



## APPROVAL PAGE

Thesis Title: The Problem of the Origination of the World: A Study of the Theology  
of Imâm al-Haramyn al-Juwayni

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I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master (M.A.) in **Islamic Thought**

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)**

**THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGINATION OF THE WORLD:  
A STUDY OF THE THEOLOGY OF IMĀM AL-ḤARAMAYN  
AL-JUWAYNĪ (d. 478/1028)**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC  
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE M.A. DEGREE**

**BY  
KHALID BIN ISMAIL**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Hj Ismail b. Hj Othman and Hj Hanih bt. Hashim who cherished and brought me up since I was a child who besides all their loving-kindness have given me great moral and encouragement in keeping alive the intellectual tradition of the family and also to my wife and children for their patience, understanding and sacrifices in supporting this work come to its full fruition. May Allāh swt bless us all.

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Above all, only God is worthy of praise. Guidance can only come from Him, in Him I trust and unto Him I look.

## ABSTRACT

Theology is the study of God and His relation to the universe particularly by analysis of the origination of the world. The study of the problem of the temporality of the world represents an important aspect of Islamic theology. Moreover, the question of the eternity or the temporality of the world is one of the controversial issues between the Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī on the one hand and the Muslim theologians such as al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī on the other. Therefore, one of the most significant tasks of the present study is to analyse the *mutakallimūn* viewpoints on the origination of the world and refute the natural philosophers' arguments regarding on this matter. Of course, the fundamental aim of this study is to show al-Juwaynī's expostulation of thought on the philosophical existence of the universe as proposed by the philosophers peripatetics who tended to relate Greek thought with God's revelation. Their thoughts on this universe is that it was created from existing things to something through an emanation system. On this basis, they came to the conclusion that the universe is eternal and so is God. For that reason we need a comprehensive study of how the *mutakallimūn* in general and al-Juwaynī in particular faced this issue theologically and philosophically and related it to the natural philosophers in demonstrating that this universe is temporal and God is eternal either in time or in essence.

This study also discusses the concept of the universe as stated in the Qur'ān. Finally, it is hoped that this study will provide the reader with a better understanding of al-Juwaynī's doctrine of the origination of the world and other related questions. If is necessary his influence on the history of Islamic theology will also be considered.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Problem of the Study

The question of the eternity or the temporality of the world is one of the controversial issues between the Muslim philosophers and the theologians. The distinction between the eternal (*qadīm*) and the origins in time (*ḥadīth*) is an almost constant topic in *falsafah*, *kalām* and *taṣawwuf* and bears a slightly different meaning according to how each thinker views God relative to the world. The differences between the two originate mainly from the different sources used. Such Muslim philosophers as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā laid more emphasis on the rational and speculative sciences and subjected religious tenets to rational interpretations in order to give them currency and acceptability. The philosophers regarded Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism as reliable sources. The starting point of *falsafah* was reason; the motivation, the quest for the time nature of things. They maintained that through demonstrative proof they could see the existence of a first cause of the universe, which they claimed to be identical with the god of the Qur'ān. This was contested by the Muslim theologians, particularly those who followed the school of al-Ash'arī (d. 324/ 935). For them the Qur'ān is a source of truth and not of falsehood. Everything in it is true when it is correctly interpreted and the real truths about the world are all contained in the Qur'ān or in Ḥadīth in one place or another. But all these truths can also be discovered independently by using rational methods and these methods also produce them in a direct and scientific form and, no doubt in more detail. In the Qur'ān the literal meaning often conceals the scientific

truth from the masses. This is the position of Ibn Rushd as conceived in his book *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. The philosophers' thesis therefore is that the world is co-eternal with God. The Islamic theologians such as al-Ash'arī, al-Bāqillānī and especially al-Ghazālī considered the Qur'ān and the prophetic traditions as the only true sources to support speculation and philosophization. The starting point and support of *kalām* was revelation. Reason was used in defending the revealed word and in interpreting the natural order in conformity with a Quranic view of creation. For them, scripture holds a more essential place as a source of truth. Rational sources leave large gaps in our knowledge of the world, and some of these gaps are filled by revelation, the Qur'ān and traditions. Furthermore, they tell us truths about the world that we could never have discovered for ourselves, e.g. that the world was created by God at a past time, a finite number of years ago. And it is not an irrational act of faith to accept scripture as a source of knowledge : there are relational grounds for believing that the Qur'ān, in particular is a divine revelation and therefore, true. It is thus rational to accept the individual statements of the Qur'ān on the basis of our confidence in the whole, just as a child who trusts his parents believes that their orders are right even when he does not see their justification for a particular order. As a result, the theologians' thesis is to confirm the origination of the world. In fact, the issue of eternity and origination or creation provided an arena for determining the relationship of God with the universe for specifically determining, whether God is a necessary or a voluntary cause. If the world were eternal and a deity recognized, God's relationship to the universe would likewise be eternal. That is why the existence of God to some extent could not as a consequence be the issue for theology. Indeed, the initial issue is the inquiry as to whether the world

