

Unto Him [all such has] its return,
 By Him [all such has] its beginning.
 He gives order to everything in heaven and earth
 by the sequence of His particularizing command
 Upon the customary rule of His decision primeval.
 How majestic L 5 is His power, how blessed are His names!
 Magnificent are His qualities, and universal His benefits!
 Wandering and lost in the great wilderness of His divinity
 are the reflections and opinions of [man's] intellect;
 Hoping for but affording no perception of Him
 are the highways of [human] thought and all its byways.
 I praise Him, yet praise of Him is beyond measuring.
 I thank Him, yet thankfulness is also His gift.
 I pray for blessing on His Messenger,
 whose zeal and toil made supreme the guidance [of God],
 and whose courage and ability quelled error [in mankind]:
 May God send blessing upon him and his family,
 as long as the bright full moon sends back its soft beams.

Isfahani says:

L 5, T 3, MS 5a

[Here] in [Baydawi's] preamble²² are included most of the essential topics in the principles of our religion. Among these is our author's assured confirmation of the Divine Maker and His attributes, and his admiring exclamations at God's beautiful grandeur as he makes mention of God's necessary existence and His permanent continuance, of the impossibility of His nonexistence and passing away, of His absolute singularity and His knowledge,²³ of His power of autonomous action and sovereign control, of His primeval decision and particularizing command, of His restoration and inauguration [of all things], and of [His instituting] a prophethood that [in itself] is God's ability to herald a new order.

Now, [the term] 'praise' is both for eulogizing and for proclaiming divine favor in kindness and other good things; as one says, "I praised this man for his gracious deeds, and I praised him for his good qualities and his courage".

²² Isfahani's commentary upon Baydawi's text begins here, following it section by section.

²³ The scribe of L has omitted this term.

God, being the Real and True One, Glorious and Most High,
 a. is that One who is described in attributes of majesty, a Master whose qualities are all perfection, and therefore

b. He is the One worthy of praise and veneration. Moreover,

c. to characterize the Most High in terms of His necessary existence [and hence every creature's obligation to Him] is [to make] the fundamental statement testifying that He is indeed characterized by attributes of divinity. Therefore,

d. praise [of the divine] belongs specifically to that Essence Who is characterized by the necessity of [His] existence; and that necessary existence has concomitants

1. the necessity of [His] permanent continuance as well as

2. the impossibility of [His] nonexistence and passing away. In the author's preamble here, the third [proposition] is considered as related to the first, and the last as related to the second, so he complemented the first proposition with the second, and complemented those two with the third and fourth.

Then [Baydawi] pointed out something that demonstrates the Most High's existence by the method of the *Mutakallimun*,²⁴ [namely,] by the evidence T 4 for His existence in His works, the most evident of His works demonstrating His existence being the earth and the heavens. God Most High said:

"Indeed, if you should ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' . . . most surely they will say, God.'" [Qur'an 29:61] Also He said: "Can there be any doubt about God, Creator of the heavens and the earth?" [Q 14:10]

[Baydawi's statement,] "Witnessing to His incomparable singularity is the careful foundation of the universe and its vast superstructure", logically requires [in turn] the denial that there is a plurality of gods, for that would be a situation necessarily resulting in the disintegration of both the heavens and the earth. God said,

"If there should be in either of them [i.e., heavens or earth] deities other than God, then both [heavens and earth] would be destroyed." [Q 21:22]

[As a grammatical note here,] the term, "careful foundation" [raṣf] with the quiescent letter L 6 "[ṣād]" is a verbal noun, as one

²⁴ MS gl: This being to reason from the result [al-ma'lūl] to the cause [al-'illah]. The "*Mutakallimun*" are those who practice 'the science of theological statement'.

says, "The work of setting [raşaftu] the stones into the building I performed carefully to give it firm stability [arşufuhā raşfan] by putting each one of them together tightly."

