

THE ISLAMIC TENDENCY IN AL-JĀḤIẒ'S PROSE
WORKS: A STUDY OF SELECTED TEXTS FROM
THE *RASĀ'IL AL-JĀḤIẒ* COLLECTION

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Islamic tendency in al-Jāḥiẓ's prose works, with special reference to the selected texts from the *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ* collection. This thesis consists of eight chapters including the introductory chapter, and is divided into two parts. Part one covers three chapters. This part starts with an analysis of the historical background of study and literature review. It then proceeds to a brief discussion on the development of Arabic literature, and ends with a discussion on the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ and his prose work as a whole. Part two consists of five chapters. This part deals with an analysis of the text from twenty-one extant *risāla* from the collection. This covers textual introductions, an analysis of the main issue in the *risāla*, the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth and the style of writing. In the course of investigating all these subjects, provisions of classical Arabic literature works, particularly al-Jāḥiẓ's works, have been referred to and various sources of Arabic language and literature studies have been consulted.

It has been found in this thesis that the nature of al-Jāḥiẓ's work focused on *adab* and social issues including religious, political, scientific elements etc. Al-Jāḥiẓ's observations on Islamic elements and issues such as theological, legal, ethical and social are scattered among his *rasā'il*. This study has also revealed that the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ, which has been chosen for an extensive study in this thesis, in many of its aspects constitutes a rich resource for Islamic studies. It would seem that the Qur'ānic verses and the Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) constitute the main sources in al-Jāḥiẓ's works. Therefore, we hope that this thesis will encourage further study, especially in the fields of Islamic studies and particularly in Arabic prose literature study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Praise be to Allah, Whom we beseech for aid, guidance and forgiveness, and to Whom we turn in repentance. We seek refuge with Allah from the wickedness within us and from our evil deeds. Whom Allah guide none may lead astray; whom He leaves in error has no guide. We testify that there are no other deities save God, Alone without partner. We testify that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His Slave and His Messenger.

Over the three years in which I have been involved with this study, a lot of people have lent me assistance and encouragement. This study has also been made possible through the help extended to me by many gracious people to all of whom I am greatly indebted and grateful.

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Finally, with the work of many scholars in the field of Arabic literature, I only hope that this contribution will merit attention, and that readers will not spare me their comments. I have drawn a lot of evidence from both past and present scholars as can

¹During the progress of the thesis, my father passed away on 16th March 2004. It was a very difficult and painful time for me because I had not seen him for more than two years, since I have been in the UK to continue my study at UWL.

be seen from the footnotes and bibliography, and I am very grateful to all of them. Needless to say, the responsibility for mistakes and any conjunctures remain mine alone. I have to admit that this thesis most certainly has its own weaknesses, due to lack of knowledge, experience and outlook. Hence, any suggestion for its improvement would be highly appreciated. I pray to God the Almighty to forgive the errors and mistakes I have made. Perfection and faultlessness only belongs to Allah, the Almighty.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

TRANSLITERATION, VOWELS AND NOTES

A. Transliteration:

Many Arabic words were transliterated into Roman alphabet in this thesis. The Library Congress System (LC) is used for this purpose. They are as follows:

ا	=	a	ط	=	t
ب	=	b	ظ	=	z
ت	=	t	ع	=	ʿ
ث	=	th	غ	=	gh
ج	=	j	ف	=	f
ح	=	ḥ	ق	=	q
خ	=	kh	ك	=	k
د	=	d	ل	=	l
ذ	=	dh	م	=	m
ر	=	r	ن	=	n
ز	=	z	ه	=	h
س	=	s	و	=	w
ش	=	sh	ي	=	y
ص	=	ṣ	ء	=	'
ض	=	ḍ	ة	=	a (in construct state – at)

B. Vowels:

a) Long vowels:

أ : ā

و : ū

ي : ī

b) Short vowels:

ـَ : a

ـُ : u

ـِ : i

C: Notes:

1. The proper names and the names of the well-known cities such as Muhammad, Ahmad, Abdullah, Mecca, Basra, Baghdad and Cairo etc., have been spell as internationally known.
2. The year of death (abridged as d.) had been given wherever available in both the Islamic (Hijrī) and the Christian (or Common) calendars; e.g. 206/821-2 = 206 (*Anno Hijrae*) corresponding to parts of 821-2 (*Anno Domini*).
3. The letter (b.) is short for 'Ibn' = 'son of', whereas 'born' is written in full.
4. In the bibliography, author with Arabic names that begin with definite article "al" is listed according to their main surnames. For example, al-Jāhiz is included under "J".
4. As for the translation of the Qur'ān, I mainly make use of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

This thesis has not used many abbreviations. The following is a list of abbreviations used in this thesis:

A.D. (*Anno Domini*): Gregorian calendar.

A.H. (*Anno Hegirae*): Islamic calendar.

Art. : Article.

b.: ibn (son of)

B.C.: Before Christ.

bt.: bint (daughter of)

cf. : compare.

d.: date of death of an author or scholar (to show the age in which he lived).

d. c: uncertain date of death of an author or scholars.

e. g. (*exempli gratia*): for example.

et. al. (*et. Alii*): and others.

etc. (*et cetera*): And the others; so forth.

Eds.: Editors.

Ibid. (*Ibidem*): in the same book or passage.

i.e. (*id est*): that is.

MS: manuscript.

p.: page.

pp.: pages.

Pl.: Plural.

p.b.u.h.: Peace be Upon Him.

rev.: Revised.

r.: reign.

Sing. : Singular.

Transl.: Translation.

viz. (*videlicet*): namely.

Vol.: Volume.

vs.: Verses

20:25 : Qur'ān, Sūra 20: Āya 25.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

The following is a list of bibliographical abbreviation used in this thesis:

Al-Aghānī: Kitāb al-aghānī by Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī.

Al-Amālī: al-Amālī fī lughāt al-ʿArab by al-Qālī.

Al-Amkina wa al-miyāh wa al-jibāl: Kitāb al-amkina wa al-miyāh wa al-jibāl by al-Iskandarī.

Al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn: Kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn by al-Jāḥiẓ.

al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya: al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya fī al-tārīkh by Ibn Kathīr.

Bughyat al-wuʿāt: Bughyat al-wuʿāt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyyīn wa al-nuḥāt by al-Suyūṭī.

Al-Bukhalāʾ: Kitāb al-bukhalāʾ by al-Jāḥiẓ.

al-Burṣān wa al-ʿUrjān: Kitāb al-burṣān wa al-ʿurjān wa al-ʿumyān wa al-ḥūlān by al-Jāḥiẓ.

Faḍl al-ʿitizāl: Faḍl al-ʿitizāl wa ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazila by Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī.

Al-Fakhrī: al-Fakhrī fī adab al-sultāniyya wa al-duwal al-Islāmiyya by Ibn al-Taḥṭaḥī.

al-Farq bayn al-fīraq: al-Farq bayn al-fīraq wa bayān al-fīraqa al-nājiya minhum by al-Baghdādī.

Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn: Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn fī asmāʾ al-muʿallifīn wa āthār al-muṣannifīn by al-Baghdādī.

Al-Ḥayawān: Kitāb al-ḥayawān by al-Jāḥiẓ.

Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān: Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā by al-Dāmīrī.

Inbāh al-ruwwāṭ: Inbāh al-ruwwāṭ ʿalā anbāʾ al-nuḥāt by al-Qifī.

Al-Intiṣār wa al-radd: al-Intiṣār wa al-radd ʿalā Ibn al-Rāwandī al-Mulḥid by al-Khayyāt.

Jamʿ al-jawāhir: Jamʿ al-jawāhir fī al-mulḥ wa al-nawādir by al-Ḥuṣrī.

Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab: Kitāb jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab by Ibn Ḥazm.

Jawāhir al-adab: Jawāhir al-adab fī adabiyāt wa inshāʾ lughāt al-ʿArab by al-Hāshimī.

Al-Kāmil: al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh by Ibn al-Athīr.

Kashf al-zunūn : Kashf al-zunūn ʿan asāmī al-kutub wa al-funūn by Ḥājji Khalīfa.

Kitābān lī al-Jāḥiẓ : Kitābān lī al-Jāḥiẓ, kitāb al-muʿallimīn wa kitāb fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha by Ibrāhīm Khalīl Jirjīs.

Kitāb al-kharāj : Kitāb al-kharāj wa ṣināʿat al-kiṭāba by Qudāma b. Jaʿfar.

Khizānat al-adab: Khizānat al-adab wa lub lubāb lisān al-ʿArab by al-Baghdādī.

Al-Lubāb : Kitāb al-lubāb fī tahdhīb al-ansāb by Ibn al-Athīr al-Jawzī.

Al-Maḥāsin wa al-aḍḍād : Kitāb al-maḥāsin wa al-aḍḍād by al-Jāḥiẓ.

Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn: Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn by al-Ashʿarī.

Al-Mathal al-sāʿir : al-Mathal al-sāʿir fī adab al-kātib wa al-shāʿir by Ibn al-Athīr.

Mirʾāt al-jinān: Mirʾāt al-jinān wa ʿibrat al-yaqẓān by al-Yāfiʿī.

Mīzān al-ʿtidāl : Mīzān al-ʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl by al-Dhahabī.

Al-Muntaẓam : al-Muntaẓam fī tārīkh al-mulūk wa al-umam by Ibn al-Jawzī.

Al-Munya wa al-amal : al-Munya wa al-amal fī sharḥ al-milal wa al-niḥal by Ibn al-Murtaḍa.

Murūj al-dhahab: Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawhar by al-Masʿūdī.

Al-Mustaṭraf : al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf by al-Ibshīhī.

Nihāyat al-arab: Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab by Nuwayrī.

Al-Nujūm al-zāhira : al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa al-Qāhira by Ibn Tighrī Birdī.

Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ : Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ by Ibn al-Anbārī.

Rawḍāt al-jannāt: Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-ʿulamāʾ wa al-sādāt by al-Iṣfahānī.

Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr: Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān by al-Jāḥiẓ

Risāla fī al-maʿād wa al-maʿāsh: Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād aw al-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa al-madhmūma kataba bihā ilā Abī al-Walīd Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Duʿād by al-Jāḥiẓ.

Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk: Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk wa ʿāmmat jund al-khilāfa by al-Jāḥiẓ.

Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul : Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr by al-Jāhiz.

Shadharāt al-dhahab: Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab by Ibn ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī.

Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn : Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn fī sharḥ risāla Ibn Zaydūn by Ibn Nubāta.

Al-Ṣināʿatayn : al-Ṣināʿatayn al-kitāba wa al-shiʿr by Al-ʿAskarī.

Subḥ al-aʿshā: Subḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshā by al-Qalqashandī.

Tārīkh Baghdād : Tārīkh Baghdād aw madīnat al-salām by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.

Al-Tanbīh wa al-radd: al-Tanbīh wa al-radd ʿalā ahl al-ahwāʾ wa al-bidaʿ by al-Shāfī.

Al-ʿUmda: al-ʿUmda fī maḥāsīn al-shiʿr wa ādābih wa naqdih by Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī.

ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ : ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa.

Wafayāt al-aʿyān : Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān by Ibn Khallikān.

Yatīmat al-dahr : Yatīmat al-dahr fī maḥāsīn ahl al-ʿaṣr by al-Thaʿālibī.

Zahr al-ādāb : Zahr al-ādāb wa thamar al-albāb by al-Ḥuṣrī.

**LIST OF THE TITLES OF AL-JĀHĪZ'S BOOKS AND RASĀ'IL
APPEARING IN THE TEXT WITH
ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

1. *Aḥimat al-ʿArab*: The Book on the food of the early Arabs.
2. *Al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*: The Book of Eloquence and Exposition.
3. *Al-Bighāl*: The Book of Mules.
4. *Al-Bukhalāʾ*: The book of misers.
5. *Al-Burṣān wa wa al-ʿurjān wa al-ʿumyān wa al-ḥūlān*: The book of lepers, cripples, the blind, cross-eyed.
6. *Al-Ḥayawān*: The Book of Beasts/Book of Living Beings.
7. *Al-Maḥāsīn wa al-aḍḍād*: Book of Beauties and Antithesis.
8. *Risāla fī al-ʿAbbasiyya*: The Abbasids.
9. *Risāla fī al-akhbār wa khayf tasiḥḥ*: Traditions and the requirement for their authenticity.
10. *Risāla fī al-balāghah wa al-ʿijāz*: Eloquence and conciseness.
11. *Risāla fī bayān madhāhib al-Shīʿa*: An account of Shiʿite doctrine.
12. *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb*: An attack on secretaries.
13. *Risāla fī dhamm al-zamān*: Attack on the present day.
14. *Risāla fī faḍl Hāshim ʿalā ʿAdb al-Shams*: Superiority of the Banū Hāshim to the ʿAbd Shams.
15. *Risāla fī faḍilat ṣināʿat al-kalām*: The merits of dogmatic theology.
16. *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīḍān*: Superiority of the blacks to the whites.
17. *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*: The difference between hostility and envy.
18. *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisāʾ wa farq mā bayn al-dhukūr wa al-ināth*: The difference between men and women, and the distinction between males and females.
19. *Risāla fī al-futyā*: Concerning the book on legal opinion.
20. *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*: The envious and the envied.
21. *Risāla fī hijāʾ Muhammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī*: Attack on character sketch of Muhammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī.
22. *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ*: Robbers and their trick.
23. *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*: Proof of prophecy.

24. *Risāla fī al-ʿishq wa al-nisāʾ* : Love and women.
25. *Risāla fī jawābāt fī al-imāma*: Response on the imamate.
26. *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*: Jest and earnest.
27. *Risāla fī khalq al-Qurʾān*: The creation of the Qurʾān.
28. *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān*: The art of keeping secrets and holding one's tongue.
29. *Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād fī al-adab wa tadbīr al-nās wa muʿāmalatihim*: Letter for this world and the next on manners, managing men and social relationship.
30. *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh*: Justification of *nabīdh*.
31. *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm ʿamal al-sulṭān*: In praise of tradesmen and disparagement of officialdom.
32. *Risāla fī manāqib khulafāʾ banī al-ʿAbbās*: The Virtue of the Caliphs of the Abbasids.
33. *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk wa ʿāmmat jund al-khilāfa* : The merit of the Turks and of the Imperial army as a whole.
34. *Risāla fī al-masāʾil wa al-jawābāt fī al-maʿrifa*: Questions and answers about knowledge.
35. *Risāla fī al-mawadda wa al-khilṭa* : On affection and friendship.
36. *Risāla fī mawt Abī Ḥarb al-Ṣaffār* : The funeral oration Abī Ḥarb al-Ṣaffār.
37. *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn*: Schoolmasters.
38. *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*: Boasting match between girls and pretty boys.
39. *Risāla fī al-nabī wa al-mutanabbīʾ*: The True and False Prophet.
40. *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh* : Concerning anthropomorphism.
41. *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*: True and assumed nobility: An attack on pride.
42. *Risāla fī al-qiyān*: Singing slave-girls.
43. *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* : Refutation of the Christians.
44. *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*: Drink and the drinkers.
45. *Risāla fī ṣināʿat al-quwwād* : The art of the masters craftsmen.
46. *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughanniyyīn*: Types of singers.
47. *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*: Superiority of the belly to the back.
48. *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ʿalā al-ṣamt* : Superiority of speech to silence.

49. *Risāla fī al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*: The circle and the Square.
50. *Risāla fī taṣwīb ʿAlī fī taḥkīm al-ḥakamayn*: Support for ʿAlī over the arbitration by two arbiters.
51. *Risāla fī al-wukalāʾ wa al-muwakkalīn* : Steward and those that appoint them.
52. *Al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk*: Book of the crown concerning the conduct of kings.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1 Background of the Study:

It has been known that Arabic literature is one of the richest literary traditions in the world. Its history reached more than fifteen hundred years and it is generally divided into six periods: 1) the Pre-Islamic period; 2) the Early Islamic period; 3) the Umayyad period; 4) the Abbasid period; 5) the Mamlūk period; and 6) the Modern period.¹

To begin with, the first phase of Arabic literature was the pre-Islamic period (*al-‘Aṣr al-Jāhili*) or known as “the Heroic Age”² which covers two centuries at least.³ A number of literary works such as *shīr* (poetry), *khutba* (oratory), and *risāla* (letter/epistle) etc. were written down during this period but, as described by Bakalla and the majority of them were handed down orally.⁴ The second phase of Arabic literature is the early Islamic in which the Qur’ān was revealed and Muslim poets and writers started to produce what was to be later recognized as the beginnings of Islamic literature.⁵ The

¹ F.F. Arbuthnot suggests that Arabic literature may be divided into three main periods only. These are as follows: 1) The time before Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), 2) From Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his immediate successors, viz, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, through the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, to the end of the Caliphate of Baghdad (656/1258), and 3) From the fall of Baghdad to the present time. See Arbuthnot, *Arabic Authors; a manual of Arabian history and literature*, William Heinemann, London, 1890, p. 25.

² Gibb, *Arabic literature: an introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1963, p. 13.

³ Bakalla, *Arabic culture through its language and literature*, Kegan Paul, London, 1984, p.113.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.113. In his *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, al-Jāhiz, for instance, has collected much information on the significance of the art of orators of Jāhiliyya period. See, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, undate, Vol. I, pp. 40, 41, 91, 144, etc., for more detailed, see, Hārūn’s index of the book, Vol. IV, pp. 107-108.

⁵ Bakalla. *Arabic culture*, p.113.

third phase of Arabic literature is the Umayyad period of which the famous Arabist from the University of Oxford, Hamilton Gibb called “The Age of Expansion”.⁶ ‘Abd al-Hamīd al-Kātib (d. 132/750) and Ibn al-Muqaffa^c (d. c. 139/757) are recognized as the two foremost literary prose writers of this period.⁷

The fourth phase of the Arabic literature is to be found in the Abbasid period that is known as the richest intellectual and literary age of the Arabs. At this time, Arabic literature reached a high standard and complexity. Goldziher, also one of the western Arabists, describes Arabic literature, which includes poetry and prose, at this period, as “a polite literature”.⁸ Normally, among scholars, Arabic literature at this time is subdivided into two periods.⁹ The first period is known as the Golden Age and the second period as the Silver Age. The Golden Age period stretched from the year 132/750 and continued until 334/1055, and the Silver Age started from the year 334/1055 until 656/1258.¹⁰ Baghdad, the new capital for the Abbasid government and one of magnificent cities of the medieval world, became the centre of learning and every kind of intellectual life including literature. When explaining this situation in Baghdad, Gibb states that it was like ‘the market’ for literature and arts.¹¹ Therefore, it was generally accepted as profound changes in Muslim social, political and intellectual cultural alike.

⁶ Gibb, *Arabic literature*, p. 32.

⁷ Bakalla, *Arabic culture*, p. 113.

⁸ Goldziher, *A short history of classical Arabic literature*, Goerg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildeshiem, 1966, p. 72.

⁹ There are three studies of Arabic literature during Abbasid period which deserve mention here. The first is Abū al-Khashab’s book *Tārīkh al-adab al-‘arabī fī al-‘asr al-‘abbāsī al-awwal wa al-thānī*, Dār al-Fīkr al-‘Arabī, Cairo, 1966, and the second and third is two books by Shawqī Ḍayf, *Al-Adab fī al-‘asr al-‘abbāsī al-awwal*, Dār al-Ma‘ārif, Cairo, undated, and *al-Adab fī al-‘asr al-‘abbāsī al-thānī*, Dār al-Ma‘ārif, Cairo, undated.

¹⁰ Gibb, *Arabic literature*, p. 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Al-Jāhiz, who will be our focus in this present study, is rated as the most popular prose writer during this period.

The following period is the age of Mamlūk. It extends from the year 656/1258, which witnessed the end of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, until the year 1198/1800, which marks the beginning of Modern Arabic literature.¹² This last period is also known as the *nahḍa*¹³ period which according to some account starting in the later half of the 19th century in Lebanon, then spreading to Egypt and Syria, then to other parts of the Arabic speaking world.¹⁴

In early Arabic literature especially in the Umayyad period and the beginning of the Abbasid period, a kind of secretary art was employed to lay down the rules of conduct and behaviours for different classes of people. These rules were written in various literary styles and introduced in the shape of poems and anecdotes, etc. Thus, whoever occupies himself with classical Arabic literature will sooner or later find numerous prose works have come down from this period such as *Risāla ilā al-kuttāb* by °Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib and *al-Adab al-kabīr* and *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr* by Ibn Muqaffa°.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹³ This term usually translated in English as 'renaissance' or 'revival', it was first used by Jurjī Zaydān and some other scholars to describe the process of Arabic literary and cultural development which occurred during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. For further detail, see *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. Al-Nahḍa, Vol. II, pp. 573-574. Nowadays, this movement is running under the new term which called "the Ḥadatha movement". For excellent observation on this movement especially the Ḥadatha movement in Saudi literature, see, Izzi Dien, *Religion, the State and the Ḥadatha movement in Saudi literature*, BRISMES, (St. Andrew), 1992, pp. 574-581.

¹⁴ Beeston, *Sample of Arabic Prose*, p. 4.

Certainly, this type of writing ‘*Adab*’ was also a popular literary exercise in the Abbasid age and it is accepted amongst Arabic prose works, which combined anecdotal prose with other elements, including Qur’ānic verses, Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and poetry. In this basis, it seems to me that Arabic literature in many of its aspects constitutes a rich resource for Islamic studies. In addition, our knowledge of Islamic medieval society depends almost exclusively upon literary sources. Therefore, it has been stated that anyone who seeks to understand the social, economic, political and intellectual life in Islamic history or the nature of foreign influences upon the people, can find echoes of all these things in poetry as well as in literary prose. For that reason, the main corpus of Arabic literature of the first two centuries of Islam is clearly the works of men deeply involved in the theological, political and social issues of the day. In conjunction with this matter, Chejne claims that in Arabic prose literature, especially in *belles letter* during the Abbasid period, writers such as al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/885), Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/890), al-Tanūkhī (d. 384/994), and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 419/1028) developed this branch of literature work into a height never attained before.¹⁵ Few specimens of such writing have been preserved by classical scholars. Special mention should be made of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ. On this basis, this present study will focus on all these considerations with special reference to the *risāla* of this famous Abbasid’s prose writer, known as al-Jāḥiẓ.¹⁶

¹⁵ Chejne, *The Arabic language*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1969, p. 67.

¹⁶It is important to note here concerning the differences of the pronunciation of the nickname of “al-Jāḥiẓ”, whether it is al-Djāḥiẓ, Jāḥiẓ, al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Gāḥeẓ or al-Yāḥiẓ. Pellat, for instance used al-Gāḥeẓ or al-Djāḥiẓ, Walker in his translation of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ used Jāḥiẓ (without “al”) and Serafin Fanjul in his translation of *Bukhalā’* into Spanish used al-Yāḥiẓ (*al-Yāḥiẓ Libro de los Avaros*, Madrid 1984), Ramazan Sésén in his catalogue of MS of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works at Topkapi Museum in Istanbul used Cāḥiẓ (Ramazan Sésén, *Cāḥiẓ in ecerlerinin Istanbul Kutu-phanelerindeki*, Sarkiyat Mecmuasi, VI, 1965). This thesis, however, will use al-Jāḥiẓ with Arabic article “al” because “al-Jāḥiẓ” is already known throughout most centuries of Islamic history particularly in the area of Arabic literature studies.

1.2 Significance of the Study :

Al-Jāḥiẓ lived more than a thousand years ago; however, there is consensus among scholars, researchers and students of Arabic literature that the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ constitutes a peak of literary attainment in Arabic. As a literary figure of the first rank, it is agreed unanimously that al-Jāḥiẓ has attracted much attention from students of Arabic literature. He is regarded as “one of the early masters of Arabic prose literature, a humorist, he was also a theologian associated with the Muʿtazilite movement. He was an *adīb*, a man of letters who hoped to educate his readers. He was a scholar of rare distinction in Arabic prose literature”.¹⁷ It is widely acknowledgeable that al-Jāḥiẓ can be considered as one of the first Muslim prose writers who expressed a great interest in Islamic thought. For al-Jāḥiẓ, as described by Khalidi, Islam in intellectual aspect is a beginning and not an end; this is based on al-Jāḥiẓ’s belief that Islam had inherited world civilization.¹⁸ This means that Islam did not end all intellectual activities but rather advancing it and the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth are the starting points for that advancement. Khalidi added that neither the veneration of antiquity of foreign cultures nor a conservative refusal to tolerate foreignness was acceptable but an open-mindedness which sought wisdom in all its manifestations, and whatever its sources.¹⁹

¹⁷ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, pp. 385-387; Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, Trans. By. D.M. Hawke, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969, p. 3.

¹⁸ Khalidi, *Arabic historical thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 104.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 104.

It is interesting to note here that al-Jāḥiẓ has over forty of his writings – of varying length – survive to the present day,²⁰ from an estimated total of upwards of one hundred and twenty, or another estimated puts the figure at three hundred and sixty.²¹ Although much of his work has already been published, a vast field remains to be studied and explored. Almost all of his works deal with various subjects, as was described by Pellat, which includes animals, Arabic rhetoric and poetry, national characteristics, ethical qualities, human sexual behaviour, the various professions and ways of making a living and in fact countless other matters.²²

Bearing this issue in mind, one can easily understand why much research has been devoted to the study of al-Jāḥiẓ's work and has occupied the minds of many. And indeed, much has been written regarding this great writer as Jackson comments, concerning the keenness of his observation; the insights he gives into the social life of the Basra of his day, the subject of his intellectual coterie, and in relation to his religious inclinations, in particular his espousal of Mu'tazilite doctrines and so forth.²³ While we would agree with Jackson on this, most of these studies have been written in Arabic, with very few written in English or other languages. In addition, most part of the research is centred on his contribution to literary form and expression, and not on the content of his ideas.

²⁰ Bakalla, *Arabic Culture*, p. 144.

²¹ In another sources, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256) in his forty-volume *Mir'āt al-zamān* records saying that he has heard that the works composed by al-Jāḥiẓ came to total two hundred and sixty books. Quotes from ʿAtīq, *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī ʿind al-ʿArab*, Dār al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, Cairo, 1986, p. 325; see also Ṭannūs, *Fī al-nathr al-ʿArabī*, Jāmiʿat Ḥalab, Aleppo, 1981, p. 325.

²² Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 81.

²³ Jackson, *An Essay in the Practical Appreciation of a story from Kitāb Bukhalāʾ of al-Jāḥiẓ*, BRISMES, St. Andrew, 1992, p. 297.

It is in this spirit that this present study that another aspect of al-Jāḥiẓ's prose works will be examined. This study will concentrate on the Islamic tendency in al-Jāḥiẓ's prose works. As far as we are aware, his observations on Islamic issues such as theological, legal and ethical, social are scattered throughout his books and *rasā'il*. Therefore, any research project such as this must define its boundaries, since the potential area of research is too vast to encompass within one study. So, this thesis offers only an extensive analysis of this aspect in the selected texts from the *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ* collection. To date, no work has focussed exclusively on this side, a vacuum which this study attempt to fill. Thus, the significance of this study emerges from the fact that the previous studies only focus on main works such as *al-Ḥayawān*, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *al-Bukhalā'* as can be seen in the survey of sources in the following literature review.

In the effort to reach a good understanding of the topic that we are going to discuss in this thesis, a study of the *rasā'il* al-Jāḥiẓ's work is essential. For the purpose of this study, there are a number of his *risāla* that we can examine because it contains a vast amount of raw material for our subject of the discussion. We believe that the study of these *rasā'il* can give us as much as information for our interest. Worth mentioning, by way of example, his *Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr*, which is satirical work, as can be seen later on, where al-Jāḥiẓ has discussed various Islamic issues. Many of them are religious questions relating to the Prophet Ādam and Satan, to other prophets, kings, peoples and historical events mentioned in the Qur'ān, to angels and devils, to Paradise, Hell and the Day of Judgment, etc.²⁴

²⁴ The detail analysis of the *risāla* can be found in chapter seven of this thesis.

According to Mansūr, these entire elements arise in al-Jāhiz's works because the era of al-Jāhiz witnessed the recording of the commentaries on the Qur'ān. For example, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and his *tafsīr* belong to a later period than that of al-Jāhiz, but it contains the kinds of commentaries that circulated in earlier times.²⁵ At the time of al-Jāhiz also witnessed a great effort of collecting and examining the large body of Ḥadīth literature. It is enough here to mention as an example that al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), the famous Ḥadīth scholar, was a contemporary of al-Jāhiz. From this point of view, this study will also investigate the Qur'ānic verses and the Ḥadīth text that had been quoted by the author. Therefore, we hope that this study will be a new contribution to studies concerning al-Jāhiz and his works.

1.3 Type of Research:

There are two basic locations for research: outside and inside. Outside research is what we call fieldworks. Fieldworks or field research deals with real life, while library research deals with whatever has already collected by field research.²⁶ From this point of view, this present study is mainly a library research or inside research.

For this research, we have a variety of material we can utilize, especially printed sources. There are different kinds of printed sources we can use in this type of research such as handbooks, dissertation or thesis, periodicals, occasional papers, and etc. We have several resources, for instance, *Adab* literature, anecdotal and narrative literature,

²⁵ Mansūr, *The World-View of al-Jāhiz in Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Alexandria, 1977, p. 18.

²⁶ Denffer, *Research in Islam*, The Islamic Foundation, London, 1983, p.7.

historical literature, biographical literature and miscellaneous sources. Moreover, this study is inter-disciplinary, since it looks at texts from the *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* collection from various angles and at empirical evidence.

1.4 The Scope of Research:

As it has been mentioned earlier that al-Jāhiz has written a huge number of works with varying length and some of them are surviving to the present day, all of these works can be divided into two types; books and *rasā'il*. The focus of this present study will be on the second type i.e. the *rasā'il* by a detailed analysis of twenty-one extant Jāhizian works.

This study will be based extensively upon the collections of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz that have been edited by different scholars. The first collection is *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* edited by ʿAbd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn which in four volumes (Cairo, 1964-79) and reprinted by Dār al-Jīl, Beirut in 1991. The other collection is *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* edited by Muhammad Bāsil ʿUyūn al-Sūd. This collection consists of four volumes printed by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut in 2000. On the other hand, other works of al-Jāhiz, apart from his *rasā'il* are also taken into consideration here, since they contain references to the subject under discussion.

1.5 Literature Review/Survey of Sources:

It is possible to come across a wide range of books written by Arabs scholars concerning al-Jāḥiẓ and his works. So, the literature that this study is based on are primarily and secondary books, articles, and written materials produced by Arabs scholars and some Western scholars. Most of the material collected for the present study is in Arabic, but other parts of it are in English or translated into English.

In *Adab* literature particularly in classical period, these books can be among our references such as *Uyūn al-akhbār* by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), *al-Iqd al-farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (d. 328/940), *al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī (d. 363/972), *al-Ṣināʿatayn* by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. 393/1005), *Zahr al-ādāb* by al-Ḥuṣrī al-Qayrawānī (d. 413/1022), *Subḥ al-ʿashā* by al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), and *al-Mustaṭraf* by al-Ibshīhī (d. 850/1446) etc. All these books hopefully will provide us with some views about the works of al-Jāḥiẓ.

In addition, we will refer to historical literature books to find some information about personal life and also the political, economic and social condition in al-Jāḥiẓ's era such as *Tārīkh al-umam wa al-mulūk* by al-Ṭabarī (d. 314/923), *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya* by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), and *al-Muqaddima* by Ibn Khaldūn (d. 780/1378), etc.

On the other hand, Islamic biographical literature books are also important. It is varied, and often rich, in its genres. It offers collection of biographies of traditionists, judges, poets, grammarians, the Qur'ān reciters, exegetes, writers, women and other. This kind of writing is one of the most extensive areas of Arabic literature, because it is devoted to the life and works of individual authors throw many sidelights on the topic, which we are discussing now. The length of notices varies widely, some are very detail and some others are very brief. For example, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), author of the monumental biographical work "*Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*" devotes thirty pages to discuss about al-Jāḥiẓ life and works (Cairo edition).²⁷ Some other biographical dictionary also offers an account of al-Jāḥiẓ such as *Murūj al-dhahab* by al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), *Anbāh al-ruwwāt* by al-Qiftī (d. 646/1248), '*Uyūn al-anbāʾ*' by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270), *Wafayāt al-aʿyān* by Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Bughyat al-wuʿāt* by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) and *Shadharāt al-dhahab* by Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089/1679), etc.

Miscellaneous sources from the classical period also important to the study. For instance, the heresographical writings such as *al-Farq bayn al-firaq* of al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) and *al-Milal wa al-niḥal* of al-Shahrastānī (d. 459/1153). A long account of al-Jāḥiẓ's theology side appeared in these two books. Al-Jāḥiẓ, as the founder of a particular sect of Muʿtazila, has a place in *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, the standard work of al-Shahrastānī, as we shall see in later discussion. In addition, the bibliographical works such as *al-Fihrist* by Ibn Nadīm (d. 385/995), *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn* by Ibn Nubāta (d. 768/1366) and *Kashf al-ẓunūn* by Ḥājjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657), the *Ansāb* literature particularly *Kitāb al-Ansāb*

²⁷ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Dār al-Maʿmūn, Cairo, undated, Vol. XVI, pp. 74-106. This work is also known by the title of *Irshād al-arīb*.

by al-Sam^ʿānī (d. 562/1167), the geographical and historical works such as *Murūj al-dhahab* by al-Mas^ʿūdī (d. 345/956) also supply us with fragments of information and cross references which are, at time necessary as other literary sources to construct a composite picture of famous Arabic prose writers and their works.

However, the secondary sources are at various times very important and of a great assistance to our present study, not because of the information they supply but for their analysis and criticism of primary sources. There are number of Eastern and Western scholars who have examined various aspects of al-Jāḥiẓ's life and his prose works either in Arabic or other languages.

For example, it is vital to understand that numerous secondary sources have been written in Arabic regarding al-Jāḥiẓ's life and works by Arabs scholars. Sandūbī, an Egyptian scholar, for instance, draws very detail information about al-Jāḥiẓ's life and works in his book *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*.²⁸ Most of his material was drawn from primary sources. As a result, the detail evidence present in the book cannot be found in any other secondary sources. Al-Ḥājirī, another Egyptian scholar, describes Jāḥiẓ's life and works in his book *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*. Besides giving a vivid picture of al-Jāḥiẓ's life, he puts al-Jāḥiẓ's achievements in order to classify them according to the stages of al-Jāḥiẓ's biography and this study also offers a brief study of individual works by al-Jāḥiẓ.²⁹ Shafīq Jabrī, another scholar of al-Jāḥiẓ contributes towards the studies of al-Jāḥiẓ through his book *al-Jāḥiẓ mu^ʿallim al-^ʿaql wa al-adab*. In this book, Shafīq Jabrī

²⁸ See Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, al-Maṭba^ʿa al-Raḥmāniyya, Cairo, 1931.

²⁹ See al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, Dār al-Ma^ʿārif, Cairo, undated.

analysed al-Jāḥiẓ's writing in a general approach. Nevertheless, the analysis of the original elements in al-Jāḥiẓ scientific inquiry is the most important part of Jabrī's book.³⁰

The term of Arabic criticism in al-Jāḥiẓ's works has been studied by Mishāl ʿĀṣī, a Lebanese theoretician, in his book *Mafāhīm al-jamāliyya wa al-naqd fī adab al-Jāḥiẓ*. Whereas, ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Balbaʿ focuses on the influence of al-Jāḥiẓ's prose writing on Arabic prose literature in his book entitled *al-Nathr al-fannī wa athar al-Jāḥiẓ fīh*. ʿAbd Rabbih ʿĪd looks at rhetorical aspects in *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* in his book *al-Maqāyīs al-balāghiyya ʿind al-Jāḥiẓ fī kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn*. Al-Ghālī draws attention on the Muʿtazila's aspect from al-Jāḥiẓ thought in his book entitled *al-Jānib al-ʿitizālī ʿind al-Jāḥiẓ*. Zakariyya Kitapchi, draws some information about the Turks in the works of al-Jāḥiẓ and their position in Islamic history in his book *al-Turk fī mu'allafāt al-Jāḥiẓ wa makānatuhum fī al-tārīkh al-Islāmī*.

In addition, a number of Western scholars have also examined some aspects of al-Jāḥiẓ's work. Charles Pellet, for instance, is of course, the acknowledged learned and the highest authority in the west on al-Jāḥiẓ, hugely contributes towards al-Jāḥiẓ's studies by collecting and translating selected works of al-Jāḥiẓ in his book *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*. This book is the fruits of many years of his research. According to Beeston, it is a noteworthy contribution towards making Arabic literature available to English reader.³¹

³⁰ See Jabrī, *al-Jāḥiẓ mu'allim al-ʿaql wa al-adab*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, 1948.

³¹ See *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, translation of selected texts by Pellet, transl. from the French by D.M. Hawke, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969, rev. by A.F. Beeston, *Journal of Arabic literature*, Vol. II, pp. 195-197.

This book was published firstly in French in 1967 and then translated into English 1969 and German in 1967. Pellat divides this book into two parts; twenty-seven pages on “the life and works” which serve as an introduction to main bulk of the book and in effect, this introduction is a summary of previous published articles. The main bulk of the book and the most valuable part consist of the second part, which contains a large number of short extracts from the whole range of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works.

Pellat, in addition, publishes critical edition and translates some of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works into French such as *al-Bukhalā’* and *al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk* which is attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ. However, his magnum opus devoted to al-Jāḥiẓ’s studies is entitled *Le milieu basrien et la formation de Gāḥiẓ*. In this book, Pellat draws some information about al-Jāḥiẓ’s life especially when he was in Basra, Baghdad and then in Sāmarrā’. This book has been translated into Arabic by Ibrāhīm al-Kīlānī.³² Subsequent of these books, Pellat’s article in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* on al-Jāḥiẓ provides us with very useful material for this present study.³³

On the other hand, the translation of some part of *rasā’il* of al-Jāḥiẓ begins with William M. Hutchins in his *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ*. This translation is his tribute to the memory of Joseph Thayer Skold. The author translates nine *risāla* or essay³⁴ of al-Jāḥiẓ namely *Kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān*, *al-Faṣl mā bayn al-‘adāwa wa al-ḥasad*, *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, *al-Ma‘āsh wa al-ma‘ād*, *Fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, *Mufākharat bayn al-*

³² See Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ fī al-Baṣra wa Baghdād wa Sāmarrā’*, Trans. by: Ibrāhīm al-Kīlānī, Dār Yaqqat al-‘Arabiyya, Damascus, 1984.

³³ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, pp. 385-387.

³⁴ Hutchins prefers to use “essay” rather than “epistle”.

jawārī wa al-ghilmān, *Tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*, and *Manāqib al-Turk*. Only *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr* is translated from a MS in the British Library, and the rest from ʿAbd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn’s edition. This translation starts with a brief introduction of al-Jāḥiẓ’s life and works and ends with a general bibliography and index. According to Beeston, this is a brave attempt at a terribly difficult task.³⁵

Jim Colville is another translator who had already translated some of al-Jāḥiẓ’s prose work. *Al-Bukhalāʾ* of al-Jāḥiẓ is his first translation. In Colville’s second book entitled *Sobriety and mirth: a selection of the shorter writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, the author translates some shorter *rasāʾil* of al-Jāḥiẓ such as *al-Maʿāsh wa al-maʿād*, *Fakhr al-sūdān ʿala al-bīdān*, *Fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, *Tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿala al-ẓahr*, *Mufākharat bayn al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, and etc.³⁶ Hārūn’s edition has been used by Colville as the basic text for this translation. This book is relatively recent writing on the *Rasāʾil* of al-Jāḥiẓ that we have.

Other authors who have dealt with the classical Arabic literature has also given a brief information about the life and works of al-Jāḥiẓ, either directly or indirectly, such as Goldziher by his book *A Short History of Classical Arabic Literature*,³⁷ Gibb through his book *Arabic Literature: an introduction*,³⁸ and Brockelmann through his great book *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* that has been translated into Arabic. Brockelmann’s

³⁵ See *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, transl. by W.M. Hutchins, New York etc. Peter Lang, 1989, rev. by, A.F. L. Beeston, in: *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. XX, 1989, pp. 200-209.

³⁶ See Colville, *Sobriety and mirth*, Keegan Paul, London, 2002.

³⁷ Joseph DeSomogyi in his preface to the book remarks that this is the only text-book written by Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), Professor of Semitic at the University of Budapest, Hungary. It was written in Hungarian with the title of *Az Arab irodalom rövid története* and translated into Croatian under the title of *Kratka povijest arabske književnosti*.

³⁸ Gibb, *Arabic literature: an introduction*, pp. 75-77.

book contains valuable resource material and is of interest to the academic reader particularly to the student of Arabic literature.³⁹ Moreover Watt gives some explanation of the maturing of Arabic prose literature in his book *The Majesty that was Islam*.⁴⁰ *Arabic Authors: A Manual Arabian History and Literature* written by F.F. Arbuthnot that has been published in 1890 is the first English book giving brief information concerning classical and medieval Arabic author including al-Jāḥiẓ.⁴¹

Apart from these sources, there has been considerable extensive research at Doctorate level conducted on al-Jāḥiẓ and his works. Wadī'a Najm for instance, in her thesis entitled *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ* deals with al-Jāḥiẓ's social works such as *al-Bukhalā'* and some of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ. She tries to draw out through al-Jāḥiẓ's works a picture of Abbasid society with its classes and social problem that occurred during that period.⁴²

Sa'īd H. Maṣṣūr in his Ph.D thesis entitled "*The Worldview of al-Jāḥiẓ in Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*" attempts to clarify the place of religion in al-Jāḥiẓ's worldview in his magnum opus, *al-Ḥayawān*. He says that this thesis purport to find out al-Jāḥiẓ's worldview as exemplified in this masterpiece and it tries to reconstruct al-Jāḥiẓ's outlook on the universe and analyses his conception of the entire system of life.⁴³ Whereas Mathias Zahniser focuses only on *Kitāb* or *Risāla fī al-ʿUthmāniyya* by al-Jāḥiẓ in his

³⁹ Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿArabī*, Vol.III, pp.110-125.

⁴⁰ Watt, *The Majesty that was Islam*, pp. 182-183.

⁴¹ Arbuthnot, *Arabic Author*, pp. 58-59.

⁴² Najm, *Studies on the Writings of al-Jāḥiẓ*, Ph.D. thesis, SOAS, 1958. This thesis subsequently appeared as *al-Jāḥiẓ wa al-ḥāqira al-ʿAbbāsiyya*, Maṭbaʿat al-Irshād, Baghdad, 1965.

⁴³ Maṣṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ in Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, Thesis Ph.D. (published in 1977), McGill University, 1968, p.4.

Ph.D. thesis entitled “*The ʿUthmāniyya of al-Jāḥiẓ: An analysis of content, method and sources*”. The author points out that *The ʿUthmāniyya of al-Jāḥiẓ* was a *risāla* or treatise on the imamate, and it was written for Caliph al-Maʾmūn. This *risāla* shows us the nature of the caliph’s religious policy.⁴⁴

A recent study that we have is by Lebanese Jamāl F. El-ʿAṭṭār which contains valuable insights on al-Jāḥiẓ’s political thought. Through his Ph.D. thesis entitled “*The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ with special reference to the question of Khilāfa (Imamate): A chronological approach*”, the author attempts to reconstruct chronologically al-Jāḥiẓ’s political works and thought by a detailed analysis of twenty-seven extant Jāḥiẓian works including books and some *rasāʾil*.⁴⁵

As we have seen above, the material survey in this introductory chapter is relatively abundant, and its content is rich and sometimes is colourful. Based on these all works, we hope to reach to our aim in this study.

1.6 Aims and Objectives of Study:

This study will focus on the following objectives:

1. To study some of the earliest literary works in classical Arabic prose literature particularly in the Abbasid period.

⁴⁴ Zahniser, *The ʿUthmāniyya of al-Jāḥiẓ: An analysis of content, method and sources*, Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), John Hopkins University, 1973.

⁴⁵ El-ʿAṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ with special reference to the question of Khilāfa (Imamate): A chronological approach*, Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), University of Edinburgh, 1996.

2. To arrive at more fruitful understanding of al-Jāḥiẓ's works especially in his *rasā'il*.
3. To investigate that 'Arabic literature in many of its aspect constitutes a rich resource for Islamic studies'.
4. To identify the Islamic tendency in the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ which contains the considerable Islamic interest.

1.7 Organisation of the Study:

This present study will be divided into two parts with the following tentative chapters:

Introductory Chapter contains of the background of study, significance of study, scope of study, aims and objective of study and literature review and survey of the sources, and at the beginning of this chapter, it is our task to introduce the structure of Arabic literature in brief.

PART ONE of the thesis is focuses on the historical background of al-Jāḥiẓ. The important of the studying the historical context lies in the essential role played by al-Jāḥiẓ in the development of prose literature writing. Part one consists of chapter one and two. Chapter one will focus briefly on the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ, which includes the personality of al-Jāḥiẓ and the development of his intellectual life.

In Chapter two, the discussion goes on to the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ's works in general, which includes his main extant books and *risāla*. Before that, this chapter will also shed some light on an overview of Arabic prose literature before al-Jāḥiẓ and then give some introduction note about the development of early Abbasid prose literature. This chapter ends with the discussion on the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ's methodology of writing and composition.

PART TWO of the thesis focuses on the extensive reading and analysis of the selected texts from the *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ* collection. It begins with chapter three which is focuses on the *rasā'il* concerning *Ādāb* which carried the meaning of manners and character traits. There are seven *risāla* in this category such as *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh*, *Risāla fī faṣl ma bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifz al-lisān*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ʿalā al-ṣamt*, *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* and *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*.

The study in chapter four will go further onto examine *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ on the issues of social group. This part of an investigation goes on to look at *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, *Risāla fī al-nisā'*, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*, *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn* and *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb*.

In Chapter five, the study will then continue to analysis of the Islamic tendency in al-Jāḥiẓ's semi-theological works. The focus will be on *rasā'il* concerning an account of

Mu'tazilite doctrine such as *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha* and *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*.

Then, the discussion of chapter six will be extended into *rasā'il* concerning the semi-political works particularly the *rasā'il* which contains the meaning of the defense of the Abbasids against their opponents such as *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* and *Risāla fī manāḳib al-Turk*.

In final chapter, the study will examine *risāla* on quasi-scientific works. There are two *risāla* of this type, which will be analysed, i.e. *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr* and *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdan ʿalā al-bīḍān*.

This present study will then end with concluding remarks.

1.8. Conclusion:

We hope that the present study might give the reader an appreciation on the significant of al-Jāḥiẓ's literary prose work for Arabic literature and Islamic thought at that time and in the present time because some of his work still remains to be translated into the English language and into other prominent western and eastern languages, and we hope that it will be done some day thoroughly and well. In addition, we hope the work of this present study is attempted to realise one part of al-Jāḥiẓ's studies that scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ has sketched and also can revise the common image of this great scholar.

PART ONE

AL-JĀḤIẒ AND HIS WORKS

CHAPTER ONE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AL-JĀḤIẒ

1.1 Al-Jāḥiẓ's Life:

Biographical sources are agreed upon his *ism* (name): ʿAmr b. Baḥr b. Maḥbūb al-Fuqaymī al-Kinānī al-Laythī al-Baṣrī. They also agree on his *laqab* (nickname): al-Jāḥiẓ (the google eyes)⁴⁶ which must have been given to him in childhood.⁴⁷ His *kunya* (surname) is Abū ʿUthmān.⁴⁸ However, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī records in his bibliographical dictionary that al-Jāḥiẓ forgot his *kunya* for several days.⁴⁹

⁴⁶See Lane, *Arabic – English Lexicon*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1863, Vol. I, p, 382.

⁴⁷ On the biography of al-Jāḥiẓ in general, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿayān*, Dār al-Thaqāfa, Beirut, undated, Vol. III, pp. 470-472; Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, Hyderabad, 1966, Vol. I, p. 246; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Muʿassasat al-Ismāʿīliyyān, Tehran, 1970, Vol. I, p. 33-35; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ*, Dar al-Nahḍa, Cairo, undated, p. 192; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mʿānī*, Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-Nazzāmiyya, Hyderabad, 1909, Vol. IV, p. 355; al-Suyūtī, *Bughyat al-wiʿāl*, Maktabat al-ʿAṣriyya, Beirut, undated, p. 213; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, Maktabat al-Quds, Cairo, undated, Vol. II, p. 121; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Dār al-Maʿmūn, Cairo, undated, Vol. XVI, pp. 74-106; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*, Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, Hyderabad, 1963, Vol. II, p. 111; Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī, *al-Lubāb*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, undated, Vol. I, 246; al-Iṣfahānī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, Maktabat al-Ismāʿīliyyān, Tehran, 1971, Vol. V, p. 322; al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, 1970, Vol. II, p. 162; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, Beirut, undated, Vol. XII, p. 214; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, Maktabat al-Maʿārif, Beirut, 1966, Vol. XI, p.19-20; Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn*, Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, Cairo, 1964, pp. 248-260; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, pp. 385-387; Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 3-12; Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p.15-20; al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 79-89.

⁴⁸In his *Risāla ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāḥ al-Kātib*, al-Jāḥiẓ listed thirty men whose nickname is Abū ʿUthmān. See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāḥ al-Kātib*, Hārūn's edition Vol. I, pp. 325-328; and ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 229-232.

⁴⁹ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 74.

According to the other tradition, al-Jāḥiẓ is also known by the nickname al-Ḥadaqī⁵⁰ as he sometimes introduces himself to other people in his hometown as al-Ḥadaqī.⁵¹ As a matter of fact, al-Jāḥiẓ is not happy with all these nicknames, he urges the people in his hometown to call him ʿAmr, his real name which he quite happy with.⁵² In addition, al-Ibshīhī in his *al-Mustaṭraf* records some verses of Abbasid poetry which describes al-Jāḥiẓ's face as being uglier than a pig.⁵³ However, this is not surprising, as al-Jāḥiẓ himself informs us that the Caliph Mutawakkil intended to appoint him as tutor to his sons, but was deterred by his ugliness, and dismissed him with a present of ten thousand dirhams.⁵⁴ On this basis, the view may be put forward with some confidence that al-Jāḥiẓ's face was indeed very ugly.

Al-Jāḥiẓ was born in Basra; however, the date of his birth cannot be determined precisely. Dates from 159 A. H.⁵⁵, 160 A.H.⁵⁶ and 168 A.H.⁵⁷ have been suggested. The most we can do is to place his date of birth somewhere in the middle of the second century of *hijra*, particularly during the regency of al-Manṣūr, the second Caliph of the

⁵⁰This *laqab* comes from the root (ح د ق), which for according to Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311) has the same meaning with (ح ح ط), see, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, undated, Vol. I, p. 550 & Vol II, p. 806.

⁵¹For a story of al-Jāḥiẓ with his friend's servant, see, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿayān*, Vol. III, p. 471; Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn*, p. 250.

⁵²Apparently, al-Jāḥiẓ writes an essay entitled ʿAmr in which he mentions names of the famous people from the *Jāhiliyya* age and in Islamic period, whose first names were ʿAmr. See Khafājī, *Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, Beirut, 1973, p. 55; Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 15.

⁵³Al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf*, Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, 1952, Vol. I, p. 28.

⁵⁴Al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, Vol. II, p. 162.

⁵⁵Amīn, *Duhā al-Islām*, Vol. I, p. 408.

⁵⁶See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, p. 385; Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 3; Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 30; however, Zahniser suggests it cannot be much earlier or later than the year 160 A.H. see Zahniser, *The ʿUthmāniya of al-Jāḥiẓ: An Analysis of Content, Method and Sources*, p. 1.

⁵⁷Al-Aghānī, *Alwān min al-adab wa al-naqd*, Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥijāzī, Cairo, 1962, p. 206.

Abbasid dynasty who was in power from 136 A.H. to 158 A.H.⁵⁸ Yāqūt says that al-Jāḥiẓ was a *mawla* (client) of the Banū Kināna, and his grandfather, Fazara was black.⁵⁹

Not much is known about al-Jāḥiẓ's childhood. From the few references to his childhood, it is reported that his family was very poor. He lived with his mother in small house in Basra. Al-Jāḥiẓ was seen selling bread and fish on the Sayḥān,⁶⁰ a canal in Basra, dug by Yaḥyā bin Khālid al-Barmakī (d.c.182/805).⁶¹ Sometimes al-Jāḥiẓ received some occasional gifts from unexpected patrons instead of selling fish and bread.⁶² Here, one can catch brief glimpses of the independently-minded boy of his future service to Islam.

We find in the references of his biography that the turning point in al-Jāḥiẓ's life came when he move to Baghdad, where he had close ties with court official and influential Abbasid figures. According to Hārūn, al-Jāḥiẓ was at that time fifty years old.⁶³ This means that al-Jāḥiẓ spent half the period of his life in his birthplace, Basra, before he decides to move to Baghdad in the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn. During his reign, the Caliph recognised the potential of al-Jāḥiẓ to be a scholar.

⁵⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, 1965, Vol. V, p. 461.

⁵⁹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 74. There is a long discussion within scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning his origin. For more detail, see, Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ fī al-Baṣra wa Baghdād wa Sāmarrā'*, Dār al-Fikr, Damascus, 1985, p. 96; Amīn, *Ḍiḥā al-Islām*, Vol. I, 386; al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, undated, p. 84; Ḍayf, *al-Fann wa madhāhibuh fī al-nathr al-ʿArabī*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, undated, p. 154; Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1931, p. 19; ʿAlī, *Umarā' al-bayān*, p. 285;

⁶⁰ See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 74.

⁶¹ About the location of the canal, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, undated, Vol. III, p. 293.

⁶² See Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, al-Maṭba'at al-Kathūlīkiyya, Beirut, 1961, p. 69; Abū Milḥim, *al-Manāḥīl al-falsafīyya ʿind al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, Beirut, 1994, p. 62; Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 3.

⁶³ Hārūn, *Tahdhīb al-ḥayawān li al-Jāḥiẓ*, Maktabat al-Khanjī, Cairo, 1983, p. 4.

Al-Ma'mūn himself is known for his awareness of his contribution to the intellectual life of his age. It is reported that al-Ma'mūn asked al-Jāḥiẓ to write a book about al-Imāma.⁶⁴ From this moment, al-Jāḥiẓ's brilliant career got its start particularly when the Caliph al-Ma'mūn was pleased with the quality of his works. Al-Jāḥiẓ also had a close ties with Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Zayyāt (Ibn Zayyāt) the vizier of al-Mu'taṣim. As well as being a vizier, Ibn Zayyāt was also a famous *adīb*. He died in 233 A.H. during the reign of Caliph al-Mutawakkil.⁶⁵ It is reported that al-Jāḥiẓ received a gift of four hundred acres of land from him.⁶⁶ During his vizierate, al-Jāḥiẓ had a chance to visit some other cities, such as Cairo in Egypt and Damascus in Syria and within this time he had frequent return trips to Basra.⁶⁷ However, according to Pellat, there is no evidence that al-Jāḥiẓ went on even a single trip to Mecca to perform a *hajj*.⁶⁸ As a result of his travel, he came into personal contact with various races, atmospheres and geographical environments. Perhaps, his *Kitāb al-buldān*, which, has not survived, is the result of this travel.⁶⁹

Al-Faḥḥ b. Khāqān (d. 247/861), who is a powerful statesman and a famous littérateur, is another important figures that al-Jāḥiẓ had close ties with.⁷⁰ During his vizierate, he helps al-Jāḥiẓ develop close ties with the caliph al-Mutawakkil and he also

⁶⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. III, 374.

⁶⁵ Ibn al-Ṭaḥṭaḥ, *al-Fakhrī fī al-ādab al-sulṭāniyya*, Maṭba'at al-Raḥmāniyya, Cairo, 1927, p. 175-177.

⁶⁶ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Al-Fākhūrī, *al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 18.

⁶⁸ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī has mentioned this book in his list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works. See, Yāqūt, *Mi'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 108.