is eternal or had a beginning and also the nature of God

On the contrary a beginning of the world would lead to a deity possessed of will. If the world is understood to have a beginning, all medieval thinkers agreed that the existence of a creator can be inferred and the decision on the creator's part to bring a world into existence where no world existed before would constitute a supreme act of volition. Will in the deity would therefore, be entailed by creation. Subsequently, the question of eternity and would be intertwined with the enterprises of proving the existence of God. The medieval advocates of the eternity of the world are Alexander of Aphrodisias, Ibn Sinā (d. 428/1037), Abū al-Barakah (d. 560/1164), Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), Moses Narboni (d. 764/1362), Abū Bakr b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzi (d. 313/925) and Gersonis (d.745/1344). On the other hand the medieval advocates of creation *ex nihilo* are as follows : Saadia (d. 331/942), al-Bāqillānī(d. 404/1013), 'Abd al-Jabbūr (d. 416/1025), Ibn. Ḥazm (d. 457/1064), al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1028), al-Bazdāwī (d. 493/1099), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), Maimonides (d. 601/1204), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233), al-Ṭūsī (d.673/1274), Albertus Magnus (d. 679/1280), Bonaventure (d. 673/1274), Thomas Aquinas (d. 673/1274), al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), Aaron ben Elijah (d. 771/1369), Hasdai Creacas (d. 813/1410), Joseph Albo (d. 914/1508).

As has been mentioned earlier, the philosophers' view is that the world is co-eternal with God, and in order to justify their opinion they adduced various arguments which have been summarized by al-Ghazālī in his *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*. However, this debate in its final form is most succinctly contained in Ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* which includes three distinct layers of thought comprising the two earlier Muslim

Aristotelian philosophers, al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) the next layer being al-Ghazālī and the last one is Ibn Rushd . The former group had upheld the Aristotelian position that the world as whole was eternal in the past. Their conception was that matter has always existed though continually takes different forms. They did not deny that God was an eternal Creator (*Khāliq*). But by this they meant that He constantly combines matter with new forms, not that He made the world out of nothing at a definite time in the past. In the same way, God creates time but it has no beginning. Al-Ghazālī's position is that both the world and time were created by God out of absolutely nothing at one moment in the past which is at a finite interval from the present. For him *khalāqa* therefore means the same as *ahdatha* meaning that the creation of the world was an act of origination of matter as well as forms and time. This is in accordance with the obvious meaning of the Qur'an at least as it was understood by the *mutakallimūn*. As for the latter group, Ibn Rushd represents a third standpoint for his primary object is to show that Aristotle if not the Islamic philosophers had proved the eternity of the world (and of time). Therefore, he has several ways of answering al-Ghazālī.

Sometimes he vindicates the arguments of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, supporting them with fresh statements of his own. Yet he argues that al-Ghazālī has misunderstood them or criticizes these philosophers themselves saying that they have misunderstood Aristotle too. Added to this, in the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, Ibn Rushd quotes almost all of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*, commenting on it paragraph by paragraph. Despite his main criticisms directed against al-Ghazālī, at times he criticizes Ibn Sīnā, particularly for his Neoplatonism. Ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut* is a sober work of criticism that tracks down

ambiguities, draws distinctions, reformulates positions, corrects misunderstandings — offers analyses. It reasserts and defends an Aristotelian causal view arguing incessantly against the Asha'rite conception of divine causality and their denial of natural causes.