Then [Baydawi] made it plain that God is 'omniscient' by way of His 'knowledge', not 'omniscient' by way of His 'essence'.

a. His knowledge is a unity, and comprehends everything knowable that lies beyond the limit of counting or measuring. MS 5b

b. Indeed, His knowledge is a unity that is linked to each and every universal and particular, both those that can be sensed and those that can be conceived. God said:

"He has knowledge of all things", [Q 6:101; etc.] and

"Not a leaf falls but He knows of it; nor is there a seed in the darknesses of the soil, nor any place of moisture or of dryness but it is written down in a Book of Plain Record [i.e., the Qur'an]", [Q 6:59] and

"God is One from whom nothing may be hidden, whether on earth or in heaven", [Q 3:5] and

"Though you may announce something publicly, God knows what is in secret and what is still more hidden." [Q 20:7]

Next [Baydawi] set forth the fact that God is omnipotent by way of a power of autonomous action

a. that is necessary through His own essence,

b. that is continuous through His own continuance, and

c. that is linked to all the possible realities. The [power] that specifies some of these possible realities to become real temporal phenomena at certain moments of time acts through the linkage of His divine will to each one. Thus, His power of autonomous action does not cease upon achieving His desired goal, for it is properly His right to restore again some goal to be desired by His will, just as it is forever His right to begin [working for] it. God Most High said:

"As We introduced the first created thing, so We shall restore it." [Q 21:104]²⁵

²⁵ The 'beginning' and the 'restoration' usually refers a) to the original creation of something and its restoration in the Resurrection. Or, it may refer b) to a shorter term goal, that when it is achieved, the 'power' of God is not frustrated by having nothing more to work toward, and thus another goal is set and there is a beginning again which is a restoration in the sense of 'recommencement' in the place of the work completed. See the article "Ma'ād" in En-I-2 by R. Arnaldez.

Then [Baydawi] explained that God Most High makes arrangement for everything that is created from the heavens to the earth by His 'particularizing command' [qadar], which in turn follows along the customary rule of His 'primeval decision' [qaḍā']. God said:

"Everything that We have created has been through a particularizing command", [Q 54:49], "There is not one thing of which We do not have a storehouse full, and We will not deliver it [to mankind] except by our well known particularizing command." [Q 15:21]

So, His 'primeval decision' is an expression for the orderly existence of all created beings within the *Book of Plain Record* and the *Safely Preserved Tablet*,²⁶ all of them having been brought together and totalled up in readiness for an original creation. And His 'particularizing command' is an expression for their existence as having been placed down within the individual 'quiddities'²⁷ after they have obtained their various contingent factors that specifically differentiate them one by one. The 'customary practice' [i.e., by which His particularizing command follows His primeval decision] is the 'customary way', as it is said that a certain person has persisted in one 'customary way'.

How glorious is His power of autonomous action, omnipotent over all things, and not ceasing upon the achievement of His desired goal! How blessed are His names; that is, let His names be exalted and magnified over any descriptions of created beings! God said: "Blessed is the name of your Lord, unto Whom be glory and honor." [Q 55:78]

How great is His favor that He has showered upon us both outwardly and inwardly; How universal are His benefits that include all created beings. God said: "He has showered His favors upon you, both outwardly and inwardly", [Q 31:20] and "If you should count up every favor of God, you could not reach their total." [Q 14:34; Q 16:18]

[Now, note Baydawi's expression], "wandering and lost", that is "bewildered in the vast wilderness L 7 of His divinity are the reflections of [man's] intellect", that is, observance of God by one's mental vision, and by critical opinions about Him.

²⁶ See the article, "Lawh", in En-I-2, v. 5:698, by A.J. Wensinck and C.E. Bosworth.

²⁷ [al-a'yān] the identified quiddities [sometimes thought of as 'the ideas'], after

Observance in the intellect by mental vision, when something necessarily cannot be perceived directly, is only a process of defining and describing. But the Creator Almighty has no commonality with anything else at all, whether in the category of genus or species, so He may not be separated distinctly from anything else through the category of either specific difference or accidental quality; rather, He is separately distinct in His essence. Therefore, there is no delimiting definition for His essence, since neither genus nor difference apply to Him. And because He is separately distinct in His essence from anything else, He has no obvious concomitant²⁸ the conception of which would convey the intellect to His reality. Nor is there a descriptive definition of Him that would convey [the intellect] to the observance of Him. For that reason, the reflections of the intellect have gone wandering and lost; that is, observance of Him [fails], from which conception of [Him as] a mental object would benefit, and also critical opinions about Him [fail] from which judgmental assent about Him would benefit.

