about the subject matter of *kalām* and its relationship to philosophy has to consider the historical development. Given that it is a dynamic science insofar as the spurious arguments (*shubah*) are countless and change over time, a practitioner of *kalām* has to adapt to the circumstances. Saeed Foudeh, a contemporary theologian, summarized it this way:

> The spurious arguments (*shubah*) in the science of *kalām* increase daily, so every spurious argument can become a topic in itself to be investigated, critiqued, and refuted. (…) This is a fundamental feature of *ʿilm al-kalām,* which Muslims need in every era.[124]

What Foudeh mentions as a positive feature was not and is not perceived that way by others. It is well known that *kalām* was repeatedly put in an uncomfortable position, so Taftāzānī, after his historical account, explains this phenomenon.

> As to what has been reported from some of the predecessors (*salaf*) concerning their opposition against *kalām* and the prohibition of it, that was only directed against [1.] the religious zealot, [2.] the one who failed to attain certainty, [3.] against the one who intended to corrupt the beliefs of Muslims and [4.] the one who plunged needlessly into the obscurities of the pseudo-philosophers. Otherwise, how can one conceive the prohibition of the foundation of what is obligatory (*aṣl al-wājibāt*) and the basis of the religious rulings (*asās al-mashrūʿāt*) upon which other obligation rest?[125]

Although Taftāzānī speaks about the predecessors, there are many instances throughout history, especially in present times, in which Muslim scholars and thinkers criticized *kalām*. This paragraph is not directly related to the topic of this chapter, so mentioning it is for the sake of completeness of Taftāzānīs account.

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[123] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 104-105; Elder, 10.
[124] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī, *Taʿrīf ʿilm al-kalām* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2018), 6.
[125] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 105; Elder, 10.

The present chapter tried to show that Taftāzānīs historical account can be read as an argument about the subject matter of *kalām*. He showed how the scope of *kalām* was influenced by philosophy bit by bit until the lines blurred to a point where both sciences were barely distinguishable if it was not for the *samʿiyyāt* section. This widening of the scope also relates to epistemological discussions insofar as they were incorporated in the books of *kalām*. The following chapters will show how Taftāzānī differed with some theologians, especially ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756), in making epistemology part of *kalām*. To understand the discussion, especially Taftāzān'īs position, it is crucial to get an idea of the overall structure of *kalām* at the time of Taftāzānī and how epistemology was situated in it. He discusses these topics in detail in his extensive work *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, which will be the basis for the next chapter and complimented by his other works.

3.2. Structure of the Discourse

The present chapter examines the structure of the Post-classical *kalām* discourse by analyzing Taftāzān'īs most extensive work called *Sharḥ al-maqāṣīd*. The aim is to get a better understanding of the arrangement and the rationale behind it to situate epistemology in the overall *kalām* program, explain the conceptual tools used in the introductory parts, and prepare the discussion about the subject matter of *kalām*.

In his introduction, Taftāzānī explains the structure of *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* and relates it to philosophy.

> **I arranged it [this book] into six objectives.**
> Know that the human being has a theoretical faculty (*quwwa naẓariyya*), its perfection being the knowledge of the reality of things. Similarly, [he has a] practical [faculty] (*quwwa ʿamaliyya*), its perfection being the [ability] to do things in a proper manner in order to attain happiness in the two abodes.
> Religion (*al-milla*) and philosophy correspond in their concern of perfecting the human soul by virtue of the two faculties, and [they correspond] in facilitating the way to attain the two objectives [of perfecting the theoretical and practical faculty] with the exception that the reflection of the mind in religion follows its guidance and in philosophy its whims.
> The philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ al-falsafa*) put into writing theoretical and practical philosophy assisting the common people in obtaining the perfections relating to the two faculties. Similarly, the greats of the religion and scholars of the community wrote down the science of *kalām* as well as the science of the norms

> of action. Thus, *kalām* is for religion, what theoretical philosophy is for philosophy.[126]

Taftāzānī explicitly contrasts the theological system with philosophy which, according to Bakker, shows that he and other theologians before him based theology on the epistemological standards of philosophy. Bakker argues that Muslim theologians understood their discipline and, with it, all the other Islamic sciences as a "scientific theology" and demanded that it is addressed as such.[127]

A main difference between theology and philosophy, as stated by Taftāzānī, is the fact that theologians took the revelation as their guide. In this context, the notion of Islamic principles (*qānūn al-Islām*) is important and will be discussed later. The philosophers, on the other hand, tried to explain reality without recourse to any revelation. This led them, as Taftāzānī expresses it, to follow their whims and therefore reach false conclusions. He continues to give more details about theoretical philosophy and *kalām* to then talk about the structure of his discourse. The following passage will not be interrupted by any analysis to fully appreciate his line of thought and how he moves from the classification of the sciences to the structure of his discourse.

> [1]
> According to them [philosophers], it [theoretical philosophy] is divided into things (*umūr*) that can dispense of matter in being and conceptualization; this is metaphysics. Or they [are not in need of matter but] only in conceptualization; this is mathematics. Or they cannot be without [both of them], and that is physics. For each one of them, there are many divisions and branches.
> However, according to the testimony of the intellect and revelation, the knowledge of the origin and the end [of all things]–which [the notion of] believe in God, the Exalted, and the resurrection refer to–take precedence.
>
> [2]
> The means to it [knowledge] is reflecting upon the possible things (*al-mumkināt*), which are the substances and accidents, as pointed out in different places in the Book of God–the Exalted.
> ʿAlī, the leader of the believers–may God bless his countenance–summarized it beautifully, saying that regarding the perfection of the practical faculty, the important factor is that by which order in livelihood and salvation in the afterlife is [achieved] and [as far as the perfection of] the theoretical [faculty] is concerned it is the knowledge of the origin, the end and what is in–between the two. He said, "May God have mercy on a person who takes himself to account, prepares for his grave, and knows where he is from, where he is, and where he is going."
>
> [3]

[126] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 11.
[127] Jens Bakker, *Normative Grundstrukturen der Theologie des sunnitischen Islam im 12./18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2012), 627.

> That is why the scholars of religion *(al-milliyyūn)* limited themselves to that which relates to the knowledge of the Creator, His attributes, His actions, and that which branches off of it regarding prophethood, afterlife, and everything else to which there is no path for the intellect to reach independently. [It also relates to] that which [the aforementioned] is built upon as far as specific states of the substances and accidents or [it relates to] most of what encompasses existent things.
> Therefore, the chapters of *kalām* are five in number:
> General matters (*al-umūr al-ʿāmma*), accidents (*al-aʿrāḍ*), substances (*al-jawāhir*), metaphysics (*al-ilāhiyyāt*), and revealed knowledge (*al-samʿiyyāt*).
>
> [4]
> It has become a common practice [in the books of *kalām*] to begin them with discussions that function as precursors (*sawābiq*) to them [the five chapters], which are called "preliminaries" (*mabādiʾ*). Thus, we ordered the book according to six objectives.
>
> The account of this division (*wajh al-ḍabṭ*) is that if the topic at hand is part of the objectives of *kalām,* then it relates to the revealed (*samʿiyyāt),* this is the sixth objective; or to the rational (*ʿaqliyyāt*) in relation to the necessary being specifically, this is the fifth [objective]; or the possible (*mumkināt*) [which divide into] the substance (*al-jawhar*), this is the fourth [objective]; or the accident (*al-ʿaraḍ*), this is the third [objective]; or it is not related to any [of the two], this is the second [objective]. If it is not from the objectives of this discipline, then it is the first objective of the book.[128]

Taftāzānī argues in paragraph [1] the precedence of *kalām* over theoretical philosophy by referring to the intellect and revelation. This is a continuation of his earlier statement that the theologians followed the guidance of revelation, unlike the philosophers who followed their whims. Obviously, it does not mean that in *kalām,* there are no rational inquiries involved but that the theologians have a commitment to the revelation insofar as it guides them to the truth in this and the next world. The *falāsifa,* on the other hand, claim that the intellect is enough to achieve this goal.

In the next part [2], he briefly mentions the method of attaining the theoretical knowledge on which *kalām* is based and which starts by reflecting upon the possible world to reach conclusions about its Creator. This method is at the center of the theological discourse and also pointed out at the beginning of the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* when Taftāzānī transitions from the introduction to the discussion about the possibility of attaining knowledge by reflection.[129]

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[128] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 4.

[129] In his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* he says: "Since the foundation of *kalām* is based upon the deduction from the existence of the originated things (*wujūd al-mumkināt*) the existence of the Creator (*ṣānīʿ*), His unity, attributes and actions and from these things to the rest of the revealed knowledge (*samʿiyyāt*) it was suitable to begin the treatise by calling to attention the existence of that which is observed of the substances and accidents and to verify the knowledge concerning both of them that thereby one might attain the knowledge of that which is the most important objective." (*Sharh al-ʿaqāʾid*, 106; Elder, 10.)

In paragraph [3], he mentions the limits of the theological discourse, which are six and make up his book. The first five chapters are the basis for the sixth chapter on the *samʿiyyāt*. This reflects the description Taftāzānī gave about the characteristic of the later theologians, which is almost indistinguishable from philosophy if it was not for the *samʿiyyāt,* which is the last objective.

Lastly, he mentions in the last paragraph [4] that it has become a standard practice to start the books of theology with preliminaries (*mabādiʾ*) which precede the main objectives of the science. The following chapter will show that the word *mabādiʾ* can refer to two different things and relates to the discussion about the subject matter of *kalām* and what is or is not considered part of a science.

Taftāzānī ends his introduction by explaining the rationale behind the division of his work. The point of division (*maqsim*) is the question of whether a chapter is part of the objective or not. Taftāzān'īs wording here is quite dense. Ibn Yaʿqūb al-Wallālī (d. 1128/1716), one of the commentators, will help untangle the division:

> The account of dividing the book into six objectives is the following: What is mentioned is either from the objectives of the science or not. The former is either revealed knowledge (*samʿiyyāt*), which is the sixth objective, or rational matters (*ʿaqliyyāt*) relating to the Eternal (exalted is He), which is the fifth objective; or rational matters relating to substances, which is the fourth objective; or rational matters relating to accidents, which is the third [objective]; or rational matters relating to that which encompasses the three [aforementioned], which is the second [objective]; or what is not from the objectives of *kalām*, which is the first [objective] and that is the *mabādiʾ*.[130]

Taftāzānī follows the same structure as Ījī, who, on the other hand, followed Āmid'īs *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn* with a slight difference since Īj'īs *al-Mawāqif* was intended to be a textbook (*kitāb madrasī*).[131]

After a general overview of the discourse and the important distinction between *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid,* it is necessary to be aware of the three meanings the word *mabādiʾ* can have. The following chapter will offer a closer look at this twofold distinction and investigate the issues related to the three usages of the word *mabādiʾ*.

[130] Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Wallālī al-Maknāsī, *Ashraf al-Maqāṣid fī sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* (Maṭbāʿa al-Khayriyya), vol. 1, 9.
[131] For a detailed comparison see: *al-Abkār*, vol. 1, 43-44.

3.2.1. Distinction Between *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid*

In the last 100 years, the call for a New Islamic Theology (*ʿilm al-kalām al-jadīd*) surfaced in different circles. Although the expression of this call varies from time to time, a common feature is a demand to broaden the scope of *kalām* as far as its topics (*masāʾil*) are concerned. New Islamic Theology proponents argue that areas such as ethics and sociology should be included. Furthermore, they see a necessity to change the core principles and methods upon which *kalām* is built.[132] The reason for mentioning this phenomenon is to show the importance of a distinction that Muslim theologians always had in mind, which proponents of the New Islamic Theology movement overlook. It is the distinction between the *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid*.

In the chapter on the history of *kalām*, we saw how scholars up to the present time acknowledge the fact that this science has to be up-to-date in every era. So the question is not if theologians should or should not deal with new topics but how to maintain the fundamental principles of this science, which relate to the *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid,* which in turn affect the subject matter of *kalām*. The present chapter will start out with a general overview. This shall be achieved by looking at some contemporary Sunnī scholars who started pointing to and discussing the problem mentioned above. After the overview, a more detailed investigation will follow.

In a recent book called *Falsafa ʿilm al-kalām,* the author, Ali al-Omari, says the following:

> The scholars explicitly mentioned that the topics (*masāʾil*) of this science have to be dealt with according to three degrees as far as belief is concerned.
> The first degree: The topics that are mentioned in this science insofar as they are beliefs sought for their own sake (*ʿaqāʾid bi-dhātiha*) and obligatory to believe in. Opposing them is not permitted. Whoever opposes them will probably step out of the fold of Islam, as is the case in some topics [like the existence of God, as mentioned in the footnote by the author].
> This degree is called objectives (*maqāṣid*) or the objectives of *kalām* (*maqāṣid kalāmiyya*)
> The second degree: The topics that are mentioned in the books of *kalām* but are not objectives in themselves. Rather, they are means or introductions of evidences (*muqaddimāt adilla*) through which the objectives are established. In other words, they are the topics upon which the objective is established. They are called

[132] For an overview on this topic, see: Ali al-Omari, *Falsafa al-kalām* (Trabzon: Dār al-Qalam, 2020), 47-63 and Mehmet Sait Özervarlı, "Yeni İlm-i Kelâm," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/yeni-ilm-i-kelam [last access 04.01.2023].

> principles of *kalām* (*mabādiʾ kalāmiyya*) since they are the basis of the theologian's reflection in establishing the objectives.
> The third degree: The topics that are neither objectives nor principles of the objectives. Instead, they are mentioned to increase the benefits that the reader of the books of this science acquires.[133]

Al-Omari gives a concise overview of how theologians think about the topics of *kalām* as far as belief (*iʿtiqād*) is concerned. Theologians seek to establish the correctness of certain propositions a person has to believe in order to be considered a Muslim. These are the objectives–the first degree. The objectives are preceded by other investigations, which are twofold. If they are the means by which the objectives are reached and upon which the objectives are built, then they are called principles (*mabādiʾ*)–the second degree. Lastly, there are matters of general benefit mentioned in the books which are not part of the science itself. These are called introductions (*muqaddimāt*).

In another passage, al-Omari discusses more details regarding the principles and introductions and says:

> The principles of a science (*mabādiʾ al-ʿilm*): They are the conceptions and assents (*al-taṣawwurāt wal-taṣdīqāt*) upon which the science itself rests. These principles are considered part of a science and, therefore, internal to it (*dākhil fīhi*).
> The basis before the beginning (*mabādiʾ al-shurūʿ*): They are introductions (*muqaddimāt*) mentioned in the books, like the definition of the science, its subject matter, and its aim. These *mabādiʾ* are external to the science (*khārij ʿan nafs al-ʿilm*).[134]

The following investigation will show that the terminology for the distinction between introductions and principles can vary. Sometimes the word *mabādiʾ* is qualified with *ʿilm* and *shurūʿ*, as is the case in the quote above. Other times the word is not qualified and simply carries a different meaning. Taftāzānī mentions in his *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* two ways the term *mabādiʾ* is used.

> *Mabādiʾ*: They are the definitions of the subject matters, its parts, its accidents, the obvious premises, or accepted premises upon which the analogies of the science are based.
>
> It could be said that *mabādiʾ* is that which begins before the objective (*maqāṣid*), or [it could also be said that] *muqaddimāt* are that which the beginning [of a scientific investigation] is based upon in a manner [which conveys] insight and

[133] al-Omari, 65-66.
[134] al-Omari, 87.

> unbridled desire, like the definition of a science (*taʿrīf al-ʿilm*), elucidation of its aim (*ghāyatihi*) and its subject matter (*mawḍūʿihi*).[135]

In the first usage, the term *mabādiʾ* refers to one of the integral parts of a science as it describes the concepts and assents upon which a science is based. The conceptions (*taṣawwurāt*) divide into the definitions of the subject matter, its parts, and its accidents. The assents (*taṣdīqāt*) are also twofold: obvious premises and accepted premises.

Regarding the second usage of *mabādiʾ*, the gloss by Muḥammad b. ʿArafa al-Dasūqī (d. 1230/1815) offers the following insight:

> {**It could be said that …**} "The term *mabādiʾ* is more general than *muqaddimāt* in this usage" end of the quote by Yāsīn.
> {**… that which is started with before the objective**} no matter if its an integral [part of a science] and therefore from the previous terminology of *mabādiʾ*. Or it is external, so the beginning rests upon it in the sense that it provides insight; or it does not, like the foreword of a book (*khuṭba al-kitāb*).
>
> {***al-Muqaddimāt…***} meaning: Just as *muqaddimāt* is used for that which precedes the objective, it is also used for that which the beginning of a science is based upon in the sense that it provides insight. The first is called *muqaddima al-kitāb,* and the second *muqaddimat al-ʿilm*.[136]

According to Dasūqī, the term *mabādiʾ* is used for three meanings: That which is integral to a science and precedes the objective, that which is external to a science but upon which the beginning rests by providing insight, or that which is external and upon which the beginning does not rest. Regarding the term *muqaddimāt* there are two usages: That which precedes the objectives and is integral to the science or that which is external to a science but upon which the beginning rests by providing insight.[137]

The investigation above shows the importance of knowing which definition a scholar is using, especially in regard to the question about the relationship between *kalām* and epistemology. If we look at Taftāzān'īs usage, we will get the following picture: The introductions (*muqaddimāt*) are not part of a science, unlike the principles (*mabādīʾ*)

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[135] *al-Tahdhīb*, 216-217.

[136] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *al-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm 2022), 907.

[137] The wording by al-Dasūqī is not clear that is why ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Sharnūbī added his marginal notes paraphrased above: "The correct thing to say is: Just as *al-muqaddimāt* is used for the obvious or accepted premises (…) it is also used for that upon which the beginning in the sense of insight rests." (*al-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya*, 907)

in the sense of conceptions and assents upon which the objectives (*maqāṣid*) are built. In the previous chapter, the term *mabādiʾ* appeared in Taftāzān'īs *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* (under the section [4]) and was translated as *preliminaries,* which tries to indicate that *mabādiʾ* can sometimes refer to everything that precedes the objectives without distinguishing if the preceding topic is part of the science or not. It is a more general use of the term. So *mabādiʾ* in the sense of general preliminaries, encompasses both: the principles (*mabādīʾ*) and the introductions (*muqaddimāt*).

As the following passages and translations will show, distinguishing between these meanings was a fruit of the scrutiny applied by commentators and glossers like Taftāzānī. A clear example of this is Taftāzān'īs gloss on Ījī's commentary on the *uṣūl al-fiqh* text by the famous Mālikī scholar Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249). The main text (indicated by the bold font) by Ibn al-Ḥājib and the commentary by Ījī state the following:

> **The foundations of *uṣūl*** (*al-mabādīʾ al-uṣūliyya*)
> The abridgment or the science [of *uṣūl al-fiqh*] is limited to four things: First, *mabādiʾ* namely that which is not sought for its own sake but upon which [other things] rest. Considering it as part of the science in general (*taghlīban*) is not farfetched.[138]

The word *mabādiʾ* was not translated since it is not clear which one of the meanings Ījī intended, as the following gloss by Taftāzānī argues:

> The common practice in the books of *uṣūl* [*al-fiqh*] is to start with investigations external to the mentioned objectives. They call them *mabādīʾ*. They are part of the book but not the science. (…) It is also possible that the linguistic meaning [is intended] since he started with them before beginning with the objectives.[139]

The notion of something becoming a common practice reminds us of the previous chapter in which Taftāzānī was talking about *kalām*. Here he is commenting on a *uṣūl al-fiqh* text, so the common practice of distinguishing between *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid* is not limited to a particular science. It might seem obvious, but when we try to situate epistemology, it will become clear why highlighting this observation is important.

[138] Ibn al-Ḥājib, *Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā al-Uṣūlī* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2020), vol. 1, 50. From here onwards abbreviated with: *al-Muntahā.*
[139] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 51 and 54.

Investigations, especially epistemology, could either be part of the book or the science. So including them in a book of *kalām* does not necessarily make it part of the science.

Regarding the term *mabādiʾ*, Taftāzānī offers two explanations for what Ījī might have intended. He either used it in the sense of introductions (*muqaddimāt*), which would make it part of a book but not part of the science, or he intended the linguistic meaning, which encompasses both: introductions and principles. The editor of the *Mukhtaṣar al-muntahā al-uṣūlī*, a contemporary scholar of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, adds more details about the linguistic use of the term *mabādiʾ* and says:

> Linguistically *mabādiʾ* is taken from "beginning with something" (*al-badʾ bil-shayʾ wal-ibtidāʾ bihi*), and "beginning with something" is putting something before something else and to start out with it. Therefore, [the word] *mabādiʾ* and its linguistic concept encompass everything that one begins with before starting with the objective itself. So in its linguistic sense, it includes the introductions (*muqaddimāt*) and the principles (*mabādiʾ*).[140]

This substantiates the statement above that it is important to know which of the two meanings an author intends. The following quotes show that Taftāzānī understands Ījʾīs usage in the general sense, which encompasses introductions and principles.

> {**First, *al-mabādiʾ* is that which is not intended in itself but upon which it rests}** i.e., the objective in itself. This means that it benefits the increase of discernment to obtain it [the objective] and to master it. It does not mean that the obtainment is not possible without it [*mabādiʾ*] since it is sure that [knowing] the definition of a science, its benefits, and its branching-off [from another science] does not [lead to obtaining the objective].[141]

He continues and says:

> {**What the book encompasses is either the objective itself or not. The latter are the *mabādiʾ* since the objective itself rests upon them. If it was not the case, then there is no need for it in the first place.**} Meaning that it does not benefit something that relates to the objective. Thus, it would not befit to start with it since you have learned that the objective rests upon these *mabādiʾ*. The need for them does not mean that it is impossible to obtain it [objective] without them. That is why in the clarification about the need of them, he said: In order [for the student] to have insight in his pursuit, to increase his diligence, etc.[142]

[140] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 54; Aḥmad Ḥilmī Ḥarb, *al-Ṣila bayna uṣūl al-fiqh wal-kalām* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2020), 52-53.
[141] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 55.
[142] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 56.

So the term *mabādiʾ* here refers to the introductions (*muqadimmāt*). Knowing them is not a prerequisite to practicing a science, but it benefits the learner to have a clearer discernment.

In the following passage, Taftāzānī goes on to distinguish between the *mabādiʾ* in the sense of introductions and principles. Ibn Ḥājib's main text and Ījʾīs commentary state:

> {**The introductions *(al-mabādiʾ)* are its definition, its benefit, and its branching off from another science (*istimdād*).**}
> I [Ījī] say: He mentioned three things from the *mabādiʾ* of a science.[143]

Taftāzān'īs gloss states:

> Meaning what is started out prior to the beginning with the objectives of the science regardless if it is external to it (*khārij ʿanhu*) and called introductions (*muqaddimāt*), like the knowledge of the definition, the purpose, clarification of the subject matter or the branching off; or if it is integral (*dākhil fīhi*) and called principles (*mabādiʾ*), like the conception of the subject matter, the intrinsic accidents, the assents from which the syllogism of the science are composed of.
>
> If the *mabādiʾ* in the technical sense is intended, then, in general, it would not be correct to make the definition, benefit, and branching off part of them. If the intention is what the author called *mabādiʾ*, then the word "from" is redundant because the things mentioned are the *mabādiʾ* themselves and not part of them.[144]

Taftāzān'īs commentary offers the following insights: The term *mabādiʾ* in the linguistic sense encompasses the introduction and principles. In the technical sense, it refers to the principles which are part of a science and broken down into conceptions and assents, as mentioned earlier. Unlike the principles, the introductions are not part of a science, even though they might be part of a book. The difference between the two relates to the ability to practice a science or not. In other words, it is possible to practice *kalām* without knowing its definition but not without knowing its principles.

Another important section in Taftāzān'īs gloss on Ījʾīs commentary is the discussion about how *uṣūl al-fiqh* branches off (*istimdād*) from *kalām*. His comment includes clear statements about his position on the relationship between *kalām* and epistemology.

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[143] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 57.
[144] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 57.

> In the [section about] the principles of *kalām (mabādiʾ kalāmiyya)*, he did not mention anything regarding the knowledge of the Creator, the truthfulness of the messenger, and the indicator in the miracle (*dalāla al-muʿjiza*) since [all of] these are perceived as self-evident (*badīhī*) from the *uṣūlī*'s point of view. Rather, he limited himself to what could be from the principles (*mabādiʾ*) or even introductions (*muqaddimāt*) of *kalām.* [It could be said that he limited himself to that which] is not even specific to *kalām*, like investigations on inquiry (*mabāḥith al-naẓar*) in regards to which all the other sciences are equal. Since there is no other science among the Islamic sciences that suits the investigations on epistemology (*mabāḥith al-naẓar wal-istidlāl*) except *kalām,* they added them to it.[145]

According to Taftāzānī, the scholars included epistemology in the books of *kalām* since it is the most appropriate science to deal with it, not because it is part of *kalām* and its subject matter. The same position is found in his own work *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*.

> {**The first objective on the principles consists of three chapters. The first: Introductions.**}
> I say: I arranged it [the first objective] according to three chapters since a part of the preliminaries (*mabādiʾ*) is that which they [the scholars] considered important to preface every science with, such as the knowledge of a science's definition, its subject matter, its aims, and so on. So they named them "introductions" (*muqaddimāt*) and placed them in one chapter.
>
> From them [the preliminaries] is what they prefaced the science of *kalām* in particular, such as the discussions about epistemology (*mabāḥith al-ʿilm wal-naẓar*) since the attainment of beliefs is by reflection and reasoning; the refutation of those who deny the possibility of attaining knowledge in the first place and those who deny that inquiry leads to knowledge in general or in metaphysics in particular. *Kalām* is based on all of this.
>
> Among the Islamic sciences, it is the most appropriate [science] to elucidate it [the aforementioned] so he [i.e.. Taftāzānī] placed them in two chapters.[146]

In an earlier quote from this work, we saw how Taftāzānī divided his book into six objectives. About the first objective, he said that it is actually not an objective but a preliminary. The quote above says that this first objective is divided into three chapters (*fuṣūl*): Introductions (*muqaddimāt*), investigations about knowledge (*mabāḥith al-ʿilm*) and reflection (*mabāḥith al-naẓar*). We refer to the last two as epistemology. The introductions are part of a book but not part of a science. Hence, all of the sciences can have introductions about the definition, benefits, and so on. According to Taftāzānī, the other two chapters on knowledge and reflection are usually in the books of *kalām*

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[145] *al-Muntahā*, vol, 1, 103.
The terms *mabāḥith al-naẓar* and *mabāḥith al-naẓar wal-istidlāl* can be translated as epistemology, although they are just part of what epistemology refers to today. Bakker uses the German word *Erkenntnistheorie* (see: Bakker, 634).
[146] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 4.

as it is the most appropriate science to deal with it. As the earlier quote from Ibn al-Ḥājibs work showed, some books of *uṣūl al-fiqh* also share the epistemological investigations with *kalām*.