For that reason this present study aims at exposing al-Juwayni's arguments about the problem of the origination of the world which have been the focus of controversy between the theologians and philosophers. Therefore as we are going to see in this study of the above mentioned question al-Juwayni is quite capable of representing the Muslim *mutakallimūn* in the philosophical train of the process of reasoning of the origination of the world and is one of the best representatives among the Asha'rite theologians to carry out their thesis of *creatio ex nihilo*. Of course, in al-Juwayni's time there were so many naturalists (*dahriyyān*), those who believed in the eternity of matter and said that the world has neither beginning nor end. These questions occur in precisely this form in Muslim philosophy among the *mutakallimūn* and the *dahriyyah* who held diametrically opposite opinions on the nature of time and atoms. As for example, the *mutakallimūn* held that the world must have a beginning in time since the series of events that happened in the past were finite. The *dahriyyah* on the other hand maintained that the world was eternal, because the events of the past were eternal. To substantiate their positions, the *mutakallimūn* maintained that the world is composed of indivisible atoms and the *dahriyyah* that it is composed of infinitely divisible parts.

In refutation of the opponents' position, the *mutakallimūn* said that if the world were eternal, we should have to assume that an infinite series of events had elapsed which was absurd. Whereas the *dahriyyah* said that if the world was created in time we

should have to assume the existence of an empty time, which was equally absurd. Yet if the real was discontinuous as the *mutakallimūn* held, the law of cause and effect would come to naught and there would be indeterminism; and if as the *dahriyyah* held the world were continuous, the law of causality would hold good, but no ground would be left for free will.

## 2. The Aim and Methods of the Study

The main objective of this study is to expose and analyze al-Juwaynī's conception of the origination of the world based on his works on theology. *Al-Shāmil* and *al-Irshād* of al-Juwaynī are without any doubt the most comprehensive and systematic elucidations of his viewpoint on origination. Other important works in which he discusses origination are *Kitāb Luma' al-Adillah*, *al-'Aqidah al-Nizāmiyyah*, *Risalah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* and *Mukhtaṣar al-Irshād li al-Bāqillāni*. In addition to that, one of the main points of the present study is to present and demonstrate the validity of the *mutakallimūn* standpoint for such a case by analyzing their arguments in general, and al-Juwaynī's proofs, in particular, in countering the philosophers' viewpoint that this universe is eternal albeit in time and not in essence. This is in contrast with the *mutakallimūn* viewpoint generally and al-Juwaynī specifically that this universe is temporal whether it is in time or in essence.

As stated earlier, the study of the question of the temporality of the world is an important aspect of Islamic theology which almost all works include in the chapter of *al-Ilahiyyat*. As far as we are aware there is no contemporary work dealing mainly with the subject unless one considers certain Arabic scholars such as Fawqīyyah Ḥusayn

Maḥmūd who wrote "*al-Juwaynī wa Arā'uhu al-Kalāmiyah ḥawla Ḥudūth al-'Ālam*" and also Muḥammad b 'Alī 'Uthmān Ḥarbī who had studied the subject and compiled it in his book entitled "*Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū'al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī wa arā'uhu fi 'Ilm al-Kalām*". So far as the topic is concerned we think that nobody has written on the subject in English and more particularly on Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī. As is often the case of this study is both descriptive and analytical. The study will employ the description of the question of the origination of the world as illustrated by the Sunnite theologians and of course simultaneously it will discuss and analyze the views and proof of both the *mutakallimūn* and the *falāsifah* in arguing the issue stated above. Finally, it is hoped that this study can give us at least a better understanding of al-Juwaynī's theology especially about his doctrine of the origination of the world and his influence on and contribution to the history of Islamic thought generally, and Islamic theological thought in particular. It is impossible for us to cover all aspects of al-Juwaynī's theology in a study such as this.

### 3. Organization of this Study

As has been mentioned on a number of occasions the primary aim of this work is to focus on those Islamic theological facts which we find to be his most original ideas and his genuine contributions to the overall development of Islamic theology. In fact, al-Juwaynī could be looked at from the aspect of his theological and philosophical ideas, his account of Islamic heresy finally, culminating in the aspect of his genuine basis of Islamic orthodoxy.

However we will deal mainly with this work on theology and philosophy.