[This is so] because judgmental assent in logic results only from a syllogistic inference from 1) the cause to the effect, or from 2) the effect to the cause. Now, the first [alternative] would be impossible in His case, for He is the First Cause, the Existential Cause of all created things, from Whom, not about Whom, testimony is requested. The second [alternative] sometimes does not produce certainty, so the intellect becomes confused. God has said,

“We will show them Our signs both in remote regions and within themselves, so that it may be clear to them that this is the truth. Or are you not satisfied that your Lord is a trustworthy witness in everything?” [Q 41:53]

[About this uncertainty Baydawi said], “Violently shaking”, that is, with a complete and incomprehensible blockage, “are the highways of [human] thinking and its methods”, that is, the directions it takes.

they have received their identifying qualities. They may be thought of existing mentally only, or extramentally in external reality.

²⁸ Isfahani's apparent self-contradiction may be resolved as follows: that God may be abstractly indicated as the Necessary and Obligating Presence [wājib al-wujūd], and that this affirmation has the obvious concomitants of ‘necessity of continuance’ and the ‘impossibility of nonexistence and passing away’ is an abstract fact. This abstract fact is separately distinct from the religious fact that in His essence God does not have any obvious concomitants.

You should understand that 'thinking', as will be plain when the topic comes up, is the movement of the ['reasoning'] soul' among the intelligibles,²⁹ beginning from a 'desired premise' and ending at it as the 'conclusion desired'.³⁰ This [movement of thought] resembles³¹ spatial movement that requires an open stretch of some distance in which movement may take place, and that [intellectual] open stretch is called the 'syllogistic way', or method.

Since the movement begins from [the desired premise] and the movement ends with [the desired conclusion], and as each of them is called [in logic a propositional] marker point,³² [Baydawi] therefore likened those intelligibles to the highways in which spatial movement takes place, and he likened the desired premise from which the [thought] movement began and the [desired conclusion] at which it ended to marker points, so he called these two³³ by those names.³⁴

After [Baydawi] had made it plain that praise belongs to a Being who would be characterized by attributes of grandeur and would be a giver of favors to others, and that God Most High is He, that One who is characterized by attributes of grandeur and who is the Lord of favors, he began to praise [God] and said: "I praise Him, yet praise of Him is beyond measuring." Here he was emulating the example of the Master of messengers, God's blessings be upon him, wherein the Prophet had said: "I cannot measure praise due unto You in the same measure that You have brought it upon Yourself."³⁵

[Baydawi] also said, "I thank Him, yet thankfulness is also MS 6b His to give." [This is] because the acts of human beings are created and belong to God, thanksgiving being among the acts of human beings. L 8 Indeed, [thanksgiving] consists in a eulogy upon one's tongue, action taken with all one's might, and conviction within one's

²⁹ For a preliminary concept of the 'reasoning soul' we have Baydawi's term 'soul', that functions like an 'intellect', the intellect being the distinguishing component of the human soul. And sometimes it will be called simply 'the intellect'.

³⁰ Both are the [maṭlūb].

³¹ L reads: [li-shibh]; T: [tushbih] apparently with "movement" as verb subject; the MS: [yushbih] apparently with "thought" as verb subject, and a gloss: "the predicate of [anna]".

³² [jihah].

³³ MS gl: I.e., the 'intelligibles' [al-ma'qūlāt] and the 'desired marker point' [whether premise or conclusion] [al-maṭlūb].

³⁴ MS gl: I.e., the 'highways' [al-ṭuruq] and the 'marker point' [al-jihah].