Taftāzān'īs statement that *kalām* is more appropriate to discuss epistemology is plausible as it is the science that establishes the revelation (Quran and Sunna) as a source of knowledge. Unlike *uṣūl al-fiqh,* which, as mentioned earlier, takes the existence of God and the truthfulness of the Prophet as self-evident since it branches off from *kalām*.[147] Furthermore, *kalām* discusses a more fundamental issue which is the possibility of attaining knowledge by reflection in general and in metaphysical matters in particular. This obviously relates to the problem of skepticism, which Muslim scholars took very serious.[148]

Ibn Yaʿqūb summarizes and explains the first chapter of *al-Maqāṣid* about the *mabādiʾ* very neatly:

> They [*mabādiʾ*] are two categories: [First,] what every discipline starts out with, like the knowledge of the definition, its subject matter, aim, name, nobility, and topics. [Second,] what only *ʿilm al-kalām* begins with for the specific benefit of it, like the investigations of reflection and inference (*mabāḥith al-naẓar wal-istidlāl*), even if it aids the engagement with other things as well. [This is the case] since the wish to engage with [*kalām*] is not accomplished until one knows that inquiry is beneficial even in metaphysics and that it leads to certain knowledge and not general presumption, as it is claimed.[149]

It is noteworthy to highlight Ibn Yaʿqūb's statement that epistemology also "aids the engagement with other things as well," which makes it not specific to *kalām,* although it is more specific to it than any other science.

3.2.2. Example for *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid*

Before moving on to the next chapter, a concrete example shall demonstrate the difference between the principles (*mabādiʾ*) and objectives (*maqāṣid*). In the following

[147] See for brief overview: Saeed Foudah, *Mawqif al-Imām al-Ghazālī min ʿilm al-kalām* (Amman; al-Aslein Studies & Publication 2021) 33-34. For a detailed investigation about the relationship between *kalām* and *uṣūl al-fiqh* see: Aḥmad Ḥilmī Ḥarb, *al-Ṣila bayna uṣūl al-fiqh wal-kalām.*

[148] See Abdurrahman Ali Mihirig, Typologies of Scepticism in the Philosophical Tradition of Kalām, in: *Theoria*, 88 (2022): 13-48.

[149] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 11-12.

comment by Ibn Yaʿqūb, he explains the structure of the book of *al-Maqāṣid* and the benefit of certain topics preceding others. He offers an important insight into the distinction between principles and objectives.

> The reason for putting [some objectives] first and delaying [others] is the appropriateness in that one takes full or partial recourse to [what precedes] for what follows after it. In a [discussion about an] objective, there might even be things mentioned due to its relevance although they are not part of it [i.e., the objective], like mentioning the possibility for the nonexistent to return (*iʿāda al-maʿdūm*) in the [objective of] the revealed knowledge (*samʿiyyāt*) or the occurrence of the beatific vision of Allah [mentioned in] the rational matters.[150]

Ibn Yaʿqūb explains that the principles serve as a basis to which the author takes recourse throughout the work. Although the main task of an author is to discuss the objectives of his science, he has to structure his discourse in a way that becomes comprehensible for the reader.

Another point about the *mabādiʾ*, or what relates to them, is the idea that even if a chapter or topic is dealing with an objective, it does not necessarily mean that everything in that chapter is an objective. As an example, he mentions the connection between the possibility of a non-existent thing return and life after death. The belief in the resurrection is an objective in itself, whereas the topic of the possibility of a non-existing thing to return is a principle. The soundness of belief does not hinge upon a detailed knowledge about the philosophical question if a non-existing thing can return or not. Rather, it is sufficient to have a general belief that human beings will be resurrected. In other words, the belief in the resurrection is something a person has to believe to be considered a Muslim, but he does not have to know the principle itself nor the details about the possibility for a non-existent thing to return, as it is not an objective. This distinction is also referred to as general evidence (*dalīl ijmālī*) and detailed evidence (*dalīl tafṣilī*), which will be discussed in the last chapter. The following quote from the sixth objective (*samʿiyyāt*) in Taftāzān'īs *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* mentions this insight. Right at the beginning of the chapter on the resurrection (*maʿād*) in the first investigation (*baḥth*), he says:

> Outwardly, many investigations of the theologians appear foreign to the science of religious beliefs (*al-ʿilm bil-ʿaqāʾid al-dīniyya*). However, when scrutinizing

[150] Ibn Yaʿqūb, 11.

> (*taḥqīq*) the main objectives, one understands that they [i.e., foreign investigations] are useful in providing evidences for them or in dispelling spurious arguments. As it is the case of topics like the returning of the non-existent, establishing [the existence of the indivisible] substance and void, the correctness of the world vanishing, the possibility of traversing the celestial spheres, that life does not require a physical constitution, that it is not necessary for physical force to end and similar things in establishing the resurrection and punishment in the grave, infinite duration in paradise and hell as well as other issues based on the different positions.
>
> The investigation about the return of the non-existent was postponed to this point specifically due to its specific connection to the resurrection insofar as it is not needed except in establishing resurrection by [proving the possibility for something] to exist after it vanished.[151]

Taftāzān'īs insight and examples help us to get a clearer view of how some topics are not religious beliefs but are needed insofar as they are principles to establish a doctrine (*iʿtiqād*) and to dispel objections.[152] Hence, there are investigations that are not objectives but principles on which the theologian bases his line of reasoning. So these principles, like the possibility for the non-existent to return or the existence of an indivisible substance, are not doctrines a person has to believe to become a Muslim.

Scholars before Taftāzānī also pointed out this distinction. The following quotes will show that theologians were very aware of the difference between principles and objectives, even if the conceptual tools were not as refined as is the case with later theologians. A brief look at the chapter on resurrection in books written before Taftāzānī will substantiate this claim.

After mentioning a number of introductory notes on the topic of resurrection, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī mentions in his *al-Iqtiṣād fil-iʿtiqād* a possible question about the details related to the resurrection and gives the following answer:

> It might be said: "What do you say: Are the substances and accidents annihilated and then all returned? Or are the accidents annihilated but not the substances, and it is the accidents that are returned?"
> We say that all of this is possible, and there is no conclusive evidence in the revelation that specifies one of these possibilities.[153]

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[151] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 153.

[152] The usefulness or benefit here is not in the sense that they provide insight into the science in general, as is the case with the introductions.

[153] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fil-iʿtiqād* (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2019), 368; Aladdin M. Yaqub, *Al-Ghazali's Moderation in Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 212.

After a brief discussion about this question and related issues, he says:

> Giving a theoretical verification of this chapter [about resurrection] would lead us to an investigation of the spirit (*rūḥ*), the soul (*nafs*), life, and their realities. The [fundamental] beliefs (*muʿtaqadāt*) do not permit an immersion into these extreme limits of the intelligible. What we have mentioned is sufficient for explaining the moderation in belief for what has to be confirmed regarding that which revelation came with.[154]

Ghazālī clearly states that there are limits to this discussion and what suffices to have a valid belief, i. e. affirming the resurrection mentioned in the revelation in a general sense without delving into the fine details.

Unlike Ghazālī, we see Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī going into the details, for example, in his *Kitāb al-arbaʾīn fī uṣūl al-dīn.* Before discussing resurrection (*maʿād*), he sees the necessity to prepare his discussion with two foundations (*aṣlayn*).

> Know that before delving into the topic of resurrection, we are in need to establish two foundations (*ithbāt aṣlayn*):
> First, knowledge about the soul (*maʿrifa al-nafs*). The knowledge about the soul, in turn, is in need of knowledge about the individual substance (*jawhar fard*).
> The second foundation: Affirming the void. So before plunging into the topic of resurrection, we will mention these three topics.[155]

In the recent edition, Rāzʾīs discussion spans over fifty pages in which he talks about the soul, individual substance, and void before finally reaching the main discussion about resurrection. Although we do not see the words *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid*, it should be clear now that these discussions are all philosophical in nature and not part of the *maqāṣid* in the sense of having to know them for sound belief. It is noteworthy that Ghazalī, Rāzī, and Taftāzānī (in his historical account) paint a similar picture when they speak of "penetrating" (*taghalghul*) or "delving/plunging into" (*khawḍ*) the philosophical issues. It conveys the idea of a topic being clear on a surface level but is actually built on many other topics, one leading to another.

To drive the point home: Even Non-Muslim scholars were aware of the twofold distinction between *mabādīʾ* and *maqāṣid*. Maimonides, for example, deems it

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[154] *al-Iqtiṣād fil-iʿtiqād*, 371; Moderation in Belief, 213.

[155] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-arbaʾīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wal-wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya, 2020), vol 2, 752.

necessary to mention the principles (*muqaddimāt*) which Muslim theologians use to substantiate their four objectives (*mabāḥith arbaʿa*):

> The general principles (*muqaddimāt ʿāmma*) that are necessary regarding what the theologians–irrespective of their differences and many different approaches–seek to establish for these four investigations (*mabāḥith*) are twelve premises.[156]

According to Maimonides, the four investigations are the contingency of the world, the existence of God, His unity, and the negation of corporeality.[157] Among the twelve premises are the affirmation of the individual substance and the existence of void. The point here is not to analyze the details of his discussion but to show that the distinction made by Muslim theologians was even obvious to Non-Muslim scholars who studied their texts. The content and examples in his discussion make it very clear that he is talking about principles when he says *muqaddimāt* and objectives when he says *mabāḥith*. It would be wrong to understand his usage of the words according to the later theologians, a point made earlier that the usage of any given scholar has to be considered in its own context.

Being aware of the distinction between *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid* helps to explain why, for instance, Rāzī and Taftāzānī were able to stay reserved about the arguments for and against the existence of the indivisible substance (*juzʾ la yatajazzaʾ*)[158] since the existence of it is not an objective in itself. After mentioning the evidences for the existence of the indivisible substance in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, Taftāzānī says that all of the arguments "are weak (*wal-kull ḍaʿīf*)."[159] He then goes on to mention the objections against them and concludes: "The evidences against them are also not free from weakness. That is why Imām Rāzī inclined to abstention (*tawaqquf*) regarding this topic."[160] By concluding in this manner, Taftāzānī seems to indicate that he agrees with Rāzī. Again, the aim is not to investigate the details of this particular issue, which we partially turn to in the last chapter, but to demonstrate that theologians differentiated between principles and objectives.

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[156] Mūsā b. Maymūn al-Qurṭubī al-Andalūsī, *Dalāla al-Ḥāʾirīn* (Makthaba al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, no date), 195.
[157] Mūsā b. Maymūn, 185.
[158] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 134-135.
[159] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 136.
[160] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 136.

The following quote by al-Omari shall summarize this chapter and highlight the benefit of a clear understanding of this twofold distinction.

> Beliefs *qua* beliefs *(al-ʿaqāʾid kal-ʿaqāʾid)* are taken from the objectives. These are the foundation in which there is no difference of opinion. (…) But in regards to the principles, the theologians have found room, a higher degree of freedom in individual effort (*ijtihād*), pure philosophical inquiry, and a diversity of premises and inferences. Therefore, you will find some of them build the topic of the contingency of the world on the affirmation of the individual substance. Others do not deal with its affirmation or negation but build their evidence of contingency on accidents residing in substances, regardless of what the body is made up of. That is why there is an increase in differences of opinion among theologians regarding these principles while staying in the same school of theology (*madrasa kalāmiyya*).[161]

This insight explains how a scholar like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who had his own approach in many instances, was still considered a scholar of the Ashʿarī school. It is not that he differed with the final conclusions in the sense of core beliefs but the approaches he chose which relate to the *mabādiʾ*. The citation also sheds light on the following investigations about the difference of opinion regarding the definition and subject matter of *kalām.*

3.3. Introductions (*al-muqaddimāt*)

3.3.1. Definition of *Kalām*

Defining *kalām* was not a common practice among the early theologians. Even less common was a detailed investigation of the own definitions and critical analysis of other suggestions. Suppose we take Taftāzān'īs narrative and the idea that even the companions were doing *fiqh* and *kalām* without the sciences having specific names and being written down. In such a case, it is reasonable that the theoretical reflections followed after the practice and scientification.

This does not mean that early theologians did not offer rudimentary definitions for *kalām*. An early–probably the earliest–definition comes from Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), in which he says that theology is: "The knowledge of the soul (*maʿrifa al-nafs*) about what benefits and what harms her." Later theologians from the Māturīdī

[161] al-Omari, 94-95.

tradition, such as Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457) and Kamāl al-Dīn Bayāḍī Zādeh (d. 1098/1687), explained and refined this definition.[162]

Another early suggestion comes from al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) in his *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm.*

> The art of *kalām* (*ṣināʿat al-kalām*) enables the human being to support the praiseworthy notions and actions that the creator declared and to falsify statements that contradict them.[163]

In this descriptive definition, the science of *kalām* becomes a skill or art a person practices. As we shall see below, Ījī chooses a similar description for *kalām.*

A few centuries later, we find definitions offered by Ashʿarī scholars like Juwaynī. According to him, *kalām* is

> knowledge (*maʿrifa*) about the universe, its parts, its contingency; the knowledge (*ʿilm*) of its Creator, what attributes are necessary for Him, what is inconceivable, what is possible for Him; the knowledge (*ʿilm*) about prophethood, differentiating it by virtue of the *muʿjizāt* from claims of liars, judgments regarding prophethood, and propositions about what is possible or impossible in regards to the universal principles of the Sharia *(kulliyyāt al-sharāʿi).*[164]

Juwayn'īs accumulative description enumerates the scope of *kalām* rather than defining its essence. His student, Ghazālī, also defined it in his *al-Mustaṣfā*: "'*Ilm al-kalām* is what its reality can be conceived by rational inquiry before revelation arrives."[165] Here, the scope of *kalām* seems to become much more narrow since the definition excludes investigations dealing with the *samʿiyyāt.* It could be argued that it does not exclude them since the main task of the theologian is to argue the possibility of everything mentioned in the revelation and that it does not contradict reason.

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[162] Ibn al-Humām: "*al-Kalām* is the knowledge of the self about what it is obliged to [know] as far as beliefs that relate to the religion of Islam based on certain evidence and presumptive evidence in some cases." (See: al-Omari, 20)

[163] al-Omari, 21.

[164] Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Yafrīnī, *al-Mabāḥith al-ʿaqliyya fī sharḥ maʿānī al-ʿaqīda al-burhāniyya,* vol. 1 339-340.

[165] Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1993), 348.

It is noteworthy that Ghazālī mentions this definition in *al-Mustaṣfā* but not in his work on *kalām, al-Iqtiṣād fil-iʿtiqād*. He wrote *al-Iqtiṣād* as an intermediate book[166] focusing on the main objectives without philosophical curiosities (*fuḍūl*).[167] Although he begins it with four introductions (*muqaddimāt*) stating explicitly that they are not part of the main inquiry of *kalām*, he does not spend any time on its definition. He focuses on the objections against *kalām* and shows its necessity and place within the Islamic sciences. We can find Māturīdī scholars in the same century, like Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580/1184), having a similar approach.[168]

It is safe to say that in the 6th century, theologians still needed to defend the legitimacy of *kalām* and argue for its nobility (*sharaf*) against objections. Hence, they were not yet involved in inquiries about secondary topics, like defining their sciences. Although a defense of *kalām* was still present in later periods, they appear more as a standard practice rather than a genuine concern about *kalām* being accepted within the Islamic sciences.

It took two more centuries until the theoretical reflections about *kalām* got into full swing. ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī seems to be the first scholar who started these discussions. In the foreword of his *al-Mawāqif*, he explicitly states his motivation for writing his work which he then connects to the reason for providing a definition.

> In our time, it [*kalām*] has become forgotten, and seeking it has become something rare for most people. Not much of it is left among the people except very little, and the desire of those barely occupying themselves with it is just hearsay. Therefore, it has become obligatory upon us to awaken a desire in the students of our time to seek precision (*ṭalab al-tadqīq*) and to take them down the path of verification in this science.
> I have read what is in the books of this science (*al-fann*), but I did not find in them the cure for the disease and what quenches the thirst. Especially not for the weak determinations [of students], the feeble ambitions, little motivation, and many distractions. The abridgments (*mukhtaṣarāt*) have shortcomings in instilling aspiration, and the comprehensive works (*muṭawwalāt*) with the weariness perplexes the minds.[169]

[166] Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007), vol. 1, 53.
[167] *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 104.
[168] Nūr al-Dīn al-Sabuni, *al-Kifāya fī al-hidāya* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2014), 48-52. He suffices with a brief epistemological discussion.
[169] ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, *al-Mawaqif* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, no date), 4.

He continues summarizing the approaches and shortcomings of the books on *kalām* up until his time. Then, he briefly mentions how he reflected on the order of his book until it turned out as he intended.[170] This notion continues in the first chapter (*mawqif*) about the introductions (*muqaddimāt*), which he starts by saying: "The first objective is its [*kalām*] definition, so the student has hindsight since whoever goes down the path of the blind will proceed recklessly."[171]

Considering Īj'īs foreword and explanation for providing a definition, it becomes clear that pedagogical considerations were one of the motivations. This applies to the work in general and to the structure in particular.

In Taftāzān'īs *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* we find the same concern for a logical and pedagogical structure. Given that Taftāzānī commented on his own work, there are more insights regarding the benefits of the structure. After mentioning his definition in the main text, Taftāzānī explains how a mental state (*kayfiyya nafsāniyya*) comes about, how every science has a reality and how the definition serves the general conception of a science in order to bring about a mental state.

> He [Taftāzānī] said: {***Kalām* is the science of religious beliefs based on decisive evidence.**}
> I say: obtaining mental states (*kayfiyyāt nafsāniyya*) in oneself is either by being attributed with them or by their concepts, that is, conceptualizing them, like the generous person being attributed with generosity although he is not conceptualizing it or someone who is not generous but conceptualizes generosity although he is not attributed with it.
>
> There is no doubt that the essence (*ḥaqiqa*) of every science–*kalām* or any other–consists of many concepts and assents (*taṣawwurāt wa taṣdīqāt*). Obtaining them is sought by reflection and inference (*bi-ṭarīq al-naẓar wal-istidlāl*). Thus, something that provides a general conception of them [the conceptions and assents] is needed. [This general conception] is equivalent to them in order to prevent the omission of something that is from them and to prevent the occupation with something that is not from them while pursuing and reflecting [on the conceptions and assents]. This is the idea behind the definition of a science. Thus, it is part of its introductions.[172]

According to Taftāzānī, the idea behind a definition is to convey a general conception (*ṣūra ijmāliyya*) of a science that consists of concepts and assents. The definition helps

[170] See *al-Mawāqif,* 4-5
[171] *al-Mawāqif,* 7.
[172] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 4-5. Mentions the same definition in Tahdhīb al-*kalām,* see: *al-Tahdhīb,* 221.

the student to know the limits of any given science so he does not leave out what is from it and does not include what is not. Ibn Yaʿqūb summarizes the same ideas with more clarity and adds how it relates to the mental state (*kayfiyya nafsāniyya*) with which Taftāzānī started:

> The definition [of *kalām*] is put first so the student can understand its topics. Through its definition, he knows what is and what is not from its topics. [If the student does not have this insight], he is not safe to busy himself with that which is not part of them. That is why the conception of a science (*taṣawwur al-ʿilm*) is a means to obtain [the knowledge of a science] as an attribute (*al-ittiṣāf bihi*). The difference between obtaining [something as a] mental state (*ḥuṣūl al-kayfiyya*), like the conception of a science, and obtaining it as an attribute is obvious. Someone can obtain the property of belief (*īmān*) without obtaining the conception of its reality through a definition (*ḥadd*) or description (*rasm*). Likewise, someone can conceptualize [belief] without obtaining it, like the unbeliever who conceptualizes it without being described with it [as an attribute].[173]

His comments show that the utility of a definition for *kalām* puts the pedagogical aspects at the forefront.

Coming back to Taftāzānī. He mentions an important insight regarding the lack of definitions in earlier books:

> Omitting [the definition] increased especially in the sciences of the *sharīʿa* and *adabiyyāt* (literature) due to the spread of writings of the sciences with their topics (*masāʾil*), evidences and explanations of what relates to them as far as conceptions. [Omitting the definition was] also due to the acquisition of them by learning from a teacher or comprehending it from the books.

This suggests that the scholars did not feel the need to write the definition of a science in their works as they communicated them orally in the learning setting. It reminds us of the distinction between the principles and objectives, which were not explicitly mentioned in the books but were obvious to scholars.

Next, Taftāzānī highlights the distinction between the types of Sharia judgments:

> After establishing this [point], we say: Some of the judgments pertaining to the Sharia relate to action and are called "branches" (*farʿiyya*) and "practices" (*ʿamaliyya*). Others relate to belief and are called "foundations" (*aṣliyya*) or "beliefs" (*iʿtiqādiyyāt*).[174]

[173] Ibn Yaʿqūb, 13.
[174] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 5.

He then transitions to the history and emergence of the Islamic sciences, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The statement above seems to prepare the contrast between the definition of *fiqh* and *kalām* that he then offers.

> For creedal matters (*al-iʿtiqādiyyāt*), they only considered certainty in the evidences as there is no regard for presumption, unlike in [human] actions (*al-ʿamaliyyāt*). So it becomes clear that *kalām* is: "The science of the principles of the religious creeds that are acquired from their certain evidences" (*al-ʿilm bil-qawāʿid al-sharʿiyya al-iʿtiqādiyya al-muktasaba min adillatihā al-yaqīniyya*). This is the meaning of "religious beliefs*,"* i. e. which are attributed to the religion of Muḥammad–peace and blessings upon him–irrespective if they are based on revelation (*sharʿ*) or not; also irrespective if it is from the religion in reality, like the *kalām* of the people of the truth, or like the *kalām* of the opponent.[175]

Taftāzānī presents a similar definition in his *Tahdhīb al-kalām*: "The science of the religious creeds based on certain evidences (*al-ʿilm bil-ʿaqāʾid al-dīniyya ʿan al-adilla al-yaqīniyya*)."[176] An even shorter definition is in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid:* in which *kalām* is: "Knowledge of the creeds based on their evidences (*maʿrifa al-ʿaqāʾid ʿan adillatihā*)."[177] According to Kastalī, the last definition corresponds with the definition in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,*[178] for which Taftāzānī himself gives an explanation. After mentioning the definition of *kalām*, Taftāzānī highlights how it corresponds with the definition of *fiqh*:

> Our statement, "The science of religious beliefs [based] on decisive evidences," corresponds with their statement that *fiqh* is "the science of the judgments relating to the branches of the Sharia based on their detailed evidences*"* (*al-ʿilm bil-aḥkām al-sharʿiyya al-farʿiyya ʿan adillatihā al-tafṣiliyya*). It also corresponds with what has been transmitted from some of the great scholars of the community that "*fiqh* is the knowledge of the self pertaining to what is for it and against it."
> Everything of the creedal matters is from *al-fiqh al-akbār* this excludes that which relates to the non-religious matters (*ghayr al-sharʿiyyāt*), legal issues of the religion (*sharīʿiyyāt farʿiyya*), the knowledge of Allah–exalted is He–, the knowledge of the Messenger–peace and blessings upon him–regarding creedal matters and the belief of the *muqallid*, according to those who call [his belief] knowledge.[179]

It seems that Taftāzānī is suggesting that Abū Ḥanīfa's definition, which we saw at the beginning of this chapter, encompasses *fiqh* and *kalām.* Similar to other scholars, like

[175] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 5.
[176] *al-Tahdḥīb*, 221.
[177] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 100.
[178] *al-Majmūʿa*, 70.
[179] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 5.

Ibn al-Humām, who explained and specified it, Taftāzānī seems to rephrase and refine Abū Ḥanīfa's very dense definition to demarcate both sciences.

Next, he mentions what his own definition includes:

> It includes the knowledge of the scholars from the companions. [Their theoretical knowledge] was *kalām,* even if the name was not used at that time. Similarly, their knowledge about the practice was *fiqh* even if the type of writing and ordering was not there.[180]

This last sentence shows that the contrasting of *fiqh* and *kalām* serves more than one purpose. On the one hand, it relates to the comparison with theoretical and practical philosophy to show that the Islamic sciences follow the same epistemological standards; on the other hand, it relates to the objection against *kalām* insofar as it was not practiced at the time of the predecessors (*salaf*). Since the critics who raise this argument usually do not object to the science of *fiqh*, Taftāzānī seems to imply that just as the understanding of the predecessors regarding the practical judgments is referred to as *fiqh,* similarly, their knowledge about the theoretical judgments is called *kalām* and in both cases, their understanding was not written down. The most notable difference between the two definitions lies in the evidences. In the science of *kalām,* certain evidences (*yaqīniyyāt*) are considered, whereas jurists allowed presumptive evidences (*ẓanniyyāt*) as well. This statement needs some further conditions since it does not mean that theologians did not consider presumptive evidences at all. The details of this issue will be discussed in the third chapter.

Regarding what the definition excludes, Taftāzānī explains that the condition "acquired" (*muktasab*) excludes the knowledge of God as it is eternal (*qadīm*) and therefore neither necessary (*ḍarūrī*) nor theoretical (*naẓarī*). God's knowledge is also not preceded by ignorance (*jahl*), as the term "acquired" might suggest. It excludes the knowledge of the Messengers for the same reason of not being preceded by ignorance, although their knowledge is obviously contingent and not eternal. Lastly, it excludes the *muqallid* according to the position that his belief is called knowledge. This is based on the division in which knowledge divides into conceptions and assents and, from

[180] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 5.

there, divides assents into assent that is certain (*taṣdīq jāzim*) and assent that is uncertain (*taṣdīq ghayr jāzim*) under which *taqlīd* falls.[181]

Ibn Yaʿqūb adds another aspect to the condition of "detailed evidences" and explains that the term evidence

> means that one is able to expound them and solve spurious arguments (*shubuhāt*). So they [the evidences] are detailed since certainty is more deserving [of them]. Therefore, knowledge that is acquired through general evidences (*adilla ijmāliyya*) is excluded as it is incapable of solving spurious arguments and doubts.[182]

The discussion about ability or capacity leads to an important question: What does the term ʿ*ilm* in Taftāzān'īs definition mean? This question relates to the discussion about the parts and essence (*ḥaqīqa*) of every science.

According to Taftāzānī, in his *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, every science is made up of three parts:

> Sciences have three parts:
> The subject matters (*mawḍūʿāt*): They are that which investigate the intrinsic accidents (*aʿrāḍuhā al-dhātiyya*) of a science.
>
> The principles (*mabādiʾ*): They are the definitions of the subject matters, its parts, its accidents, the obvious premises, or accepted [premises] upon which the analogies of the science are based.
>
> The topics (*masāʾil*): They are the propositions investigated in a science by demonstration. Their subjects are either the subject matter of the science, a species of it, an intrinsic accident of it, or a compound of the two. Their predicates (*maḥmūlātuhā*) are things that are extrinsic yet accidental due to their essences.[183]

It is important to mention that this chapter appears at the end of the first half of the *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*. The investigation of the sciences is neither part of logic nor of *kalām*. In his gloss, Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1250/1834) explicitly says that this and similar investigations are "the task of the philosophical sciences" (ʿ*ulūm ḥikmiyya*).[184] Introducing this section, he also says:

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[181] See for example: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2012), 24.
[182] Ibn Yaʿqūb, 13.
[183] *al-Tahdhīb*, 217
[184] *a-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya*, 897.