Therefore, in chapter one we will give a brief account of his life and works or what little biographical information is available on his life, his travels, scholarship, and his works. While in chapter two we will deal briefly with his method and his doctrines in *'ilm al-Kalām* including his religious theory of knowledge and other related matters. In chapter three we will focus on the question of the origination of the world in Islamic thought including the concept of the creation from the Quranic viewpoint. Finally, in chapter four we will discuss al-Juwaynī's standpoint on creation and his arguments for *creatio ex nihilo*.

In conclusion, we will recapitulate al-Juwaynī's conception of the origination of the world and also the most important point, al-Juwaynī's influence on subsequent Islamic theology.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE LIFE AND WORKS OF AL-JUWAYNI

#### 1. The Life of al-Juwayni

His full name was 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. al-Haiyūyah al-Juwayni al-Naysābūrī. His *Laqab* was *Imām al-Ḥaramayn* (the chief of the two sanctuaries) *Diya' al-Dīn* (the light of religion) and *Fakhr al-Islam* (the honor of Islam), his *kunya* was *Abū al-Ma'ālī* which indicates his prominent place<sup>1</sup> among the Sunnite theologians as well as his also being one of the last great representatives of the Ash'arī school of *mutakallimūn* and the teacher of al-Ghazālī. His birth place was Khurāsān. He was born there on Muḥarram 419H<sup>2</sup>/Feb, 25, 1028M. The *nisbah* al-Juwayni<sup>3</sup> is derived from the small town in Khurāsān

<sup>1</sup> Most authorities, both traditional and modern have traced al-Juwayni's birthplace to Naysābūr or its province in Khurāsān which was located in north-eastern of Iran on the border with Afghanistan on the eastern part, the districts of Kirmān, Bulukhistan, 'Irāq on the southern and western part and also Khaiyūwah on the northern part of Iran. One notable exception Brokholmann is the author of GAL who cites al-Juwayni's place of birth was 'Bustanika'. However, we did not find that it was al-Juwayni's birth place but most biographers unanimously report that he died in this village 'Bustanika' and then he was taken shortly after to his house in Naysābūr. Most probably it was based on this fact, that it is true that Bustanika was al-Juwayni's birth place by viewing its circumstance in the province of Naysābūr and because of its nearness with, it and it is considered as part of the Naysābūr area. See al-Juwayni, *Luma' al-'Adillah*, ed. Fawqayyah Ḥussayn (Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1965), 13-15. Hereinafter cited as "Luma"; see also al-Ḥamawī, *Shihāb al-Dīn Abū 'Abdullāh b. Yāqūt. Mu'jam al-Buladīn*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣūdir, 1957) 3: 408. Henceforth cited as "al-Ḥamawī".

<sup>2</sup> Al-Juwayni's date of birth cannot be established with certainty. Some traditional biographers such as Ibn Khallikān, (d. 681/1282), *Wafayāt al-'A'yān*, 8 vols. (Qum: Mansūrah al-Ra'ī, 1968), 1:362. Hereinafter cited as "Wafayāt". See also al-Subkī (d. 771/1369); *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā*, 8 vols. (Cairo: Matba'ah 'Isā al-Bāhī al-Ḥalabī, 1964), 2:251. Hereinafter cited as "Ṭabaqāt"; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ṭabiyān Kātib al-Muftarī*, ed. H. Qudsi (Damascus: Matba'at al-Tawfiq, 1347 H), 285. Henceforth cited as "Ṭabiyān"; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 / 1373); *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, ed. Aḥmad Abū Milhah, 12 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), 2: 128. Henceforth shortened as "al-Bidāyah"; Ibn Fadhlullāh, *Masālik al-Aḥsān fi Masālik al-Ansār* (Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr, n.d.), 38-40. Hereinafter cited as "Masālik"; al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* ed. D.S. Margulouth (Leiden: n.p. 1912), 144. Henceforth cited as "al-Ansāb"; Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, Ibn 'Asākir, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Fad Allāh al-'Amrī and al-Sam'ānī claim that his year of birth was according to 419/1028. While others such as Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taghribirdī say that it was in 417/1026. In our judgment we have accepted here the birth date of al-Juwayni given by the former as a reliable source. This fact is based on two reasons: first, it is viewed to al-Juwayni's death date that is 478/1085 were unanimously agreed by all the biographers and second is according to his age which every biographers had agreed that al-Juwayni died at the age of fifty-nine. As a result, the later date is rejected since the age of al-Juwayni's death at that time is fifty-seven, thus it is not correct. See al-Juwayni, *Luma'*, 15-16; *Wafayāt*, 1:362; *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:251; *Ṭabiyān*, 285; *al-Bidāyah*, 2: 128; *Masālik*, 38-40; *al-Ansāb*, 144.

called "Juwayn or Kuwayn", which was also situated in the province of Naysābūr. (In the East of Modern Iran).

