Paradigm Shift on Thought

Muslim Women’s Perspectives

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CHAPTER 5

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AL-ASH'ARĪ’S ISTIHSĀN AND
AL-GHAZĀLĪ’S ILJĀM AL‘AWĀM

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Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī ibn Ismā‘il al-Ash‘arī was known as the founder of
the orthodox philosophical theology, the school which defended the
faith with arguments or reason. The school was named after him as
Ash‘arism. Al-Ghazālī (his full name was Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn
Muḥammad al-Ghazālī) was one of the leading masters of Ash‘arite
school. Some of al-Ghazālī’s theological methods showed a new
approach from the traditional teachings of the As‘arite School. This
paper attempts to present the difference between al-Ash‘arī’s ideas in
Istihṣān ‘an khawḍ fī ‘ilm al-kalām and al-Ghazālī’s work of Iljām al
‘awām ‘an ‘ilm al kalām.

In Istihṣān, al-Ash‘arī deals with the objections raised by the
extremely orthodox against the use of kalām, and the replies given by
al-Ash‘arī, justifying its use in matters of faith. Al-Ash‘arī justifies
theological discussions about matters of faith in three ways; first, he