> The chapter about the parts of the sciences
> They are three: The subject matter, the topics, and the principles. In reality, the essence of a science (*ḥaqīqat al-ʿilm*) is its topics. Counting the subject matters (*mawḍūʿāt*) and principles (*mabādiʾ*) as parts of it is laxity in expression due to the strong connection [between the three]. That is why you hear them say: The essence of every science is the topics of that science. Furthermore, what is intended here are the written sciences (*ʿulūm mudawwana*), like the science of logic. That is why this does not contradict that *ʿilm* is used for the ability (*malaka*) and understating (*idrāk*) as well. In the usage of the latter, it is the literal meaning and a widespread metaphor (*majāz mashhūr*) for the topics and ability. So the discussion is on two different levels. Reflect on it, so you do not confuse the two.[185]

In this passage, ʿAṭṭār explains that the term *ʿilm* can refer to science in the sense of a systematic study of something which is recorded in writing, or it can also refer to knowledge. The present discussions revolve around the first meaning. The verified position, according to ʿAṭṭār, is that written sciences are their topics, so the subject matter and principles are not a part but so closely connected to the science that they become counted as parts of it.

Coming back to the term *ʿilm* in Taftāzān'īs definition, Zakariyya al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) briefly explains the three usages with examples and then specifies which one of them is intended in the definition mentioned in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*:

> Know that the name of every science (*ism al-ʿilm*) is used to signify its specific topics (*masāʾilihi al-makhṣūṣa*), like saying: So and so knows grammar, i. e. he knows its topics. It is also used for the understanding (*idrāk*) of its theoretical judgments. From this usage is the statement: *fiqh* is the knowledge of the judgments (*al-ʿilm bil-aḥkām*). Lastly, it is also used for the ability to infer that understanding and calling it to mind (*al-idrāk wa istiḥḍāruhu*). Therefore, the term science is either those topics (*masāʾil*), understanding (*idrāk*), or ability (*malakatu*).
> If you understand this, then the meaning of the definition here is: The topics connected to the indications of their judgments (*al-masāʾil al-muqtarina bi-amārāt aḥkāmihā*). So whoever–from those people that have the ability to infer [judgments] from the indications–studies the indications and understands them, knows the judgments from its evidences.
> The purpose of defining the sciences is to distinguish the defined from everything else as far as its existence (*bi-ḥasab al-wujūd*) and not to give it its reality (*iʿṭāʾ ḥaqīqatihi*) because that is its topics. So they are not known without studying them.[186]

Anṣārī is in agreement with ʿAṭṭār's statement that the term *ʿilm*, in general, and in Taftazān'īs definition, in particular, is referring to the topics.

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[185] *al-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya*, 897.
[186] *Fatḥ*, 140-141.

Other scholars, like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502), suggest that the term ʿ*ilm* in the definition could also mean ability (*malaka*).[187] Since the main concern of the investigation is not a detailed discussion about the meaning of written sciences (ʿ*ulūm mudawwana)* and how Taftāzānī uses the term ʿ*ilm* in his definition, we shall suffice with the summary of this issue mentioned by Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Ḥafīd al-Saʿd (d. 916/1510), Taftāzān'īs grandson, who said:

> Know that the widespread position among the majority is that the essence of the written sciences is their specific topics (*masāʾil makhṣuṣa*), the assent of them (*taṣdīq bihā*) or the obtained ability (*malaka ḥāṣila*) by understanding them over and over again and by which a person is able to call them to mind whenever he wants.[188]

3.3.2. The Subject Matter of *Kalām*

The previous chapter about Taftāzān'īs historical account mentioned how *kalām* and philosophy were mixed to the point of becoming almost indistinguishable from each other. Considering this development, it seems obvious that theologians started to see the need to investigate the demarcation between the two sciences. A key figure regarding the debate about the subject matter of philosophy and *kalām* is Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 682/1283). He wrote an influential epistle titled "The difference between the sciences of metaphysics and ʿ*ilm al-kalām*" (*al-farq bayna īlmay al-ilāhī wal-kalām).*[189] Based on the attention he received, we can assume that he was the first scholar to treat the subject matter of *kalām* and philosophy independently. The mark Urmawī left can be seen in many later books, like *al-Mawāqif* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, in which his position is almost always mentioned alongside other scholars.

The present chapter aims to outline some of the main points and positions regarding this debate without delving into the subtle philosophical issues.[190] The discussion about the subject matter is the longest part of Taftāzān'īs *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* and would need an independent work to encompass the details he discusses.

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[187] *Taʿrīf ʿilm al-kalām* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ 2018), 66-67.

[188] Ibn al-Ḥāfīd al-Taftāzānī, *al-Durr al-naḍīḍ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī 1980), 24.

[189] Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī, *Risāla fī al-farq bayna īlmay al-ilāhī wal-kalām* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2013). See also: Eichner, 286-288.

[190] Heidrun Eichner in her unpublished Habilitationsschrift investigated the discussions around this topic until the 8th/14th century. See: Eichner, 275-316.

Therefore, the present investigation will be limited to (1) Taftāzān'īs general introduction to the notion of a subject matter and his position with regard to *kalām*, (2) a brief overview of other positions before Taftāzānī, and (3) how this debate relates to the demarcation between *kalām* and epistemology.

In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Taftāzānī begins his discussion on the subject matter of *kalām* with an investigation of the subject matter of the sciences in general and says:

> The scholars have agreed that the distinction between the sciences is according to the distinction between the subject matters. Hence, it is proper to begin a science with the clarification about the subject matter as it benefits that which is distinguished according to its essence (*yatamayyaz bi-ḥasab al-dhāt*) after the definition benefited the distinction according to the concept (*al-tamyīz bi-ḥasab al-mafhūm*).[191]

In the previous chapter, Taftāzānī explained that the definition benefits a general conception of the concepts and assents of a science which help the student to properly limit his study. The subject matter serves a similar purpose and helps the student who "intends to obtain the details about it not to turn his investigation from that which is part of it to that which is not a part of it."[192]

Taftāzānī offers an explanation of how the distinction between the sciences came about:

> When they [philosophers] attempted to know the states of the things as far as humanly possible–which is the intent behind philosophy; when they arranged the realities of things (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*) in species, genera and so on, like "human," "animal" and "existence"; and when they investigated their specific states and established them with evidences, they arrived at acquired propositions (*qaḍāyā kasbiyya*) of which the predicates were natural properties (*al-aʿrāḍ al-dhātiyya*) of those realities. So they named them topics (*al-masāʾil*).
>
> They traced each group of them [topics] back to one of those things [i. e. realities] so that their subject matters become that thing itself, part of it, a type of it, or a natural property of it. Then, they turned them into a specific science isolated to be written down, named, and taught (…).[193]

Taftāzānī continues and describes how the subject matter unifies the topics and demarcates a science from others:

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[191] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 167.
[192] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 167.
[193] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 167-168.

> It has become clear that the subject matter is the unifying perspective of the topics in a science (*jiha al-wāhda masāʾil al-ʿilm al-wāḥid*) with regards to their essence. (…) To say that "this is a science" and "that is another science" means that this science investigates the states of a thing (*aḥwāl al-shayʾ*) and that other science the states of a thing different from the first by its essence or point of view (*iʿtibār*).[194]

Three notions are crucial to the discussion: the subject matter, topics, and natural properties. In *al-Talwīḥ*, Taftāzānī explains these three and offers some examples:

> What is intended by the "subject matter of a science" is that in which the intrinsic properties are investigated. What is intended by "properties" (*ʿaraḍ*) here is something extrinsic predicated on a thing. The meaning of "natural properties" (*ʿawārīd dhātiyya*) is that whose origin is the essence (*mansha'uhū al-dhāt*) insofar as it follows from a thing by its essence, like understanding in relation to the human being; or by a means of something that is equal to it, like laughing in relation to the human being by virtue of his ability to be amazed; or by means of something more generally which is intrinsic to it, like movement in relation to the human being by virtue of him being an animal.[195]

The example shows the three ways in which properties[196] accrue from a subject. First, what results directly from the essence, like understanding in relation to the human being by virtue of him being rational or like speech by virtue of him being rational and living. Second, something that is extrinsic to the subject but co-extensional, like laughing in relation to the human being by virtue of him being rational. Third, something that is more general, as it is also found in other subjects, but part of the essence, like moving by virtue of him being an animal.[197]

The condition "natural properties" excludes "foreign properties" (*aʿrāḍ gharība*) since a science does not explore them. Hence, the investigation of a science consists of predicating the natural properties, its general, or parts of it on the subject matter that make up a proposition which then becomes the topic of a science.[198]

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[194] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 168.

[195] *al-Talwīḥ*, 49-50.

[196] The term *ʿaraḍ* in this context is more general than the usage in the books of theology. It encompasses the properties of an essence whether it is from a created thing or a property of God. The term *aʿrāḍ dhātiyya* could be translated as intrinsic accidents, as Khaled El-Rouayheb does. See: Khaled El-Rouayheb, "Post-Avicennan Logicians on the subject matter of logic: Some Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century discussions," in: *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (2012): 69–90.

[197] See, Ḥarb, 35; El-Rouayheb (2012), 72.

[198] See: Ḥarb, 35.

After an overview of the subject matter in general, the present section will investigate the subject matter of *kalām* in particular. In his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* Taftāzānī says:

> The subject matter of ʿ*ilm al-kalām* is the knowable (*maʿlūm*) insofar as establishing the religious beliefs relates to it.
> Because it investigates the states of the Creator as far as eternality, oneness, power, will, etc., and the states of the body and accident as far as contingency, dependency, composition from parts, receptivity to vanish, and similar things which are Islamic creeds or a means to them.
> All of this is the investigation of the states of the knowable.[199]

Ibn Yaʿqūb elaborates on the aforementioned and gives some examples for further clarification:

> **{Its subject matter}** that is the subject matter of ʿ*ilm al-kalām* is **{the knowable}** meaning that which is perceived and conceptualized in general because it is that which encompasses the existent, non-existent and state (*ḥāl*). All of them are investigated in this science. The subject matter of this science is that which investigates the natural properties or that which is traced back to them. Therefore, one investigates in it the existent insofar it is, for example, eternal or contingent; the non-existent as far as it could possibly exist or it being impossible; the state insofar it is contingent or eternal and insofar the evidence is established that it is a degree between existence and non-existence. (…)
>
> **{Insofar establishing the religious beliefs relates to it}** meaning that the knowable is the subject matter as long as the investigation relates to establishing the religious beliefs, like our investigation of the knowable, which is the world (ʿ*ālam*) insofar as it relates to establishing its contingency which one has to belief– or let it be a means by which the existence of the Creator is established. Or like our investigation of the knowable, which is the Creator insofar as establishing that He is eternal, endless, independent, powerful, has a will, and so on. Or like our investigation of the knowable, i. e., what is conceptualized, which is Allah's partner insofar as establishing its impossibility which is obligatory to believe.[200]

The following passage from a contemporary work gives a few examples that show how the subject matter of *kalām* encompasses the topics:

> The topics of it are propositions (*qaḍāyā*) composed of subject matters and what is predicated on them by which they become religious creeds or principles (*mabādiʾ*). So if it is said: "The Creator (exalted is He) is eternal," "The Creator is one, knowing, etc."; or "Bodies are contingent,"or "The return of them after vanishing is a reality" then something is predicated on the knowable by which it becomes a religious creed. For example, if it is said: "Bodies are made up of single substances," then something is predicated on the knowable (*maʿlūm*) by which it becomes a principle for the religious beliefs since the compositeness is evidence for its neediness of the Creator (*mūjid*), and so on. This is why Sayyid Sharīf said:

[199] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 173.
[200] Ibn Yaʿqūb, 13-14.

> The topics of this science are either religious beliefs or propositions upon which those beliefs are based.[201]

The distinction between topics that are religious beliefs and topics that are principles relates to the previous chapter on the distinction between the objectives and principles of *kalām*. The topics are divided into objectives–which have to be affirmed–or not. Those that are not objectives are either means to them insofar as they are principles (*mabādiʾ*), or they are not means but introductions (*muqaddimāt*) mentioned to benefit the student in his pursuit of learning the science. All of these three are gathered under the subject matter, which is the knowable.[202]

Regarding the topics of *kalām*, Taftāzānī says:

> **{Its topics are theoretical religious propositions of belief}**
> (…) He conditioned *propositions* with *theoretical* since there is no contention that first principles (*badīhī*) and practical issues (*maṭālib ʿamaliyya*) are not from the topics. In fact, a topic is only that which one inquires about and seeks with evidence. Yes, within the topics, there are instances in which the judgment of a first principle is mentioned to clarify its causal explanation (*limmiyya*). So from this perspective, it is acquired (*kasbiyya*) and not a first principle.[203]

Ibn Yaʿqūb offers a more detailed and structured analysis of the conditions with examples:

> **{Theoretical}** means that which is taken from reflection and inference. It excludes first principle propositions. Hence, they are not from the topics of this science since they are not inquired about and not sought by learning. If a first principle topic is mentioned in a science due to a benefit, like the clarification of its causality (*bayān ʿillatihā*), it becomes–insofar as it clarifies the causality–acquired. Otherwise, it is not from its topics.
>
> **{Religious}** means what relates to the Muḥammadan revelation (*sharʿ muḥammadī*) (…). It excludes the empirical (*ʿādiyyāt*), like the topics of medicine, and the conventional, like grammar.
>
> **{Belief}** means that which is obligatory to belief. It excludes the practical, like the topics of *fiqh*.[204]

In summary, the subject matter is that which unifies the topics of a science. In the case of *kalām,* according to Taftāzānī and later theologians, the subject matter is the

[201] Ḥarb, 87.
[202] al-Omarī, 67.
[203] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 8.
[204] Ibn Yaʿqūb, 16.

knowable (*maʿlūm*) and its topics (*masāʾil*) theoretical religious propositions of belief. The knowable encompasses the existent (*mawjūd*), non-existent (*maʿdūm*), and state (*ḥāl*). Some of the topics are objectives (*maqāṣid*) of *kalām,* meaning that they are propositions that have to be affirmed to obtain belief (*imān*). Other topics are principles (*mabādiʾ*) upon which the objectives are based. Lastly, there are topics that are neither objectives nor principles but introductions (*muqaddimāt*) that have pedagogical benefits.

3.3.3. Debates About the Subject Matter of *Kalām*

The aim of this section is to give an overview of the different positions theologians held in regard to the subject matter of *kalām*. It is noteworthy that in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* Taftāzānī postpones the detailed discussion of other positions to the end of the first introduction, which makes the subject matter the longest topic. It is necessary to narrow the scope since Taftāzān'īs investigation includes many subtle philosophical issues, objections, and answers to those objections.[205] Thus, the focus will be the subject matter insofar as it relates to the relationship between *kalām* and epistemology. In this regard, one position will be discussed in detail as the discussion surrounding it are directly related to epistemology.

Before moving to a detailed discussion, it will be useful to get a summary of the different positions. Ṭāhā b. Shaykh al-Sanandjī (d. 1300/1883), in his commentary on *Tahdhīb al-kalām,* neatly summarizes the investigation from *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*. He presents four positions, objections against them, and answers to those objections.

> **{Its subject matter}** They disagreed about it. Qāḍī Urmawī said: The subject matter is Allah's essence (*dhāt Allah*) because it investigates His positive and negating attributes and His acts relating to the world and the hereafter.
>
> [Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī], the author of *al-Ṣaḥāʾif,* added the essence of the possible beings insofar as they depend on Him since in it [*kalām*] the states of the possible beings are investigated insofar as they are in need of Allah–exalted is He. The unifying perspective is existence. (…)
>
> Early theologians made its subject matter the existences insofar as it is connected to the investigations according to the principles of Islam (*qānūn al-Islām*) since

[205] This relates to what Eichner observed insofar as Taftāzānī represents "a stage where many earlier conventions are synthesized." (See: Eichner, 324.) To do so he has to evaluate what has come before him.

> the investigations of *kalām* go back to it. The theologian looks at the most general thing, which is existence. He divides it into eternal and contingent, the contingent into substance and accident, and so on. Then, he starts with the accidents and substances, investigates the Eternal insofar as He is not composed of parts and does not multiply, and so on. (…)
>
> Later theologians said that its subject matter is **{the knowable}** but not without the viewpoint of obtaining knowledge about the religious beliefs as it is broader, rather, {**insofar it relates to that**}.[206]

The first position comes from Urmawī, who started the debate with independent treaties on the subject matter of metaphysics and *kalām*. According to him, the subject matter of metaphysics is existence qua existence (*al-mawjūd bi-mā huwa mawjūd*), and that of *kalām*" the specific existence (*al-mawjūd al-khāṣṣ*) which is Allah–exalted is He–, so He is the subject matter of *kalām* which is called *uṣūl al-Dīn.*"[207]

The second position, represented by Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 690/1291), added the possible beings to the subject matter insofar as they are dependent upon God. In both of these positions, epistemology would not be part of *kalām* and thus considered part of the preliminaries. The last position by the later theologians was discussed earlier.

The third position by earlier theologians had a bearing on epistemology and shall be discussed in more detail. In the main text of *al-Maqāṣid*, Taftāzānī says:

> The early theologians are of the opinion that its subject matter is existence qua existence and distinguishes itself from metaphysics insofar as the investigation in it is according to the Tenet of Islam (*qānūn al-Islām)*–meaning that which is known decisively from the religion, like the origination of multitude from the One, the ascension of the angle from heaven, that the world is surrounded by nothingness and evanescent, etc. which the religious community (*milla*) is certain of, unlike the philosophers.[208]

In his commentary, Taftāzānī mentions Ghazālī as an example of this position and quotes a long passage from *al-Mustaṣfā* in which Ghazālī illustrates how the investigation of a theologian begins with the most general of things which is

[206] Ṭāhā b. Shaykh al-Sanandjī, *Hudā al-Nāẓirīn fī sharḥ tahdhīb al-kalām* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), 188-189. See also: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 176-186. From here onwards abbreviated with: al-Hudā.
[207] al-Urmawī, 74-75.
[208] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 176.

existence.[209] The qualifier "according to the Tenet of Islam" differentiates *kalām* from metaphysics as they share the same subject matter. Taftāzānī says:

> He [i.e., Taftāzānī himself] differentiated *kalām* from metaphysics by stating that the investigation in it is according to the Tenet of Islam, i. e. the well-known method referred to as religion (*dīn*) or religious community (*milla*) and the known and decisive principles from the Quran, Sunna, and consensus, like the One being the creator of the multitude, the angle ascending from heaven, the world being preceded by nonexistence and perishing after existence and other things from the principles that are affirmed with certainty in Islam, unlike Philosophy. (…)
>
> In summary: It [Tenet of Islam] means observing the sharia principles in all of the investigations and not contradicting that which is certain (*qaṭʿiyyāt*), as is the case with the inquiry of deficient intellects in the manner of the Tenet of Philosophy (*qānūn al-falsafa*).[210]

We saw earlier how the sciences are distinguished from each other by their subject matters. Two science can share a subject matter, but they have to investigate it from at least one different perspective; otherwise, it is not possible to speak of two distinct sciences. Since *kalām*, according to the earlier theologians, and metaphysics have existence as their subject matter, there needs to be a difference in perspective. In the case of *kalām,* it is the notion of the "Tenet of Islam" or "Tenet of the Sharia."[211] Taftāzān'īs last sentence calls to mind what he mentioned in his introduction: "The reflection of the mind in religion follows its guidance and in philosophy its whims." This concise statement summarizes the idea behind the two types of Tenets. Due to the importance of this notion, it is worth looking at some descriptions of it.

Besides the meaning above, Taftāzānī gives another explanation for the Tenet of Islam: "What is intended with "the Tenet of Islam" is the foundation from the Quran, Sunna, consensus, and the intelligible (*maʿqūl*), which does not contradict them."[212]

The same notion has been mentioned by Ījī in his *al-Mawāqif*, which Jurjānī comments on by saying: "**{According to the Tenet of Islam}** contrary to the investigation in

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[209] *al-Mustaṣfa*, 6.
[210] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 177.
[211] Molla Aḥmad al-Jandī uses this variation of the term in his gloss. See: *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 21 [Jandī].
[212] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 177.

metaphysics, which is according to the Tenet of their intellects no matter if it is in accordance with Islam or not."[213]

Ibn Yaʿqūb gives a detailed explanation and says:

> **{The Tenet of Islam}** meaning: according to the principle of Islam (*qāʿida al-Islām*), and that is what Islam affirms as far as universal judgments (*ḥukm kullī*) which have to be observed. Contrary to the investigation of the philosophical metaphysician (*ilāhī faylaṣufī*) in his science in which he is not bound by the principles of Islam. That is why they affirmed matters coming from their deficient minds, which Islam does not affirm (…). According to this, the subject matter of *kalām*–even if it is existence–is, in reality, the state of existence corresponding to the principles of Islam, and the subject matter of metaphysics is existence qua existence.[214]

From these statements, we can conclude that the notion *Tenet of Islam* refers to general principles derived from decisive rational and textual evidence. Now this calls to mind Taftāzān'īs statement mentioned earlier that philosophy was mixed with *kalām* until it "was hardly distinguishable from philosophy had it not been that it included revealed knowledge (*samʿiyyāt*)."[215] As simple as the statement might sound, it has far-reaching implications, as we can see in the discussion about the subject matter. Ibn Yaʿqūb manages to highlight this implication and articulates it clearly when he says that the subject matter, according to this position, is actually the state of existence insofar as it corresponds with the Tenet of Islam. The examples Taftāzānī mentions show that the statements that fall under the umbrella of this notion are more general than propositions that are subject to differences of opinion. That is why they are agreed upon by Muslim Theologians, including non-Sunnī theologians and demarcate the difference to the Tenet of Philosophy. Ibn Yaʿqūb highlights this important aspect in his commentary on Taftāzān'īs text:

> **{And other things}** like the Eternal causing volitionally, Him encompassing all the particulars and universals with His knowledge. These [principles] and that which is similar are beliefs (*ʿaqāʾid*) **{which the}** Islamic **{religious community affirms with certainty}** be it the ones who are correct, like the Sunnīs, or the ones who are wrong, like the other groups, for example, the Muʿtazila.

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[213] al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-mawāqif*, vol. 1, 31. A reliable print with two glosses can be found online:
https://archive.org/details/sohaibhassan33_yahoo_1_20170714
[214] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 17.
[215] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 104; Elder, 9-10.

> **{Unlike the philosophers}** since their followers do not assert these beliefs. On the contrary, they negate the effect of the Eternal on the universe due to the impossibility (ʿ*adam al-ṣiḥḥa*) of multiplicity emerging from the One. They negated the dispatchment due to the impossibility of an angle ascending from the heave. They also negated the contingency of the hyle (*ḥudūth al-hayūlī*) and its evanescence.[216]

In summary, according to the scholars who opined that the subject matter of *kalām* is existence qua existence, it is necessary to qualify the investigation to demarcate *kalām* from metaphysics. This qualifier is the Tenet of Islam (*qanūn al-Islām*), which includes all Muslim theologians and excludes the philosophers. So, according to this position, what qualifies someone as a theologian (*mutakallim*) is not the correct beliefs in all their details but the general principles that are affirmed even if there are differences of opinion on other topics.[217]

An objection raised against this position that the subject matter of *kalām* is existence is the following: It follows from this position that epistemology is not part of *kalām* as its existence is not considered (*lā yuʿtabar wujūduhu*). However, it is the norm that chapters on epistemology are found in the books of *kalām* and often investigated in great detail. Therefore, the subject matter of *kalām* has to be broader to encompass epistemology. This objection was raised by Ījī in his *al-Mawāqif*.[218] Taftāzānī mentions his objection in the main text of *al-Maqāṣid* and says:

> If it is said: Although mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*) is denied, the states of matters whose existence is not considered are still investigated, like epistemology (*al-naẓar wal-dalīl*), and that which has no existence, like nothingness and states.
>
> We say: They are appendages (*lawāḥiq*). Even if it is conceded [that epistemology is investigated in *kalām*], the rejection of mental existence is only the opinion of some.[219]

After pointing out in the commentary that this position belongs to Ījī, Taftāzānī deflects his argument by saying:

> We do not concede that these are investigations from the topics of *kalām*. Investigations in epistemology are from its *mabādiʾ*, as we already established.

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[216] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 18.

[217] There are other issues relating to this qualification that are not related to the thesis at hand so we suffice with what has been mentioned. For more details see: Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 17-18.

[218] *al-Mawāqif*, 7-8.

[219] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 178.

> And the investigation about nothingness and states are from the appendages of the topic of existence (*lawāḥiq masʾalat al-wujūd*) to clarify and complete the objective by dealing with that which is contrary to it.[220]

Based on this statement, epistemology is from the *mabādiʾ* and investigations on nothingness and states from the appendages as they are the opposites of existence by which one obtains more clarity, based on the principle that things are known by their opposites.

To know what Taftāzānī is referring to when he uses the word *mabādiʾ*, it is important to recall how he divided the investigations in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*. He says at the beginning:

> It has become a common practice [in the books of *kalām*] to begin the chapters with discussions that function as precursors (*sawābiq*) to them [the five chapters], which are called "preliminaries" (*mabādiʾ*). Thus, we ordered the book according to six objectives.[221]

He then divided the first chapter into three subchapters. The first is the introductions (*muqaddimāt*) which include investigations which every science is prefaced with, like the definition of a science, its subject matter, and so on, and two subchapters that *kalām* in particular is prefaced with, i.e., epistemology (*mabāḥith al-ʿilm wal-naẓar*).[222]

In his gloss on the *Muntahā al-uṣūlī*, he also mentioned the possibility of considering epistemology as part of the introductions:

> Rather, he limited himself to what could be from the principles (*mabādiʾ*) or even introductions (*muqaddimāt*) of *kalām.* [It could be said that he limited himself to that which] is not even specific to *kalām*, like investigations on inquiry (*mabāḥith al-naẓar*) in regards to which all the other sciences are equal. Since there is no other science among the Islamic sciences that suits the investigations on epistemology (*mabāḥith al-naẓar wal-istidlāl*) except *kalām,* they added it to it.[223]

Although he seems to prefer the epistemological investigations to be from the principles, he leaves the possibility open that it could even be part of the introductions

[220] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 178-179.
[221] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 4.
[222] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 4.
[223] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 103.

(*muqaddimāt*).[224] What is clear from both statements is that he does not consider epistemology as a part of *kalām.*[225]

Coming back to Ījʾīs objection: Another part of his argument was that if existence was the subject matter, it would lead to affirming mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*) to explain why some investigations are included that are not part of existence.
Taftāzānī replies to this argument by saying:

> The investigations on epistemology are from the states of the external existence (*aḥwāl al-wujūd al-ʿaynī*) even if its existence is not considered. The rest is from the states of mental existence, and many theologians affirm it according to their explicit statements. Whoever does not has to turn to the knowable [as the subject matter].[226]

In summary: The central point here is not about the way Taftāzānī deflects the arguments against the different positions regarding the subject matter but how they reveal his position regarding the relationship between *kalām* and epistemology. Although epistemology has been included in most of the works of *kalām*, including Taftāzānʾīs books, he explicitly states that it is not a part of *kalām.* However, he still agrees with Ījī and other later theologians that the subject matter of *kalām* is the knowable. But Taftāzānī taking this position is not related to the attempt to include epistemology. Furthermore, unlike scholars before him, Taftāzānī tries to offer different explanations for earlier scholars who chose existence as the subject matter. It seems that he is trying to defuse the tension between the different positions by giving each position a charitable reading without compromising his position regarding the relationship between *kalām* and epistemology.