However, according to al-Subki, al-Juwayni's *nisbah* was al-Naysābūrī.<sup>4</sup> This is because when we studied the biography of al-Imām al-Ḥaramayn we found that there was no convincing evidence to indicate that he was born or lived or died in Juwayn. Therefore, the *nisbah* Imām al-Ḥaramayn to "Juwayn" was most probably seen from its heritage, whereas the *nisbah* Imām al-Ḥaramayn to al-Naysābūr may be viewed from his long stay in that town. With reference to his origin although he was originally born Khurāsāni, some biographers have attempted to trace al-Juwayni's

<sup>3</sup> Juwayni means belonging to Juwayn or Kuwayn a district in the Naysābūr country on the route from Bistam between Jadjarm and Bayhaq (Sabawar) or a large territory near Naysābūr crowded with villages. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed. s.v. "Juwayn" by R. Hartmann; al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Buddān*, 3:181; al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2: 249; Abū al-Mahāsini, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣrā*, 16 vols. (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī a.d.) 5: 121. Hereinafter cited as "al-Nujūm"; Ibn al-Imād, *Shadharūt al-Dhahab*, 8 vols (Beirut: Maktabat al-Tijāriyyah n.d.) 3:358. Henceforth cited as "Shadharūt"; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* 1: 361; Abū al-Fidā, *al-Bidāyah*, 12: 128.

<sup>4</sup> Naysābūrī means belonging to Naysābūr situated in Khurāsān. The distance between Khurāsān and Ray was 16 Farsakh and 40 Farsakh to Sarkhan. See *Mu'jam al-Buddān*, s.v. "Naysābūr" by al-Ḥamawī; al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt* 3:249; Abū al-Mahāsini, *al-Nujūm* 5:121. During the eleventh century the best known ash'rite theologians are associated with Naysābūr (in the East of Modern Iran) which became a great intellectual center for many centuries. Among them were Ibn Furāk (d.406/1015), al-Baqhdādī (d.439/1047), al-Bayhaqī (d.459/1066), and al-Qushayrī (d.465/1072). See W.M.Watt, *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: An Extended Survey* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1985), 79-83. Henceforth shortened as "ITP".

<sup>5</sup> For the traditional accounts of his life and works, see al-Yāfi'i, *Adr'at al-Imān*, 4 vols (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A 'lami li al-Maṭbu'at, 1970), 3:123. Hereafter cited as "Mā'at"; al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 249-282; Ibn Khallikān, *Kitāb Wafayāt al-A'yān*, tr. W. MacGuckin de Slane, *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), 2:120-123; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 1: 361; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, 12: 128; Ibn al-Imād, *Shadharūt* 2: 358-362; Ibn Asākir, *Tabyat*, 278-283; Ibn Taghri Birdī, *al-Nujūm* 5:121. For modern accounts of his life and works, see 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyin*, 2 Vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1971), 1:670-698; Ahmad Mahmūd Subḥī, *Fī Imā al-Kalām*, 2 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍah al-'Arabīyyah, 1985), 2:147-164; Ahmad Khawājā, *Alīm wa al-Insān*, (Beirut-Lubnān: Dār Manshūrāt 'Uwayyāt, 1983), 145-147; Fawziyyah Ḥusayn Mahmūd, *al-Juwaynī, Imām al-Ḥaramayn* New Edition (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1970), 11-15; Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā in the "Preface to *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā Qawā'it 'al-Adlīyah fī Uṣūl al-Dīn of al-Juwaynī*, ed. Yūsuf Mūsā and 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, (Cairo: Maktabah al-Khanjī, 1950), *Kāf*; Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'Uthmān Harbī, *Abū al-Mā'āl al-Juwaynī wa Atharahu fī 'Im al-Kalām* (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1986), 1976; M.'Abdul Ḥye "Ash'arian", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vols. ed. M.M. Sharīf, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), 1:242-243; A.S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology*, (London: Luzac & Company Ltd, 1947), 184-185; W.M.W., *ITP*, 82-83; *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed., s.v. "al-Djuwayni" by C. Brockelmann.