⁷⁰ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, Vol. I, p. 88; see also al-Kutubī, *Fawā' al-wafayāt*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, undated, Vol. II, p. 246.

asks al-Jāḥiẓ to accompany him on trip to Sham and then to Egypt.⁷¹ Nevertheless, although, in this age of patronage, al-Jāḥiẓ presents himself to his readers as an independent author who has received no commission because when asked if he had a plantation in Basra, al-Jāḥiẓ replied that his establishment in Basra consisted of himself “and a woman to serve her, a man servant and a donkey”.⁷²

Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār b. Hānī, who is better known as al-Nazzām and born in Basra, is also an important figure that had a great influence on the personality and life of al-Jāḥiẓ. He was a great scholar of Muʿtazila and his followers were known as al-Nazzāmiyya.⁷³ Al-Nazzām was al-Jāḥiẓ’s first teacher in Muʿtazilite doctrine. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) informs us that al-Jāḥiẓ was the *ghulam* (page/boy) of al-Nazzām.⁷⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ was proud of his teacher and it is reported that he claimed that al-Nazzām was a *Mujaddid* (reformer) in the second/eight century.⁷⁵

A careful reading of the references, we do at least know that al-Jāḥiẓ also had close ties with other important figures during his time, such as Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī (d. 234/857), Thumāma b. al-Ashras (d. 213/828), Abū Muhammad al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817), Ahmad b. Abī Duʿād (d. 240/854), and his son Muhammad. Thumāma and Ahmad b. Abī Duʿād are al-Maʿmūn’s advisers and both of them are said to have played a significant role in encouraging the Abbasid caliphs to hold and enforce their dogma of Iʿtizal as the state belief. Abū Muhammad al-Yazīdī, a grammarian and poet who served

⁷¹ Kitapchi, *al-Turk fī muʿallafāt al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Thaqāfa, Beirut, 1972, p. 211.

⁷² Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 32.

⁷³ Al-Maqrizī, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Maqriziyya*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, undated, Vol. II, p. 346.

⁷⁴ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. VIII, p. 33.

⁷⁵ Al-Balkhī, *lʿaḍl al-ʿitizāl*, Dār al-Tūnisiyya, Tunis, 1974, p. 256.

the Abbasids court, is said to have introduced al-Jāḥiẓ's work to al-Ma'mūn.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, according to Hutchins, patronage of these people sometimes put somebody in dangers, as well as riches.⁷⁷ For example, al-Jāḥiẓ was nearly to be tortured in *Tannūr*⁷⁸ by Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād. However, al-Jāḥiẓ reportedly fled at that time.⁷⁹

The first official profession al-Jāḥiẓ is known to practise was that of *Kātib* (Secretary). This was during al-Ma'mūn reign, however, it is reported that al-Jāḥiẓ held this government post in *Dīwān al-rasā'il*,⁸⁰ and he resigned after three days.⁸¹ Concerning the duty of secretary at *Dīwān al-rasā'il*, Qudāma b. Ja'far (d. 326/938) describes that is being similar to the duty of a minister.⁸² It was the ultimate goal for many Baghdadi or Iraqi families since it not only led to rich and the possibility of placing family and friends in similar posts but also was the route to the vizierate.⁸³ As a result, Sahl b. Hārūn, one of al-Jāḥiẓ's best friends is even quoted as having said: "While al-Jāḥiẓ holds this post, there will be no future for the rest of the secretaries".⁸⁴ On this basis, most probably, these people were feeling envy towards al-Jāḥiẓ.⁸⁵ Ibn Shuhayd, an Andalusian writer who

⁷⁶ El-Atṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p.45.

⁷⁷ Hutchins, *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 4.

⁷⁸ This tool (a spike-studded drum) originally has been created by Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (Ibn Zayyāt) and it is used for torture and punishes his enemies. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, Vol. VII, p. 37.

⁷⁹ Yāqūt, *Miḥjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p.77.

⁸⁰ The word of *Dīwān* (pl. *Dawāwān*) originally has many meaning. The *Dīwān* al-Mutanabbī for instance is a collection of his poems. Later, the word was used of an office or bureau of government. By the end of the Umayyad period, the government bureaucracy, organized as a group of *dīwāns* or government departments. Under Abbasids, the existing *dīwāns* increased in size and complexity. For more detailed views on the development of *Dīwān*, see, al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-ʿshā*, Vol. I, p. 89; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Dīwān*, Vol. II, p. 323-336; Glassé, *The Concise The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Dīwān*, p. 101.

⁸¹ Yāqūt, *Miḥjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 79.

⁸² Qudāma b. Ja'far, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, Ma'had Tārīkh al-'Ulūm al-'Arabiyya wa al-Islāmiyya, Frankfurt, 1986, p.19.

⁸³ See Bray, 'Men, women and slaves in Abbasid society', in: *Gender in the early medieval world*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 140.

⁸⁴ Yāqūt, *Miḥjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 79.

⁸⁵ Al-Baṣīr, *FTal-adab al-'Abbāsī*, Maṭba'at al-Nu'mān, Baghdad, 1970, p. 44.

died in 426/1035, comments on this event by saying that al-Jāḥiẓ's ugliness prevented him from achieving the degree of success at that *Dīwān*.⁸⁶ However, we can say that al-Jāḥiẓ probably did not like to be tied up by such official duties; he wanted to be free to continue with his own work.

On the other hand, some classical Arab scholars, such as al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1331) and al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), claimed that whoever was chosen to be a secretary in *Dīwān al-rasā'il* should have to fulfil several criteria, for instance: an open mind, good personality and to be knowledgeable in every fields of sciences, etc.⁸⁷ Whilst Gibb refers to the position al-Jāḥiẓ held in his time as follows: "Although as a Mu'tazilite, his views were so tempered by his breadth of mind that, we are told, 'he was held in high esteem among both Mu'tazilites and non-Mu'tazilites, by all the learned who knew men and could judge affairs'".⁸⁸

Before the end of his life, al-Jāḥiẓ left the capital city Baghdad, returning to his hometown in Basra. This was probably before the assassination of al-Mutawakkil and al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān in 247/861.⁸⁹ When al-Jāḥiẓ came back to his hometown, he was partially paralysed and complained that while one side was totally insensitive, the other ached with pain if a fly passed. The cause of al-Jāḥiẓ's illness has been stated by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270) in his *'Uyūn al-anbā'* as follows: "one-day al-Jāḥiẓ has been invited to a dinner at house of vizier, Ismā'īl b. Bulbul (d. 278/892), and he was

⁸⁶ Al-Bustānī, *Uḍabā' al-ʿArab fī al-ʿaṣr al-ʿArabīyya*, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1979, Vol. II, p. 261.

⁸⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-ʿaṣḥā*, Vol. 1, p. 65-67; see also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, al-Mu'assasa al-Miṣriyya li al-Ṭibā'a, Cairo, undated, Vol. VII, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁸ Gibb, *Arabic Literature*, p. 75.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

accompanied by Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh (d. 243/857). Fish and milk were among the dishes that had been served. Al-Jāḥiẓ ate both of these dishes. As a result, al-Jāḥiẓ suffered from hemiplegia (*fālij*) and gout (*nigris*).⁹⁰ According to report mentioned in *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn* by Ibn Nubāta (d. 768/1366), Ibn Bukhtīshūʿ (d. 256/870), a doctor, was among those who were present at the time. He has already warned al-Jāḥiẓ from eating fish and milk together. Nevertheless, al-Jāḥiẓ did not heed this warning and proceeded to eat.⁹¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ is reported also that was not only suffered from hemiplegia and gout, but also that he suffered from calculus stone in his urine which meant that he did not feel well.⁹²

In the final year of his reign, the caliph al-Mutawakkil sent a delegation to Basra inviting al-Jāḥiẓ to meet him; however al-Jāḥiẓ declined the invitation for reasons of ill health and age.⁹³ During his illness he often said to his friends: “Sicknesses of opposite against my body. If I eat anything cold, it strikes my feet, and if I touch anything hot, it goes to my head”.⁹⁴

Al-Jāḥiẓ died in Basra, his birthplace, in the month of Muḥarram 255 A.H.(either the first or last month of 868 A.D.) during the reign of the Caliph al-Muʿtazz.⁹⁵ This means that al-Jāḥiẓ lived up to age of ninety-six.⁹⁶ However, according to another (perhaps less reliable) source, al-Jāḥiẓ died in Baghdad, and his coffin was said to be

⁹⁰ Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, Beirut, 1965, p. 181.

⁹¹ Ibn Nubāta, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn*, p. 253-254.

⁹² Al-Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, Vol. II, p. 164.

⁹³ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿyān*, Vol. III, p. 474.

⁹⁴ Yāqūt, *Miʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 114.

⁹⁵ Al-Isbahānī, *Rawdāt al-jannāt*, Vol. V, p. 326.

⁹⁶ Golziher, *A Short history of classical Arabic literature*, p. 81.

buried in Khaizurān Cemetery in Baghdad.⁹⁷ By referring to the date of his death, it seems al-Jāḥiẓ had lived and accompanied twelve great Abbasid caliphs from al-Manṣūr (r.126-158 A.H.) to al-Muʿtazz (r. 252-255 A.H.).

One further point should be stressed regarding the cause of death of al-Jāḥiẓ. There is a different version of his death from a later tradition in which Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089/1679) quotes in his *Shadharāt al-dhahab* that al-Jāḥiẓ was crushed to death under a pile of books in his private library in his home.⁹⁸ It is possible that such a thing could happen because according to some scholars, al-Jāḥiẓ's house was crowded with bookshelves.⁹⁹ It is obvious to us that the most likely cause of death was old age, because al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) in his *Tārīkh Baghdād* informs us that when al-Jāḥiẓ died, his age was more than ninety years old.¹⁰⁰

It can be seen from the long life of al-Jāḥiẓ, that he was no doubt the product of the Golden age of Abbasid rule which, as Nicholson says, was marked by a great intellectual development. In his brief description of the atmosphere in which al-Jāḥiẓ's mind was born, Nicholson says, "All sorts of new ideas were in the air. It was an age of discovery and awakening. In a marvellously brief space the diverse studies of theology,

⁹⁷ Al-Hāshimī, *Jawāhir al-adab*, Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥijāzī, Cairo, 1951, Vol. I, p. 174.

⁹⁸ Ibn ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, Vol. II, p. 122.

⁹⁹ See al-Yāzījī, *al-Asālib al-adabiyya fī al-nathr al-ʿArabī al-qadīm*, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1986, p. 73; Fayyāḍ, *Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Marrīkh, Riyadh, 1982, p. 50. For instance, from his *risāla* entitled *Risāla fī madḥ al-kutub wa al-hatht ʿala jamʿih*, indicates that al-Jāḥiẓ has a huge collections of books. The manuscript of this *risāla* is in the British Library, London, MSS No. OR 13014, see, Stocks, *Subject-guide to the manuscripts in the British library*, The British Library, London, 2001, p. 328.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. XII, p. 218.

law, medicine, philosophy, mathematic, astronomy, and natural science attained their maturity, if not their highest development".¹⁰¹

It is notable that the Abbasid dynasty was established about one generation before the birth of al-Jāhiz and this period of the time was a great period in Islamic history. Al-Jāhiz in his works had described some of the Abbasid caliphs as great persons in Islamic history namely, al-Saffāh, al-Manṣūr, al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'taṣim.¹⁰² In the Abbasid period the capital city had been transferred from Damascus to Baghdad. As a new capital city, Baghdad became a new environment for different nations including Arabs, Persians and later Turks, to start a new life. At the beginning of the Abbasid dynasty, the Persian influence began to prevail over every aspect of society's life and thinking.¹⁰³ This had a great influence on al-Jāhiz's personality and his intellectual life.

1.2 Al-Jāhiz's Intellectual Development:

It was reported that al-Jāhiz attended a traditional school *al-Kuttāb*¹⁰⁴ in the Banū Kināna residential area to study under scholars who were teaching the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and Arabic grammar (*Naḥw* and *Ṣarf*).¹⁰⁵ There are no records telling us at what age al-Jāhiz

¹⁰¹ Nicholson, *A Literary History of The Arabs*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1969, p. 367.

¹⁰² See al-Jāhiz, 'Risāla Jadīda li al-Jāhiz fi manāqib khulafā' Banī al-'Abbās', (Edit by: al-Darūbī) in: *Ḥawliyat al-adab wa al-'ulūm al-ijtimā'iyya*, Jāmi'at al-Kuwayt, Kuwait, 2001-2002, pp. 61-76.

¹⁰³ Ḥasan, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, Vol II, p. 398.

¹⁰⁴ *Al-Kuttāb* (pl. *al-Katātib*) or *al-Maktab* was an elementary school in the second and third century. The curriculum included Qur'ānic studies and other subjects, such as Ḥadīth, Sīra, Arabic grammar and arithmetic instead of instruction and guidance in worship and good behaviour. For more information about *al-Kuttāb*, see Ghirbāl, *al-Mawsū'a al-'arabiyya al-muyassara*, Dār al-Sha'ab, Cairo, 1965, p. 1441.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Jāhiz called them *Mu'allim katātib al-qurā'*. See al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 251; and for more information on this group, see al-Shadhar, *Alfāz al-ḥadāra al-'Abbāsiyya ft mu'allafāt al-Jāhiz*, Dār Qubā', Cairo, 1998, p. 268.

was admitted into this *kuttāb* nor do we know when he left it. We do know, however, that al-Jāḥiẓ attended this *kuttāb* when he informs us that Abū al-Wazīr and Abū ʿAdnān were among his teachers at *kuttāb*.¹⁰⁶ At this stage, Pellat says that al-Jāḥiẓ started his first formal education in Basra - which he has described as a birthplace of Arabic prose - under some of the finest and the most distinguished scholars of his day.¹⁰⁷

Yāqūt has listed the names of scholars that al-Jāḥiẓ studied under when doing his advanced studies in Basra, namely al-Nazzām, al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 213/828), Abū ʿUbayda al-Muthannā (d. 209/825), Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (d. 215/831) and al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 221/835).¹⁰⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ learnt Arabic education from al-Aṣmaʿī, Abū ʿUbayda al-Muthannā and Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī. All three were famous philologists and scholars who made a fundamental contribution to the development of Arabic culture. Al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ was his teachers in Arabic grammar.¹⁰⁹

Al-Jāḥiẓ is said to have studied Ḥadīth with Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Qāḍī, Yazīd b. Hārūn, al-Sarī b. ʿAbdawayh and al-Hajjāj b. Muhammad b. Hammād b. Salama.¹¹⁰ Lastly, al-Jāḥiẓ studied ʿilm al-kalām (theology), especially Muʿtazilite thought, with al-Nazzām, Thumāma b. al-Ashras, Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir and Ahmad b. Abī Duʿād.¹¹¹ These scholars contributed and played a big role in the intellectual formation of

¹⁰⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 252.

¹⁰⁷ Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p.75.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ himself mentioned these names of scholars in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* in which he called them as *al-Riwwāʾ*. For instance, he writes "I got to know the *riwwāʾ* who were among the regular attenders at the great mosque and the Mirbad". See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. IV, p. 23.

¹¹⁰ Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 28-29.

¹¹¹ See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 75; Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 27.

al-Jāḥiẓ. For this reason, al-Jāḥiẓ attributes one of his *rasā'il* entitled *Risāla fī al-mu'allimīn* to praising this group of scholars and defends their profession.¹¹²

In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ also informs us that he sometimes went to mosques and joins the groups called *al-Masjidiyyūn*¹¹³ of which he mentions several times in his *Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *Bukhalā'*.¹¹⁴ These people gathered at the mosque in Basra to discuss a wide range of knowledge such as al-Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Qur'ānic exegesis and Arabic grammar because it was usual at that time for education to take place in the mosque, where the teacher sat surrounded by a *ḥalqa* (circle) of young people.¹¹⁵ Every scholar was knowledgeable in all branches; the philologist was also a Qur'ānic interpreter, a theologian, a philosopher, and historian, etc. Al-Jāḥiẓ informs us that the Muhammad b. Rughbān mosque and Banū Māzin mosque were famous mosques where these groups had their gathering.¹¹⁶ In addition, he tells us that he studied Qur'ānic exegesis under supervision of Abū 'Alī al-Iswārī without mentioning the name of the mosque where the *ḥalqa* was held.¹¹⁷ When he moved to Baghdad, he continued this habit by joining *Masjidiyyūn* who held their gathering at the Baghdad mosques where he

¹¹² See Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 199-212. For excellent analysis on this group, see Hārūn, 'al-Jāḥiẓ wa al-mu'allimūn', in *Majallat al-Kātib al-Miṣrī*, Vol. II (1946): pp. 564-571. A detailed analysis of the *risāla*, see chapter four of this thesis.

¹¹³ *Masjidī* (pl. *Masjidiyyūn*), an adjective formed from *masjid*. *Masjidī* originally was a group of adults and young people who were accustomed to meet together in that building. Pellat suggests that these *masjidiyyūn* were members of the bourgeois, or idlers who exchanged ideas and held conversations on varied subjects. The group was diverse, including, among others, poets and transmitters of poetry. Al-Jāḥiẓ was the first writer tells us about this group particularly in his *Bukhalā'*. He always refers to these people as follows: "Our companions from among the Masjidites said". See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. III, p. 360; *al-Bukhalā'*, p. 29; for more information on the term, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Masjidī*, Vol. VI, p. 709.

¹¹⁴ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 234; *al-Bukhalā'*, p. 29.

¹¹⁵ For an excellent study of the relationship between al-Jāḥiẓ and this group of people, see Montgomery, 'al-Jāḥiẓ on the Masjidites of Basra', in *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. XXIV (1993), pp. 236-245.

¹¹⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. II, p. 156 & 231; and about the Muhammad b. Rughbān mosque, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, Vol. IV, p. 265.

¹¹⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 252.

found the same atmosphere with *Masjidiyyūn* group at Basra.¹¹⁸ This shows us that besides serving as institution for teaching the Islamic sciences, the mosque was used for the teaching of *adah* studies.

In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ also attends, as a spectator; the philological enquires conducted by scholars who he called *Mirbadiyyūn* who were based at Mirbad,¹¹⁹ which was probably located not very far from his house.¹²⁰ Mirbad attracted many visitors including celebrities, such as grammarians, orators, and poets etc. According to Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, Bashshār b. Burd (d. c.167/784), a great Abbasids poet, was among the celebrities who always attended this place.¹²¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ had many opportunities to meet these people and increase his learning. When describing the knowledge that al-Jāḥiẓ received in Mirbad, Malti-Douglas called it “extra academic”.¹²²

What is remarkable to mention concerning al-Jāḥiẓ’s learning is that al-Jāḥiẓ use to hire the shops of the manuscript copyists (i.e. bookstore) and would spent the entire night there studying the books in order to increase his knowledge.¹²³ However, regarding this matter, Malti Douglas said that Pellat poses the very interesting question as to where and how, aside from the way described above; al-Jāḥiẓ could have had access to books in

¹¹⁸ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ *Mirbad* or *Sūq Mirbad* was a famous market place outside Basra town. Unfortunately, this place was destroyed by the al-Zanj when they fought against the Abbasid government between 255-270 A.H. For the location of this place, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, Vol. V, pp. 97-98; al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik wa al-mamālik*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1927, p. 80; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *al-Mirbad*, Vol. VII, pp. 113-115.

¹²⁰ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. IV, p. 23; Khafājī, *Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 47; al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 101.

¹²¹ Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, 1929, Vol. III, p. 135.

¹²² Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 33.

¹²³ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 74; see also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, Vol. III, p. 471; al-Isbahānī, *Rawdāt al-jannāt*, Vol. V, p. 323.

his native Basra. Firstly, because there were no public libraries in the city, and even more importantly, the cost of books was such that our author could not have had it within his means to buy many of them. One is tempted to draw the same conclusion as Pellat, that it was certainly the friends and teachers of al-Jāḥiẓ who gave him access to their private libraries.¹²⁴

Apart from the learning described in the above venues, al-Jāḥiẓ might also go to personal lectures. Some of the scholars at that time might address a gathering of people within their own home. For example, it has been said that Khalaf al-Aḥmar (d. c.180/796), who succeeded al-Kisā'ī (d. c. 189/804) as tutor to the children of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170/786-193/809), delivered his lectures in his own splendid residence.¹²⁵

It is not certain whether al-Jāḥiẓ was able to speak and read Persian and Turkish or not, but it is quite certain that he had some awareness of Persian vocabulary.¹²⁶ Therefore, Pellat claims that there seems no reason to doubt that al-Jāḥiẓ had knowledge of Arabic, Persian and Turkish language and culture. If he received only a traditional education, involving no more than regular attendance at classes by reputable teachers, he would not have achieved the distinction that he did.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 31.

¹²⁵ Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1970, p. 20.

¹²⁶ For instance, in his *al-Bukhalā'*, al-Jāḥiẓ often mentions Persian foodstuffs, dishes, etc. For a further discussion on this matter, see Amīn, 'Baḥth fīmā naqalah al-Jāḥiẓ min akhbār al-Furs fī kitābayh al-bayān wa al-tabyīn wa al-ḥayawān', in: *Majallat Kulliyat al-Adab*, al-Jāmi'at al-Miṣriyya, 1936, Vol. VIII, pp. 170-186.

¹²⁷ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 4.

It is remarkable to note that the reputation of al-Jāḥiẓ remained unrivalled, as described by Rosenthal, although there were later authors who could stand comparison with him.¹²⁸ For this reason, there are a number of different biographical writers mentioned a variety of exemplary scholars in which each proved a list of different names but what stands out is that all these writers mention al-Jāḥiẓ within their list. For instance, Yāqūt records that Thābit b. Qurra al-Ṣābī (d. 288/901) was reported as saying that there were 'three men' within the entire Arab nation that he envied; the Caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb for his political genius, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī for his religious knowledge and personal piety, and al-Jāḥiẓ, the orator of the Muslim and the chief of the dialecticians.¹²⁹ Here we find that Thābit b. Qurra al-Ṣābī, a non-Arabs scholar expressed an opinion concerning these three greatest men among Arabs, each in virtue of his own special qualities, a sufficiently high complement.

On the other hand, some scholars expressed their tribute to al-Jāḥiẓ's scholarly life. For example, the lexicographer and poet Abū Hiffān Abdullah b. Ahmad al-Mikhzāmī (d. 255/869) said that he had never seen or heard anyone who loved reading the books except for three persons. The first of these being al-Jāḥiẓ, who whenever a book fell into his hand would read it exhaustively; the second person is al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān (d. 247/861); and the third, the judge Ismāʿīl b. Ishāq al-Azdī (d. 282/895).¹³⁰ Al-Mubarrad (d. c. 286/899) said that he have never met scholars who excelled in Arabic

¹²⁸Rosenthal, 'Literature', in: *The Legacy of Islam*, Edit. by: Schact, Joseph, et al., The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1974, p. 326.

¹²⁹Yāqūt, *Miʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 95.

¹³⁰Khafājī, *Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 75.

eloquence as much as Abū Hudhayl al-[°]Allāf and al-Jāḥiẓ.¹³¹ Ibn Nubāta said that someone told him that among the characteristics that Allah gives to the *Umma* (people) of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the great personality of [°]Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in political thinking, the cleverness of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in learning, and the brilliant skill of al-Jāḥiẓ in Arabic eloquence.¹³²

Some other scholars such as Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 419/1023) has devoted a special book entitled *Kitāb al-taqrīẓ* in praise of al-Jāḥiẓ, however, this book has not come down to us; we only have the title of this book as preserved in Yāqūt's biographical work.¹³³ In addition, some of the Abbasid poets have also paid their tribute to al-Jāḥiẓ such as Abū Shirā[°]a al-Qaysī, one of the famous Abbasid's poets.¹³⁴

The popularity of the nickname "al-Jāḥiẓ" remained high throughout the period from the end of the second century of hijra until today. People have conferred this nickname to others to indicate their intellectual qualities. For example, Abū Mūsā Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Kūfī, a well-known prose writer from Baghdad who died in the fourth century of hijra was known as al-Jāḥiẓ.¹³⁵ Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934) was known as al-Jāḥiẓ of Khurasān; Ibn al-[°]Amīd (d. 360/970) was dubbed as "the second al-

¹³¹ Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya wa al-Amal*, p. 150.

¹³² Ibn Nubāta, *Sharḥ al-[°]uyūn*, p. 48.

¹³³ Yāqūt, *Mu[°]jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 78.

¹³⁴ Abū Shirā[°]a al-Qaysī said:

في العلم للعلماء أن يتفهموه واعظ
وإذ أنسيت وقد جمعت علا عليك الحافظ
ولقد رأيت الظرف دهرًا ما حواه لافظ
حتى أقام طريقه عمرو بن بحر الجاحظ

See Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. XII, p. 219.

¹³⁵ See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, Vol. II, p. 128; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu[°]jam al-mu'allifīn*, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-[°]Arabī, Beirut, undated, Vol. VIII, p. 311.

Jāḥiẓ”,¹³⁶ and Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Āridī as “the third al-Jāḥiẓ”.¹³⁷ In the modern times, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (d. 1975), the famous man of letter in this period, was also known as a modern al-Jāḥiẓ.¹³⁸

Badī‘ al-Zamān (d. 398/1007), also the great prose writer, devotes part of his *Maqāmāt* to al-Jāḥiẓ entitled *al-Maqāma al-Jāḥiẓiyya* (The Maqāma of al-Jāḥiẓ)¹³⁹ in which he quotes a story from his narrator, ‘Īsā b. Hishām as saying: “...O people, every work hath its men, every situation its saying, every house its occupants and every age its al-Jāḥiẓ ...”.¹⁴⁰

There is no doubt that for much of the time al-Jāḥiẓ received much praise, but sometimes some scholars, either his contemporaries or later, also blamed him and criticised him. He does not seem to have been trusted by some scholars, especially by those who were authorities in the science of Ḥadīth. For instance, al-Tha‘ālibī (d. 427/1035) says that al-Jāḥiẓ was not to be trusted in Ḥadīth. Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) claims also that al-Jāḥiẓ is an innovator, therefore not to be trusted in this area.¹⁴¹ Al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037), by his prejudice against Mu‘tazila and the spirit of attacking al-Jāḥiẓ, he asserts that al-Jāḥiẓ has stolen the meaning of Aristotle book on animals.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Pellat admits that this honouree title has been given wrongly to Ibn al-‘Amīd. See Pellat, *Tārīkh al-lughā wa al-ādāb al-‘Arabiyya*, Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1997, p. 206.

¹³⁷ Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ fī al-Baṣra wa Baghdād wa Sāmarrā’*, p. 62.

¹³⁹ Badī‘ al-Zamān, *Maqāmāt Badī‘ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, Dār al-Mashriq, Beirut, undated, p. 75.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 75-78; see also *The Maqāmāt of Badī‘ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, Trans. by: W.J. Prendergast, Curzon Press, London, 1973, p. 70.

¹⁴¹ Al-Dhahabī, *MĒ.ān al-ḥadīth*, Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘āda, Cairo, 1904, Vol. III, p. 247.

¹⁴² Al-Baghdādī, *al-ḥarq bayn al-firaq*, Maṭba‘at al-Madanī, Cairo, undated, p. 175.

In conjunction to the issue of criticism towards al-Jāḥiẓ, it is interesting to note here that Yāqūt relates the story that when al-Jāḥiẓ was arrested and brought in shackles to the chief justice Ibn Abī Du'ād, he was said to have won his freedom by reminding the judge that it was better to suffer evil than to inflict it. Ibn Abī Du'ād commented on that event that he was “confident of al-Jāḥiẓ’s wit but not of his religion”.¹⁴³

On the other hand, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) openly disapproves of some of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ, which he regards as poor quality.¹⁴⁴ Al-Mas'ūdī criticises al-Jāḥiẓ for writing a book on the *Imamate* of the children of al-°Abbās, which was according to him, nothing but an expression of the argument of al-Rāwandīyya, the partisans of the Abbasid.¹⁴⁵ We find that al-Bāqillānī (d. c. 403/1013) in his *ʿIjāz al-Qur'ān* is also criticised al-Jāḥiẓ.¹⁴⁶ Ibn Qutayba also aimed his criticism towards al-Jāḥiẓ’s life as well as his works.¹⁴⁷ For example, he points out that al-Jāḥiẓ “is the most forceful of writers in using subtle means to make a small thing look great”. Elsewhere, he describes al-Jāḥiẓ as being capable of “doing a thing and its opposite”. For instance, attacking and defending °Alī, or arguing the superiority of black people over white people. Ibn Qutayba goes so far as to call al-Jāḥiẓ ‘among the greatest liars in the community of believers (*umma*), its greatest inventor (i.e. falsifier) of *ḥadīths* and its greatest supporter of falsehood.¹⁴⁸ It seems from this statement that al-Jāḥiẓ has no friend of the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. Therefore, describing the attack of Ibn Qutayba on al-Jāḥiẓ, Pellat said that he

¹⁴³ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 80.

¹⁴⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1992, Vol. XII, p. 96.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. VI, p. 55.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *ʿIjāz al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1962, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ For further information on Ibn Qutayba’s criticism on the personality of al-Jāḥiẓ, see, Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1981, p. 65 ; and see also Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, Dār al-Kutub al-°Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1985, p. 72.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, p. 72.

consequently misunderstood al-Jāḥiẓ because he was radically different from al-Jāḥiẓ's view.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, al-Jāḥiẓ occasionally expressed his awareness of such criticism. For example, in *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*, he says: "... and we may know that many of them will exaggerate in criticism and insolence and hold an opinion different from ours, but what an easy thing that is for the due rights of *al-Futyān*".¹⁵⁰ While describing this situation, Najm asserts that the reason of this attitude of al-Jāḥiẓ is thought to have been because many of al-Jāḥiẓ's works were commissioned by the authorities and that al-Jāḥiẓ was actually living on his writing.¹⁵¹ In addition, we can assume that the cause of all criticism lies on al-Jāḥiẓ's character which many people did not like and for which they took against him.

1.3 Al-Jāḥiẓ and Mu'tazila:

Much has been written on the origin of the name of *Mu'tazila*, the history and the doctrine of this intellectual movement in the far and the recent past;¹⁵² however, we shall, by way of introduction, make some general remarks. If we take the the Mu'tazilite school to have been founded by the Basrans Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748) and 'Amr b. Ubayd (d. 144/761), then its origin go back to the early second/eighth century and later on became

¹⁴⁹ Pellat, 'al-Jāḥiẓ', in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁰ See 'Uyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. III, p. 99; Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 219.

¹⁵¹ Najm, *Studies on the Writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 9.

¹⁵² See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Mu'tazila, Vol. VII, pp. 783-793; Brandon, *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1970, p. 462; Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1973, pp. 209-211; De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, Luzac and Company, London, 1970, and for detailed analysis on this school of thought, see Jārallah, *al-Mu'tazila*, Maktabat al-Ahliyya li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', Beirut, 1974.

the most important theological school of Islam.¹⁵³ In his *al-Milal wa al-nihal*, al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) gives his opinion on the origin of Muʿtazilite by saying that Wāṣil b. ʿAṭāʾ, founder of the Muʿtazilite school, disagreed with his teacher al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) and then he left the al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī circle, and his followers then formed, a new group.¹⁵⁴

Anawati regards the Muʿtazila as philosopher and the first who tried to give a systematic presentation of religious belief. In this way, one of their leaders, Abū Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf, adopted the following plan for the presentation of Muslim doctrine: firstly, predestination and divine attributes; secondly, divine unity and attributes; thirdly, eschatology (promises and threats); fourthly, legal terms and statutes; and fifthly, ordering the good and forbidding the evil, the role of prophecy and the Caliphate.¹⁵⁵

Briefly, the Muʿtazila are known for the five principles: 1) *Tawḥīd* (God's unity), 2) *ʿAdl* (God's justice), 3) *al-Waʿd wa al-waʿīd* (the promise and the threat), 4) *al-Manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* (the intermediate position of the grave sinner), 5) *al-Amr bī al-maʿrūf wa al-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (commanding the right and forbidding the wrong).¹⁵⁶

All Muʿtazilites accepted these principles, which was a requirement for membership of their school. Of these five principles, the first two are concerned with divinity; the third has an eschatological aspect, and the fourth and fifth deals with moral theology. Watt

¹⁵³ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Muʿtazila, Vol. VII, pp. 783-793; see also *Encyclopaedia of Seerah*, art. The Growth of Reasoning in Islamic History, Vol. VI, pp. 560-568; Brandon, *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, p. 462; Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁴ About the origin of name of *Muʿtazila* is found, for instance, in al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-nihal*, pp. 75-76; Al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Tanbīh wa al-radd*, Maktabat al-Muthannā, Baghdad, 1968, p. 38; Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, p. 114.

¹⁵⁵ Anawati, 'Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism', in: *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 362.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār wa al-radd*, p. 126.

points out that the last two or indeed three principles had political implications, but most of the theological discussions were about the first two.¹⁵⁷

As well as these five principles, the Mu'tazila also believed in the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān¹⁵⁸ and free will.¹⁵⁹ Based on the first principle, i.e. *Tawhīd*, which is fundamental to the dogma of Islam, the Mu'tazilite also liked to call themselves as "*Ahl al-tawhīd*" (The People of Tawhīd) or "*Ahl al-ʿadl wa al-tawhīd*" (The People of Justice and Divine Unity).¹⁶⁰

Encouraged by the Abbasid Caliphs particularly from al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'taṣim had made this school of thought very popular. For instance, al-Ma'mūn made Mu'tazila doctrines as a state belief. In 212/827, he officially declared that the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān is the only true one. But it was not until the year of his death 218/833, he tried to force that doctrine upon the *ulamā'*, and via them onto all Muslims. However there was popular opposition to this doctrine lead by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). In that year, the *miḥna* (an inquisition)¹⁶¹ was instituted. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁵⁸ Ja'ad b. Dirham is said that the first person who holds the idea of the creation of the Qur'ān, but little is known about this man. As we know, almost all the early scholars insisted that the Qur'ān is truly *Kalām Allah* (The Speech of God) and denied that it was created. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal in his discussion during the time of the *miḥna*, affirmed that the Qur'ān is part of knowledge of God and as such uncreated. A full discussion of this issue as reported in al-Jāḥiẓ's works may be found in Madelung, 'The Origin of the Controversy Concerning the Creation of the Qur'an', in: J.M. Barral (ed.) *Orientalia Hispanica sive studia F. M. Pareja ocyogenario dicata*, Vol. I/1, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1974, pp. 504-525, reprinted as Part V in Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, Variorum Reprints, London, 1985, pp. 504-525.

¹⁵⁹ Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 224.

¹⁶⁰ Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Mu'tazilites, p. 291-292.

¹⁶¹ The word '*Miḥna*' is derived from the verb *maḥana*, which means to test, to smooth, to purify, to scourge or to force one to confess to something which one did not do or did not believe in. This word then applied to the religious policy initiated by al-Ma'mūn in 833 A.D and ended by al-Mutawakkil in 849 A.D. The question around which the *miḥna* centred was the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān. There are

suffered flogging and imprisonment for his faith. What is remarkable to note here that al-Jāḥiẓ is the first writer who record this most important event in the history of Islamic thought in his work.¹⁶²

After the death of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, the Mu'tazilite policy continued during the reign of al-Mu'taṣim (r. 218-27/833-42) and that of al-Wāthiq (r. 227-32/842-47).¹⁶³ The *miḥna* reached its climax during the reign of al-Mu'taṣim. However, according to El-ʿAṭṭār, this does not mean that the Mu'tazilites were influential from the beginning of the Abbasid period,¹⁶⁴ but their rise to power under al-Ma'mūn and its continuation under al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq was political.

Al-Jāḥiẓ, our *adīb*, is among influential scholar in this school of thought. Al-Nazzām, one of the leading scholars in this school of thought, has played a big role in teaching al-Jāḥiẓ the basic principals of Mu'tazila particularly when al-Jāḥiẓ was still living in Basra.¹⁶⁵ For this reason, he is very proud with the personality of his teacher. It is reported that al-Jāḥiẓ describes the portrait of al-Nazzām as follows: "Ibrāhīm (al-Nazzām) was a man of his word, and guilty of little wrong or unfairness in the realms of frankness and truthfulness. When I say that he was guilty of little wrong or unfairness, I do not mean that he was guilty of it, albeit only a little. If he stated anything in the form of apodictic evidence, the hearer could be sure that he was reporting something he had

seven leading theologian authorities of Baghdad that has been tested. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was at first in the list. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Miḥna, Vol. VII, pp. 2-6; *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 377-378.

¹⁶² Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 242. See also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī khalq al-Qur'ān*, in: Abū Miḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 165-173.

¹⁶³ Sourdel, 'The Abbasids Caliphate', in: *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. I, pp. 123-124.

¹⁶⁴ El-ʿAṭṭār, *The Political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 34.

¹⁶⁵ Shalḥat, *al-Naẓ'a al-kalāniyya fī uslūb al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1964, p. 19.

himself positively and directly heard or personally and vividly witnessed".¹⁶⁶ Then al-Jāhiz receives further lesson with other prominent Mu'tazila figures such as Thumāma b. al-Ashras, Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir and Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād.

It was reported that among the Mu'tazilite figures, al-Jāhiz is in the seventh *tabaqa* (generation),¹⁶⁷ which is led by Thumāma b. al-Ashras, and then Abū Mūsā al-Murdār, Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād, Yūsuf b. °Abdullah al-Saḥḥām and others.¹⁶⁸ Al-Jāhiz is among the Mu'tazila of the Basra's school.¹⁶⁹

Though al-Jāhiz's contribution to Mu'tazila forms a minor of his literary output, as Watt asserted,¹⁷⁰ nevertheless, we find a number of his works deal with questions in theology from a Mu'tazila standpoint. Al-Khayyāt (d. c. 300/913) gives a most valuable list of al-Jāhiz's works in this category including *Faḍīlat al-Mu'tazila, al-ʿItizāl wa faḍlih ʿalā al-faḍīla, al-Istiḥāʿa wa khalq al-afʿāl* and *Khalq al-Qur'ān*.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, Pellat claims that there are nine works of al-Jāhiz which reflect of Mu'tazilite doctrine.¹⁷² Al-Ghālī is another scholars of al-Jāhiz claims that al-Jāhiz has written about twenty-four

¹⁶⁶ See al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. II, p. 229.

¹⁶⁷ The term *tabaqa* originally meant 'layer', but developed a technical meaning of 'generation' or 'class' to denote a group of person who had played some role in history of significance from a religious, scientific, military, artistic or other point of view. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Vol. IV, p. 2637; Steingass, *A Learner's Arabic-English Dictionary*, Maktabat Lubnān, Beirut, 1972, p. 626; Young, 'Arabic Biographical Writing', in: *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period*, Edit. by: Young & et. al., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 171.

¹⁶⁸ Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya wa al-amal*, p. 162.

¹⁶⁹ Watt, *Formative Period of Islamic thought*, p. 218.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁷¹ Al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiḥār wa al-radd*, pp. 70 & 99.

¹⁷² For instance, *Risāla fī faḍīlat ṣināʿat al-kalām, Risāla fī al-masāʿil wa al-jawābat fī al-maʿrifa, Risāla fī al-akhbār wa kayf taṣiḥḥ, Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa, Risāla fī khalq al-Qur'ān, Risāla ʿIlā Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād yukhbiruh fīhā bi kitāb al-futayā, Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh, Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* and *Risāla fī madh al-nābīdh*, see, Pellat, *The life and work of Jāhiz*, pp. 14-16.

books on Mu'tazila thought, but unfortunately some of these books have not survived.¹⁷³ However, one should not be worried about this matter; because as Pellat already asserts that all the Mu'tazila material can be found in al-Jāḥiẓ's works, from *al-Ḥayawān* through various minor works to *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*. Nevertheless, he claims that no text entirely devoted to the exposition of his views has survived.¹⁷⁴ As far as we are aware that no writing about any of five basic principle of Mu'tazila doctrine has survived.¹⁷⁵ What is important to say here is that almost all of al-Jāḥiẓ's works contains some reflection of Mu'tazila and, of course, he has made clear his theological position.

Although the Mu'tazila were noted for upholding the five principles that we have already mentioned above, this does not mean there were no differences between them. For instance, although al-Jāḥiẓ had received instructions from the leading Mu'tazila's scholars, he never followed any one of them exclusively, nor did he join one of the Mu'tazilite circles. However, he has his own idea regarding the Mu'tazilite thought. Ibn al-Murtaḍā has quoted two of al-Jāḥiẓ's idea, which differs from other Mu'tazila scholars. Firstly, is about "necessary knowledge" or "immediate knowledge"¹⁷⁶ and secondly, "the reputation to al-Rāfiḍa".¹⁷⁷ Moreover, al-Baghdādī and Abū al-Ḥasan al-

¹⁷³ For example, such as *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-qawliyya*, *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā man ḡfama 'anna al-insān juz' lā yatajazza'*, *Risāla fī al-nāshī wa al-mutalashī*, and *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā ashāb al-ilhām*, etc. For more detail discussion of the lost Mu'tazilite works of al-Jāḥiẓ, see al-Ghālī, *al-Jāḥiẓ al-ḥaywānī 'ind al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, Beirut, 1999, pp. 91-94.

¹⁷⁴ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ Perhaps, the only work that corresponds a little to one of them, as described by Pellat, is *Risāla fī al-waḍ' wa al-waḍ'īd*. *Ibid.* p. 16.

¹⁷⁶ The idea of knowledge is discussed at length by later Mu'tazilite scholars such as al-Maqdisī (d. c. 380/990) in his *al-Bad' wa al-ta'rīkh*, for more detail analysis on this book, see Khalidi, 'Mu'tazilite Historiography: Maqdisi's Kitāb al-bad' wa al-ta'rīkh', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35/1 (January 1976), pp. 1-11.

¹⁷⁷ Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya wa al-amal*, p. 162. Al-Rāfiḍa is the names given to the Shi'a. Rāfiḍī originally is founded as a pejorative term; the Imāmis soon turned it into an honorific. Rafidism, which first emerged in Kufa, had spread to Kumm in Iran, by the end of the 2nd/8th century. According to the later

Ash'arī (d. 324/936) also has quoted various Mu'tazilite ideas of al-Jāhiz which differs from others.¹⁷⁸ For instance, according to al-Baghdādī, al-Jāhiz believed that God does not put anyone into Hell, but it is the nature of the Fire to pull people to it and so forth.¹⁷⁹

De Boer in his book summarises some of al-Jāhiz's idea as follows: "Man's reason is capable of knowing the creator, and in like manner of comprehending the need of a prophetic revelation. Secondly, man's only merit is in his will, for on the one hand his actions are interwoven with the events of nature, and on the other his entire knowledge is necessarily determined from above. And yet no great significance appears to accrue to the Will, which is derived from 'knowing'. At least Will in the Divine Being is quite negatively conceived of, that is, God never operates unconsciously, or with dislike to his work".¹⁸⁰ Having dealt with the idea of al-Jāhiz's, al-Shahrastānī records that al-Jāhiz has his own of followers known as al-Jāhiziyya.¹⁸¹ This is not the place, however, to discuss more detail the idea in which Ibn al-Rāwandī who died in the middle or in the end of 4th/10th century is reported to attribute to al-Jāhiziyya, some of which al-Khayyāṭ has already refuted in his *al-Intiṣār wa al-radd*.¹⁸²

Saba'iyya, the followers of Abdullah b. Sabā' was the first Rafidite. See for further information on this matter in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Rāfiḍa, Vol. VIII, pp. 386-388; see also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Rafidite, p. 466.

¹⁷⁸ See al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-fīraq*, pp. 177-178; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, 1969, Vol. II, pp. 32, 34, etc.

¹⁷⁹ See al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-fīraq*, p. 176. In addition, Ibn Ḥajar Al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) relates also that al-Jāhiz has said that *al-Ḥajar al-aswad* (Black Stone) originally was white in colour, but this colour has changed due to the sins of *Mushrikīn* (unbelievers), so it has become Muslims' duty to wipe it white again. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mʿānī*, Vol. IV, p. 356.

¹⁸⁰ De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, Luzac and Company, London, 1970, p. 54.

¹⁸¹ Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-niḥal*, p. 75. However, D.S. Richards declined that this school of thought is really existed. See *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, art. al-Jāhiz, Vol. I, pp. 408-409.

¹⁸² See al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār wa al-radd*, pp. 70, 99, 126, etc.

1.4 Conclusion:

Although information about al-Jāḥiẓ's private and public life is not readily forthcoming from either his biographers or himself, as claimed by Pellat¹⁸³, however, it appears from what we have discussed in this brief account of al-Jāḥiẓ's life and the course of his scholarly life that some of that information can be seen from the beginning of his till his death, and how he build up himself as scholars of the top level. He was a great scholar who built his scholarship on the Mu'tazilite doctrine which was based on the important of the rational faculties for seeking and verifying truth. In addition, we can see also from the examples that had been given through out the chapter, how al-Jāḥiẓ was in continuous relationship with the men who were directing the policy of the state. He lived in the first Abbasid century where the government in full power, and he also lived part of his life in the second Abbasid century that witnessed a sharp decline in the power of the Abbasid dynasty, and also the appearance of both semi-independent and completely independent states within the area of what had been the Islamic empire. In short, one can say that the greatest *adīb* with Mu'tazilite thought or the new Muslim intellectual of the second half of third century was without any doubt was al-Jāḥiẓ.

¹⁸³ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, p. 385.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AL-JĀḤIẒ'S WORKS

2.1 Prose Literature Works Before al-Jāḥiẓ:

The aim of this chapter is briefly survey of the historical trends in the development of Arabic prose literature particularly during the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period. The importance of studying the historical context lies in the essential role played by al-Jāḥiẓ in the development of this genre subsequently.

It was general knowledge that the Arabic language and Arab speech are divided into two types; one is rhymed poetry and the other is prose. As a result, Arabic literature contains a rich body of poetry (*shī'r*) and prose (*nathr*). As with all literature in the world, it is agreed that poetry appeared before prose in Arabic literature. In defining the prose, we find that *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines it as "the plain speech of mankind, when it written or composed without reference to the rules of verse or all forms of careful literary expression which are not metrically versified and is used for stating precisely that which is true in reason or fact".¹⁸⁴ And almost all student of Arabic literature in modern

¹⁸⁴ See, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, art. Prose, Vol. XVIII, p. 591; Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1863, Vol. II, p. 2763.

times agrees that the Arabic word *nathr* is equivalent to the English word 'prose', while the Arabic word *Adab* (pl. *Ādāb*) is equivalent to the English word 'literature'. However, the original meaning of the verbal root (أدب) "*adab*" is to invite someone to a banquet.¹⁸⁵ From that meaning, it is developed to the meaning of good manners, good breeding, decency, and by extension, also humanism, and belles-letters.¹⁸⁶

The above Arabic root indicates the possession of refinement or good habits bequeathed down the ages. Therefore, Malti-Douglas admits that the development of the usage of *adab*, has come up from two particular usages. The first usage would be the gleaning from every area of knowledge of elegant tidbits, as well as the gathering of morsels of poetry and stories. The second usage would refer to the literary works written with elegance and distinction and not merely to their isolated parts. These works encompass prose as well as poetry".¹⁸⁷ Hence, *al-Nathr al-adabī* or prose literature cannot be separated from the literary concept of *adab*, since many of its works are permeated by the didactic intention of guidance to learning and refinement.

¹⁸⁵ For further detail on the lexical origins of the term *Adab*, see Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. I, pp. 34-35; Ba'labakkī, *Al-Mawrid al-wasīf, A Concise Arabic English Dictionary*, Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, Beirut, 1991, p. 43.

¹⁸⁶ For further detail on the concept of *Adab*, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Adab*, New Edition, Edit. by: H. A. R. Gibb, et. al., E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1995, Vol. I, pp. 175-6; Allan, *An introduction to Arabic Literature*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 134; Bonebakker, 'Adab and the concept of belles-letters', in: *Abbasid Belles-Letters* Edit. by: Julia Ashtiany, et. al., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 16-30; Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1985, p. 8; Pellat, 'al-Jāhiz', in: *Abbasid Belles-Letters* Edit. by: Julia Ashtiany, et. al., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 78-95.

¹⁸⁷ See Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 8. Al-Jāhiz himself defines *al-Adab* as a process of building up a new culture in which reflection; doubt, observation and even experiment were involved. In other occasion, he defines again *Adab* as a precious tool in matters religious and everyday life. See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 99.

Serjeant states that the earliest known form of prose is the *khuṭba* (oratory).¹⁸⁸

This type of prose literature is spoken art, and later on, it was compiled in books which can be found, for instance, in classical works, such as in *al-Amālī* by al-Qālī, *al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-Kāmil* by al-Mubarrad and also in the writing of al-Jāhiz, Ibn Qutayba and others. However, Arabic prose literature as written rather than spoken really started with the genre of writing *risāla*. This marks the foundation of a distinct branch of prose literature.¹⁸⁹ It was the first literary art of Arabic written prose and was invented by the *Kuttāb* (the secretaries).¹⁹⁰

It may be useful to give examples of some of the types of evidence available for the earlier period of Arabic prose literature. Though letters in Islam begin with Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), his Companions and Successors, but as an art form began with ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, who introduced this kind of writing to the public. He is, as claimed by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, the first to ‘burst open the buds of eloquence and smoothed its ways’.¹⁹¹ He is also the one whom the Modern Egyptian writer Ṭaha Ḥusayn, himself a celebrated master of style, said that there had probably never been any writer to equal ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd in purity and euphony of language, clarity of concept and aptness of style.¹⁹² His full name is according to Ibn Khallikān, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib b. Saʿad.¹⁹³ He is of Persian origin from Anbār and has known as the last *Kātib* of the *Diwān*

¹⁸⁸ Serjeant, ‘Early Arabic Prose’, in: *Arabic Literature to the End of The Umayyad Period*, Edit. by: A.F. L. Beeston, et. al, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 117.

¹⁸⁹ See *Encyclopaedia of Arabic literature*, art: Prose, Vol. II, pp. 615-618.

¹⁹⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. ʿArabiyya, Vol. I, p. 586.

¹⁹¹ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, Vol. II, p. 106, see also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Vol. I, pp. 65-66.

¹⁹² Ḥusayn, *Min ḥadīth al-shīr wa al-nathr*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, 1969, p. 40.

¹⁹³ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿayān*, Vol. III, p. 228

al-rasā'il in the Umayyad period.¹⁹⁴ He has been killed with Marwān II, last Umayyad caliph in the battle at Būṣir in 132/750.¹⁹⁵

ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd played an influential role in Arabic prose literature, particularly in the writing of *risāla*. He is considered the founder of this genre, the first to extend the length of *risāla*, and to introduce eloquence into the art of letter-writing. His works aim to attract the ear of the listener rather than capturing the thought of reader.¹⁹⁶ For this reason, al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) claimed that the art of writing *risāla* begins with ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd.¹⁹⁷ His most famous work is *Risāla ilā al-kuttāb* which is addressed to the chancery secretaries. This *risāla* is a code of conduct dealing with the qualities and duties required of a man of position and honour. The text of the *risāla* can be found in al-Qalqashandī's encyclopaedia "*Subḥ al-aʿshā*"¹⁹⁸ and it is thanks to Iḥsān ʿAbbās, that we now have ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's *rasā'il* in an academic edition.¹⁹⁹ When describing ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's works, Wadād al-Qāḍī states: "they are of varying length between two lines and forty pages, deal with topics which are mainly public in nature (letters on conquests, obedience, civil discord, and so forth), in addition to a few letters which are personal and, whereas most of them are complete, other are fragments of longer letters".²⁰⁰ Regarding

¹⁹⁴ Al-Istakhrī, *Masālik al-mamālik*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1927, p. 145.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, Vol. X, p. 55.

¹⁹⁶ Latham, 'The Beginnings of Arabic Prose Literature', in *Arabic Literature to the End of Umayyad Period*, Edit. by: Beeston et. al, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 174.

¹⁹⁷ Al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1973, Vol. III, p. 154.

¹⁹⁸ For the Arabic text, see al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-aʿshā*, Vol. I, pp. 85-89.

¹⁹⁹ According to Wadād al-Qāḍī, the best study so far of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd and his work is that of Iḥsān ʿAbbās in his book entitled "*ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib wa mā tabaqqā min rasā'ilih*", Amman, 1988, pp. 25-60. See also al-Qāḍī, 'The Impact of the Qur'ān on the epistolography of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd', in: *Approaches to the Qur'an*, Edit. by: G.R. Hawting & Abdul Kader A. Shareef, Routledge, London, 1993, p. 312.

²⁰⁰ *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kātib, Vol. I, pp. 13-14. See also, Al-Qāḍī, *The Impact of the Qur'ān*, p. 286.

the style of his writing, Roger Allan claims that the *rasā'il* of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd and his style reflect a complete familiarity with the Qurʾān in words group and structure.²⁰¹

Moving to the early Abbasid period where our study will take place, it can be found that almost all scholars agree that prose literature work begins with ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd's disciple, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. He is born in Firuzabad in Fars and known as Ruz Bih.²⁰² His precise date of birth is not known or given, but probably in the early years of the second/eight century.²⁰³ In Arabic prose literature, it is said that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ opened the door to the golden age of this kind of prose writing. He also introduces a wide humanistic concept of letters to the Arab world.²⁰⁴ Although he died very early at the age of thirty-six, he left behind a considerable quantity of works.²⁰⁵ Among his significant prose product is the translation and the adaptation of non-Arabic works such as *Kalīla wa Dimna* from which al-Jāḥiẓ has quoted sayings on two occasions in his *al-Ḥayawān*.²⁰⁶ The works of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ remain among the most fascinating innovations in Arabic prose literature, especially in the classical period, alongside the *rasā'il* of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Sahl b. Hārūn²⁰⁷ and other earlier *kuttāb*.

²⁰¹ Allan, *An introduction to Arabic Literature*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 140. For excellent analysis on this aspect, see al-Qāḍī, *The Impact of the Qurʾān on the epistolography of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd*, pp. 285-321.

²⁰² Al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, undated, Vol. III, pp. 459-460.

²⁰³ See Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, Vol. I, p. 201; al-Jahsiyārī, *al-Wuzarāʾ wa al-kuttāb*, Maṭbaʿat al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, 1938, p. 109.

²⁰⁴ Latham, *Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and early Abbasid prose*, p. 48.

²⁰⁵ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Vol. III, pp. 883-885.

²⁰⁶ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. VI, p. 330, Vol. VII, pp. 92-95.

²⁰⁷ He is a writer and poet, a contemporary of al-Jāḥiẓ, who died in the year 244/858. He is also *Kātib* to the Barmakids and the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn, but his works have been lost. Al-Jāḥiẓ mentioned some of the title of Sahl b. Hārūn's works such as *Kitāb al-ikhwān*, *Thaʿla wa ʿafra*, *al-Makhzūmī wa al-makhzūmiya* and *al-Masāʾil*. See, al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. I, p. 52. Describing Sahl b. Hārūn's works, Goldziher says that "the literary curiosity which made him famous". See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1971, Vol. I, p. 137, see also Goldziher, *A short history of classical Arabic literature*, p. 85; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Sahl b. Hārūn, Vol. VIII, p. 62.

In general, during the Abbasid period, there are two groups of prose writers who contributed to the growth of Abbasid prose literature. The first group is the *kuttāb*, of whom the most important representatives were Sahl b. Hārūn and Ibn al-Muqaffa^c. The second group of writers is the scholars of the third/ninth century, to whom Arabic prose style are deeply indebted. They was represented by al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Qutayba, Badī^c al-Zamān, and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī.

Their style of writing can be divided into three main categories: the *mutlaq* or *mursal*, that is the free unadorned style of the second/eight century represented by Sahl b. Hārūn and Ibn al-Muqaffa^c; the *muzdawaj* or *mutawāzin*, the assonantal style of the third/ninth century represented by al-Jāḥiẓ; and the *musajja^c*, the rhyming style of the fourth/tenth century represented by Badī^c al-Zamān.²⁰⁸ It can be said that the writings of men such as ^cAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, Sahl b. Hārūn, Ibn al-Muqaffa^c and others paved the way for al-Jāḥiẓ with their contributions in the development of prose writing.