3.4. Epistemology (*mabāḥith al-ʿilm wal-naẓar*)

After the discussion about the relationship between epistemology and *kalām*, the following chapters will focus on the conceptual tools that are discussed in the chapters

[224] In one of the commentaries on *Tahdhīb al-kalām,* the author gives the same answer as Taftāzānī but specifies that epistemology is from the introductions. See: *al-Hudā*, vol. 1, 189.
[225] This lines up with earlier theologians who held this position, like Ghazālī. In his *al-Iqtiṣād fīl-iʿtiqād*, Ghazālī puts his epistemological discussions into the last of the four introductions (*tamhīdāt*). See Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fīl-iʿtiqād*, 114-125.
[226] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 179.

on epistemology. The first part deals with three common questions with regard to knowledge. The second part will look at the two different ways knowledge was divided. Lastly, we will look at the different kinds of self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), which are the most fundamental building blocks for attaining new knowledge.

3.4.1. Knowledge (*ʿilm*)

"Know that the investigations on knowledge cannot be encompassed unless with at least one volume (*mujallad*). Hence, we shall mention some of them concisely."[227] This is how Farhārī begins the discussion in his gloss on *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* on the two words: "The means to knowledge (*asbāb al-ʿilm*)." He then spends two pages in the modern print going through five different topics very briefly. Farhār'īs gloss is a simple example to illustrate how epistemological investigations were perceived by Muslim scholars. For this reason, the scope of the present chapter will be narrowed down to discuss three topics that are commonly found in the books on *kalām* regarding knowledge:

1. Can knowledge be defined?
2. Is the concept of knowledge self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) or theoretical (*naẓarī*)?
3. What is the definition or description Taftāzānī offered for knowledge?

3.4.2. Can Knowledge Be Defined?

In *Tahdhīb al-kalām*, Taftāzānī says: "Knowledge cannot be defined due to its clarity (*li-wuḍūḥihi*). It is also said that it is due to its obscurity (*li-khafāʾihi)*."[228] The structure and wording in this statement disclose the opinion Taftāzānī prefers. In the beginning, he mentions the position he chooses. Then, he presents the second position by preceding it with the words: "It is said" (*qīla*). It indicates that he considers it to be the weaker position.

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[227] *al-Nibrās*, 74.
[228] *al-Tahdhīb,* 222.

The main text of *al-Maqāṣid* substantiates this reading. He says, again briefly: "Most of the definitions for knowledge are faulty (*madkhūla*). It is said due to its obscurity while the verifiers say due to its clarity."[229] Again, he introduces the position saying it is due to its obscurity with "it is said" and ascribes the second position to the verifiers (*muḥaqqiqūn*). From both texts, *Tahdhīb* and *Maqāṣid,* it is safe to say that he believes that knowledge cannot be defined due to its clarity.

In his commentary on the *Maqāṣid,* he identifies two scholars that took differing positions. Amongst the verifiers is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), whom Taftāzānī paraphrases:

> Imām al-Rāzī said: The definitions for knowledge are not free from deficiency (*khalal*) because its essence reaches such a point of lucidness that it is not possible to define it with something more evident than it (*ajlā minhu*). Many verifiers took this position. Some of them said: The difference of opinion that occurred was because of its intense clarity, not obscurity.[230]

A representative of the position that knowledge cannot be defined due to its obscurity is Ghazālī. Taftāzānī cites and paraphrases from *al-Mustaṣfā* saying:

> It is probably difficult to define it according to its reality with an encompassing formulation of its genus and differentia. This is difficult for most things; in fact, it is difficult for most of what is perceived with the senses. So how will it be with that which is perceived [mentally]? Hence, its meaning is clarified by division (*taqsīm*) and example (*mithāl*).[231]

Although Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Taftāzānī agree that knowledge cannot be defined, they disagree when it comes to the reason. For Ghazālī, the definition for most of the tangibles is difficult and more so intangible concepts. So his default position suggests that defining something is difficult, and so is defining knowledge. The solution is to describe (*rasm*) it using division and examples. About the first, he says, as paraphrased by Taftāzānī:

> As for the division: It is you differentiating it from that which it is confused with, and that is beliefs (*iʿtiqādāt*). It is obvious how it differentiates itself from doubt (*shakk*), from presumption (*ẓann*) by certainty (*jazm*), and ignorance (*jahl*) by

[229] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 46.
[230] Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, 47. See also: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ 2012), 24-25.
[231] *al-Mustaṣfā,* 21.

> being congruent [with reality]. So there is nothing else left than the belief of the *muqallid*. It [knowledge] differentiates itself from it since belief might remain, although that which it is connected to might change like someone believing that Zayd is in the house, but he then exists. The belief is as it was [i.e., that Zayd is still in the house]. Whereas knowledge changes with the known (*maʿlūm*) and does not remain when one believes that the thing to which it is connected has ceased since it is an uncovering (*inkishāf*) and separation (*inḥilāl*) from the conviction (*ʿaqīda*) while belief (*iʿtiqād*) is a knotting of the heart (*ʿaqd ʿalā al-qalb*). That is why it ceases by a doubter when he causes doubt, unlike knowledge. (…) So the division mentioned separates knowledge from the situation of resembling [belief].[232]

Ghazālī argues that knowledge is easily differentiated from doubt, presumption, and ignorance. There is no judgment in a state of doubt and no certainty in a state of presumption, whereas, in knowledge, they are. The distinction between ignorance and knowledge is obvious, as they are opposites. However, knowledge can be confused with belief. So the way to differentiate between them is that knowledge follows the known (*al-ʿilm tābiʿ lil-maʿlūm*), meaning that they are concomitant, unlike belief which can remain although the subject of belief has changed its state. So the division helps to grasp the difference between knowledge and belief by highlighting the differences between them.

The second way of clarifying the meaning of knowledge is by giving an example. Ghazālī, as quoted by Taftāzānī, says:

> As for the example: Visual perception (*idrāk al-baṣar*) is similar to mental perception (*idrāk al-bāṣira*). So just as the meaning of seeing (*ibṣār*) is the impression of the image from the seen object–that its likeness in the visual faculty is like the impression of an image in the mirror–the intellect resembles the mirror in which the images of the intelligible is impressed–that is their realities and their essence as they are. Knowledge is an expression of the intellect, capturing the images of the intelligible, imprinting, and obtaining them.
> (…) This example makes you understand the reality of knowledge.[233]

Taftāzānī then concludes and says:

> This is what he said. So it becomes apparent that he intends the difficulty of defining with a real definition (*taʿrīf ḥaqīqī*) and not what conveys its differentiation and inducing understanding of its reality, and [he intends] that this is not far-fetched.[234]

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[232] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 47. Taftāzānī quotes and summarizes simultaneously. For the original wording see: *al-Mustaṣfā*, 22.
[233] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 47; *al-Mustaṣfā*, 22.
[234] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, 47.

In Taftāzān'īs conclusion, there is an implicit response to Īj'īs judgment regarding Ghazāl'īs position. Ījī says: "Ghazāl'īs position that it can only be known by division and example is farfetched."[235] So Taftāzānī is more lenient towards Ghazālī and Juwaynī, just as he was with Urmawī. Yet, this does not prevent him from having a clear stance and disagreeing with them insofar as he agrees with the conclusion that knowledge cannot be defined but disagrees with the reason and sides with Rāzī and the verified position.

3.4.3. Definitions for Knowledge

The following question is linked to the issue of the definition of knowledge: Is the concept of knowledge self-evident (*ḍarūrī/badīhī*) or theoretical (naẓarī)?[236] Summarizing the topic, we find the glossators of *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* mention three positions concerning this question:

1. The concept of knowledge is self-evident, therefore, not in need of a definition. This is Rāz'īs position.
2. It is theoretical but difficult to define. This position is ascribed to Ghazālī and Juwaynī.
3. It is theoretical and can be defined.[237]

Taftāzānī mentions two arguments for the first position in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, which were put forward by Rāzī:

> It is said that conceptualizing it is immediate (*ḍarūrī*) because it is already obtained (*ḥāṣil*), and everything else is known by it. So if it [knowledge] is known by something else, it would lead to a vicious circle (*dawr*). Moreover, because the knowledge of one's existence is self-evident, that, in turn, is preceded by unqualified knowledge (*muṭlaq al-ʿilm*). Therefore, it is more so self-evident.[238]

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[235] ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī, *Jawhar al-kalām* (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣalāh 2022), 22-23.

[236] The distinction between *ḍarūrī* and *badīhī* knowledge will be the topic of chapter "Self-Evident and Theoretical Knowledge". For now these two terms will be used interchangeably. For an overview on this matter, see: Ahmet Süruri, "Taşköprizade'nin el-Mealim fi İlmi'l-Kelam'ında "Bilginin Tanımı" Problemi," in: *XVII. Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Eylül 2014): 2329-2337.

[237] See: *al-Nibrās*, 75; *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 110-111 (Ramaḍān).

[238] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 43.

The first point argues that knowledge is already obtained (*ḥāṣil*) and cannot be acquired (*iktisāb*). As one of the principles states, it is impossible to obtain what is already present (*taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil muḥāl*). The way knowledge is obtained is through intuition (*wijdān*), and everything else is known by knowledge. Hence, it is impossible that knowledge is known through something else or by virtue of itself, as it would lead to a vicious circle (*dawr*). Therefore, it has to be *a priori* (*badīhī*).[239]

The second argument starts with the premise that the knowledge of oneself is self-evident, which is a specific knowledge: "I have knowledge of my existence." This specific knowledge is preceded by unrestricted knowledge, i. e. just the notion of knowledge, not the more specific "knowledge *of*" something. So if the specific knowledge is self-evident and a compound of unrestricted knowledge and its specificity ("my existence"), then the unrestricted knowledge has to be *a priori* as well since that which precedes the *a priori* is also *a priori.*[240]

Taftāzānī then mentions a long discussion with objections and answers. The gist of it revolves around the objection that the two arguments do not differentiate between conceptualizing knowledge (*taṣawwur al-ʿilm*) and obtaining knowledge *(ḥuṣūl al-ʿilm*). Briefly put, there is a difference between, for example, conceptualizing *īmān* and obtaining *īmān* insofar as a person becomes described as being a believer (*muʿmin*). It is conceivable that someone has a conception of *īmān* without obtaining it and thus be described as a believer (*muʾmin*). Similarly, it is conceivable that someone obtains *īmān* and becomes described as a believer without any knowledge of the reality of *īmān* itself. Applying this to the earlier argument regarding the proposition "I have knowledge of my existence" shows that a person can obtain self-knowledge without conceptualizing the reality of knowledge itself. Therefore, it does not follow that the conception of unqualified knowledge (*ʿilm muṭlaq*) is *a priori* because the more specific self-knowledge is *a priori* since the second is obtaining knowledge, whereas the first is conceptualizing knowledge.[241] Taftāzānī goes through a number of arguments and counter-arguments without fully resolving the issue.

[239] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 43-44.
[240] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 44.
[241] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 44-45; Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 25-28.

Altogether, he seems to leave the discussion open by showing that neither of the arguments is conclusive.

The second position regarding knowledge states that it is theoretical (*naẓarī*) but difficult to define with a real definition (*taʿrīf ḥaqīqī*), that is, a genus and differentia. The details of this position were discussed earlier in the passage from Ghazāl'īs *al-Mustaṣfā.* Taftāzānī concluded that Ghazāl'īs main argument is about the difficulty of finding a definition that meets the conditions required in logic; however, it is still possible to distinguish the notion of knowledge from belief with a division (*taqsīm*) and grasp its reality with an example (*mithāl*).[242]

The third position states that knowledge is theoretical and can therefore be defined. Early theologians suggested different definitions, which later theologians found to be flawed.[243] Taftāzānī, for example, states that "most of the definitions for knowledge are deficient (*madkhūla*)."[244] He mentions the following as examples:

> The knowledge (*maʿrifa*) of the known (*maʿlūm*) as it is; the perception (*idrāk*) of the known as it is; affirmation (*ithbāt*) of the known as it is; believing something as it is; that by which something is known; that which makes the one possessing it a knower, etc. The reason for the shortcoming (*khalal*) is apparent.[245]

Ibn Yaʿqūb explains what the shortcoming is:

> The shortcoming in these definitions is apparent: the implication of a vicious circle (*dawr*) since they are a derivation (*mushtaq*) from the word ʿ*ilm.* The derivation is only known after knowing ʿ*ilm* with the addition of "as it is," which is dispensable because being acquainted with a thing requires it to be as it is for the knower. Otherwise, the connection would be ignorance, not knowledge.[246]

Taftāzān'īs criticism of the definitions relates to circularity in them as they contain a derivation from the definition. In the definitions above, it is the word "known" (*maʿlūm*), which is a derivation from "knowledge" (ʿ*ilm*). To understand the definition, one has to be familiar with the word ʿ*ilm* as it is the root from

[242] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 47.
[243] For an extensive overview of the definitions see: Frank Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant* (Leiden: Brill 2007), 46-69.
[244] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 46.
[245] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 46.
[246] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 28.

which *maʿlūm* is derived. So grasping the definition for *ʿilm* presupposes understanding the word *maʿlūm*, which requires understanding the word *ʿilm,* which leads to a vicious circle. An important observation from Ibn Yaʿqūb is that Taftāzānī says *most* of the definitions are deficient and not all of them "because a number of the verifiers did choose some of the definitions claiming that one cannot object to them."[247]

The following section will look at one definition in particular, which some of the theologians, amongst them Taftāzānī, did consider beneficial and valid.

3.4.4. The Best Definition of Knowledge

In his two independent works on theology *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* and *Tahdhīb al-kalām*, Taftāzānī clearly states that knowledge cannot be defined. In his commentary of *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafīyya*, however, he discusses two definitions without going into the details about the possibilities of a definition. This relates to the general approach of him being the commentator of a specific school. In this case, a Māturīdī text.

Taftāzān'īs discussion on knowledge in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* begins when he reaches the statement: "The means to knowledge." As it is his method in the commentary, he begins by clarifying the words first: "Knowledge is an attribute (*ṣifa*) through which what is mentioned (*madhkūr*) becomes revealed in whom it subsists."[248] Before we look at his analysis, it is worth noticing to whom this definition is ascribed. Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115), in his *Tabṣira al-adilla*, says that this is a definition that can be understood from Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) although he did not formulate it verbatim. Abū al-Muʿīn says:

> During his discussion, the Shaykh and Imām, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī–May Allah have mercy on him–, points out that knowledge is an attribute through which what is mentioned becomes revealed in whom it subsists. However, he did not use these words in this order and arrangement. (…) By reflection, one knows that [this definition] is not subject to any false objection.[249]

[247] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 28.

[248] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 112; Rosenthal (2007), 59.

[249] Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣira al-adilla* (Damascus: al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmī al-Faransī li-dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya, 1990), vol. 1, 11.

Later theologians, like Jurjānī, considered it to be "the best definition," and most of the later verifiers, especially from the Māturīdīs, mentioned this definition as the most accurate.[250]

With regard to the analysis of this definition, Taftāzānī says:

> Knowledge is an attribute by which what is mentioned becomes revealed in whom it subsists (*ṣifa yatajallā bihā al-madhkūr li-man qāmat hiya bihi*). Meaning that whatever is mentioned becomes clear and obvious and can be expressed, whether it is existent or nonexistent. It includes sense perception and the perception of the intellect regarding conceptions and assents, which are certain and not certain. (…)
>
> Nevertheless, it is more appropriate to interpret "revealing" (*tajallī*) as a complete uncovering (*inkishāf tāmm*) which does not include presumption because knowledge is in opposition to presumption, according to them [the theologians].[251]

In the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Taftāzānī informs us that the word *ʿilm* is equivocal (*lafẓ mushtarak*) and depending on the terminological definition, an attribute (*ṣifa*), a perception (*idrāk*), the obtaining of an image (*ḥuṣūl al-ṣūra*) or a belief (*iʿtiqād*).[252] The definition he mentions is based on the position that knowledge is an attribute (*ṣifa*) of the knower (*ʿālim*) which connects to the object of knowledge. Others considered knowledge to be the connection (*taʿalluq*) between the knower and object of knowledge, which reveals and uncovers what is mentioned.[253]

A similar discussion is about the accident (*maqūla*) to which knowledge belongs. Summarizing the discussion, Farhārī says: There are three positions. Knowledge is either a relation (*iḍāfa*), quality (*kayf*), or an affect (*infiʿāl*).

> The verifiers say: If we know something, then there are three things:
> (1) the relation between the knower and the known,
> (2) the obtaining of a form in the knower or
> (3) the receptiveness of the soul (*qabūl al-nafs*) for that form.
> So whoever went for the first said it is a relation. If one goes for the second, then it is a quality, and whoever goes for the third says it is an affect.[254]

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[250] See: *al-Nibrās*, 75; *Ṣābūnī*, 47; Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī, *al-Iʿtimād fī al-iʿtiqād* (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Fajr, 2020), 86; *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 39 (Jandī);

[251] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 112-113. The statement "knowledge is in opposition to presumption" is based on the usage in which *ẓann* means everything but certainty (*mā laysa bi-yaqīnī*). So it encompasses presumption, ignorance and belief, all of which are not certainty. See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 654.

[252] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 48; *al-Hudā*, 192-194.

[253] See: *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 39 (Jandī); *al-Hudā*, 194.

[254] *al-Nibrās*, 75.

According to Farhārī, the difference of opinion regarding the accident of knowledge arises from the varying perspectives of the theologians. Five things are necessary here: The knower, the subject of knowledge, the relationship between the two, the knower's receptiveness to the form, and the obtaining of the form. Theologians who said the accident of knowledge is a relation (*iḍāfa*) looked at the knower and the known. Those who said it is a quality (*kayf*) looked at the obtaining of the form, and those who said it is an affect (*infiʿāl*) looked at the receptiveness of the form in the knower.

Next, we will look closely at the conditions mentioned in the definition above to see what they include and exclude. The term *tajallī* (revealed or manifest), according to Taftāzānī, describes "a complete uncovering" (*inkishāf tamm*) which excludes presumption (*ẓann*), ignorance (*jahl*) and the belief of a *muqallid* since the primary concern of a theologian is reaching certainty.[255] The condition *madhkūr* (what is mentioned) is used instead of the term *shayʾ* (thing) to include the existent and nonexistent, which can potentially and actually be expressed mentally or linguistically. Among the glossators, there is a discussion about the root of the word *madhkūr*. If its root is the word *dhikr*–which is more probable–then it would refer to that which is expressed linguistically, and if it is *dhukr*, then that which is in the mind.[256]

Taftāzānī explicitly states that the definition includes sense perception, which clarifies his position regarding the difference of opinion. Theologians discussed if sense perception is part of knowledge or essentially different and, therefore, another kind of perception. According to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935) and some later theologians, like Taftāzānī, sense perception is from the category of knowledge. In contrast, the majority (*jumhūr*) holds that it is a type of perception (*nawʿ min al-idrāk*) essentially different from knowledge which is more appropriate terminologically and linguistically.[257] One objection regarding this position is that if sense perception is knowledge, then animals would be described as possessing it (*ulūl al-ʿilm*).[258] Glossators, like Jandī, deflected this objection saying:

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[255] See *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 49; *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 113.
[256] See: *al-Majmūʿa*, 109-110 (Khayālī).
[257] See: *al-Majmūʿā*, 111 (Kastalī).
[258] See: *al-Majmūʿā*, 111 (Khayālī).

> It does not necessitate that animals become described as possessing knowledge since their perception is with the senses directly and not the soul (*nafs*) by means of the senses. That is why it is said: "In whom it subsists." It is as if he says: "An attribute through which what is mentioned becomes revealed to the soul."[259]

According to the theologians, the locus of knowledge is the soul (*nafs*). In contrast, the sense faculties (*quwwa ḥassāsa*) are the means of perception (*āla al-idrāk*). In other words, the sense faculties are not the place of perception but means by which enable the soul to perceive. Animals, however, perceive through their senses since they are the locus of perception, not the means for the soul. As Kastalī says:

> As far as what animals perceive by their imagination (*awhāmihim*), like the sheep perceiving a meaning forcing (*maʿnan mūjiban*) it to flee when it sees a wolf, (…) it does not necessitate that it is through the intellect (*ʿaql*). It is conceivable that Allah creates it [the meaning] without a means, or it [is also conceivable] that they have some other means.[260]

The gloss by Farhārī gives further insights. After mentioning the objection that the linguistic, terminological, and religious (*sharʿī*) usage negates that animals have knowledge, he offers three counterarguments and says:

> Firstly, what is negated from animals is knowledge by the intellect and not the senses.
>
> Secondly, the word "whom" (*man*) [in the definition] is for those that have intellect, so the sensation (*iḥsās*) in animals is excluded from the definition.
>
> Thirdly, the meaning of "perception of the senses" (*idrāk al-ḥawās*) is the perception of the rational soul through the senses (*idrāk al-nafs al-nāṭiqa bil-ḥawās*) and not the sensation itself because the senses are only the means of perception.[261]

Both glossators do not specify the faculty of animals, which, for example, instills the meaning of fear, as is the case with a sheep when it sees a wolf. They argue that this example does not necessitate that animals have an intellect since the meaning can be obtained through other means. As Kastalī suggests, the meaning obtained is either by a direct creation in a sheep or some other means, which he, as a theologian, is not compelled to clarify. As long as the possibility for some means is there, it is enough to deflect the argument, which is the following: If sense perception yields knowledge,

[259] *al-Ḥawāṣhi*, vol. 1, 39 (Janḍi).
[260] See: *al-Majmūʿā*, 123 (Kastalī).
[261] *al-Nibrās*, 77.

then animals have to be described as possessing knowledge and, by extension, having an intellect. As both theologians explain, there is a difference between the human being with a rational soul, which obtains knowledge through the senses insofar as they are means, and animals obtaining perception directly in their senses.

Farhārī goes a step further and clarifies that even the intellect is just a means. When Taftāzānī says: "The perception of the intellect," Farhārī comments:

> Meaning: Perception of the soul through the intellect. From the words of the scholars, it becomes evident that connecting the perception to the intellect is meant in a real sense (*ḥaqīqī*). Moreover, to the perspicacious, it is also clear that it is metaphorical (*majāzī*), like the perception of the senses. Nevertheless, since the intellect is the immediate cause (*sabab qarīb*), they made it the one perceiving (*mudrik*). Keep that in mind so it saves you from confusion.[262]

Farhārī says that the human soul is ultimately the locus of knowledge. Its most specific attribute is the intellect. That is why scholars mention that the terms soul and intellect are sometimes used synonymously. So the statement "perception of the intellect" is meant literally in the sense that it is referring to the soul but using its most specific attribute, the intellect. Alternatively, it is used metaphorically, meaning that the soul perceives through the intellect.

In summary, we saw earlier that Taftāzānī, in his independent works, agrees with Rāzī insofar as knowledge cannot be defined. He also says that the varying definitions, or rather descriptions and calling-to-attention (*tanbīh*), are a result of the different terminologies with regard to the essence of knowledge. Finally, in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, he is first and foremost operating as a commentator for a Māturīdī text, so his aim is to clarify it according to the Māturīdī understanding. Based on these insights, there is no contradiction in mentioning a definition for knowledge in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* and saying that knowledge cannot be defined in his independent works. Kastal'īs statement can be taken as a pointer when he says: "He defined it based on the position that it is obtainable (*kasbī*) and possible to be defined and not as the Imam [al-Rāzī] said that it is self-evident."[263] Considering all of his works and mode of

[262] *al-Nibrās*, 78.
[263] *al-Majmūʿa*, 109 (Kastalī).

writing shows that there is no contradiction between his statements in the different works, which leads to confusion regarding his positions.

3.4.5. Conception (*taṣawwur*) and Assent (*taṣdīq*)

The present chapter analysis four central concepts used in the discussions on epistemology which serve as a basis for further theological investigations. The first subchapter looks at the first division of knowledge into concepts (*taṣawwurāt*) and assents (*taṣdīqāt*). The second subchapter deals with the next layer, in which concepts and assents are divided into self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) and theoretical (*naẓarī*). The last subchapter looks at six types of self-evident assents that serve as building blocks of every inference (*qiyās*). In the books of *kalām,* this is where debates about skepticism occur. Although some of the above topics relate to logic, it is difficult to find a book of *kalām* authored by later theologians that do not include them.

Taftāzān'īs concise text in the *Tahdhīb al-manṭīq* will serve as a point of departure for the present and the following subchapters. He begins the investigation on logic with a twofold division:

> "In knowledge, if there is an affirmation (*idhʿān*) regarding a relation (*nisba*), then it is an assent (*taṣdīq*); if not, then it is a conception (*taṣawwur*). Both divide necessarily into that which is self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) and acquired (*iktisābī*)."[264]

With very few words, Taftāzānī encapsulates four discussions regarding assent, conception, their further division, and the topics of self-evident and acquired knowledge. Before we look at the different investigations, it is important to highlight a novelty in Taftāzān'īs expression.

Commentators and glossators of this text point out how Taftāzānī turned away from the commonly used term *idrāk* (perception) by using the word *idhʿān* (affirmation). He introduced a more concise expression with various benefits. Dawwānī, in his commentary on *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, says:

[264] *al-Tahdhīb*, 163.

> The author–may Allah be pleased with him–turned away from the famous expression which is: "The perception (*idrāk*) that the relation holds or does not hold" because imagination (*takhyīl*) is included since it is a perception of a relation that holds or does not hold. Similarly, doubt (*shakk*) and assumption (*wahm*) [are excluded].[265]

Khabīṣī (d. 1050/1641), who wrote a famous commentary on *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, adds:

> The author used "affirmation" (*idhʿān*) to shorten the expression and to establish the difference most clearly and concisely between perceiving the relation (*idrāk al-nisba*), which is from conception, and between affirming the relation (*idhʿān al-nisba*), which is from assent.[266]

Dasūqī, in his gloss on Khabīṣī, says further:

> "Affirming the relation" implies its perception but not vice versa because the connection of the affirmed either holds or does not. So it is more specific than the connection from the perception of the relation (*mutaʿalliq idrāk al-nisba*), which asserts the subject's predicate, i.e., its connection to it.
>
> In summary, every affirmation is a perception, but not every perception is an affirmation. Reflect on it.[267]

The commentators and glossators agree that Taftāzān'īs choice of "affirming the relation" instead of "perceiving the relation" has multiple benefits. It is concise and precise as it is more specific than perception. Additionally, it conveys the meaning of assertion, and by that, it excludes imagination, assumption, and doubt.