³⁵ [lā uḥṣī thanā'an 'alayka anta ka-mā athnayta 'ala' nafsika]: a hadith indexed in Wensinck's *Muḥjam Alfaz al-Hadith al-Nabawi* as being in most or all of the major hadith collections. Found in *Sahih Muslim*, Salah #222.

heart.³⁶ Taken all together, T 5 [thanksgiving] is to devote one's soul, one's body members, and one's powers, both outwardly and inwardly, 'to that for which they were created',³⁷ and thus 'thanksgiving' is the gift of God.

Then, since all happiness, whether heavenly or earthly, whether temporal or eternal, is something that comes to us through the Messenger, God said [i.e., to him],

"We have sent you strictly as an act of mercy to the world's inhabitants." [Q 21:107] God has commanded us to ask blessing upon him, saying,

"Indeed, God and His angels ask blessings upon the Prophet; O you who believe, ask blessings for him and greet him abundantly with 'peace.'" [Q 33:56] So [Baydawi] began to pray for blessings to be upon him, and said, "I pray a blessing to be upon His Messenger who³⁸ has made supreme the guidance [of God] . . ." such that it has reached to the eastern parts of the earth and to the western.

[Notes on Baydawi's syntax here.] The term, 'toil', [ʿanāʾ] is spelled with an 'a' and is the verbal noun of [ʿaniya], spelled with an 'i', and in the imperfect tense with an 'a', as [yaʿnaʾ]. He quelled error, that is, his courage, or, his strength conquered [it], and 'his ability' [ghanāʾuhu], spelled with an 'a' is 'his advantage'. 'Shining out' [ḍiyāʾ] means 'brightness'. One says, "The light of the fire made a brightness", [ḍāʾat] with either [ḍawʾan] or [ḍiyāʾan], and the word [aḍāʾat] is like it. It sometimes occurs as transitive [mutaʾaddiyan]; one may say, "The fire brightened it." The word [aḍāʾa] here is transitive, its active agency being its shining out [ḍiyāʾuhu], and the pronoun [hu] attached to it refers to the Messenger [as antecedent]. The 'bright full moon' is its object in the accusative case. But it can

³⁶ Near his commentary's beginning Isfahani places this statement in triadic form based on the rhyming of [lisān—arkān—janān], here focussed on the concept of praise as thanksgiving. Near the ending of his commentary, in Book 3, Section 2, Topic 8, Isfahani changes this same triad to focus on the concept of "faith." As such it is discussed in the article, "Iman.—I. Elements and conditions of the act of faith", by Louis Gardet in the *En-I-2*, v. 3, pp. 1170b–1171a.

³⁷ The foregoing clause echoes the second part of a quotation used by the Prophet, but not attributed to him as its originator; in full it is: "Everyone is easily amenable to that for which he was created." Baydawi uses this quotation in his argument in Book 3, Section 2, Topic 4b. As a hadith it is listed in *Sunan Abu Daud*, Kitab al-Sunnah, #4709.

³⁸ The MS adds here the clause, . . . "Whose zeal and toil", as in Baydawi's text, but Isfahani abridges the passage, and it is omitted by L and T and MS Garrett 989Ha.

also be intransitive [lāziman], and in that case “the bright full moon” would be the active agency of [aḍā’a], [ḍiyā’uhu] being in apposition to it.

Baydawi said:

L 8, T 5

To proceed further:

- a. the greatest of all our sciences in subject matter,
the firmest of them in principles and corollaries,
the strongest of them in evidence and proof, and
the clearest³⁹ of them in argument and method,
is that Science [of Theological Statement] which is the
 1. Guardian in making manifest the sublime mysteries of divinity hidden by the curtains of [divine] omnipotence; the
 2. Observer of everything present in the sovereign domain as well as everything unseen in the divine kingdom; the
 3. Distinguisher between those chosen to bear a message and to guide
and those disposed by nature for error and evil; the
 4. Unveiler of the states of the blessed and the miserable in their final abode on the Day of Justice and Decision; and the
 5. Solid Platform for the Religious Law’s [pillar] bases; and it is [the Law’s] foundation, as well as being the chief and headmost of the distinguishing signs of our religion.⁴⁰