2.2 The Significance of al-Jāḥiẓ's Prose Works:

The prose literature work continued during the first Abbasid century and it was the beginning of the great creative period of Arabic prose literature. The first really great representative of Arabic prose writers at this time was al-Jāḥiẓ. It is not known when al-Jāḥiẓ began writing but, according to Pellat, his first works certainly date from before the

²⁰⁸ Al-Maqdisī, *Taḥṣīn al-asālib al-nathriyya ft al-adab al-^cArabi*, Dār al-^cIlm lī al-Malāyīn, Beirut, 1965, p. 6.

end of the second/eight century.²⁰⁹ More specifically, he suggests to be dated from roughly 200/815-816.²¹⁰ Perhaps by this time, al-Jāḥiẓ had already written some works which his first work is about *al-Imāma*.²¹¹ Quotation from al-Jāḥiẓ himself in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn* will be interesting to show this point: “After (Caliph al-Ma’mūn) having ordered al-Yazīdī to look through the books which I had written on the imamate and to convey to him his opinion about their contents, and after having read them himself ... (al-Ma’mūn) sent for me and said to me, “Someone whose intelligence we respect and whose information can be trusted informed me that these books were well composed and of great usefulness. I said to him, “Maybe the description will prove superior to firsthand contact”. But when I looked them over I found that on inspection they were better than the description of them. So I examined the books more closely and found that my pleasure with them had been a greatly increase by a second reading as it had been the first... This is a book, which does not require the presence of its author or other supporters to defend its contention. It combines depth of meaning with fullness of treatment. It has excellent diction and smoothness of style. It is a book for the marketplace or the palace, for the common man or the specialist”.²¹² This statement can be accepted and helps to understand the circumstances in which al-Jāḥiẓ started his writing. Through this work, al-Jāḥiẓ won the compliments of the Caliph al-Ma’mūn.

²⁰⁹ See Pellat, ‘al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Abbasid Belles-Letter*, p. 79.

²¹⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, p. 385.

²¹¹ For the development of the theory of *Imāma*, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art *Imāma*, Vol. III, pp. 1163-1169. An excellent study on the works of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning *al-Imāma* (Imamate) that we have so far is “*The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ with special reference to the question of Khilāfa (Imamate)*” by Jamāl El-‘Aṭṭār, Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1996.

²¹² Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. III, pp. 374-375.

Strictly speaking, one knows that, as Goldziher said, that it was al-Jāḥiẓ who initiated the kind of Arabic literature styled *adab* (meaning culture, good manners, and humanities).²¹³ One may assume that al-Jāḥiẓ is also one who brought Arabic prose literature to bear on all aspects of contemporary life in a series of works.²¹⁴ In the following words, Gibb describes how al-Jāḥiẓ began his career: “the man [al-Jāḥiẓ] who more than any other, found the reply to literary challenge of the secretaries, and established the new Islamic literature firmly upon the foundations of the Arabic humanities. He began his career as a writer by imitating the secretarial works, and whether of set purpose or not had learned the secret of their literary art and success”.²¹⁵

During his long life, like many Arabic writers, al-Jāḥiẓ had a very great output in Arabic prose literature. Pellat claims that this achievement is something unique and remarkable in Arabic literature particularly in an age when writing materials were very expensive and paper only just coming into use.²¹⁶ The list of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ can be found in several premier sources. For instance, Yāqūt in his *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* has listed one hundred and twenty-eight titles of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works,²¹⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm in his *al-Fihrist* has listed around one hundred and twenty one titles,²¹⁸ and Ḥājjī Khalīfa in his *Kashf al-zunūn* has another account with approximately around seventy titles.²¹⁹ In the first volume of *al-Ḥawayān*, al-Jāḥiẓ himself only mentions thirty-six titles of his works.²²⁰ In

²¹³ Goldziher, *A Short history of Classical Arabic Literature*, p. 8.

²¹⁴ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. I, p.588.

²¹⁵ Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1962, p. 71.

²¹⁶ Pellat, ‘al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Abbasid Belles-Letters*, p. 81.

²¹⁷ See index of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works as appeared in *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī at the end of this thesis.

²¹⁸ Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 207-209.

²¹⁹ Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, Vol. V, pp. 802-803.

²²⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥawayān*, Vol. I, pp. 13-16.

modern times, Hasan Sandūbī was the first scholar of al-Jāḥiẓ who has made a list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work in his *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*. He has collected nearly one hundred and fifty-nine titles of al-Jāḥiẓ's works.²²¹ However, according to Sandūbī and followed by Ghurayyib, some of this great output of al-Jāḥiẓ is wrongly attributed to him. For example, both of them assumed that *al-Ibil*, *al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk*, *Tanbīh al-mulūk wa al-makā'id*, *al-Hanīn ilā al-awṭān*, *al-Dalā'il wa al-ītibār 'alā al-khalq wa al-āthār*,²²² *Salwa al-kharīf bī munāzara al-rabī' wa al-kharīf*, *al-Maḥāsin wa al-aḍḍād* and *al-Hadāyā* was not included in al-Jāḥiẓ's work.²²³ In addition, some of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ survived only a part, although they still appear under the title of the whole original works and some other works were lost altogether and only quotations from them in other references could be found.²²⁴

Subsequently, Brockelmann, who is the first western authority of Arabic literature, has set out his list of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ in his great book *Tārīkh al-adab al-'Arabī*.²²⁵ After that, Pellat, the French Arabist, has also set out a provisional list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work in *Arabica* 1956/2²²⁶ based on the Brockelmann's book. However,

²²¹ Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 117-144.

²²² According to Rieu, the manuscript of this book can be found in the British Museum, see Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscript in the British Library*, Gilbert and Rivington Ltd., London, 1894, pp. 709-711.

²²³ Ghurayyib, *al-Jāḥiẓ, dirāsa 'amma*, Dār al-Thaqāfa, Beirut, 1975, p. 41, and see also: Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 145-158.

²²⁴ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 35.

²²⁵ He collected nearly one hundred and seventy-six titles; see Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-'Arabī*, Vol. III, pp. 110-128.

²²⁶ See Pellat, *Gāḥiẓiana III, Essei D'inventairi De L'oeuvre Gāḥiẓienne*, *Arabica*, Vol III, 1956, pp. 147-180.

according to Pellat, the most recent published catalogue of al-Jāḥiẓ lists two hundred and thirty-one authentic works, and only two-dozen have survived intact.²²⁷

The most important, however, of the voluminous work of al-Jāḥiẓ consists of his cultivation and extension of the category of *adab*. This has been described as a literary genre comprising works which combine entertainment and instruction. Some scholars described that almost all al-Jāḥiẓ works dealing with too many things, animals lore, Arabic rhetoric and poetry, supposed racial and national characteristics, ethical qualities, human sexual behavior, the various professions and ways of making a living, or any of countless other matters.²²⁸

Based on this wide contribution, Hutchins claims that al-Jāḥiẓ is one of the first of the major authors to use the new secular Arabic art prose in specifically Arab and Muslim ways.²²⁹ Whilst Gibb describes al-Jāḥiẓ as independent thinker, because he resigned an official post three days after his appointment and even in Islamic law he formed a school of his own.²³⁰ Hirschfield also stresses the same view, he says “al-Jāḥiẓ is a keen observer, an original thinker, and reveals deep thought even in apparently tribal subjects, and his field is wide”.²³¹ Marmura describes al-Jāḥiẓ as *littérateur par excellence*, as versatile and witty, while his style of writing was characterized by assonances, balance phrasing and tendency to digress.²³²

²²⁷ Pellat, ‘al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Abbasid Bellers Letters*, p. 81.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81

²²⁹ Hutchins, *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p.3.

²³⁰ Gibb, *A Short History of the Classical Arabic Literature*, p. 75.

²³¹ Hirschfield, ‘A volume of essays by al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *A volume of Oriental Study*, Edit. by: T. W. Arnold and Reynold A. Nicholson, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1922, p. 202.

²³² Marmura, *Arabic literature: a living heritage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, p. 68.

In any case, McDonald says "if we are to judge from the title of so many of his works, both extant and lost, al-Jāḥiẓ must have thought of himself as primarily a Mu'tazilite theologian and political controversialist, and after this an essayist and an *adīb*."²³³ G. E. von Grunebaum in one of his brilliant essays also suggests that Arabic prose literature has reached a first perfection in al-Jāḥiẓ who he says, was eminently successful in 'Arabizing' Arabic prose by providing a great deal of new matter, not derived from Iranian sources.²³⁴

The forementioned are the most important views of the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ's work and his contribution to the development of Arabic prose literature which scholars have expressed. Although these views differ in detail, they agree in general that the nature of al-Jāḥiẓ's work focused on *adab* and social issues including religious and political elements.

As far as classical Arabic literature resources states, al-Jāḥiẓ dedicates some of his works to Abbasids court officials for which he received large sums of money. For example, Yāqūt cited that *al-Ḥayawān* was dedicated to Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (Ibn Zayyat), and he had given al-Jāḥiẓ five thousand dinars for this book.²³⁵ *Risāla fī al-zarʿ wa al-nakhl* which is not extant dedicated to Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī and he had given him five thousand dinars, and Ahmad b. Abū Duʿād, the chief *qāḍī* (*qāḍī al-quḍāh*) had given al-Jāḥiẓ five thousand dinars for *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*. Al-

²³³ McDonald, *al-Jāḥiẓ's method of composition*, BRISMES, St. Andrew, 1992, p.5.

²³⁴ See Grunebaum, 'Aspects of Arabic Urban Literature', in: *Islamic Studies VIII*, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, 1969, pp. 281-300, reprint as Part IV in Grunebaum, *Themes in Medieval Arabic literature*, Edit. by: Dunning S. Wilson, Variorum Reprints, London, 1981, p. 291.

²³⁵ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 106.

Jāḥiẓ also dedicates some of his works to Ahmad b. Abū Du'ād, his son and deputy, Muhammad, especially *Risāla fī al-mā'āsh wa al-mā'ād*. While *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk* and *al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk* was dedicated to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, an Abbasid commander of Turkish descent.²³⁶

Brockelmann in his discussion of al-Jāḥiẓ's work has classified it according to whether it has been printed or edited under the following heading: theological and politico-theological writings, history, anthropology, general ethics, professions, animals, languages, geography, anthologies and polemics. He added that the lost works covering the further categories of, games, plants, and other substance, literary history, work of entertainment.²³⁷

It seems that this selection of his books and *rasā'il* represent the author's wide range of interest and views. However, Pellat suggests that al-Jāḥiẓ had only two main fields of activity; firstly, theology and politics, and secondly, *adab*.²³⁸ In other words, as Gibb describes, al-Jāḥiẓ's work "widened the range of Arabic literature to cover all aspects of contemporary life and remain to this day the master pieces of Arabic prose. No doubt he chose his subject for his own pleasure, but at the same time almost all his writing were directed to specific, though often well-concealed, ends".²³⁹

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²³⁷ Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿArabī*, Vol.III, pp.110-125.

²³⁸ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 82.

²³⁹ Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, p. 71.

The above quotation from Gibb draws the logical consequences of what we have discussed in the previous pages in chapter one and part of this chapter. We have attempted to show that al-Jāḥiẓ lived in the intellectual, political, social, religious tendencies of his age.

2.3 A breif introduction to al-Jāḥiẓ's main works:

Some of the books and *rasā'il* from the list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work have been edited by many leading scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ. Nowadays, a number of al-Jāḥiẓ's works such as *al-Ḥayawān*, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, *al-Bukhalā'*, *al-Maḥāsin wa al-aḍḍād*,²⁴⁰ *al-Burṣān wa wa al-ʿurjān*,²⁴¹ *al-Tāj fī akhlāq al-mulūk*,²⁴² *al-Bighāl*²⁴³ and other collection of his *rasā'il* have become widely available in scholarly editions of varying quality. Thanks for eastern and western scholars, viz. ʿAbd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn, Ṭahā al-Ḥājirī, G. van Vloten, Charles Pellat and many others with their efforts in editing and reviewing all

²⁴⁰ According to Gelder, this work is by unknown author; however, it used to be attributing to al-Jāḥiẓ. See Gelder, 'The Paradox in Calssical Arabic Literature', in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. XLVIII, 2003, p. 344. It has been edited by ʿAlī Faʿūr and others, reprinted by Dār al-Hādī, Beirut, 1991.

²⁴¹ The title of this book is mentioned only in the *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* with other three titles i.e. *Kitāb abnā' al-sarārī wa al-mahārāt* (lost), *Kitāb al-asmā' wa al-kunā wa al-alqāb wa al-anbāʿ* (lost) and *Kitāb al-insān* (lost). See, al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, pp. 34 & 186 & 255; Vol. III, p. 74. Pellat suggests that these four books were written between 233 A.H. and 237 A.H. see Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 10. The content of the book is about the handicaped which the author set forward his thesis that these people in fact are capable of outstanding achievements. He also set his arguments by citing examples from his contemporaries.

²⁴² This book has survived and it has been edited by Ahmad Makkī Bāshā, al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿĀmiriyya, Cairo, 1914, and translated into French by Pellat, 1954. In this book, the author describes the etiquette in force at the Sasanian court and under the caliphs, and gives advice to the rulers of the government. See, Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 23.

²⁴³ This book has been edited for the first time by Pellat, Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, Cairo, 1955 and the latest edition we have is Abū Milḥim's edition, printed by Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, Beirut, 1997. The book also can be found in the collection of "Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ" by Hārūn and ʿUyūn al-Sūd. Hārūn in his preface to the book said that it is also known as *Kitāb al-qawl fī al-bighāl*, while Dāwūd al-Ḥalabī, on the other hand, said that he found on manuscript from Aleppo which caring the title *Kitāb al-bighāl wa manāfiʿuhā*. This book was written after *al-Ḥayawān*. The main focus on this book is about a hybrid animal. See, Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. II, pp. 215-378; see also in ʿUyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. II, pp. 159-280.

of al-Jāḥiẓ's work. Among these works, the three principal ones are *al-Ḥayawān*, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *al-Bukhalā'*.

In this present section, before we turn our attention to the intensive study of the *rasā'il*, it would be useful in this thesis to offers a brief study of each of these extant books particularly *al-Ḥayawān*, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *al-Bukhalā'*.

2.3.1 *Al-Ḥayawān* :

This book has been edited by °Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn in seven volumes and printed several times in Cairo and Beirut. The first edition has been printed at Maktabat al-Khanjī, Cairo, 1938. The latest edition of *al-Ḥayawān* that we have has been edited by Yaḥyā al-Shāmī and printed at Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, Beirut, 1997. Describing this work, Pellat said as follows “this is a monumental and chief work of al-Jāḥiẓ, which is not so much a bestiary as a genuine anthology based on animals, leading off sometimes rather unexpectedly into theology, metaphysics, sociology etc.; one can even find embryonic theories, without it being possible to say how far they are original, of the evolution of species, the influence of climate and animal psychology, which were not developed till the nineteenth century”.²⁴⁴

There are three notable points from Pellat's statement; the first is that *al-Ḥayawān* is a genuine anthology of material on animals. The second point is al-Jāḥiẓ's tendency to present his varied subject matter with little regard for specialization or organization. The

²⁴⁴ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, p. 386.

third point is the embryonic theories that the book contains.²⁴⁵ In another place Pellat states “The *al-Ḥayawān*, which is a work of *adab* of religious character and not of natural science, is characterized by the greatest disorder. This book is also unfinished, though it is continued in *al-Bighāl*’.²⁴⁶

The exact date of composition of *al-Ḥayawān* is controversial. Pellat for instance, says that it must have been written before 233/847.²⁴⁷ This means that this book has been written before the death of Ibn al-Zayyāt, one of Abbasids court official and he had given him five thousand dinars for this book, who is seen here as the addressee of the book based on a report cited by Yāqūt.²⁴⁸ However, al-Ḥājirī, who is another authority on al-Jāḥiẓ, does not value this citation and assumes that *al-Ḥayawān* was written much later than 232/846, depending on al-Jāḥiẓ own reference to the reign of al-Mutawakkil.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, al-Baṣīr, suggests that the composition of *al-Ḥayawān* should have stretched over a considerable period of al-Jāḥiẓ’s life (he suggests that he wrote it when he was in his eighties), however, he offers no evidences for this.²⁵⁰ From this point of view, we can safely conclude here that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote *al-Ḥayawān* in the latter part of his life, or in the time of al-Mutawakkil or later.

Among Arabs scholars, Jabrī, in his work on al-Jāḥiẓ, gives a special treatment of *al-Ḥayawān*. He sees the significance of this work in its representation of al-Jāḥiẓ’s

²⁴⁵ Manṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 33.

²⁴⁶ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 22.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁴⁸ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 106.

²⁴⁹ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, pp. 397-399.

²⁵⁰ Al-Baṣīr, *Fī al-adab al-ʿAbbāsī*, Maṭbaʿat al-Nuʿmān, Cairo, 1970, p. 58.

scientific attitude in addition to artistic value.²⁵¹ Al-Ḥājirī also discusses the significance of *al-Ḥayawān* when he observes that its significance lies in al-Jāḥiẓ's exposition of a vivid and rich picture of time, the trends of thought of the age and the different tendencies of Muslim society side by side with the treatment of animals.²⁵² Therefore, al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022), the author of *Jam' al-jawāhir*, admits that this book remains as one of al-Jāḥiẓ's peculiarities, particularly the way how could he had attempted this work when he was old and paralysed.²⁵³ This is the most important point of the significance of *al-Ḥayawān*, which scholars have expressed in different views.

Speaking about the structure of his *al-Ḥayawān*, al-Jāḥiẓ asserts: "And thus the chapters- Allah preserve them – were created which require profuseness and length. The words for varied content, few words are for little meaning. Simple content, obvious in its form and aim, requires fewer words than a complicated one whose aim is less clear. Even if all eloquent people tried to express the latter by means of concise words, without any additional explanation, they would not succeed. If the content requires a lot of words, the hearers are ready to listen to them".²⁵⁴

The original sources of the material on which al-Jāḥiẓ depended throughout *al-Ḥayawān* are the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Arabic poetry, proverbs, and reports handed down by oral tradition. However, the greater part of his sources of *al-Ḥayawān* consists of pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, which he quoted extensively, and historical accounts

²⁵¹ Jabrī, *al-Jāḥiẓ mi' allim al-^ḥaql wa al-adab*, p. 111.

²⁵² Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātih wa āihāruh*, pp. 422-423.

²⁵³ Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jam' al-jawāhir*, Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-^ḥArabiyya, Cairo, 1953, p. 204.

²⁵⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 7.

from Jāhiliyya, early Islam and the Umayyad and early Abbasid period because al-Jāḥiẓ found Arabic poetry contained a lot of knowledge concerning animals. It is interesting to note here that Islamic scholarship was at its height when al-Jāḥiẓ wrote this book.

For this reason, al-Jāḥiẓ also depends upon verses of the al-Qur'ān not only in his discussion of theological and religious problems but also in the treatment of subtle philosophical questions. As for animals, there are six Sūra (chapter) in the Qur'ān having the title of the name of animals namely *al-Baqara* (the heifer), *al-An'ām* (the cattle), *al-Naḥl* (the bees), *al-Naml* (the ants), *al-ʿAnkabūt* (the spider), *al-Fīl* (the elephant). It is remarkable to note that al-Jāḥiẓ studied some of three hundred and fifty animals which he then described and classified.

Like the Qur'ānic verse, the Ḥadīth of the Prophet also constitutes one of al-Jāḥiẓ's sources. Al-Jāḥiẓ, however, finds in the prophetic tradition convincing evidences to support his idea. Besides the Qur'ān and the Prophetic tradition, there are more than three hundred proverbs cited in *al-Ḥayawān* because al-Jāḥiẓ could find a suitable proverb to support his argument in any context.²⁵⁵

The well-known tradition or report handed down orally by transmitters is another original source for al-Jāḥiẓ in *al-Ḥayawān* because he had strong confidence in the knowledge of the Arabs or Bedouin. Besides the previous mentioned literary sources, al-Jāḥiẓ's own personal experience played a serious role in his work. He often said that nothing less than eyewitness or actual seeing would satisfy him which Manṣūr described

²⁵⁵ See Hārūn's index of proverbs cited in *al-Ḥayawān*.

that it was the custom of al-Jāḥiẓ to listen to everyone, to observe, and to use his careful 'goggle-eyes' to see every single and subtle thing.²⁵⁶

Beside these materials, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes also from time to time information from *al-Ḥayawān* by Aristotle.²⁵⁷ McDonald reported that F. Sezgin in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* identifies thirty-four passages where al-Jāḥiẓ quotes directly from Ibn al-Biṭrīq's (d. 328/940) translation.²⁵⁸ It is interesting to note that, while he speaks of Aristotle with the greatest respect, he does not hesitate to express polite doubt when he believes him to be wrong as can be seen in *al-Ḥayawān*.

Later, this book became one of the main references for other scholars after al-Jāḥiẓ. Al-Dāmīrī (d. 808/1405) for instance, followed al-Jāḥiẓ's approach when he writes his *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*.²⁵⁹ According to Ḥājī Khalīfa, °Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 626/1231) also had also tried to summarise *al-Ḥayawān* by al-Jāḥiẓ, however his summary has not survived.²⁶⁰ Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (d. 608/1211), an Egyptian prose writer, also attempts to summarise *al-Ḥayawān* by al-Jāḥiẓ in his book entitled *Rūḥ al-ḥayawān*, but this book is also lost.²⁶¹ *Tadhīb ḥayawān lī al-Jāḥiẓ* by Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311) is

²⁵⁶ Manẓūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 33.

²⁵⁷ Aristotle major zoological works *Historia Animalium*, *De Partibus Animalium* and *De Generatione Animalium* were translated quite early into Arabic by Ibn Baṭrīq under the unsurprising title *al-Ḥayawān*. This work is still extant. See Ḥājī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, Vol. I, pp. 695-696; *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Aristūṭalīs, Vol. I, pp. 630-633.

²⁵⁸ McDonald, 'Animals Books as a Genre in Arabic literature', in: *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, (Vol. 15, No. 1&2, 1988), p. 6.

²⁵⁹ The special value of this book is that the surveying of the animal kingdom in an alphabetical order. It is reported that there are one hundred and seven quotations from *al-Ḥayawān* of al-Jāḥiẓ see, al-Dāmīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, Maṭba'at al-Ḥijāzī, Cairo, undated.

²⁶⁰ See Ḥājī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, Vol. I, p. 457; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āl*, p. 311; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, Vol. VI, p. 15.

²⁶¹ See Zamri Arifin, 'Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk and Muwashshah' (Malay version) in: *Ketokohan Cendekiawan Islam*, JPATI, Faculty of Islamic Studies, UKM, Bangi, 2000, pp. 129-141.

the only summary of *al-Ḥayawān* that has survived in which Ibn Manẓūr has also cited some of the anecdotes from *Rūḥ al-ḥayawān* by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk.²⁶²

Al-Jāḥiẓ normally in all his work exhibits a strong desire to record as much oral material as possible, whether it is relevant to his main purpose or not. As a result the main point of the book is hidden among irrelevancies and has to be ferreted out. Hārūn, the editor of the scientific edition of *al-Ḥayawān*, has constructed a valuable index in several parts occupying most of the seven volumes. Finally, we would like to quote McDonald's view regarding al-Jāḥiẓ's approach in this book. He claims that "al-Jāḥiẓ was not a specialist in the study of animals, nor did he have any practical expertise in the handling of animals, or in falconry or farriery".²⁶³ He further argues "one of the results of this is that it is often difficult or impossible to identify the animals of which al-Jāḥiẓ is speaking, and no doubt it is difficult to explain what any animals look like in the absence of a picture".²⁶⁴ However, almost can be said here is that *al-Ḥayawān*, is a foundation for further study in that field which reflect the Islamic tendency in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing.

2.3.2 *Al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*:

This book was among the most important of al-Jāḥiẓ's works. Ibn Khaldūn, a notable scholar of the ninth/fourteenth century, remarked in his great work *al-Muqaddima*, on the importance of *al-Bayān al-tabayīn* by al-Jāḥiẓ particularly in Arabic

²⁶² This book has been edited by Zahrān Muhammad Jabr 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, and forward by 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājī, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1992.

²⁶³ McDonald, *Animals-Books as a Genre in Arabic Literature*, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

prose literature as follows: "We heard our *shaykh* (teacher) say in class that the basic principles and pillars of this discipline are four works, the *Adab al-kātib* by Ibn Qutayba, *al-Kāmil* by al-Mubarrad, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīm* by al-Jāḥiẓ and the *al-Nawādir* by Abū 'Alī al-Qālī'. All other books depend on these four and are derived from them.²⁶⁵

The first edition of this book has been edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn in 1948-50 into four volumes (and also in other editions e.g. Muḥibuddīn al-Khatīb, undated and Sandūbī, in 1345 H.). Hārūn also constructed a valuable index in several parts occupying most of the forth volume. According to Yāqūt, this book was written in two copies, and the second copy was much better.²⁶⁶ We do not know which copy that we are using today. In addition, there have been some controversies over the correct reading of the title of this work either *al-Bayān wa al-tabayyun* or *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīm*.²⁶⁷ However, this book is better known among scholars of Arabic literature as *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīm*.

This book dealt with literary topics; as can clearly be seen from the title itself. The word "*al-Bayān*" means elegance of expression, and "*al-tabyīm*" means clarity of exposition. Hence, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīm* is an anthology of poetry and oratorical prose.²⁶⁸ There are many oral materials that have been recorded by al-Jāḥiẓ. The author depended, throughout this book, on the original sources of his material such as the

²⁶⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, Vol. III, pp. 340-341.

²⁶⁶ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 106.

²⁶⁷ For this problem and full discussion of this work, see al-Būshaykhī, *Muṣṭalahāt naqdiyya wa balāghiyya fī kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabayyun li al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, Beirut, 1982, pp. 27-46; Makkī, *Dirāsāt fī maṣādir al-adab*, Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo, 1968, pp. 164-165; Ṭabbāna, *al-Bayān al-'Arabī*, Maktabat al-Injlū al-Miṣriyya, Cairo, 1956, p. 31; 'Id, *al-Maqāyīs al-balāghiyya 'ind al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 43; 'Āṣī, *Mafāhīm al-jamāliyya wa al-naqd fī adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, Beirut, 1974, p. 40.

²⁶⁸ Pellat, 'al-Jāḥiẓ', in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 88.

Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Arabic poetry, proverbs, and reports handed down by oral tradition.²⁶⁹

One can notice that al-Jāḥiẓ used *al-Istitrād* (digression), his famous method to compose this book. A sense of humour can be seen in this book, for example, in the volumes two and four, al-Jāḥiẓ offers us more than forty pages of anecdotes entitled “*Bāb al-nawkā wa al-majānīn wa al-aghbiyā*”.²⁷⁰

This book contains several important topics concerning the study of Arabic language and literature, which had been summarised by Hārūn, the editor of the book, in the first volume.²⁷¹ Ṭahā Ḥusayn seems to have agreed with Hārūn's edition whenever he also suggests that the important subject that had been discussed by al-Jāḥiẓ in this book can be divided into these four groups: 1) a discussion on Arabic phonetic; 2) a discussion on Arabic grammar and its relation with phonetic; 3) a discussion on some of the rhetoric rules; and 4) a discussion on the rules of oratory and speeches.²⁷² However, according to al-Bahitī, the content of the *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* was not come down to us in its original structure, as had been listed by Hārūn, because it may be added to and changed unreservedly by the copyist.²⁷³

There is no definite sign to show exactly when al-Jāḥiẓ wrote his *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*. We only know without any doubt that he wrote *al-Ḥayawān* in the later part of his

²⁶⁹ See Index of *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* organised by Hārūn, Vol. IV, pp. 103-321.

²⁷⁰ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. II, p. 225-246 & Vol. IV, p. 5-22. For further detail on the sense of humour in *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*. See al-Ḥūfi, *al-Fukāha fī al-adab*, Dār al-Nahḍa, Cairo, undated, p. 7; and also Zamri Arifin, ‘al-Fukāha fī kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn li al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Jurnal Islāmiyyāt*, FPI, National University of Malaysia, Vol. 23 (2002): pp. 69-82.

²⁷¹ Hārūn, *Muqaddima kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 7.

²⁷² See Ṭahā Ḥusayn, *Muqaddima kitāb naqd al-nathr li Qudāma b. Jafar*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1982, pp. 7-8.

²⁷³ Al-Bahitī, ‘Manḥaj al-Jāḥiẓ fī kitābih al-bayān wa al-tabyīn’, in: *Majallat al-Muqtaṭṭif*, Cairo, 1950, Vol. 117, p. 50.

life, in the time of al-Mutawakkil or later, and was perhaps followed by *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*. This sequence is reliable since al-Jāhiz in *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn* mentions *al-Hayuwān* as a previous work.²⁷⁴ There are two aims in the composition of this book, one is that al-Jāhiz tries to demonstrate Arab superiority to all other nations in the literary field particularly in *‘Ilm al-Balāgha* (rhetoric),²⁷⁵ and the other one, as was explained by al-Jāhiz himself, is to add to the arguments directed against members of other cultures especially the *Shu‘ūbiyya*²⁷⁶ group who claimed that the Arabs were barbarian.²⁷⁷ Because of this reason, some scholars of al-Jāhiz have said that al-Jāhiz has played a role as defender and solicitor for the Arabs in the Abbasid period against their enemy viz. the *Shu‘ūbiyya*.²⁷⁸

Many scholars pointed out that this book is a great achievement of al-Jāhiz's writing in the literary field. Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī, Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī and al-Mas‘ūdī for instance, said that *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn* was the first Arabic book which focused on the discussion of *‘Ilm al-Balāgha* or *al-Bayān* (Rhetoric).²⁷⁹ Al-Jāhiz elaborates his theory of explication of *al-Bayān* in this four volumes work which includes the definition, forms and meaning of *al-Bayān*, etc.²⁸⁰ Al-Jāhiz also exploits religious

²⁷⁴ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. III, p. 302.

²⁷⁵ In Arabic, the term *balāgha* and *bayān* had each the meaning of both rhetoric and eloquence. When it prefix with *‘ilm* (science), they meant rhetoric, i.e. the science of eloquence. See

²⁷⁶ This term refers to a movement of Persian nationalism whose aim was the glorification of the Persian origin. For detail analysis of this movement, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Al-Shu‘ūbiyya, Vol. IX, pp. 513-516. For excellent analysis on the influence of this movement on Arabic literature, see Hijāb, *Mazāhir al-shu‘ūbiyya fī al-adab al-‘Arabī*, Maktabat al-Nahḍa, Cairo, 1961.

²⁷⁷ See al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān*, Vol. II, p. 5; Pellat, ‘al-Jāhiz’, in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 88.

²⁷⁸ See for instance Abū Zayd, *al-Manḥā al-‘itizālī fī al-bayān wa i‘jāz al-Qur’ān*, Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif, Rabat, 1986, p. 131; Hijāb, *Mazāhir al-shu‘ūbiyya fī al-adab al-‘Arabī*, p. 431.

²⁷⁹ See al-‘Askarī, *al-Šinā‘atayn*, p. 4-5; Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī, *al-‘Umda*, Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1972, Vol. I, p. 257; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. VIII, p. 34.

²⁸⁰ For the detail analysis on this aspect, see Krystyna, ‘Some Aspects of al-Jāhiz’s rhetorical theory’, in: *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, University of Edinburgh, Vol. III, (1991), pp. 89-116.

texts (i.e. the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīth) in his attempt to highlight his theory.²⁸¹ It has been reported that the people from the town of Basra, where al-Jāḥiẓ was born and died, were very proud of four books which were written by their scholars, i.e. *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *al-Ḥayawān* written by al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Kitāb* written by Sībawayh (d. c. 180/796) and *al-ʿAyn* written by al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhidī (d. c. 175/791).²⁸² This is clear evidence of the importance of this book in the literary field.

In modern times, Gibb for example, says that in *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, al-Jāḥiẓ displayed the rich resources of the Arabic humanities, and taught the classical philologists that their studies served a wider purpose than the mere classifying of linguistic niches.²⁸³ Ahsan describes *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* as a most important book since it offers valuable data on the mode of costume of the people in classical period particularly in the Abbasid era.²⁸⁴ In conclusion, it can be said that *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* represents al-Jāḥiẓ's contribution to the study of literary, philological, linguistic, and sociology studies.

2.3.3 *Al-Bukhalā'*:

Al-Bukhalā' was written towards the end of al-Jāḥiẓ's life. The first edition of *al-Bukhalā'* has been edited in 1900 by a Dutch Arabist, G. Van Vloten. This European edition, as was described by Serjeant, based on what appears to be the unique MS. the

²⁸¹ For excellent study on this subject matter, see, El-ʿAṭṭār, 'al-Jāḥiẓ's view of Arabic in relation to the Qur'ān', BRISMES, (St. Andrew, 1992), pp. 20-33.

²⁸² ʿAlī, *Umar ā' al-bayān*, p. 387.

²⁸³ Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, p. 71.

²⁸⁴ Ahsan, *Social life under the Abbasids*, Longman, London, 1979, p. 4.

Köprülü text transcribed in 669/1300.²⁸⁵ In 1938, it was edited again by °Alī al-Jārim and Ahmad al-°Awāmirī. Later on, *al-Bukhalā'* was once again edited for the third time by Tahā al-Ḥājirī. According to al-Ḥājirī, only two manuscripts of the *al-Bukhalā'* of al-Jāḥiẓ have been discovered, a complete one in Köprülü dated 1890, and an incomplete one in Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Arabe 6011, which consists of a segment stopping in the middle of the work.²⁸⁶ Therefore, Serjeant suggests that al-Ḥājirī's text is on the whole a very good edition indeed.²⁸⁷

According to Multi-Douglas, there are three books which are known with *Bukhalā'* in the title, namely *al-Bukhalā'* by al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'* by al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071)²⁸⁸ and the *Wuqū' al-balā' bī al-bukhl wa al-bukhalā'* by Ibn al-Mibrad (d. 909/1503).²⁸⁹ However, only the first two of these works have been edited, whereas the third is extant in manuscript only.²⁹⁰

As can be seen from the text, *al-Bukhalā'* consists largely of prose anecdotes. Malti-Douglas has listed thirty-two topics of this book starting with the introduction by

²⁸⁵ See Serjeant, 'Translating *al-Bukhalā'* of al-Jāḥiẓ', in: *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, University of Edinburgh, Vol. III, (1991), p. 20. Later on, Serjeant translates *Bukhalā'* of al-Jāḥiẓ completely into English entitled "The book of misers", Garnet Publishing Limited, London, 1977.

²⁸⁶ See al-Ḥājirī, *Muqaddima kitāb al-bukhalā'*, pp. 13-14.

²⁸⁷ Serjeant, *Translating al-Bukhalā' of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 23.

²⁸⁸ This book has been edited by Ahmad Maṭlūb, Khadīja al-Ḥadīthī and Ahmad al-Qaysī (Baghdad, 1964). On his biography and his works, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Vol. IV, pp. 1111-12.

²⁸⁹ His full name is Yūsuf b. Ḥasan b. Ahmad b. °Abd al-Hādī al-Ṣāliḥī. However, he is known as Ibn al-Mibrad. See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, Vol. XIII, p. 289. Malti-Douglas remarks that a detailed analysis of this book can be seen in her article, 'Yūsuf b. °Abd al-Hādī and His Autograph of the *Wuqūf al-balā' bi al-bukhl wa al-bukhalā'*', *Bulletin d'etudes orientalis*, Vol. 31 (1979), pp.17-50. Quotes from: Malti-Douglas, 'Structure and organization in monographic *Adab* work', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40/3 (1981), pp. 227-245.

²⁹⁰ Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 6.

al-Jāḥiẓ²⁹¹ and ending with various anecdotes.²⁹² Al-Jāḥiẓ opens his discussion in the introduction with a lengthy discussion of the topics which he was asked to treat in his book concerning the mentality of the *bukhalā'* and the reason for their behavior and their choice of this particular way of life. The *risāla* of Sahl b. Hārūn on avarice forms the beginning of al-Jāḥiẓ's *Bukhalā'*.²⁹³ Furthermore, we can see that each section within the book can be perceived as a self-contained literary unit.

Malti-Douglas also suggests that the collection of anecdotes in *al-Bukhalā'* can be divided into three subgroups: 1) groups of anecdotes concerned with different individuals with no unifying element; 2) groups of anecdotes or a series of anecdotes concerned with single individuals; and 3) groups of anecdotes concerned with different individuals but with some unifying elements.²⁹⁴ Pellat asks whether the last part of this book entitled "*Aṭrāf min ʿilm al-ʿArab fī al-ṭaʿām*" (The Utmost Parts from the Knowledge of the Arabs Concerning Food), could be the *Kitāb aḥimat al-ʿArab* that was listed by Brockelmann.²⁹⁵ This controversial issue appears because this chapter in *al-Bukhalā'* present in only one manuscript.²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, we entirely agree with Brockelmann, when he admits that *Kitāb aḥimat al-ʿArab* was among al-Jāḥiẓ's work.²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'*, pp. 1-8.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 195-212.

²⁹³ We assumed that the reason why this *risāla* comes first is that al-Jāḥiẓ wants to attack the personality of Sahl b. Hārūn because he is said to have been a fanatical supporter of the Shuʿūbiyya. See Gibb, 'The Social Significance of the Shuʿūbiyya', in: Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, pp. 62-73; Norris, 'Shuʿūbiyya in Arabic literature', in: Ashtiany et. al., *Abbasid Belles-Letters*, pp. 31-45.

²⁹⁴ Malti Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 47.

²⁹⁵ Pellat, *The life and works of al-Jahiz*, p. 23.

²⁹⁶ For further discussion on this matter see, Malti-Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, pp. 43-45.

²⁹⁷ Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿArab I*, Vol. III, p. 123.

Regarding the motive of the composition of this book, al-Jāḥiẓ states in his introduction that the reader will find three things in his book: the first being the explanation of a novel argument (*tabayyun ḥujja ṭarīfa*), the second being the revelation of a witty stratagem (*ta'arruf ḥilā al-laṭīfa*), and the third being the benefit of a wondrous anecdotes (*istifadāt nādira 'ajība*).²⁹⁸ In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ also wants to highlight the Arabs superiority against the *Shu' ūbiyya* group. This book also represents the sense of al-Jāḥiẓ's obedience to the Abbasid government against the Umayyads.²⁹⁹

Describing the methodology of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing of his *Bukhalā'*, Pellat says as follows: "he wrote the *al-Bukhalā'* in which he used laughter as an element in moralizing desing".³⁰⁰ This book of al-Jāḥiẓ also is a treasure-trove of information on the food and dietary habits of various groups of people living in early Abbasid society.³⁰¹ In praise of the composition of *al-Bukhalā'*, Jackson said that we are fortunate in *al-Bukhalā'* of al-Jāḥiẓ that the composition of the book as a series of anecdotes enables us to enjoy and appreciate an individual story or stories, without necessarily having read the entire book.³⁰² In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ also exploits religious texts (i.e. the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīth) in his way to highlight how *Bukhalā'*'s person attempts to defend their vice.³⁰³

In short, we can say that this book would fall within the group of works dealing with a specific category of people. One can cite other books in this category composed by

²⁹⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'*, p. 5; see also, Malti Douglas, *Structure of Avarice*, p. 49.

²⁹⁹ Abū 'Alī, *Sukhriya al-Jāḥiẓ min bukhālā'ih*, Maktabat al-Aqṣā, Amman, 1982, pp. 37-39.

³⁰⁰ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djidd wa al-Hazl, Vol. II, pp. 536-537.

³⁰¹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 4.

³⁰² Jackson, *An Essay in the Practical Appreciation of a story from Kitāb Bukhalā' of al-Jāḥiẓ* BRISMES, St. Andrew, 1992, p. 297.

³⁰³ See for example, al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'*, pp. 9-16, 185-86, 192-94.

al-Jāhiz. He himself for instance, mentions *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ*, however as has been mentioned above, this work is unfortunately not extant. Further titles in this category, would include *al-Burṣān wa al-ʿurjān*, *Risāla fī al-qiyān* and etc.

2.4 *Rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz:

It seems from the list of his work that al-Jāhiz has a large number of books and *rasā'il*. We have already offered a brief explanation about some of his main extant works. Therefore, this part of the study will now focus on the discussion of the second part of al-Jāhiz's works i.e. the *rasā'il*.

2.4.1 The definition of *Risāla*:

Risāla (pl. *Rasā'il*) is Arabic term used in classical Arabic literature to describe the literary letter/epistle which addressed to a name (or without naming) person as a literary device. The composition being in fact designed for public consumption and commonly much lengthier than any genuine private letter would be. At the start, this device was mainly used for works of moral and political advice, but soon came to be employed also for scientific, and philosophical, etc. which we would be call treatises, essays or epistles. This kind of writing has not always denoted a short work; a *risāla* can extend over several volumes.³⁰⁴ Whilst *Fann al-rasā'il* also known as “epistolary art”

³⁰⁴For further information, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Risāla*, Vol. VIII, pp. 532-544; Beeston, *Sample of Arabic Prose*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 3. However, this thesis will use *risāla* and *rasā'il* for plural usage.

which derived from three Arabic words, viz. (رسل), (أنشا), and (كتب). The words *tarassul*, *tarsīl*, *kitāba*, *inshā'*, designated the art of letter-writing.³⁰⁵

2.4.2 The collection of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ:

The *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ originally is preserved in fragments in classical works particularly in the margin of *al-Kāmil* written by al-Mubarrad (d. c. 285/898). Then it has been collected from these fragments by 'Ubaydullah b. Ḥassān.³⁰⁶ In modern times, almost all these *rasā'il* has received considerable scholarly attention, mainly because of its value. As far as I am aware that the first collection of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ has been edited by Van Vloten but this edition contains only three *rasā'il*.³⁰⁷ Unfortunately, he died before completing the work; it was then continued and sent to the press by de Goeje.³⁰⁸ Later, Muhammad Sāsī al-Maghribī edited a new edition of *risāla* which contained eleven *risāla*; three *rasā'il* from Vloten's collection and the other *rasā'il* from his new collection.³⁰⁹ Then, J. Finkel collected and edited three more *risāla* in his

³⁰⁵ We find that some of these *rasā'il* are sometimes called *kitāb*, but most often *risāla*. See Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol I, p. 1084, Vol. II, pp. 2592, 2791.

³⁰⁶ Thanks to 'Ubaydullah b. Ḥassān, that we now have al-Jāḥiẓ's *rasā'il* in an academic edition. According to 'Uyūn al-Sūd, 'Ubaydullah b. Ḥassān was unknown *Adīb*, who lived in the fourth century of hijra. See 'Uyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. III, p. 3.

³⁰⁷ This collection entitled "*Tria Opuscula Autote Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr al-Djahiz Basrensi*", it was printed by E.J. Brill, Leiden in 1903. It contains three *rasā'il* namely: 1) *Risāla ilā al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān fī manāḳib al-Turk*, pp. 1-56, 2) *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān 'alā al-bīdān*, pp. 57-85, and 3) *Kitāb or Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr*, pp. 86-157.

³⁰⁸ See Walker, C. T. Harley, *Jahiz of Basra to al-Fath Ibn Khaqan on the "Exploit of the Turks and the Army of the Caliphate in General"*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXIII, (1915): p. 41.

³⁰⁹ The eight *risāla* as follows: 1) *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, 2) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-muṭq 'alā al-ṣamt*, 3) *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm 'amal al-sulṭān*, 4) *Risāla fī al-'ishq wa al-nisā'*, 5) *Risāla fī istinjāz al-waḍ' d*, 6) *Risāla fī bayān madhāhib al-Shī'ah*, 7) *Risāla fī al-wukalā'*, and 8) *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīn*. Sāsī al-Maghribī, *Majmū'a rasā'il*, Maṭba'at al-Taqaḍdum, Cairo, 1324, and see also: Hārūn Muqaddima *rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. I, p 10.

collection.³¹⁰ In 1933, Sandūhī edited a bigger portion of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz in his collection which contained seventeen *rasā'il*.³¹¹ In 1943, Ṭaha al-Ḥājirī and Paul Kraus published four *rasā'il* in their edition which has been published by Lujnat al-Ta'līf wa al-Turjuma, Cairo.³¹²

The first complete collection of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz has been edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn in two volumes. He based his edition on the previous collections and on some classical works such as *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. c. 656/1258), *Ṭirāz al-majālis* by al-Shihāb al-Khafājī (d. 979/1571) and *Jam' al-jawāhir* by al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022) etc".³¹³ Later on, in 1974, 'Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn published another two volumes which consists of ten *rasā'il*.

The edition that we are going to use in this study was reprinted in four volumes by Dār al-Jīl, Beirut, 1991. This edition has clearly been prepared with immense care. The usefulness of Hārūn's edition is considerably enhanced by his introduction and indices of the Qur'ānic verse, Ḥadīth, proverbs, poetry, persons, tribes and groups, and countries and other places. For this reason, all modern studies on *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* are, of course, indebted to Hārūn's edition.

³¹⁰ The three *rasā'il* are as follows: 1) *al-Mukhtār min kitāb al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, 2) *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, and 3) *Risāla fī al-qiyān*. See: *Thalāth rasā'il lī al-Jāhiz*, Edit. by: Finkel, Maṭba'at al-Salafiyya, Cairo, 1928.

³¹¹ The seventeen *rasā'il* as follows: 1) *Kitāb al-'Uthmāniya*, 2) *Kitāb fadl Hāshim 'alā 'Abd al-Sham*, 3) *Kitāb ḥujaj al-mubirwa*, 4) *Kitāb al-ḥijāb*, 5) *Kitāb al-tarbf wa al-tadwār*, 6) *Risāla fī istiḥqāq al-imāna*, 7) *Fī ṣinā'at al-qurwād*, 8) *Fī al-nisā'*, 9) *Fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, 10) *Fī madḥ al-nabīdh*, 11) *Fī Banī Umayya*, 12) *Fī al-'Abbāsiyya*, 13) *Fī al-mawadda wa al-khilā'a*, 14) *Fī dhamm al-zamān*, 15) *Risāla ilā Ibn Zayyāt*, 16) *Risāla ilā Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād*, 17) *Risāla ilā Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir*, See: Hārūn, *Muqaddima rasā'il al-Jāhiz*, Vol. I, p. 13.

³¹² The four *rasā'il* are: 1) *Risāla fī al-maf'āsh wa al-maf'ād*, 2) *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifz al-lisān* 3) *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* 4) *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-'adāwa wa al-ḥasad*.

³¹³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

The first volume of Hārūn's edition contains ten *rasā'il*, namely:

1. *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk.*
2. *Risāla fī al-ma' āsh wa al-ma' ād.*
3. *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān.*
4. *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān 'alā al-bīdān.*
5. *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl.*
6. *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh.*
7. *Risāla fī al-futyā*
8. *Risāla ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāḥ al-Kātib.*
9. *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-'adāwa wa al-ḥasad.*
10. *Risāla fī ṣinā'a al-quwwād.*

And the second volume contains seven *rasā'il*, namely:

1. *Risāla fī al-nābita.*
2. *Risāla fī al-ḥijāb*
3. *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*
4. *Kitāb (Risāla) fī al-qiyān*
5. *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*
6. *Kitāb al-bighāl*
7. *Risāla al-ḥanīm ilā al-awṭān.*

The third volume consists of *rasā'il* as follows:

1. *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*
2. *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn*
3. *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*
4. *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh wa ṣifat aṣḥābih*
5. *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughaniyyīn*
6. *Risāla fī al-nisāʾ*
7. *Risāla fī manākib al-Turk*
8. *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa.*
9. *Risāla fī khalq al-Qurʾān*
10. *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*

The fourth volume contains this *rasāʾil*:

- 1) *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbīha*
- 2) *Risāla fī al-ʿUthmāniyya*
- 3) *Risāla fī al-masāʾil wa al-jawābāt fī al-maʿrifa.*
- 4) *Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād*
- 5) *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*
- 6) *Risāla fī al-wukalāʾ*
- 7) *Risāla fī al-awṭān wa al-buldān*
- 8) *Risāla fī al-balāgha wa al-ijāz*
- 9) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-zahr*
- 10) *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul*
- 11) *Risāla fī al-mawadda wa al-khilṭa*

- 12) *Risāla fī istiḥqāq al-imāma*
- 13) *Risāla fī istinjāz al-wa'd*
- 14) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq °alā al-ṣamt*
- 15) *Risāla fī ṣinā'at al-kalām*
- 16) *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*
- 17) *Risāla fī al-jawābāt fī al-imāma*
- 18) *Risāla fī maqala al-zaydiyya wa al-rāfiḍa.*

Subsequently, in 1995, °Alī Abū Milḥim comes with his special collection and edition of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ which he divided into two groups; the first group is called *al-Rasā'il al-Kalāmiyya*³¹⁴ and the second group is *al-Rasā'il al-Adabiyya*.³¹⁵ In addition, he also provides a lengthy introduction into each *risāla*.

The third and the latest collection of *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ that we are going to use for this study is the collection of Muhammad Bāsil °Uyūn al-Sūd. This is a further step toward a better understanding of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ. The editor has added occasional notes, both philological and historical, to the text. This collection consists of four

³¹⁴There are eleven *rasā'il* in the this group, namely: 1) *Risāla fī ṣ inā'at al-kalām* 2) *Risāla fī al-qiyān* 3) *Risāla fī al-nisā'* 4) *Risāla fī al-masā'il wa al-jawābāt fī al-ma'rifa* 5) *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* 6) *Risāla fī khalq al-Qur'ān* 7) *Risāla fī istiḥqāq al-imāma* 8) *Risāla fī naḥy al-tashbīh* 9) *Risāla fī al-radd °alā al-mushabbihā* 10) *Risāla fī al-nābita* 11) *Risāla fī al-radd °alā al-Naṣārā.*

³¹⁵These are as follows: 1) *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān* 2) *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd* 3) *Risāla fī al-mubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr* 4) *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān* 5) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baḥī °alā al-ṣahr* 6) *Risāla fī al-mi'allimīn* 7) *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughaniyyīn* 8) *Risāla fī al-wukalā' wa al-muwakkalīn* 9) *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm °amal al-sulṭān* 10) *Risāla fī al-futyā* 11) *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh wa ṣifat aṣḥābih* 12) *Risāla fī al-balāgha wa al-ijāz* 13) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq °alā al-ṣamt* 14) *Risāla fī ṣinā'at al-qurwwād* 15) *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* 16) *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-°adāwa wa al-ḥasad* 17) *Risāla fī istinjāz al-wa'd* 18) *Risāla ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāḥ al-Kātib* 19) *Risāla fī al-mawadda wa al-khilṭa* 20) *Risāla fī al-tarbīf wa al-tadwīr.*

volumes in which the whole *rasā'il* appeared as the same order as Hārūn's editions which are as follows:

- 1) First volume contains ten *rasā'il*.
- 2) Second volume contains seven *rasā'il*.
- 3) Third volume consists of ten *rasā'il*.
- 4) Forth volume contains eighteen *rasā'il*.

On the other hand, there are some other *risāla* which not have been mentioned in these three collections. For instance, it has been said that *Risāla fī al-zar' wa al-nakhl wa al-zaytūn* was supposed to be the work of al-Jāhiz.³¹⁶ According to McDonald, this work was very possibly quite large if the report quoted in the *Fihrist* of Ibn Nadīm is correct, because five thousands dinars at that time was a large amount.³¹⁷ However, as far as we know, this work has not survived.

It is remarkable to note here that some manuscripts of this *rasā'il* still exist in the British Museum. For instance, in his "*Supplement to the Catalogue of Arabic MSS in the British Museum*", Charles Rieu mentioned some of title of *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz* which can be seen in the British mesuem.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Al-Jāhiz adapted the title of this work from the Qur'ānic verse (16:11). He dedicated this work to Ibrāhīm b. 'Abbās al-Ṣūlī, who has given him 5,000 dinars. However, Abū Milḥim suggests that the complete title of this work is *al-Zar' wa al-nakhl wa al-zaytūn wa al-ā'nāb*, See: Abū Milḥim, *Kashshāf āhār al-Jāhiz*, p. 376.

³¹⁷ McDonald, *Animals-Books as a Genre in Arabic Literature*, pp. 3-10.

³¹⁸ See for further information, Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscript in the British Library*, Gilbert and Rivington Ltd., London, 1894, pp. 709-710.

Referring to Pellat's book on *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, we find that Pellat divided all of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ's into three categories; the first category is on semi-political or semi-theological, the second category is on al-Jāḥiẓ's own particular type of *adab*, and the final category is on traditional *adab*, merging into the portrayal of people and society. There are eighteen *rasā'il* in the first category, which Pellat divided into two sub-titles; an account of Mu'tazilite doctrine and a defence of the Abbasids against their opponents³¹⁹.

In category two, Pellat divided the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ into two sub-titles i.e. *risāla* on literary and quasi-scientific. There are seven *risāla* on literary and two *risāla* on quasi-scientific issues³²⁰. And in the final category which is on traditional *adab* merging into the portrayal of people and society, Pellat divided this into four sub-titles i.e. manners, character traits, emotion and social groups.³²¹ It is important to take a note here that our study will be in agreement with Pellat on this subject matter.

³¹⁹ These *rasā'il* are as follows: 1) *Risāla fī faḍīlat ṣinā'at al-kalām* 2) *Risāla fī al-masā'il wa al-jawābāt fī al-ma'rifa* 3) *Risāla fī al-akhbār wa khayfa taṣiḥḥ* 4) *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-mubīwwa* 5) *Risāla fī khalq al-Qur'ān* 6) *Risāla fī al-futyā* 7) *Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh* 8) *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* 9) *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabī* 10) *Risāla fī al-Abbāsiyya* 11) *Risāla fī faḍl Hāshim 'alā 'Adb al-Shams* 12) *Risāla fī bayān madhāhib al-Shī'a* 13) *Risāla fī jawābāt fī al-imāma* 14) *Risāla fī taswīb 'Alī fī taḥkīm al-ḥakamayn* 15) *Risāla fī al-Uthmāniyya* 16) *Risāla fī al-nābita* 17) *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā* 18) *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk wa 'āmmat jund al-khilāfa*.

³²⁰ These *rasā'il* are as follows: 1) *Risāla fī al-balāgha wa al-ḥikm* 2) *Risāla fī al-mu'allimīn* 3) *Risāla fī ṣinā'at al-quwwād* 4) *Risāla fī mawt Abī Ḥarb al-Ṣaffār* 5) *Risāla fī hijā' Muhammad b. al-Jahm al-Barmakī* 6) *Risāla fī dhamm al-zamān* 7) *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughanniyyīn* 8) *Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr* 9) *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdan 'alā al-bīdān*.

³²¹ There are sixteen *risāla* in this category namely: 1) *Risāla fī al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād* 2) *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* 3) *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-'adāwa wa al-ḥasad* 4) *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd* 5) *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān* 6) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq 'alā al-ṣamt* 7) *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr* 8) *Risāla fī al-wikalā' wa al-muwakkalīn* 9) *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-ḥuṣūṣ* 10) *Risāla fī al-mawadda wa al-khilāfa* 11) *Risāla fī al-'ishq wa al-nisā'* 12) *Risāla fī al-qiyān* 13) *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baḥr 'alā al-zahr* 14) *Risāla fī mufākharāt al-jawān wa al-ghilmān* 15) *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm 'amal al-sultān* 16) *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb*.

2.5 The Significance of al-Jāḥiẓ's Methodology of Writing and Composition:

Ibn Khaldūn states in his *Muqaddima* that most of the scholars in early Islamic period have been non-Arab and mostly Persian.³²² This fact can be found in Arabic prose literature because this type of literature was mainly started by non-Arab writers especially by these two famous names namely ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib and Ibn al-Muqaffa’. They introduced Persian cultural influence to the Islamic world by producing translations and adaptations from Pahlawi literature. However, al-Jāḥiẓ changed this type of prose literature into a new type, which was based on the foundation of early Arab culture; although Pellat has said: “it must be conceded that al-Jāḥiẓ’s style is hard to characterize”.³²³ Nevertheless, in other occasion he has described some of the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ’s writing, for instance he claimed: “his sentences, which almost always dispenses with internal rhyme, are often complex and extremely long, so long indeed as to mislead some editors who fail to grasp their flow into breaking them up at the wrong point. They are balanced by the juxtaposition of units of similar quantity and by the repetition of the same idea in two different forms, so that the reader may be sure to grasp its sense. His vocabulary is rich and as precise as the state of language at that period allowed; foreign terms and neologian are used with discrimination, and many passages seem quite modern”.³²⁴ It is clear from this quotation that Pellat already knew some of al-Jāḥiẓ’s type of writing. Now, this thesis will offer some explanation of al-Jāḥiẓ’s writing.

³²² Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, Vol. III, p. 311.