Describing the meaning of this novel term, Khabīṣī says:

> The meaning of "affirming the relation" (*idhʿān al-nisba*) is perceiving it insofar as the words submission (*taslīm*) and acceptance (*qabūl*) are used for it.
>
> According to this manner, as mentioned above, perception is called judgment (*ḥukm*). So assent, based on his definition, is the judgment only, which is the position of the *ḥukamāʾ*. Thus, it is simple (*baṣit*).[268]

According to Taftāzān'īs definition of assent (*taṣdīq*), which is "affirming the relation," there is no difference between it and a judgment (*ḥukm*). Furthermore, assent

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[265] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥā al-muḥaqqiq al-Dawwānī wa Mullā ʿAbd Allah al-Yazdī ʿalā Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2014), 102.
[266] *al-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya*, 110.
[267] *al-Majmūʿa al-manṭiqiyya*, 110 (Dasūqī).
[268] *al-Majmūʿa al-manṭiqiyya*, 105 (Khabīsī).

or judgment is simple as it is not a compound of various conceptions and something additional. This is the position of the *ḥukamāʾ* and contrary to the position of some later scholars, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in particular. Taftāzānī, explaining his position, says:

> The majority (*jumhūr*) is of the opinion that it [assent] is the judgment (*ḥukm*) and that it is a type of knowledge essentially different from conception (*taṣawwur*) as it only connects to relations. Unlike conceptions as they connect to it [relation] and other things. Do not you see that if you doubt the world's contingency, you conceptualize "the world," "contingent," and the relation between the two without judgment and assent? But when a proof (*burhān*) is established, you will grasp the relation differently, called judgment and assent. Its reality is the affirmation in one's self and one's acceptance of [the relations] occurrence or its non-occurrence (*li-wuqūʿ al-nisba aw lā wuqūʿ al-nisba*).[269]

Taftāzānī illustration explains the following: The proposition "The world is contingent" has three conceptions: "The world," "contingent," and the relation between the two. In a state of doubt, the last conception (i.e., the relation) is conceptualized without affirming or denying its occurrence. One only conceptualizes the relation between the two concepts without any judgment. So in this sense, the relationship is not a judgment but only a conception. Once there is evidence that the relation holds, the assent and judgment set in. Hence, conceptualizing the relation and affirming it is essentially different. That is why the judgment is simple, not a compound of the conceptions.

Other scholars, like Rāzī, believed that the assent is a compound of four conceptions while the judgment is an act (*fiʿl*) or an affect (*infiʿāl*).[270] The four conceptions are:

1. The conception of what is judged (*taṣawwur al-maḥkūm ʿalayhi*)
2. The conception of what is judged by (*taṣawwur al-maḥkūm bihi*)
3. The conception of the relation (*taṣawwur al-nisba al-ḥukmiyya*)
4. The conception which is the judgment (*al-taṣawwur alladhī huwa al-ḥukm)*[271]

[269] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 53.
[270] See: *al-Majmūʿa al-manṭiqiyya*, 112-122; *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 52-53.
[271] See: *al-Majmūʿa al-manṭiqiyya*, 118; Najm al-Dīn al-Khūnajī, Sharḥ kitāb Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn (Beirut, Dār al-Rayḥān, 2019) 90.

Irrespective of whether the judgment is an affect or an act, assent occurs whenever the four parts come together. Taftāzānī mentions that Rāz'īs position is not entirely clear as he sometimes puts the judgment in the category of acts (*afʿāl*) and other times refers to it as "inner speech" (*kalām nafsī*).[272] However, in his commentary on the *Shamsiyya,* Taftāzānī explicitly dismisses the position that the judgment is an act and says that it is an affirmation.

> (…) The truth is that the judgment is not an act but an affirmation (*idhʿān*) and acceptance (*qabūl*) of the relations occurrence or non-occurrence and the perception of it. (…) According to the *ḥukamāʿ*, it is called assent (*taṣdīq*).[273]

The second term Taftāzānī mentions in *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* is conception (*taṣawwur*). He says that conception is knowledge that has no judgment. This encompasses qualified subjects, like "rational animal" or "Zayd's servant." Both examples have a relation, but it does not convey a complete meaning. A relation can also convey a complete meaning without having a judgment, like a proposition in which there is doubt about the relation between the subject and the predicate, as we saw in the example above about the contingency of the world.[274]

The most controversial issue regarding conceptions was started by none other than Rāzī. That is why Taftāzānī dedicates most of the second subchapter of the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* to the discussion regarding Rāz'īs position that conceptions are always immediate (*ḍarūrī)*. The main text of *al-Maqāṣid* says:

> Imam [Rāzī] chose the position that what is obtained from conceptions is immediate (*ḍarūrī*) since acquiring them is impossible. As far as from the perspective of seeking them [it is impossible] because they are either unconditionally known (*maʿlūm muṭlaq*), so they cannot be sought; they are unconditionally unknown (*majhūl muṭlaq),* so it is impossible to turn one's attention to them; or they are known from one perspective without another, so it is not possible to seek something from two perspectives, unlike assents as they are sought by obtaining their conceptions.[275]

[272] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 53.
[273] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2016), 103.
[274] *al-Majmūʿ al-manṭiqiyya*, 125-126.
[275] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 56.

Rāz'īs position is mentioned in his *al-Muḥaṣṣal*.[276] But there are works in which Rāzī does not take this position, as is the case in his *Maʿālim fī uṣūl al-dīn.* However, since this opinion had such an impact, commentators on the *Maʿālim* still opened the investigation on this topic. Sharaf al-Dīn Tilmisānī (d. 658/1260), for example, in his commentary on this work, explains:

> Fakhr [al-Dīn al-Rāzī] claimed in his *al-Muḥaṣṣal* that all conceptions are known immediately (*ḍarūratan*). He [Rāzī] said: We do not mean that we necessarily (*bil-ḍarūra*) know all the concepts since reality opposes this. We only mean that everything we know as far as conceptions have been obtained immediately (*ḥāṣil bil-ḍarūra*) either through sense perception (*ḥiss*), intuition (*wijdān*), or pure reason (*maḥd al-ʿaql*). And a person may be favored with the conception of realities, but by Allah–Exalted is He–through an immediate knowledge of them.[277]

When Rāzī says that all concepts are necessary, he, according to Tilmisānī, does not mean to say that they are all already obtained in the mind since our experience contradicts this claim. However, one of the main consequences of this position is that definitions do not lead to the acquisition of new conceptions since they are already present in the mind.

Discussing this topic in detail would go beyond the scope of the present work as it needs a thorough and careful reading of Rāz'īs books and their commentaries. Our primary concern is Taftāzān'īs position. He follows the majority position and one of the arguments he and others mention is the following:

> We do not concede that when something is known from one perspective (*min wajh*), it is impossible to direct one's attention to the unknown perspective. It is only impossible if the known perspective–from its overall perspectives and mental conceptions (*iʿtibārātihi*)–is in a way that it does not take [the object of reflection] out from an unconditionally unknown (*majhūlan muṭlaqan*) state.[278]

Deflecting Rāz'īs position happens by not conceding to one of the premises mentioned earlier in his quote. The point of contention is not about what is unconditionally unknown, as it is not possible to reflect upon what is not known at all, as Taftāzānī

[276] See: Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī, *al-Muffaṣal fī sharḥ al-mullakhkhaṣ* (Amman: al-Aṣlayn, 2018), vol. 1, 58-59.
[277] *Sharḥ maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn*, 56.
[278] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 58.

admits. However, it is enough to know about the object of reflection from some perspective (*min wajhin mā*) to acquire knowledge about the unknown perspectives.[279] Throughout his discussion, Taftāzānī refers to Ījʾīs *al-Mawāqif* by sometimes quoting and other times correcting some of his expressions.[280] This is again an example of how later scholars continuously evaluated and refined earlier works.

After discussing assent and conception, we will now turn to the third discussion about the way we know the twofold division of knowledge. When Taftāzānī states that the division is self-evident (*ḍarūrī*), it follows that one can only call to attention (*tanbīh*) that this division holds. Although Taftāzānī offers lengthy arguments in his *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, he concludes that our intuition (*wijdān*) is sufficient to come to this conclusion since the evidence is more obscure (*akhfā*) than the result which is being proven.[281] This probably explains why he does not bother to present an inference for the division in his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* in which he suffices with the following:

> Both conception and assent divide into theoretical (*naẓarī*) and self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) since we find in ourselves that some conceptions and some assents need reflection (*naẓar*), like conceptualizing angels and *jinn*, or the assent that the world is contingent. At the same time, some do not need reflection, like conceptualizing existence and nothingness or assent to the law of excluded middle.[282]

Later scholars, like Ḥusayn b. Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Yazdī (d. 910/1505), in his commentary on *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, says about the statement that the division is self-evident: "It is a pointer (*ishāra*) that this division is *a priori* (*badīhī*) not in need of undergoing the hardship of inference, as some of the scholars did."[283] Dawwānī mentions in his commentary that it is "safer" (*aslam*) to refer to the *a priori* approach instead of burdening oneself with an inference.[284]

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[279] For more detailed discussion see: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 56-64; *al-Mufaṣṣal fī sharḥ al-muḥaṣṣal*, vol. 1, 58-68; Khūnajī, 94-99; Sharaf al-Dīn al-Tilmisānī, *Sharḥ Maʿālim uṣūl al-Dīn* (Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, no date), 56-60

[280] See for example: *Sharḥ al-mawāqif*, vol. 1, 58-59 and 61.

[281] *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 109-110.

[282] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 54.

[283] *Sharḥā al-tahdhīb*, 218.

[284] *Sharḥā al-tahdhīb*, 205.

3.4.6. Self-Evident Knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*)

After discussing knowledge, its twofold division, and how this division comes about, the following discussion turns to the subsequent twofold division of self-evident (*ḍarūrī*) and theoretical (*naẓarī*) knowledge, found in the earliest *Sunnī-kalām* books.[285] The aim is to show what conceptual tools later scholars use to discuss this division. Taftāzānī is noteworthy in this regard as his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* reveals a salient difference between two approaches among Sunnī theologians, especially the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs, which we will discuss in the following subchapter. One can be called objective-driven, in which discussions about epistemology focus on the main objectives of theology, substantiating the religious creeds. The second approach can be called scrutiny-driven, in which the epistemological discussions are more detailed and influenced by philosophy.

Before we delve into the main discussions, it is crucial to highlight that Taftāzānī, generally speaking, uses the words *ḍarūrī* and *badīhī* as well as *naẓarī* and *kasbī* interchangeably. If there is a more specific usage, he will point it out, or it becomes clear from the context. The following four examples illustrate this before moving on to a closer analysis. Since the next discussions revolve around the conceptual tools, which are very close in meaning, we will suffice with the Arabic terminology for the sake of clarity.

In a quote mentioned earlier from *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* he says: "Both conception and assent divide into *naẓarī* and *ḍarūrī*"[286] In a later passage, when he talks about the types of *ḍarūrī* knowledge he says: "*Ḍarūrī* knowledge is limited to six *badīhiyyāt.*"[287]
In this context, the word *badīhī* is more specific than *ḍarūrī.*
In his commentary on the Shamsiyya, he says:

> "*Naẓarī* is that which needs acquisition (*kasb*) and thinking (*fikr*). *Badīhī* is that which does not need it. (…) And *ḍarūrī* is synonymous with it. It could also be

[285] See: Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Ashʿarī* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2022), 59-60 and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (Istanbul: İSAM, 2019), 86-87.
[286] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 54.
[287] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 65.

> intended by it [*badīhī*]: That which does not need anything else after the mind has turned its attention to it. Hence, it is more specific than *ḍarūrī*."[288]

The usage here is the same as in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*. In his *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*, he says: "Both [conception and assent] divide by necessity into *ḍarūra* and *iktisāb* (…)."[289] In his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, he says: "*Ḍarūrī* might be said in contrast to *iktisābī* (…). It could also be said in contrast to *istidlālī*."[290] A few sentences earlier, in the same context, he says: "So *iktisābī* is more general than *istidlālī* (…). So every *istidlālī* is *iktisābī* and not vice versa."[291] Here he clarifies the usage and difference between *istidlālī* and *iktisābī.* Both can be said in contrast to *ḍarūrī,* although there is a more specific usage for *istidlālī.*

Here is a brief overview of the above quotes, which shows the various usages in the different works:

In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid: naẓarī* is contrary to *ḍarūrī*
In *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq: iktisābī* is contrary to *ḍarūrī*
In *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya: naẓarī* is contrary to *badīhī*
In *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid: iktisābī* is contrary to *ḍarūrī*

These examples illustrate that Taftāzānī generally uses the terms *ḍarūrī–badīhī* and *naẓarī–iktisābī* interchangeably. The following investigation will show that more specific usages will help map out the conceptual tools he and other theologians use. After this brief overview, we will now discuss the Māturīdī approach mentioned above and then turn to a detailed investigation of the terms.

3.4.7. The Māturīdī Approach

The point of departure for this chapter will be *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, as Taftāzānī discusses epistemological issues concisely in the introduction. In his other works, the same topics are discussed in different chapters. We will start with the main text by Abū Ḥafẓ

[288] *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 108.
[289] *al-Tahdhīb*, 166.
[290] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 127.
[291] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 127.

al-Nasafī and then look at Taftāzān'īs commentary. Further explanations and details will come from his other works and glosses.

Following a typical structure in the Māturīdī tradition, Nasafī begins with a famous and concise statement: "The people of reality say: The reality of things is verifiable, and the knowledge of them is certain, in contradiction to the Sophists."[292] These few words set the stage for the rest of the text as Nasafī moves from broad epistemological discussions (*mabadiʾ*) to rational arguments for the existence of a creator (*ilāhiyyāt*) and truthfulness of the Messengers (*nubuwwāt*) to creedal matters based on transmission (*samʿiyyāt*). From an epistemological perspective, the structure is significant as it moves from general questions about knowledge to the reliability of textual evidence that yields certainty or high probability.
Nasafī begins the section on epistemology by saying:

> The means to knowledge for created beings are three: Sound sense perception, true report, and reason. The senses are five: hearing, seeing, smelling, taste, and touch. By each of these senses, one is informed concerning that for which it is appointed.
>
> The true report (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*) is of two kinds. One of the two is the successively transmitted report (*al-khabar al-mutawātir*) established upon the tongues of people of whom it is inconceivable that they would agree on falsehood. It brings about immediate knowledge (*ʿilm ḍarūrī*), like the knowledge of former kings in past times and distant countries.
>
> The second is the report of a Messenger aided by an evidentiary miracle (*muʿjiza*). It brings about deductive knowledge (*ʿilm istidlālī*), and the knowledge established by it resembles the knowledge established by necessity in certainty and reliability.
>
> As for the intellect (*ʿaql*): It is also a means to knowledge. Whatever of it, if it is established *a priori* (*badīha*), is necessary (*ḍarūrī*), like the knowledge that the whole of a thing is greater than its part. And whatever is established by deduction (*istidlāl*) is acquired (*iktisābī*).[293]

Nasaf'īs account is, at least on a surface level, self-explanatory and easy to map out. Taftāzān'īs explanation begins with the definitions for knowledge, which were discussed in an earlier chapter. He then mentions that limiting the means of knowledge

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[292] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 85.
Attas: "The People of Reality–may Allāh honor them forever!–say: The realities of things are established in their existence, and the knowledge of them is certain in contradiction to the Sophists." 65.
Elder: "The People of Reality say that the real essences of things exist in reality and that the knowledge of them is verifiable as real in contradiction to the Sophists." 5.

[293] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 87. Alternative translation: Elder, 15.

to three is by *istiqrāʾ* (induction). Glossators explain that the induction is as follows: "If there were other categories, then it would have been found by investigation. But this is invalid, and so is the antecedent."[294] Scholars also agree that a division based on induction only yields presumptive knowledge (*ẓannī*) since different categories are rationally possible.[295]

Next, Taftāzānī explains the account for the threefold classification (*wajh al-ḍabt*): "If the means to knowledge is external, then it is the true report; if not, it is an organ (*ālah*) distinct from the perceptive faculty (*mudrik*), which is sense perception; if not, then it is the intellect."[296]

As discussed earlier, the senses are only a means for the perception of particulars (*juzʾiyyāt*), the intellect is the means to perceive universals (*kullīyyāt*), and the self is the locus of perception (*mudrik*).

After explaining the text, Taftāzānī mentions a possible objection, which states that the means to knowledge are more than three, like the internal perception (*wijdān),* intuition (*ḥads*), experience (*tajriba*), the reflection of the mind (*naẓar al-ʿaql).*[297] Taftāzān'īs answer is significant as it relates to two different approaches theologians took:

> We say: This is according to the method (*ʿādah*) of the *mashāykh,* who limited themselves to the objections and avoided the minute [investigations] of the *falāsifa.* When they [*mashāykh*] found that some of the things perceived were obtained after using the external senses about which there is no doubt–whether in rational beings or non-rational beings–they, therefore, made the senses one of the means.
>
> Since most of the things known about religion are derived from true reports, they made it another means. And since they were not positive about the internal senses called common sense (*ḥiss mushtarak*), the estimative faculty (*wahm*), or others. Because there was no aim for them in the details about intuition, experience, the self-evident, and reflection since all of these go back to reason, they made it a third means. [Reflection] leads to knowledge merely by directing one's attention, combining it with intuition or experience, or arranging the premises. So they made reason–even if in some instances it is aided by sense perception–the means to

[294] *al-Ḥawāshī,* vol. 1, 45 (Jundī).
[295] See: *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 372.
[296] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 113. Elder, 17.
[297] See: *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 114; Elder, 17.

> knowledge in that we have hunger and thirst, that the whole is greater than the part, that the light of the moon is derived from the sun, that scammony is laxative, and that the world is originated.[298]

Some glossers say that Taftāzānī is referring to the early scholars whenever he uses the term *mashāykh* in his commentary.[299] But it is more convincing that Taftāzānī is actually referring to the Ḥanafīs/Māturīdīs, as Biqāʿī in his gloss points out.[300] Taftāzān'īs commentary has enough indicators that solidify this claim. For example, in the discussion on *takwīn*, Taftāzānī refers to the scholars who affirmed the attribute of *takwīn* as *mashāykh.*[301] After finishing his discussion on the *tanzīhiyyāt,* he very briefly mentions the arguments the Ḥanafī scholars usually use and refers to them as *mashāykh.*[302] Therefore, it is more convincing that Taftāzānī in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* is using this word specifically for the Ḥanafī/Māturīdī scholars.

Let us return to Taftāzān'īs observation about the method of some scholars. It shows that theologians did have the distinction of *mabādiʾ* and *maqāṣid* in mind and that they put different emphasis on the *mabādiʾ*, even among Ashʿarī scholars, like Ghazālī, who delved deeply into the works of philosophy. Still, he put limits on himself when writing his *Iqtiṣād fil-iʿtiqād*. One of his statements reads as a general principle for the book: "Everything that does not negate our objective, we do to occupy ourselves with it."[303] Regarding epistemological investigations, he says in the introduction:

> "Know that the methods of proof ramify. We mentioned some of them in the book *The Touchstone of Theorization* (*Miḥakk al-naẓar*) and discussed them elaborately in *The Standard of Knowledge* (*Miʿyār al-ʿilm*). In this book, however, we stay away from dead-end paths and obscure trails, aiming at clarity, inclining towards brevity, and avoiding long-windedness. We confine ourselves to three methods."[304]

So when Taftāzānī says that the *mashāykh* avoid the minute scrutiny of the *falāsifa,* he highlights a feature in the Māturīdī tradition in particular, but also an approach that

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[298] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 114; Elders, 17-18.

[299] Elders in his translation used the word *early theologians* for the term *mashāykh* which is closer to an interpretation than translation since *scholars* would be more appropriate. (See: Elders, 17.)

[300] Biqāʾī, 211.

[301] See: *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 195.

[302] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 158

[303] *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 134.

[304] *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*, 115; Moderation of Belief, 14-15;

can be found among theologians in general. We can refer to it as the objective-driven approach. Later works by Māturīdī scholars affirm Taftāzān'īs claim as they remained with the threefold distinction instead of investigating and dividing them further.[305] Later Ashʿarī scholars, on the other hand, included many philosophical discussions to the point that Taftāzānī said that *kalām* and philosophy became indistinguishable, as he mentioned in his historical account. This can be referred to as the scrutiny approach. The following chapters will investigate this approach since Taftāzānī is part of the later Ashʿarī tradition and delved into the deeper philosophical questions.

3.4.8. *Ḍarūriyyāt* in the Books of Logic and *Kalām*

Taftāzān'īs commentary above shows how the other means of knowledge are included in the threefold division. He only points to them by giving examples but does not investigate them further. For more details, it is necessary to look into his books on logic and *kalām*. But before we move on to the details, it is important to highlight the difference between the ways he discusses the same topic in two different sciences.

In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* he mentions the following: "*Ḍarūrī* knowledge is limited to six *badīhiyyāt*."[306] After enumerating and defining them, he begins a lengthy discussion on skepticism,[307] which we will turn to later. The six *badīhiyyāt* are also mentioned concisely at the end of his *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq,* and a detailed investigation is found in his *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*.[308] A significant difference between the two detailed discussions in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* and *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* is that in the latter, he does not take skeptics as the interlocutor as he does in the former. His logic book only discusses how fallacies (*mughālaṭāt*) occur: "The reasons for fallacies are many. Some relate to the words (*lafẓ*), and some relate to the meaning (*maʿan*)."[309] In *al-Maqāṣid,* he does not speak about the reasons for fallacies but about "the deniers (*munkirūn*)," some of which reject sense perception, first principles, or both.[310] The beginning of his commentary on *al-Maqāṣid* clarifies the reason for discussing *ḍarūriyyat*: "Since

[305] See for example: *Tabṣira al-adilla, al-iʿtimād fil-iʿtiqād,* and *al-Kifāya fil-hidāya*.
[306] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 65.
[307] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 70-78.
[308] *al-Tahdhīb,* 215; *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 372-377.
[309] *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 382.
[310] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 70; 73 and 76.

theoretical knowledge (*ʿulūm naẓariyya*) goes back to self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), they made establishing it and answering the deniers part of the principles of theology (*mabādiʾ al-kalām*)."[311]

The brief comparison shows that although the same topic, that is, the six *ḍarūriyyāt,* are discussed, the objective of the science dictates the manner of discussion and need of them. *Kalām* aims to establish religious beliefs based on certain evidence. So Taftāzānī, insofar he is a Sunnī theologian, has the objective of proofing his religious beliefs by showing that they go back to *ḍarūrīyyāt*. The first interlocutor he has are the skeptics who partially or fully deny the possibility of attaining certainty.[312] In the books on logic, Taftāzānī is a logician insofar as he is investigating the sound method of reflection. One of the commentators on *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* introduces the section on inference (*qiyās*) in which the *ḍarūriyyāt* are discussed with the following:

> Since the aim of logic is to distinguish sound reflection from the wrong one, and since this distinction revolves around knowing both the forms of reflection (*ṣūrat al-fikr*) and its matter (*mawādduhu*), he dedicated a chapter to the clarification of the matters of the inferences.[313]

The objective of Taftāzān'īs discussion on the *ḍarūrīyyāt* as a logician is different from his discussion of the same topic as a Sunnī theologian. This solidifies the finding in the chapter about the commentary tradition. Just as Taftāzānī as a *shāriḥ* of a Māturīdī text is concerned with explaining the main text on its own terms, he describes a science, in this case, logic, according to its aims and method (*ʿādah*) of its scholars and tradition. Similarly, the perspective he is writing differs insofar as he is a theologian arguing against skeptics and interlocutors who have contrary positions to Sunnī beliefs. As a logician, he is concerned with sound reflection, so he has no interlocutor as he does in *kalām*. Although this observation might appear obvious, it needs to be highlighted as it explains some of the statements Taftāzānī makes in the

[311] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 65.

[312] At this stage most of the theological schools are in agreement about the most basic premises that achieving certasingy is possible. The next question is what means yield certainty which already leads to a difference of opinion even among Muslim scholars. The Shiʿa, for example, would add an infallible imām to the list which others do not accept.

[313] Aḥmad al-Maḥallī, *Tanwīr al-mashriq sharḥ Tahdhīb al-manṭiq* (Istanbul: Dār al-Shāmiyya, 2022), 446.

introduction of the *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* in which he mentions the ten intellects and appears to be affirming them, at least on a surface level.[314] However, in his *Tahdhīb al-kalām,* he explicitly argues against them.[315] It shows that the position of a scholar should be taken from the relevant book and context.

Knowing that Taftāzānī deals with the same topic differently depending on the objective of a science, we can now turn to the types of *ḍarūrī* knowledge in the manner in which it is relevant to the *kalām* discourse.

3.4.9. Types of *ḍarūrī* Knowledge

Epistemological discussions, especially on *ḍarūrī* knowledge, should be analyzed in the context of skepticism. Although there are internal debates between Muslim scholars about the validity or degree of some of the channels of knowledge, the main interlocutors are always different types of skeptics. Taftāzānī approaches this topic from different angles in his books. Still, the typical structure is that he first establishes the position of Sunnī theologians and then deals with the objections. So this will be the first aim of this chapter.

In the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* after discussing the three different forms of skepticism, he says: "We have a verified position (*lanā taḥqīq*)."[316] Glossers explain that this statement aims to establish the thing in itself (*fī nafs al-amr*) and not to refute or convince the skeptic, which is impossible anyway, as Taftāzānī acknowledges later in the text. Jandī says in this context:

> His statement: {**We have a verified position.**} means that we have real evidence and true premises in accordance with reality itself, even if it is not real and true, according to and contested by the opponent. Thus, the objective of it is to disclose the truth and not to coerce the opponent.[317]

[314] *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 94-95
[315] *al-Tahdhīb*, 309-311.
[316] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 110.
[317] (*Dalīlan ḥaqqan ṣādiq al-muqaddimāt bi-ḥasab nafs al-amr). Ḥawāshī,* vol. 1, 36. A similar comment comes from ʿIṣām al-Dīn al-Isfarāʾīnī. (See: *Ḥawāshī,* vol 4, 51.)

The skepticism in its different forms either does not affirm or negate anything about reality or denies the possibility of knowing reality as it is. The famous glosser Khayālī explains that the objectives of the skeptics, especially the Agnostics (*lā-adriyya*), is not to affirm or negate anything but to cause doubt.[318] Theologians, on the other hand, have a claim about reality and affirm the possibility of attaining certain knowledge, which is what the famous statement in Nasaf'īs text says: "The people of reality say: The reality of things is verifiable, and the knowledge of them is certain in contradiction to the Sophists."[319] So Taftāzān'īs following statement in the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* should be read in light of the most fundamental premise of Muslim theologians (and other non-skeptics) that knowledge of the realities is possible. "Since theoretical knowledge (*ʿulūm naẓariyya*) goes back to self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), they made establishing it and answering the deniers part of the principles of theology (*mabādiʾ al-kalām*)."[320] He continues to enumerate the *badīhiyyāt* and to define them before moving on to discuss the objections by the skeptics.

Taftāzānī says that *ḍarūrī* knowledge is limited to six *badīhiyyāt,* which are: *awwaliyyāt*, *mushāhadāt*, *fiṭriyyāt*, *mujarrabāt, mutawātirāt* and *ḥadsiyyāt.*[321] The following translation is from his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* in which he explains them.

> *Badīhiyyāt*–called *awwaliyyāt*[322]–are propositions in which the mind (*ʿaql*) judges just by conceptualizing the two terms, like the judgment that one is the half of two or that a body cannot be at two places at the same time. The mind might hesitate [to judge] due to the lack of conception of the two terms, like our statement: equal things to one thing are equal, or hesitate due to a deficiency by nature, as it is the case with children and feebleminded, or due to the pollution of the natural state (*fiṭra*) by contradicting beliefs, as is the case with the ignorant or because Allah does not create it [knowledge in the person], based on the opinion of the school.[323]
>
> *Mushāhadāt* are propositions in which the mind judges by means of the external senses, which are called *ḥissiyyāt,* like "the sun is radiating" or "fire is hot." [Or the intellect judges by means of] the internal senses and is called *wijdāniyyāt,* like

[318] See: *al-Majmūʿ*, 106 (Khayālī).

[319] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 85.

[320] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 65.