³⁹ The two immediately preceding adjectives, superlatives formed on weak-lam verb roots [aqwa’—ajla’], are examples of problems faced by the Iranian author as well as by the Ottoman scribes and editors of this work in Arabic spelling. L: [aqwihā—ajlāhā]; T (edited in Cairo): [aqwāhā—ajlāhā]; MS Garrett 283B: [aqwihā (?)—ajlāhā]; MS Garrett 989Hb: [aqwihā—ajlihā]. Isfahani’s text in L is [aqwihā] while in T it is [aqwāhā], but he chooses [awḍaḥuhā] as a synonym of [ajlāhā] and that precludes misreading the latter as [ajallahā], perhaps a more common term in laudatory texts.

⁴⁰ Baydawi first defines the [‘ilm al-kalām] by this list of its functions, and his commentator Isfahani starts out by giving a generic definition for it that serves to designate the larger body of knowledge from which the [‘ilm al-kalām] branched out. Modern scholarship also wrestles in translation for a definition of this newly growing ‘branch of religious knowledge’. Professor Louis Gardet has written on this matter in the En-I-2. In his article titled “Kalam”, he distinguishes our topic from other usages by defining [‘ilm al-kalām] as “defensive apologetics”, or “the science of discourse (on God).”

In his article titled “‘Ilm al-kalam”, he begins by saying “The term is usually translated, as an approximate rendering, ‘theology.’” Then he quotes two authorities. The philosopher Farabi said, that it was “a science which enables a man to procure the victory of the dogmas and actions laid down by the Legislator of the

Isfahani says:

L 8, T 5, MS 6b

a. Our author's intent is to point out the fact that the noblest of all branches of knowledge is the [body of] systematic knowledge of the fundamental principles of our religion [that is, 'the science of theological statement'], in order to motivate students to desire and seek it.

Now,—wherein the greatness and nobility of any science rest upon the greatness and nobility of its subject matter, and L 9 upon the firmness of its principles, namely, its universal foundations, as the fact that the Most High is a free agent, and its corollaries, namely, questions that branch out from the universal foundations, such as the commissioning of prophetic messengers and the resurrection of human bodies, and upon the strength of its evidence and proof and the clarity of its argumentation and method,—then, to that extent every science will have had its subject matter become greater and nobler, its principles and corollaries firmer, its evidence and proof stronger, and its argumentation and method clearer. Indeed, that science [of theological statement] will be greater and nobler, this being the greatest of all our sciences in subject matter, firmest of them in principles and corollaries, strongest of them in evidence and proof, and clearest of them in argumentation MS 7a and method; this is the science called [the 'science of] theological statement'.

1. [Baydawi describes this 'science of theological statement' first] as "the Guardian" in presenting clearly and publicly the attributes of the Most High's essence, [a task that is done] through [studying] the attributes of [God's] acts. [Baydawi's use of the term] 'to

religion, and to refute all opinions contradicting them." Further, from Iji's *Mawaqif*: "Kalam is the science which is concerned with firmly establishing religious beliefs by adducing proofs and with banishing doubts" (p. 7 in our edition). After this Gardet gives a full history of the development of this science, first among the Mu'tazilah in defending Islam against Mazdaean and Christian apologists, then later among the Asha'irah who were more in the mainstream of Islamic thinking and practice. The Mu'tazilah fell out of favor and "Mu'tazilism was in turn condemned and most of its productions [in religious literature] were destroyed." "The discovery of these works [e.g., 'Abd al-Jabbar's *Mughni*] in the Yemen is another proof that under the challenge of the 5th/11th century reaction [against them] the influence of the school continued to be felt in non-Sunni milieus" (En-I-2 v. 3: p. 1144a).

Gardet lists (v. 3, p. 1145a) among the "later Mutakallimun" of the Asha'irah school Ghazali, Shahrastani, Fakhr al-Din Razi ("one of the most original thinkers of this school"), then skips to Isfahani, Iji, Jurjani and Dawani. Perhaps Baydawi was skipped here because he is considered to be more of a jurist than a Mutakallim.