³²³ Pellat, ‘al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 93.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

1) *Istiṭrād* or digression³²⁵ is one of the main features of al-Jāḥiẓ's style of writing. Baldick defines digression as a temporary departure from one subject to another more or less distantly related topic, before discussion of the first subject is resumed.³²⁶ According to Hutchins, digression was already a recognized stylistic device in Greek and Roman literature.³²⁷ In more modern times, Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*, for instance, as quoted by Hutchins, said that "digressions are the very sunshine of reading, its life and soul. To remove them from his book would leave winter reign in its pages".³²⁸ We can find that a similar suggestion had been made by al-Jāḥiẓ long time ago when he recommended that an author should "nurse the readers enthusiasm" by taking them from one thing to another and from topic to topic.³²⁹ The reason behind this method, as explained by Bā Qāzī, has two aspects; one is that al-Jāḥiẓ has a lot of information to relay to the reader and the other is al-Jāḥiẓ wants his reader to continue their reading untill the end of the book.³³⁰ The same idea was highlighted by Zakī Mubārak in his great work *al-Nathr al-fannī fī al-qarn al-rābi'*.³³¹ In short, we can say that al-Jāḥiẓ does this in an effort to keep the reader interested.

Though such digressions will mislead the student, they may, however, entertain the reader. When explaining this method of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, Maṣṣūr said that al-Jāḥiẓ makes us understand, for example, that he did not want to ignore the differing

³²⁵ Ba'labakkī, Munīr, *al-Mawrid- A Modern English - Arabic Dictionary*, Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, Beirut, 1995, p. 273.

³²⁶ Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 58.

³²⁷ Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 2.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³²⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. III, p. 366.

³³⁰ Bā Qāzī, *al-Qiṣṣah fī adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 53.

³³¹ Mubārak, *al-Nathr al-fannī*, Maktabat al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, Cairo, undated, Vol. II, p. 103.

inclinations of his readers at whatever level they may be. He did not forget or scorn even those who were uninterested in reading books. In an effort to cater to the widest possible audience and readers, he included much that obscures the main thrust of his explanation and that might have been omitted.³³² Nevertheless, al-Jāḥiẓ was criticised and attacked on this point by later writers such as Ibn Qutayba, Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī and others.

2) Another peculiarity of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, which he himself admits is the fact that he writes some of his works and attributes them to some early prose writers, in order that people would read them without prejudice against him. For instance, he said "...I may write a perfect and excellent book on religion, jurisprudence or literature ... and attribute it to myself, a group of scholars then agree on calumniating it for the envy which it created in them, although they know its creativeness and cleverness ... But I may write a book which is not as good as that, in meaning and words, and publish it under another name, attributing it to a writer earlier than me, like Ibn al-Muqaffa^o or al-Khalīl or Salm of Bayt al-Ḥikma, Yaḥyā b. Khālid and al-ʿAttabī... then the same people come to me To copy the book and study it under my supervision".³³³

We do not know how far al-Jāḥiẓ went this way, but it is interesting to notice that he tend to hide his identity in some of his works and delude the reader about the authorship of the works. We can find this particularly at the beginning of his involvement in writing. The reason for this method as explained by al-Ḥājirī, has two aspects; one is that it was one of the typical artistic methods of al-Jāḥiẓ to write pieces and attribute them

³³² Manṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 41.

³³³ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p.351, ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 237.

to other writer of the time. The second reason, is that al-Jāḥiẓ himself stated that he had attributed many of works to other writers whom the public respected.³³⁴

3) Another characteristic of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, which makes the study of his thought a difficult task, is the fact that he, very often, does not express a personal opinion on the subject he deals with, but tends to discuss the contradictory views of various people and parties. We can see in al-Jāḥiẓ's works several words that refer to other opinion such as "*Qīl*" (It has been said), "*Qālū*" (They said), "*Qāl*" (He said), *Qāla al-ʿArab* (The Arabs said), and *Qāla al-Ākhar* (Another said), etc.³³⁵ In reference to this method of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, al-Bāqillānī describes it as follows: "Whenever he mentions one line of his own words, he would follow it by pages of other people's speech, and whenever he writes one page, he would construct a whole book of other people's saying...".³³⁶ Through the usage of this method, we assumed that in this way, al-Jāḥiẓ was able to rid himself from a great responsibility of what he has done in his works. However, al-Jāḥiẓ has his justification for this method, (i.e. quoting various references), that he intended to leave the judgments to the readers, therefore, as he described "... the dispute would be only between him and the evidence..."³³⁷

4) Another element in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing sets him apart from other prose writers is the used of humour and satire. Humour in Arabic is "*al-Fukāḥa*".³³⁸ In English literature,

³³⁴ See al-Ḥājirī, in: *Muqaddima kitāb al-bukhalāʾ*, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, undated, p. 41.

³³⁵ The usage of these phrases is known in the Ḥadīth literature as "narrative structure". For excellent study on this aspect, see Speight, 'Narrative Structure in the Ḥadīth', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 59/4 (Oktober, 2000): pp. 265-271.

³³⁶ Al-Bāqillānī, *Fjāz al-Qur'ān*, p. 377.

³³⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. VI, p. 14.

³³⁸ Baalabakkī, *al-Mawrid- A Modern English - Arabic Dictionary*, p. 438.

humour is forms of the genre of 'satire'. However, there is no exact equivalent in Arabic for 'satire'. *Hijā'* or *hajw* is often translated as 'satire'.³³⁹ This term is thought to come from the Latin word *satura*, originally meaning the vessel used for carrying harvest produce.³⁴⁰ By extension, the word also came to mean a mixture, and then a mixed sort of entertainment, of the kind people might have at harvest time, with songs and jokes and other kind of humour.³⁴¹ So, satire is related to comedy which focuses on people's behaviour.

In Arabic literature as well, we can find this kind of humour, particularly in prose writing, and the main focus of Arabic humour is more likely to be on human behaviour. Therefore, this type of writing is a main feature of Arabic literature from medieval times to the present day. The most important value in humorous writing as described by Ogborn, is wit, sharpness of observation and cleverness with language – this can give the work a cutting edge, which can amuse and entertain while it criticises.³⁴²

Several of al-Jāhiz's works have humorous and satirical elements.³⁴³ The *Bukhalā'* and *Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr* are the greatest of al-Jāhiz's work in this style of writing. However, it is remarkable to note here that he tried to justify his method of writing by saying that had he encumbered his readers with the burden of truth and seriousness, none but the devotees of science would have had the patience to read so long

³³⁹ See *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. Satire, Vol. II, p. 693.

³⁴⁰ Ogborn et. al, *Satire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p.13; see also Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, p. 198.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.13; see also Baldick, p. 198.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p.13.

³⁴³ See al-Hūfī, *al-Fukāha fī al-adab*, Dār al-Nahḍa, Cairo, undated, p. 7; Zamri Arifin, *al-Fukāha fī kitāb al-bayān wa al-tabayīn lī al-Jāhiz*, pp. 69-82.

a work.³⁴⁴ According to Manṣūr, the sense of humour that has been shown in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing may do him credit; but the exaggeration to which it led him, is a definite weakness.³⁴⁵

Instead of using humour and satire, we also find that al-Jāḥiẓ tries to mix seriousness and joking in his writing. Seriousness in Arabic is *al-Jidd* and joking is *al-Hazl*.³⁴⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ remarks on *jidd* and *hazl* are scattered throughout a number of his works. It is remarkably to note here that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote one *risāla* entitled *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, which will be taken for extensive discussion in chapter three. This *risāla*, as was described by Gelder, is far from being a *risāla* “on earnest and jest”, it ought to be rendered as “in earnest and jest” because the pair of *jidd* and *hazl* is not even found in the text.³⁴⁷ Pellat says that the seriousness and joking was a common combination of antithetical terms which have a certain resonance in Muslim ethics and the Arabic literary genre known as *adab*.³⁴⁸ Referring to his *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, al-Jāḥiẓ clearly mentions this methodology of writing when he writes: “I have leavened seriousness with humour and spiced reasoning with jest to lighten the reader's labour and spur the listener's interest. I have alternated sobriety and mirth in order to amuse and

³⁴⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. I, p. 186.

³⁴⁵ Manṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 43.

³⁴⁶ See Madina, *Arabic – English Dictionary*, Pocket Book, New York, 1973, pp. 108 & 711. In the Qur'ān, the word *jidd* is absent; *hazl* is found only in Sūra al-Ṭāriq (86: 13-14) when the Qur'ān said: “*Innahū la qawlun faṣl, wa mā huwa bi al-hazl*” which means: (Behold this is the word that distinguishes (good from evil), it is not a thing for amusement). See, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān, Text, Translation and Comentary*, p. 1633. In addition, there are a few Ḥadīths that employs the word “*hazl*” and “*jidd*” such as the Prophet saying: “O God, forgive me, my *hazl* and my *jidd*”, which clearly means (Forgive me all my sins, whether they were committed in earnest or jestingly). For excellent study of the concept *al-jidd wa al-hazl* in Arabic literature, see Gelder, ‘Mixture of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature’, in *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. XXIII, 1992, Part One, pp. 83-107 & Part Two, pp. 169-190.

³⁴⁷ Gelder, *Mixture of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature*, p. 95.

³⁴⁸ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djidd wa al-Hazl, Vol. II, p. 536.

mixed wit with argument to divert and entertain".³⁴⁹ We find that on several occasions al-Jāhiz justifies and explains this habit of mixture of *jidd* and *hazl* such in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, *al-Ḥayawān* and *al-Bukhalā'*.³⁵⁰ For that reason, Gelder admits that the most interesting early author on jest and earnest is unquestionably al-Jāhiz.³⁵¹ In short, al-Jāhiz succeeds in harmoniously, as described by Pellat, in blending together the serious and the joke in several of his writing.³⁵²

5) Techniques of argumentation or debate played a significant part in the development of Arabic prose.³⁵³ *Munāẓara*, which may be in prose, *saj'* or verse, is the most common term for both the scholarly and the literary debate.³⁵⁴ According to Gelder, the debate or argument in literary field is a genre with a long history. It appears in Arabic and other numerous languages such as Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Aramaic, Syrian, Middle and New Persian, either in prose text, often rhymed, or in poetry.³⁵⁵ In the Arabic literary debate, the words such as *munāẓara*, *muḥāwara*, *munāfara*, *mufākhara*, *mukhāyala*, *munāqaḍa*, *mu'ātaba*, and *munāḍala*, etc are used to prescribe the debate and we can find some these phrases in al-Jāhiz's writing as well. However, it is in the form of an individual argument, which we can be assumed also as a form of debate.

³⁴⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. IV, p. 280-281, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 216.

³⁵⁰ See *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 186; *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. III, pp. 5-6; *al-Bukhalā'*, p. 7.

³⁵¹ Gelder, *Mixture of Jest and Earnest in Classical Arabic Literature*, p. 95.

³⁵² Charles Pellat has studied the concept of jest and earnest or seriousness and humour in Arabic literature, concentrating on religious and literary attitude towards humour, joking and laughter, and, to a lesser extent, on the combination of those with earnestness. See Pellat, 'Seriousness and humour in early Islam', in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2:3 (1963), pp. 353-362; and see his article 'Al-Djidd wa al-Hazl', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 537.

³⁵³ Leder, *Classical Arabic prose literature*, p. 8.

³⁵⁴ See *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, art. Debate literature, Vol. I, p. 186.

³⁵⁵ Gelder, 'The conceit of Pen and Sword on an Arabic Literary Debate', in: *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. XXXII (1987): p. 331.

His arguments, however, are sometimes presented in a systematic way in spite of the generally disordered nature of the work. This form of debate reflects the dialectical aspect in al-Jāḥiẓ's methodology and at the same time gives us an idea about the kind of controversies current in the circle of the *Mutakklīmīn*. It is most difficult to see which side al-Jāḥiẓ favours in this kind of debate, however, generally speaking he takes both sides as we can be seen in later discussion. In al-Jāḥiẓ's prose writing, one can notice that words like *mufākharā*, *farq*, *ikhtiṣām*, *faḍl* and *muwāzana* occur frequently in the title of his work.³⁵⁶ However, according to °Āṣī, al-Jāḥiẓ did not give any specific definition to these debate terms.³⁵⁷

From this point of view, Gelder suggests that the style of literary debate may have been introduced into Arabic literature by al-Jāḥiẓ. We can find, for instance, the contest between spring and autumn,³⁵⁸ and the debate of musk and civet (*Mufākharat al-misk wa al-zabad*)³⁵⁹ in al-Jāḥiẓ's prose works. Moreover, in the introduction to his debate between a lover boy and lover of girls in *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, al-Jāḥiẓ refers to another debate of his, also lost, called *Ikhtiṣām al-shitā' wa al-ṣayf wa ihtijāj aḥadihimā° alā ṣāhibih*.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ See List of al-Jāḥiẓ's work in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-110.

³⁵⁷ °Āṣī, *Mafāhīm al-jamāliyya wa al-naqd fī adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 101-102.

³⁵⁸ The title of this *risāla* is *Salwa al-kharj bī munāzara al-rabī° wa al-kharj*. However, according to Brockelmann, this *risāla* was wrongly attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ, because later on, it appears to be written by a Persian writer. See Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-°Arabī*, Vol. III, p. 127.

³⁵⁹ Sandūbī claims that the original title of this *risāla* is *Risāla fī mufākharat al-misk wa al-ramād*, Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 141.

³⁶⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: °Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 76. See also Gelder, *The conceit of Pen and Sword on an Arabic Literary Debate*, p. 333.

Futhermore, we can see that al-Jāḥiẓ also wrote *risāla* in which one thing is declared superior to another such as *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr* (The Superiority of Belly to Back), *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān* (The Superiority of Blacks to Whites). From this point of view, when examining the work of al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Qutayba describes our author as being capable of “doing a thing and its opposite”.³⁶¹ In modern times, Najm came up with the same idea when she says: “al-Jāḥiẓ enjoyed a remarkable quality of producing one idea and its reverse and being, at the same time, able to defend both side with equal interest and ability. His books on praising and condemning various groups of people stand as an example of his double-side mind”.³⁶² Gelder agreed with Najm in this matter, therefore he claimed that al-Jāḥiẓ may be considered the true founder of *taḥsīn* (beautifying) and *taqbiḥ* (uglifying) as a genre, and of the related practice of praising and blaming the same thing.³⁶³ *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān* and *al-Burṣān wa al-ʿurjān*, for instance, are clear example of beautifying what was commonly deemed ugly. Therefore, al-Jāḥiẓ is able to express his ideas through this method whereby he would present opponents view; or he would fabricate a debate between two groups to present both sides of an argument in which there is no clear winner.

6) Al-Jāḥiẓ also used his linguistic skills to delight and win over his readers. The most famous linguistic skill of al-Jāḥiẓ is the beauty of his *sajʿ*, a certain rhythm and congruity of sound, which makes the reading go smoothly and awakens the admiration of the reader. The advantages of this style, as was described by al-Jāḥiẓ, are two fold; it is

³⁶¹ Ibn Qutayba, *Taʿwīl mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, pp. 59-60.

³⁶² Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 9.

³⁶³ Gelder, ‘The Paradox in Classical Arabic Literature’, in *Journal of Semmetic Studies*, Vol. XLVIII (2003), p. 332.

pleasing to the ear and easy to remember. However, he himself is not slave of rhetorical devices; rather we can say that his style is very natural, where it is natural to drift toward *sajf*, he will use it.³⁶⁴ This type of writing skill is also known as “*Uslūb al-mutawāzin*” which reflects the style of the Qur’ān. The use of Qur’ānic style enhances the beauty of the prose. Because of this, it has been said that al-Jāḥiẓ may be the earliest prose writer whose work has been preserved who makes use of the Qur’ānic style.³⁶⁵

Another linguistic skill of al-Jāḥiẓ is the use of *al-Jumla al-du‘ā’iyya*, which includes the optative meaning, particularly in the debate. Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī named this type of writing as “*Du‘ā’ al-mukātabāt*”, which normally used by *Kuttāb* (secretaries) in *Dīwān al-rasā’il*.³⁶⁶ By using this type of writing, al-Jāḥiẓ attempts to convince his enemies by giving them good wishes before attacking them. We can find this type of phrases scattered in al-Jāḥiẓ’s works such as ابقاك الله (May Allah preserve you), رحمك الله (May Allah honor you), ارسدك الله (May Allah give you right guidance), and حفظك الله (May Allah grant you long life), etc.³⁶⁷

In addition, repetitive structure also can be found in al-Jāḥiẓ’s works. This kind of style of writing is normal phenomenon with classical Arabic literature either in pre-Islamic poetry, in the Qur’ān, Ḥadith literature, and in the literature following the foundation of Islam, poetry as well as prose, and particularly so in what is known under

³⁶⁴ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 112.

³⁶⁵ See Zahniser, *The ‘Uthmāniyya of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 69.

³⁶⁶ See the list of *Du‘ā’ al-mukātabāt* in al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-kuttāb*, pp. 173-175.

³⁶⁷ See for instance in al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 76; *al-Bukhalā’*, p. 1; *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 35; *Risāla fī al-maf‘āsh wa al-maf‘ād*, *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-‘adāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 91, 93, 233, 241, 337, etc; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 69, 70, 72, 166, 173, 237 etc.

the heading of *adab*.³⁶⁸ According to Bürgel, repetition is a structural element of general importance in various kind of art, all over the world. He claims that repetition in Arabic literature, Arabic prose in particular, if the phenomenon is ubiquitous in various arts; it was certainly more than usually favored by authors of the Arabic *adab* literature.³⁶⁹

7) The most important elements of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing in this study is the use of the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth and historical narrative such as *khabar*, *qiṣṣa*, proverbs and poetry, etc. As we know, the Qur'ān is book of guidance which set up for Muslims new principle of religious, moral and social conduct. The Qur'ān is also a literary work of the highest quality. It is the final authority regarding the Arabic language and grammar and the standard by which a literary work might be judged. While the Ḥadīth, or the Sunna, of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is used as supporting evidence. From this point of view, al-Jāḥiẓ used all these elements in his writing in making his case and to support his argument. Because of this, for al-Jāḥiẓ, there is no question that the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth are the most important source for use as evidence in the construction of his argument. This is followed by historical narrative. Describing the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, Zubaidi said: "From the third/ninth century onwards the influence of the Ḥadīth went hand in hand with that of al-Qur'ān. In al-Jāḥiẓ's essay quotations from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are used in abundance. He usually resorts to them in support of his argument".³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ For further explanation on the repetitive structure in Arabic prose, see Bürgel, 'Repetitive Structure in Early Arabic prose', in: *Critical Pilgrimage: Studies in the Arabic Literature Tradition*, Edit. by: Fedwa Malti-Douglas, the University of Texas, Austin, 1989, pp. 49-64.

³⁶⁹ Bürgel, *Repetitive Structure in Early Arabic prose*, p. 49.

³⁷⁰ Zubaidi, 'The Impact of the Qur'an and Hadith on the Medieval Arabic literature', in: *Arabic literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, p. 342.

2.6 Conclusion:

From the extant works of al-Jāḥiẓ's, we would like to note here that some early writers, as were noted by Pellat, recognised the importance al-Jāḥiẓ and dubbed him as *muʿallim al-ʿaql wa al-adab*, which means “the teacher of reason and polite learning”, or in other words they said that the works of al-Jāḥiẓ teach us to reason first, and instruct us in literature next. An interesting point should be mentioned here concerning his works, besides their literary merit, his writings are of considerable historical interest which provides valuable material for the detailed study of social and intellectual developments in the the third century A.H. or ninth century A.D. century in Baghdad. Therefore, we may assume that all his works becomes the major sourcework on this important genre within the Arabic literary heritage. Concerning the method of his writing, there were writers who tried to follow this method, but were criticised of being unsuccessful. Ibn al-ʿAmīd, for instance, is said to have been one of the great admirers of al-Jāḥiẓ and wanted to be like him, but was disillusioned about his ability. However, “he fell far away from al-Jāḥiẓ, near to his own self”.³⁷¹ Thus, this is clear evidence for the significance of al-Jāḥiẓ and his works.

³⁷¹ Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī said that on the authority of Ibn Thawwāba (d. 277/890), quotes from Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 323.

PART TWO

**A STUDY OF SELECTED TEXTS FROM
THE *RASĀ'IL AL-JĀHIZ* COLLECTION**

CHAPTER THREE

THE *RASĀ'IL* CONCERNING THE *ĀDĀB*

3.1. Introduction:

The study of morals, manners and character traits is an important subject in Islamic thought. Generally, it has been known that Islamic manners and characters traits are derived from the two main sources in Islam, namely the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).³⁷² Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to elucidate the significance of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz concerning the *Ādāb*³⁷³ which carried the meaning of morals, manners and characters traits. In addition, an attempt is made here to appraise al-Jāhiz's point of view concerning the subject matter. From the list of the works of al-Jāhiz as was recorded by Yāqūt,³⁷⁴ we find that al-Jāhiz also contributed several *rasā'il* in this area of study.

³⁷² For more detail about *Ādāb al-Islām* (Islamic manners) see al-Kaysi, *Morals and Manners in Islam*, The Islamic Foundation, Melksham, 1996.

³⁷³ There have been many definitions and descriptions of *Adab* (pl. *Ādāb*). It is an Arabic term meaning custom; it denotes a habit, etiquette, a manner of conduct derived from people considered as models. During the first two centuries following the emergence of Islam, the term "*adab*" carried the meaning of ethical and social implications. For our purpose in this chapter, we shall adopt the above simplified definition. For more detail, see *Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Adab*, Vol. I, pp.175-6; see also in Chapter two of this thesis. In the same case, Pellat also asserts that there are two types of *Adab*; the first was concerned with general ethic, the second with worldly wisdom and polite behaviour. See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāhiz*, p. 23.

³⁷⁴ See Yāqūt, *Miʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-110.

Although, there are several works of varying length by al-Jāḥiẓ in this category³⁷⁵ this thesis will however, only deal with certain works such as *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh*, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ʿalā al-ṣamt*, *Risāla fī jidd wa al-hazl* and *Risāla fī al-nubl wa tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*. This work can be assumed as moralistic literature which was known to have influenced other writers such as Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 296/908), and others.³⁷⁶

With some of the *rasā'il* in this category, only a few pages seem to have survived, for instance, *Risāla fī al-wukalā' wa al-muwakkalīn*³⁷⁷ and *Risāla fī istinjāz al-wa'ad*.³⁷⁸ In some cases, only a few quotations of a text have survived, whilst in some cases the whole *risāla* has been lost such as *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ*³⁷⁹ and *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-mukaddīn*. For example, we know about *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ* only by al-Jāḥiẓ's quotation in his *al-*

³⁷⁵ The works of al-Jāḥiẓ in this category as listed by Pellat are: *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh*, *Risāla fī istinjāz al-wa'ad*, *Risāla fī jidd wa al-hazl*, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ʿalā al-ṣamt*, *Risāla fī al-nubl wa tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*, *Risāla fī al-wukalā' wa al-muwakkalīn*, *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ*, and *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-mukaddīn*, *Kitāb al-ḥijāb*, *al-Bukhalā'*. See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 24-26.

³⁷⁶ Ibn Qutayba by his *ʿUyūn al-akḥbār*, Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *Kitāb al-adab* and perhaps from al-Jāḥiẓ into the Islamic religious tradition through the jurisconsult-theologian al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111). For an excellent introduction to moral philosophy in Islam, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Akhlāk, Vol. I, pp. 325-328; see also *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethic*, art. Ethic and morality (Muslim), Vol. V, pp. 501-512.

³⁷⁷ Yāqūt mentions it under the list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works. See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 107; The *risāla*, like many other works of al-Jāḥiẓ, seems to have been a refutation of another work which was written against the *wakīl* (agent). In publishing this work, Sāsī al-Maghribī, for example, selected less than three pages of it. See Sāsī al-Maghribī, *Majmūʿ rasā'il*, pp. 170-172. However, this work, in Hārūn's edition, contains more chapters than those published by Sāsī al-Maghribī.

³⁷⁸ A fragment text of the *risāla* can be seen in Hārūn's, *ʿUyūn al-Sūd*'s and Abū Milḥim's collection. It seems from Abū Milḥim's collection that he collected the *risāla* within the group of *Rasā'il al-Adabiyya*. See Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 421-425. The author commands the keeping of promises; however, Pellat claims that the extract of the *risāla* is virtually untranslatable. See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 25.

³⁷⁹ Multi Douglas describes this *risāla* as among the earliest work of classical Arabic crime narratives. See Malti-Douglas, 'Classical Arabic Crime Narrative', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, XIX (1988), p. 109. Charles Pellat lists only an apparent fragment of this *risāla*. See Pellat, 'Nouvel essai d'inventaire de l'oeuvre gāḥiẓienne', *Arabica*, XXXI, (1984), p. 146.

Bukhalā' when he says: "You remarked, Allah preserved you, that you have read my book on the classification of the ruse of thieves who rob by day and the detailed expose of the tricks of thieves who rob by night. (You also remarked) that thereby you have stopped up each crack and fortified each breach, surpassing (others) through what it told you of subtle deceits and strange devices against which it cautioned you – that perchance not stratagem will succeed in countering or cunning manage (to foil). You remarked (furthermore) that it has been of great benefit (to you) and that it is essential to (devote oneself to) to study of it".³⁸⁰

Whilst we know about *Risāla fī ḥiyal al-mukaddīm* from al-Baghdādī's (d. 429 A.H.) statement when he criticised al-Jāḥiẓ as follows: "... And among his workis [his book] on the trick of *al-Mukaddīm* (beggars), the content of which is appropriate to him [i.e. al-Jāḥiẓ], his profession and his family".³⁸¹ Based on the above two statements, we believe that some quotations on *al-Mukaddīm*, which have been recorded by later writers such as al-Ibshīhī, without mentioning where they were taken from, are quotations from al-Jāḥiẓ's work on the subject of *al-Mukaddīm*.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'* (*The book of misers*), transl. by R. B. Serjeant, p. 1. In another occasion, al-Jāḥiẓ named this *risāla* as *Kitāb al-luṣūṣ*. See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. II, p. 156. However, al-Baghdādī criticises al-Jāḥiẓ's approach in this *risāla* which according to him more appropriate to al-Jāḥiẓ himself. See al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, p. 126.

³⁸¹ Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, p. 162.

³⁸² Al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf*, p. 1331. According to Pellat, the same quotation of al-Ibshīhī can be found also in *al-Maḥāsīn wa al-masāwīf* by al-Bayhaqī (d. 565/1169). See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Mukkadī, Vol. VII, pp. 493-495. *Mukaddī* (pl. *Mukaddūn*) is known as a man who practises *kidā'* (*ṣāḥib al-kidā'*). Al-Jāḥiẓ probably the first writer to have introduced this group of people into Arabic literature through the story of Khālīd b. Yazīd in his *Bukhalā'*, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'*, pp. 46-53. .

In contrast, *Kitāb al-ḥijāb*, a text consisting entirely of prose quotations and verses of poetry,³⁸³ although described by Pellat as the first text containing practical rules of conduct³⁸⁴ is however, doubtfully attributable to al-Jāḥiẓ. In the list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work cited by Yāqūt, there is no mention of a work under this title.³⁸⁵ Najm also maintains that there is no confirmation as to whether this *risāla* belonged to al-Jāḥiẓ or not.³⁸⁶ It was published, with other *Rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ, for the first time, by al-Sandubi.³⁸⁷ The text of *Kitāb al-ḥijāb* can be seen now in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection.³⁸⁸

On examining the text of the above *risāla* however, we find that the pattern of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing is very obvious. The author proceeds to list *ḥadīth* unfavourable to the employment of doorkeepers; then, still drawing on Islamic tradition, he quotes historical examples of the advice given by famous men to their doorkeepers. Next, he considers the reasons for the employment of these servants, and the qualities needed in them. The author discusses the class of *al-Ḥujjāb* (chamberlains) and the post of *al-Ḥijāba* which became a necessity to the rulers and governors, particularly in later time. The author also says that the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) did not approve of it and he advised his governors not to hide themselves from their people. However, the system of *al-Ḥijāba* was practised. We find that the author attributes a saying to Persian *Dihqān* (local

³⁸³ There are more than one hundred *abyāt* (verses) of poetry from different poems which has been quoted by the author.

³⁸⁴ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 24.

³⁸⁵ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 107.

³⁸⁶ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 16.

³⁸⁷ See al-Sandūbī, *Majmū' rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 155-186.

³⁸⁸ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥijāb*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, pp. 29-85; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, pp. 21-69.

chief),³⁸⁹ who advises a governor at the time of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (d. 95/714), on how to deal with the common people in the question of *al-Ḥijāba*.³⁹⁰

Now, our first analysis on the *Rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ in this category goes to *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh* which according to Pellat the only text of al-Jāḥiẓ that can be placed in the subject of manners.³⁹¹

3.2 *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh* (*Risāla* on this world and the Hereafter)

3.2.1 Title and text of the *Risāla*:

Yāqūt and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih named it as *Kitāb al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād*.³⁹² Hārūn, in his editorial remark to the text of the *risāla*, claimed that it was originally in two copies of manuscripts with different titles. The first copy is entitled “*Risāla Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ ilā Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Malik fī akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa al-madhmūma*” and the second copy entitled “*Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh fī al-adab wa tadabbur al-nās wa mu'āmalatihim kataba bihā ilā Abī al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād*”.³⁹³ However, Hārūn himself, in his collection of *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, used *al-Ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh* as a heading of the *risāla*.³⁹⁴

³⁸⁹ This term is from the Persian for “head of the village”. See Glassé, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Dihqān, p. 99.

³⁹⁰ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-hijāb*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, pp. 29-85; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, pp. 21-69.

³⁹¹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 24.

³⁹² Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā*, Vol. XVI, p. 107; Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, Vol. III, p. 28.

³⁹³ See Hārūn's editorial remarks to the *Risāla fī al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād* in: *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 89.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 89.

On the other hand, in ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection, the text of the *risāla* appeared under the heading *Risāla al-ma‘āsh wa al-ma‘ād aw al-akhlāq al-maḥmūda wa al-madhūma kataba bihā ilā Abī al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du‘ād*’.³⁹⁵ It seems to us here that copyists of al-Jāḥiẓ’s works have suggested different titles according to their different approach and understanding of the text or it may be al-Jāḥiẓ made more than one copy with different title. However, other scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ in modern times, Pellat, for instance, assumed that the correct reading of the title of this work is *Risāla fī al-ma‘ād wa al-ma‘āsh fī al-adab wa tadbīr al-nās wa mu‘āmalatihim* which means “Letter for this world and the next on manners, conduct and human relationship”.³⁹⁶ Al-Ḥājirī later claimed that this *risāla* is also known as *Kitāb al-adāb*.³⁹⁷

By referring to the text of the *risāla*, one can observe that al-Jāḥiẓ clearly informs us about the title of his works when he declares: “I thought that I would compile for you a book of manners (كتاب من الأدب), assembling much knowledge of the sustenance for life and the afterlife (من المعاش والمعاد)”.³⁹⁸ Moreover, these two terms i.e. *al-Ma‘ād* and *al-Ma‘āsh* are related to al-Jāḥiẓ’s definition of *Adab* itself which according to him, *Adab* is a precious tool in matters religious and everyday life.³⁹⁹ This indicates that this *risāla* contains the combination of the discussion on the issue of manner concerning the life and the afterlife.

³⁹⁵ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-ma‘āsh wa al-ma‘ād*, in: ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection, Vol. I, p. 67. On the other hand, Najm suggests that the name of the *risāla* is also given as ‘*Fī al-akhlāq al-maḥmūda*’. See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 16.

³⁹⁶ Pellat, ‘al-Jāḥiẓ’, in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 89.

³⁹⁷ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āhārūh*, p. 327.

³⁹⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-ma‘āsh wa al-ma‘ād*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 95; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 99; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 73.

The text of the *risāla* in the printed edition consists of forty-three pages with no divisions other than paragraphs either in Hārūn's edition or 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition; however, in the later edition it only consists of twenty-four pages.⁴⁰⁰ Pellat in his collection of translated portion of al-Jāhiz's work also has published some five pages selected from various places of the *risāla*.⁴⁰¹ Hutchins in his *Nine Essay of al-Jāhiz* translated the whole text of the *risāla* into English under the heading "Life and Afterlife or Praiseworthy and Blameworthy Conduct".⁴⁰² The latest English translation of the *risāla* could be seen in Colville's book *Sobriety and Mirth* entitled "This life and the life to come or Conduct Praiseworthy and Offensive".⁴⁰³ Therefore, beside Arabic text from Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection, the study of the *risāla* in this chapter would rely on the Hutchins's and Colville's translations.

3.2.2 Addressee of the *Risāla*:

Hārūn, the editor of the *risāla* claimed that the addressee was Abī al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād, son of the leading Mu'tazila scholars, Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād. This is based on al-Jāhiz's statement in his introduction to the *risāla* when he says: "I knew you – may God honour you – in the day of youth when pleasure's authority which wears out reputations had sway over your peers".⁴⁰⁴ In another occasion, Hārūn

⁴⁰⁰ The text of the *risāla* can be found in two places in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition. We find that the former is more detail than the latter. See for example in Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 91-134 & Vol. IV, pp. 69-79; and in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 69-93 & Vol. IV, pp. 49-58.

⁴⁰¹ Pellat, *The life and work of Jāhiz*, pp. 202-206.

⁴⁰² Hutchins, *Nine Essay of al-Jāhiz*, p. 67.

⁴⁰³ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 3-24.

⁴⁰⁴ See Hārūn editorial remarks to the *Risāla fī al-ma' āsh wa al-ma' ād*, in *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz*, Vol. I, p. 89.

again claims that he found other statement in the second copy of the *risāla* which stated that it was written to Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt or known as Ibn Zayyāt.⁴⁰⁵ However, we assume that Ibn Zayyāt could not be accepted as an addressee of the *risāla*. This is because al-Jāhīz starts his relationship with Ibn al-Zayyāt when he was in power. For example, there is a clear evidence of this relationship when al-Jāhīz states in other *risāla*: “You are a poet and I but a *rāwī* (narrator); you are tall and I am short, you are bald on top and I at the temples; you ride your horseback and I ride donkeys; you are phlegmatic and I quick tempered; you manage you own affairs and at the same time provide for the needs of others, your action affect every citizen of the empire and your organization makes itself felt to the further corner of the nation, ...you are prince and I a yokel”.⁴⁰⁶

The above statement indicates that it was addressed to Ibn al-Zayyāt in which the author describes their position at the time. From this point of view, it is safely to be said that the addressee of the *Risāla fī al-ma‘āsh wa al-ma‘ād* is Abū al-Walīd Muhammad b. Abū Du‘ād not Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Zayyāt.

3.2.3 The Purpose and the date of writing:

The aim of this *risāla* is to inform someone about the discussion of ethics and it also speaks of virtue as a mean between excess and deficiency and habit in which the soul

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 89.

⁴⁰⁶ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* in: Hārūn’s edition , Vol. I, pp. 265-266; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 187.

should be trained.⁴⁰⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ points out his purpose of the composition of the *risāla* as follows: “Then I recalled that I still had one way of showing my gratitude by doing you a favour which would be within my power, provide you with something indispensable, and profit you considerably both in this world and the next, if God wills. I am still – may Allah grant you long life – harness to the same task, namely collecting, studying and pondering over the book”.⁴⁰⁸ He then states clearly on the first page of the *risāla* the thesis of this work: “So I decided to write you a book of *adab*, bringing together various theories about the life hereafter and life here on earth, and setting out for you the causes of things, their outward appearance and their generally accepted significance”.⁴⁰⁹

Our author keeps this aspect of his subject clearly in mind throughout the *risāla*. After stating his purpose, al-Jāḥiẓ immediately informs us that the earlier writer has not dealt satisfactorily with the subject of *ādāb*. For instance, he states: “I think that many writers before me have entrusted to those remaining after them in literature legacies in which they approximated the truth. In them, they gave excellent guidance. I think, however, that they primarily depicted derived conclusion without making clear the causes, pleasing attributes for which they did not indicate”.⁴¹⁰

From the above statement, we know that al-Jāḥiẓ presumably denotes by “the earlier writers” was Ibn al-Muqaffa^c particularly with his two works on the subject of

⁴⁰⁷ Pellat, *The life and work of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 202.

⁴⁰⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 95; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 95; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 96; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

Ādāb entitled *al-Adab al-kabīr* and *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr*.⁴¹¹ From this point of view, al-Ḥājirī claims that al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn al-Muqaffa^c have a similar approach concerning the discussion on the subject of *Adab*.⁴¹² Ibn al-Muqaffa^c, for instance, stresses his approach when he declares that his *al-Adab al-ṣaghīr* is a collection of the speeches of the earlier generation regarding the *Ādāb* in which he hope to be a guidance for later generation.⁴¹³ On the other hand, al-Jāḥiẓ stresses also the same view when he says that he has collected, studied and then examined a book concerning the *Ādāb*. For this reason, he says “I have composed this book of mine for you, describing for you in it the natural characteristic with which mankind has been endowed and with which all creatures were brought into existence”.⁴¹⁴ Later he remarks “I will clarify for you how their states are distinguished and how their levels differ, what the causes are which necessitate each other, what thing is a cause for something else so that the existence of the first implies that of the second, what the cause is of which the second comes only by the first”.⁴¹⁵ This is clear evidence that there is a great similarity between the style of this work and that of Ibn al-Muqaffa^c in his ethical work.

The precise date of the composition of the *risāla* is unknown; however, al-Ḥājirī suggests that it could be between the periods of the death of Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847) till to the year 236 A.H. when ‘Ubaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān has been appointed as

⁴¹¹ According to Latham, the *Kitab Ādāb al-Kabīr* is commonly, but incorrectly, style *al-Adab al-Kabīr* which conveniently distinguishes it from *al-Adab al-Saghīr*. See Latham, ‘Ibn al-Muqaffa^c and Early Abbasid Prose’, in: *Abbasid Beller-Letters*, p. 57.

⁴¹² Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātih wa āthāruh*, p. 306.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁴¹⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-maf āsh wa al-maf āl*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 97; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 97; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 72.

vizier.⁴¹⁶ At that time, Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād, the addressee of the *risāla*, had already replaced his father as Qāḍī particularly when his father partially paralyzed. Therefore, this *risāla* is the first work of al-Jāḥiẓ attribute to the new Qāḍī.⁴¹⁷

3.2.4 Organization of the text:

According to Pellat, the *risāla* is a guide to etiquette; but it is plentifully and come together with digression and psychological comments.⁴¹⁸ The organization of this *risāla* can be divided into these separate parts:

1. Introduction
2. A token of gratitude to the addressee.
3. The aim of the composition of the *risāla*.
4. The differences between this *risāla* and the *risāla* of earlier prose writers.
5. The subject and method of composition of the *risāla*.
6. The skill of rules for this world and the hereafter.
7. Relations with one's associates.
8. Attitude to be adopted towards friend and enemy.
10. The friend.
11. Notes on the most reprehensible faults; untruthfulness, anger, envy and pride.
12. How to behave to one's friend.
13. The *risāla* ends with some general advice.

⁴¹⁶ Al-Ḥājiṙī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātih wa āthāruh*, p. 327.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

⁴¹⁸ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 25.

3.2.5 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

The main issue of this *risāla* is al-Jāḥiẓ's instructions to his addressee and perhaps to all of his reader. For example, in his introduction, al-Jāḥiẓ starts his word by sending to his addressee a special prayer by saying "May Allah grant you a long life and allow you to delight others".⁴¹⁹ Then he proceeds: "Many wise people have said that it is necessary for wise person to explore the place of desire thoroughly. He must take the causes of thing clear and help prepare for the consequences. For scholars are praised for carefully ascertaining the first principles of affairs and for discerning with their intellects what consequences will allow".⁴²⁰

In his introduction, al-Jāḥiẓ claims that he knew his addressee in the days of youth when pleasure's authority which wears out reputation had sway out. Because of that he sent him his token gratitude to his addressee "I was under an obligation to show you my gratitude, indeed felt guilty that I could not begin to repay the debt I owed you, but had to confess myself unequal to the task".⁴²¹ The result of this gratitude was giving "my total thank to my God, the Master of each blessing and initiator of every benefaction, thank for you and an attempt to recompense you however possible with word and deed".⁴²²

It seems here that al-Jāḥiẓ explained the necessity of gratitude and thanks in the fact that it is logical and rational. The reason is that, according to him, he who does not

⁴¹⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-ma' āsh wa al-ma' āl*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 91; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.69.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 91; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 69.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 91; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 69.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 91; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 69.

thank people will not be able to thank God, for God gives easily, but it is not the same with people, they give with difficulty, therefore, he who gives generously must be thanked and praised.

3.2.5.1 Al-Jāhiz's instructions to his addressee:

Approximately two-third of the *risāla* is devoted to al-Jāhiz's instructions to his addressee. For instance, proceeding from his introduction, we meet with the first instruction in which al-Jāhiz reminds his addressee to fear Allah because that is the common ground for all good, the cause of all salvation, and the origin of all right guidance. And then he starts by giving his advices to his addressee, here are the list of some passages of al-Jāhiz's instructions with Islamic flavour as can be seen in this *risāla*:

- فأول ما أوصيك به ونفسي تقوى الله ، فإنها جماع كل خير، وسبب كل نجاة، ولقاح كل
رشد .

(My first counsel for you, and myself, is to fear Allah. That is the common ground for all good, the cause of all salvation, and the origin of all right guidance).

- وأحذرك ونفسي الله والاعتزاز به ، والإدهان في أمره ، والاستهانة بعزائمه ، والأمن لمكره .

(I caution you and myself about Allah. Do not take Him for granted. Do not try bypass His Command, treat His duties lightly, and assume you can beguile Him).

- واعلم أن إجراءات الأمور مجاريها ، واستعمالها الأشياء على وجوهها ، يجمع لك ألفة القلوب،

فيعاملك كل من عاملك بمودة .

(Know that your treating affairs equitably and your taking matters at their actual worth bring you the heart's friendship. Everyone will deal with you with affection).

- واعلم أن أثرتك على غير النصيحة والشفقة ، والحرمة والكفاية ، يوجب لك المباحة وقلة الثقة ممن أثرت أو أثرت عليه.

(Know that when your preference is not based on sound advice, compassion, revenge, or sufficient reason, it will occasion for you estrangement and lack of confidence on the part of the one you favoured or discriminated against).

- واعلم أن أكثر الأمور إنما هو العادة وما تضرى عليه النفوس.

(Know that the most traits are habits in which the souls are trained).

- واعلم أن تميمير المال آلة للمكارم ، وعون على الدين ، ومتألف للإخوان.

(Know that increasing wealth is an instrument for generous act, an aid to religion, and a way to alliance with brothers).

- واعلم أن الصمت في موضعه ربما كان أنفع من الإبلاغ بالمنطق في موضعه ، وعند إصابه فرصته.

(Know that the silence in its place may be more useful than the delivery of speech in its place and on the attainment of its opportunity, if you are silent before one who knows you do not remain silent with him out of weakness of fear).

- واعلم أن إشاعة الأسرار فساد في كل وجه من الوجوه ، من العدو والصديق.

(Know that having secrets spread is evil in every respect, whether by enemy of friend).

- واعلم أنك ستصحب من الناس أجناسا متفرقة حالاتهم، متفاوتة منازلهم، وكلهم بك إليه حاجة.

(Know that you will associate with people in group of differing conditions and disparate ranks, each of whom you need).

- واعلم أنه سيمر بك في معاملات الناس حالات تحتاج فيها إلى مدارات أصناف الناس وطبقاتهم.

(Know that in dealing with people there arise for you circumstances in which you will need to be sociable with different types and classes of people).

As was observed above, the bulk of the text of the *risāla* is comprised of the author's instructions. All these instructions to his addressee manifest a commendable concern for al-Jāhiz's relation with him.

3.2.5.2 The conclusion of the *Risāla*:

Near the end of the *risāla*, al-Jāhiz again lists some general advice to his addressee and perhaps to all his readers by stating that: "the need to discipline yourself to do good works. Each good deed is a burden to the soul since it is a denial of its pleasure. If you neglect this then beware, for your base instincts will rise up to dominate you".⁴²³

The *risāla* ends with al-Jāhiz's final praise to his addressee by asking God to continue His favour on him, and add to what has already been granted to him, etc. It seems that this *risāla* was entirely devoted to the advice of an authority, accompanied by various examples of good morals.

3.2.6. The use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in the text:

After a careful examination, the most noticeable way in which al-Jāhiz expressed his views is through the usage of Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad

⁴²³ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 133; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 92.

(p.b.u.h.). There are a number of both of the main Islamic sources which had been quoted by the author in order to strengthen his argument. Since he had learned the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth for the religious purpose, this was the style of writing with which he was intimately familiar. Therefore, it can be strongly recommended that this *risāla* is Islamic in favour.

The following list is some of Qur'ānic verses that have been quoted by the author in the *risāla*:

1) According to al-Jāḥiẓ: “Judgment here is the same as judgment there (Hereafter). If it was not for that, no kingdom would arise, no dynasty is established, and no leadership be confirmed”. The author quotes this verse (23:102-103):

﴿فَمَنْ ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ، وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ

فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ﴾

“Then those who balance (of the good deeds) is heavy, they will attain salvation? But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls, in Hell will they abide”.

Al-Jāḥiẓ then asserts: “Know that judgment in the next world is the same as judgment in this world; an equitable balance and just ruling”.⁴²⁴ He then emphasises this idea by the quotation of this Qur'ānic verse (17:72):

﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

“But those who were blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter and most astray from the path”.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 101; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 75.

This verse was used as evidence when al-Jāḥiẓ talks about the principle of regulatory matter for religion and the world. This followed by quotation of Ibn ʿAbbās’s interpretation of the above verse. He claims that: “Ibn ʿAbbās’s interpretation of this verse holds that whoever lacks the intelligence to know how to manage his worldly affairs will be transported to the next life with the same level of intelligent”.⁴²⁵

This comment seems to us that al-Jāḥiẓ agreed with Ibn ʿAbbās’s interpretation.

2) The second Qur’ānic verse has been quoted by the author is from Sūrah Fāṭir when the Qur’ān said (35:45) :

﴿ولو يؤاخذ الله الناس بما كسبوا ما ترك على ظهرها من دابة﴾

“If Allah were to punish men according to what they deserve, He would not leave on the back of the earth a single living creature”?

This verse was quoted when al-Jāḥiẓ explains concerning the issue of repentance. For instance, he writes: “If Allah was unrelenting with His creatures, He would torture all of them, however, Allah accepts repentance, overlooks a false step, and doubles good deeds”.⁴²⁶

3) Al-Jāḥiẓ says that Allah gave desire and fear control over boundaries and the scales of equity and adjusted them harmoniously. Related to this matter, al-Jāḥiẓ again quotes the following Qur’ānic verse (99:7-8):

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 99; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 74.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 101; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 75.

﴿فمن يعمل مثقال ذرة خيرا يره ومن يعمل مثقال ذرة شرا يره﴾

“So whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. And whoever does equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it.

The author then comments: “Every agent was made confident of what He threatened and promised. Then the hearts of mankind were bound by desire and fear. Organization proceeded and policy was established according to the innate character of man and the promotion of matters of public welfare”.⁴²⁷

4) The author writes: “Beware with all caution lest Satan tempt you from your determination and portray negligence to you in the form of trust in God, wrest caution from you and create in you languor through your surrender to the fates. God ordered trustful surrender only after the exhaustion of available procedures and submission to divine decree after seeking pardon”.⁴²⁸ The author quotes these two Qur’ānic verses to support his idea. Firstly, when the Qur’ān said (4: 71): ﴿خذوا حذرکم﴾ which mean “.... Take your precaution ...” and secondly, when the Qur’ān said (2:195):

﴿ولا تلقوا بأيديکم إلى التهلكه﴾

“Do not throw yourselves into destruction (by not spending your wealth in the cause of Allah)”.

5) Al-Jāhiz suggests his addressee to discipline himself with God’s instruction like His instruction to His Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Here, the author quotes this verse (17: 29):

﴿ولا تجعل يدك مغلولة إلى عنقك ولا تبسطها كل البسط فتقعد ملوما محسورا﴾

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 104; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 76.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 111-112; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 80.

“And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to you neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty”.

However, al-Jāhiz does not make any explanation towards this verse.

6) Al-Jāhiz also suggests his addressee the three ways of getting better from his enemy. According to him, the first one is to treat him in a kind and friendly manner from the outset. In conjunction with this matter, al-Jāhiz quoted the Qur’ān saying (41:34):

﴿ ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم ﴾

“Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e Allah ordered the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily! he between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend”.

Regarding to this verse, al-Jāhiz then asserts: “If your enemy is one for who that neither is nor appropriate, then guard your secrets from him. Leave him blind to the effect of your design and do not let him become informed by word or deed of any part of your conspiracy against him lest he be wary and learn your weak point. To protect secrets is to take the guiding reins. To threaten enemies much is cowardly. Conceal your dislike for your enemy as much as he conceals his for you. Recount his vices when he quarrels with you”.⁴²⁹

On the other hand, since the ethical and manners problems have been discussed in considerable detail in the Ḥadīth of the Prophert Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), al-Jāhiz quotes also five Ḥadīth to support and strengthen his idea.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 115; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 82.

1) The first Ḥadīth is the Prophet's saying:⁴³⁰

(من لم يشكر للناس لم يشكر الله)

“He who does not thank people does not thank God”.

Related to this Ḥadīth, al-Jāhīz offers his opinion: “By my life, the intellect knows that instinctively. Whoever is ungrateful for a favour performed by one of God's creatures is even more ungrateful to god for His favours. When people give they feel it is an imposition and an inconvenience. It weighs heavily on their hearts. God gives effortlessly. For this reason, He connected giving thanks to Him and to the benefactors among His creatures”.⁴³¹

2) Afterwards, he again quotes the second Ḥadīth in which the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was reported as saying:⁴³²

(من أودع عرفاً فليشكره، فإن لم يمكنه فلينشروه، فإذا نشره فقد شكره ،

وإذا كتمه فقد كفره)

“Let a man to whom kindness is done show gratitude and if he cannot, let him make the kindness known. A man shows his gratitude by making it known. To keep silent is a sign of the ingrate”.

However, the author does not offer any comment on this Ḥadīth.

⁴³⁰ Narrated by Abū Hurayra and collected by al-Tirmidhī in: *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* or *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1987, Chapter 35, “Mā Jā’ fī al-Shukr”, Vol. IV, p. 298. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ*.

⁴³¹ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī al-ma’ āsh wa al-ma’ ād*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 94; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 71.

⁴³² This Ḥadīth can be seen in *Sunan Abū Dawūd*, No. 4814, “Fī shukr al-ma’ rūf”, book: “al-Adab”, with slightly in different wording. See Abū Dawūd, *Sunan Abū Dawūd*, Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyya, Beirut, undated, Vol. IV, p. 259.

3) The third Ḥadīth is the Prophet saying:⁴³³

(حفت الجنة بالمكاره والنار بالشهوات)

“Heaven is surrounded by hardship; Hell is surrounded by pleasure”.

In conjunction with the meaning of this Ḥadīth, al-Jāhiz comments: “By which he (the Prophet Muhammad) meant that the road to heaven is pitted with ordeal and the road to hell is strewn with pleasure”.⁴³⁴

4) The following Ḥadīth was quoted in connection with the discussion on the determination. The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said:⁴³⁵

(اعقلها وتوكل)

“Think first and then place your trust in God”.

In accordance to this Ḥadīth, al-Jāhiz explains: “Beware with all caution lest Satan tempt you from your determination and portray negligence to you in the form of trust in God, wrest caution from you and create in you languor through your surrender to the fates. God ordered trustful surrender only after the exhaustion of available procedures and submission to divine decree after seeking pardon”.⁴³⁶

⁴³³Reported by Abū Hurayra and Anas b. Mālik and collected by al-Suyūfī in: *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 3732, Vol. I, p. 576. This is *Ḥadīth Ṣaḡīh*.

⁴³⁴Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 105; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 77.

⁴³⁵Reported by Anas b. Mālik and collected by al-Suyūfī in: *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 1191, Vol. I, p. 180. *Ḥadīth Ḍaʿīf*.

⁴³⁶Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-maʿāsh wa al-maʿād*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 112; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 80.

5) The final Ḥadīth was quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ is the Ḥadīth which related to the subject of secrets spread. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, having secrets spread is evil in every aspect, whether by enemy or friend. Concerning this issue, he quotes the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) saying:⁴³⁷

(استعينوا على الحوائج بسترها فإن كل ذي نعمة محسود)

“Protect against misfortune by concealing it; the fortunate are always envied”.

For this reason, al-Jāḥiẓ suggests his addressee to confide his secrets only in someone who would be harmed as much as by their disclosure and who stand to benefit no less than him by keeping them concealed.

In the light of this attitude, we can see that the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth stands at the very root of his thought before he goes on to set all of his significance idea into motion.

3.2.7 The Language of the *Risāla*:

Moving to another important part of al-Jāḥiẓ’s style of writing is his linguistic skill. It is known that his linguistic skill is to delight his reader’s interest and to win their sympathy. Therefore, it is for this reason that the following stylistic and linguistic observations are included here. In an attempt to give his advice, for instance, we find that

⁴³⁷Collected by al-Suyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 985, Vol. I, p 150, with different wording. *Ḥadīth Daf’*. Cf. The original wording for this Ḥadīth is:
(استعينوا على إتيان الحوائج بالكتمان ، فإن كل ذي نعمة محسود)

al-Jāhiz usually begins his words by using imperative style⁴³⁸ (فعل الأمر) such as **إعلم** (Know), **إحذر** (Beware), **داوم** (Maintain), **تحفظ** (Take heed), **إحفظ** (Remember), and **إقتصد** (Be economical), etc. to stress his addressee. The usage of this style has made almost all of al-Jāhiz's instructions more important than others.

For instance, he says:

- 1) **إعلم أن الآداب إنما هي آلات تصلح أن تستعمل في الدين وتستعمل في الدنيا، وإنما وضعت الآداب على أصول الطبائع.**

(Know that the *Ādāb* (ethics) are the tools which can be soundly employed in religion and in worldly concern)

- 2) **إحذر كل حذر أن يختدعك الشيطان عن الحزم**

(Beware with all caution lest Satan tempt you from your determination)

- 3) **داوم حالك وبقاء النعمة عليك**

(Maintain the status quo and preserve your prosperity)

In addition, for the same purpose, al-Jāhiz also used the negative imperative (فعل النهي) or "prohibition"⁴³⁹ such as the usage of (لا الناهية) in order to achieve his objectives.

A good example of this, he writes:

⁴³⁸ The Imperative formed by: 1) Taking away the vowel of the final radical as in case of the jussive; 2) Dropping the pronominal prefix; 3) Replacing it by an *alif*. See ʿAbbās al-Nadwī, *Learn the language of the Holy Qurʾān*, Iqra' International Educational Foundation, Chicago, 1981, p. 201.

⁴³⁹ The 2nd person of the jussive mood preceded by "lā" gives us the prohibition. See Cowan, *Modern Literary Arabic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1958, p. 98; al-Nadwī, *Learn the Language of the Holy Qurʾān*, p. 203.

(لا تغبن حظك من دينك) (Do not let your luck prejudice your faith),

And in another occasion, he writes again:

(ولا تخلين أحدا منهم) (Do not leave any of them).

It seems to us that the usage of this type of expression is absolutely suitable for that situation in which the author is trying to persuade his addressee to follow his instructions.

Instead of using *Fi'l al-amr* and *Lām al-nāhiya*, al-Jāḥiẓ used the oath style (أسلوب القسم) such as the usage of (لعمرى).⁴⁴⁰ We find that al-Jāḥiẓ had used this special oath in three occasions of this *risāla*. For instance, he says concerning the issue of total thank:

(ولعمرى إن ذلك لا موجود في الفطرة)

(And by my life, the intellect knows that instinctively)

Elsewhere, in the occasion of the destinies, he says again:

(ولعمرى ما يكاد ذلك يجئ إلا أقل الامور)

(And by my life, that rarely comes about except in a few affairs)

The last oath comes when al-Jāḥiẓ speaks about patient, truthfulness and loyalty, etc. Here, he swore again:

(ولعمرى ما غلطت الحكماء حين سمتها أركان الدين والدنيا)

⁴⁴⁰The meaning of this oath: *By my life*.

(By my life, the philosophers did not make a mistake when they termed these the pillars of religion and of the world).

The usage of rhythmic balance and measured termination style or *Uslūb al-muzdawaj* is very obvious in the *risāla*. This type of writing makes the reading go smoothly and awakes the admiration of the reader. To illustrate it, let us observe the paragraph below to see how al-Jāhiz divided it into small parts which ended with the same letter al-Kāf (ك). For example, is a passage where he is showing the merits and status of people, in which he divided into two groups, he writes:⁴⁴¹

أما من أثرت فإنه يعلم أنك لم تؤثره باستحقاق بل لهوي، فهو مترقب أن ينتقل هواك إلى غيره،
فتحول أثرتك حيث مال هواك . فهو مدخول القلب في مودتك ، غير آمن لتغيرك . وأما من أثرت
عليه بعد الاستحقاق منه، فقد جعلت له السبيل إلى الطعن عليك ، وأعطيته الحجة على نفسك . فكل
من يعمل على غير ثقة عاد ما أراد به النفع ضررا، والاصلاح فيه فسادا.