[321] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 65. In *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* and *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq,* he uses slightly different terminology which do not have any effect on the meaning. In *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya: awwaliyyāt, mushāhadāt, ḥadsiyyāt, qaḍāyā allatī qiyāsātahuhā maʿhā, mutawātirāt,* and *mujarrabāt* (see *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya*, 373). In *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq*: *awwaliyyāt, mushāhadāt, tajribiyyāt, ḥadsiyyāt, mutawātirāt,* and *naẓariyyāt* (see: *al-Tahdhīb,* 215).

[322] Note that *awwaliyyāt* are also called *badīhiyyāt*. There is general meaning for *badīhiyyāt* in the sense that *ḍarūrī* knowledge has six *badīhiyyāt*, and a specific meaning that it is one of the six *badīhiyyāt* called *awwaliyyā.*

[323] He is referring to the ahl al-Sunna position.

> the judgment that we have fear or are angry. From them are also what we find in ourselves without bodily organs, like the sense of ourselves or our states. The judgment through the senses is particular because it only yields that this [particular] fire is hot. In contrast, the judgment that every fire is hot is a judgment of the mind obtained with the aid of the senses through the particular instances of that judgment and understanding its cause.
>
> *Fiṭriyyāt* are propositions in which the mind judges by an intermediary (*wāsiṭah*) that does not slip [the mind] throughout the conception of the two terms. And that meaning [which does not slip the mind throughout the conception] is a concomitant matter included in the proposition. That is why it is called "propositions that contain their syllogisms" (*qaḍāyā qiyāsatuhā maʿahā*), like the judgment that four is an even number because it divides into two equal parts.
>
> *Mujarrabāt* are propositions in which the mind judges by adding repeated observation to it and adding the hidden syllogism leading to certainty, which is that the repeated observation, in the same manner, has to have a cause even if its essence is not known. So every time the cause's existence is known, its effect is known with certainty, like the judgment that scammony purges bile.
>
> *Mutawātirāt* are propositions in which the intellect judges by means of a high number of witnesses so high that collusion on a lie becomes impossible, and what they witnessed is something possible based on visual perception. So the reports are added to the mind, and a hidden syllogism is added to the proposition: "if this judgment was not true, then this group of people would not have reported it."
>
> *Ḥadsiyyāt* are propositions in which the intellect judges with a strong intuition from the soul through which doubt ceases, and certainty is attained by observing indicators (*qarāʾin*), like the judgment that the light of the moon is coming from the sun due to what we see as far as different shapes of its light depending on its position to the sun. (…) It resembles the *mujarrabāt* in its repeated observation and its accompanying the hidden syllogism. However, the cause of the *mujarrabāt* is known, unlike its essence. In the *ḥadsiyyāt,* both are known, but their attainment is by intuition and not thinking (*fikr*). If it were the case [that it was through thinking], it would have been from the acquired knowledge.[324]

The division is based on the idea that the mind (*ʿaql*) can either judge independently (*awwaliyyāt*) or require additional means. This addition is either an external sense perception (*mushāhadāt*), a hidden inference (*fiṭriyyāt* and *ḥadsiyyāt*), or both (*mujarrabāt* and *mutawātirāt*).[325]

Taftāzānī mentions another twofold division which goes back to Rāzī, who suffices with the *badīhiyyāt* and *ḥissiyyāt* as they encompass all the others. Although Rāzī mentions the *wijdāniyyāt* as a third category, he does not consider them because of the little benefit they bring in the context of scientific investigation and the requirement to be intersubjective.[326] According to Ibn Yaʿqūb, the six-fold division is the position of

[324] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 66-67.
[325] See: Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 42.
[326] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 68.

the majority of scholars (*jumhūr*).[327] Taftāzānī discusses the difference between the twofold and sixfold division and concludes that it is a terminological difference (*nizāʿ lafẓī*) resulting from the varying interpretations of the term *ḍarūrī* as something that does not depend on means (*wāsiṭah*) at all, or that which we are compelled to know (*muḍṭarrīn ʿalayh*).[328] Note that there is a difference between the difference of opinion just mentioned and the Māturīdī approach in limiting the means to knowledge. The discussion among Ashʿarī scholars falls under the category of minute philosophical investigations, which the Māturīdī scholars avoid. So even if scholars like Rāzī reach a lesser number of *badīhiyyāt,* it is a result of their philosophical inquiry. Māturīdīs, on the other hand, suffice with a lesser number without the minute inquiry and the attempt to reach a verified position in the matter. In other words, there is a difference between limiting the numbers of *badīhiyyāt* due to philosophical inquiry and limiting the numbers because one suffices with that which serves the objective.

To get a deeper understanding of the *badīhiyyāt* above, it is helpful to investigate how the skeptics 'objections are answered. The glossators of *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* offer insightful explanations to Taftāzān'īs answers against the skeptic's objections. So the following paragraph will look at the skeptic's account presented by Taftāzānī, followed by his answer and additional statements from the glosses.

There are several instances in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* in which objections from the Sophists are mentioned. The first instance is at the beginning of the text, in which Nasafī affirms the reality of things "contrary to the sophists." Taftāzānī presents this objection:

> They say: From the types of immediate knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*) are sense perceptions (*ḥissiyyāt*), but sense perception might err a lot, like the cross-eyed who sees one to be two, and of the bilious who finds the sweet bitter. And some of them are first principles (*badīhiyyāt*), but these might be subject to differences of opinion and are susceptible to uncertainties for the solving of which there is a need for subtle reflections. The reflections (*naẓariyyāt*) branch off from the immediate knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), and the corruption of [the immediate knowledge] is the corruption of [the knowledge by reflection]. That is why many differences occurred among the right-minded people (*ikhtilāf al-ʿuqalāʾ*).[329]

[327] See: Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 44.
[328] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 69.
[329] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 110; Elders, 13-14.

Two arguments in this passage are directed at *ḍarūriyyāt* and two at the *naẓariyyāt*. Before we discuss them, it is noteworthy to highlight which of the six *badīhiyyāt* are targeted. In the gloss by ʿIṣām al-Dīn, he says:

> He only presented the sense perceptions (*ḥissiyyāt*) and first principles (*badīhiyyāt*) from the foundations of reflection (*mabādiʾ al-naẓariyyāt*) as they are the most obvious of them. So to nullify confidence (*irtifāʿ al-amān*) in them necessitates nullifying confidence in the rest of them even more so.[330]

We saw earlier how the six *badīhiyyāt* are either the intellect independent of anything else or with the addition of the senses. So if the skeptics successfully eliminate confidence in the intellect and sense perception, all the other *badīhiyyāt* will also be affected.

We return to the analysis of the skeptic's arguments. Farhāri, in his gloss, summarizes them and highlights their main points. About the first, which is directed at sense perception (*ḥissiyyāt*), he says:

> This spurious argument (*shubha*) results in the senses making mistakes in some circumstances, known by agreement from both parties. So the confidence in the senses has been nullified, and there is no certainty in that which is perceived by the senses anymore since the senses can make a mistake.[331]

The second argument relates to the difference that occurs in the sense perception:

> The result of this spurious argument is that one of the two parties does not know the first principle (*badīhī*), so this revokes the confidence in first principles (*badīhiyyāt*) due to the possible mistake in claiming that it is the first principle.[332]

The third argument is that the need for subtle reflections to affirm that something is immediate knowledge is self-defeating. "The result is that the need for subtle reflections (*naẓariyyāt khafiyya*) contradicts something self-evident. Furthermore, a

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[330] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 4, 55 (ʿIṣām).
[331] *al-Nibrās*, 68.
[332] *al-Nibrās*, 68.

mistake may happen in solving the issue, so confidence in first principles is eliminated."[333]

The last objection relates to reflection, which the following chapter will deal with in more detail. Briefly stated: If reflection leads to the truth (*ḥaqq*), then there would not be any difference of opinion. However, the reflection of the different sects led them to various conclusions. Therefore, reflection does not lead to the truth. Hence, it cannot convey certainty about the conclusion.[334]

Taftāzānī answers the objections with the following:

> We say: The error that may occur in the sense perception (*ghalaṭ al-ḥiss*) because of particular causes does not negate the certainty (*jazm*) in them in other instances. The difference of opinion concerning immediate knowledge (*badīhī*) due to lack of acquaintance or subtlety of the conception does not negate the immediacy (*badāhā*). The many differences of opinion due to unsound reflections (*li-fasād al-anẓār*) do not negate the validity of some reflections.[335]

Taftāzānī acknowledges the possibility of error regarding sense perception and immediate knowledge, but he does not generalize particular instances to the point that both are entirely nullified. Although Taftāzānī offers these answers, he acknowledges that they will not convince the skeptic. So he says: "The truth is that there is no way to have a debate with them, especially with the agnostics (*lā-adriyya*), since they do not acknowledge anything known (*maʿlūm*) to establish something unknown (*majhūl*)."[336]

Jandī comments and says: "His statement {**The truth**} is a pointer that what has been mentioned before as far as verification (*taḥqīq*) and implication (*ilzām*) are not complete (*lā yatimm*)."[337] At the beginning of this chapter, the position of the Theologians was presented in the manner Taftāzānī formulated it. He referred to it as the "verified position" (*lanā taḥqīq*). Next, he mentioned the implication of the

[333] *al-Nibrās*, 69.
[334] See: *al-Nibrās*, 70.
[335] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 110-111.
[336] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 111.
[337] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 39 (Jandī).

skeptics 'position. As Jandī says, the point is that neither the verified position nor the implications of what the skeptics say will bear fruits in a debate with them, especially not with the agnostics. The idea that the evidence is not complete in their case (*lā yatimmu ʿalayhim*)[338] relates to the possibility of bringing an argument back to the self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), which is not possible in the case of the skeptics since the point of contention is the self-evident knowledge. Based on objective reality (*fī nafs al-amr*), the evidence is complete, but since they deny it is incomplete in their case. That is why Taftāzānī concludes that it is not possible to debate with them as they do not affirm anything that is known from the self-evident knowledge to affirm something that is unknown.

Taftāzānī discusses another objection by the skeptics in a later passage in the context of certain knowledge imparted by *mutawātir* reports.

> If it is said: In the case of self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*), there is no discrepancy or difference of opinion. However, we find that the knowledge of one being half of two is stronger than the knowledge that Alexandria exists. And as far as *mutawātir:* Some of the sound-minded (*ʿuqalāʾ*) have denied that it does not impart knowledge, like the *Sumaniyya* and the Brahmans.[339]

The objection argues that if there are various categories of self-evident knowledge, there should not be any discrepancy in its strength of imparting certain knowledge. In other words, if something is self-evident, then there should not be varying degrees between them or between people. Taftāzānī answers with the following:

> We say: This is not conceded (*mamnūʿ*). Instead, there is a discrepancy between the various types of self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*) due to the discrepancy [between people] in acquaintance (*ilf*), habits (*ʿāda*), practice (*mumārasa*), calling to mind (*ikhṭār bil-bāl*), and conceptualizing the terms of judgments (*taṣawwurāt aṭrāf al-ḥukm*). The difference might even occur due to arrogance (*mukābara*) and stubbornness (*ʿinād*), as is the case with the sophists regarding all the self-evident knowledge.[340]

Taftāzānī rejects the argument's main premise, acknowledges the discrepancy between the types of self-evident knowledge, and gives several reasons for their occurrence.

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[338] See: *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 110.
[339] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 120.
[340] *Sharḥ al-ʿāqāʾid*, 120.

Muḥammad b. Ḥamīd al-Kafawī (d. 1175/1762), in his gloss, mentions an insightful comment and discloses an important aspect:

> We do not concede the impossibility of difference and discrepancy unconditionally between what is self-evident (*ḍarūrī*). [No discrepancy] is only the case in self-evident knowledge that has no means (*lā sabab lahā*), like the whole being bigger than its part. The immediacy of that which has a means is only perceived by someone who has a share in its means (*man shāraka fī sababihi*), like the sweetness of this food. So its immediacy is only perceived by one who has a share in its means which is its taste.[341]

Kafawī explains that the discrepancy between the different types of self-evident knowledge is due to their means (*sabab*) added to the intellect. Only the first principles (*awwaliyyāt* or *badīhiyyāt*) are judgments from the intellect independent from any other means. The others, however, presuppose the existence of the means in the knower. In the case of sense perception, for example, one only has immediate knowledge of sweetness when the means to it exist, which is the ability to taste. The same is the case for experience (*tajrībiyyāt*). For example, the immediate knowledge of the sun rising in the east only sets in with the repeated experience of the sun rising through the means of eyesight. That is why Taftāzānī acknowledges the discrepancy between the types of self-evident knowledge and points out that they occur due to different reasons.

The last two reasons, arrogance (*mukābara*) and stubbornness (*ʿinād*) are attitudes that some glossators define.

> *Mukābara* is debating a scientific topic without the intention to show what is correct but to coerce the opponent and to show one's own virtue.
>
> *ʿInād* is a debate without knowledge of what one says and what the opponent says to coerce the opponent into leaving his opinion.[342]

Taftāzānī mentions the skeptics as an example of these two attitudes, which is why he ultimately says that debating them is not fruitful.

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[341] *Fatḥ*, 241-242 (footnote 6).
[342] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 53 (Jandī); *al-Majmūʿa*, 138 (Ramaḍān).

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF EVIDENCE (*DALĪL*)

From the 5th/11th century onwards, Islamic Theology was based on the epistemological standard of philosophy. Muslim scholars understood the Islamic creed and its entirety of classical theology as a scientific theology.[343] Within this theological system, there is a division of labor in which the science of *kalām* lays the foundation for all the other Islamic sciences. In light of the concept of evidence, this division helps us to situate the present investigation. Ghazālī, in his famous work *al-Mustaṣfā,* presents how theology (*kalām*) is located within the hierarchy of the Islamic sciences.

> Know that the sciences are divided into natural sciences, such as medicine, mathematics, and geometry–which for our purposes are not included here–and religious sciences, such as *kalām*, *fiqh*, and its principles; the sciences of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*, and the science of inner matters, by which I mean the science of the heart and its purification from vile conduct. The natural and religious sciences are further divided into universal and particular [sciences].
>
> The universal science from among the religious disciplines is theology. But other sciences, such as jurisprudence, its principles, *ḥadīth*, and *tafsīr*, are particular. For a *mufassir* concentrates only on the meaning of the Book specifically; a *muḥaddith* focuses only on the ways of establishing *ḥadīth* in particular; a *faqīh* looks exclusively at the rules about the acts of the loci of obligation; an *uṣūlī* is attentive to only the principles of the Sharīʿa rules in particular. Now, the *mutakallim* is the one who inquires into the most general of things, namely existence.[344]

Ghazālī then explains how the theologians divide existence into the eternal and the originated, prove the existence of God, what is necessary, impossible, and possible concerning Him and His attributes, the rational possibility for Him to send messengers, and demonstrate their truthfulness through miracles (*muʿjizāt*).[345] He continues and says:

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[343] See: Bakker, 627.

[344] Aḥmad Zakī Mansūr Ḥammād, *Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazāl'īs Juristic Doctrine in al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl* (Chicago, P.h. D. Thesis, 1987), vol 2, 311.
https://www.ghazali.org/books/azhmd-p1.pdf
See original: *al-Mustaṣfa*, 6.

[345] Ḥammād, 311; *al-Mustaṣfā, 6.*

> Here, the discussion of the *mutakallim* ends, and the influence of reason stops. Thus, reason can lead one to the truthfulness of the Prophet but then abdicates itself, acknowledging that it receives with acceptance from the Prophet what he says concerning Allah, the Last Day, and other things that reason cannot independently comprehend nor determine its impossibility. For the *Sharīʿa* may come with that which reason falls short of knowing independently because reason does not independently know that obedience is a cause for bliss in the Hereafter and that disobedience is a cause for misery. Yet it cannot decide upon its impossibility either.
>
> Furthermore, it necessarily concludes the truth of him [the Prophet], whose truthfulness has been demonstrated by miracles. So when the Prophet speaks on His behalf, reason attests to it this way. This, then, is the content of the science of *kalām*.
>
> Now you know from this that the inquiry of the theologian begins with the most general of subjects, namely existence. He then gradually descends into the details we have mentioned and establishes the principles of the other religious sciences, such as the Book and the Sunna, and the truth of the Prophet.
>
> Thus, a *mufassir* takes a particular subject from the totality of the *mutakallim*'*s* inquiry, namely the Book, and looks into its commentary. Similarly, the *muḥaddith* takes on a particular [subject], the Sunna, and discusses the manners of its establishment. The *faqīh* takes one particular subject, the aft of the locus of obligation, and then examines its relation to the *Sharīʿa* address as far as obligation, prohibition, and lawfulness [are concerned]. The *uṣūlī* takes one particular aspect, which is the statements of the Prophet–whose truthfulness has been demonstrated by the mutakallim–then inquires into how it conveys the rules, either through their explicit, implicit, or logical meanings and extractions. The inquiry of the jurist does not go beyond the utterances of the Messenger–peace be upon him–and his actions, for even the Book of Allah he hears only by his word. *Ijmāʿ*, too, is established based on his words.
>
> Now, the sources are only the Book, the Sunna, and *ijmāʿ*. The truthfulness and validity of the statements of the Prophet are established in the science of *kalām*, which undertakes to establish the principles of all the religious science, which are therefore particular relative to *kalām*. Therefore, *kalām* is the highest-ranking science, so to arrive at these details, one must start with it.[346]

Analyzing Ghazāl'īs explanation in light of evidence leads to the following: Theologians rationally prove the existence of God and the truthfulness of His Messenger. Both have to be based on rational evidence without recourse to textual evidence (Quran, Sunnah, and *ijmāʿ);* otherwise, one would end up in a vicious circle. After the truthfulness of the Messenger is proven, the religious texts become additional sources of knowledge and are analyzed and used in other Islamic sciences. In other words, the theologian's task is to lift the textual evidence for the other Islamic sciences to the degree of self-evident knowledge. That is why Taftāzānī, in his gloss on Īj'īs commentary on *Mukhtaṣar al-muntahā al-usūlī,* says in the discussion on the theological foundations (*al-mabādiʾ al-kalāmiyya*):

[346] Ḥammād, 311-313; *al-Mustaṣfā,* 7-8.

> In the section on the theological foundations, he did not mention anything that relates to the knowledge of Allah, the truthfulness of the Messenger, and the evidence in the miracle since all of it is on the level of self-evident knowledge (*badīhī*) from the perspective of the *uṣūlī*.[347]

This outlook is not limited to the *uṣūlī*. What Taftāzānī says applies to all Muslim scholars. For example, when the scholar of *tafsīr* investigates the meanings of the Quran, he does not ask if the Quran is a valid source of knowledge because it is taken for granted since it is proven by the theologian. So looking from the perspective of evidence and epistemology in general, the questions a theologian asks are more general than those in other sciences. For example, a theologian might ask: What are the means to knowledge? What proves the truthfulness of the Messenger? Do his statements impart certain knowledge?

These are not questions scholars of other Islamic sciences deal with. For them, it is not a matter of debate if the Quran and the statements of the Messenger impart knowledge. It is a given that they do. So their concern with textual evidence is principles that help to govern, for example, chains of narrations going back to the Messenger, as with scholars of *ḥadīth*. If a chain of narration is traced back, a jurist will investigate what ruling could be extracted from that particular report. Just as Ghazālī describes, the task of a theologian concerning religion in general and evidence, in particular, is much broader than that of scholars in other Islamic sciences.

There is another crucial task theologians have to deal with. It relates to the following statement of Ghazālī:

> Because the *Sharīʿa* may come with that, which reason falls short of knowing independently because reason does not independently know that obedience is a cause for bliss in the Hereafter and that disobedience is a cause for misery. Yet it cannot decide upon its impossibility either.[348]

Another task of theologians is to investigate if something is rationally necessary, impossible, or possible to make room for textual evidence. Ghazālī gives an example that shows that when the mind deems something possible, further evidence becomes

[347] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 103.
[348] Ḥammād, 312, *al-Mustaṣfā*, 7.

necessary. So the mind can not independently know how acts are being judged in relation to the hereafter. It cannot say that it is necessary nor impossible that obedience in the form of observing prayer, for example, will be rewarded in the afterlife. This applies to all human acts, according to Sunnī theology.[349] That is why textual evidence is needed even with regard to belief. That is what Taftāzānī points out at the beginning of his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*:

> Know that of the religious judgments (*aḥkām sharʿiyya*), there are some which relate to practice and are called branches (*farʿiyya*) and practical (*ʿamaliyya*), and there are others that relate to belief and are called foundational (*aṣliyya*) and creedal (*iʿtiqādiyya*).[350]

Jandī says about the division:

> His statement {**Know that of the religious judgments**} meaning that which is taken from the Sharia, like the Quran, Sunnah, and consensus, regardless if it is assumed to be observed without the affirmation of it relying on [the Sharia] and in which the intellect is independent, like most of the theological topics (*masāʾil kalāmiyya*). Or to be affirmed insofar as the mind is not independent in affirming it and for which it has no way to establish except through the revelation (*sharʿ*), like the topics clarified in *fiqh*.
>
> We only said "like most of the theological topics" because some of them, like the topic of the beatific vision (*ruʾya Allah*), bodily resurrection and what relates to it, the topic of the attributes of seeing and hearing, and the attribute of speech, according to some, are those topics for which there is no way of knowing them except by revelation (*sharʿ*).[351]

Based on Taftāzān'īs statement and the gloss, we can see that there are theological topics in which the intellect is independent, i.e., not in need of textual evidence. However, there are matters of belief in which rational evidence is not conclusive and textual evidence is necessary, like the topic of bodily resurrection. This relates to the second crucial task of the theologian, which is not to prove the necessity or impossibility of the belief but to show that the intellect cannot judge independently. In other words, the topic at hand is rationally possible. Once this task is achieved, the next step is to investigate if any textual evidence affirms or negates this belief.

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[349] Unlike the Muʿtazila for whom the intellect is capable to judge certain acts. The discussion about this topic is called *al-taḥsin wal-taqbīḥ*.
[350] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 99.
[351] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 12 (Jandī).

The following chapters will investigate the details of the theologian's task mentioned above. The investigation will start with the term *dalīl,* its definitions, conditions, and the twofold distinction between rational and textual evidence.

4.1. Definitions for Evidence

Taftāzānī's Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid will be the starting point for the present investigation. He defines dalīl in the context of the meaning of istidlāl and says: "*Dalīl* is that by which sound reflection of can lead to knowledge of a propositional conclusion. It has also been said to be a statement composed of propositions that necessitate another proposition."[352]

Glossators point out that the second definition is how *dalīl* is used in Logic.[353] However, in the books of Logic, the term *qiyās* (syllogism) is used. Taftāzānī in *Tahdīb al-manṭiq* and *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* says: "*Qiyās* is a statement composed of propositions which necessitate in itself another proposition."[354] On the other hand, the first definition is used in his *Tahdhīb al-kalām,* which indicates its usage in theology.[355] This point will be further investigated. Based on this brief overview, we can see that the term *dalīl* is equivocal, and depending on its definition, it can be ascribed to logic or *kalām*.

In the *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* Taftāzānī investigates the term *dalīl* in the broader context of reflection (*naẓar*). He says that the purpose of reflection is to either reach a conception or assent. For each one of the sought conclusions (*maṭlūb*), there is a means (*mūṣil*): For the conception, it is the definition (*ḥadd*) and description (*rasm*) called *muʿarrif,* and for the assent, it is the syllogism, induction, or example. The means (*mūṣil*) for the assent is either called *dalīl* due to its directing (*irshād*) or *ḥujja* because

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[352] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* 121. The following passages will explain why the word ʿ*ilm* is translated to certainty.
[353] *al-Nibrās,* 113.
[354] *qawl muʾallaf min qaḍāyā yalzamuhu li-dhātihi qawl ākhar.*
Tahdhīb al-manṭiq, 207. The wording in *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* is slightly different but does not lead to a different meaning (See: *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya,* 317).
[355] *al-Tahdhīb,* 224.

it gives a person the predominance (*ghalaba*) over the opponent.[356] Since our focus is the concept of *dalīl,* we will not investigate what relates to conceptions.
In a later passage, he says about *dalīl*:

> In the terminology of logic, it is the ordered premises leading to the conclusion. It is also used for the thing that one can reflect upon and infer from it the ordered premises, like "the world" for "the Creator." So it is interpreted as that by which sound reflection of one can attain a certain or presumptive judgment. (…)[357]

The genus in the definition of *dalīl* in logic, according to Taftāzānī, is the ordering of premises (*muqaddimāt murattaba*), and in the *kalām* definition, it is "a thing" (*amr*). In other words, the term *dalīl* can be used for the form of reasoning, that is, the syllogism or the object of reflection. So *dalīl* either refers to the form (*ṣūra*) or the matter (*mādda*). That is why we find the word *qiyās* instead of *dalīl* in the logic books as it investigates the form.

With this distinction in mind, the examples Taftāzānī gives for each definition in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* become clearer: "According to the first [definition]: The *dalīl* for the existence of the Creator is the world. According to the second [definition], it is our statement: "The world is contingent, and every contingent has a creator."[358]

The examples show that the first usage of *dalīl* is an object of reflection, in this case, the world, which can lead to the sought knowledge by using a valid reflection. The details about the reflection will follow. The example for the second usage is a syllogism with two premises that necessarily leads to another proposition Taftāzānī did not spell out: The world has a creator.

After these two examples in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* Taftāzānī mentions a third definition which is: "As far as their statement: *Dalīl* is that whose knowledge necessitates the knowledge of something else."[359] Based on the indicators and wordings he uses in the text, it becomes clear that this definition does not convince him. One of the glossators

[356] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 126-127.
[357] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 131.
[358] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 121.
[359] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 121.

describes it as the opposing view.[360] They also say that it is mentioned in the books of logic.[361] That is why Taftāzānī says that it is closer to the second definition, as both of them include the condition of necessity (*luzūm*). This information about the third definition should suffice since Taftāzānī does not pay much attention to it.

In his gloss on *al-Muntahā*, we find further insights as Taftāzānī mentions other sciences that use *dalīl* according to the first definition:

> It is also used for that which has an indicator (*dalāla*) and guidance (*irshād*) which is called *dalīl*, whether it leads to certainty (*ʿilm*) or presumption (*ẓann*), according to the terminology of the jurists.
>
> The *usūliyyūn* distinguish: They use *dalīl* specifically for that which leads to knowledge (*ʿilm*) and *amāra* for that which leads to presumption (*ẓann*). So, according to the jurists, its definition is that by which sound reflection of can lead to a propositional conclusion.
>
> And according to the *uṣūliyyūn*: that by which sound reflection of can lead to knowledge of a propositional conclusion.[362]

Two aspects of this statement are noteworthy: The word *uṣūliyyūn* and the subtle difference in the definition. Taftāzānī uses the word *uṣūlī* in a broader sense which refers to scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *uṣūl al-dīn* (*kalām*). There are several reasons for this claim. First, the discussion in which Taftāzānī makes this statement is about the theological foundations (*mabādiʾ kalāmiyya*) of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. So the context of Taftāzān'īs gloss is about the foundations that scholars of *kalām* lay for scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* to begin their investigations. Second, we saw earlier that Taftāzānī mentioned the *uṣūlī* definition in his *Tahdhīb al-kalām*, which indicates that this is how *kalām* scholars primarily understand *dalīl*. So the word *uṣūlī* can be used for scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *kalām*. For the sake of clarity, we will distinguish between the two and use *uṣūlī* or *uṣūl* scholar only for *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

The second aspect regarding the quote above relates to the subtle difference in the definition of *dalīl* in *fiqh*: That by which sound reflection of can lead to a propositional conclusion. The conclusion is not specified so that it can be certain knowledge or

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[360] See: *al-Majmūʿa*, 144 (Ramaḍān).
[361] See: *al-Nibrās*, 115.
[362] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 104.

presumption. However, in the second definition, the term *dalīl* refers to that which leads to certain knowledge and *amāra* to presumptive knowledge.