We believe that the translation, 'the science of theological statement', will serve as a useful and correct interpretation.

manifest' means 'to present clearly and publicly', the 'sublime mysteries of divinity' are the attributes of [God's] essence, 'the divinity' being [God's] essence, and the 'curtains of divine omnipotence' are the attributes of the [divine] acts; thus, the attributes of [God's] essence are behind the cover of the attributes of [His divine] acts.

2. [Baydawi's] expression, "the Observer", is a second descriptive for that science [of theological statement, in its natural comprehension] of the observable aspects of the world, namely, everything perceptible to the senses, as well as the unrevealed aspects of the divine kingdom, namely, the intelligibles that are absent to the physical senses. For indeed, among the realities possible that [have become] existents there are those that are perceived by physical sense, being called the 'observable evidence', the 'sovereign domain' and 'the creation'; and there are those that are perceived not by physical sense but rather by the intellect, these being called 'the unseen', the 'divine kingdom', and the 'governing authority'. God has referred to both these categories when He said,

"He is well aware of the unseen and what can be observed", [Q 6:73]

"Do not all creation and all governing authority belong to Him?" [Q 7:54]

"Blessed be He in whose hand is the sovereign domain", [Q 67:1] and,

"Praise be to Him in whose hand is the divine rule over all things." [Q 36:83]

3. [Baydawi's] expression, "the Distinguisher", is a third descriptive of that science [of theological statement]; that is, [it is] the agency distinguishing between those chosen to bear a divine message and to guide and those disposed by nature for error and ruin, namely, those created with a disposition for these things. 'Ruin' means 'destruction', and is the verbal noun of "perished."

4. [Baydawi's] expression, "the Unveiler", is a fourth descriptive of that science [of theological statement]; that is, [it is] the Unveiler of the states of those in bliss or in misery in the Hereafter, these being their [respective places] of final abode on the Day of Justice and Decision.

5. [Baydawi's] expression, "the Solid Platform for the [pillar] bases of the Religious Law" is a fifth descriptive [of the science of theological statement]. It follows in orderly fashion upon what has preceded, namely, that the [pillar] bases of the Religious Law and the distinguishing signs of our religion are founded upon the Book

and the Prophet's Custom, and the [process of] inference drawn from both of these depends upon the fact of having established that God L 10 is One Who speaks, Who sends messengers, and Who gives revelations to them. These matters are known only from the 'science of theological statement'. Therefore, [this science of theological statement] is the Solid Platform for the [pillar] bases of the Religious Law and is its foundation, as well as being the chief and headmost of the distinguishing signs of our religion. Thus, the distinguishing signs of our religion are 'in need' of the science of theological statement, while the 'theological statement' is not 'in need' of them.

The science characterized by these attributes is the greatest of all our sciences in its subject matter, firmest⁴¹ of them in principles and corollaries, strongest of them in evidence and proof, MS 7b and clearest of them in argumentation and method, only because its subject matter is the essence of God Most High, and the essence of all created things. [It is so] because in this way it investigates the attributes of God and the various conditions of all created things wherein these factors will lead to conviction in what should be believed.

Let no one say that it is inadmissible to make the essence of God a subject [for study] in the science of theological statement, because the subject of every science is something that is granted [as a presupposition] in that science, either being clearly evident in itself or made evident in some other science. Furthermore, the essence of God is neither something clearly evident in itself, because it is a matter of logical reasoning, nor is it made evident in some other science, because the rest of T 6 the sciences of the religious law seek help in this matter through 'theological statement'. As a particular example, the certainty that there is a Creator is not due to what people say, namely, that His essence is 'made clear through philosophy' and is 'granted as a presupposition in theology', because that would not be sound reasoning. How could it be admissible that the [main] subject in the highest of the religious sciences would be made clear within some other science foreign to the sciences of the religious law? Rather, since what would be made clear by proof is the 'existence' of an essence,⁴² this ['existence'] being something 'additional' to the essence [itself], that is, to [its] existence in absolute

⁴¹ L mistakenly reads, [aqwihā] instead of [aqwamuhā].