This is a cognate repetition but the rhythm and similarity of form catch the attention of the reader and give him a feeling of pleasure and delight. On the other hand, from the above paragraph, it can be seen also that the usage of Arabic grammar by the author was very systematic. For example, the usage of particle “أما” had been used in two occasions. In this case, by referring to the Arabic grammar, if the subject of the nominal sentences is introduced by “أما”, then the predicate must be prefixed by (ف).⁴⁴² So, it

⁴⁴¹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-ma'āsh wa al-ma'ād*, in: Hārūn's edition , Vol. I, pp. 106-7; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 78.

⁴⁴² Cowan, *Modern Literary Arabic*, p. 66.

should be two subjects and two predicate in the above paragraph. To illustrate, let us refer to the above paragraph again to find out those things.

- 1) The first one is (أما من أثرت فإنه يعلم أنك لم تؤثره), and the subject for this is (أما من أثرت), and the predicate is (فإنه يعلم أنك لم تؤثره).
- 2) Whilst, the other one is (وأما من أثرت عليه بعد الاستحقاق منه، فقد جعلت) (وأما من أثرت) (له السبيل إلى الطعن عليك) and the predicate is (فقد جعلت له السبيل إلى الطعن عليك) (عليه).

Finally, the use of poetry in this *risāla* is very limited. Only seven verses of poetry were cited by the author, namely the poet of Abū al-^cAtāhiya⁴⁴³, Abū Du'ād al-Iyādi⁴⁴⁴, Qan'ab b. Ḍamra⁴⁴⁵ and Zuhayr b. Janab b. Hubal al-Kalbī.⁴⁴⁶ However, the main bulk of the main part of the *risāla*, as can be seen in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection, consists of the author's instructions and the approaching conclusion is signalled by selection of *nawādir*.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-mā' āsh wa al-mā' āl*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 113; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 81.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 114; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 82.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 115; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 83.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 128; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 89.

⁴⁴⁷ *Nawādir* (sing. *Nādira*) is literally means rare thing, and its denotes a pleasing anecdotes containing wit, humor, jocularities of type which has never ceased to be an integral feature of all social gatherings, whether intimate or official. See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Nawādir*, Vol. VII, pp. 856-7.

3.3 *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd al-maḥsūd* (The Envious and the Envied)

3.3.1 Background of the *Risāla*:

One of the most dangerous diseases that haunted men all over history is *al-Ḥasad* (Envy). It is regarded as the virulent disease that caused many distresses and difficulties to all human nations including the Islamic *umma*. The epidemic of *al-Ḥasad*, which forms one of the diseases of the “soul”, if not being well controlled will give a great consequence on human development, be that in the aspect of psychology, moral or social.⁴⁴⁸

In this context, as far as we are aware that al-Jāḥiẓ has made great contributions to this subject matter. His first contribution is this *risāla* entitled *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd* and the other is entitled *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa al-ḥasad*. According to Pellat, both *risāla* are the materials on the subject of bad qualities which contains some odd details about the risk writers run in approaching patrons.⁴⁴⁹ Whilst, Colville in his remarks to the translation of *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd* said that the *risāla* displays al-Jāḥiẓ’s insight into human character.⁴⁵⁰ The main issue of this *risāla* is about the first

⁴⁴⁸ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* defines envy as an emotion that is essentially both selfish and malevolent. It is aimed at persons, and implies dislike of one who possesses what the envious man himself covets or desires, and wish to harm him. See *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. Envy, Vol. V, p. 322.

⁴⁴⁹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 25.

⁴⁵⁰ Colville, *Gravity and Mirth*, p. 231.

deadly sin or the first transgression to appear in heaven and first sin to occur on earth i.e. envy.⁴⁵¹

3.3.2 The text of the *Risāla*:

In Hārūn's printed edition, it consists of twenty-one consecutive pages, whereas, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition consists only thirteen pages. The *risāla* begins with the heading "*Faṣl min ṣadr (fī) kitābih al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*". It was divided into five divisions in which every division begins with the initial word "*Faṣl min*". The first division starts with *Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih (fī) ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*"; second division starts with "*Faṣl fī ḥasad al-jirān*" and the rest with "*Faṣl minhu*" or "*Faṣl*". This study will rely the translation of the *risāla* on the Colville's translation entitle "Envy"⁴⁵².

3.3.3 Structure of the *Risāla*:

Before going onto further discussion of the content of the *risāla*, this is a brief outline of the *risāla* that can be seen as follows:

- a. The definition of envy.
- b. The reasons of envy.
- c. The consequence of envy.
- d. The author established a link between hypocrisy and envy.

⁴⁵¹ Al-Ghazzālī, the jurisconsult-theologian, in his *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* has special treatment on this issue, see al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, transl. Fazlul Karim, Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 1982, Vol. III, p. 177-178.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 145-150.

- e. Quotation of e examples from the days of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and saying by famous men.
- f. Some advice on how to behave towards envious people.
- g. The *risāla* ends with al-Jāḥiẓ's conclusion that envy is the product of hatred.

3.3.4 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

The *risāla* is al-Jāḥiẓ's react to his addressee who has evidently asked him for an analysis of envy. He starts with recording the questions that were asked by his addressee. "You wrote to me asking about envy. "What is it, exactly?" you wondered. "Where does it come from? What are its symptoms and sign? How can its features be recognised? How can it be detected when concealed? Why is it more common among educated men then among the ignorant and the unlettered? Why does it exist between relatives and not between total strangers? Why is it a vice of the careful but not of the immoral? Why are neighbours especially prone?"⁴⁵³

3.3.4.1 Al-Jāḥiẓ's view on envy:

From what can be gleaned from the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ's definition of envy is very clear. He says that envy is a grey area and difficult to understand. It is a sickness hard to treat. It enfeebles the body and will ruin a friendship forever. Once out in the open, it

⁴⁵³Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūl*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 3; Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 7.

cannot be cured; if suppressed, the treatment is long and laborious. Al-Jāḥiẓ then lists some reasons of envy. For instance, he says, a man is envied for the blessing which God has given him. And as a result, envy begets animosity and causes of falsehood and it creates divisions among families and severs kinship's bond.⁴⁵⁴

The author mentioned that envy was the first transgression (wrongdoing) to appear in heaven and first sin to occur on earth. For example, envy appeared in heaven when the Satan compared himself with another God's creation, Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h.), because he believed he is superior. On the other hand, the first envy occurred on the earth when a son of Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h.) killed his brother. Al-Jāḥiẓ comments on that event: "It was envy that drove him to murder and enters the ranks of the damned. It caused him to commit a dreadful sin and deny his brother's life".⁴⁵⁵

In the next paragraph, al-Jāḥiẓ developed his writing to describes how envy shows itself. Here, we find in the *risāla* that the author listed three conditions in which envy normally shows itself. Firstly, if the man whom he envies is rich, he will claim that he got it by criminal and he holds on to it unlawful, etc. Secondly, if the man whom he envies is a scholar, for instance, he will accuse him of being a heretic lacking original thought and intellectual direction and an opportunist in pursuit of material gain, etc. Finally, if the man whom he envies is a cleric, he will accuse him of being a crook who has taken up the good fight to qualify as legal executor, etc. In conjunction to this explanation, the author assigns a very good example to show how envy had spread in early Islamic society. He

⁴⁵⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 4; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 8.

⁴⁵⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 6; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 9.

writes: “Before becoming a hypocrite, Abdullah b. ‘Ubay b. Salūl was a man of unique qualities and sound judgment who was motivated by highest ideals. Everyone in Medina, the Prophet’s city, agreed that he was intelligent, astute and stranger to inconstancy who’s his abilities made him the ideal man for leader. However, when God’s work brought the Prophet to Medina and Abdullah b. Ubay b. Salūl saw the status in which he was held by the people, his nose was put out of joint, envy undermined his faith and he openly dissented. He ended up in hell-fire although he could have dwelt in paradise for ever”.⁴⁵⁶

3.3.4.2 The characteristics of envious people:

Al-Jāhīz describes some characteristic of envious people such as they can not hide their envy towards other people. Here, the author reminds us about the story of Prophet Yūsuf (p.b.u.h) and his brothers. Al-Jāhīz says that Prophet Yūsuf’s brothers were reasonably respected and educated men, descended from the prophets. However, because envy had flaring up in their hearts, they betrayed their promises with their father to look after Yūsuf, they threw him down a well and stained his shirt with blood.⁴⁵⁷

Therefore, al-Jāhīz gives some advice on how to behave towards envious people especially when someone detects envy in a friend. He suggests that the best way of keeping the envious person from you is to have as little as possible to do with him. In addition, al-Jāhīz also suggests us to confide nothing in this kind of people, because he

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 9; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 11.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 15; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 14-15.

says we will be safe from their mischief. As a result, he says that there no sense to deal with this kind of people.

Then al-Jāhiz tells us about God's description of paradise in the Qur'ān and how He has adorned it. He writes: "God does not receive men into His dwelling until He has stripped malice and envy from their hearts. If not, they would forfeit the rapture of heaven and turn their backs on one another".⁴⁵⁸ Therefore, he said that there can be no peace unless all contact with the envious is severed. Finally, he asked his addressee to follow his advice and at the end of the *risāla* he said that you will have a healthy appetite, restful sleep each night and live a long and happy life.

Al-Jāhiz ends the *risāla* with praise to God Almighty to cleanse our hearts from envy and make us avoid unworthy conduct and bless us with concord and amity.

3.3.5 The use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in the text:

In presenting his idea, al-Jāhiz quotes numerous Qur'ānic verses which come to the aid of his writing by indicating certain evidence or proof which enable the reader to accept and reject it. Therefore, we can assume that the author has clear Islamic tendency in his writing. For example, he states that a man is envied for the blessing which God has given him.⁴⁵⁹ In the sense of this meaning, he quotes this Qur'ānic verse (4:54):

⁴⁵⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 22; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 19.

⁴⁵⁹*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 4; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 8.

﴿ أم يحسدون الناس على ما آتاهم الله من فضله، فقد آتينا آل إبراهيم الكتاب والحكمة، وآتيناهم ملكا

عظيما ﴾

“Or do they envy men (Muhammad and his followers) for what Allah has given them of His Bounty? Then We had already given the family of Abraham the Book and *al-Hikma* (Al-Sunna – Divine Inspiration to those Prophets, not written in the form of a book), and conferred upon them a great kingdom”.

To al-Jāhiz, envy is leader of unbelief, the confederate of falsehood, the adversary of truth and the enemy of the Qur’ān.⁴⁶⁰ Concerning this matter, the author then quotes the following Qur’ānic verse in which Allah denounced the *Ahl al-kitāb* (particularly Jews and Christians) for envy. For them, the Qur’ān said (2:109):

﴿ ود كثير من أهل الكتاب لو يردونكم من بعد إيمانكم كفارا حسدا من عند أنفسهم ﴾

“Many of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own selves”.

Al-Jāhiz further states that envy is the first transgression to appear in heaven and first sin to occur on earth. For instance, he claims that the greatest angels (*Iblīs*) bore its mark and disobeyed his Lord. In the story of *Iblīs* disobey his Lord, al-Jāhiz quotes the following Qur’ānic verse (7:12):

﴿ خلقتني من نار وخلقته من طين ﴾

“Iblis said: You created me from fire, and You created him from clay”.

On this verse, al-Jāhiz comments: “Thus did God curse him and make him Satan. He cast him down from His right hand and rendered him dismal and foul. Then did Satan

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 4; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 8.

deceive Ādam, causing him to forget God's will; thus did Ādam disobey. But when Ādam repented, God forgave him and showed him the way. Satan, however, persisted in his envy and so was lost and wretched".⁴⁶¹ It seems that this event was the first wrongdoing in heaven, and for the first sin to occur in earth, therefore, al-Jāhiz writes: "On earth, a son of Ādam killed his brother, sinning against God and bereaving his father. It was envy that drove him to murder and enters the ranks of the damned. It caused him to commit a dreadful sin and deny his brother's life: he struck him a terrible blow with a rock and was filled right away with regret".⁴⁶²

Describing of some characteristic of envious people, al-Jāhiz reminds us about the story of Prophet Yūsuf (p.b.u.h) and his brothers. Related to this story, al-Jāhiz quoted three Qur'ānic verses from Sūra Yūsuf to strengthen his view concerning the subject matter. For example, the Qur'ān said (12:10): ﴿ وَالْقَوَاهِ فِي غِيَابَةِ الْجَبِّ ﴾ which mean: "...throw him down to the bottom of a well".

Then, the Qur'ān said again (12:18): ﴿ وَجَاؤَا عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِ بَدْمَ كَذِبٍ ﴾ which mean "they brought his shirt stained with false blood".

And finally, the Qur'ān said (12:100):

﴿ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا ﴾ which mean: "...and they fell down before him prostrate".

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 6; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 9.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 6-7; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 9.

At the end of his explanation of the story, al-Jāḥiẓ reminds his addressee: “Should you detect envy in a friend, have as little as possible to do with him, for that is the best way of keeping him off your back. Confide nothing in him and you will be safe from his mischief and the obstacle he will place in your way. Never seek his advice on anything and do not let his flattery or smoothing talking eloquence deceive you, for they are the snares of his duplicity”.⁴⁶³

The Qur’ānic quotations can be found also before the conclusion of the *risāla* when the author discusses God’s description of paradise in the Qur’ān. Al-Jāḥiẓ explains to his addressee: “You will have read God’s description of paradise in the Qur’ān and how He has adorned it. He has made it the dwelling of his good servant and prophets. Therein is what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no heart of man has ever felt. God spoke in His Book (the Qur’ān) of the rapture men shall feel when they enter into paradise and how He has made it their eternal dwelling”.⁴⁶⁴ Then al-Jāḥiẓ quotes this Qur’ānic verses (15:45-48):

﴿إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعَيْونَ ، ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمَنِينَ ، وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ، لَا يَمْسُهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ ﴾

“Truly! The *Muttaqīm* (Believers) will be amidst Gardens and water-springs (Paradise). It will be said to them: Enter therein (Paradise), in peace and security. And We shall remove from their breast any sense of injury (that they may have), (So they will be like) brothers facing each other on thrones. No sense of fatigue shall touch them nor shall they (ever) be asked to leave it”.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 15-16; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 21-22; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 18-19.

Al-Jāhiz comments on these verses: “God does not receive men into His dwelling until He has stripped malice and envy from their hearts. Thus they find delight in paradise, reclining on divans opposite friends. They delight in the faces they see before them, for peace fills their hearts and malice has been stripped from their breasts”.⁴⁶⁵

In addition, the author also records two Ḥadīth to support his idea. For example, he quotes this Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said:⁴⁶⁶

(دَبُّ إِلَيْكُمْ دَاءُ الْأُمَمِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ : الْحَسَدُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ)

“The disease of past nations has spread among you: envy and resentment”.

The above Ḥadīth has been quoted after the author identified the terminology of envy and its significance.

On the other hand, the second Ḥadīth was quoted concerning the significance of neighbours. For instance, al-Jāhiz informs us that a friend told him that how he had once brought some meat home and hidden it from his neighbours because he was afraid that they would envy him. In conjunction with this story, the author quotes this Ḥadīth which narrated by Ibn Zubayr (d. 95 A.H) that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) once said:⁴⁶⁷

(لَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ مَنْ بَاتَ شَبَعَاتًا وَجَارَهُ طَاوٍ)

“The man who sleeps on a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry is not a Muslim”.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 22, see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 19.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 22, see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 19. This Ḥadīth can be seen in al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, Vol. I, p. 563.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 13, see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 13. The full text of the Ḥadīth can be referred to Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī ḡharīb al-ḥadīth wa al-athar*, Vol. III, p. 146. See also al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No 7583, Vol. II, p. 452.

3.3.6 Language of the *Risāla*:

The usage of rhythmic balance and measured termination style of *sajʿ* is very clear from the beginning of the *risāla*. This style of writing makes the reading go smoothly and awakes the admiration of the reader. To illustrate that, this line from the introduction of *risāla* is shown how the author separated it into shorter sentences which ended with the same letter, the author writes:⁴⁶⁸

وهب الله لك السلامة، وأدام لك الكرامة، ورزقك الاستقامة، ورفع عنك الندامة.

(May God grant you security, bless you with integrity, maintain your generosity and part you from remorse and regret).

Moreover, it can be found some sentences in the *risāla* shows us that al-Jāhiz's style of writing is bearing some similarity to the Qur'ānic style. Although, as we all know that the Qur'ān is neither poetry nor prose, it has its relation to both. To illustrate that, note these short quotations from the *risāla* which shows exactly how the author style of writing reflects the style of the Qur'ān. For example, he writes:⁴⁶⁹

- ونزع الغل من قلوبهم. ولو لم ينزع ذلك من صدورهم ويخرجه من قلوبهم ، لافتدوا لذادة

الجنة ... ولمسهم فيها النصب ، وأعقبوا منها الخروج ، لأنه عز وجل فضل بينهم في المنازل ،

ورفع درجات بعضهم فوق بعض في الكرامات، وسنى العطيّات.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 3, see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 7.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 3, see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 7.

This similarity can be identified by a comparison to these Qur'ānic verses, for example:

1) The first sentence is similar to this verse in Sūra al-A'raf (7:43) and Sūra al-Hijr (15:47):

﴿ونزنا ما في صدورهم من غل﴾

2) The second sentence is similar to the Qur'ānic saying also in Sūra al-Hijr (15:48):

﴿لا يمسهم فيها نصب وما هم بمخرجين﴾

3) The last sentence is similar to this verse in Sūra al-Zukhruf (43:32):

﴿ورفعنا بعضهم فوق بعض درجات﴾

And in another passage, al-Jāhiz writes:⁴⁷⁰

.....- فإذا فعلت ذلك فكل هنيا مريا ، ونم رضيا ، وعش في السرور مليا .

The above short sentence calling in mind the Qur'ānic style in Sūra Maryam in which nearly all its verses ended with the same style.⁴⁷¹

Another linguistic skill can be found in this *risāla* is the use of rhetorical elements. The use of *Ṭibāq* (acronym or antithesis),⁴⁷² for instance, can be seen scattered

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 23; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 19.

⁴⁷¹ See for example verses 2-23 and verses 41-74, etc.

⁴⁷² *Ṭibāq* is one of five elements in 'ilm al-Badī' as has been stated by Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908) which include *isti'āra* (metaphor), *tajnīs* (paronomasia), *radd 'ajaz al-kalām 'alā ṣudūrih* (internal repetition) and *al-madhahb al-kalāmī* (the dialectical manner). According to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭibāq* is based on total opposition between the signified and no relation of signifiers. See K. Abu Deeb, 'Literary Criticism', in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 347.

through out the text of *risāla*. A good example for this is in the second paragraph of the *risāla*, the words with underline come with its acronym.⁴⁷³

(كتبت إلي ، أيدك الله ، تسألني عن الحسد ، ما هو؟ ... وبم يعرف ظاهره ومكتومه ، وكيف يعلم مجهوله ومعلومه ، ولم صار في العلماء أكثر من الجهلاء؟ ولم كثر في الأقرباء وقل في البعداء؟ وكيف دب في الصالحين أكثر منه في الفاسقين؟ ... إلخ).

Elsewhere, he writes:⁴⁷⁴

(وقلت : ولو كنت تعرف الجليل من الرأي ، ... لاستغنيت بالرمز عن الإشارة ، وبالإشارة عن الكلام ، وبالسر عن الجهر ، وبالخفض عن الرفع ، وبالاختصار عن التطويل ... إلخ)

In other occasion, the author writes again:⁴⁷⁵

(إن كنت تجهل بعد ما علمناك ، وتعوج بعد ما قومناك ، وتبذل بعد ما تقفناك ، وتضل إذ هديناك ، وتتسى إذ ذكرناك ...).

There are many other word that can be found in the *risāla* which comes with thier acronym.⁴⁷⁶ The usage of this kind of rhetoric style can be assumed as one of al-Jāhiz's trademarks in the linguistic skill.

⁴⁷³ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 3; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 18-19; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 20; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁶ For instance, see particularly in all paragraphs in the fifth division of the *risāla*.

On the other hand, the use of poetry only appeared once in this *risāla*. The author quotes *abyāt* from unknown poem which related to the subject of envy. He writes: “In the course of a speech in Medina, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) complained about him (Abdullah b. Ubay b. Salūl) to his supporters from Medina: “Do not blame him.” they said. “Before you arrival, we treated him as king.” If the poor man had only been able to rid his heart of envy, he would have surely had a place in the Islamic regime. However, he was humiliated by God on account of his envy and his hypocrisy made apparent to all”. Al-Jāhiz added, “to this effect”,⁴⁷⁷ and then he quoted what the poet said:⁴⁷⁸

طال الحاسد أحزانه فاصفر من كثرة أحزانه
دعه فقد أشعلت في جوفه ما هاج من حر نيرانه
العييب أشهى عنده لذة من لذة المال لخزانه
فارم على غاربه حبله تسلم من كثرة بهتانه

Though, the use of poetry only appeared once, the significance of the *risāla* is still remaining in the other kind of *nawādir* which can be found scattered within the text.

⁴⁷⁷ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 10; Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 11.

⁴⁷⁸ For the translation of these verses, see, Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 55.

3.4 *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-‘adāwa wa al-ḥasad* (The differences between hostility and envy)

3.4.1 Textual background of the *Risāla*:

This is the second work of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the subject of envy. The text of the *risāla* can be found in Hārūn’s and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection in varying length. In Hārūn’s printed edition, the *risāla* consists of thirty-seven consecutive pages with no divisions other than paragraphs. However, in ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, it contains only twenty-eight pages and it is interesting to note here, that the text of the *risāla* in ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition begins with this introduction:⁴⁷⁹

الحمد لله رب العالمين كما هو أهله وصلى الله على محمد خاتم النبيين كما أمر به وعلى آله وسلم
كثيرا.

Hārūn, however, in his editorial remarks, claimed that this introduction is not from the normal al-Jāḥiẓ’s style of writing.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, we find in his edition, the text of the *risāla* begins with this statement⁴⁸¹:

أصبح الله مدتك السعادة والسلامة ، وقرنها بالعافية والسرور ، ووصلها بالنعمة التي لا
تزل ، والكرامة التي لا تحول .

⁴⁷⁹ ‘Uyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. I, p. 237.

⁴⁸⁰ Hārūn, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. I, p. 237.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 237.

The English translation of the *risāla* can be seen in *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ* by Hutchins.⁴⁸² So, the analysis of the *risāla* will be base on the Arabic text in Hārūn's and ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition and for English translation, it will rely on Hutchins's translation.

3.4.2 The Addressee and the date of composition:

The *risāla* was addressed to Abū al-Ḥasan ʿUbaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān,⁴⁸³ because the author himself declares the name of his addressee when he expressed as follows: "I said to him (Abū al-Ḥasan), "I will recite two *bayt* (verses) of my poet which answer you and the envious":⁴⁸⁴

إن ابن يحيى عبيد الله أمني من الحوادث بعد الخوف من زمني
فلست أحذر حسادي وإن كثروا ما دمت ممسك حبل من أبي الحسن

The precise date of composition of the *risāla* can not be determined precisely, however, it could be between the year 236 A.H. and the 247 A.H. Because, al-Ḥājirī, for instance, suggested that the *risāla* was among four works that has been composed by al-Jāḥiẓ after ʿUbaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān was appointed to be vizier of the Caliph al-

⁴⁸² Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 33-54.

⁴⁸³ His name is ʿUbaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān, but famous with nickname Abū al-Ḥasan. He was a vizier to the Caliph al-Mutawakkil and then to the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim. He died in the year 263 A.H. See al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, Vol. IV, p. 198.

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's collection, Vol. I, p. 370; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's collection, Vol. I, p. 263.

The meaning of these verses is:

ʿUbaydullah b. Yaḥyā protected me, from accident after I had known fear,
I will not be wary of those who envy me, however numerous,
As long as I am still continuing to cling to Abū al-Ḥasan's relationship.

Mutawakkil in 236 A.H.⁴⁸⁵ Al-Jāhiz tell us also: “When I reached this point in the composition of this book, I was visited by ten *Kuttāb*, whom your benefaction has encompassed and whose status has been raised by your generation”.⁴⁸⁶ This indicates that the author takes many times to finish his work when he has to break for certain period.

3.4.3 Structure of the *Risāla*:

Let us now turn from the background of the *risāla* into it contain which can be divided into these elements:

1. The significance of the *risāla*.
2. Note on the dangerous of intermediaries.
3. Note on beauty.
4. Note on the envy and quotation of Yaḥyā b. Khālid on the envious people.
5. Note on the envy and the literary critic.
6. Quotations of traditions and anecdotes about envious men.
7. The ten *kuttāb* came to see him.
8. Note from certain envious men threatening him.
9. The ten visitors, having read the note, impart their thought in prose and verse.
10. The last page contains traditions bearing on the subject of envy.

⁴⁸⁵ The rest of al-Jāhiz's works are: *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Yahūd* and *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*. See al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāhiz ḥayātuh wa ʿāhārūh*, pp. 359-368.

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 368; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 260.

3.4.4 Analysis of the main issues in the *Risāla*:

3.4.4.1 The Significance of the *Risāla*:

Most important is al-Jāhīz's claims that he was to be the first writer who deal with this topic i.e. the envy. He describes this work as splendid and excellent. He then adds that: "No previous author has treated this topic or that of *Faḍl al-wa'īd* (Merit of the Promise) which preceded this and *Akhlāq al-wuzarā'* (Manners of the Viziers) which preceded the "Merit of the Promise". These are splendid, handsome, and excellent".⁴⁸⁷

From this statement, we know that al-Jāhīz had written two more works entitled *Faḍl al-wa'īd* and *Akhlāq al-wuzarā'*. However, as far as we know from the list of al-Jāhīz's works that these two works did not survive.⁴⁸⁸ According to al-Jāhīz, *Faḍl al-wa'īd* contains unusual and elegant accounts, refined and beautiful reports, and traditions which promote praiseworthy behaviour and generous deeds of lasting renown. Whilst *Akhlāq al-wuzarā'* contains the custom of the kings and caliphs, of their ministers and followers, and their stories. Al-Jāhīz mentioned that these two works also were presented to 'Ubaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān.⁴⁸⁹ Therefore, al-Jāhīz asks his addressee to take a general view of them by leafing through the first few pages.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 337; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 238.

⁴⁸⁸ See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-110.; Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāhīz*, pp. 117-144.

⁴⁸⁹ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-'adāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 367; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 237.

3.4.4.2 The nature of scholars:

Afterwards, the author also reminds us about the nature of scholars in his days. He writes: “No era from the past has lacked truthful scholars who read the works of their predecessors, studied with their followers, practised with them, and contended against their opponents. They would boast of that to rivals and compete with each other about it. In their own time envious people found fault with their scholarships and books. Plagiarist claimed to have done as much”.⁴⁹⁰

It is obvious from this statement that there are two types of scholars in the time of al-Jāḥiẓ, which he divided them into true scholars and plagiarists. As a result, he worried about his works, which he writes at the cost of so much hard work, will be presented to his addressee being a subject of plagiarism by an impostor. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, an impostor is someone who distinguishes himself as the author of similar works, pretends to creative ability equal to other works and prides himself on the fertility which God has in fact denied him. In conjunction with this group of scholars, al-Jāḥiẓ informed us that Bishr al-Marīsī told him that after he presented his work on the legitimacy of dates wine to the Caliph al-Ma'mūn, Muhammad b. Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ṭūsī attacked it and protested against al-Jāḥiẓ's argument in it. However, according to al-Jāḥiẓ, the Caliph al-Ma'mūn was very upset and anger because of al-Ṭūsī's disparaging remarks spoken when there was no one in the assembly to oppose him.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 337; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 237.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 342; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 240.

3.4.4.3 Enmity and envy:

The author informs us about the distinction between enmity and envy. According to al-Jāhīz, “enmity has the intellect to guide it and its hostility is apparent in times of stress. Otherwise, it stays hidden to seize the moments of opportunity”.⁴⁹² On the other hand, “envy is stripped of intelligence at all times, occasions, and hours. Part of the baseness of envy is that it is concerned with increasingly petty thing”.⁴⁹³ And also, “Enmity even if it disfigures what is beautiful falls short of envy. A declare enemy may become a hypocritical friend. In the same way, the hypocritical befriended person may become an open enemy”.⁴⁹⁴

In another occasion of the *risāla*, al-Jāhīz again records some more distinctions between enmity and envy. For instance, he writes: “Enmity wears out and become stale. Envy is fresh and new whether unsatisfied or gratified. It does not end”.⁴⁹⁵ According to al-Jāhīz, every envious person is an enemy, but not every enemy is envious. In conjunction with this statement, the author gives us an example. He says that it was nothing but envy which brought the Jews to reject Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) when they knew as they knew their children that he was a truthful prophet and true messenger. Because they read of his mission in their Torah and studied together in their religious

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 345; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 243.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 345; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 243.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 345; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 243.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 346; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 243.

school. Finally, envy came between their scholars and it created in them enmity to Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).⁴⁹⁶

In the next paragraph, the author informs us the evidence that envy is more grievous and more painful than enmity. He writes: “envy is provoked by an act of God the Almighty while enmity is free from that. It is only related to the acts of man. No one is provoked to enmity by an act of God”.⁴⁹⁷ This statement shows us the consequence of the Mu‘tazila thought into al-Jāhiz’s writing because the idea of an act of God and the act of man are the main issue in the discussion between the followers of this school of thought.

Afterwards, the author offers us other descriptions of the enmity and envy. He writes: “Envy is falsehood’s brother. They run on the same track. They are indistinguishable companions and inseparable bed mates. Enmity can exist without lying. Envy is never innocent of calumny. Envy is a fire for which the spirit is the fuel. It never subsides through exhaustion of fuel. Enmity is a coal lit by anger and extinguished by satisfaction. Envy is substance, enmity something required”.⁴⁹⁸

Regarding to the issue of enmity and envy, the author relates it with the quotation of Yaḥyā b. Khālid’s statement on the envious people. Al-Jāhiz says: “I learned the truth of what Yaḥyā b. Khālid said from trial and suffering. I have on occasion written an expert and masterly look on religion and law, prophetic message and biography,

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 346; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 243.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 346; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 244.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 347; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 244.

sermons, taxation, ordinances, or on the other types of wisdom attributing it to myself. Then a group of people of learning attacked it in concert because they envy built into them although they knew its brilliance and clarity”.⁴⁹⁹

3.4.4.4 Types of envious people:

He expounds his views on the envy and the literary critic and he divides the envious person into two groups; firstly, the envy of the ignorant man, secondly, the envy of the wise and discerning man. He claims the first group as: “The ignorant envier hastens to attack the book the first instant it is read before he finishes reading a single sheet. Then he is not content with a mild or light attack. He launches the strongest and coarsest one before attending to its sections or definitions. His censure is not explained or itemised. He rather lumps it together saying “This is wrong from first to last, false from beginning to end”. He reckons that the more he increases his excess, criticism and verbosity in the attack on the book’s author, the more that is likely to be accepted from him”.⁵⁰⁰ While, for the second group, al-Jāhiz describes them as follows: “When he wants to destroy the book and plot its downfall leafs through its pages and masters its definitions and sections. He looks at it repeatedly and reviews its thought”.⁵⁰¹ However, from al-Jāhiz’s point of view, the envy of the ignorant is a smaller thorn and lesser trial than the envy of one learned and clever.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 350; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 247.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 351-2; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 248.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 352; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 249.

Al-Jāhiz again clarifies his objective of this work. He writes: “We will not give in full all the sections of the debate in this *risāla*. If we did, many days and nights would be exhausted before we reached our goal of finishing the book. We have rather selected from each of its sections what would illustrate the idea intended”.⁵⁰² Above all, al-Jāhiz states “I was a man few envied until I held fast to your [Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Ubaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān] handle, grasped hold of your rope, and stood in the shade you provide. Then the envious flocked round me in a crowd and attack me with their arrows from every shore and climes”.⁵⁰³ Concerning the envious person, al-Jāhiz tells us about his dialogue with the ten *Kuttāb*, who visited him after they read his work on envy. We find that al-Jāhiz reveals their thought about envy with the quotations of prose and verse which can be seen in the text of the *risāla*.⁵⁰⁴

3.4.4.5 The conclusion of the *Risāla*:

The author concludes the *risāla* with the quotation from the Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). He then proclaims that the real envy is in obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (p.b.u.h.). Finally, he asserts that “this all what has reached him of the sayings about envy”.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 366-7; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 259.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 368; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 260.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 367-70; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, pp. 260-2

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 373; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 264.

3.4.5 The style of writing:

There is no quotation from the Qur'ān in this *risāla*. The only quotation can be found is from the second sources of Islam i.e. the Ḥadīth of the Prophet's Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). However, it is very limited, there is only one Ḥadīth has been quoted by the author. At the end of the *risāla*, the author states that: "We know nothing in favour of envy except the saying attributes to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). He then quotes this Ḥadīth:⁵⁰⁶

(لا حسد إلا في اثنتين : رجل آتاه الله حفظ القرآن فهو يقوم به آناء الليل وآناء النهار، ورجل آتاه الله
مالا فهو ينفقه في وجوه البر آناء الليل وآناء النهار)

"There is no envy except for two things: a man on whom God has bestowed ability to memorise the Qur'ān who undertakes that night and day, and a man on whom God bestowed wealth who expands it in pious ways night and day".

The author then asserts his final comment: "This envy is in obedience to God the Mighty and Exalted and His Messenger". In addition, in another occasion of the *risāla*, we find the quotation of the dialogue between Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) with al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī⁵⁰⁷ (d. c. 63/683) in which al-Jāḥiẓ records some *abyāt* (verses) from the poetry of al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī and the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 373; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 264. Cf. this Ḥadīth to the text of Ḥadīth reported by Abdullah b. Mas'ūd in al-Bukhārī in *Kitāb al-'ilm*, Vol. I, No 73; and *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, Vol. VI, No 4737/543.

⁵⁰⁷ His full name is Qays b. Abdullah b. 'Adas b. Rabī'a al-Ja'dī al-'Āmirī. His nick name is Abū Laylā, but famous with al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī. He is poet of *Mukhadram* and one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). It has been reported that he was gave up from making any poetry for thirty years, but suddenly, he starts again with good quality of poetry. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. al-Nābigha al-Dja'dī, Vol. VII, pp. 842-3.

particularly when the Prophet prayed for al-Nābigha al-Ja°dī: (لا فض الله فاك !)⁵⁰⁸ after he [al-Nābigha al-Ja°dī] recite some verses to him. As a result of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) prayer, al-Jāhiz claims that al-Nābigha al-Ja°dī lived to be one hundred twenty years old. Whenever he dropped a tooth, another grew in its place because of the Prophet's prayer.⁵⁰⁹ Al-Jāhiz then comments: "This was the best that was related of the hasty word by which self-restraint is protected".⁵¹⁰

Finally, the author records some verse of his own poetry which rarely can be found in his works. After an extensive examination, we find that there are three verses of al-Jāhiz's poetry in the *risāla*. For instance, he says:⁵¹¹

فاكثر حسادي واكثر خلتي وكنت وحسادي قليل وخالتي

In another occasion, he says again.⁵¹²

إن ابن يحيى عبيد الله أمني من الحوادث بعد الخوف من زمني
فأست أحر حسادي وإن كثروا ما دمت ممسك حبل من أبي الحسن

⁵⁰⁸ The meaning: "God's blessing on your teeth".

⁵⁰⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-°adāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 364; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 258.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.364; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 258.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.368; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 260. This verse is based on *Baḥr al-ḫawīl* (One of sixteen metre's names in Arabic prosody. It is made up, in each hemistich, two of *mafā'ilun* and two of *mustaf'ilun*). For more information about Arabic prosody see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art 'Arūḍ, Vol. I, pp. 667-677. The meaning of this verse is: "You have multiplied my friends and my enemies; few used to envy me or be my friend".

⁵¹² Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-°adāwa wa al-ḥasad*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 370; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 263. These two verses are based on *Baḥr al-basīṭ* (One of the sixteen metre's name in Arabic prosody. It is made up, in each hemistich, of two *fa'ūlun*, and two of *mafā'ilun*). See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art 'Arūḍ, Vol. I, pp. 667-677.

This indicates that al-Jāḥiẓ not only involved in prose literature, but also has written some good quality verses of poetry.⁵¹³

3.5 *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān* (The art of keeping secret and keeping the tongue)

3.5.1 The title and the text of the *Risāla*:

We find in Yāqūt's list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works that the *risāla* was known as *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*.⁵¹⁴ However, most of the scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ in modern days namely Pellat and Sandūbī agreed that the correct reading of the work is *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān*.⁵¹⁵ The text of the *risāla* can be seen in Hārūn's edition and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition with varying length. In Hārūn's printed edition, for instance, it consists of thirty-three consecutive pages with no divisions other than paragraphs, while in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition; it only consists of twenty-three pages. Some portion of the *risāla* has been translated into English by Pellat.⁵¹⁶ Whilst the full translation of the *risāla* can be found in *Sobriety and Mirth* by Colville and *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ* by Hutchins⁵¹⁷.

⁵¹³ Yāqūt records sixteen verses of poetry which has been attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ. There are ten verses on praising of Ibn Abī Du'ād, four verses on praising of Ibrāhīm b. Rabāḥ, Muhammad b. al-Jahm and Ibn Abī Du'ād, and two verses on attacking the poet al-Jammāz, see, Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 80-82.

⁵¹⁴ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 109.

⁵¹⁵ See for instance, Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 54. He claimed that this work entitled *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr* or *Kitāb fī kitmān al-sirr wa ḥifẓ al-lisān* and also in al-Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p.139.

⁵¹⁶ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 223-229.

⁵¹⁷ The translation of the *risāla* in Colville's book entitled "The Art of Keeping Silent", whilst in *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ* by Hutchins entitled "Keeping Secrets and Holding The Tongue". See, Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 151-169 and Hutchins, *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 13-32.

3.5.2 The Addressee of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ as usual did not declare the addressee of this *risāla*. He describes his addressee as person with good personality and very polite. However, he broke out this personality with two bad habits *i.e.* give away a secrets and not holding the tongue. Abū Milḥim suggests that al-Jāḥiẓ addressed this *risāla* to Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abū Du'ād, the vizier of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil.⁵¹⁸ On the other hand, al-Ḥājirī in his introduction to the *risāla* remarks that 'Ubaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān, the other vizier of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, was the addressee of the *risāla*.⁵¹⁹ He also stress that 'Ubaydullah was very young man when he was appointed to be the vizier.⁵²⁰

Al-Jāḥiẓ himself in some extant described the personality of his addressee in this *risāla*, who he described him as follows: "I have examined your background, considered your conduct, and reflect upon your morality. My conclusion is that you have drawn near perfection, verged to completeness and ascended the stairway of virtue. No excellent person can seek to surpass you".⁵²¹ However, he adds: "Yet, in spite of everything, I have found you to be missing and overlooking two matters which I have against you are: talking idly and giving away secret".⁵²² From this point of view, al-Jāḥiẓ wrote this *risāla* and addressed to this an important man and gives him some advices.

⁵¹⁸ Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 11.

⁵¹⁹ Al-Ḥājirī, *Majmū' rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 193.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁵²¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 139; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 97.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.139; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.97.

3.5.3 Outline of the *Risāla*:

Below is an outline of the main points to be discussed in our analysis of the detail content of the *risāla*, these are as follows:

1. The author praises his addressee.
2. He noted the two failings in his addressee *i.e.* talking idly and giving away a secret.
3. Note on the tongue and the *‘aql* (reason).
4. Revert to the discussion on the transmission of traditions.
5. Keeping secret is very hard to some people.
6. Some examples to illustrate the difficulty of keeping secrets, notably to the case of al-A[‘]mash.⁵²³
7. He goes on to the dissemination of secrets.
8. Some examples of people who customarily give away secrets.
9. The qualities needed for it seldom found in one person.
10. The appeal of forbidden fruit.
11. Revert to the disclosure of secrets.
12. Goes on to backbiting.
13. Some thoughts on the subject of excuses.
14. Digression on the backbiting.
15. Revert to the harm done by words.

⁵²³ His full name is Sulaymān b. Mahrān al-Asadī. He was born in Kufah in 60 A.H. and died at the same place in 148 A.H. He was of a Persian father and was among the famous traditionist. For further information, see Al-Zirikī, *al-A‘lām*, Vol. III, p. 135; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-A[‘]mash, Vol. I, p. 431.

16. The *risāla* ends with al-Jāḥiẓ's suggestion on the keeping the tongue.

3.5.4 Analysis of the main issues in the *Risāla*:

The author firstly sings his praise to his addressee. He said that he had examined his addressee background, considered his conduct and reflects upon his morality. He found that his addressee have drawn near perfection and verged on completeness. However, al-Jāḥiẓ found his addressee has two bad habits i.e. talking idly and giving away secret.⁵²⁴ Therefore, he said that he against him. He added that nothing is harder than to confront one's emotion and battle with natural desires because by loosening the tongue, emotion invites the disclosure of secrets and allow too much to be said.

3.5.4.1 The tongue and the reason:

In conjunction with the issue of talking idly and giving away of secret, al-Jāḥiẓ stresses on the function of *‘aql* (reason) which can be a tool to control the one's tongue. Because according to the author, the tongue is the heart's interpreter and the heart is a strongbox wherein thoughts and secrets are stored away, as well as everything else, good or bad. Al-Jāḥiẓ says that speech is one of God's greatest gift and blessing, and the reasonable man has a responsibility towards it and it will be called to account for how he has used it.⁵²⁵ Here, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ suggests his addressee to use it in praise and to serve Him, to honour his debt to Him and he should avoid whatever contrary to these, if

⁵²⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 140; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 98.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.142; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 99.

not this will be the limit of stupidity and great loss. Otherwise, al-Jāhiz suggests that sometimes silence is better than speech.⁵²⁶

However, al-Jāhiz states that men naturally like telling stories and listening to news. In conjunction with that issue, we find that the author digresses his writing to speak about the importance of transmission of traditions. For example, he claims that if men did not enjoy telling and listening to stories, the prophetic traditions (*Aḥādīth*) would have never been transmitted or acquired the importance they have.⁵²⁷

3.5.4.2 The release of secret:

According to al-Jāhiz, the release of secret is to be guarded against even in an elegant report, a distinguished sermon, in what is mysterious and unknown, and in the infamous and motley. For instance, he says, religious secrets should be guarded against the victory of passion over the soul and against the hatred of people for each other occasioned by difference and opposition, alliance and enmity. Royal secret about deceptions aimed at a king's enemies, concealed desires and veiled plans, as are the secrets of the high and mighty.⁵²⁸

Of course, it is hard to keep a secret, hence, man find it difficult to keep secrets because of the strength of this urge and his proneness to yield to this instinct. Al-Jāhiz states that it would be easier for person to move well established mountains than to fight

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.143 ; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.100.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.144 ; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.100.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.144 ; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.101.

against his own instincts.⁵²⁹ In connection with the difficulty of keeping secret, the author then give an example to illustrate it, notably the case of al-A^cmash, who was so anxious to keep to himself the traditions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) he had collected that he recited them to sheep.⁵³⁰

3.5.4.3 The backbiting:

Al-Jāḥiẓ claims that to slander people is a tyrannical course for justice, a failing of zeal, weakness of reasoning, baseness in value, a plentiful inconvenience, envy, and jealous. However, he said that if the slander limited his abuse to one whose assault he feared, he would be more forgivable.⁵³¹ Elsewhere, al-Jāḥiẓ again stresses that most often a person apologise only for fear of a fall, or to restrain his power. Related to this matter, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes what has been done by *fuqahā'*. He says that *fuqahā'* explain away whatever might attach suspicion to the sovereign and make them suspect, especially in matters relating to possible loss of life, property or honour. He adds that there is no end to this malady except in renouncing excuses.⁵³²

Finally, the author concludes the *risāla* with a postscript about its usefulness by saying that he had treated only a brief of the theme of keeping secret, he says that it ought to be sufficient for the man of reason and understanding.⁵³³ And he adds that the

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.144; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.101.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.145; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.101.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.159; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.112.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.166; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.116.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.171; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.119.

praiseworthy deeds associate with personal gain, honour and virtue, in life and after death.⁵³⁴

3.5.5 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān in the text:

The first Qur'ānic verse used by al-Jāhiz in this *risāla* is from Sūra al-Fajr when the Qur'ān said (89:5):

﴿ هل في ذلك قسم لذي حجر ﴾

“There is indeed in them (the above oaths) a sufficient proof for men of understanding (and that, they should avoid all kinds of sins and disbeliefs, etc.)!”

This verse was used in connection with the explanation of the meaning of *‘aql* (reason). The author comments: “It (reason) binds the excess and shackles it from going far down the path of ignorance, error and injury”.⁵³⁵ He then adds, “In the same way a camel is shackled and the motherless calf restrained”.⁵³⁶

According to al-Jāhiz, this world is the home of decay and boredom. There is not in its nature, nor for any part of it, any permanence in one state. Everlasting permanence is only for the eternal one. He added, “People do not want them merely to supply a need the way an ascetic person might. They sought, rather, to curb greed. Greed has not limit or end to it, because it is not an effort aimed at satisfying a need”.⁵³⁷ In conjunction with this issue, al-Jāhiz quotes two Qur'ānic verses (89:20): ﴿وتحبون المال حبا جما﴾ which

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.171; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.120.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.141; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.99.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.141; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.99.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.157; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.110.

mean “You love wealth with great love” and (100:8): ﴿ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَبُّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴾ which mean: “He is surely strong in love of riches”.

The author also stresses about the backbiting. He said “We do not think that God gave licence to slander the believer. Rather He coined the phrase about backbiting with what is most hateful to souls and before which death is preferred to life”.⁵³⁸ He then quoted the Qur’ānic verse (49:12):

﴿ وَلَا تَجسسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَعضكم بَعضا أَيحب أهدكم أن يأكل لحم أخيه ميتا فكرهتموه ﴾

“And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it so hate backbiting”.

He then asserts: “Throughout mankind backbiting is an attitude that betrays deep seated unfairness, inherent baseness, meanness and deliberate wickedness based on envy and jealousy; it has taken hold of the world, governed men’s instincts, and flourished on habitual misdeeds, the victory of evil over good, and the abounding seeds of discord, depravity and envy in men’s hearts”.⁵³⁹ At the end, the author claims that no one will be free or escape from backbiting.

However, al-Jāhīz states that each person is responsible for himself and not blamed for someone else, he alone rather than his family, children, or relatives.⁵⁴⁰ Here, we find that al-Jāhīz quotes two Qur’ānic verses which related to the issue such as this

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.159; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.112.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp.159-60; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 112.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.163; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.114.

verse (52:21): ﴿ كل امرئ بما كسب رهين ﴾ which mean: “Every person is a pledge for that which he has earned”. And the other verse from Sūra is-Mā’ida (5:105):

﴿ يا أيها الذين آمنوا عليكم أنفسكم لا يضركم من ضل إذا اهتديتم ﴾

“O you who believe! Take care of your own selves, (do righteous deeds, fear Allah much abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained). If you follow the right guidance and enjoin what is right (Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbid that is wrong (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden) no hurt can come to you from those who are in error”.

According to al-Jāhiz, most people like to speak rather than taking action. Therefore, he asserts: “Most people answer without being questioned and talk even when they have no information”.⁵⁴¹ Here al-Jāhiz quotes another verse from the Qur’ān (38:86): ﴿ قل ما أسئلكم عليه من أجر وما أنا من المتكلفين ﴾ which mean: “Say (O Muhammad): “No wage do I ask of you for this (the Qur’ān), nor am I one of the *Mutakallifūn* (those who pretend and fabricate things which do not exist). Related to this matter, al-Jāhiz then informs us about the story of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 125 A.H.) with the busybody group. He comments on that event by saying: “If something like the severity of Hishām were prepared at all time for busybody, those among them with a sense of shame would certainly be restrained. The excesses, imposition, and slander would decrease”.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p.163; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. 1, p. 114.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p.164; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. 1, p. 114.

Finally, the author asks his addressee to: “Determine in which of the two matters you have spent your life: in wisdom or in foolish talk?”⁵⁴³ In addition, at the same time, he also asked his addressee to: “Observe God’s description of those He praised highly among His servant”.⁵⁴⁴ Here, al-Jāhiz quotes these two Qur’ānic verses which related to his question. The first one is from Sūra al-Mu’minūn (23:3) in which the Qur’ān said:

﴿والذين هم عن اللغو معرضون﴾

“And when they hear *al-laghw* (dirty, false, evil vain talk) they withdraw from it”.

And the other is from Sūra al-Furqān (25:72):

﴿وإذا سمعوا اللغو أعرضوا عنه﴾

“-...and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity”.

Afterwards, the author proclaim to his addressee that: “He (God) protected the ears and tongues of the people of paradise from it”.⁵⁴⁵ This proceeds with this Qur’ānic quotation from Sūra al-Wāqī’a (56:25-26):

﴿لا يسمعون فيها لغوا ولا تأثيما ، إلا قيلا سلا سلاما﴾

“No *laghw* (dirty, false, evil vain talk) will they hear therein, nor any sinful speech (like backbiting, etc.) But only the saying of: *Salām!* , *Salām!* (Greetings with peace)!”

It is clear from the foregoing that al-Jāhiz not only uses of reason in built his case, but also in almost circumstances he depended upon Qur’ānic verses as evidence for his argument.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.168; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 117.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.168; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 117.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.168; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 117.

3.5.6 Analysis of the use of Ḥadīth in the text:

The author has used several Ḥadīth to strengthen his argument in this *risāla*. For instance, when he asked his addresses to be awake in all conditions and be suspicious to all mankind⁵⁴⁶, he quotes this Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad said:⁵⁴⁷

(الحزم سوء الظن)

“Prudence is suspicious”.

This is because, from al-Jāḥiẓ’s point of view, suspicion can prevent a man from giving away a secret. According to him, people’s secrets are most often spread by these groups of people, either by their families and servant, or by their followers and apprentices, and also by those they control and command. Therefore, the author suggests: “do not tell your secret, if no one who fulfils the condition can be found, particularly if there is no one whose self-control, intelligence, trustworthiness and sincere advice are relied on, who has nothing to gain or lose from secret”.⁵⁴⁸ To show the important of the situation, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes the Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad said:⁵⁴⁹

(الناس كإبل مائة لا يوجد فيها راحلة)

“People are like hundred head of camel without a single steed among them”.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.150; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 105.

⁵⁴⁷ Collected by al-Suyūfī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 3815, Vol. I, p. 589. *Ḥadīth Ḥasan*.

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 151; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 106.

⁵⁴⁹ Collected by Ibn Māja, See Sunan Ibn Māja, No. 3990, and it was reported that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said as follows: (تجدون الناس بعدي كإبل مائة ليس فيها راحلة)

Then al-Jāhīz adds that merit and demerit are not encountered in fixed proportions among people. Because according to him, we might find person who outweighs a nation and a nation that does not equal a fingernail clipping of that person.⁵⁵⁰

When speaking about the greed which has no limit or end to it, because it is not an effort aimed at satisfying a need,⁵⁵¹ al-Jāhīz says that those people who are living only to fulfil their greed is similar to the meaning of this Ḥadīth in which the Prophet Muhammad was reported as saying:⁵⁵²

(لو لابن آدم واديين من ذهب لابتغى إليهما ثالثا ولا يملأ جوف ابن آدم إلا التراب)

“If one of the sons of Ādam (mankind) had two valleys of gold, he would surely desire a third. Man is only satisfied in the grave”.

Related to the same issue, al-Jāhīz quotes another Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said as follows:⁵⁵³

(لا يشبع أربع من أربعة: أرض من مطر وعين من نظر وأنثى من ذكر، وعالم من علم)

“Four things are never satisfied; the land by rain, the eye by looking, a female by a male and the scholar by learning”.

Al-Jāhīz then comments on the meaning of that Ḥadīth: “Generally speaking, the eye is not sated by seeing, just as the nose is not sated by smell, although a man may look

⁵⁵⁰ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 151; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 106.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.156; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 110.

⁵⁵² Collected by al-Suyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 7476, Vol. II, p. 436, with slightly different wording. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḡīh*. Cf. The original wording for this Ḥadīth as follows:

(لو كان لابن آدم واد من مال لابتغى إليه ثانيا ، ولو كان له واديان لابتغى لهما ثالثا ، ولا يملأ جوف ابن آدم إلا التراب ، ويتوب الله على من)
(تلب)

⁵⁵³ Collected by al-Suyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 922, Vol. I, p. 141. *Ḥadīth Ḍa‘īf*. Cf. The original wording for this Ḥadīth is:

(أربع لا يشبعن من أربع : عين من نظر ، وأرض من مطر ، وأنثى من ذكر ، وعالم من علم)

at something to the point of satisfaction then turn aside to look at something else. And as for knowledge, it is too vast to be circumscribed. If one seeks it for honour and pride, then there is no limit and end to it. The more one seeks it, the more he desires it.”⁵⁵⁴

Al-Jāḥiẓ praises to a man who speaks only of what concerns him and does not impose on himself what he can do without, because according to him, the words from this man will be few, and as a result, God will compassionate him.⁵⁵⁵ Related to this issue, he quotes this Ḥadīth:⁵⁵⁶

(رحم الله عبدا أنفق الفضل من ماله وأمسك الفضل من قوله وشغله عيبه عن عيوب الناس)

“God is compassionate to a person who expends of his wealth and withholds the excess of his talk, whose own fault diverts him from the faults of the people”.

Afterwards he states again: “How worthy is one whose words are countable and from whom no statement escaped unaccompanied by the two Angels, Raqīb and ‘Atīd”.⁵⁵⁷

On the other, al-Jāḥiẓ claims that the only cure for this disease i.e. talking idly and giving away a secret is to stamp out interference and stop wagging tongues of men tarnishing the honour of others and taking pleasure in malice and unkindness.⁵⁵⁸ Here, we

⁵⁵⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 157; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 110.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.162; *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 113.

⁵⁵⁶ I have tried to find this Ḥadīth in *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras li alfāẓ al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī* by A. J. Winshick, and also in the computer program, HARF, which contains ‘The Six Authentic’, but I could not find anything similar or close to this text.

⁵⁵⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 163; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 114.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.166; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 116.

find that al-Jāḥiẓ quotes these three Ḥadīth. The first one is the Prophet Muhammad saying:⁵⁵⁹

(المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده)

“A Muslim is a man from whose tongue and whose hand other Muslims is safe”.

Al-Jāḥiẓ comments: “The man from whom others are not safe is a man who is not safe from himself”.⁵⁶⁰ The following Ḥadīth has been quoted by the author in connection with the same issue is the Prophet’s saying:⁵⁶¹

(وهل يكب الناس على مناخرهم في النار إلا حصائد ألسنتهم)

Which mean: “What else but the harvest of their tongues drops men head-first into hell-fire”.

Finally, from al-Jāḥiẓ’s point of view, silent is better than talking idly and giving away a secret. In this case, he quotes the final Ḥadīth concerning the superiority of silence when the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said:⁵⁶²

(العبادۃ عشرة أجزاء تسعة منها في الصمت)

“Worship consists ten parts. Nine of them are in silence”.

⁵⁵⁹ Collected by āl-Şūyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 9206, 9207, 9208, *Ḥadīth Daf‘ī*.

⁵⁶⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī kitmān al-sirr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 167; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 116.

⁵⁶¹ This Ḥadīth narrated by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī, Ibn Māja. According to al-Tirmidhī, this is Ḥadīth Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ. See al-Mundhirī, *al-Targhīb wa al-tarhīb*, Dār al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, undated, Vol. IV, p. 5. Al-Jāḥiẓ also quoted the same Ḥadīth in his al-Bayān. See *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 194.

⁵⁶² When I looked this Ḥadīth up I discovered that only in *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr* by al-Suyūṭī contains this similar reported Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: (الصمت أرفع العبادۃ). See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, Vol. II, p. 117.