In conclusion, the term *dalīl* (evidence) is used differently in logic and *fiqh,* while *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *kalām* share a common usage. The present research concerns the second usage, so the focus in the following chapters will be accordingly.[363] The next chapter will analyze the conditions of the definition in detail.

4.1.1. Conditions in the Definition

The present chapter will investigate the conditions of the *kalām* and *uṣūl* definition in detail: "Evidence is that by which sound reflection of can lead to certainty (ʿ*ilm*) of a propositional conclusion."[364]

The first term in the definition, as we saw earlier, is sometimes *mā* (what), *alladhī* (that which), or *amr* (matter). Taftāzānī explains that these refer to

> a concrete existence (*wujūd ʿaynī*), like the world, by which the attainment occurs, so it is not a proposition and assent. If that was meant, it has to be considered independent of an arrangement (*tartīb*) as there is no meaning to "reflection about" and "movement of the soul in the intelligibles" that are already arranged.[365]

The evidence one takes as an object of reflection, according to Taftāzānī, has to be something that exists in the outside world, hence, concrete existence. Another point he makes is that it only makes sense to consider the evidence to be a proposition or assent in the case in which it is without a form. In other words, it is not a syllogism already structured so that it necessarily leads to a conclusion. This relates to the notion of reflection, which is "the movement of the soul in the intelligible," which is composed of two movements: The first relating to the matter (*mādda*) and the second to the form (*ṣūra*).[366] Based on this, the notion of "reflecting upon evidence" makes only sense if

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[363] For an insightful study on the meaning of *dalīl* in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and its historical development see: ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Rāqī, *Taṭawwur mafhūm al-dalīl ʿinda al-uṣuliyyīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Khazāʾina al-Azhariyya 2019).
[364] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 121.
[365] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 105.
[366] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 81-82.

the premises are not already placed in an argumentative structure. So the first condition in the definition refers to every concrete thing that can be taken as an object of reflection.

The next condition is "possibility" (*imkān*). As Taftāzānī explains, the property of something being evidence does not hinge upon it being reflected upon. Even if an object is evidence for something but is never reflected upon, it stays potentially evidence (*bil-quwwa*).[367] Farhārī gives an example and says ''He sufficed with [the condition of] possibility because the actual obtaining is not considered for the evidence to be evidence. Because a pomegranate or apple, for example, is evidence for its Originator even if no one ever reflects upon it.''[368]

The majority of glossators[369] seem to understand possibility in its specific sense (*imkān khāṣṣ*).[370] The famous glosser Khayālī, however, suggested that possibility can be understood in both ways:

> This possibility is the specific possibility (*imkān khāṣṣ*). So the meaning of the definition is: Evidence is that which there is no necessity (*ḍarūra*) in the two sides of the obtaining, meaning it is possible to obtain or not to obtain. You can also understand it as a general possibility (*imkān khāṣṣ*) from the perspective of existence, i.e., there is no necessity in the absence of obtaining.[371]

To unpack this very dense statement, we will take a look at Siyalkūt'īs comprehensive explanation of Khayāl'īs gloss:

> His statement {It is a specific possibility} means that this possibility is limited to the specific possibility. Meaning: Obtaining knowledge by valid reflection is not necessary, and not obtaining it is also not necessary, meaning it is possible to

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[367] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 131.

[368] *al-Nibrās*, 113.

[369] See: *al-Majmūʿa*, 142 (Ramaḍān; Kastalī); *Fatḥ*, 225, *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol. 1, 55.

[370] Possibility (*imkān*) can be used in two ways: General and specific.
Specific possibility (*imkān khāṣṣ*) is the negation of the necessity from both sides. The necessity to exist and the necessity to not exist are both negated from the perspective of existence. So something can either possibly exist (*mumkin al-wujūd*) or possibly not exist (*mumkin al-ʿadam*).
General possibility (*imkān ʿāmm*) from the perspective of existence is the negation of the necessity from one side. Based on this, the negation of the necessity to not exist (*salb ḍarūra al-ʿadam*) is a necessary existence (*wājib al-wujūb*), and the negation of the necessity to exist is the specific possibility, which encompasses the possible existence and possible not existence. (See: Shams al-Dīn al-Isfahānī, *Tasdīd al-qawāʿid fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid wa maʿahu Ḥāshiya al-tajrīd* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2020) vol 2, 143-144; *Hudā*, vol. 1, 296-297.

[371] *al-Majmūʿa*, 142 (Khayālī).

> obtain knowledge by valid reflection and not to obtain it. Because the followers of this definition are *ahl al-Sunna*, who say that the emanation (*fayḍān*) of the conclusion after the valid reflection is only nomological and not necessary, so the honorable glosser [Khayālī] saying that it is "possible to obtain and not to obtain" is with regards to the evidence itself, like the world. Because through it, it is possible to obtain knowledge about the existence of the Creator or not to obtain it. However, the necessary obtaining through the valid reflection does not contradict the possibility in itself. The general possibility here is, obviously, the apparent meaning that occurs to the mind. So, the invalidity [of the specific possibility] is unmistakable.
>
> As for his statement {you can understand the general possibility} means that you can understand "possibility" as a general possibility conditioned from the perspective of existence. Its meaning is that the absence of obtaining knowledge with the valid reflection is not necessary, irrespective of the obtaining being necessary either by preparation (*iʿdād*), as it is the position of the *ḥukamāʾ*, or by generation (*tawalludī*), as it is the position of the Muʿtazila; or it is not necessary but nomological, as it is the position of *ahl al-Sunna*. So the definition is correct according to all three positions.
>
> The master of the verifiers said–may his soul be purified–in his gloss on the *Mukhtaṣar* of ʿAḍud: "It is said: 'It is possible to obtain 'to call to attention that insofar an evidence is evidence the actual obtaining is not considered, rather, its possibility is sufficient. Its evidential quality is not nullified by not reflecting upon it ever. If the existence [of reflection] were [considered], then everything that someone never reflected upon would be exempted from the definition."[372]

Siyālkūtī seems convinced that understanding *possibility* in the specific sense is invalid because the apparent meaning is the *general possibility* that includes all three positions. But glossators after him had objections against his arguments, especially that the apparent meaning is the general possibility.[373] The point here is not to settle the dispute but to show how the debates about subtle issues continued in the glosses.
In conclusion, the second condition of possibility says that a piece of evidence has the potential to lead to knowledge through valid reflection. The evidential quality of something exists irrespective of whether someone ever took it as an object of reflection.

The next condition in the definition of evidence is "valid reflection" (*naẓar ṣaḥīḥ*). It excludes invalid reflection (*naẓar fāsid*) as it is not possible to obtain the sought conclusion with it. Glosses of *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* explain what both entail and how they are different from each other:

[372] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 2, 173.
[373] See: *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 3, 173.

> He conditioned it with "valid reflection," which encompasses its prerequisites as far as form (*ṣūra*) and matter (*mādda*) because obtaining is not possible with an invalid reflection. It means that it is not a means (*waṣila*) to knowledge in itself (*fī nafsihi*), even if it might lead to it by chance (*yufḍī ilayhi ba-ṭarīq al-ittifāq*).[374]

Kastalī points out an important distinction between obtaining knowledge through a means (*wasīla*) and stumbling upon a conclusion by chance (*bi-ittifāq*). The first, which applies to the valid reflection, is achieved by considering the requirements regarding matter and form. If any of the two or both are missing, the reflection becomes invalid even if the right conclusion is reached. That is why Kastalī distinguishes between obtaining through a means and stumbling upon the conclusion by chance.

Another way an invalid reflection occurs is when one believes that something is evidence, although it is not in objective reality (*fī nafs al-amr*). Ansārī gives the following example:

> It is not possible to obtain the conclusion with it due to the absence of the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*). Even if it leads to it through belief (*bi-wāsiṭa al-iʿtiqād*), like reflection about the world from the perspective of simplicity (*basāṭa*), it has no basis (*laysa min shaʾnihi*) to move from it to the existence of the Creator. But it leads to the existence of the reflection of someone who believes that "the world is simple" and "everything simple has a Creator."[375]

Based on this, even if the form and conclusion are correct, the reflection is invalid due to the incorrect matter. So the person using this inference might believe it is valid, but in reality (*nafs al-amr*), it is not.

The concept of the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*) is central and will be investigated further below, so a general understanding of it will suffice. Taftāzānī says about this concept:

> It is not possible to obtain a conclusion with an invalid reflection. This is obvious as far as its form (*ṣūra*) is concerned. As far as the matter (*mādda*), like our statement: "The world is simple, and everything simple has a Creator," [the invalidity] is due to the absence of the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*) since the simplicity is not something from which one passes on to the affirmation of the Creator even if it leads to it in general.

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[374] *al-Majmūʿa*, 142 (Kastalī).
[375] *Fatḥ*, 227.

> If it is said: the leading to the conclusion necessitates the possibility of arriving at it.
>
> We say: [This is] not conceded (*mamnūʿ*). The meaning of obtaining (*tawaṣṣul*) necessitates a signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*), unlike leading (*iḍāʾ*).[376]

We saw earlier how a conclusion reached by chance (*bi-ittifāq*) is not considered. Taftāzānī argues along the same lines. If something is viewed as evidence, it has to have a signifier that always leads to the conclusion, provided a valid reflection is applied. As Taftāzānī explains in another passage that being a signifier is an accident of the evidence (*al-dalīl maʿrūḍ al-dalāla*).[377] And being a signifier means that "something is in such a manner that it yields knowledge when reflected upon, and this is obtained regardless of someone reflecting upon it or not."[378] To illustrate the transition from the world to the Creator using the signifier: The world is the evidence for the existence of the Creator insofar as the signifier in the world is contingency by which it is possible to conclude that the world has a creator.[379] So it is insufficient to believe that a signifier is present although it is not, as is the case with simplicity. Based on this, Muslim theologians would argue that contingency, unlike simplicity, is a self-evident property of the world and hence intersubjective. Simplicity, on the other hand, is neither self-evident nor a property of the world in objective reality. So if someone reflects upon the world from the perspective that it is simple, it would be considered an invalid reflection as far as the matter (*mādda*) of the reflection is concerned.

Regarding the final condition, there are minor differences within the works of Taftāzānī. In *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, he says that valid reflection leads to "knowledge of the propositional conclusion (*maṭlūb khabarī*)."[380] In his two independent works on *kalām,* he says it leads to "a judgment" (*ḥukm*) and adds that the qualifier "certain" (*jāzim*) is often used.[381] First, we will look at the two words *khabar* and *ḥukm*. In his *Talwīh,* Taftāzānī enumerates and explains several terms that are used for a complete statement (*murakkab tāmm*):

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[376] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 105.
[377] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 104.
[378] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 104.
[379] See: Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 92.
[380] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 121.
[381] See: *al-Tahdhīb*, 224; *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 131.

> Know that the complete statement (*murakkab tāmm*) which can be true or false is called:
> *qaḍiyya* (proposition) insofar it encompasses a judgment (*al-ḥukm*),
> *khabar* (report) insofar there is a probability that it is true or false,
> *ikhbār* (communicate) insofar it yields a judgment,
> *muqaddima* (premise) insofar it is part of an evidence,
> *maṭlūb* (thesis) insofar it is sought by the evidence,
> *natīja* (conclusion) insofar it follows from the evidence and
> *masʾala* (topic) insofar it falls under a science and is asked about.
> So the essence is one, and the different expressions are due to the different points of view (*al-iʿtibarāt*).[382]

Based on this overview, it becomes clear that there is no essential difference between *khabar* and *ḥukm.*

Regarding the additional qualifier of knowledge (*ʿilm*) or decisive (*jāzim*), Taftāzānī says that "often evidence is specific for that which yields knowledge and indicator (*amāra*) for that which leads to presumption."[383] In his gloss on *Mukhtaṣar al-muntahā* he says:

> That which has a signifier (*dalāla*) or guide (*irshād*) in it, regardless if it leads to knowledge or presumption, is called evidence, according to the terminology of the jurists.
>
> The *uṣūlī* scholars differentiate and use evidence specifically for that which leads to knowledge and indicator (*amāra*) for that which leads to presumption.[384]

Based on this, the term judgment without any qualifier encompasses presumptive and certain knowledge. If it is conditioned with knowledge (*ʿilm*) or certain (*jāzim*), then it excludes the indicator (*amāra*), which leads to presumption.

After analyzing the conditions of the definition of evidence, we will take a closer look at four critical terms in the discussion about evidence. The four terms are *dalīl*, *dalāla*, *wajh al-dalīl,* and *jiha al-dalāla*. Taftāzānī explains in the following manner:

> The valid reflection requires to be a reflection upon an evidence and not a spurious argument (*shubha*). It also has to be a reflection from the perspective of the signifier (*jiha al-dalāla*). It is that through which the mind (*dhihn*) transitions from the evidence to the signified (*madlūl*). So if we infer the Creator from the world by reflecting upon it, we obtain two propositions. One of them is: "the world is

[382] *al-Talwīḥ*, vol. 1, 46.
[383] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 131.
[384] *al-Muntahā*, vol. 1, 104.

> contingent," and the other is "every contingent has a Creator." From this arrangement (*tartīb*), it is understood that the world has a Creator.
>
> So the world is the evidence (*dalīl*) for the theologians, not the arranged premises since it is the terminology of the logicians. The existence of the Creator is the signified (*madlūl*). The world, insofar as the reflection upon it yields the knowledge of the Creator's existence, is the signifier (*dalāla*). And the possibility or contingency of the world, which is the reason for its need for a Creator, is the perspective of the signifier (*jiha al-dalāla*). These four matters are distinct, meaning that each concept (*mafhūm*) is distinct from the others. So the knowledge of each is different depending on the relation [to each of them].[385]

The backdrop of this investigation is the following question: Is the knowledge of the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*) distinct from the knowledge of the signified (*madlūl*)? Taftāzānī points out that there is a difference of opinion regarding the answer but adds that the correct position is the distinction between them.[386]

The Taftāzān'īs example illustrates the difference between these four terms: The world is the evidence (*dalīl*), the Creator is the signified (*madlūl*), the world insofar as a valid reflection of it leads to the Creator is the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*), and the world insofar as it is contingent or possible and in need of a Creator is the perspective of the signifier (*jiha al-dalāla*). At the end of the passage above, Taftāzānī points out that each concept is different. Therefore, the knowledge of the signifier is not the same as that of the evidence, as some have wrongfully suggested.[387] One of the reasons for it is that being a signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*) is an attribute (*ṣifa*) of the evidence, like possibility or contingency, which are attributes with regards to the world, unlike the perspective of the signifier (*jiha al-dalāla*) which is just a mental concept (*amr iʿtibārī*).[388]

The present chapter discussed the conditions for the definition of evidence and prepared the ground to investigate the twofold division of evidence into rational and textual evidence related to the matter (*mādda*) of evidence.

[385] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 109.
[386] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 110.
[387] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 110.
[388] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 111.

4.2. Rational and Textual Evidence *(dalīl ʿaqlī and naqlī)*

Taftāzān'īs discussion about the rationale and textual evidence focuses on three topics. He mentions them very concisely in *Tahdhīb al-kalām*:

> When [evidence] is based on a text, then it is textual [evidence]. If not, then it is rational. Decisiveness by it is achieved with the aid of indications. [The judgment in which] the two sides are equal is only affirmed by a text. What the text is based upon can only be affirmed by the intellect.[389]

The three topics in this very dense text are the following: The first is dividing evidence according to its matter (*mādda*) into rational and textual. The second is about whether or not textual evidence provides certain knowledge. The last topic investigates when the conclusion necessitates textual evidence and when rational evidence.

Before we move on to the first topic, it is important to highlight the exact meaning of the term textual evidence in the theological context. The term *textual* is not used in a general sense insofar as it encompasses any kind of historical text or evidence. It is a very specific usage in that it only refers to that which is traced back to the Messenger.[390] So, the term *dalīl naqlī* should be understood as an evidence by revelation.

The first discussion in Taftāzān'īs *Tahdhīb* is about the twofold division. In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* he presents an additional threefold division and says:

> If the evidence is not based upon a text at all, then it is rational evidence. If not [and it is based on a text], it is textual evidence, regardless of all of its approximate premises being based on a text or not.
>
> The first might be specifically used for the textual, and the second would be called compound (*murakkab*). However, purely textual evidence is invalid because it is necessary to affirm the truthfulness of the messenger rationally.[391]

[389] *al-Tahdhīb*, 224.
[390] Notice that the statement is not limited to that words of the Messenger and kept general to include the Quran, *ḥadīth*, and *ijmāʿ*.
[391] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 132.

The earlier quote from his *Tahdhīb* and the wording in *maqāṣid* indicates that he prefers the twofold division. In the explanation of *maqāṣid* he explains the issue with the threefold division.

> [Evidence] might be divided into rational and textual, and it also might be divided into the two and the compound of rational and textual evidence. However, this suggests that the intended meaning of textual evidence is that which has no rational premises at all, and this is invalid. Because if the truthfulness of the reporters does not go back to someone whose truthfulness is known rationally, then it necessitates a vicious circle or an infinite regress.[392]

The vicious circle occurs when, for example, the truthfulness of the Messenger is based on the affirmation of his truthfulness by the revelation. The infinite regress comes about when the truthfulness of the Messenger is proven by the truthfulness of others, whose truthfulness then goes to another source and so on. To avoid the vicious circle and infinite regress, the existence of God, the possibility for Him to send messengers, and proof of their trustworthiness by an evidentiary miracle all have to be based on rational evidence.[393]

Taftāzānī then explains how the problem in the threefold division can be deflected and mentions that the definition of textual evidence is different than in the twofold division.

> Deflecting this happens by saying that whoever limits [the categories] into two intends by *textual evidence* that which some of his approximate and far premises is based upon transmission and hearing from the truthful [Messenger]. And he intended by *rational evidence* that which is not like that.
>
> Whoever makes a threefold division intends by *textual evidence* that all of its approximate premises are transmitted, like: "*Ḥajj* is obligatory and abstaining from doing the obligatory deserves punishment." And he intends by *compound evidence* that which some of its approximate premises are rational and some of them textual, like: "*Wuḍūʾ* is an act, and the validity of every *sharʿiyya* act is by the intention (*niyyah*)." And like the statement: "*Ḥajj* is obligatory and whoever abstains from the obligatory is disobedient." There is no other meaning to disobedience except abstaining from obeying the command and prohibition. He conditioned the term premises with approximate (*qarība*) since some of the far premises (*baʿīda*) of the textual evidence are rational, as mentioned earlier. So it is not contrary to the compound but included under it.[394]

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[392] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 132.
[393] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 133; Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 93.
[394] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 132-133.

Based on Taftāzān'īs explanation, we see that the threefold division first divides into two parts: rational and compound. Then, the compound further divides into rational and textual, and textual with approximate premises. As he pointed out in the quote earlier, there is no such thing as purely textual evidence since it has to go back to rational evidence to cut the vicious circle and infinite regress. So the meaning of textual evidence is that whose approximate premises are all textual evidence, which he illustrated with the example of *ḥajj*. On the other hand, the compound of rational and textual evidence has premises solely based on the intellect.

After his explanation, Taftāzānī points out that the threefold division only applies when the term *dalīl* is meant in the sense of being a premise and not the source from which the premise is taken (*maʾkhadh*). In other words, the rational evidence for the Creator is the world, and the textual evidence for religious acts are the Quran, Sunnah, and *ijmaʾ*. These are the sources from which the premises are taken, and they are either rational or textual. So a threefold division with a compound would not make any sense.[395]

The second topic Taftāzānī discusses is the question if textual knowledge yields certainty or not. This topic was brought up very explicitly by none other than Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.[396] As we saw in the concise text from *Tahdhīb al-kalām*, Taftāzānī summarizes his position by saying: "Decisiveness by it is achieved with the aid of indications (*qarāʾin*)."[397] In his *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, he mentions more details about the topic and says:

> There is no doubt that textual evidence yields presumptive knowledge. However, certainty from it is based on the knowledge of semantics (*waḍʿ*)[398] and the intention [of the speaker]. This [can only be achieved] with the infallibility of the transmitters of the Arabic language. [Furthermore, it is based on the knowledge of] the absence of a new usage [of the expression], the absence of synonym, the

[395] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 133.

[396] For an investigation about this topic see: Bilal Ibrahim, "Reason and Revelation in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and the Ashʿarī Tradition," in: *Philosophy and Language in the Islamic World* edited by Nadja Germann and Mostafa Najafi (Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), vol 2, 129-182.

[397] *al-Tahdhīb*, 224.

[398] Bernard G. Weiss points out that "*ʿilm al-waḍʿ*" has no apparent counterpart among the branches of Western philology or linguistics" which makes it very difficult to translate. See: Bernard G. Weiss, "A Theory of the Parts of Speech in Arabic (Noun, Verb and Particle): A Study in 'ʿilm al-Waḍʿ,'" in: *Arabica* 23, no. 1 (1976): 23–36.

> absence of figurative speech, the absence of ellipsis, and the absence of contradiction of the rational evidence.[399]

In the beginning, he points out that there is no difference of opinion that textual evidence imparts presumptive knowledge. So the point of contention is about certainty, which is put into question by the requirements he mentions. Rāzī famously put forth ten conditions. Taftāzānī mentions eight, but they encompass the ten conditions since he put some of them under one category. For instance, Rāzī mentions grammar and morphology separately, which fall under the category of *waḍʿ* in Taftāzān'īs list.[400]

After presenting the opponent's argument, Taftāzānī deflects it by saying: "Indicators (*qarāʾin*) might be added to the [textual evidence] which rule out this possibility. Hence, it yields decisiveness (*qaṭʿ*) regarding the conclusion."[401] In the explanation, he says:

> The truth is that textual evidence might yield decisiveness because there are coined terms (*awḍāʿ*) that are known by mass transmission (*tawātur*), like the word *samāʾ* and *arḍ*, and like most of the rules of morphology and grammar regarding the form of the singulars and the form of the compounds (*tarkībāt*). And the knowledge of the intended meaning obtains by the aid of indications (*qarāʾin*) insofar as these leave no room for doubt, like the texts regarding the obligation of prayer, *zakāt* and what resembles them, the unity of God, and the resurrection. [There is no room for doubt] if we suffice with simply hearing them, like the words of the Exalted: "Say He is one," "Know that He there is no deity save Him," and "Say: He who brought them into being in the first instance will give them life, seeing that He has full knowledge of every act of creation."[402]

Ibn Yaʿqūb summarizes Taftāzān'īs argument concisely with the following statement:

> The need for indications (*qarāʾin*) in imparting knowledge is only in relation to the intention of the truthful transmitter. Whereas the knowledge regarding the designated meaning of [the signified] is obtained through mass transmission (*tawātur*).[403]

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[399] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 94.

[400] Since a detailed analysis of the difference does not serve the main purpose of the investigation, we will suffice with this one example. One could claim that Taftāzānī refined the list insofar as he was able to encapsulate the ten conditions more comprehensively, which was a desirable goal of many later writings as we saw in an earlier chapter.

[401] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 134.

[402] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 136.

[403] Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 95.

Both theologians point out that the ways to obtain certain knowledge about the meaning of the words and the intention of the speaker are different. The intention of a speaker relies upon indications (*qarāʾin*) that help us to know what he intended when using a certain word. Certainty about the meaning of the words, on the other hand, is achieved by mass transmission. We know what Arabic words like *samāʾ* or *arḍ* signify by virtue of the way Arabs have been using them ever since.

The last topic Taftāzānī investigates is the situations in which rational and textual evidence becomes necessary. He says that the judgment in which "the two sides are equal is only affirmed by a text" and "what the text is based upon can only be affirmed by the intellect."[404] He explains this statement and says:

> When the side of affirmation and negation for a sought judgment is equal in the mind insofar as it does not independently find any way to specify one of them, then the way to affirm it is by textual evidence and nothing else, like the judgment that *ḥajj* is obligatory and that Zayd is in the house.
>
> But if the affirmation of textual evidence is based on it, like the knowledge of the truthfulness of the messenger, and what is further based upon that, like the affirmation of the Creator, sending of the Messenger, the signification of the evidentiary miracle, and what resembles it, then the proof for it is only reason nothing else. This is in order to avoid a vicious circle.[405]

The instance in which textual evidence is the only way to reach a conclusion is when the two sides of a conclusion, that is, its affirmation and negation are equally possible. Taftāzānī gives a religious and secular example. The religious example is the judgment "*ḥajj* is obligatory." Affirming or negating the obligation of the *ḥajj* are both equally possible, and there is no evidence for the preponderance of one of the sides if we rely on the mind alone. Hence, another type of evidence is needed to tip the scale to one of the two sides. This tipping of the scale happens by textual evidence. The same applies to profane judgments such as Zayd being in the house. In the mind, the presence and absence of Zayd are both equally possible insofar as neither of the two judgments leads to a rational impossibility. Therefore, further evidence is needed to affirm one side and reject the other.

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[404] *al-Tahdhīb*, 224; *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 132.
[405] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 133.

The situation in which rational evidence becomes necessary is when the two sides of the judgment are not equal insofar as the mind can make a judgment independently and in situations in which the textual evidence is based on it, like the truthfulness of the Messenger. In other words, the truthfulness of the Messenger is based on the existence of a Creator, His capability to send messengers and an evidentiary miracle that proves the truthfulness of the Messenger's statement. All of these judgments are rational insofar as they cannot be proven by textual evidence, as it would lead to a vicious circle.[406]

On a theoretical level, the aforementioned principle about the necessity of rational and textual evidence is rather uncomplicated. However, in practice, one of the main issues becomes the question if something is rationally possible or not. Based on this, the interpretation of the religious text will differ. This connects back to an earlier claim about the task of the theologian in which he demarcates the realm of the rationally possible. Especially the debates with the Muʿtazila and *falāsifa* offer many examples. The task regarding anthropomorphism, on the other hand, is to demonstrate that reading the textual evidence literally in every case leads to rational impossibilities. Some later theologians recognized the importance of distinguishing between rational judgments and put them at the beginning of their works. At the forefront of this is Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsi (d. 895), who started all of his books with an investigation of rational judgments and explicitly mentioned that one of the reasons for wrong belief is "the ignorance regarding rational principles, which is the knowledge about the necessity of the necessary, the possibility of the possible, and the impossibility of the impossible."[407]

The following chapter focuses on a number of case studies that relate to the concept of evidence. The first case relates to the task of demarcating the realm of the rationally possible, while the other examples discuss topics that shed some more light on various issues that relate to the concept of evidence.

[406] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 133; Ibn Yaʿqūb, vol. 1, 93.
[407] Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, *Sharḥ al-muqaddimāt* (Damascus: Dār al-Taqwā, 2019), 194.