descent back to the 'Arab tribe called al-Ṭā'ī that was Abū al-Ḥayy of al-Ṭā'ī.<sup>6</sup> That tribe was one of the renowned Arab tribes. If this is the case it means that al-Juwaynī and his father were of Arab origin and blood. I do not intend to exclude the possibility that al-Juwaynī may have been actually of Arab origin since this uncertainty about his origin comes either from the fact that the claim has no grounds at all or because the descent itself was not a matter of such great significance in Khurāsān in those days that it required special attention. Whatever the case may be, it is certain that al-Juwaynī gained his reputation as the great Ash'arite scholar through his intellectual endeavors rather than through his claims to Arab or other nobility. Notwithstanding there are two ways in which we may come to know more about our celebrated scholar in terms of his intellectual growth and his academic contribution to Islamic civilization: First, by an investigation of the political and intellectual state of the Muslim empire in al-Juwaynī's time and second by a closer look at the sources of his education and his own intellectual performance as seen in his works.

As for the overall political situation of the Muslim empire at the time, two phenomena are observable. First, the disintegrating of the power of the central government of Baghdād whose symptoms were already tangible by the time of al-Ma'mūn's era (813-833/1410-1429) and second as a result of that, the establishment and strengthening of several local governments across the land. In other words, the political breakdown of the 'Abbāsīd empire in the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, resulting in the fragmentation of its centralized power had immediate negative effects on the position of the sunni Muslims.

Shi'ite rulers were in control of most of the provinces, the Ḥamdanids in Northern Syria and Mesopotamia, the Qarmatians in Bahrain and Southern Arabia

<sup>6</sup> See al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, 3: 208, also Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Taj al-'Arūs Min Jawābir al-Qāmūs*, 16 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1980), 4: 92-168.

and the Fāṭimids in North Africa and Egypt, the Sāmānids in Khurāsān and Transoxania, the Ziyārīds in Ṭābāristān and Jurjān, the Būyids in Persia and Iraq and the Būyids and the Seljuqs in the East, under whose rule al-Juwaynī lived, and many other less important provincial dynasties.<sup>7</sup> As indicated above, al-Juwaynī was born in 419/1028 and died in 478/1085. That means he lived during the fifth century of the Hijrah, a period during which the political life in the Eastern district of the Islamic state was experiencing a crisis of religious fanaticism between the Būyids, on the one hand, and the Seljuqs, on the other. As is already known, the 'Abbāsīd period can be divided into two phases. The first 'Abbāsīd period begins from 132/749 up to 232/846 and is popularly known as the Golden Age of Islam. While the second 'Abbāsīd period begins from the caliph al-Mutawakkil in 232/846, that is the beginning of the period of decline of the 'Abbāsīd's region and ends in 656/1258. This was the last of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty which collapsed at the hands of the Tartar invasion. As a result of this, most of the Muslim regions were freed from the 'Abbāsīd's empire and gained their independence. Among them were Khurāsān which subsequently attempted to dominate neighbouring countries. This occurred at the time of the Būyid ruler Aḥmad in 334/945.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the coming to power of the Būyids in 320/932, started an open door policy of indiscriminately patronizing Shi'ites of different shades of opinion, even though they themselves were politically twelvers. Instead, the Sunnites were forced to assume a defensive position not only against the encroachments and ravages of militant Shi'ite groups but also against the subtle and very effective criticism of the Shi'ite jurists, political theorists and

<sup>7</sup> See A. Mez, *The Renaissance of Islam*, trans. S. Khuda Baksh and Margoliouth, (Patna: n.p., 1937), 59-75; H.A.R. Gibb, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in the *History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: n.p. 1958) 1:81-98; See also Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 94-97 and 115-127; *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, s.v. "Abbāsids" by B. Lewis.