3.6 *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ‘alā al-ṣamt* (Superiority of Speech to Silence)

3.6.1 The text of the *Risāla*:

In ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection, the *risāla* begins with the heading “*Faṣl min ṣadr risālatih fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ‘alā al-ṣamt*” and it does contain eight pages. ‘Uyūn al-Sūd divided it into five divisions in which every division begins with “*Faṣl minhā*” and only the fourth division starts with “*Faṣl minhā fī ṣifāt man yaqdar ‘alā al-ibāna*”. The text of this *risāla* can be found also in Hārūn’s edition. This study will rely the translation of the *risāla* on the Colville’s translation entitle “Why speech is superiority to silence”.⁵⁶³

3.6.2 The Addressee of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāhīz did not declare the addressee of this *risāla*. He only replies to someone who has written a *risāla* on the virtue of silence when he says: “I have read your *kitāb* in which you outlined the merits of silence and summarised its more obvious appeal”.⁵⁶⁴ We find that the author mentions the context of his friend’s book on the superiority of silent. His friend claimed that silence more worthy than speech in many situations, even if what is said should be true. In addition, the tongue is nothing more than a channel for indecency that gets its owner into trouble, etc.

⁵⁶³ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 145-150.

⁵⁶⁴ See al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ‘alā al-ṣamt*, in ‘Rasā’il al-Jāhīz’, Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 229; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol IV, p. 177.

3.6.3 Outline of the *Risāla*:

Before going further discussion onto the main content of the *risāla*, this is the brief outline of the structure of the *risāla*:

1. Al-Jāḥiẓ replies to someone who has written an essay on the virtue of silence.
2. Al-Jāḥiẓ's methodology in writing the *risāla*.
3. He then proclaims the virtues of speech.
4. The story of Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham).
5. The story of Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) with the High Priest of Egypt's.
6. The eloquence of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).
7. The virtue of *ʿIlm al-kalām* (theology).

3.6.4 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

At the beginning of the *risāla*, the author tells us that someone has written an essay on the virtues of the silence. We find him also recapitulating his opponent's arguments, for instance, he says: "You declared that you found silence more worthy than speech in most situations, even if what is said should be true. The tongue, you claimed, is nothing more than a conduit for indecency that gets its owner into trouble. You describe

the silent men as a thinker. You quoted the Emperor of Persia, Anūshirwān,⁵⁶⁵ in support of your arguments; you referred to the verses of poets and so on”.⁵⁶⁶

Al-Jāhiz tells us also that he read all that his addressee had written on the subject, and he also studied it with thoroughness and care. Afterwards, he mentions his position concerning the respond to that essay: “I shall make my own position clear with convincing arguments and illustration, to be the best of my ability and in a way that shall be impossible to repute. There is no power but God’s. Him I beseech for help, in Him I place my trust and to him I turn in repentance”.⁵⁶⁷ From this point of view, this is very clear for us that the writing of al-Jāhiz in some extant has meaning of the Islamic value.

3.6.4.1 Evidence of the virtue of speech:

First of all he admits that he personally found the virtues of speech are obviously amazing. For instance, you can only praise God and thank to Him through speech, you can only express your wants and needs through speech, and there are many other arguments which according to al-Jāhiz can be easily found through his reasoning and experience.

⁵⁶⁵ Anūshirwān b. Qubādh b. Fairūz, the Emperor of Persia, and he was among the Sasanid ruler who was in reign from 531 A.D. to 579 A.D. See al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. I, pp. 305-311; *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Kistrā, Vol. V, pp. 184-185.

⁵⁶⁶ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-nuṭq ‘alā al-ṣamt*, in ‘Rasā’il al-Jāhiz’, Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 229; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol IV, p. 177.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 230; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 178.

On the other hand he states that there is no evidence for the superiority of silence to speech. In conjunction with the evidences of superiority of silence to speech, we find that al-Jāhiz used his brilliant skill of reasoning to repute his addressee. For example, he writes: “you can describe silence with speech but you cannot describe speech with silence. Were silence superior, mankind would have no recognisable primacy over the rest of creation. There would be no fundamental distinction between man and beast, despite the diversity of their essence, natures, physical characteristic and lifestyles”.⁵⁶⁸

Al-Jāhiz then claims that the examples of the superiority of speech to silence are too many either from the Qur’ānic verses, prophetic traditions, chronicles, narratives, and speeches of the great orators, etc. For example, al-Jāhiz constructs more evidence from Islamic history concerning the superiority of speech to silence particularly from the story of the prophets such as the story of the prophet Ibrāhīm’s (p.b.u.h.) demolition of the idols, the story of the Prophet Yūsuf (p.b.u.h.) with the word of the High Priest of Egypt, and the Prophet Muhammad’s (p.b.u.h.) eloquence. And then he writes: “the foregoing has provided the evidence to refute your argument and undermine your stance. God sent His prophets to spread the word and warn the nations. He commanded them to proclaim the message not with silence but with speech. No message ever held substance, no argument ever carried conviction and no reason was ever made clear except by means of speech”.⁵⁶⁹ This is because, according to al-Jāhiz, no message ever held substance, no argument ever carried conviction and no reason was ever made clear except by means of speech.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 231; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 179.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 239; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 183.

3.6.4.2 The virtue of *‘ilm al-Kalām* (Theology)

As a Mu‘tazila’s scholar, the author concludes the *risāla* with the discussion on the virtue of *‘ilm al-kalām* (theology). He writes “what could possibly be more highly esteemed, more consummately good and more manifestly beneficial to mankind than something which, if it did not exist, neither God’s divinity nor the testament of the prophets could be affirmed and, without which proof could not be distinguished from sophistry or the genuine distinguished from the counterfeit masquerading as authentic?”⁵⁷⁰

He then records two reasons why *‘ilm al-kalām* is superior to other sciences. Firstly, he says that through *‘ilm al-kalām* do we differentiate consensus from dissent, error from innovation and the aberrant from customary practise. Secondly, it is the means of learning the facts about the religious faiths and of rationally affirming the existence of the divinity and authenticity of the revelation. It is the testing ground of justice and of tyranny, compulsion and free will.

3.6.5 Analysis of the use of the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth:

It is very clear from the content of the *risāla* that al-Jāhīz used verses and stories from the Qur’ān to strengthen his idea about the virtue of speech to the silence. For instance, he says: “I have never known that silence to be praised in any situation where

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 239; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 184.

speech would not be praised more. Speech is the medium of choice for its clarity, expressiveness and precision of meaning".⁵⁷¹ Al-Jāhiz then provides us an example for that point of view particularly related to the story of the Prophet Ibrāhīm's demolition of the idols which has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. He then quotes this verse from Sūra al-Anbiyā' when the Qur'ān said (21:62-63):

﴿ قالوا أنت فعلت هذا بآلهتنا يا إبراهيم ، قال بل فعله كبيرهم هذا فاسألوهم إن كانوا ينطقون ﴾

"They said: "Are you the one who has done this to our gods, O Abraham?". (Abraham) said: "Nay, this one, the biggest of them (idols) did it. Ask them, if they can speak!"".

Afterwards, al-Jāhiz comments on that verse: "Prophet Ibrāhīm save his life with these words, which were more praiseworthy than the silence of another would have been in a similar situation because, had he remained silent when questioned, it would have been a profaning of his insight and knowledge. He spoke because he knew that to speak was the best course of action. He knew too, that whoever is able to speak effectively, can also keep silent effectively, but whoever keeps silent effectively may not be able to speak so effectively".⁵⁷²

In addition, al-Jāhiz states that speech is a means of affirming virtue and guide to knowledge of eminent men, because, without it, it would be impossible to distinguish the essential from the inessential in most situations. Related to this statement, the author offers the story of Prophet Yūsuf with the High Priest of Egypt. Here, he quotes this Qur'ānic verse in which the Qur'ān praised Prophet Yūsuf in Sūra Yūsuf (12:54):

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 232; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 184.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 234; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 180.

﴿إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ﴾

“Verily, this day, you are with us high in rank and full trusted”.

Al-Jāhiz then adds: “If Yūsuf had not demonstrated his superiority through language with his attractive personal qualities, the High Priest would have remained unaware of his righteousness and Yūsuf would not have earned a place as his trusted confident. His standing with the High Priest would have remained simply that one man among many others. However, Yūsuf words raised his rank and status, made known his integrity and endeared him to the High Priest”.⁵⁷³

Speech is a means of distinguishing between man and beast and of appreciating the superiority of mankind to all other creatures. Al-Jāhiz quotes this verse from Sūra al-Isrā’ (17:70):

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ﴾

“And indeed We have honoured the children Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea...”

The author states that God honoured man with speech and carried him forward with the ability to plan. Therefore, according to al-Jāhiz, without speech, no one would deserve blessing or perfume the duty of giving thanks to God. Gratitude is commonly expressed through language; no other way is known. Because of that, al-Jāhiz’s claimed that the Qur’ān said (14:7): ﴿لَنْ نَشْكُرَكَ لَآزِيدُنَا﴾ which mean: “If you give thanks (by

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 234; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 180.

accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings),....”, thus making the articulation of praise the means of deserving increase and to praise Him is a key to prosperity.⁵⁷⁴

The Arabs, as was described by al-Jāhīz, were famous by their eloquence and elegance of expression. It was for this reason that the greatest of God’s prophet i.e. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) from an Arab, his language was Arabic and the Qur’ān also was in Arabic. To support his argument, al-Jāhīz quotes this verse from Sūra al-Shu‘arā’ (26:195): ﴿بَلْسَانَ عَرَبِيٍّ مَبِينٍ﴾ which mean: “In the plain Arabic language”. This is a clear evidence for the eloquence of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

Al-Jāhīz also states that God has only sent His prophets to mankind except whose moral superiority within their own communities was paralleled by the superiority of their eloquence. For instance, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was the most eloquent, expressive and articulate of the Arabs and all Arab society was represented in his person. This is because; he was born into the tribe of Hāshim and, on his mother side, came from the Banū Zahra. In addition, he was nursed by the tribe of Sa‘d b. Bakr and grew up among Quraysh. Then, he married into the tribe of Asad b. ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā and, when he immigrated to Medina, he was taken in by Banū ‘Amr (i.e. the clans of Aws and Khazraj).⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 236; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 181.

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Jāhīz has contributed also some further information on the eloquent of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). See for instance in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. II, p. 31.

After this statement, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes the Ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as saying:⁵⁷⁶

(أنا أفصح العرب بيد أني من قريش ، ونشأت في بني سعد بن بكر)

“I am the most eloquent of the Arabs, because I come from Qurays and was raised among the Banū Sa‘d b. Bakr”.

We find that the above Ḥadīth is the only one has been quoted by the author in this *risāla*. From this point, al-Jāḥiẓ concludes: “Of all the tribes mentioned, Quraysh alone would have been enough, for they are the most eloquent, articulate, sharp-tongued and quick-witted of all and the tribes’ most powerful linguistic focus”. After a long explanation on the origin of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), finally, al-Jāḥiẓ claims that he shall draw a line here for fear of going on too long.⁵⁷⁷

3.6.6 The language of the *Risāla*:

The use of language of the *risāla* clearly is in debate style. From the first line of the *risāla*, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ mentions the words *Fadīla* (The Virtue) which mean that he will explain to his addressee the virtue of something. In addition, we find in the next paragraph, the words such as (ذكرت), (زعمت), and (سميت), etc. which indicates that the author assumed his addressee is his opponent in this discussion. For example, here he quotes what his addressee has said:

⁵⁷⁶ Collected by āl-Ṣūyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḡhīr*, Vol. I, p. 411, with different wording. *Ḥadīth Daf‘īf*. See also, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, (بيد). Cf. The original wording for this Ḥadīth is as follows:

(أنا النبي لا كذب ، أنا ابن عبد المطلب ، أنا أعرب العرب ، ولدتني قريش ، ونشأت في بني سعد بن بكر ، فأتيتني اللحن)

⁵⁷⁷ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-muta‘alā al-ṣamt*, in ‘Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ’, Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 238; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol IV, p. 183.

- وذكرت أنك وجدت الصمت أفضل من الكلام في مواطن كثيرة وإن كان صوابا.

“You declared that you found silence more worthy than speech in most situations, even if what is said should be true”.

- وزعمت أن اللسان من مسالك الخناء الجالي على صاحبه البلا.

“You claimed that the tongue is nothing more than a conduit for indecency that gets its owner into trouble”.

- وسميت الصامت حليما والساكت لبيبا.

“You describe the silent man as a thinker”.

Later on, al-Jāhiz says: “I have read all that you have written on the subject [the virtue of silence to the speech], everything you have summarised, itemised, explained at great length. I have subjected it to scientific scrutiny and studied it with diligence and care”. However, he claims: “And what have I found? The words of a man bewitched by his own opinions...”⁵⁷⁸

The used of use of *Du'ā' al-mukātabat* also can be seen in five occasions of the *risāla* such as (حفظك الله) , (أسعدك الله) and (أبقاك الله) . The first one was used at the beginning of the *risāla* before the author goes for further explanation on the subject of speech is superior to silence. For instance, al-Jāhiz writes:

(وأتيت – حفظك الله – على جميع ما ذكرت من ذلك ، ووصفت ولخصت)

The use of this kind of expression indicates that the author has his personal impression to his addressee.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 230; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 177.

3.7 *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl* (In Earnest and Jest):

3.7.1 Text and title of the *Risāla*:

In the printed edition, the *risāla* consists of forty-seven consecutive pages with no divisions other than paragraphs either in Hārūn's edition or 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition; however in the latter, it consists of thirty-one pages only.⁵⁷⁹ The *risāla* is now available in English which has been translated by Hutchins⁵⁸⁰ and Colville.⁵⁸¹ Pellat also had translated some portion of the *risāla* in his book on the life and work of al-Jāḥiẓ under the heading "Jest and earnest".⁵⁸² So, our reference for analysis of the content of this *risāla* would base on Hārūn's collection and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection particularly for Arabic text, and Hutchins's and Colville's book for English translation.

By referring to Yāqūt's and Ḥājji Khalīfa's list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works, we find that both scholars claimed that the title of the *risāla* is *al-Muzāḥ wa al-jidd*.⁵⁸³ However, most scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ in modern times such as al-Ḥājirī, Pellat and Abū Milḥim agreed that the correct reading is *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷⁹ The text of the *risāla* can be found in two locations in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition with varying length. See, for example in Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 231-278 & Vol. IV, pp. 83-94; and in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 165-196 & Vol. IV, pp. 59-66.

⁵⁸⁰ Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 93-122.

⁵⁸¹ Colville, *Gravity and Mirth*, pp. 231-255.

⁵⁸² Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp 207-216.

⁵⁸³ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 108; Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, Vol. V, pp. 802-803.

⁵⁸⁴ See al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayā'uh wa āthā'uh*, p. 267; Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, p.327; Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 51; Pellat, *Gāḥiẓiana* III, p. 156.

3.7.2 The Addressee and the date of composition:

Hārūn and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd in their editorial remarks states that the *risāla* was composed by al-Jāḥiẓ to his friend, Ibn al-Zayyāt.⁵⁸⁵ This is because al-Jāḥiẓ himself states clearly the name of his addressee i.e. Ibn al-Zayyāt, the vizier of the caliph al-Mutawakkil. On the other hand, the date of the composition of the *risāla* can not be determined precisely. Colville, for instance, suggests that it may have been composed towards the end of the author’s life.⁵⁸⁶

However, by referring to the text of the *risāla*, we can suggest the nearest date of the composition. For example, from internal evidence, this *risāla* can be dated to the period of the Caliph al-Mu‘taṣim when the author mentioned the event of the death of the Caliph, which located in the month of Rabī‘ al-Awwal 227 A.H.⁵⁸⁷ This indicates that the *risāla* was written later than this event. In addition, we find another sign which al-Jāḥiẓ mentions it in this *risāla* concerning his long period of relationship with Ibn al-Zayyāt. For instance, he says: “How is it that after you honoured me when I was young you now wish to treat me with hatred”.⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, some scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ suggest that the *risāla* has been written between the year 229 A.H. and the year 231 A.H.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁵ See Hārūn and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd in their editorial remarks to the *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 229; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 163.

⁵⁸⁶ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 231.

⁵⁸⁷ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Mu‘taṣim, Vol. VII, p. 776.

⁵⁸⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 272; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 191.

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātih wa āihāruh*, p. 268.

3.7.3 Outline of the *Risāla*:

Let us now turn from the background of the *risāla* to the work itself which according to Colville, bearing some similarity to the *Risāla al-tarbī^c wa al-tadwīr*.⁵⁹⁰ Pellat states that the *risāla* describes the author's approach rather than the subject-matter.⁵⁹¹ Elsewhere, he claims again that in this *risāla*, the author reproaches Ibn al-Zayyāt with punishing him unduly severely for some unspecified misbehaviour on his part.⁵⁹² However, before going onto further discussion; let us break down the content of the *risāla* into these constituent elements:

1. Introduction.
2. Al-Jāḥiẓ apologise to his addressee.
3. The punishment must be proportional to the offence.
4. Some observation about the bonds of friendship.
5. Revert to the cause of quarrel.
6. Warns Ibn al-Zayyāt against losing his temper.
7. Revert to the cause of quarrel.
8. Replying to an oblique criticism of himself by his patron.
9. Proceed to inquire into the best way of preserving documents.
10. Examines the disadvantages of parchment.
11. Digress on meaning and thing meant.

⁵⁹⁰ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 231. See for detail discussion of the *Risāla al-tarbī^c wa al-tadwīr* in chapter seven of this thesis.

⁵⁹¹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 207.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 207.

12. Revert to the comparison of Ibn al-Zayyāt and Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h.), asking Ibn al-Zayyāt forgiveness and quoting historical examples of sustained punishment.
13. Reminding Ibn al-Zayyāt that they were once neighbours and both of them are the Mu^otazila's followers.
14. Drawing a humorous comparison between them (al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn al-Zayyāt).
15. Conclusion - Reverts to the subject of his punishment.

3.7.4 Analysis of the main issues in the *Risāla*:

In this *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ makes a plea for forgiveness to his addressee. He complains of old age and speaks of career dedicated to his patron's service. The author also seeks earnestly to humour his patron with analysis of anger, punishment, bookbinding and the relationship of word to the meaning. Therefore, in the first instance, al-Jāḥiẓ complains about the treatment he received from his correspondent (Ibn al-Zayyāt), in return for which he proceeds to subject him to a sustained and withering attack. However, we find that the most important issue in this *risāla* is the subject of anger which can be seen clearly in the following paragraphs.

3.7.4.1 The relationship between the author and his addressee:

In his introduction, the author tells us about the two reasons in which Ibn al-Zayyāt against him. Firstly, because he addressed his work entitled *al-Zarʿ wa al-nakhl* to Ibrāhīm b. al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī which he received from him five thousand *dinars*. Secondly, it is reported that al-Jāhīz refused to pay *al-Itāwa* (land tax)⁵⁹³ to the authority. However, al-Jāhīz asserts that was not fair to punish him by these two small matters. For instance, he comments on this issue: “One who punishes something small as though big, a slip as though persistent, a mistake as though intentional. One who leaves behind all measures and is at variance with the balanced scale is the most deserving and fit for extreme punishment”.⁵⁹⁴ And he adds: “An indication of the intensity of your fury and of your boiling chest is the strength of your motion, the delay in you’re calming down, the remoteness of an end to your plotting”.⁵⁹⁵ As a result, al-Jāhīz come across that Ibn al-Zayyāt was angry with him.

From this point of view, he then reverts to discuss the anger which he describes it as follows: “The reign of anger is tyrannical, the judgement of wrath unjust. The weaker the resolve is to act freely, the weaker is prudence. Fury is a characteristic of Satan”.⁵⁹⁶ Furthermore, al-Jāhīz urges his addressee to distinguish between anger to different types of people. He says: “Do not expose yourself to the enmity of intelligent narrators, the

⁵⁹³ The meaning of this term is similar to *al-Kharāj* (Land tax). It comes from the root (أ ت و). See, Lane, *Arabic – English Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 14.

⁵⁹⁴ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī al-jidd wa al-hazl*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 232; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 166.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 232; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 166.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 234; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 167.

rancour of those who perpetuate the memory of shortcomings, the tongue of those known for truthfulness, directness, and lack of idle talk and bias, so long as you find an escape from that and a broad path away from it”.⁵⁹⁷

In the next paragraph, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ records some of Ibn al-Zayyāt criticisms towards him. Firstly, Ibn al-Zayyāt complained about some works of al-Jāḥiẓ which were being in dispersed and disordered and he compared them with the process of compiling the Qur’ān. However, al-Jāḥiẓ admits that compiling all of his works is almost impossible, and sometimes most of it was lost. Secondly, Ibn al-Zayyāt complained about the type of papers which al-Jāḥiẓ used for his work. Finally, he criticised about al-Jāḥiẓ’s family life. Ibn al-Zayyāt claimed that al-Jāḥiẓ did not having a child to keep alive his memory and to take possession of his estate. Concerning all this criticism, al-Jāḥiẓ writes: “What difference would it make to you if I had a little son, especially when my position with you is not that of person with an income to be taken, assistance that would matter, benevolence worth eyeing, or an ability to provide anticipated delight”.⁵⁹⁸ After all, al-Jāḥiẓ claims that he does not know why his addressee loves to abuse him and to celebrate his estate and praise his name. Because according to him, this conduct, indeed, combines personal charm, delicacy of procedure, and a distant goal. As a result of this situation, al-Jāḥiẓ also informs us that there was a conspiracy in which Ibn al-Zayyāt was planning to kill him. So, in this case, al-Jāḥiẓ asks his addressee, “If you kill me, so with whom will you live?”⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 236; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 168.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 254; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 179.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 258; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 182.

3.7.4.2 Some of Mu'tazilite doctrines:

As usual al-Jāhīz digresses in his writing. It is interesting to note that the digression in this *risāla* is into the meaning and things meant. Concerning this matter, the author relates in his digression on the story of the creation of Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h). He writes: "Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h) himself stumbled and went astray, disobeyed his Lord... And yet God created him with His hand, lodged him in His paradise, made His angels to bow down before him... For it was impossible for God to have taught him a name without teaching him its meaning, or to have taught him a meaning without creating for him the thing meant by it".⁶⁰⁰ This idea is in conformity with his Mu'tazilite teaching. Therefore, he maintains that: "A term is not a word unless it is provided with a meaning. A might have no word for it, but no word should be without a meaning".⁶⁰¹

Later on we shall see that al-Jāhīz departs once again to his main topic especially about his relationship with Ibn al-Zayyāt. This time, he compares Ibn al-Zayyat, his correspondent to Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h.), who asked forgiveness from God. In this case, he also asks forgiveness from Ibn Zayyāt. He also reminds that they were once neighbours and both of them are among the Mu'tazila followers. Therefore, the author concludes it with this statement: "I have counted up all the causes for mutual hostility and summed up all the reasons for hatred, except the reason of Satan's enmity to man".⁶⁰² He then continues: "Among the causes of enmity are the rivalry of neighbours and relatives

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 262; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 184.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 263; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 185.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 264; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 186.

and the mutual envy of person of similar craft”.⁶⁰³ Afterwards, he asks for a pardon and forgiveness by saying that it is amazing that Ibn al-Zayyāt are annoyed at the length of his request for pardon and forgiveness. In this case, the author compares with some animals manners which according to him have a better developed senses and a more heightened sensitivity toward their enemy.

It is remarkable to mention here that al-Jāhīz described his relationship with Ibn al-Zayyāt like the relation between parts of the body and its soul. For instance, he says: “The section of the soul and members of the body in spite of the multiplicity of their numbers, the difference of their mixtures ... become one soul and one body through harmony of the thoughts”.⁶⁰⁴ Afterwards he again stresses on his addressee, he says: “If your friend is separated from you, part of you has been separated. When your companion falls ill, then half of you are ill. When part of them goes all goes. Then my death is the death of my friend, my life is my friend’s life. So do not remove him from your heart to the distance his body is from yours”.⁶⁰⁵

3.7.4.3 Final instruction:

Finally, al-Jāhīz addresses his correspondent that he has already pointed out to him people who unite the traits in which he can find continuing pleasure and the fulfilment of his passion. He then concludes the *risāla* with his final advice to his addressee particularly in the relation with friends and enemies. Firstly, be careful from

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 264; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 186.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 270; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 190.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 271; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 191.

those people who have snatched from the treasury of the caliphate, secondly, separate them, and finally, carry out the judgment of the Book and the Sunna over them. Because according to the author, it will untie the bond of their spirits, knot by knot and your reward will be great and the most important thing is you will be remembered.⁶⁰⁶ In addition, you will serve the caliph and endear him to the people. Then you will have done well through administering a beating to those deserving it and will have relieved those not deserving from it. From this final conclusion, we find that it denotes that al-Jāhīz denied all criticism made by his addressee.

3.7.5 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth:

The Qur'ān was only used in two occasions in the *risāla*. Firstly, when the author digresses his writing to describe about the relation between the meaning and thing meant especially when he speak about the story of Prophet Ādam (p.b.u.h). Here, he quoted the Qur'ānic verse from Ṣūra al-Baqara (2:31):

﴿وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا﴾

“And He taught Ādam all the names of everything”.

Al-Jāhīz then comments on his addressee concerning this verse as follows: “By saying that God taught Ādam all the words of speech together with their meanings, we mean that He did so only to the extent which necessity required. Remember that Ādam is

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 278; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, pp. 195-196.

like a tree and you are but the fruit, he is of the heaven and you are of the earth, he is the sturdy trunk and you are a flimsy branch”.⁶⁰⁷

The other verse was quoted when al-Jāḥiẓ expresses his view concerning his relationship with his addressee. Here, he quoted the Qur’ānic verse as follows (38:82):

﴿فبعزتك لأغوينهم أجمعين﴾

“By Your Might, then I will surely mislead them all”.

Al-Jāḥiẓ then comments on the attitude of his addressee: “So take up with Satan if you are angry at God or with your peers, if you are seeking a cure”.⁶⁰⁸

On the other hand, there are only one Ḥadīth can be found in the *risāla*. For instance, it is reported that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said:⁶⁰⁹

(رحم الله امرأ قال خيرا فغنم أو سكت فسلم)

“God bless the man who speaks well and profit from it, as well as the one who plays safe and holds his tongue”.

In conjunction with the meaning of the Ḥadīth, al-Jāḥiẓ then added: “He made security alone the reward of silence but security and profit the reward of speech; a man can be secure and not profit but he cannot profit unless he is secure”.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 262; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 185.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 268; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 188.

⁶⁰⁹ Collected by al-Suyūṭī in: *al-Jāmi‘ al-Saghīr*, No. 4425, 4426, 4427, Vol. II, p. 11. This Ḥadīth also has been quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ in his *al-Bayān*. See *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 168.

⁶¹⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla ft al-jidd wa al-hazl*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 259; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 182.

3.7.6 The Language of the *Risāla*:

The author begins the *risāla* with apologise to his addressee by saying (جعلت) “I would ransom you with my own life”. This special word indicates that al-Jāhiz, as the author of the *risāla* has his own view towards his addressee. It is interesting to note here that such word has been used by the author more than eight times in the *risāla*.⁶¹¹

In addition, the use of oath style can be found scattered in the text particularly when the author stresses on the relationship with his addressee. The author always reminds his addressee by saying such as (هذا والله), (لا والله), (والله) and (هذا والله).

For instance, he says:

(والله لقد كنت أكره لك سرف الرضا مخافة جواذبه إلى سرف الهوى)

“By God, I would have hated for you an excess of pleasure for fear it would lead to an excess of passion”.

In another occasion, he says again:

(لا والله إن تعرف على ظهرها موضعا للسر، ولا مكانا للشكوى، ولا روحا تأنس بها، ولا

تسكن إليها)

“No, by God, you will not find on the face of the earth room for a secret or space for a compliant, nor a spirit with whom you can feel at home or a soul with whom you are comfortable”.

⁶¹¹ See for example, Vol. I, pp. 231, 233, 234, 236, 250, 252, 255 & 264 in Hārūn’s edition and Vol. I, pp. 165, 167, 168, 177, 178, 180, 180 & 186 in ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition.

Moreover, the usage of other *Du'ā' al-mukātabāt* as usual can be found scattered in the *risālah* such as (أبقاك الله), (أعزك الله), and (عافاك الله), etc. Al-Jāhiz used also the word such as (معاذ الله) and (سبحان الله) to express his view towards his addressee.

For example he said:

ومعاذ الله أن أقول لك كما قال الحسن لذلك الظالم المعتدي، والمصمم القاسي، ولكنني أقول:
إعلم أنك تضرب من قد جعلك من قتله في حل.

This indicates that al-Jāhiz still respect his addressee and hope their relationship will continue in the future.

Finally, it is remarkable to say that the use of poetry appeared only once in this *risālah*. The author quotes only one *bayt* by al-Qutāmī who died in 130 A.H. concerning the patient man. Al-Jāhiz writes: “Mistaken the poet who said: ⁶¹²

قد يدرك المتأني بعض حاجاته وقد يكون مع المستعجل الزلل

He then comments on that *bayt* as follows: “The patient man is likely to get what he needs and the hasty is likely to fail”.⁶¹³ Al-Jāhiz claims that the poet would have been closer to expressing the truth.

⁶¹²*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 242; *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 172. The meaning of the *bayt* is: “The patient man, at times, gets what he needs; the hasty sometimes slips”.

⁶¹³*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 242; see also “Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 172.

3.8 *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr* (True and assumed nobility: An attack on pride)

3.8.1 The text of the *Risāla*:

This is the final *risāla* that has been chosen for the study in this section. However, according to Pellat, only an excerpt of it has survived.⁶¹⁴ In Hārūn's printed edition, the text of *risāla* consists of twenty pages, whilst in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition; it is in fifteen pages only and it was divided into nine divisions. The first division entitled "*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*" and followed by the other eight divisions with the heading "*Faṣl minhu*".

Pellat in his collection of translated portion of al-Jāḥiẓ's work also has published some five pages selected from various places of the *risāla* under the heading "*True and assumed nobility; an attack on pride*".⁶¹⁵ The study of this *risāla* will be base on Pellat's translation of selected portion of the *risāla*.

3.8.2 The Addressee of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ did not declare the addressee of this *risāla*. We know that he only replies to someone who has written a *risāla* on the subject of pride and nobility as he mentioned in the introduction of the *risāla*.

⁶¹⁴ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 25 & 231.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-5.

3.8.3 Outline of the *Risāla*:

The body of the *risāla* can be divided into these elements:

1. The author tells his correspondent that he has already dealt with the main topic.
2. Then he tackles the subject of pride and nobility.
3. Define nobility and quotes the example.
4. Note on Divine pride.
5. Note on pardonable pride.
6. Note on pride and snobbishness.
7. The pride of *Iblīs*.
8. Define pride.
9. Digress to praise the Banū Hāshim.
10. Reverts to the subject of *ḥilm* (generosity).⁶¹⁶
11. Then he goes on to the qualities of leadership.

3.8.4 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

The introduction of the *risāla* was a brief explanation from the author to remind his addressee that he has already dealt with the main topic of pride and nobility. He

⁶¹⁶ There are many discussions about this term. Most of the lexicographers and scholars are agreed that the basic element of *ḥilm* is to be self mastery, dignity, detachment and it also connotes the qualities associated with patience, leniency, tolerance, understanding or even gentleness. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 202; Baalbakki, *al-Mawrid-Modern Arabic-English Dictionary*, p. 308; *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Ḥilm*, Vol. III, p. 390-392.

expresses it with: “I have already read and understand your work on the subject of pride and nobility. I found that everybody agreed that pride and nobility is blameworthy”.⁶¹⁷

3.8.4.1 The definition of nobility:

The author defines nobility is passing which consists above all of ‘humbling oneself before one inferiors, behaving justly towards one’s equals, and asserting oneself with one’s superior’. For instance he asserts: “If nobility consisted simply of making oneself out to be noble, and honour were earned by puffing oneself up, eschewing regrets and apologise and disdaining really worthy men, then all those who are still less retiring, more utterly immodest and more conceited, albeit with less reason, would have a greater claim to nobility, and their conduct would be more pardonable”.⁶¹⁸

After all, he adds: “Nobility is not like luck: a man may quite well have the best of fortune through on his deserts he should have the worst, but a man fitted for insignificance will never be noble”.⁶¹⁹ He says again: “Remember that unless you plan with nobility as your aim, hammer out the tools for it, approach it from the right direction and do your duty by it, you will be hated despite your efforts and detested for your pains. A man who makes himself open to insults and does not mind being blamed is dead rather

⁶¹⁷ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-mīl wa al-tanabbul*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 169; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 129.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 169; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 129.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 171; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 130.

than alive, a dog rather than a human being”.⁶²⁰ Related to this definition, the author quotes the example of al-Ahnaf b. Qays.⁶²¹

3.8.4.2 The definition of pride:

Pride is of two kinds, open and secret. Secret pride is the name of feeling of superiority. When it is expressed in actions, it is called open pride. Feeling of superiority in mind is called self conceit (*kibr*). When it is expressed in actions, it is called pride (*takabbar*). So, self conceit is the root of pride.⁶²²

According to al-Jāhiz, pride is a character trait such that nothing short of *hilm* is needed to tolerate it, and the patience of job to endure the proud. To cease from punishing them is a mark of gentleness, and to be kindly to them true glory; generosity is needed to ignore them, and dumbness to leave off from blaming them.

From his point of view “Pride is worse than brutality, which is the worst of sin, and modesty is better than clemency, which is the best of good deeds. Pride is a defect in

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 172; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 132.

⁶²¹ His real name is Abū Baḥr Sakhr b. Qays b. Mu‘āwiya al-Tamīmī al-Sa‘dī. He was born before Islam. His *laqab* (cognomen) al-Ahnaf derives from his feet were misshapen and he also has other abnormalities. He was famous as a spokesman and leader of the Tamīmites, who during the first century of *hijra* formed the intellectual, religious and political elite of the city of Basra. He was the legend of the *Hilm* within the Arabs society. See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. al-Ahnaf b. Qays, Vol. I, p. 303-304. For more detail of the description of his physical appearance, see al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. I, p. 56.

⁶²² See al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. III, 314-315. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* defines pride as a self-regarding passion or sentiment of self-love; it is associated with several related qualities of selfish disposition such as arrogance, conceit, vanity, and egotism. See, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. Pride, Vol. X, p. 275.

which all the elements of evil are put together, and modesty a quality in which all the elements of good are combined".⁶²³

3.8.4.3 The Divine pride:

The author says that pride belongs not to the creature but only to the creator (Allah); and the only reason that God rebukes man for his pride is that he oversteps the mark, goes too far, and usurps his Lord's prerogatives.

3.8.4.4 Pardonable pride:

Though pride is ugly in all men, however, according to the author, it is pardonable and commendable in three cases in human being. Firstly, in uncouth Bedouin, savage when thwarted and neither a town-dweller nor a peasant because based on their natural Bedouin arrogance. Secondly, pride may be the outcome of vengefulness, hostility, rivalry and hatred. Finally, if it is shown only towards rulers, tyrants, for instance, Pharaohs and consorts.⁶²⁴ Then he points out that the person his correspondent refers to falls into none of these categories, for his behaviours are contrary to the definition of nobility given above. Because according to him, absence of nobility leads to envy, falsehood, backbiting and impiety.

⁶²³ al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-mubl wa al-tanabbul*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. IV, p. 181; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 137.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 176; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 134.

3.8.4.5 The pride of *Iblīs*:

The author declares that the first misdeed committed in heaven or on earth was the sin of pride. For instance, the author claims that it was pride prevented *Iblīs* bowing down [before *Ādam*], persuaded him of uselessness of friendship and the value of wrath, made disobedience pleasant and loneliness and isolation attractive to him, made the curse of the Lord seem light to him and eternal punishment bearable, promised him victory and gave him hope of salvation, put specious arguments into his mind and made lying words seem fair to him, led him to eschew the company of the angels, united in him all qualities and combined in him all the marks of wickedness, for he was jealous.⁶²⁵

3.8.4.6 Other issues within the *Risāla*:

The author takes the opportunity in passing to praise people of the Banū Hāshim, who are according to him not proud. Then the author quotes Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’,⁶²⁶ who omits pride from his list of the failing that disqualify from holding office: for it can be counterbalanced by *ḥilm*. He refers also in passing to military commanders who are averse to seeking advice, and then reverts to the subject of *ḥilm*. He points out those qualities that go unrecognised when a man is of lowly station are acknowledged or even exaggerated when he attains high office.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 179; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 136.

⁶²⁶ He was a founder of the grammatical school of Basra and died in 154/770. He was also famous as a celebrated reader of al-Qur’ān. His place among Arab lexicographers seems to have been very important, since he is said that to have been the master of al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhidī. See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’, Vol. I, p. 106.

⁶²⁷ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-nuḥl wa al-tanabbul*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 183; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 139.

The *risāla* end with the discussion on the qualities of leadership that make man loved, and we find that the author states that the Arabs needed tribal chiefs to defend them because they were too remote from the central authority.⁶²⁸

3.8.5 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth:

The use of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth is very limited in this *risāla*. There are only three Qur'ānic verses and one Ḥadīth has been quoted by the author. The Qur'ānic verse was used when the author records some of his opponent's views concerning some God's name such *al-Mutakabbir* and *al-Jabbār*. For instance, he writes in the centre of his discussion: "they might say: "If *mutakabbir* (haughty) were very bad and *mutakabbir* (proud) blameworthy, God would not have so described Himself, or have used these two adjectives in a favourable sense in the Qur'ān i.e. when God says in the Qur'ān (59:23) as follows ﴿ الجبار المتكبر ﴾ "...the Compeller, the Supreme" and He said again in another occasion (59:24): ﴿ له الأسماء الحسنى ﴾ "...To Him belong the Best Names. ...".⁶²⁹

Now notice this brilliant answer from the author to that question, he writes: "Man, who is created to be subject to the divine will, frail and downtrodden, could only be humble and may only be modest. How could pride be an attribute of a being that is capable of being defeated by hunger and shows him unjust when sated? What possible

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 187-188; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, pp. 142-143.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 172; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 133.

connection is there between pride and the eating, drinking, urinating, defecating human being? What right has a being whom weariness exhausts and rest refreshes to be proud and haughty?"⁶³⁰

Later, the author quotes another Qur'ānic verse when he declares that the first misdeed committed in heaven or on earth was the sin of pride. Here, he quotes this verse from Sūra al-A'rāf (7:13):

﴿ مَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَّكِبَ فِيهَا ﴾

“It is not for you to be arrogant here”.

Finally, when he claimed that the pride belongs not to the creature but only to the creator (Allah); the author quotes this Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was reported as saying:⁶³¹

(العظمة رداء الله ، فمن نازعه رداءه قصمه)

“Greatness is God's mantle, and he who contends with Him for it tears it to shreds”.

The above Ḥadīth is the only quotation made by the author to support his argument concerning the subject matter, however the Islamic value of this *risāla* still can be found in its content as has been shown above. In addition, it is interesting to note here

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 172; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 133.

⁶³¹ This Ḥadīth Qudsī was reported by Ibn Māja and it can be found in al-Mundhirī, *al-Targhīb wa al-tarhīb*, Vol. IV, p. 16, with different wording. Cf. The original wording is as follows:

(يقول الله جل وعلا : الكبرياء رداي والعظمة لزي فمن نازعني واحدا منهما ألقته في النار) .

that the author had quoted only one *bayt* of poem by al-Farazdaq⁶³² in this *risāla*, however; on the other hand, there are a large number of proverbs that had been quoted.⁶³³

3.9 CONCLUSION

This is a part of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz which can be considered as an essay on the questions of proper behaviour and moral studies. All these *rasā'il* have been the object of our extensive analysis. As we have seen in this chapter, *Adab* went through various stages of moral thought, combining various elements. We have seen that the author adopts a critical approach to evaluate his idea in all circumstances and mix together with other elements such al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, etc. It is obvious for us from al-Jāhiz's works that the dimensions of manners of morality in Islam are numerous, far-reaching and comprehensive.

Through his discussion of a number of the *rasā'il* in this category, we find that al-Jāhiz displays his remarkable talent for human observation, for instance, his observation on certain emotions such as envy and jealousy in his *Risāla fī al-ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd* and *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad*, snobbishness and pride in *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul*, etc. In addition, it is clear that the author's approach is based on Islamic thought which can be considered as his Islamic tendency in his writing. For instance, in the discussion of a number of the Qur'ānic passages, the author refers to the views of

⁶³² His full name is Tammām b. Ghālib. This poet was born in Yamāma probably after 20/640, died at Basra about 110/728 or 112/730. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Farazdaq, Vol. II, pp. 788-789.

⁶³³ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-nubl wa al-tanabbul wa dhamm al-kibr*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. IV, p. 169; Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 141.

respected early authorities such as Ibn ʿAbbās and others. On the other hand, in his discussion of the text of Ḥadīth, we find that there is some problem particularly to cross-check the author's Ḥadīth quotations. Therefore, we have to refer directly to their sources. Finally, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ addressed some of this *rasā'il* to historical figure particularly among the Abbasid caliphs and vizier, accompanied by various examples of good morals such as in *Risāla fī al-ma'ād wa al-ma'āsh*. To conclude, we can say that the content of these works conforms to the content of books on *adab* moralistic literature which is one of the prolific genres in Arabic. This is, of course, al-Jāḥiẓ made it popular in the third/ninth century.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *RASĀ'IL* CONCERNING THE ISSUES OF SOCIAL GROUPS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the thesis attempts to study the social works of al-Jāḥiẓ. As far as we are aware it is generally known that the most important work of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the social group is *al-Bukhalā'*, however, it will not be considered in this part of the study,⁶³⁴ instead, I will concentrate only on the collection of his *rasā'il*. As usual, in studying all these *rasā'il*, other works of al-Jāḥiẓ will be taken into our consideration.

According to Pellat, in the 2nd century A.H. writers were busy collecting together traditions about various Arabs tribes and recalling the life stories of people belonging to a particular group, starting with a collection of transmitters of tradition, then the *fuqahā'*, governors, cadis, etc. In addition they also compiled the collection of hilarious anecdotes

⁶³⁴ *Al-Bukhalā'* is discussed briefly in the chapter two of this thesis. In addition to what has already been said, there has been much work done concerning this work both in Arabic and English. For example, Wadī'ah Ṭaha Najm in her Ph.D. thesis "*Studies in the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*" has a detailed discussion about the book. Also Fedwa Malti-Douglas compared between two books on al-Bukhalā' namely *Bukhalā'* by al-Jāḥiẓ and *Bukhalā'* by al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī in her book "*The Structure of Avarice*". This book concludes with an excellent bibliography of the case study. Also, Muhammad Burkān Ḥamdī discusses about mockery in al-Jāḥiẓ's *Bukhalā'* in his book *Suhkriyat al-Jāḥiẓ min bukhālā'ih*. Within the same tradition comes two books written by Ahmad b. Muhammad Ambezik and 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Muhammad entitled *Ṣīrat bakhīl al-Jāḥiẓ al-famiyya min khilāl khaṣā'iṣ uslubih fī kitāb al-bukhalā'* and *al-Sukhriya fī adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, etc.

with the aim of contributing to the development of the *ādāb* works. However, these were feeble attempts, which never reached a full scale toward picturing the social situation at that time.⁶³⁵

Referring to Pellat's list of the works of al-Jāhīz in this category, it seems that there are several *risāla*, which can be taken for further extensive reading and analysis. These are as follows: *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, *Risāla fī al-ʿishq wa al-nisā'*, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīn*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb* and *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn*. It should be pointed out, before proceeding further, that the first two of these *rasā'il* are clearly related to the issue of groups of women, who appeared in the Abbasid society and played an eminent role in social life, the life of art, pleasure and literature. Whilst *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn* will be discussed together with another two *risāla* of al-Jāhīz entitled *Risāla fī ṣināʿat al-quwwād* and *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm ʿamal al-sulṭān*. This is based on the considerable social elements attaching to the text of the *risāla*.

4.2 *Risāla fī al-qiyān* (*Risāla* on singing slave-girls)

4.2.1 The Text of the *Risāla*:

We all know that Islam introduces new dimensions into the human relationship of man and women and gave them a new philosophy of life, enriching the family with love, pleasure, comfort, mercy and security and, at the same time, enabling them both to gain

⁶³⁵ See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāhīz*, p. 27.

moral goodness and spiritual excellent through this relationship. Thus, al-Jāḥiẓ through this work sheds some light on the relationship between men and women particularly on the lawfulness of social contact between these two sexes. This issue, even today, as described by Colville, is a highly sensitive one in parts of the Muslim world.⁶³⁶

One finds from the text of *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, al-Jāḥiẓ, firstly, focuses his discussion on the group of people known as *al-Qiyān*,⁶³⁷ whom he portrays in connection with the Abbasid social life. However, at the same time; he also digresses into the subject of relationship between men and women. So, we are trying to highlight this aspect in this study. Now, before going into further detail on the content of the *risāla*, it is important to know briefly about its background.

Yāqūt did not mention this *risāla* under his list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work. It is possible that he had this work in mind when he mentioned the book of *al-Muqayyinīn*⁶³⁸ which he named it as *Kitāb al-muqayyinīn al-ghinā' wa al-ṣan'at*.⁶³⁹ The text of *Risāla fī al-qiyān* firstly was published by J. Finkel in his *Three Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*.⁶⁴⁰ In 1959, the *risāla* appeared again in Beirut under the collection of "*Al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn wa aḥamm al-rasā'il*", which according to Beeston, is completely devoid of critical value; it is an

⁶³⁶ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 181.

⁶³⁷ *Al-Qayn* (pl. *al-Qiyān*) means slave-girls either she is singer or not. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Vol. XI, p. 376. According to Charles Pellat, the first female slave-singers among the Arabs appeared as early as the Jāhiliyya period. See for further details on "*qiyān*", Pellat, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Kayna, Vol. IV, pp. 820-824. On the other hand, A.F.L. Beeston thinks of the *geisha* of Japan as being similar to the Arab institution of *al-Qiyān*. See Beeston, *The Epistle of Singing-Girls of Jāḥiẓ*, Aris & Philips Ltd, Warminster, 1980, p. 2.

⁶³⁸ This word *al-Muqayyin* (pl. *al-Muqayyinīn*) means merchant of singing slave-girls. On the meaning of *al-Muqayyin*, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, art. Qiyān, Vol. XI, pp. 376-377.

⁶³⁹ Yāqūt, *Miʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 108.

⁶⁴⁰ Finkle, *Three Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 53-75.

unaltered reprint of Finkel's edition, without even the trouble having been taken to incorporate his corrigenda.⁶⁴¹ However, the excellent edition of the *risāla* has been done by 'Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn, who devoted the first two volumes of his projected complete edition of al-Jāḥiẓ to its content. In this edition, the *risāla* appears in volume two, pp. 143-184. The latest edition of the *risāla* can be seen in the 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection.⁶⁴² The text of the *risāla* in the printed edition did not consist of any divisions other than paragraphs either in Hārūn's edition or 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition. Therefore, for this study, we will use the combination of Hārūn's edition and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's editions.

A complete translation of the *risāla* has been translated for the first time into French by Charles Pellat which was based on Finkel's edition. However, the *risāla* was edited again and then translated into English by A.F.L. Beeston. This edition was published in 1980 under the title "*The Epistle on Singing-Girls of Jāḥiẓ*". Pellat produced also a partial French translation of the *risāla* in his *Le Melieu Basrien*. The same portion of Pellat's translation now can be found in his book on the works of al-Jāḥiẓ.⁶⁴³ Whilst, the latest translation of the *risāla* can be seen in Colville's book *Sobriety and Mirth* entitled "Chanteuses".⁶⁴⁴ So, all quotations in the text relating to the *risāla* are from both Beeston's and Colville's translation.

⁶⁴¹ See Beeston, *The Epistle of Singing-Girls of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 6.

⁶⁴² See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, pp. 111-136.

⁶⁴³ See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 259-268. Part of the *risāla* can be seen also in German translation, for instance, in O. Rescher, *Excerpte und Übersetzungen aus der Schriften des Philologen Gahiz*, Stuttgart, 1931.

⁶⁴⁴ See Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 181-201.

4.2.2 The nature and purpose of the *Risāla*:

The subject of *al-Qiyān* is found in all periods of Arabic literature particularly in poetry. For instance, referring to a medieval Arabic *qaṣīda*⁶⁴⁵ or ode from the third/ninth century, we find that there is a detail of *waṣf* (description)⁶⁴⁶ of this group of singing slave girls. Ibn al-Rūmī (d. c. 283/896), for example, devoted a big part of his poetry to describe them.⁶⁴⁷ On contrary, prose literature works devoted to same subject are also found, but far less frequently. Perhaps, *Risāla fī al-qiyān* written by al-Jāḥiẓ was the first prose work devoted to this subject matter. We assume that *Risāla fī ummahāt al-awlād* also written by al-Jāḥiẓ, as cited by Yāqūt in his list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works,⁶⁴⁸ can be put in this category. This is based on the term of *Umm al-walad* (pl. *Ummahāt al-awlād*) which is normally refers to the female slave when she has given birth to the child.⁶⁴⁹ However, it is a pity that the text of this *risāla* is lost, for it would probably have contained additional views of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the subject matter.

Later on, there are some monographs devoted to the subject of *al-Qiyān* as have been brought to light and cited, for instance, by Ibn Nadīm and Yāqūt such as *Kitāb al-*

⁶⁴⁵ The term, *qaṣīda* (pl. *qaṣā'id*) is generally defined according to its certain length, some scholar said that is from seven or ten and others said fifteen to eighteen lines. For more detail on this term, see *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. *Qaṣīda*, Vol. II, pp. 630-633.

⁶⁴⁶ This term occupies a central role in the Arabic *qaṣīda* tradition and is commonly held to be characteristic of the genre. See *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. *Waṣf*, Vol. II, pp. 806-807.

⁶⁴⁷ See *Dīwan Ibn al-Rūmī*, Edit. By: Ahmad Ḥasan Basaj, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, Beirut, 1994. For excellent study on the *waṣf* of singing slave girls in Ibn al-Rūmī's works, see Akiko, 'Sensibility and Synaesthesia: Ibn al-Rūmī's Singing Slave Girls', in *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. XXXII, (2001): pp. 1-30.

⁶⁴⁸ See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 110.

⁶⁴⁹ The legal term for such a slave is *Umm al-walad*. On the death of her master, *Umm al-walad*, together with her children, become free. For more discussion on the development of this term in the pre-Islamic period and under Islam, see also *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Umm al-walad*, Vol. X, pp. 857-859.

qaynāt by al-Madā'inī,⁶⁵⁰ *Kitāb akhbār al-qiyān* by Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī (d. 363/972),⁶⁵¹ *Kitāb qiyān al-Ḥijāz* and *Kitāb al-qiyān* written by Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 188/804).⁶⁵² However, this list of works does not seem to have survived and according to Pellat, probably, it is far from having the same literary value as the work of al-Jāḥiẓ.⁶⁵³

Therefore, *Risāla fī al-qiyān* by al-Jāḥiẓ can be assumed to be among the early prose documents which provide a fairly representative sample of the various kinds of material making up the existing corpus of literature on the profession of *al-Qiyān* and the development of music among the Arabs.⁶⁵⁴ Beeston admits that *Risāla fī al-qiyān* of al-Jāḥiẓ was an open letter from the author to some named person.⁶⁵⁵ This is based on the first statement of the *risāla* where al-Jāḥiẓ listed the putative authors namely Mūsā b. Ishāq b. Mūsā, Muhammad b. Khālid, Abdullah b. Ayyūb, Muhammad b. Ḥammād and others.⁶⁵⁶ However, according to Colville, although al-Jāḥiẓ claimed about his joint authorship, he is the sole author of this piece.⁶⁵⁷ In this preamble, al-Jāḥiẓ informs that they claim their good fortune, and say that they have not hitherto set out their apologia because the truth seemed self-evident and so forth. However, al-Jāḥiẓ argues: "We have

⁶⁵⁰ His full name is Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muhammad, but known as al-Madā'inī, because he lived for a time in al-Madā'in (Ctesiphon). He is reported to have written more than two hundred books, but hardly any have been survived. See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, Vol. VII, p. 211; see also *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art al-Madā'inī, Vol. II, p. 481.

⁶⁵¹ *Kitāb akhbār al-qiyān* (Book of information on singing girls) and *Kitāb al-diyārāt* (Book of Monasteries), which both published recently, are not editions of Abū al-Faraj's books on these subjects but collections of quotations from him, gathered from latter sources. See, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, art. Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī, Vol. I, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁵² See Pellat, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Kayna, Vol. IV, pp. 822-823.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 822-823.

⁶⁵⁴ See Owen Right, 'Music and Verse', in: *Arabic Literature to the End of Umayyad Period*, pp. 433-459.

⁶⁵⁵ Beeston, *The Epistle of Singing-Girls of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ mentions about eleven names altogether, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 154; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 111.

⁶⁵⁷ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 201.

heard about the criticisms levelled against us be a certain groups of persons and if we did not reply to them in our own self-defence – for we know very well that it is in the nature of the envious to make a show of despising the object of their envy...⁶⁵⁸

For the reason of writing of this *risāla*, in fact later on al-Jāḥiẓ writes: “We have therefore set out in this *risāla* our arguments against those who count it for shame to us that we own singing slave girls, insult us for sitting at table with our friends, and resent our displaying and talking about our prosperity. We hope to be justified because we are the victims of aggression”.⁶⁵⁹ A little later on in the same paragraph, he specifically states his premise: “In this *risāla* we shall set forth our arguments against the extension of jealousy to cover cases that are neither unlawful nor dubious; we shall then describe the good fortune that is our lot, and controvert our opponents’ assertions in terms both concise and clear”.⁶⁶⁰

4.2.3 The Structure of the *Risāla*:

The following content of the *risāla*, was restructured by Beeston who gave it a very clear outline.⁶⁶¹

1. Introduction.
2. General thesis, which since nothing in the Qur’ān and Sunna forbids association between men and women, apart from certain specific cases,

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, p. 166; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 112.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 154; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 112.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 154; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 113.

⁶⁶¹ See Beeston, *The Epistle on Singing-Girls of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 5.

therefore such association is licit, provided that the specific prohibitions are not violated.

3. A series of anecdotes, all designed to illustrate the fact that in pre-Islamic and early Islamic time's men and women conversed freely at the social level, and that women were present at assemblies of men, without the strict *purda* (veil).
4. Excursus on social customs.
5. Anecdotes and general argument, illustrating the thesis that music is an unobjectionable pastime.
6. Further argument on the general thesis that, provided that actual indecency is avoided, social intercourse between men and women is licit.
7. Excursus on the nature of love and passion.
8. Description of the practice of the *qiyān*.
9. Description of the advantages enjoyed by the *muqayyinīn* and of the practices employed by them.
10. Terminal apologia.

It seems here that through this *risāla*, al-Jāhīz offers us some brilliant insights concerning certain circumstances of singing slave girls in the Abbasid era. In his detailed accounts of them, for instance, al-Jāhīz suggests that in those days female singer would actually sing poems in front of guests.

4.2.4 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

4.2.4.1 The Issue of *al-Qiyān*:

Al-Jāhīz's main concern, in this *risāla*, is to discuss about the *qiyān*. The existence of this group of professional female singers or *al-qiyān* was a feature of upper-class life in the Abbasid society. According to al-Jāhīz, wealthy clients would seek out excellent songstresses to entertain their guests at parties and for other purposes. In order to elevate their commercial value, the female singers were supposed to be endowed with highly trained performance and social skill, resulting from advanced musical education and association with intellectual culture under supervision of the *muqayyin*.⁶⁶² This training enhanced their commercial value. Al-Jāhīz claims that a successful singing girl had a repertoire of as many as four thousand songs comprising ten thousand verses, which, of course, she knew by heart, besides her erudition in the traditional sciences and the Qur'ān.

Part way through, the author digresses from this topic and turns his focus on trying to prove that jealousy is unjustifiable, supporting this with examples of the promiscuity of the early Arabs, and telling sundry stories about relation between men and women. This leads him to the subject of the Umayyad caliphs and their use of female slaves and singing slave-girls, and this is followed by a plea on behalf of music and singing.

⁶⁶² These women had received a thorough education. For more information on *al-qiyān*'s education, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Kayna, Vol. IV, pp. 821-822.