4.3. Case Studies for Evidence

The aim of this last chapter is to discuss some cases and tie them back to the previously investigated topics. Every case has many detailed discussions attached to it, so it is not possible to present them comprehensively. Therefore, we will suffice with a focus on specific aspects that relate to the concept of evidence. Every case offers enough material, which we will leave for further research.

4.3.1. Beatific Vision (*ruʾya*) Is Rationally Possible

The possibility of seeing God in the hereafter is one of the main topics that Sunnī theologians and Muʿtazila differ about. Abū Ḥafṣ Nasafī in *ʿAqāʾid nasafiyya* indicates the different positions with the following statement: "Seeing Allah–the Exalted–is rationally possible and necessary by textual evidence."[408] As we saw in the previous chapter, textual evidence is needed when the affirmation or negation of a judgment is equal to the mind. So the difference of opinion regarding this topic does not start with the textual evidence but with the question: Is seeing God rationally possible? If it is possible, is there any textual evidence that affirms or negates it? These are the guiding questions of this topic.

Taftāzānī begins his discussion with the following:

> When the mind is emptied and by itself, then it does not judge that seeing Him is impossible as long as there is no proof for that, and the basis is the absence of proof for [the impossibility]. This much is self-evident, so whoever claims that it is impossible has to bring up the argument.[409]

This passage illustrates how Taftāzānī puts the burden of proof on the opponents who claim that the beatific vision is rationally impossible. He continues and gives rational and textual evidence for the Sunnī position and then presents the Muʿtazila position, which claims that it is rationally impossible to see God since *seeing* necessitates specific conditions. Taftāzānī summarizes their strongest argument and says:

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[408] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 87.
[409] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 201-202.

> Their strongest spurious argument is the following: Seeing is conditioned by the seen entity to be in a place, to be at an angle, situated opposite to the one seeing, the distance between the two insofar as it is not too close and too far away, and that light rays of light from the eye connect to the seen.[410] All of this is impossible in relation to God–the Exalted.[411]

After deeming the beatific vision of God rationally impossible, the next logical step with regard to textual evidence is to interpret it accordingly. That is what the Muʿtazila do, especially in cases that suggest that God is going to be seen.

So the first task for the Sunnī theologian is to bring this topic into the realm of the rationally possible in order to make room for the textual evidence to become necessary. The Muʿtazila, on the other hand, do not need any textual evidence since they reach the conclusion that it is rationally impossible without the need for textual evidence.

Taftāzānʾīs response is the following:

> The answer is to not concede to the condition. He pointed to it by saying: {**He is seen not in a place or in a direction so far as being confronted, nor by the conjunction of the rays of light, nor by a certain definite distance between the one who sees and Allah.**} And to draw an analogy from the seen to the unseen is invalid.[412]

Farhārī commenting on this passage says:

> The verification of this (*taḥqīquhu*): According to us, seeing is by the creation of Allah–the Exalted. That is why the scholars deemed it possible that a blind person in China could see a bug flying in Andalusia in the West. The nomological habit (*ʿāda ilāhiyya*) is that seeing is created whenever the means mentioned above are realized and that it is not created when they are not. It is possible that He violates the norm (*yakhriq al-ʿāda*) for whomever He wants. Verily, the Messenger–peace and blessings upon him and his family–used to see what was behind him just as he saw what was in front of him without being confronted with what he saw.[413]

Farhārʾīs gloss shows some of the theological implications when Sunnī theologians make the conditions the Muʿtazila mention for seeing nomological. Once they move the topic of the beatific vision of God to the realm of the rationally possible, they have to commit to all of its implications, one of which Farhārī mentions in the example

[410] This is based on the emission theory.
[411] *Sharḥ al-ʿāqaʾid*, 206.
[412] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 206.
[413] *al-Nibrās*, 352.

about the blind man. Simultaneously, it makes it possible to understand religious texts literally, as is the case with the narration of the Messenger, seeing what is behind him.

Farhārī also points out that Taftāzān'īs statement includes another argument:

> {**And to draw an analogy from the seen to the unseen is invalid.**} This is a second answer based on accepting their hypothesis.
>
> Its clarification: If we submit to these conditions, then they are only conditions in this world or for seeing substances and accidents only. It is possible that the state in the afterlife and of seeing Allah–the Exalted–is different.[414]

Even if one were to submit to the conditions and the impossibility that a violation of the norm occurs in the world, it is invalid to draw an analogy from the unseen to the seen.

This case study illustrates how one of the most important tasks of theologians is to demarcate the realm of the rationally possible. Once a topic is moved to this realm, textual evidence is needed.

4.3.2. The Common Denominator of the Textual Evidence

In the chapter on Prophethood in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, Taftāzānī discusses a twofold distinction between the evidentiary miracles. The first is the inimitability of the Quran, and the second is other norm violations that occurred throughout the life of the Messenger. The focus of this chapter is the second category. Taftāzānī says about them:

> Matters of norm violations have been narrated about him–peace and blessings upon him–to the point that the common denominator in them–by that, I mean the manifestation of the evidentiary miracle–has reached *tawātur*. Even if their details are solitary (*āḥād*), like the bravery of ʿAlī–may Allah be pleased with him–and the generosity of Ḥātim. These are mentioned in the books of *sīra*.[415]

Besides the Quran, there are many other instances in which a norm violation (*khāriq al-ʿāda*) has occurred at the hands of the Messenger. However, their accounts are

[414] *al-Nibrās*, 352.
[415] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 294.

transmitted through solitary reports. In other words, there were various kinds of norm violations in the life of the Messenger, like water gushing out from between his fingers hand or the splitting of the moon, but each of the instances was transmitted by solitary reports which do not impart certain knowledge. Yet, Taftāzānī argues that the common denominator in all of these narrations is the same: They are reports about *some* kind of norm violation. Irrespective of the specific kind of norm violation, the number of narrations leads to the certainty that a norm violation occurred. So the details are presumptive, but the occurrence of norm violations which are evidentiary miracles is certain. The significance of the notion Taftāzānī presents is that it broadens the spectrum of what *tawātur* is.

Taftāzānī is not the first to highlight this idea. Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 445 AH), in his *Shifā* mentions the same distinction that evidentiary miracles can be of two kinds. Farhārī, in his gloss, summarizes Qāḍī ʿIy'āḍs statement about the second kind and says:

> Many of the evidentiary miracles reached the level of *tawātur* and prominence. The judgment that they are solitary reports arises from the lack of investigation of the narrations. There are many judgments that are *tawātur* for some people and not for others. Some people know about the existence of Baghdād by *tawātur*, while others do not even know its name.[416]

In the previous chapter, we saw how self-evident knowledge sometimes relies on additional means. In the case of *tawātur*, the means is the multiplicity of reports one has to be exposed to for certainty to be obtained. So the argument here is that even some of the second type of evidentiary miracles are actually *mutawātir*, but due to the lack of being exposed to the reports mentioned in the books of *ḥadīth*, they remain presumptive for the majority of people.

Farhārī then mentions some examples, the many companions that narrated the different events, and continues:

> This is the truth. According to this, the judgment of the commentator [Taftāzānī] that the details are solitary is due to the lack of pursuit in the narrations or based on the assumption and abandoning the state of *tawātur* from all of them to the *tawātur* of the meaning of the sum. This is because the first [position that they are *mutawātir*] is something that the interlocutor might deny, unlike the second [position that they are solitary but *tawātur* in meaning].

[416] *al-Nibrās*, 592; Qāḍi ʿIyāḍ, *al-Shifā bi-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣtafā* (Amman: Dār al-Nūr, 2015), 164.

> If you say: The *mutawātir* is what some people hear. So where is the hearing of these narrations?
>
> I say: Looking into what is written and hearing are equal in imparting knowledge. If letters from people reach you in which the content is the same, then knowledge is obtained without hearing. So similarly, the books of *ḥadīth* spread throughout the earth from the East to the West, yielding decisive knowledge for whoever studies them. Remember this great insight![417]

This shows at least two noteworthy features regarding *tawātur*, which is part of self-evident knowledge. First, narrations, which have a common denominator but vary in some of their details, can become *tawātur* from the perspective of their common denominator and presumptive from the perspective of the details. Second, certainty through *tawātur* can only be achieved when one is exposed to the means that lead to the *tawātur*. In the present case, this would occur by investigating the relevant textual sources in the books of *ḥadīth.* Once a sufficient number of authentic narrations about a specific instance of a norm violation are found, certainty regarding that instance will be obtained.

4.3.3. Incomplete Evidence (*dalīl ghayr tāmm*)

The present case study will illustrate how later scholars evaluate some of the most common evidences they and previous scholars use. The point of the example is to show that one of the main objectives of the later scholars is to reach conclusive arguments. This presupposes that they are very critical of their own arguments and take the opponents 'objections very seriously, to the point that the theologians not only read the objections charitably but also refine the opposing views.[418] So the case study aims at highlighting this feature of the Post-classical period and not to discuss the example itself, which is going to be the indivisible part (*juzʾ lā yatajazzaʾ*). We will first look at the texts from the relevant sources and then analyze them.

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī, in the investigation about the origination of the world, says:

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[417] *al-Nibrās*, 592.

[418] This phenomenon needs an independent study as it demands a thorough historical assessment of a case study in which the development of an opposing argument is analyzed throughout the different historical stages.

> The world in the totality of its parts is originated since it consists of substances and accidents. A substance is that which has self-subsistence, and it is either a compound, which is a body; or not a compound, like an atom (*jawhar*), which is the indivisible part.[419]

Taftāzānī explaining this passage says:

> {**It is the indivisible part**} He did not say: "It is the atom," guarding against an objection because that which is not a compound is rationally not limited to the atom, that is, the indivisible part. Rather, it is necessary to nullify the prime matter (*hayūla*), the form (*ṣūra*), the intellects (*ʿuqūl*), and the incorporeal souls until [the evidence] is complete (*li-yatimma dhālika*).[420]

He continues by mentioning that the *falāsifa* negate the atom's existence, presents three evidences for its existence, and concludes with a noteworthy statement: "All of them are weak."[421] He proceeds to show the objections against the three arguments and concludes: "The evidences negating [the existence of the single substance] are also not free from weakness. That is why Imām Rāzī inclined towards abstention (*tawaqquf*)."[422] Lastly, he answers the question if the difference of opinion between the theologians and *falāsifa* yields any benefit and answers:

> We say: Yes, establishing the existence of the atom is an escape from many obscurities of the *falāsifa*, like the affirmation of the prime matter and form which leads to the eternity of the world and the denial of bodily resurrection, and many of the principles of geometry upon which the continual motion of the heavenly spheres is built, and also the impossibility of them being torn apart and mended.[423]

In the *Tahdhīb al-kalām,* Taftāzānī mentions a similar statement without saying that the arguments for or against the atom are weak. He says: "Know that affirming the atom wards off many principles from the *falāsifa*, and it is also an easy way to establish many Islamic principles (*qawāʿid islāmiyya*)."[424] The discussion in *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*

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[419] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 86.
[420] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 134; Elder, 31-32.
[421] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 135; Elder, 32.
[422] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 136; Elder, 32.
[423] *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 137; Elder, 32.
[424] *al-Tahdhīb*, 286.

is very comprehensive, but here does not explicitly speak of weaknesses regarding the arguments.[425]

As mentioned earlier, the point is not the topic of the atom but how discussions about evidences looked like and what the Later Theologians were focusing on. The central idea here is the notion of an incomplete evidence (*dalīl ghayr tāmm*). Taftāzānī says that it is rationally possible that there is more than one category under the genus of non-compound substances. So in order to limit the non-compound to the atom, it is necessary to have evidence against the existence of the prime matter, form, intellects, and incorporeal souls. However, the arguments against them, according to Taftāzānī, are incomplete, which means that they are not conclusive proofs (*burhān*).

ʿIṣām al-Dīn points out that Taftāzānī is a response to Ījī.[426] Kafawī explains that this response is an objection since Ījī speaks of "proofs" (*sabʿa ḥujaj*), and his wording suggests that only some of them are weaokayk. Taftāzān'īs point of contention is that the word *proof* implies conclusiveness. Walī al-Dīn (d. 1119), in his gloss on ʿIṣam al-Dīn's gloss, says:

> You know that this is only an objection if the judgment is about all of what has been mentioned in *al-Mawāqif* as far as the seven perspectives. However, this is not the case. The commentator [Taftāzānī] mentioned three of them only in this book, and the judgment of the three does not necessitate the judgment on all of the seven. There is no doubt that the intention in his statement: "All of them are weak." is only that which he mentioned in this book.[427]

Walī al-Dīn limits Taftāzān'īs result of the evidences being weak to what he has mentioned in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* which suggests that the other ones are strong enough. Kafawī, in his gloss, opposes this view and says:

> The following should not be said: The author of al-*Mawāqif* mentioned seven proofs and then said, "some of them are weak," and what the commentator [Taftāzānī] mentioned here are three of them. The judgment that all three are weak does not contradict the strength of some of the seven. So how does the objection make sense?

[425] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* vol. 1, 830-876.
[426] See: *al-Ḥawāshī,* vol 4, 118 (ʿIṣām al-Dīn).
[427] *al-Ḥawāshī,* vol 4, 118 (Walī al-Dīn)

> We say: When the commentator [Taftāzānī] said that the strongest is one and the well-known of them are two, followed by the statement: "All of them are weak." then it is a judgment that all of the seven are weak.[428]

Reading the glosses side by side, it seems very likely that Kafawī has Walī al-Dīn's position in mind.

Interestingly, ʿIṣām al-Dīn does not pose the question if Taftāzānī meant all of the evidences or just the ones he mentioned in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*. He takes a different approach altogether and says that it is easier to not concede that the prime matter is eternal and to demonstrate that they are contingent instead of proving that the atom exists.[429]

In conclusion, this case study shows that theologians in the Post-classical period evaluate the works of their predecessors and try to refine their arguments as much as possible. These very subtle discussions and debates usually take place in the comprehensive works (*muṭṭawwalāt*), whereas shorter textbooks and even commentaries, such as *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, suffice with the topics and pointers to the deeper discussions.

4.3.4. *Īmān* Without Evidence

The last case study is about the relationship between *īmān* and evidence. There is no difference of opinion that *īmān* is obligatory for the moral agent (*mukallaf*). However, there is a discussion about the first obligation. Is it knowledge of God (*maʿrifa*) or the reflection that leads to it? Taftāzānī says:

> They differed about the first obligation. It is said it is the knowledge of Allah–the Exalted–because that is the foundation (*aṣl*). It is also said it is a reflection about it or turning towards [reflection] because [knowledge of Allah] is based on it. (…)
>
> The obligation of the *muqallid* and the ignorant whose ignorance is compounded (*jahl murakkab*) is the reflection about the signifier (*wajh al-dalāla*) in order for it to lead him to knowledge.[430]

[428] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 4, 118 (Kafawī).
[429] *al-Ḥawāshī*, vol 4, 121 (ʿIṣām al-Dīn).
[430] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 123.

Theologians distinction between two types of evidence: general (*dalīl ijmālī*) and detailed evidence (*dalīl tafṣilī*). General evidence is compulsory for every individual (*farḍ ʿayn*), whereas detailed evidence is only necessary for some individuals in every Muslim community who have to ward off spurious arguments and establish the truthfulness of the religion against opponents.[431] In the later books of *kalām,* the discussion about the first obligation usually takes place in the chapter on reflection.

Another difference of opinion, which is discussed in the chapter on *samʿiyyāt,* is about the validity of the *īmān* of the *muqallid*, that is, someone who has no evidence. In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Taftāzānī clarifies the exact point of contention:

> The difference of opinion is not about those people who grew up in Muslim lands (…) and whom reached by *tawātur* the state of the Messenger–peace be upon him– and the evidentiary miracles that were given to him. It is also not about those that think about the creation of the heavens and the earth, the difference between night and day. All of them are from the people of reflection and inference (*ahl al-naẓar wal-istidlāl*). [The difference of opinion] is rather about someone who, for example, grew up on the top of the mountains and did not think about the heavens and the earth but then got informed by a person about that which is obligatory upon him to believe after which he affirmed him regarding that which he was informed about without thinking.[432]

The example Taftāzānī mentions illustrates that the kind of *muqallid* the discussion revolves around is very specific. It is someone who is not among Muslims, who does not know anything about the revelation, and who has not reflected upon creation in a manner that makes him think of the Creator. If such a person was informed about the obligations regarding belief and affirmed them just by the authority of the one informing him without any reflection, is his *īmān* valid? This is the exact point of discussion.

Taftāzānī explicitly states that according to the majority position, the belief of the *muqallid* is valid.[433] Note that this does not negate the obligation of having at least a general evidence because the obligation of having *īmān*, the obligations to reflect or

[431] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol. 1, 117.
[432] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 1833.
[433] See: *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 1827.

having evidence in order to reach *īmān*, and the validity of the *muqallid*'*s īmān* are all different topics.

One of the objections agains the validity of the *īmān* of the *muqallid* is the following:

> It is not possible to conceptualize assent (*taṣdīq*) without knowledge because it is either inherent to knowledge or a condition for it (…). So the *muqallid* has no knowledge because it is a decisive congruent belief (*iʿtiqād jāzim muṭābiq*) linked with a means which is either self-evident or an inference.[434]

The point of the objection is the following: *Īmān* is essentially an assent, and assent is either self-evident or theoretical. There is no difference of opinion that the knowledge of God is not self-evident, so *īmān* is an assent in need of reflection, which is in need of a means, that is, evidence. Therefore, the *muqallid* has no knowledge, so his *īmān* is not valid. Taftāzānī answers with the following:

> We say: What is considered in the assent is certainty (*yaqīn*). By that, I mean the decisive congruent belief. It is even possible to suffice with congruence and treat the predominant probability (*ẓann ghālib*)–for which no occurrence of the opposite occurs in the mind–as certainty.[435]
>
> Know that those scholars that said the *īmān* of the *muqallid* is valid and those that negated it [both] say that responsibility (*taklīf*) is fulfilled by acquiring and choice (*iktisābī ikhtiyārī*) except that the majority (*jumhūr*)–when they understood that acquiring (*kasbī*) in this meaning is more general than the acquiring by inference (*kasbī istitdlālī*), which is the well-known meaning among the logicians, and when they saw that this more general meaning suffices for responsibility to be fulfilled–did not make the evidence a condition for the validity of *īmān* and, therefore, said that the *īmān* of the *muqallid* is valid.
>
> Those that negated the validity of his *īmān*–when they thought that acquiring by choice (*kasbī ikhtiyārī*) is the same as acquiring in logic (*kasbī manṭiqī*) insofar as everything by volition is acquired by reflection and inference, and vice verse–made *īmān* that which is based on evidence.[436]

Sanandjī explains that the difference of opinion regarding the *muqallid* can be explained based on the different understandings of the term *kasbī,* which has two meanings. First, the acquiring in the context of logic refers to that which is obtained by reflection and arranging the premises (*tartīb al-muqaddimāt*). This is called *naẓar* (reflection) and *istidlāl* (inference). The second meaning is used in *fiqh* and means that

[434] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 1827.
[435] *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, vol 2, 1827.
[436] ʿAbd al-Qadīr al-Sanandajī, *Taqrīb al-marām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2017), vol 2, 339.

which is obtained by capability (*qudra*) and choice (*ikhtiyār*). The second usage is more general as it encompasses the first. In other words, everything acquired by reflection and inference is from being capable (*qudra*) but not vice versa.[437] Now, if *īmān* is acquired and by choice (*kasbī ikhtiyārī*), depending on the understanding of the word acquired (*kasbī*), evidence becomes necessary or not. If *acquired* is used in the more general sense, then the evidence is not a condition because someone can choose to affirm what he has been told about the religion and acquire *īmān* by authority without reflection, hence, without evidence. But when *acquired* is used in the more specific sense, then the evidence becomes necessary because acquiring and inference are concomitant with each other.

At the end of his discussion, Sanandjī says that his investigation is "the pinnacle of the position's verification and utmost exactness" and advises the reader: "Remember it! Because it is from the subtle points which are only reached by the noble ones with understanding."[438] His remark is significant because he died in 1304/1886, which shows that *tadqīq* and *taḥqīq* were and still are an open door for scholars to come.

[437] See: *Taqrīb al-marām*, vol 2, 338.
[438] *Taqrīb al-maram*, vol 2, 339.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Diving into the commentary tradition of the Post-classical period is an extremely humbling experience. The present thesis dealt with only a few pages of Taftāzān'īs comprehensive *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid.* Although a decent amount of commentaries and glosses were consulted, it is in no shape or form an exaggeration to say that the previous investigations only scratched the surface. Many discussions were not even mentioned due to the fear of going down a rabbit hole since the concepts and topics are interconnected. Because of this interconnectedness, this thesis tried to shed some light on three topics to help navigate through the theological discourse of the Post-classical period.

Before the detailed investigations of the three topics, it was important to situate the thesis within the different trends in contemporary academia. First and foremost, there is a noteworthy difference between the academic output and the state of research in different countries and languages. While the relevant literature in English and German has made advancements in recent years, it has yet to catch up with the massive output in Turkey, which covers critical editions and secondary literature. Contemporary academics are aware of this situation. However, this discrepancy will not disappear as long the academic output in Turkey becomes available in English or Western academics start to read the secondary literature in Turkish. The available relevant literature was divided into two major trends: Non-engaging (descriptive) and engaging with contemporary issues. The present thesis falls under the first trend as it does not try to engage contemporary issues since it is still too early to put different traditions into a conversation.

The first chapter substantiated this claim by not only presenting Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzān'īs biography and works but also discussing several issues relating to the commentary tradition. We saw the importance of knowing the role of a scholar in a

commentary and how it differs from his independent works. Keeping this simple distinction in mind facilitates determining the school of a scholar and avoiding wrong conclusions. In the case of Taftāzānī, the most convincing position is that he is an Ashʿarī in *kalām* and Shāfiʿī in *fiqh.*

The second topic was epistemology and its relation to *kalām*. It was shown how the distinction between principles (*mabādiʾ*) and objectives (*maqāṣid*) in the works of *kalām* is not only helpful with creedal matters but also helps to situate epistemological discussions in the *kalām* discourse. However, the line between the principles and objectives is not always clear-cut. As the brief history of *kalām* showed, philosophical topics were integrated into the works of *kalām* to the point that the two sciences became almost indistinguishable, which ultimately led to debates about the subject matter of both sciences. Irrespective of this discussion, there is no debate about the fact that the subject matter of *kalām* also became broader with time. This begs the question of how the line between principles and objectives is determined. So a deeper investigation into this topic would be very fruitful.

One could argue that discussing the history of a science in the introductory section (*muqaddimāt*) was a novelty introduced by Taftāzānī. His brief history of *kalām,* which he presents in the *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, was quoted by later scholars in their commentaries and glosses. It is not far-fetched to claim that he was trying to make the history of a science part of the introductory section, which is mainly a pedagogical tool to give the students of any given science more insights. Again, this has to be treated as a claim and needs to be studied in more detail.

Another important part of the second topic was the discussions about knowledge and the difference in how it is discussed in books of *kalām* and logic. While books of logic focus on the right form (*ṣūra*) of an inference, books of *kalām* mainly engage with skeptics against whom they defend the possibility that the senses and reflection can lead to certain knowledge. That is where the discussions about the types of self-evident knowledge (*ḍarūriyyāt*) become crucial because they form the fundamental building blocks for the rest of the theological investigations.

The third topic dealt with the concept of evidence. Compared to other topics in the introduction section (*muqaddimāt*) in the classical texts, the concept of evidence is discussed rather briefly with a focus on the distinction between rational and textual evidence and various questions relating to prerequisites for textual evidence to impair certainty. Ghazāl'īs treatment of the different Islamic sciences in his *al-Mustaṣfā* was analyzed in light of evidence and showed how the task of a theologian is to lift the textual evidence to the degree of self-evident knowledge for the other Islamic sciences. This shows how different sciences deal with textual evidence. From the perspective of epistemology and evidence, a theologian asks the most general questions, whereas scholars in the other sciences (especially jurists) are mainly concerned with establishing principles that govern the textual evidence to put them into a coherent system.

By analyzing the definitions for the term *dalīl* (evidence), the study showed the difference between the usage of this term in the different sciences. Scholars of *kalām* and *usūl al-fiqh* use the term *dalīl* as "that by which sound reflection of can lead to knowledge of a propositional conclusion," whereas logicians use the term for "the ordered premises leading to the conclusion." So evidence in the first usage, which was the focus of this thesis, is an objective of reflection, which can lead to knowledge. This means that a piece of evidence has a signifier that always leads to the conclusion, provided a valid reflection is applied. Now, having a signifier means that the object of reflection is in such a manner that it yields knowledge when reflected upon, irrespective if someone reflects upon it or not.

Finally, the thesis also showed the important task of the theologian in the discussion about the realm of the rationally possible to make room for textual evidence. Especially the case study on the beatific vision showed that some differences of opinion about the revelation do not relate primarily to the interpretation of them but begin with the rational possibility of a matter. This opens up the question of how theologians, especially in the Post-classical period, determine the limits of the mind, which is another topic that deserves a closer investigation.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information:

Navid Chizari

Education:

2018 – 2023 ……. Ph.D. in Islamic Studies, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey
2018 – ongoing… Îkân Akli İlimler Projesi, Sultanahmet Medresesi, Turkey
2015 – 2018 ……. MA in Arabic/Islamic Studies, Münster University, Germany
Master of Philosophy and Islamic Civilization, UTM University, Malaysia (*two semesters)*
2012 – 2015 ……. BA in Islamic Theology, University of Osnabrück, Germany
2011 – 2011 ……. One Year Intensive Arabic Course, Merkez Kalimah, Egypt

Work Experience:

08/2021 – 06/2023
Research Assistant for Dr. Hakkı Arslan, University of Münster (MS)
• Bibliography and coordination of bibliographical entries

8/2020 – 02/2021
Teaching Fellow: Comparative Theories and Methods 1, Ibn Haldun University (IST)
Uṣūl al-fiqh
Formation of the Islamic Sciences

10/2018 – 07/2020
Research Assistant for Prof. Dr. Yaşar Çolak, Ibn Haldun University (IST)

03/2016 – 10/2016
Research Assistant for Prof. Syrinx von Hees, University of Münster (MS)
• Editing and commenting on poetry by Ibn Abī Ḥajalah

01/2015 – 07/2016
Chairman of the Student Association Group Osnabrück (MHG)

09/2013 – 04/2016
Teacher for Arabic, Bündnis der Islamischen Gemeinden in Norddeutschland e.V. (HH)

01/2013 – 09/2014
Tutor for Arabic and Undergraduate Assistant, University of Osnabrück (OSM)

Publications:

"Analyse der islamischen Psychologie: Eine Gegenüberstellung der IP-Literatur und klassischen-islamischen Texten," in *Islamintegrierte Psychotherapie und Beratung*, ed. I. Rüschoff & P. Kaplick (Gießen: Psychosozial- Verlag, 2021).

[with Yaşar Çolak] "Islamic or Secular History: Reassessing the Categories of Muslim Historical Writing by Tarif Khalidi and Thomas Bauer," *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 8 / 2 (2020), 460-487.

Scholarships:

2018 – 2022
Ibn Haldun Scholarship (Türkiye)

2014 – 2017
Avicenna Scholarship (Germany)

Languages:

German:	Native Speaker
Farsi:	Fluent
English:	Fluent
Arabic:	Mastery (C2)
Turkish:	Upper-Intermediate (B2)