⁴² The MS alone parenthetically inserts here: (not the essence of Him the Most High).

terms, it would be therefore one of the states of the essence. Now, an investigation—of the states of a [given] subject of a certain science—that would be carried on within [that same] science, would not exclude the [given subject's] essence from becoming the subject [of investigation].

Thus, if it should be objected that the certainty of a [given] subject's 'existence' would not be established within the [same] science, but rather in some other [science], and if its 'existence' should not be evident [within its own science], and if its 'existence in relation to [its own] essence' should not be evident [within its own science], so that it would need to be demonstrated, then the answer [to the objection] would be that if the investigation should be about the 'states', these being [a subject] other than the 'existence', then the existence of this subject would be granted and it would be made clear in some other science. But if the investigation should be about the 'existence' [of the main subject in the science], then that would not be made clear in some other science, but rather, within that [same] science. In that case [the 'existence' of the subject] would be one of the problems of [that certain] science. This is provided that [the disputants'] statement—that the existence of the subject would be made clear nevertheless, in another science,—is not to be taken in its absolute sense. Rather, what is meant by [their statement] is that the subject [of this science, i.e., 'theological statement'], being more specific than the subject of some other science, would have its existence made clear in the other science only if it should not be clear [in its own science of 'theological statement'].

So, it is apparent that the greatest of the sciences in subject matter L 11 is [the science of] theological statement. Also, with regard to the fact that the science of theological statement is the firmest of the sciences in its principles and corollaries, compared to the [other] sciences of our religion, that is true because it is a knowledge of conviction, while in the rest of them it is conjectural [knowledge].

Compared to the topics in divinity in the system of MS 8a the Physician-Philosopher [Ibn Sina], [the science of theological statement] rests upon:⁴³

- a) divine inspiration which provides the truth of conviction,
- and
- b) divine aid that is both

⁴³ L: [musnad]; T, MS and MS Garrett 989Ha: [mustanad].

1) required for completeness of what is knowable, and is
 2) free from the defect of fallible estimation; and all that is in contrast to the topics in divinity in the system of the Physician-Philosopher. His [system] is based upon the intellect to which the fallible estimation raises objections. Thus, if the fundamental principles should be such, then the subsidiary corollaries would be likewise.

With regard to [the science of theological statement] being the strongest of [the religious sciences] in evidence and proof, this is true because its evidence provides a decisive demonstration, and it is clearest in argumentation and method because it is the method of the prophets. [This science of theological statement] is the Straight Path, the Path of God, "to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth." [Q 2:255, 284, etc.]

Baydawi said:

L 11, T 6

This [then is the preamble]. Our book employs the wisest intellectual maxims and the finest traditional selections in the ongoing task of examining [our theology's] fundamental principles and bringing out its distinguishing factors, in summarizing its laws and verifying its demonstrations, in resolving its problems and clarifying its enigmas. Even together with its brevity of expression and resulting ease of memorization, it includes topical ideas having many branches whose boundary sides are close together, and these are uniformly identifiable in their fundamental concepts and introductory steps, and soundly correct in their sublimities and their passages of transition.⁴⁴

I named it: *Rays of Dawnlight Outstreaming from Far Horizons of Logical Reasoning*. And from God, to Him be praise, I ask

that He will safeguard me from anything worthless and guide me on a steady path,

that He will forgive my sins on Judgment Day and bring me to the highest heavens,

"together with the prophets and people of truth,
 the martyrs and people of virtue." [Qur'an 4:69]

⁴⁴ [musawwamat al-mabādī wa-al-maṭālī' muqawwamat al-ʿawālī wa-al-maqāṭī']. Baydawi appears to favor an architectural metaphor: foundation, entry stairway, upper areas, lines of definition. Isfahani reverses the order of the first two nouns, perhaps favoring a topographical metaphor: introductory climbing approach, spread out platform foundation, sublimity of conceptual subject, passages intersecting with history.