Al-Jāhiz then proceeds to analyse physical beauty and sexual attraction. He says: “I shall attempt to explain beauty to you. It is fullness and proportion; and by fullness I do not mean anything excessive or disproportionate, such as tallness, thinness, fleshiness or size of eye or mouth over and above the normal dimensions in well-proportioned individuals. Any such excess detracts from beauty, even if it be thought to add something to physique”.⁶⁶³ All this is to explain why it is permissible to touch a slave-girl before buying her; and it leads the author on to deal with the attitude of Islam to healing by touching.

4.2.4.2 The issue of relation between men and women:

Apart from discussion on the *Qiyān*, al-Jāhiz digresses his discussion into the subject of relation between men and women which also amongst the important issue in Islamic thought. Before proceeding to further discussion of this aspect in al-Jāhiz’s work, it will be most convenient to know that in Islam, a man, other than husband, is neither allowed to have privacy with a woman, nor is he allowed to any part of the body, no matter how closely he is related to her. This according to Ḥadīth, which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) warned man not to call on a woman in the absence of her husband, unless he is accompanied by one or two other man. Likewise is the prohibition of touching the body of woman. However, it is lawful to sit with the women of advanced

⁶⁶³Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, p. 166; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 127.

age in privacy and touching them is not prohibited. The real object is to prevent such mixing of these sexes together as may lead to evil result.⁶⁶⁴

Now, let us listen to what al-Jāhiz has to say on the subject in which he argued at length. Firstly, he stresses that among Bedouin men and women there was no veiling of women. He then asserts that men continued to hold converse with women both in pre-Islam and in the beginning of Islam, up to the time the veil was imposed as a particular duty on the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). According to al-Jāhiz, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb never forbids looking at, and talking and joking with women. Regarding this matter, he asserts: “If looking, conversation and joking with women were things to excite jealousy then ‘Umar would have been the first to disapprove”.⁶⁶⁵ Then, he quotes another story of Mundhir b. Zubayr, who was in love with Abdulrahman’s daughter, Ḥafṣa. According to al-Jāhiz, from these two conditions, undermine the cleric’s claim that “the first look is forbidden and the second look is forbidden”, since it is impossible to have conversation with someone that is not accompanied by many looks”.⁶⁶⁶ It seems that what he means by this is that it is lawful in Islam looking at women. In addition, al-Jāhiz also gives one more proof which shows us that it is not unlawful to look at any women. He says that spinsters will appear in front of men and feel not the slightest shame. Were it forbidden when she was young, it would not be permissible when she is older.

⁶⁶⁴ For more discussion on this aspect, see Maududi, *Purdah and the status of women in Islam*, Islamic Publication Ltd, Lahore, 1983, pp.171-178.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Harun’s edition, Vol. II, p. 152; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 117.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.154; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 118.

4.2.4.3 The issue of legitimacy of songs:

This is another important issue which has been highlighted by al-Jāḥiẓ. As far as can be determined, there has been a close connection between singing and poetry in Arabic culture. This song is normally performed by singing slave girls or *al-Qiyān*. On this situation, al-Jāḥiẓ says: “In my opinion, there is nothing at all wrong with song, for it is simply poetry in the dress of music. Songs that are decent can only be good, while those that encourage vice are not”.⁶⁶⁷ For instance, the author quotes the Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is reported as saying that “some of poetry contains wisdom”. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ also quotes ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is reported as saying: “Poetry is only words; the good is good and bad is bad”. Then he continues “that a song can be appreciated intuitively and understood technically by *wazan* (metre) and *qāfiya* (rhyme). There is no basis, either in reason or in the Qur’ān and Sunna, to declare it unlawful”.⁶⁶⁸

His argument is: “If it is to be declared unlawful because it distracts from devotion to God, we can point to any number of things that do that such as listening to stories, eating, drinking, looking at gardens and flowers, hunting, etc.” Regarding this matter, he concludes: “We understand that, for the man who is able to do so, spending his time in prayer is fine thing to do but, as long as he has discharged his religious duties, these other things are perfectly permissible”.⁶⁶⁹ In this case, al-Jāḥiẓ gives us an example

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.160; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 123.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.160; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 123.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.161; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 124.

of Prophet Sulaymān when he was distracted from prayer until after sunset by a horse-riding tournament.

4.2.5 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth:

From what can be gleaned from the text of the *risāla*, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ quotes verse from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The Qur'ānic quotation in this *risāla* can be found only in the paragraph on the legitimacy of touching slave-girls. For instance, al-Jāḥiẓ stresses that it is permissible to talk, joke, flirt and shake hands with singing slave-girls, and it is permissible also to touch them while examining them, as long as nothing unlawful happens. In conjunction with this matter, al-Jāḥiẓ commented that Allah has accepted minor misdemeanours from His punishment. Here, we find that the author quotes verse from Sūra al-Najm (53: 32) to support his argument when the Qur'ān said:

﴿الذين يجتنبون كبائر الإثم والفواحش إلا اللّم ، إن ربك واسع المغفرة﴾

(Those who avoid great sins and *al-Fawāḥish* (illegal intercourse, etc.) except the small faults, - verily, your Lord is of vast forgiveness)

In his comment to the above verse, Abdullah Yusuf Ali said: "Allah's attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness are unlimited. They come into action without our asking, but on our bringing our will as offerings to Him."⁶⁷⁰ It is interesting to note here that al-Jāḥiẓ then quotes Abdullah b. Mas'ūd's interpretation on this verse in which he says: "Asked to interpret this, Abdullah b. Mas'ūd gave the example of a man who approaches a woman:

⁶⁷⁰In his comment to this verse, Abdullah Yusuf Ali said: "Allah's attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness are unlimited. They come into action without our asking, but on our bringing our will as offerings to Him." See, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān, Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 1381.

if he proceeds, it is an act of indecency but if he holds back, it may be considered a minor misdemeanor".⁶⁷¹

Regarding the same case, al-Jāhiz then asserts: "Let us suppose the following argument: "There are Ḥadīth that say: The breath of men and women shall not commingle" and "A man shall not be alone in a room with the woman even if he is her brother in law, for brother in law are a menace".⁶⁷² He proceeds: "Now, the coming together of men and *qiyān* is an open invitation to debauchery and vice, since it fills a man with lust, drives him to indecency and spurs him to foul abomination".⁶⁷³

Let us see now how he replied to that idea in which he himself creates it. He says: "We would begin by noting that rules apply only to external actions. Although action should be based upon good intent, God does not demand judgment on the basis of unknown factors. For example, a man may be judge to be a Muslim on the basis of his ostensible observance of the rituals, although he is infidel in reality, and so forth".⁶⁷⁴

Beside this Ḥadīth, al-Jāhiz quoted also another Ḥadīth in conjunction with the legitimacy of singing a song when he stresses: "There is nothing at all wrong with song, for it is simply poetry in the dress of music".⁶⁷⁵ Here, he quotes the Ḥadīth when Prophet

⁶⁷¹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 164; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 126.

⁶⁷² This Ḥadīth can be seen in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Chapter on marriage, No. 1711.

⁶⁷³ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-qiyān*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 164; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 126.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.164; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 126.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.160; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 123.

Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as reported saying: (إن من الشعر لحكمة) which means “Indeed, some poetry contains wisdom”.⁶⁷⁶

Another aspect we would like to highlight here is the style of al-Jāhiz’s argument. We find that one argument flows into another in such a way that a division required by the outline may come in the midst of a paragraph or in the middle of another argument. This style can be obviously followed in the text of the *risāla* but as a result of this, it is difficult to know where one should stop reading. This is because with his digressions, he jumps from topic to topic, so if you want to follow a particular argument then you need to read the complete text.

Al-Jāhiz employs a number of post-classical lexical items in this *risāla* which Beeston concludes that the language usage would have to be regarded in some respects as faulty.⁶⁷⁷ So, at the end of his analysis, Beeston listed the select glossary to record of non-Arabic words and post-classical usages found in the text of the *risāla*. On the other hand, al-Jāhiz’s style of writing bears strong traces of the influence of the parallelism characteristic of *Adab*.⁶⁷⁸ In addition, al-Jāhiz avoids using rhyming style; however, on some occasions there are two or three examples of rhyme in his work.

⁶⁷⁶ See al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaghīr*, Vol. I, p. 376, No. 2457.

⁶⁷⁷ Beeston, *The Epistle on Singing-girls of al-Jāhiz*, p. 6.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

4.3 *Risāla fī al-nisā'* (*Risāla* on Women)

4.3.1 The text and title of the *Risāla*:

Allah has created every living being in pairs – male and female including mankind. By nature, man does not live alone and he cannot live alone. In fact he is destined not to live alone. Even Prophet Ādam, when he was created, was not left to live alone. From the earliest times, Ādam and his wife lived together, naturally, with love and affection. This sense of mutual love and close relations between man and wife is considered to have been due to the physical creation of the woman out of the left rib of her husband, as narrated in a Ḥadīth. Thus, women have a very important place in Islamic society. Unlike a number of other religions, Islam holds a woman in high esteem.⁶⁷⁹

It is generally observed that al-Jāḥiẓ's attitude and discussion of the subject of women can be distinguished by two main characteristics; firstly, a great deal of tolerance, and secondly, a true recognition of human nature.⁶⁸⁰ From this point of view, some scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ called him as a protector for women.⁶⁸¹ Now, let us refer to the list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work, to find out these elements. We find that the works of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning women can be traced in this *rasā'il* namely *Risāla fī al-nisā'*, *Kitāb* or *Risāla fī ummahāt*

⁶⁷⁹ On Islamic view concerning women and their rights and responsibilities from religious and as well as anthropological point of view, see for instance Aisha Lemu, 'Women in Islam', in: *The Challenge of Islam*, Edit. by: Altaf Gauhar, Redwood Burn Limited, London, 1978, pp. 248-265. There is, needless to say, a vast literature on the subject but most works are written from the perspective of current prejudices in the West.

⁶⁸⁰ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 173.

⁶⁸¹ See, al-Qāsimī, Zāfir, 'al-Jāḥiẓ Naṣīr al-Mar'a', *al-ʿArabī*, Vol. 135, (February, 1970), pp. 66-69.

*al-awlād*⁶⁸² and *Risāla fī al-farq mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisā*.⁶⁸³ However, *Risāla fī al-nisā* is the only text which survived and it will be engaged our attention in this part of study.

Al-Jāhiz refers in many occasions to this *risāla* in his *Ḥayawān*.⁶⁸⁴ By referring to the list of al-Jāhiz's works cited by Yāqūt, there is a mention of two books, one on *al-Nisā*, and the other on *al-ʿIshq*.⁶⁸⁵ According to Najm, none of these two works come down to us in full.⁶⁸⁶ She claims that what we have today only a selection from the original copy which comes among the chapters collected by ʿUbaydullah b. Ḥassān.⁶⁸⁷ *Risāla fī al-ʿishq wa al-nisā* or simply known as *Risāla fī al-nisā* has been published for the first time with some other *rasā'il* of al-Jāhiz by Muhammad Sāsī al-Maghribī.⁶⁸⁸ Then, al-Sandūbī published it under the title "*Min kitāb al-nisā*".⁶⁸⁹ Pellat, however, cited two works under the title of *Fi al-ʿishq wa al-nisā* and *Faṣl mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisā wa farq mā bayn al-dhukūr wa al-ināth*,⁶⁹⁰ which according to him the first one has

⁶⁸² See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 110.

⁶⁸³ Abū Milḥim mentioned it under the following title "*Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisā wa farq mā bayn al-dhukūr wa al-ināth*", See Abū Milḥim, 'Muḥāwalat khasf natāj al-Jāhiz', in *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz*, p. 376. On Islamic view from modern philosophical studies concerning the male and female and the distinction between this two sexes, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'The male and female in the Islamic Perspective', *Journal of Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. XIV (1980), pp. 67-75.

⁶⁸⁴ See al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 13.

⁶⁸⁵ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-111. It is reported that Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) has also written a *risāla* in this subject entitled *Risāla fī al-ʿishq*. This *risāla* has been analysed by G. E. von Grunebaum in his article: 'Avicenna's *Risāla fī al-ʿishq* and courtly love', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. XI (1952), pp. 233-238.

⁶⁸⁶ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāhiz*, p. 46.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁸⁸ Sāsī al-Maghribī, *Majmūʿa Rasā'il*, pp. 161-169.

⁶⁸⁹ Al-Sandūbī's collection contains more than thirteen *rasā'il* including *Risāla fī al-nisā*.

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Jāhiz tell us in *al-Ḥayawān* that in this *risāla* he considered such questions as when women are superior to men and vice versa, whether a child contains more of its father or its mother, in which cases women's right should be absolutely guaranteed, what sort of work is most appropriate for women, and in which occupations they are most efficient. See al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 13.

a link with the latter.⁶⁹¹ Perhaps he think that these titles are, originally, two different works, which later on, combined it together. Nevertheless, referring to al-Jāhiz's statement that he had dealt with the question of love in details, in the book, saying: "As we have mentioned in this book the love (*al-Ḥubb*) which is the root of passionate love (*al-Hawā*), and the passionate love of which extreme love (*al-ʿIshq*) is derived and the extreme love for which the person sets out aimlessly or dies of grief in his bed".⁶⁹² We can conclude here that he already wrote two books, one under the heading "*al-ʿIshq wa al-nisā*", and the other was "*al-Farq mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisā*". However, the latter, as far as we are aware, was not survived.⁶⁹³

Furthermore, Najm claimed that, in al-Sandūbī's edition, the whole *risāla* ends with a chapter where a general description of the book is given by the author, and where he complains of his illness.⁶⁹⁴ According to this chapter, al-Jāhiz intended to write a book on the differences between the males and the females of all animals, but found that it was better to limit it within the subject of men and women, who, according to him, was made short, in order to win the interest of the reader. It may be presumed that the book of *al-Nisā*' is identical with the book of *Farq mā bayn al-rijāl wa al-nisā*', of which only selected extracts, in the form of chapter have come down to us. The question, however, still remains whether *Risāla fī al-nisā*' is part of the work or not.⁶⁹⁵ However, we believed that Ibn Nadīm was right in this context when he insisted that *Risāla fī al-nisā*' is the

⁶⁹¹Pellat, *Inventaire de Leuvre Gāhizienne*, No. 146, p. 174.

⁶⁹² See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-nisā*': Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 139, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 105.

⁶⁹³ There are some monographs devoted to the subject of women which has been written by later Muslim scholars such as Ibn Qutayba's volume entitled "Kitāb al-nisā'" in his work 'Uyūn al-akhbār (Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī edition, 1963) and al-Sakhāwī's (d. 902/1497) volume entitled, "Kitāb al-nisā'" in his work *al-Dir' al-lāmi' li ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'* (Beirut, Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, n.d.).

⁶⁹⁴Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāhiz*, p. 48.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

same work known as *Risāla fī al-farq mā bayn al-dhukūr (al-rijāl) wa al-ināth (al-nisā')*.⁶⁹⁶

The text of the *risāla* is divided into twenty-one portions. The first portion entitled “*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī al-nisā'*” and the last portion ends with “*Faṣl minhu*”.⁶⁹⁷ The *risāla* is now available in English under the heading “On Women” which has been translated by Jim Colville.⁶⁹⁸ Therefore, the study of the text of the *risāla* will be based on the Hārūn’s and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection, and for translation of the text will be relied on Colville’s translation.

4.3.2 The purpose and date of the composition:

The purpose of composition of this *risāla* is clear when the author noticed that some men treating women with the utmost contempt and denying them most of their rights which according to him, is the sign of weakness if a man can only fulfil his obligation to his father and uncles by denying them to his mother and aunts. For this reason he admits that he has written of the merits of women.⁶⁹⁹

The date of composition of *Risāla fī al-nisā'* can not be determined precisely. Abū Miḥim suggests it would be before 232 A.H. Some other said that it may be having written within the same period of *al-Ḥayawān*, or after *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* was

⁶⁹⁶ Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 209.

⁶⁹⁷ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-nisā'*: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 139-159, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 105-121.

⁶⁹⁸ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 170-179.

⁶⁹⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-nisā'*: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 152, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 116.

completed.⁷⁰⁰ However, one can supposed that *Risāla fī al-nisā'* together with *Kitāb al-bighāl* have been written after the latter portion of *al-Ḥayawān*, because these themes and topics are strongly related to *al-Ḥayawān* as al-Jāḥiẓ himself has promised the reader of his *al-Ḥayawān*.⁷⁰¹

4.3.3 Analysis of the Content and Style of writing:

According to Pellat, al-Jāḥiẓ used his favourite technique, firstly, defines passionate love (*‘ishq*) as a step beyond affection love (*ḥubb*) in the same way that rashness is a step beyond courage. The word *‘ishq* is also used figuratively in the text of the *risāla* in an empahtic sense to denote love of renowned, wealth, etc.⁷⁰² In the next paragraph, the author speaks about men and love which according to him, compared with what they give women, men only give each other things of little consequence. Describing the range of bounty, al-Jāḥiẓ, for instance, says that he never known a man to love his parents or children, his stable or estate with much intensity as he loves forbidden women, even to the point of his death.⁷⁰³ From this point of view, he quotes this Qur’ānic verse in which Allah tell us about the range of the bounty:

﴿ زين للناس حب الشهوات من النساء والبنين والقناطير المقنطرة من الذهب والفضة والخيل

المسومة والأنعام والحرث ﴾

⁷⁰⁰ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āhārūh*, p. 437; El-Attār, *The Political Thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 348.

⁷⁰¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 4; Vol. 6, p. 14.

⁷⁰² Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 257.

⁷⁰³ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-nisā'*: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 142, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 107.

(Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: women and sons; headed-up hoards of gold and silver; horse branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land). Sūra Āl-Imrān (3:14)

It seems from the Qur'ānic verse above that women are in the first range of the bounty. Now, let us see how the author comments on that verse, he says: "Here, God speaks of the range of bounty. He was bestowed on man; men, however, long for nothing with such passion as they long for women. For that reason, He placed them first on the list".⁷⁰⁴ This comment seems that the author used emotional element to support his argument.

It is remarkable to note here that the author also mentions the status of women in Islam which according to him, women are superior to men in certain respects. For instance, he writes "it is they who are are desired, courted, loved and pursued. It is they who are ransomed and guarded".⁷⁰⁵ In another occasion, he said that the God has given wives in their husbands' hearts, for instance, if a man be asked to to swear to divorce his wife, he grows pale, is overcome with rage, protests, expostulates, gets angry and refuses, etc. In addition, al-Jāhiz said also that a further point to consider is that God has created a child from a woman without man but not from man without a woman. In conjunction with this idea, he refers to the case of the creation of al-Masīḥ (Messiah) in the womb of Maryam (Mary). This according to the author, the miracle God distinguished woman, not man.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 142; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 108.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 146; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 111.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 149; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 113.

Afterwards, the author reverts briefly to the subject of superiority of men to women. He states: "It is my view that the superiority of men to women is evident. Nevertheless, a woman's right should not be ignored. The right of father, brothers and sons are not respected by diminishing those of mothers, sisters and daughters. Although the rights of the former are greater, I believe compassion dictates that the rights of the latter be respected".⁷⁰⁷

Finally, the author defines the canon of feminine beauty particularly in the type of women known as *Majdūla* (voluptuousness). He said: "I noticed that most expert judges of feminine beauty set great store by *Majdūla*. In a woman, this lies somewhere between slender and fat. A woman should have a good figure, finely chiselled features and a straight back and shoulders. She should have enough flesh on her bones not to be skinny but neither should be fat".⁷⁰⁸

Concerning the style of writing of this *risāla*, it has already been declared by the author himself as follows: "I had initially intended that this book present as complete a picture as possible of the features of the male and female of each animal species. The virtues and vices of both were to be identified and brought together in one place. By supplying the appropriate evidence from the Qur'ān and Sunna, as well as documented quotations and widely known proverbs and maxims, the reader would be shown by just how wide margin superiority differs from inferiority. The book was being truly Arabs in

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 152; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 120.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 158; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 121.

character and represents our communal norms”.⁷⁰⁹ Then he continues: “A book should have something to encourage the reader and banish the listeners’ yawns. So, if you find anything of that sort here, you know it has been included on purpose”.⁷¹⁰

By extensive reading of the *risāla*, we find that the author highlighted the subject matter of the discussion by given the appropriate evidence from the Qur’ān and other sources.

4.4 *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān* (Boasting match between girls and pretty boys)

4.4.1 Background of the *Risāla*:

The Qur’ānic legislation on sex and marriage is well known. Men are urged to marry, even to find spouses for their slaves. Adultery is forbidden, and the story of Lūṭ (Lot) is told several times, in terms that leave no doubt that sodomy is forbidden. The text of this *risāla* will discuss here is one of the most obvious tendencies in the Abbasid social relation, i.e. the tendency towards sodomy, with which al-Jāḥiẓ deals effectively. *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*⁷¹¹ is the work where al-Jāḥiẓ relates a debate between the supporters of *al-Jawārī*⁷¹² and the supporters of *al-Ghilmān*.⁷¹³ A debate

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 152; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 116.

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 153; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 117.

⁷¹¹ Yāqūt only named it as *Kitāb al-jawārī*, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 107.

⁷¹² *Jāriya* (pl. *Jawārī*). This word means slave girls, or the champion girls. See Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 122.

⁷¹³ *Ghulām* (pl. *Ghilmān*). This word means a young man or boy and very often, but not necessarily, a slave servant or bodyguard, etc. See Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 682. For more information

boasts in poetry and anecdotes. In the sphere of prose literature, this *risāla* is the most significant, if not the oldest writing on the subject of sodomy.

There are a number of anecdotes in the *risāla*, which testify to the popularity of stories of this group from the 3rd/9th century.⁷¹⁴ The subject of discussion attaching to the *risāla* is reason enough to examine its content in detail. Colville in his remarks to the translation of the *risāla* into English admits this is first independent treatment of sex in Arabic literature.⁷¹⁵ However, al-Jāḥiẓ himself describes the *risāla* as no more than light-hearted, with which he hopes to entertain his readers. For instance, at the beginning of the *risāla*, he writes: “The result may be frivolous but this is why I have sought to explain and justify my position from the outset. I have no wish to offend or upset anyone. To God I turn for help and protection, to beg, through His mercy, for peace in this world and hereafter”.⁷¹⁶

The example set by al-Jāḥiẓ in this *risāla* has been followed by quite serious author who have left analogous writings, among which we may mention here such as *al-*

on the existence of this group and its constitution in the history of Muslim world, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Ghulām, Vol. II, pp. 1079-1091.

⁷¹⁴ *Risāla fī dhamm al-liwāṭ* is also written by al-Jāḥiẓ concerning sodomy. Only title of the *risāla* has been mentioned by Pellat in his *Gāḥiẓiana III*, and it is a pity the whole text is lost, for it would probably have contained al-Jāḥiẓ's view concerning the subject matter. See, Pellat, *Gāḥiẓiana III*, p. 164, No. 94. Nevertheless, some information of this subject can be found in other work of al-Jāḥiẓ such as *Risāla fī al-muḥallimīn*. See Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 43, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 34.

⁷¹⁵ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 202. The issue of sex and love in literary sources has been discussed at length by J. C. Brūgel, 'Love, lust and logging: Eroticism in early Islam as reflected in literary sources', in: *Society and sexes in medieval Islam*, Undena Publication, Malibu, 1970, pp. 81-117.

⁷¹⁶ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī muḥākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 95, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 76.

Wasāṭa bayn al-zunāt wa al-lātā by Ibn Hindū (d. 420/1029)⁷¹⁷ and *Kitāb al-ḥikāyāt* by Badr al-Dīn al-°Aynī (d. 855/1451).⁷¹⁸

The text of the *risāla* can be seen in Hārūn's collection with no division other than paragraphs.⁷¹⁹ Hārūn based his publication of the entire text on the only Pellat's edition. The latest edition of the *risāla* can be seen also in °Uyūn al-Sūd's collection.⁷²⁰ The *risāla* has been translated for the first time into English by Hutchins under the following title "Boasting Match over Maids and Youth".⁷²¹ And the latest translation of the *risāla* can be seen in Colville's book with English title "The Pleasure of Boys and Girls; Compared".⁷²² Therefore, the study of the text of the *risāla* will be based on Hārūn's and °Uyūn al-Sūd's collection, and for translation of the text will be relied on Hutchins and Colville's translation.

4.4.2 The Structure of the *Risāla*:

Let us now turn from the background of the *risāla* to the work itself which can be separate into these elements:

1. A discussion of the usage of explicit words.

⁷¹⁷ His full name is Abū al-Faraj °Alī b. Ḥusayn b. Hindū. He was a courtier, *adīb*, poet, and scholar. He died in Jurjān during the Ziyārid period. However, his *dīwān* (anthology of poetry) and work on proverbs and letter are lost. See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, Vol. VII, p. 82; see also *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. Ibn Hindū, Vol. I, p. 334.

⁷¹⁸ His full name is Maḥmūd b. Ahmad b. Mūsā al-°Aynī, but known as Badr al-Dīn al-°Aynī. See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, Vol. VII, p. 82; see also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Liwāt, Vol. V, pp. 776-779.

⁷¹⁹ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, pp. 91-137.

⁷²⁰ See also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: °Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, pp. 73-108.

⁷²¹ Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 167-174. On his note to the translation of selected *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Hutchins said that a portion of this *risāla* appeared in somewhat different form in *Playboy*, XXII, 7 (July 1975), p. 135 and is used in his translation by permission.

⁷²² Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 101-131.

2. *Al-Jawārī* and *al-Ghilmān* in the Qur'ān.
3. *Al-Jawārī* and *al-Ghilmān* in the Ḥadīth.
4. The penalty of the fornication and sodomy.
5. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) urges his Ummah for marriage.
6. The characteristic of adultery.
7. *Al-Jawārī* and *al-Ghilmān* in Arabic poetry.
8. Digression onto a Basran and a Kufan who boasted to one another about the number of noble people of Basra and of Kufa.
9. Note on the story of eunuchs.
10. Ends with list of jokes.

4.4.3 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

At the beginning of the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ explains about the use of explicit language in everyday life which according to him was invented to be employed by the speakers of the language. In addition, he continues, there are enough examples for their use by, or in the presence of, the Prophet and the greatest of the early Muslims to make them generally acceptable. Al-Jāḥiẓ concludes his introduction with the proverb:

(لكل مقام مقال)

“Each place has (its) verbal statement”.

This means that the right words must always be used in their proper places.

4.4.3.1 The issue of *al-Liwāt* (Homosexuality)

The main point of this *risāla* is *al-Liwāt* (homosexuality). In spite of the fact that Islamic society condemned this practice and the fact that the Qur'ān itself refers to it with disgust, the growth of it in the Abbasid society was strong and obvious. Its prevalence was not in among a certain class of people, but among all classes whether lower, middle or upper. Its prevalence among judges, teachers, clerks and scholars was well-known to the Abbasid society. No secret was made of this practice, whether among old or young people.⁷²³

As has been mentioned before that al-Jāhīz writes a chapter of *al-Liwāt*, where he argues and condemns the habit. His argument is based, mainly, on religious grounds. For example, he said that God prohibited many practices in the society, such as drinking wine, but He promised to recompensate His good believers by allowing them the prohibition in the next world (the Hereafter). God, however, according to al-Jāhīz, did not promise to compensate for this prohibition; therefore, it is unnatural, abominable and hateful.⁷²⁴

In *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, however, al-Jāhīz again gives more explanation on this practice which he presents it within the debate between the two groups, i.e. *al-Jawārī* and *al-Ghilmān*. First of all, al-Jāhīz mentions that the word of *al-Ghilmān* which is exist in the Qur'ān and Sunna was taken by the supporters of this group

⁷²³ See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Liwāt*, Vol. V, pp. 776-779.

⁷²⁴ See al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī al-muf'allimān* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 43-51, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 23-39.

as an argument to justify it as legal and good practice. God, according to them, praised the *Ghilmān* and often referred to their beauty.⁷²⁵

To illustrate the dialogue between these two groups, let us follow these quotations from the text of the *risāla*:

- قال صاحب الغلمان : إن من فضل الغلام على الجارية أن الجارية إذا وصفت بكمال الحسن قيل :

كانها غلام ، ووصيفة غلامية.

(The youths' patron said: The superiority of boys to girls is demonstrated by the fact that, in poetry, a pretty girl is often described in boyish terms as though, in fact, she were one).

- قال صاحب الجوارى : قد ذكر الله الحور العين أكثر مما ذكر الولدان ، فما حجتك في هذا إلا

كحجتنا عليك. ومما صان الله به النساء أنه جعل في جميع الأحكام شاهدين : منها الإشراك بالله ،

وقتل النفس التي حرم الله تعالى ، وجعل الشهادة على المرأة إذا رميت بالزنى أربعة مجتمعين غير

متفرقين في موضع يشهدون ... إلى آخره.

(The maids' patron said: God speaks about the girls of paradise more often than the boys. God protects the honour of women. In criminal cases, including murder and idolatry, religious law requires the evidence of two witnesses. However, in the case of woman accused of fornication, four collective witnesses to the act are required and each has to swear).

- قال صاحب الغلمان : إن أحدا لا يدخل الجنة إلا أمرد ، والنساء إلى المرء أميل كما قال الأعشى

... إلى آخره.

(The youth's patron said: Only beardless shall enter heaven. Even women, as the poet A°shā observed, are attracted by beardless young men).

⁷²⁵See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 139, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 105.

- قال صاحب الجوارى : فإن الحديث قد جاء عن الرسول (ص) : (حبب إلى النساء والطيب ، وجعل قرّة عيني في الصلاة). ولم يأت للغلمان مثل هذه الفضيلة . وقد فتن بالنساء الأنبياء عليهم السلام ، منهم داود ويوسف عليهما السلام.

(The maids' patron said: The Prophet is also reported as having said, "Women and perfume are my pleasure and I find my delight in prayer". He never spoke about boys that way. All the prophets, including Dāwūd and Yūsuf, were captivated by women).

- قال صاحب الغلمان : إن من عيوب الجوارى أن الرجل إذا اشترى والوصيفة إلى أن يستبرئها محرم عليه أن يستمتع بشيء منها قبل ذلك ، والوصيف لا يحتاج إلى ذلك.

(The youths' patron said: Among inconvenience with females is the legal requirement that, when he buys a slave girl, a man wait a specified time before he can take his pleasure with her- a stipulation which, of course, does not apply to boys).

- قال صاحب الجوارى : لم نسمع بعاشق قتله حب الغلام . ونحن نعد من الشعراء خاصة الإسلاميين جماعة منهم جميل بن معمر قتله حب بثينة وكثير قتله حب عزة وعروة قتله حب عفراء ... هؤلاء من أحصينا ومن لم نذكر أكثر.

(The maids' patron said: I have never heard of any lover pining to death out of love for a boy, yet among the poets, particularly the Islamic ones, there are many who have died out of love for women. Jamīl b. Mu'ammār was killed by his love for Buthaynah, Kuthayyir died out of love for 'Azzah and it was his love for Afrā' that killed 'Urwah).

After taking up a number of issues raised by the both groups in dialogue form, we find that the paragraph before the end of the *risāla*, the author digresses his subject into another subject matter i.e. the eunuchs. The reason is that he was asked to discuss about it. However, he asserts that this topic is out of place in a discussion about slave girls and boys. The eunuch according to al-Jāhīz is neither man nor woman. His character is a hybrid of woman's and a boy's. He has defects that would be repellent in a woman and so

forth. Al-Jāḥiẓ highlights also the result of the research that has been carried out by certain eminent scholars concerning the eunuch, saying that they found long life more common among the eunuchs than among all races of men; the reason is the absence of intercourse.⁷²⁶

Finally, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ follows the dialogue with some equally scabrous anecdotes as the end of the *risāla*. There are around twenty-one anecdotes⁷²⁷ which according to Colville that a few can still raise a smile.⁷²⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ himself says that he “will now round off this *risāla* with a few comic anecdotes and jokes, to revive the flagging reader and dispel his weariness”.⁷²⁹

4.4.3.1 The style of writing:

Al-Jāḥiẓ always prone to cultivate the genre *munāẓara*, debate, of which he is one of the pioneers in Arabic literature, presents in the form of stylised dialogue arguments. The text of this *risāla* shows us that the author presents the debate between homosexuals which he described them as *Ṣāḥib al-ghilmān* (The youth’s patron) and men of normal sexuality as *Ṣāḥib al-jawārī* (The maids’ patron). However, the editor, ‘Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn, remarks in a note that al-Jāḥiẓ has hereby silenced him as to the composition of this debate. But, we are not sure of this, it is not at all certain that al-Jāḥiẓ

⁷²⁶ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī mufāḥarat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, pp. 123-124, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, pp. 98-99.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 125-137; *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 99-108.

⁷²⁸ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 202.

⁷²⁹ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī mufāḥarat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, p. 125, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 99.

is wholly serious here. For one thing, the passage in question is put into mouth of one of the contestants, *al-Ghilmān*, whereas it is his opponent, *al-Jawārī*, who clearly has the better of the debate.⁷³⁰ This sense can be seen clearly in the statement from the youth's patron when they said as follows: "You have been unjust in the debate and unfair in the argument... Why do you argue against us with the Qur'ān, traditions, and legists when we have read as much as you and heard from the traditions as much as you?"⁷³¹ In another occasion, they claimed again: "At least play fair and let us argue on the same terms. By intoning the Qur'ān at me and quoting statements from the Prophet that you have scraped together, you have closed down the discussion and we end up like Basran and Kufan arguing about which town has the greater numbers of nobility".⁷³²

The use of language of the *risāla* clearly is in debate style. The word "*Qāla*" is frequently used in the *risāla*. The debate starts with the patron of *al-Ghilmān* and the patron of *al-Jawārī* has the last word in this debate. There are eight arguments offered by each patron. In addition, from the second part of the *risāla*, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ mentions the words *Faḍl* (The Virtue) which mean that he will explain to his addressee the virtue of something.

This dialogue between *al-Jawārī* and *al-Ghilmān* is interspersed with quotations from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīths, etc. We find that there is large number of Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīth which has been quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ. For instance, when he speaks about the *al-*

⁷³⁰ See Gelder, *Jest and earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p. 105.

⁷³¹ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī muḥākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 116, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 93.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 117, see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 94

Jawārī and *al-Ghilmān* or *al-Wildān* in the Qur'ān, the following Qur'ānic verses has been quoted:

﴿ يطوف عليهم غلمان لهم كأنهم لؤلؤ مكنون ﴾

(And there will go round boy-servants of their, to serve them as if they were preserved pearls). Sūra al-Ṭūr (52:24)

﴿ ويطوف عليهم ولدان مخلدون بأكواب وأباريق ﴾

(They will be served by immortal boys, with cups, and jugs, and a glass). Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah (17-18)

Al-Jāhīz then says on behalf of *al-Ghilmān*: “So, He (Allah) described them in more than one place in His book and created desire for them”.

On discussion of the punishment of adultery, al-Jāhīz through the youth's patron said that the ban of adultery was expressed more forcefully than anything else in the Qur'ān and in the Sunna. Here, we find him quoted these following verses:

﴿ ولا تقربوا الزنى إنه كان فاحشة وساء سبيلا ﴾

(And come not near to the unlawful sexual intercourse. Verily, it is a *Fāḥisha* (i.e. anything that transgresses its limit (a great sin)), and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him). Sūra al-Isrā' (17:32)

﴿ ولا يزنون ومن يفعل ذلك يلق أثاما ، يضاعف له العذاب يوم القيامة ويخلد فيه مهانا ﴾

(Nor commit illegal sexual intercourse – and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace). Sūra al-Furqān (25:68-69)

﴿ الزانية والزاني فاجلدوا كل واحد منهما مائة جلدة ولا تأخذكم بهما رافة ﴾

(The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let no pity withhold you in their case). Sūra al-Nūr (24:2)

Later, he comments on the above verse: “In the absence of witnesses to the act, the divine punishment is for them to be estranged and to loathe and curse each other to the end of their days, followed by eternal torment and damnation for whichever of them lied about the deed”.⁷³³

In his discussion on *al-Ghilmān* which mention in Ḥadīth, al-Jāhīz quotes the following Ḥadīth in which the patron of this group argued that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said no one enters paradise as a beardless youth:⁷³⁴

(إن أهل الجنة يدخلونها مردا مكحلين)

(The people of paradise will enter it clean shaven and wearing *kohl*).

Based on the above Ḥadīth, al-Jāhīz gives his comment on behalf of this group: “Women are more attracted to beardless youths and desire them more”.⁷³⁵

The following Ḥadīth is used by the other group to support their argument on the virtue of *al-Jawārī*. It is reported that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) as saying:⁷³⁶

(حبيب إلى النساء والطيب ، وجعلت قرّة عيني في الصلاة)

(Women and perfume were made dear to me, and prayer pleases me).

⁷³³ See al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, p. 100, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 79.

⁷³⁴ This Ḥadīth can be seen in *al-Nihāya* by Ibn al-Athīr with different wording under the heading “*jarada*”. See, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-Ḥadīth wa al-Āthār*, Vol. I, p. 265.

⁷³⁵ See al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. II, p. 98, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. II, p. 78.

⁷³⁶ See al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 3669.

The patron of *al-Jawārī* comment: “No honour like this came to the boys (i.e. *al-Ghilmān*)”.

Like adultery, punishment has been described for those who are found to engage in homosexual acts. Al-Jāhīz also has described that punishment in this *risāla*, for instance he records several Ḥadīth concerning the punishment for sodomy from Islamic law such as the Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad is reported expelled a bisexual called “Hayt” from Medina.⁷³⁷ In another Ḥadīth, Anas b. Mālik reported that Prophet Muhammad cursed homosexuals and lesbians.⁷³⁸

The following Ḥadīth is used as supporting idea when the author mentioned that Prophet Muhammad urges his people to get married. For example, Prophet Muhammad is reported as saying:⁷³⁹

(تزوجوا فإني مكاثر بكم الأمم)

(I shall, through you, make nation numerous)

The Prophet again said:⁷⁴⁰

(إذا قضيتم غزوكم فالكيس الكيس)

⁷³⁷ It is reported that Hayt was telling the Prophet's wife, Umm Salama: “When you conquer Ṭā'if, then you will have Bādiya bt. Ghaylān. She is then-bellied and mirthful, and so forth. Marry her to your son Umar”. The Prophet said: “You have been looking closely, you enemy of God; I never took you for a ladies's man”. See See al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī Mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. II, p. 101, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. II, p. 80. This text of Ḥadīth can be seen in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

⁷³⁸ See al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 7268.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 3287.

⁷⁴⁰ The original wording of this Ḥadīth can be found in *Kitāb al-Buyū'*, on the purchase of animal and donkeys, and also can be seen in *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, on the seeking to the beget children, see *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. III, p. 176, Vol. VII, p. 124.

(When you finish the raid, then the sack, the sack, i.e. marriage).

In another occasion, he said:⁷⁴¹

(تزوجوا والتمسوا الولد ، فإنهم ثمرات القلوب ، وإياكم والعجز العقر)

(Marry and have children, for they are the fruit of the hearts. Beware of barren old women).

Finally, the Prophet said:⁷⁴²

(عليكم بالأبكار الشواب ، فإنهن أطيب أفواها ، وأنتق أرحاما)

(Look for young virgins, for they have the sweetest mouths and more fruitful wombs).

Afterwards, al-Jāhiz states that: "The Ḥadīth about this are too numerous for us to mention them".

Towards the end of the text, al-Jāhiz interrupts the debate and concludes with a collection of assorted anecdotes and jokes. This he does, as he explains, because he fears that the reader would be bored with the debate. Thus, as was noted by Gelder, al-Jāhiz pretends that the debate itself was serious and in need of some light relief.⁷⁴³ Indeed, al-Jāhiz did it when he declared at the end of the *risāla*: "I cut short this work of mine to prevent the reader becoming bored with it".

⁷⁴¹ I have tried to find this Ḥadīth in *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras li alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, and also in the computer program, HAREF, which contains 'The Six Authentic', but I could not find anything similar or close to this text. Perhaps, al-Jāhiz used his own words which its meaning refer to the Ḥadīth concerning the marriage.

⁷⁴² See al-Suyūfī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡhīr*, No. 5507-9.

⁷⁴³ Gelder, *Jest and earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p. 106.

4.5 *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr* (The Superiority of the Belly to the Back)

4.5.1 Background of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ's interest in this aspect of social problems seems to have influenced his writing. Closely connected to *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān* as has been discussed above is *Risālah fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*, or "in preference of the belly to the back". This *risāla* seems to have been another kind of illustration and refutation of the same tendency in the Abbasid society. As we have seen above, this practice (*liwāf*) remains as a big problem within the Muslim community in Baghdad, as a result, al-Jāḥiẓ tries to convince his addressee about the bad nature of this practice.

There is no mention of this *risāla* in Yāqūt's list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works. The text of the *risāla* was edited for the first time by ʿAbd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn. Now, the *risāla* can be found also in ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition with a different length.⁷⁴⁴ It is divided into six portions. The first portion is the largest which is entitled "*Min ṣadr kitābih fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*", and the second portion is the smallest portion which contains one short paragraph. The text of the *risāla* now available in English is entitled "The Superiority of the Belly over the Back".⁷⁴⁵ The latest translation of the *risāla* appeared in *Sobriety and Mirth* by Jim Colville.⁷⁴⁶ So, all quotations from the *risāla* are based on English translation.

⁷⁴⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. IV, pp. 155-166; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, pp. 117-125.

⁷⁴⁵ Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 167-173.

⁷⁴⁶ See Colville, 'Inside, outside and back to front', in *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 62-70.

4.5.2 The structure of the *Risāla*:

The structure of this *risāla* can be divided into these elements:

1. Starts with a lengthy preamble which is consume a big part of first portion.
2. Recall that some ancient civilization (i.e. The People of Lūṭ and Thamūd) became extinct as a result of the unnatural vice.
3. Portion three and four; the author continues his vindication of the “belly”.
4. Proceed with a violent attack on his correspondent particularly in portion five.
5. Ends with the simple prayer from the author for his addressee.

4.5.3 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

4.5.3.1 The homosexual practice:

The debate on “The Superiority of the Belly to the Back” opens with a sombre introduction in which an unnamed person is addressed who has a marked preference for back, or, as it strongly suggested, for homosexual practice. Al-Jāḥiẓ says: “May God preserve both of us from doubt and protect us from deviant desire and misguided passion”.⁷⁴⁷ Then he describes his opponent’s work as: “Your book, my brother, may God grant you success, in which you describe the merit of backs in a way which shows

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baḥī ‘alā al-ẓahr*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 155; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 117.

your passion, love, longing, and preference for them". He proceeds: "I have therefore embarked on this book of mine to awaken you from your deep slumber and to call you to the right way".⁷⁴⁸

Al-Jāhiz rebuts this view, firstly by adducing some religious arguments. For example, he reminds his addressee: "We have seen that the destruction of the people of Lūṭ and the people of Thamūd with the onset of eclipse and earthquake, were caused only by what they committed by choosing backs".⁷⁴⁹ He then quotes Qur'ānic verse from Sūra al-Shu'arā' (26:165-166) in which Allah mentioned the story of people of the Prophet Lūṭ. Al-Jāhiz said to his addressee: "So, God the Blessed and Exalted censured them as you see! They were condemned by God, whose wrath at the enormity of their abomination".⁷⁵⁰

4.5.3.2 The merits of belly over the back:

Al-Jāhiz rebuts this view also by dwelling at length on the various meanings of *batn* "belly" and *zahr* "back" and by given evidences from the Qur'ān, Sunna and proverbs. He says: "We begin now to mention the merits with which God characterised bellies to help one who is on his way to repentance, and a sleeper to wake up and so forth".⁷⁵¹ In this regard, al-Jāhiz shows that "belly" is used in favourable contexts; in the Qur'ān, honey is said to come forth from the bellies of bees. He then said that Prophet

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 155; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 117.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 158; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 119.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 158; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 119.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 159; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 120.

Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was born in the best *batn* (clan) of the tribe Quraysh. The insider or “belly” of parchment is better for writing on than the reverse or “back”. The cutting edge of a knife is called the “belly”. Treasure and precious stones are found in the “belly” (or the bowel of earth), and so forth. It seems here that al-Jāhiz plays on words and meaning in order to support his arguments later on.

4.5.3.3 The penalty for the fornicator:

Al-Jāhiz also speaks about the penalty for the fornicator in Islamic law as can be seen in the text of the *risāla*. For example, he tells his addressee: “Do you know that the penalty for the fornicator is eighty lashes so long as he has not married and that the penalty of the homosexual is to be burned. Both of them are immoral acts, foul deeds, sin, and impurity”.⁷⁵² This statement seems that al-Jāhiz explained about two different kind of penalty. The first one is about the fornication, and the other is about homosexuality.

We know that fornication is morally the most heinous crime that a person can commit. Therefore, Islam has held fornication as a punishable offence for its own sake, whether it is accompanied by some other offence as the use of violence or encroachment upon somebody else’s legal right, or not. The Qur’ān already said in Sūra al-Nūr (24:2):

﴿ الزانية والزاني فاجلدوا كل واحد منهما مائة جلدة ولا تأخذكم بهما رافة في دين الله إن كنتم تؤمنون بالله واليوم الآخر وليشهد عذابهما طائفة من المؤمنين ﴾

⁷⁵²*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 164; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 123.

(The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with hundred stripes, let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribes by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day, and let a party of believers witness their punishment).

4.5.3.4 The conclusion of the *Risāla*:

Finally, al-Jāḥiẓ earnestly expresses his hope that the addressee will mend his ways. He says: “Thus, I have thought to conclude my book with a simple prayer for you to safeguard thereby my reward and recompense. I hope you will repent and return after having been headstrong and obstinate”. Therefore, he hopes: “May God put us among those who behold His guidance, know His way, choose justice and apply it, and reject desire and cast it off”.⁷⁵³

4.5.4 The style of writing:

This *risāla* is among al-Jāḥiẓ’s works which can be called as “*maḥāsīn wa al-masāwi*” or “merits and fault” together with the previous *risāla*. We find that the author records oral debate in which one person praises belly while his interlocutor praises back. As we have said before that for al-Jāḥiẓ, there is no question that the Qur’ān is the most important sources for use as evidence in the construction of his argument. So, this *risāla* shows al-Jāḥiẓ’s Islamic tendency in developing his argument concerning the subject. There are three Qur’ānic verses which had been quoted by the author. The first one is the following verse:

⁷⁵³*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 166; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 125.

﴿ أتأتون الذكران من العالمين، وتذرون ما خلق لكم ربكم من أزواجكم بل أنتم قوم
عادون ﴾

(Go you in unto the males of the mankind, and leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your wives? Nay, you are a trespassing people!) Sūra al-Shu'arā' (26:165-166)

The next one is quoted when the author asserts that when God describing bees, He mentioned that from their bellies comes a honey:

﴿ يخرج من بطونها شراب مختلف ألوانه فيه شفاء للناس ﴾

(There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying color wherein is healing for men....) Sūra al-Naḥl (16:69)

Finally, in connection with God commenced His pronouncement on vice with conspicuous acts of immorality, not inconspicuous, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes this verse:

﴿ إنما حرم ربي الفواحش ما ظهر منها وما بطن ﴾

(But the things that my Lord has forbidden are *al-Fawāḥish* (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse etc.) whether committed openly or secretly) Sūra al-A'raf (7:33).

Besides these Qur'ānic quotations, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes also Ḥadīth to strengthen his argument. For instance, al-Jāḥiẓ says that it is a sin for mankind to copulate with their wife in their buttocks according to the reported Ḥadīth. Here, he quotes Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is reported to have said: (لا تأتوا النساء في محاشهن) which means: "Do not copulate with your wife in their anuses".⁷⁵⁴

In short, it should be note that it is stated nowhere that unnamed person actually advocates homosexuality: however, all we know is that he wrote this *risāla* in praise of

⁷⁵⁴ See Ibn Maja, *Sunan Ibn Maja*, No. 1924, Chapter 29, book 9.

backs. As Gelder notes, there are two possibilities can be put toward al-Jāḥiẓ regarding composition of this *risāla*: either there was nothing more to it, no question of morals and behaviours but merely a playful rhetorical exercise, performed, however, on the part of al-Jāḥiẓ, with a mixture of ludicrous arguments and deadpan seriousness. Or al-Jāḥiẓ earnestly wished to cure his correspondent of what he considers a perversity, but at the same time including some arguments that nobody would take seriously, least of all al-Jāḥiẓ himself.⁷⁵⁵

4.6 *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn* (*Risāla* on Schoolmasters)

4.6.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

As we has been mentioned earlier that it was reported that the Caliph al-Mutawakkil wished to appoint al-Jāḥiẓ as a tutor to one of his sons, but unfortunately, the Caliph refused to accept him due to al-Jāḥiẓ's extraordinary ugliness. By this event, it seems to us that al-Jāḥiẓ to have been a teacher by profession, and this circumstance, as was describe by Hirschfeld, probably induced him to lay down his tutorial experience in a *risāla* on "*al-Muʿallimīn*".⁷⁵⁶ From this point of view, we can say that al-Jāḥiẓ spent almost of his life in teaching through his writing. His fame and his *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn* and *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*, which reached Spain, is said to have brought him students from there who studied under him for several years.

⁷⁵⁵ See Gelder, *Jest and earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p. 105.

⁷⁵⁶ Hirschfeld, 'A Volume of Essays by al-Jāḥiẓ', in: *A Volume of Oriental Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1922, p. 202.

The subject of teachers has been mentioned by the author in his *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*.⁷⁵⁷ However, according to al-Ibshīhī, al-Jāḥiẓ is said to have wrote a book on teachers, in which he quoted their jokes and anecdotes and criticized them.⁷⁵⁸ In Yāqūt's list of works of al-Jāḥiẓ, there is no mention of the *risāla* which criticizing teachers, however, this *risāla* which has come down to us, al-Jāḥiẓ is more inclined to praise them and defend their profession.⁷⁵⁹ Perhaps, al-Jāḥiẓ wrote two works on teachers; one criticizing them and the other praising them, showing ambivalence, which is not unusual with him as he do with other works. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ seems to us to have been embittered by the disappointment mentioned above as well as unhappy experience in his educational work. It is remarkable to note that within the same tradition that Ibn Shahīd (4th of *hijra*) was the only author who attacked teachers and wrote against them. However, it seems to us that he is later than the time of al-Jāḥiẓ.

4.6.2 The nature of the *Risāla*:

This *risāla* originally is to be found on the margin of *al-Kāmil* by al-Mubarrad, which according to Najm, it being in disorder and it has not been edited properly.⁷⁶⁰ However, in modern days, this *risāla* can be seen in Hārūn's edition and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition with good quality in varying length.⁷⁶¹ The text of *risāla* is divided into eleven portions. The first portion entitled "*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī al-mu'allimīn*", the eight

⁷⁵⁷ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabayīn*, Vol. I, pp. 248-249.

⁷⁵⁸ Al-Ibshīhī, *al-Muṣṭaḥṣaf*, Vol. II, p. 242.

⁷⁵⁹ Yāqūt, *Mi'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-111.

⁷⁶⁰ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 50.

⁷⁶¹ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-mu'allimīn* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 43-51, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 23-39.

portion entitled “*Faṣl fī riyāda al-ṣabī*”, and ninth portion entitled “*Fī dhamm al-liwāf*”. The other portions only entitled “*Faṣl minhu*”. In 1922, Hirschfeld translated extracts from the *risāla* in his article which has been printed in *A Volume of Oriental Studies* presented to Edward G. Brown in memory of his 60th birthday.⁷⁶² In addition, Pellat also translated some portion of the *risāla* into French, and it is now available in English under following title “Schoolmasters”.⁷⁶³

Najm said that the text of the *risāla* is by no means the whole work and it appears to be extracts made from the original book of *al-Muʿallimīn*. We would agree with Najm in this aspect, because we have found that one portion of the *risāla* has under it no more than the following sentence:⁷⁶⁴

- وهذان الشاعران جاهليان بعيدان من التوليد وبنجوة من التكلف.

(And these two poets are pre-Islamic and far from *al-tawlīd* (modernised language) and safe from *al-takalluf* (artificiality)).⁷⁶⁵

This sentence, which comes in separate portion, is put, immediately, after al-Jāḥiẓ discusses about Ibn al-Muqaffa^o and al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhīdī, and criticises them. Najm maintains that this sentence have been cut off from whole chapter on two pre-Islamic poets.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶² See Hirschfeld, *A Volume of Essays by al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 200-209. It was also translated into German by O. Rescher, *Excerpte und Übersetzungen aus deem Schriften des Gāḥiẓ*, Stuttgart, 1931.

⁷⁶³ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 114-116.

⁷⁶⁴ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 44, ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 35.

⁷⁶⁵ For the other meaning of *al-Tawlīd* and *al-Takalluf*, see Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 837 & p. 1098.

⁷⁶⁶ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 52.

In addition, we think that some paragraph of the *risāla* has been mixed up with other work of al-Jāhiz particularly *Risāla fī madh al-tujjār wa dhamm ʿamal al-sulṭān* and *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ṣadr*. This based on the Pellat's comment concerning the text of the *risāla* when he admits that the *risāla* was mostly lost.⁷⁶⁷ This means that the last surviving part of *risāla* consists of remarks which probably belong to another work. Indeed, by referring to the text, one could consider that the paragraph which discuss about the question of trade and merchants probably been taken from that *risāla*. However, we are agree with Pellat, when he admits that to judge by what survives the loss is regrettable, for the aim of the *risāla* seems to have been influence education in the direction of producing 'gentlemen'.⁷⁶⁸

4.6.3 The structure of the *Risāla*:

The structure of this *risāla* can be seen as follows:

1. Note on the books and their importance.
2. Digression to *al-Hifz* (the memory).
3. Then proceeds to the subject of teachers.
4. Then the author embarks on the problem of children's education.
5. There are teachers for everything that man needs to know.
6. Followed by a list of subjects thought.
7. Note on homosexuality (sodomy).
8. Note on the importance of *Sulṭān*.

⁷⁶⁷Pellat, *The life and works of Jāhiz*, p. 20 & 114.

⁷⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 20.

9. Note on trade and merchants particularly on the Quraysh.

10. The *risāla* ends with note on *Adab*.

4.6.4 Analysis of the main issue and the style of writing:

The content of the *risāla* appears in the guise of refutation directed against a person who attacked teachers a class and used abusive language against them. Therefore, it seems to us that al-Jāḥiẓ is trying to give them their due rights and to do them justice. The author starts by talking about the books and their importance. Then he digresses into *al-Ḥifẓ* (memory) in which we find him detested learning by heart which according to him, would paralyse the faculty of thinking and would stifle intelligence. Somewhat earlier in the essay he speaks on the important of writing as a means of communication with absent people, keeping records of past events, and the administration of outlying province by the home department. He then precedes with the main theme of the *risāla*, i.e. the subject of teachers.

4.6.4.1 The *Mu'allim* and *Mu'addib*:

There are several terms designated the teacher: *mu'allim*, *mu'addib*, *mukattib*, etc. *Mu'allim* (teacher) meant one who caused another to acquire *ilm*, knowledge. *Mu'addib* (tutor) meant the teacher of *adab*, humanistic studies, discipline of the mind and manner. It is clear that al-Jāḥiẓ defines these two terms which according to him, *mu'allim* and *mu'addib* are derived from *ilm* (knowledge) and *adab* (manner). He states the former

being the root and the latter the branch, but often generalised to include both. *‘Ilm* enables us to distinguish between what is noble and what is base, lawful and unlawful, excessive and fair, and to choose between the better of two good things and the lesser of two evils.⁷⁶⁹

Al-Jāhiz classifies teachers into two categories, according to the class of students they teach and the knowledge they possess. He says: “Teachers, as I believe, are of two grades: among them are men who were raised above the teaching of children of the special. Some were raised from teaching children of the special to that of the children of kings themselves, who are prepared for the caliphate. How you think that one like ‘Alī b. Hamza al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/805) and Muhammad al-Mustanşir, known as Quṭrub (d. 206/821), and the like, could be describe as fools. This saying is not true on these and the grade below them, but if you mean the teachers of village schools (*Katātib al-qurā*), there are lower as well as upper grades in every class. Therefore, they are not different in this from others”.⁷⁷⁰

It seems that in his discussion on teachers, al-Jāhiz distinguishes two grades; in general. In his classification, he seems to take two facts into consideration; the fact that people are mainly of two classes, common and special, and secondly the fact that knowledge of man is an essential factor in raising him up in social estimation.

⁷⁶⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-mū‘allimīn* in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 34, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 29.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 34; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 29.