<sup>8</sup> See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, 12: 39.

theologians.<sup>9</sup> However, the period from 426/1034 up to 531/1136 saw the beginning of the appearance of the Seljuq is at the first time in Khurāsān under the Seljuq Sultān Tughril Beg who was an adherent of the Ḥanbalite school who treated the Ash'arites very badly. His successor, however, Sultān Alp Arslan and especially his famous *wazir* Nizām al-Mulk supported the Ash'arites and put an end to the persecution to which they had been exposed. As is already known, he favoured Ash'arism, therefore, it is obvious that the ruler of the al-Seljuq era belonged to the Sunnite doctrine. As a result of that, he founded the Nizāmite school in Baghdād in 459/1066 for the defence of the opportunity of preaching the Ash'arite doctrine freely.<sup>10</sup>

On the intellectual level, the main streams of the religion, Islamic disciplines of knowledge and learning had been both methodologically and substantively well developed by the time of al-Juwaynī. In reality, al-Juwaynī was faced with one of those *cul-de-sac* situations in the process of development of Islamic civilization when the general view of many scholars was that the genuine possibilities for the search for Islamic knowledge and faith had been exhausted and that role of the subsequent generations was accordingly unclear. In matters of theology, we find that the fifth century of the Hijrah in Naysābūr was filled by the celebrated scholars of theology whether mu'tazilites, or Ash'arites or both parties. Indeed, the city of Naysābūr had become a focal point for many scholars such Abū al-Turāb al-Marāghī<sup>11</sup> a member of the Ash'arite school died towards the end of the fifth century of the Hijrah approximately in 492/1037 and who was also a jurist in Naysābūr. Similarly, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1065) and also Ibn Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī<sup>12</sup> (d. 482/1089) was a mu'tazilite who occupied with exegesis who collected numerous volumes of works

<sup>9</sup> See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new. ed., s.v. "Abbāsid" by B. Lewis.

<sup>10</sup> See. M.M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden : Otto Harrassowitz 1960) I : 242-243.

<sup>11</sup> See al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 230.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

and who urged the teaching of his doctrines and defended them until he became one of the great Mu'tazilite scholars. As a result of that, the Mu'tazilite school had a great influence in developing the science of *kalām* at that time until issuing such controversial theology as the view of the createdness of the Qur'an and the negation of the divine attributes which were against the Sunnite creed. Therefore, it appears there grew up a conflict between the two groups of *kalām* and al-Juwaynī was one of the Sunnite representatives. Afterwards, it is clear that at the time of al-Juwaynī, Naysābūr was crowded with scholars of theology as well as by many leaders of religion. On this basis, it is obvious to us that al-Juwaynī lived in a milieu of intellectual and scientific activity in which various doctrines of theology can be seen. As a great Ash'arite scholar it was thus necessary for him to defend his school and refute opposing views. Aside from that, it suffices to mention here the names of only a few of the scholars who came from the region of Khurāsān in general and Naysābūr in particular in order to realize the vigor of the intellectual activity there in different fields of Islamic knowledge during the time of Imām al-Ḥaramayn. From the science of *kalām*, the names of 'Abd al-Salām b. Yūsuf,<sup>13</sup> Ibn Baghdādī,<sup>14</sup> Abū Muḥammad al-Miṣrī,<sup>15</sup> Abū al-Ḥassan al-Ba'khirzī<sup>16</sup> and many others are conspicuously recognizable. From the science of philosophy, the names of Ibn Sīnā (428/1037),<sup>17</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'sumī<sup>18</sup> and Umar al-Khayyām<sup>19</sup> are commonly acknowledged.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 3: 237

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 3: 298.

<sup>17</sup> In this regard, al-Juwaynī was also a scholar who mastered in philosophy and had a great place in the science of philosophy. As Ibn Sīnā considered him as Aristotle in relation to him as was Aristotle in relation to Plato.

<sup>18</sup> He was one of Ibn Sīnā's students who produced various works in philosophy such as *Kitāb al-Mufaraqāt*, *Kitāb fī Adab al-'Uqūl*, *Kitāb fī al-Aflak* and the like. All this means that al-Juwaynī lived in the philosophical milieu.

<sup>19</sup> He was one of the who was produced and lived in Naysābūr. Indeed, it can be said of him that he also was engaged very much in philosophy beside Ibn Sīnā and has several works in the field. Among which are *al-Rubū'iyāt*, *Mukhtaṣar fī al-Ṭabī'āt*, *Risālah fī al-Wujūd*, *Risālah fī al-Kawn wa al-Taklīf*.