Isfahani says:

L 11, T 6, MS 8a

[Baydawi's expression, 'this, then' means] 'this has been the preamble', or, 'accept this [as introduction].' His expression, 'wisest intellectual maxims' ['aqā'il], being the plural of ['aqīlah], means 'the best'; it is the precious part of any thing, that is, it includes the choicest intellectual statements and the best traditional studies—as one says, "The choicest of his companions came to me", that is, the best of them—while continuing to examine its principles and deduce its distinguishing factors.

So indeed, the principles mentioned in it are reviewed, and the distinguishing factors noted in it are extracted [and listed for study]. As the term, 'to review', means 'to trim', the meaning is that its fundamental principles are reviewed and trimmed of all that is extraneous. Its distinguishing factors have been clearly formulated and extracted to rest upon the bases of the faith, and the religious laws have been summarized, that is, clarified and explained, 'summarizing' meaning 'clarify' and 'explain'.

The word, 'difficult' [also] means 'ambiguous'. One may say, L 12 "The matter became difficult", that is, ambiguous. One may say, "The affair became problematic", that is, hard and incomprehensible, and "a problematic matter does not lead straight ahead." Also, "clarification" means 'explanation', as one says, "I clarified it", that is, "I explained it."

The 'many divisions', [i.e., especially of peoples], [shu'ūb] being the plural of [sha'b] with an 'a' after the ['shīn], are what have been divided into many branches, or tribes among the Arabs.⁴⁵ The term, "sides", [junūb] being the plural of 'side' [janb], [as in] 'their boundary sides are close together', that is, they are near to each other. The expression, 'uniformly identifiable' [literally, 'designated by a mark' [musawwamah], means something known [by its mark]. A statement of the Most High [refers to angels], "having a uniform insignia" [musawwimīn], [Q 3:125] that is, marks by which they are readily known. Also, the word of the Most High is, "stamped clay bricks", [Q 51:33] that is, they have the seal imprints [of manufacture]

⁴⁵ Baydawi and Isfahani both use only one set of the nouns from the root [sh-ʿ-b], namely, [sha'b—shu'ūb], now commonly meaning 'people'. However, the context indicates that their meaning fits another set, namely [shu'bah—shu'ab], meaning branch or division.

stamped on them. And the term, 'made correct' [muqawwamah], means, 'properly correct'. One says, "I made the thing to be correct [qawwamtu], so it is sound [qawīm]", that is, properly correct [mustaqīm].

Our author meant by the phrase, "the introductory steps and fundamental concepts", the topics on 'logical reasoning and its principles' and on the 'realities possible', and by the phrase, "the sublimities and their passages of transition", he meant the topics on 'realities divine' and 'realities prophetic' and on the 'supreme leadership', which are obvious.

Baydawi said:

L 12, T 6

The content of the volume is arranged in an introduction and three interior books.

Isfahani says:

L 12, T 6, MS 8b

Since the chief reason for composing this volume has been to establish firmly both the fact of the Creator and His attributes and of the Prophethood with its linked topics, all by using intellectual demonstrations set up from premises drawn from [all] the realities possible by logical reasoning about them, our author arranged the volume into an introduction and three interior books. The Introduction is on Studies in Logical Reasoning, Book 1 on Realities Possible, Book 2 on Realities Divine, and Book 3 on Realities Prophetic, with their related matters.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Through the course of these lectures, readers can note the influence of great authorities of the past on Baydawi. The Jubba'i family among the Mu'tazilah and al-Ash'ari among the Asha'irah Sunnis are prominent among his esteemed guides. His thought was informed by the work of Ibn Sina in philosophy and science and Fakhr al-Din Razi in historical theology. G.C. Anawati's survey of Razi's *Muhassal* in the En-I-2 (under *Fakhr al-Din Razi*) reveals how Baydawi has made his contribution in form and content generally following Razi. This is in line with the normal custom for medieval speakers and writers to build what they have to say on the work of earlier authorities. But we believe that in a comparison with Razi the *Tawali' al-Anwar min Matali' al-Anzar* of Baydawi is a better model in the outlining and statement of topics and arguments. Baydawi's permanently useful work in this regard is fully appreciated by scholars in both medieval and modern times, as we have documented in the Preface.