From the Šūfism the names of Abū 'Alī Ḥassan b. 'Alī al-Daqqāq, Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Salmī, Abū al-'Abbās al-Qasār, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī<sup>20</sup> and Abū Saḥl al-Khashab are well known and at great repute. From the foregoing exposition, we can conclude that al-Juwaynī lived in the midst of an inexhaustible fund of knowledge that no doubt had a great impact on the formation of his mind and on the final crystallization and formulation of his thought. Now, we shall discuss al-Juwaynī's family background, his education, his teachers and his students and also his contemporaries in the next part of this chapter.

#### A. His Family Background

Al-Juwaynī was brought up in a prominent family about which we know little. At least we know that his family was renowned for its scholarship. His father Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf al-Juwaynī<sup>21</sup> in later times is universally considered as a *mujtahid* (*Imām*); it is also agreed on by all that he stood pre-eminent for the extent of his knowledge and his skill in many different branches of science such as philology, jurisprudence, exegesis, literature and syntax. He had indeed produced various works; some of which are in *tafsīr* (*al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*) and in *fiqh* (*al-Tabṣīrah*, *al-Tadhkirah* and *Mukhtaṣar al-Mukhtaṣar*). Hence, it displays that he was not merely a celebrated scholar at that time but he was also a pious man and godly person. Among the expressions of his piety and godliness was that he would not lean against the wall of his house that was shared with his neighbour. In addition, is the

<sup>20</sup> He was born in a village near Neysābūr in 986 and died in the town itself on the last day of 1072. As is well known he was attracted to Šūfism by the teaching of the leading master of the time al-Daqqāq, whose daughter he married. His most famous work is his *Risālah* which is a full account of early Šūfism and has been much read and studied. See W. Montgomery Watt, *IFT*, 81-82. For more on his biography, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafiyāt al-'A'yān* trans. W. Mc.Guckin de Slane, *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary*, al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, 2: 108 and 3:208-209; al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Bukhārī* 2: 2-193; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafiyāt*, 1: 316.

example of his carefulness in *zakat*'s payment which he paid twice a year due to his awareness of forgetfulness of intention or giving *zakat* to unqualified people.<sup>22</sup>

According to the account given by Ibn Khallikān, his father Abū Muḥammad began the world as a professional book-copyist. Having amassed some money from his labours, he bought a slave girl leaving a high character for piety and virtue and her he supported with the lawful gains furnished him by his trade. She bore him a son, then known as the Imām al-Haramayn, and he told her not to allow any person but herself to suckle the child; but it happened one day, that on going into her apartment he found her indisposed and as the child was crying, a woman who was one of the neighbours, was suckling the child for a short time to quiet it. When the father saw this, he felt so vexed that he took the child, and held it with its head downwards, stroked its stomach and put his finger into its mouth till he succeeded in making it throw up what it had swallowed.<sup>23</sup> Then his father said that would rather see him die than have his natural disposition spoiled by the milk of one who was not his mother. In connection with this, it can be presumed that a languor of mind which sometimes came over the Imām during meetings at which he preached was attributed to the effects of that milk, a portion of which had remained in his stomach.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* 3: 208.

<sup>23</sup> Abū al-Fidā, *al-Bidāyah*, 12: 128; Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* 3: 251. In my opinion concerning this report is that it is impossible to connect it with Imām al-Juwaynī, even though he admitted an offence or a little sin, thus why could he not be forgiven while at the same time he was still young and possessed a good character and as a child he was not obligated yet and perhaps this tale was wrongly attributed to him in the first place. Whereas, on the other hand, it is also impossible to relate it with a well-known scholar like his father al-Shaykh Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh al-Juwaynī who was known as a godly person knowing the permissible and the forbidden, also understanding the greatness of Islam, so that an attempt to eject the milk from his stomach is a bad action and blameworthy of the father since al-Juwaynī was still a boy and if he made a mistake it would not be counted. Although he ate the forbidden food, he did not commit an error. So this is why the torture is charged to him while his father as we know was a scholar in religion and that boy was not necessitated from the Islamic law point of view? For further discussion on this fact, see Muhammad b. 'Alī 'Uthmān Ḥarbī, *Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī* (Beirut: Maktabat al-'Ālam al-Kutub, 1986), 27-28; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 208.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* 3: 25; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān*, tr. W. Mc.Guckin *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary*, 2: 122.