Al-Jāhiz's attitude toward a system of education in his time can be divided into two categories: 1) the education of certain special class of people which consisted of all branches of knowledge, whether science, art, sport, games, etc. 2) the education of people in general.⁷⁷¹ It is meant that teaching ordinary people a handcraft by which they could earn their living, in order to become cultivators, builders and tailors, etc. In this context, al-Jāhiz said that teachers are needed for all subjects which are to be learnt, such as, writing, reckoning, law, the Qur'ān, grammar, prosody, poetry, history, horsemanship, games, astronomy, music, medicine, mathematics, archery, agriculture, commerce, agriculture, jewellery, tailoring, bootmaking, dyeing, bookbinding, training of animals, etc.

Afterwards al-Jāhiz proceeds to discuss on the children education. For instance he advice to the schoolmasters that a boy should not be taught more grammar than he requires for correct speech in order to avoid solecism and common ignorance in writing, reciting poetry, and making statement. He claims that too much grammar would distract boy attention from better things and more than that prejudice his mind against dialectic and historical matters which are superior.⁷⁷²

The same point of view had been mentioned by the author in his *Risāla fī ṣinā'at al-quwwād*⁷⁷³ in which the author directed to the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim and he intended to

⁷⁷¹ See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāhiz*, p. 50.

⁷⁷² Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-mu'allimīn* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 38, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 31.

⁷⁷³ 'Uyūn al-Sūd used *Risāla fī ṭabā'at al-quwwād* as a title for this *risāla*. See 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 267-277. Bürgel admits that *Risāla fī ṣinā'at al-quwwād* or "Treatise on the crafts of the masters", a misleading title. See, Bürgel, *Repetitive structures in early Arabic prose*, p. 59.

persuade him to arrange for diversified education of his son. From the text of the *risāla*, for example, after quoting some statements by well-known authorities about the important and the power of speech, al-Jāhiz comes to the main point: “O Commander of the Faithful, see to it that your sons be instructed in all branches of *adab*, for, if you let them specialize in one thing only, and they are then asked about something else, they will not be able to give good answer.”⁷⁷⁴ The rest of *risāla* is quotations of some lines of verses in the *ghazal* with representatives of ten other professions such as a physician, a tailor, a farmer, a bath-attendant, a street-sweeper, a wine-merchant, a cook, a valet, and etc. The text, however, maintains its disguise and ends with the formula: “The Caliph laughed so that he fell on his back, then he called in the tutor of his sons and ordered him to instruct them in all sciences”.⁷⁷⁵

Next chapter of *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn*, the author speaks about the degree of intelligence in mankind especially among children. It is important to note here that al-Jāhiz quotes Qurʾānic verse to support his argument regarding this matter. In this regard, he writes: “Boys, it said, differ as to their degree of intelligence as well of slackness and stupidity. This is alluded to in the Qurʾān”.⁷⁷⁶ Here, we find him quoted this Qurʾānic verse:

﴿ولو جعلنا ملكا لجعلناه رجلا﴾

(And had We appointed him an angel, We indeed would have made him a man)
Sūra al-Anʿām. (6:9).

⁷⁷⁴ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ṣināʿat al-quwwāʾil*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, pp. 379-393, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, pp. 267-277.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 393, see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 277.

⁷⁷⁶ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-muʿallimīn* in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 37, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 30.

This verse leads al-Jāḥiẓ to conclude that: “This is because some persons are more intelligent than others. Allah comes to the aid of boys by causing their intellectual faculties to approach the intellect of accomplished scholars”.⁷⁷⁷

4.6.4.2 The question of homosexuality:

From the topic of teachers and teaching, we suddenly come across a chapter on the question of homosexuality (*al-Liwāf*). We think there is no relationship between these two issues. Therefore, according to Najm, this part of *risāla* is not complete and it has probably been taken from another work.⁷⁷⁸ We think that it might be from *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ‘alā al-ṣadr* in which al-Jāḥiẓ focuses his discussion on this practise. However, the discussion on this subject in *Risāla fī al-mu‘allimīn* consists of two paragraphs only. For instance, al-Jāḥiẓ describes: “The hateful nature of sodomy is revealed in the fact that Allah offers no compensation in hereafter for any desire to neglect propagation in this world, although He promises wine to those who eschew it here (in this world)”.⁷⁷⁹ Here, he quotes this Qur’ānic verse:

﴿ لا يصدعون عنها ولا ينزفون ﴾

(Where from they will get neither any aching of the head, nor any intoxication)
Sūra al-Wāqī‘a (56:19).

⁷⁷⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 37; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 30.

⁷⁷⁸ See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 53.

⁷⁷⁹ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-mu‘allimīn* in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 43, ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 34.

He then interprets this verse: “He (Allah) means to convey that the wines of paradise doest not intoxicate, and there is no overcrowding of men with men or women with women”.⁷⁸⁰

Afterwards, al-Jāhīz tells us about the nature of this group of people as expressed in the Qur’ān that Allah created men and women and placed between them the sources of mutual love and attachment. Allah joined men and women one to another in matrimony, but vice turned their relation upside down.

Then al-Jāhīz turned back to discussion of the teacher. He mentions that a most eloquent and accomplished teacher was ‘Abdullah b. al-Muqaffa’. Moreover, he gives us a full description of the personality of Ibn al-Muqaffa’. He describes him as follows: “He was of generous nature and elegant and courteous. When he spoke in poetry, he could vie with a competitor without labouring to improve upon it in any way. He was also circumspect in transmitting the utterances of other persons without disclosing either deceit or trustworthiness”.⁷⁸¹

4.6.4.3 The important of the *Sulṭān*:

Next chapter is a shortish account of the important of the *sulṭān*, who is, according to him, like a shepherd to his people. He states: “Know that the most intelligent person is the *sulṭān*, and whoever seeks intercourse with him must find the right way to present his

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 43; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 34.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 44; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 34.

plea. A monarch's favour towards his subjects is not more marked than the attachment of an owner to his cattle".⁷⁸²

4.6.4.4 The question of trade and merchants:

Quite unpredictably, the writer now moves on for next discussion which is on the question of trade and merchants. Concerning this topic, al-Jāhiz sheds some description on the Quraysh. He claims that the Quraysh are people whom Allah kept free from blemish, but allowed their originally fine constitutions to deteriorate. He then argues that if people knew their high station in commerce, they would notice the difference of their way. According to al-Jāhiz, the Quraysh were brave and pious, they refrained from rapine and ravishing women, and did not bury their daughters alive, etc. Al-Jāhiz also mentions that the Qurasyh were travellers and depended on certain seasons and the establishment of cities, they were obliged to work for their living, held the *ḥāf* and travelled to the kings with their wares. This statement refers to the Qur'ānic verse in which Allah describes the Qurasyh as follows:

﴿ لإيلاف قريش ، إيلافهم رحلة الشتاء والصيف ، فليعبدوا رب هذا البيت ، الذي أطعمهم

من جوع و أمنهم من خوف ﴾

(For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Qurasyh, their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer. Let them adore the Lord of this House, who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear of danger). Sūra Qurasyh, (106:1-4)

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 45; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 35.

The idea of trade and merchants has been discussed by al-Jāḥiẓ in several occasions of his works. For example, his *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm ʿamal al-sulṭān* which is addressed to a correspondent one of whose friends had spoken in praise of officials. So, al-Jāḥiẓ wrote this *risāla* in order to praise of tradesman and on the other hand disparagement of officialdom. He pointed out that the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is known to have been a trader, and the very name Quraysh is derived from trade (*taqrīsh*).⁷⁸³ As a result, according to Najm, this chapter, together with the above one, is completely out of place. This is because; the reader may wonder why al-Jāḥiẓ should discuss so many topics in one work, and without any apparent connection between them.⁷⁸⁴ However, the reason perhaps, lies in the confusion caused by the selected extracts which were presented in this chapter. In short, we can say that kind of composition represent one of the trademarks of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing i.e, *al-Istiṭrād* in which he swithes from topic to topic by simple association of ideas.

The *risāla* at that point moves to its conclusion with the rebuke to bear a pure love for *Adab* in order to draw out its hidden treasures even at the risk of material sacrifices. Here, he quotes these two following Qur'ānic verses:

﴿ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴾

(O My Lord! Leave me not single (childless), though You are the Best of the inheritors).
Sūra al-Anbiyā' (21:89).

⁷⁸³ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī madḥ al-tujjār wa dhamm ʿamal al-sulṭān*, in: 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 197.

⁷⁸⁴ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 54.

Al-Jāhīz asserts that as a result of this prayer, Allah awarded Prophet Zakariyyā a beautiful son. The author then quotes final Qur'ānic verse in this *risāla* which related to the above mention verse:

﴿وليس الذكر كالأنثى﴾

(And the male is not like the female). Sūra al-An'ām (4:36).

4.7 *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm* (Classes of Singers)

4.7.1 Background of the *Risāla*:

This *risāla* is closely connected with *Risāla fī al-qiyān*. It is based on the art of song (*al-ghinā'*) in Arabic society particularly in the Abbasid period existed within the group of *al-qiyān*.⁷⁸⁵ Yāqūt did not mention this *risāla* under the list of al-Jāhīz's work. He only mentions *Kitāb al-mughannīm* which would be the title of this *risāla*.⁷⁸⁶ However, Sandūbī cites two works of al-Jāhīz; one *Kitāb al-mughannīm wa al-ghinā' wa al-ṣan'a*, and the other *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*.⁷⁸⁷ *Kitāb* or *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm* seems to have been one of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāhīz which thrown an interesting light on professional grouping. A selected portion of this *risāla* was published for the first time by Sāsī al-Maghribī and it appeared again in better edition in 'Abd al-Salām

⁷⁸⁵It has been said that almost these *qayyīnāt* were all foreigners and they sang probably to foreign airs. Some of them came from Persia, or more likely al-Hīra, and even Byzantium. See Farmer, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Ghinā', Vol. II, pp. 1072-1074.

⁷⁸⁶Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 110.

⁷⁸⁷Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāhīz*, p. 129.

Muhammad Hārūn collection. The latest edition we have is ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition.⁷⁸⁸ It seems to us that this piece was designed as preface to the original work which indeed not extant. The length of the *risāla* is in six consecutive pages only with no division other than paragraphs. It starts with the following title: “*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*”.

The date of composition of this *risāla* is very clear when the author himself mentioned the year 215 A.H. where he start writing this work.⁷⁸⁹ However, Najm argued that it is possible that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote the introduction after completing the main work.⁷⁹⁰ Pellat, on the other hand claims that al-Jāḥiẓ has in mind to write a sort of musical almanac for the year 251 A.H., leaving blanks which he will fill in later but which no one else is to be allowed to fill in for him. For this reason, al-Jāḥiẓ resolves to deposit a copy with someone for safe keeping, but unfortunately the text is lost.⁷⁹¹

4.7.2 The scheme of the *Risāla*:

Referring to the text of the *risāla*, Najm, for instance, divided it into this scheme:⁷⁹²

1. To classify singer according to their: a) instruments b) school or method of singing c) peculiarities and d) reputation.

⁷⁸⁸ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*, in Sāsī al-Maghribī, *Majmūʿ rasāʾil*, pp. 186-190; in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 131-136; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 97-101.

⁷⁸⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 134.

⁷⁹⁰ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 40.

⁷⁹¹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 125.

⁷⁹² Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 40.

2. To give each classes its name accordingly.
3. To be concerned only with contemporary singers and particularly those who lived in Baghdad.
4. To leave a space after each chapter for new singers who might appear and had not been included or to drop who might lose their reputation as singers by changing their place to the class that befit with them.
5. Not to be partial in judgement and prefer one to other without reason.

4.7.3 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

4.7.3.1 Branches of knowledge:

In the opening chapter, al-Jāhiz talks about branches of knowledge. The old philosophers, according to him, said that the origin of arts from which all sciences had derived, are four namely astronomy, geometry, chemistry and the art of melodies. He claims that the art of melodies contains its parts, syllables, divisions and themes which form harmony. Al-Jāhiz states that he was going to give only the name of these four origins without going into details.⁷⁹³ This point of view can be assumed as a foundation for further study on the field which have been develop by later scholars such as al-Farābī (d. 339/950), Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111).⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹³ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīn*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 131; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 97.

⁷⁹⁴ Among al-Farābī works is *Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-ʿulūm wa tartībuhā* (A book on the enumeration and classification of the sciences), twice translated into Latin. *Maqāla fī taqāsīm al-ḥikma wa al-ʿulūm* (Discourse on the classification of the philosophical and other sciences) is among Ibn Sīnā's works on this field, while al-Ghazzālī through his *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* (The revivification of the religious sciences).

In this preface, al-Jāhiz delineates a complete scheme for the *risāla* itself. He does not embark upon a discussion of the subject of singers and their classes as is to be expected from the title of the work, but gives a general idea of the scope of the *risāla*, its aims, method and style.

4.7.3.2 The science and music:

Al-Jāhiz discusses about the science and music which he refers to al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 175/791) as founder of Arabic music. He says: "Their knowledge of it was intuitive or based on Persian or Pahlavi traditions, until al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhīdī made a study of poetry and its cadence and scansion, identified and classified the various metres used by Arabs, and collected them together in a book which he entitled *al-ʿArūḍ*".⁷⁹⁵ He continues: "When he had mastered and perfected this branch of knowledge, he set to work to analyse melodies and musical sounds; and after that some trial and error he established rules, which his successor adopted and elaborated".⁷⁹⁶

The author next refers to the writing of Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 235/850), who according to him, was better equipped than al-Khalīl b. Ahmad al-Farāhīdī, and to many musicians who came after him. He proceeds, however, to discuss the history of music beginning with Islamic times.

⁷⁹⁵ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīn*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 132-133; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 98.

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p.133 ; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 98.

Al-Jāḥiẓ also mentions one particular type of singers who made repentance namely Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ṣāliḥ, Ahmad b. Sallām and Ṣāliḥ Mawlā Rashīda.⁷⁹⁷ However, one understands that this respect and admiration for the class of singer made al-Jāḥiẓ, as he says, devote a whole work to them.

4.7.4 The style of writing

A study of this *risāla* gives us indication of the character of the original work on *al-Mughannīm* for which it was presumably designed as an introduction. Concerning the style of writing of this *risāla*, as was described by the author himself, is to mix between seriousness with jest, particularising with hinting. The text of the *risāla* starts without traditional preamble as has been used by al-Jāḥiẓ in other work. In addition, there is no quotation from the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, poetry or proverbs except a few anecdotes. The rest of paragraphs run on the normal type of al-Jāḥiẓ's style of writing including the used of *al-Istitrād*. It is found also that all his arguments begin with 'they say', 'they said', 'he say', etc. Therefore, one cannot be sure whether al-Jāḥiẓ agrees with what 'they said' or not.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p.135-136 ; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 101.

4.8 *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb* (An attack on Secretaries).

4.8.1 Background and the significance of the *Risāla*:

It is reported that the *Kātib* (Secretary)⁷⁹⁸ were considered next to kings in his value and position. This post is the first official profession al-Jāḥiẓ is known to practised during al-Ma'mūn reign, however, he resigned after three days.⁷⁹⁹ The *Kuttāb* had a great influence on the culture and the whole literature of Islamic society. Their high position in the Abbasid court gave them great privilege over the fields of knowledge, whether in the court or outside it.⁸⁰⁰ Before al-Jāḥiẓ, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib already wrote a *risāla* addressed to secretaries. Then, Ibn Qutayba's *Adab al-kātib*, was the first of several similar works on correct linguistic usage, and followed by *Adab al-kuttāb*, the work of Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī.⁸⁰¹

Due to the importance of this job, al-Jāḥiẓ offers his view concerning those people who are working as *Kuttāb*. Yāqūt mentioned two works of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning *al-Kuttāb*, one criticising them "*Kitāb risālatih fī dhamm al-kuttāb*" and the other praising

⁷⁹⁸ *Kātib* (pl. *Kuttāb*) or in English is secretary. This term was used in the early Islamic century for every person whose role or function consisted of writing of drafting official letters or administrative documents for the caliphate and for those of its provincial successor states. For more information on the development of this jobs in the classical era, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Kātib*, Vol. IV, pp. 754-760; see also, *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. Secretaries, Vol. II, p. 698. On the other hand, Najm suggests 'the clerks' is the best term for the *Kuttāb*. See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 131. On contrary, Hutchins thinks of the attorney of modern times as being similar to the Arab institution of *Kātib*. See Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 6.

⁷⁹⁹ Yāqūt, *Mufjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 79.

⁸⁰⁰ See al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-ʿshā*, Vol. I, pp. 177-178.

⁸⁰¹ See *Encyclopedia of Arabic literature*, art. Secretaries, Vol. II, p. 699.

them “*Kitāb risālatih fī madh al-kuttāb*”.⁸⁰² This is to show the author’s ambivalence concerning the issue which is not unusual with him. In other words, it shows us the author double-minded i.e. praising and at the same time condemning various groups of people. However, only the first is survived in which al-Jāḥiẓ more inclined in criticised them. One may assume that al-Jāḥiẓ writes this *risāla* as a result of his anger over this group of people particularly when he resigned from this post after three days of his appointment. In addition, it was reported that al-Mutawakkil was unhappy with some of his *Kuttāb* who are working with him in several department. For instance, he replaces ‘Ubaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān instead of Muhammad b. al-Faḍl at *Dīwān al-tawqī’*^c and he also appointed Mūsā b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hishām as *Kātib* at *Dīwān al-Kharāj* instead of Najāḥ b. Salama, etc. As a result of this situation, al-Jāḥiẓ writes this *risāla* to show his support toward the caliph’s policy. Thus, we can say also that the *risāla* is combination of ethical and political issue and is written in the period of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232/847-247/861).

The text of the *risāla* can be found in Hārūn’s and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection under the heading “*Kitāb fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*” with varying length. There is no division of the text other than paragraphs. The *risāla* is also available in English under following title “Censure of the Conduct of Secretaries”.⁸⁰³ Therefore, the study of the text of the *risāla* will be based on the Hārūn’s and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s collection, and all English quotations in the text relating to the *risāla* are from Hutchins’s translation.

⁸⁰²Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 109.

⁸⁰³ Hutchins, *Nine Essays of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 55-66.

4.8.2 Analysis of the *risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ regrets the fact that the class of official *kuttāb* of his time were preoccupied with false education and appearances, following the Persian example in extravagance so much, so that they hated and despised everything Arabic, even the learning of the Qur'ān, which is according to al-Jāḥiẓ, the best example of the language. This is clearly stated when al-Jāḥiẓ argued: "What do you think of a group among whom was the first apostate from Islam?". He then says: "Part of proof for that is no *kātib* (secretary) has ever been seen to make the Qur'ān his evening companion, its study his exegesis, gaining knowledge of religion his emblem, or memorizing reports of the Prophet's words and deeds his prop. If one of them is found to mention some of that he does it awkwardly and there is no grace to it when it comes from him".⁸⁰⁴ More than that, al-Jāḥiẓ says, it would be impossible for him to pronounce it properly. It seems here that the *kuttāb*, who were a mixture of Arabs and non-Arabs, especially Persians, were adopting new styles, whether in manners, appearance or writing. This is, according to Najm, caused the criticism of al-Jāḥiẓ.⁸⁰⁵

For example, al-Jāḥiẓ points out their vanity about Persian culture, saying that as soon as anyone of them is appointed and learns a few anecdotes and saying of Buzurgemhr, Ardashir, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib or Ibn al-Muqaffa^c and holds the books of Mazdak as a basic knowledge and *Kalīla wa Dimna* his treasure, he feels as if he became capable of knowing everything.

⁸⁰⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 194; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 145.

⁸⁰⁵ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 132.

In his attack, al-Jāḥiẓ seems to reject not only the social manners of the *Kuttāb* of his time, but also their school of thought who was distinguished in connection with official writing letters and administrative works. Al-Jāḥiẓ, however, did not deny the good qualities of their merits. It seems that his attack was not directed against individuals, but against the whole class of *Kuttāb*, their culture, way of thinking and manners. For example, al-Jāḥiẓ says that the relation of the *Kuttāb* with the Caliph finished with them, he got rid of them. Away from their own field, al-Jāḥiẓ says, they worth nothing, they are at the same level with the common people. Besides their own profession, they can do nothing, because it is not suitable for any of them to be anything else, after having been a *Kuttāb*. They may enjoy a good influence among the special people, al-Jāḥiẓ says, but they hate each other. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes other theologians who criticised the superficial knowledge of the *Kuttāb*.⁸⁰⁶

As for Islamic culture and traditional knowledge, al-Jāḥiẓ says, they despised it and put it behind their backs. They never approached the Qur'ān or tried to quote it. If anyone of them tried to learn it, the rest of his class would despised him, but even if he could learn it, al-Jāḥiẓ says, it would be impossible for him to pronounce it properly.⁸⁰⁷

The closing section of the *risāla* ends with al-Jāḥiẓ point of view concerning this group of people. He says: "Had we related all the stories of this type and all those analogous and similar, the work would have become long and wearied the sympathetic

⁸⁰⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 202-208; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 151-155.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 194; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 145.

reader. We have limited ourselves to a portion of the material, to part in place of the whole".⁸⁰⁸

4.9 Conclusion:

As we have seen above that this is a part of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ which can be considered as an essay on the questions of social groups and emotion. All these *rasā'il* have been the object of our extensive analysis. Al-Jāḥiẓ displays his remarkable talent for human observation, for instance, his observation on certain issues in social life of the Abbasid society. In addition, as we have seen in this chapter, the author has a critical approach to evaluate his idea in all circumstances and mix together with other elements such al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, etc.

Through all these works, it is the most helpful in revealing a side of al-Jāḥiẓ's interests in the social issue of his time. *Risāla fī al-qiyān* and *Risāla fī ṭabaqāt al-mughannīm*, for instance, shows us that al-Jāḥiẓ highlights the social problems arises particularly after the Abbasid's era saw the centre of musical life which was transferred from the Ḥijāz. As a result, the *Qiyān* or professional musicians' amateurs appeared which could cause ravages among her admirers among the people in the Abbasid society, as al-Jāḥiẓ recorded. In addition, these two *risāla* also shows that al-Jāḥiẓ was the first writer who began to record the custom of celebrating festive occasions. The author, for instance, showed his interest in recording the daily life of professionals, artisans and etc. On the other hand, it cannot be denied also that in this group of the *rasā'il*, the author

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 209; *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 155.

presents a systematic argument against other people or parties. This is clear, for instance, in his *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb* where al-Jāḥiẓ denounces them for their arrogance, their reliance on Persian lore and precedent and their contempt for the Qur'ān and so forth.

On the subject of women, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ's attitude towards the question of women is not merely that of an observer or reporter, but also of a critic. This aspect can be seen clearly in the text of *Risāla fī wa al-nisā'*. Through this *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ provides us with numerous insights into the social lives of women. The significance of this *risāla* emerges from the fact that almost half of what history should discuss is left out concerning this group that represents half of any society.

Moreover, some other social phenomena such sodomy and adultery can be found in *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān*, *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn 'alā al-ẓahr* and part of *Risāla fī al-mu'allimīn*. Through these *rasā'il*, al-Jāḥiẓ does not fail to portray social manners in the Abbasid life in his time. In some case, al-Jāḥiẓ claims that there was another person who involved him in the argument, in order to create another side to stand for the opposite point of view. This is obvious from an analysis on *Risāla fī mufākharat al-jawārī wa al-ghilmān* and *Risāla fī tafḍīl al-baṭn 'alā al-ẓahr*. In short, we can say that it would be difficult to find anywhere in classical Arabic prose literature a more vivid picture of social environment than we find in the work of al-Jāḥiẓ. In addition, his examples in giving the groups of professions a special place in Arabic literature, was followed by later writers, who showed the same interest. For instance, in the fourth/tenth

century, writers like al-Tha'ālibī and al-Tanūkhī quote al-Jāhiz in various occasion on themes pertaining to professional groups, classes and other characteristics of people.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *RASĀ'IL* CONCERNING THE SEMI-THEOLOGY ISSUES

5.1 Introduction:

The main purpose of this part is to cast light on the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the semi-theology⁸⁰⁹ issues which mainly related to an account of Mu'tazilite doctrine. As it has been mentioned earlier in this thesis⁸¹⁰ that although Mu'tazilite scholars had written many works about Mu'tazila were lost, but some of the material concerning this school of thought could be found in al-Jāḥiẓ's works.

Manṣūr describes the works of al-Jāḥiẓ on Mu'tazilite ideology as a kind of substitute for the lost works of other scholars of the Mu'tazila.⁸¹¹ For instance, from the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the doctrine of Mu'tazila, we shall see a vivid picture of the

⁸⁰⁹ The word 'semi' means half, partly or almost. However, the usage of this word in designations of heresies, sect, and school of thought, expressing partial adherence to the tenets or theories connected by the second element of the compound. For detailed linguistic usage of 'semi', see Simpson, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XIV, pp. 944-950. The word 'theology' refers to the rational analysis of a religious faith or a system of theoretical principle, especially an impractical or rigid ideology. Whilst, the term 'Islamic theology' is defined by al-Ghazzālī as only the study of God; it has four main topics: the existence and basic nature of God, His attributes, His works and His prophet Muhammad together with his teachings concerning God and eschatological matters. For the term 'theology' see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, p. 1266; and for 'Islamic theology' see Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtisād fi al-ʿItiqād*, Maktabat al-Ḥusayn al-Tijāriyya, Cairo, undated, pp. 3-4.

⁸¹⁰ Please refer to the Chapter one of this thesis, p. 44.

⁸¹¹ Manṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 180.

Mu'tazila theological arguments and discussions represented in his writing. Based on this point of view, this part of the thesis will highlight some of these elements from the selected *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ.

When describing the Mu'tazila, Watt obviously describes it, in some sense, as the school of rational or liberal theologian and they seemed to be closer to the occidental outlook. Because of this reason, it attracts the attention of European scholars during the nineteenth century.⁸¹² From this point of view, it would better to bear in mind that it is not our aim in this thesis to prove that al-Jāḥiẓ was a Mu'tazilī thinker, nor is it not our purpose to look at the reasons why many of the Mu'tazila views were rejected by the main body of Sunnite Muslims. On the contrary, our aim is only to elaborate al-Jāḥiẓ's perspective concerning the issues, which relates to the Abbasid society at his time and at the same time to shed some light on al-Jāḥiẓ's contribution to Islamic thought.

Pellat listed nine *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the subject of Mu'tazila's doctrine, which in some extent contains the meaning of semi-theology or semi-religious.⁸¹³ However, this thesis offers only three *risāla* for extensive reading and analysis in the hope of gaining some insight into al-Jāḥiẓ's school of thought in general. The works to be treated in this section are; *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-mushabbiha* and *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*. It is important to note here that *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh* will be taken for discussion in connection with *Risāla fī al-*

⁸¹² Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 209.

⁸¹³ The rest of al-Jāḥiẓ's works in this category are as follows: *Risāla fī faḍilat ṣinā'at al-kalām*, *Kitāb al-masā'il wa al-jawābāt fī al-mā'rifa*, *Risāla fī al-akḥbār wa kayf taṣiḥḥ*, *Risāla ilā Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād yukhbiruh fīhā bi kitāb al-futyā*, *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh*, see Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 14-16, and Pellat, 'al-Jāḥiẓ', in: *Abbasid Belles-Letters*, pp. 86-88.

shārib wa al-mashrūb. Whilst, *Risāla fī nāfy al-tashbīh* will be discussed together with *Risāla fī al-radd °alā al-mushabbihā* because these two works are on the same subject

5.2 *Risāla fī hujaj al-nubuwwa* (Proofs of Prophecy):

5.2.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was born on Monday 12th Rabī° al-Awwal (2nd August 570 A.D.), at Mecca, to the noble family of the Quraysh. When he forty years old, he received al-Wahy (the Divine call), this was when he was in his retreat in Hirā' cave. It was the first Revelation and the beginning of the prophethood of Muhammad and he became the Prophet of Islam.⁸¹⁴ However, Islamic history told us that some people did not accept his *nubuwwa* (prophecy),⁸¹⁵ but the triumph of Islam at Medina, followed by the conquest of Mecca, put an end to such reservation.⁸¹⁶

There are several Muslim authors who have written interesting works concerning the subject of *nubuwwa* and its distinctive signs particularly writers from the Abbasid era when most Muslim's scholars are at the time get in touch with the Greek philosopher.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁴ See *Encyclopaedia of Seerah*, Vol. I, p. 17.

⁸¹⁵ *Nubuwwa* is derived from word *Nabī* (Prophet) and distinctive signs i.e. (*°alāmāt, dalā'il, imārāt al-nubuwwa*). See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Nubuwwa*, Vol. VIII, pp. 93-96.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. VIII, p. 96.

⁸¹⁷ There are some work which had been written by later Muslim authors on the subject of *Nubuwwa* (prophecy), for instance, *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa* by Abū Na°im Ahmad b. Abdullah al-Aṣbahānī (d. 430 A.H.) and *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa* by Abū Bakr Ahmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066). However, both books were not survived. The only work of al-Mawardī (d. 450/1058), *Kitāb °lām al-nubuwwa* and *°Iṣnat al-anbiyā'* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), was survived. See Ḥajji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓumūn*, Vol. I, p. 760. For detailed view on the prophecy in Islam, see F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1958; see also *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Nubuwwa*, Vol. VIII, pp. 93-96.

Al-Jāhiz, for instance, as a famous Mu'tazila's scholar at the time, had contributed some of his work on the subject especially concerning the distinctive signs of Muhammad's prophecy. Referring to Yāqūt's list of the work of al-Jāhiz, there are two works of this author which related to subject of *nubuwwa* namely *Risāla fī al-nabī wa al-mutanabbi'* and *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*.⁸¹⁸ However, as far as we are aware, only the latter had survived which will be the main subject for this extensive study.

The significance of the *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa* lies in the fact that it constitutes a central point at the subject matter which the author elaborates the reasons (*Ḥujaj*) of the *nubuwwa* as we shall see later on. In addition, it can be said that this *risāla*, which presented here is one of the earliest works on the subject from the Mu'tazila's perspective and is among the best study on the subject of *nubuwwa* as described by al-Ḥājirī.⁸¹⁹

5.2.2 The title of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāhiz had already mentioned in two occasions in his *al-Ḥayawān* regarding the title of this work which seems to be the same as the *risāla* under discussion here. The first one is in his introduction, when he named as *Kitāb al-ḥujja fī tathbīl al-nubuwwa*⁸²⁰ and, in other occasion, he named it only as *Kitāb al-ḥujja*.⁸²¹ However, in later tradition, Ibn

⁸¹⁸ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-108.

⁸¹⁹ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāhiz ḥayātuh wa āhārūh*, p. 316.

⁸²⁰ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 16.

⁸²¹ The title of the *risāla* has been mentioned by al-Jāhiz when he writes about the story from the Qur'an concerning the elephant and the *Abābīl* (flight) of birds in *Ṣūra al-Fīl* (105: 3). See al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. VII, p. 61.

Rāwandī, one of al-Jāḥiẓ's opponents, claimed that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote the book on prophecy, which he called it as *al-Akḥbār wa ithbāt al-nubuwwa*.⁸²² Afterwards, al-Murtaḍā in his *al-Munya wa al-amal* named it as *Kitāb fi ithbāt al-nubuwwa*.⁸²³ Yāqūt, on the other hand, is the only scholar mentions in his list of the works of al-Jāḥiẓ which he called it as *Kitāb al-ḥujr wa al-nubuwwa*.⁸²⁴ However, in modern times, al-Ḥājirī for example, assumes that both al-Murtaḍā and Yāqūt are mistaken when they mentioned about the works of al-Jāḥiẓ.⁸²⁵ He suggests that the correct reading of the title is *Kitāb al-ḥujja fī tathbīt al-nubuwwa*.⁸²⁶

Pellat and Brockelmann, on the other hand, only named this *risāla* as *Kitāb ḥujja (ḥujaj) al-nubuwwa*.⁸²⁷ Nevertheless, by referring to Sandūbī's list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work, we find that there are two works of al-Jāḥiẓ on this subject matter with different titles. The first one is *Kitāb al-ḥujjah fī tathbīt al-nubuwwa* and the other is *Kitāb al-ḥajr wa al-nubuwwa*.⁸²⁸ In this case, we assume that Sandūbī is seemingly thinks that this two works are on the different subject.

5.2.3 The text of the *Risāla*:

The text of *risāla* is divided into eighteen portions. The first portion entitled "*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*", followed by the second portion entitled "*Faṣl*

⁸²² Al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār wa al-radd*, p.111.

⁸²³ Al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya wa al-Amal*, p. 162.

⁸²⁴ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol XVI, p. 108.

⁸²⁵ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 316.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁸²⁷ See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 15; Brockelmann, *Tārīkh al-adab al-ʿArabī*, Vol. III, p. 112.

⁸²⁸ Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 129.

minhu fī al-iḥtijāj li al-jamʿ ʿalā qirāʾāt Zayd. The last portion comes with the heading “*Faṣl fī dhikr aklāq al-Nabī (p.b.u.h.)*”. Selected part of this *risāla* has been translated in Pellat’s book under the title “Proofs of prophecy”.⁸²⁹ Now, the *risāla* is available in English under the heading “On the Prophet’s Authenticity”.⁸³⁰ Therefore, the study of the text of the *risāla* will be based on the Hārūn’s and ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s collection, and for translation of the text I will rely on Colville’s translation.

5.2.4 The time of composition.

It is very difficult to decide the precise date concerning the time of composition of the *risāla*. In modern times, al-Ḥājirī and El-ʿAṭṭār are the only scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ who have discussed this matter in their work. For example, we find that al-Ḥājirī recorded the title of the *risāla* among al-Jāḥiẓ’s works that had been written between the year 233 A.H. which is the date of Ibn al-Zayyāt’s death and the year 236 A.H. which was the date ʿUbaydullah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān had been appointed as a vizier.⁸³¹ In contrast, El-ʿAṭṭār puts the title of the *risāla* with other works of al-Jāḥiẓ in al-Mutawakkil’s third period, where this era is known as the Orthodox and Sunni policy of al-Mutawakkil and the decline of Iʿtizāl. This period stretched from the year 237 A.H. until 247 A.H.⁸³² Therefore, based on these two statements, the best thing that can be said regarding this

⁸²⁹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 39-48.

⁸³⁰ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 101-131.

⁸³¹ According to al-Ḥājirī, *Kitāb al-futyā*, *Kitāb naẓm al-Qurʾān*, *Kitāb masāʾil al-Qurʾān*, *Risāla fī al-maʿād wa al-maʿāsh*, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbihā*, and etc. is another works of al-Jāḥiẓ that has been written in this period. See al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, pp. 311-339.

⁸³² El-ʿAṭṭār claims that *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk* and *Risāla fī al-akhbār wa kayf taṣiḥḥ* are another works of al-Jāḥiẓ that has been written at this time limit. See El-ʿAṭṭār, *The Political Thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 387-395.

matter is to put it in some place in the Baghdad era where al-Jāhiz wrote almost of his works.

5.2.5 Outline of the *Risāla*:

The following outline of the content of the *risāla* should give us a clear idea of its design:

1. The topic and scope of the *risāla*.
2. The definition of the “*Hujja*”.
3. The reason why the earlier generation forgot to write about the proof of the prophecy.
4. The reason why Allah may have distracted the first generation to collect the proof of prophecy in order to test prosperity of later generation.
5. The first generation prefer to have verification in the science of the Qur’ān rather than collecting the proof of prophecy.
6. The requisite of collecting the proof of the prophecy.
7. The aim of collecting of the proof of the prophecy.
8. The use of mind is not the only way to receive knowledge.
9. The reason why Allah sending his prophets to the people?
10. List of the evidences for prophecy:
 - a. The unconditional fulfilment of his prayer (*al-Du‘ā’ al-mustajab*)
 - b. The prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was foretold in ancient scriptures.
 - b. The Arabs cannot resistance with the Qur’ān.

c. The Unique combination of morality and works of the Prophet Muhammad.

11. Conclusion.

5.2.6 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

In his introduction to the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ enumerates the issues that he would like to highlight in this work such as the differences between the proof (*Hujja*) and the doubt, the proofs of prophecy, the types and the need of traditions, men manners, prophets traditions, and reason of spreading traditions, etc.⁸³³

Firstly of all, al-Jāḥiẓ stresses on the topic of the *risāla* when he says as follows: “As I sorted the mass of data at my disposal, I kept in mind the argument for the Prophet’s authenticity – that is, his sign, edicts and practice. I arranged the traditions in term of importance and summarised them in a clear and straightforward manner, so that the man who has heard little and whose memory is poor might achieve, by means of rational argument and compelling evidence, the same level of understanding as one who has read much and whose memory is good”.⁸³⁴ Secondly, according to al-Jāḥiẓ, there are two kinds of evidence, first-hand eyewitness and second, authentic reports.⁸³⁵

⁸³³ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-mubuwwa*, in Hārūn edition, Vol. III, p.223; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 171.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 224; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 172.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 225-226; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 173.

5.2.6.1 The proofs and signs of *Nubuwwa*:

When arranging and classifying evidences (*al-Akhhbār*), al-Jāhiz clearly stated that he wants to mention the proofs and the signs of the Prophet. From this point, he goes further to elaborate the reason why the earlier generation did not collect together the proofs of the prophecy. He claims that: "The first generation of Muslims collected the Qur'ān in book form- it having previously existed only as fragment in men's memories- and established the position of Zayd b. Thābit recensions as canonical where, before, there had been no standard text...Had they also collected the evidence, sign and proofs of the Prophet's authenticity and accounts of the wonders he performed in the course of his daily life as well as his sermons before great congregations of such number that none but a fool or fanatic would doubt the accounts".⁸³⁶

The author admits that there are two reasons why earlier generation forget to collect evidence of the prophecy. Firstly, is to test the posterity of later generation. Concerning to this matter, he writes: "Of course, Allah may have occasionally distracted the first generation by causing them to forget, or whatever, in order to test posterity and give later opportunity to show their obedience to Him by defending His faith and championing His Prophet".⁸³⁷

And another reason is that they were busy with learning and collecting *al-Qirā'āt* (the different style of reading of the Qur'ān). Al-Jāhiz says: "By virtue of God's grace

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 226; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 173.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 228; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 174.

and their own intelligence, the first Muslims (earlier generation) that they had to protect the text (the Qur'ān) from confusion and the odd counterfeit letter and word".

Because of this, al-Jāhiz suggests to put the importance of collecting the proofs of *nubuwwa* is in the same level with the collecting of the Qira'āt. The main objective of this collection as the author argued is: "Once they have been arranged systemically in one place, someone who is unable or unwilling to collect them himself from the various sources, who has difficulty with the language employed or who is unaware of where to locate them may be encouraged to study and understand them".⁸³⁸

Afterwards, al-Jāhiz goes on to tell us the reason why Allah has sent His Messenger to mankind. According to al-Jāhiz, the reason is that "Allah created men imperfect and unable to act in their own interests. His design was for mankind to worship Him. But, He has not burdened men beyond their abilities and He has given them free rein to hope. He sent His prophets and apostle among them".⁸³⁹

From this point of view, al-Jāhiz goes further to discuss the differences between men's character. He found that these differences were due to the types of their works. He writes: "There is something that makes each professional group particularly satisfied with the trade it practices. The weaver, noticing a defect in a colleague's work, will call him a barber, while the barber, pointing out a colleague's shoddy work, will describe him as a weaver! For this reason, tradesmen are usually keen to see their sons follow them into the

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 234; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 180.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 239; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 184

same trade”.⁸⁴⁰ And as a result, al-Jāḥiẓ emphasises that Allah created men differently in order to unite them.

He then relates the creation of men and their relationship with homeland. He states that: “if marsh-dwellers were exiled to the desert, plainsmen to the mountains, highlanders to the coast and nomad to the towns, the hearts of each would dissolve in sorrow and their lives descend into stripe. The love of homeland is said to be inherent in everyone”.⁸⁴¹

5.2.6.2. The author theology doctrine:

From the above point of view, al-Jāḥiẓ employs part of the *risāla* to provide his readers some of his Mu‘tazilite doctrine, for example he says: “A man may be compelled to do one thing but have free choice with regard to another. Even in the absence of the divine command and prohibition, it would be possible for men to be drawn to the subtle and the sublime, the esoteric and the evident”.⁸⁴²

Al-Jāḥiẓ’s main purpose from all of these statements is: “to enable you to see how a large number of men could not simultaneously conspire to fabricate a report”.⁸⁴³ Because of this, he claims that: “he will discuss further the matter of human similarity

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol III, p. 242.; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 184.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 243; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 185.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 246; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 188.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 247; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 188.

and diversity and show how, in certain crucial respects, diversity secures the welfare of mankind and allows the authenticity of reports to be established".⁸⁴⁴

Afterwards, al-Jāḥiẓ gives two more examples about human similarity. Firstly, between the merchant and the consumer, both of them are in cohesion in buying and selling, which according to al-Jāḥiẓ, where there is commerce there are profits for all and where there are profits there is social cohesion. Secondly, al-Jāḥiẓ's illustration of the diversity of human nature and instinct is that in eating food. According to him, if the desires of each person happened to coincide, there would be an outbreak of bad manners, bickering and rash initiatives.⁸⁴⁵

Al-Jāḥiẓ again returns to the point that human needs to listen to and relates news reports and traditions particularly to the strange reports and traditions. Here, he gives us detail information about the reports and tradition. For example, he said that men have an innate to speak of uncommon events and a predisposition to tell of epic deeds but are no more likely to recount the instructive and good than they are to relate the vicious and bad and etc.⁸⁴⁶

5.2.6.3 Evidence of *Nubuwwa*:

Finally, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ had listed a several proofs or evidences of *nubuwwa*. First of all, he said that the Prophet Muhammad is afforded by his foretelling the future

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 248; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 190.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 249; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 190.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 257; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 196.

and his appeals to Allah were answered. Here, al-Jāhiz gives the example, particularly when both Quraysh and the Bedouin has rejected Prophet Muhammad's prophecy and mobilised men and material against him, he beseeched Allah to make them barren their lands and poverty enter their home, so Allah withheld rain and the palm trees died, the dates disappeared, the crops withered and the cattle perished.⁸⁴⁷

The second proof and evidence of *nubuwwa* is that the prophethood of Muhammad was foretold in ancient scriptures such as the Tawrat (Old Testament/Pentateuch), the Injil (New Testament/Gospels), and the Zabūr (Psalms). For example, he said, if we refer to both Old Testament and New Testament, we find references which speak of the coming of the Last Messenger of Allah on the earth.⁸⁴⁸

Concerning to this matter, al-Jāhiz writes: "By observing that Syrian Christians and Jews who convert to Islam give the same reason as Iraqi Christian and Jews who convert. The same applies to converts from the Ḥijāz and the Yemen, without any collusion or prior acquaintance. These men could not have met or corresponded since not only do they not know each other but they are unaware of one another's existence".⁸⁴⁹

The third proof of *nubuwwa* is that the Arabs cannot resist with the Qur'ān which has been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad which according to al-Jāhiz was uniquely gifted with one exceptional sign. He further added that it is impossible to accept

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 266-267; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 203.

⁸⁴⁸ Similar prophecies are also found in Indian religious books as well as Persian (Iranian) books. For further information on the external and internal evidence of the prophethood, see *Encyclopaedia of Seera*, art. Proof of His Prophethood, Vol. I, pp. 141-159.

⁸⁴⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, in Hārūn edition, Vol. III, pp. 269-270; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 206.

and absurd that Qurasyh with their intelligent, sharp and perceptive men, were lost for words in fighting against the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Jāhiz explains: "what foiled them (Quraysh) was the same thing that foiled Ibn Abī al-ʿAwjā', Ishāq b. Ṭālūt, al-Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir and others who bartered honour with for disgrace, faith for unbelief, happiness for misery, and certainty for doubt".⁸⁵⁰

After all, al-Jāhiz records the last proof of *nubuwwa* i.e. the unique combination of morality and works of Prophet Muhammad, which has never been found in one man before or since. As for the conclusion al-Jāhiz states: "To my knowledge, no men ever had such remarkable upbringing or possessed such patience, composure, good faith, piety, honesty, generosity, courage, humility, understanding, recollection, serenity, eloquence, forgiveness, consistency, stability and self-sufficiency as Muhammad".⁸⁵¹

5.2.7 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in the text:

The Qur'ān is the primary and most reliable source for any event in the Prophet's life to which makes reference, since it transmitted through the centuries in unchanged form. Therefore, one can observed that al-Jāhiz used several verses from the Qur'ān to support and strengthen his case. For instance, al-Jāhiz records three Qur'ānic verses in the explanation of the scope of the *risāla*. The first one is from Sūra al-Tawba (9:33), when the Qur'ān said:

﴿ هو الذي أرسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون ﴾

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 277-278; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 211-212.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 280-281; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 213-214.

“It is He Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religion even though the *Mushrikūn* (polytheist, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah etc.) hate (it)”.

His comment is: “The most basic level on which to prevail is in debate against those who resist of God”.

He then quotes the second verse from Sūra al-Şaf (61:8):

﴿ يريدون ليطفنوا نور الله بأفواههم والله متم نوره ولو كره الكافرون ﴾

“They intend to put out the Light of Allah (i.e the Religion of Islam, this Qur'an, and Prophet Muhammad) with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light even though the disbelievers hate (it)”.

He continues that God has announced that He has commanded all races of men, near and far, and said to His prophet (Muhammad) (Sūra Saba'), (34:28):

﴿ وما أرسلنا إلا كافة للناس بشيرا ونذيرا ﴾

“And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind”.

This verse from Sūra al-Nisā' (4:165) was cited when al-Jāhiz speaks about the reason of sending the prophets to mankind.

﴿ لنلا يكون للناس على الله حجة بعد الرسل ﴾

“...in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after Messengers...”

The love of homeland is said to be inherent in everyone. For example, he said that if marsh-dwellers were exiled to the desert, plainsmen to the mountains, highlanders to the coast and nomads to the town, the hearts of each would dissolve in sorrow and their

lives descend strife. Here, al-Jāhiz cited this verse from Sūra al-Nisā' (4:66) to support his view:

﴿ ولو أنا كتبنا عليهم أن يقتلوا أنفسهم أو اخرجوا من دياركم ما فعلوه إلا قليل منهم ﴾

“And if We had ordered them (saying), "Kill yourselves (i.e. the innocent ones kill the guilty ones) or leave your homes," very few of them would do it.”

He comments: “God compared the attachment to one’s homeland with attachment to life itself”.

The Prophet was very often rejected, opposed and ridiculed by unbelievers. Al-Jāhiz tells us that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) once wrote to Chosroes (Kisrā), inviting him to salvation and to renounce his unbelief. He quotes this verse from Sūra al-Tawba (9:33):⁸⁵²

﴿ هو الذي أرسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله، ولو كره المشركون ﴾

“It is He who hath sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the pagans may detest”.

He then comments: “It is not enough that this religion be proclaimed without Muslims holding supreme power and receiving tribute”.

The Prophet was very eager for all the unbelievers to accept his faith and was often grieved at their rejection of him. Al-Jāhiz proves this matter of the fact by offering some quotation of the Qur’ānic verses such as:

⁸⁵² The same verse can be seen also in Sūra al-Şaf (61: 9) and in Sūra al-Fatḥ (48:28) ends with this verse (. وكفى بالله شهيدا).

﴿ اجعل لنا إلهًا كما لهم آلهة ﴾

“Make for us a god as they have gods” Sūra al-Aʿrāf. (7:138).

﴿ أرنا الله جهرة ﴾

“Show us Allah in public” Sūra al-Nisā'. (4:153).

﴿ فاذهب أنت وربك فقاتلا إنا ههنا قاعدون ﴾

“So go you and your Lord and fight you two, we are sitting right here”. Sūra al-Mā'ida (5:240).

﴿ وإذا تتلى عليهم آياتنا قالوا قد سمعنا لو نشاء لقلنا مثل هذا ﴾

“And when Our Verses (of the Qur'an) are recited to them, they say:” We have heard this (the Qur'an); if we wish we can say the like of this”. Sūra al-Anfāl (8:31).

﴿ وقال الذين كفروا لولا نزل عليه القرآن جملة واحدة ﴾

“And those who disbelieve say:” why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?” Sūra al-Furqān. (25:32).

﴿ وإذا تتلى عليهم آياتنا بينات قال الذين لا يرجون لقاءنا انت بقران غير هذا أو بدله ﴾

“And when Our Clear Verses are recited unto them, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say: Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or change it. Sūra Yūnus. (10:15).

Beside these Qur'ānic verses, the author quotes also several Ḥadīth which related to the same issue. For instance, when both Quraysh and the Bedouin had rejected *nubuwwa* of Muhammad and mobilised men and material against him, the Prophet

beseached God to make barren their lands and poverty enter their home. Here, al-Jāhiz quoted this Ḥadīth in which Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is reported as saying:⁸⁵³

(اللهم سنين كسني يوسف . اللهم اشدد وطأتك على مضر)

“O Allah, afflict them with years (of femine) similar to the (femine) years of the time of Prophet Yūsuf. O Allah, Be very hard on Muḍar tribe”.

As a result, al-Jāhiz continues: “So, God withheld rain and the palm-trees died, the dates disappeared, the crops withered and the cattle perished. People were reduced to eating hide and a broth of camel blood, hair and fleas”.⁸⁵⁴

According to al-Jāhiz, the Prophet, in his mercy, relented and appeal to God to send rain and make the land green once again particularly when Muḍar had been worn down hunger and suffering. However, the rains destroy their homes and swept away their belongings, so in response to their appeals, Prophet Muhammad prays again:⁸⁵⁵

(اللهم حوالينا ولا علينا)

“O Allah, send the rains around us, not upon us”

In another occasion al-Jāhiz tells us that once Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) wrote a letter to Chosroes inviting him to Islam, however, Chosroes tear up that letter. So, in respon to this attitude, Prophet Muhammad prays:⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵³ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, No 961, Vol. IV, p. 113.

⁸⁵⁴ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, in Hārūn edition, Vol. III, p.267; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 203.

⁸⁵⁵ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in Bāb Ṣalāt al-Istisqā’, No 961, Vol. II, p. 27.

⁸⁵⁶ See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in Bāb al-Jihād, No 2781.

(اللهم مزق ملكه كل ممزق)

“O God, tear apart his empire”.

As a result of Prophet’ appeal, al-Jāhiz continues: “Thus, did God destroy Chosroes’ empire and uproot his power”.⁸⁵⁷

It seems that Allah occasionally provided him with relief and solace for his satisfaction. As the Prophet was very anxious for the people, sometimes he wished that some miracles would be shown so that people could embrace the faith and save themselves from the punishment. As we all know that the Qur’ān itself is the greatest miracle Muhammad has given to mankind. There are many verses which provide strong evidence to this effect. The most obvious one is the challenge to mankind to produce a similar Book or few Sūra like it. Al-Jāhiz quotes this verse to show that the Prophet requests some miracles:

﴿ قل فاتوا بعشر سور مثله مفتريات ﴾

“Say:” Bring you then ten forged Surahs (chapters) like unto it, and call whomsoever you can”. Sūra Hūd (11:13).

Al-Jāhiz adds that the style and force of the Qur’ān and his manner of delivery would itself have been the challenge.

⁸⁵⁷ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, in Hārūn edition, Vol. III, p.267; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 203.

5.2.8 Language of the *Risāla*:

The language of the *risāla* is obviously in the debate style. For instance, the author frequently used these words to express his view such as “If you said”, “If they said”, “If someone said”, etc. And for respond, he will say: “I say”. To illustrate that, let us follow these quotations:

- فإن قلت : إن الناس يكذبون في الأخبار عن الأعراب والكهان من كل جيل؟

قلنا : فهم في أخبارهم عن المنجمين أكذب.

- فإن قالوا : وما علمنا أن محمداً عليه السلام لم يكن منجماً؟

قلنا : إن علمنا بذلك كعلمنا بأن العباس وحمزة وعلياً وأبا بكر وعمر ، رضوان الله

عليهم أجمعين ، لم يكونوا منجمين ولا أطباء متكهنين .

- فإن قال قائل : هذه الروافض بأسرها تآبى ذلك وتكرهه.

قلنا : إن الروافض ليست منا بسبيل

Among other linguistic style which has been used in the text of the *risāla* is the usage of conditional sentences.⁸⁵⁸ It has been used more than twenty locations in the text.

Let us follow some of this passage:

- لو كان زيد من آل أبي العاص ، أو من عرض بني أمية ، لوجد ابن مسعود متعلقاً.

⁸⁵⁸ A conditional sentence consists of two parts: “ شرط ” the condition (i.e Protasis) and “ جواب الشرط ” answer of the condition (i.e. Apodosis). See Nadwi, *Learn the language of the Holy Qur'ān*, p. 353. For more information on the conditional sentences, see Cowan, *An introduction into modern literary Arabic*, pp. 195-198.

- ولو جاز ذلك في أهل البحرين والمنصورة لجاز ذلك على أهل البصرة والكوفة ، ولو جاز ذلك في الأيام لكان في الشهور أجوز ، ولو جاز ذلك في الشهور لكان في السنين أجوز.

This short paragraph contains a conditional sentence which is introduced by particale “لو”. While the following examples shows us that the author used some other conjunctions which followed by a negative particle such as “لم” and “لا”:

- ولو لم يكن ما صنعوا لله تعالى فيه رضا لما اجتمع عليه أول هذه الأمة وآخرها.
- ولو لا أن الله تعالى أراد أن يجعل الاختلاف سببا للاتفاق والائتلاف لما جعل واحدا قصيرا
والآخر طويلا

We notice that the answer for these conditional sentences may be introduced by the attached particle “ل” to give more stress on the nature of the sentence.

Finally, the author used rhyme style in his writing. Note the careful and clever structure of the following paragraph in which the author stresses on the further evidence of the Prophet's authenticity:⁸⁵⁹

- وذلك أنا لم نر ولم نسمع لأحد قط كصبره ، ولا كعلمه ، ولا كوفاته ، ولا كزهده ، ولا كجوده ،
ولا كنجده ، ولا كصدق لهجته ، وكرم عشرته ، ولا كتواضعه ، ولا كعلمه ، ولا كحفظه ، ولا
كصمته إذا صمت ، ولا كقوله إذا قال ، ولا كعجيب منشئه ، ولا كقلة ثلونه ، ولا كعفوه ، ولا كدوام
طريقته ، وقلة امتناته .

⁸⁵⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla ft ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, in Hārūn edition, Vol. III, pp.280-281; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 214.

In short, the foregoing discussion shows us that through this *risāla*, al-Jāhiz establishes the authenticity of Muhammad's prophecy and in the same time he defends the truthfulness of the Qur'ānic verses and the Sunna of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

5.3 *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-mushabbiha* (Refutation of the Anthropomorphism)

5.3.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

This is the second *risāla* in this category, which has been chosen for extensive analysis in this study. The significant of the *risāla* lies on the issues that have been employed by the author in refuting the group of people known as "*al-Mushabbiha*".⁸⁶⁰ It is already known that the principle of *al-Tawhīd* (God unity) is one of the five principles of al-Mu'tazila school of thought. Therefore, there are three important matters, which came under this principle, firstly, the denial of hypostatic character of God's, secondly, the denial of the creation of the Qur'ān and finally, the denial of anthropomorphism.⁸⁶¹ The Mu'tazila believed that Allah is one; there no thing like Him; he is hearing, seeing; he is not a body (*jism, shabah, juththa*), and not a form, etc. As a result, those who differed from the Mu'tazila in these points of view were accused of holding false doctrines of *tashbīh*.⁸⁶²

⁸⁶⁰ The word *al-Mushabbiha* is denoting to a person or group practising *Tashbīh* which means making similar, and can be understood either as producing something similar to creation or as assimilating Allah to His creature. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Tashbīh*, Vol. X, pp. 341-344.

⁸⁶¹ Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 242.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.* pp. 246-247. For instance, an analysis on the conflict between Mu'tazila and Sunni concerning this issue can be seen in Masdar Hilmy, *Theological conflict between Mu'tazila and Sunni: A Study of al-Jāhiz's refutation against anthropomorphism*, in: <http://www.geocities.com/Hotsprings/677/j-4.html>.

From this point of view, al-Jāḥiẓ as one of the followers of the Mu'tazila's school of thought had taken his responsibility to refute this issue that have been employed by this group in order to avoid misunderstanding about God. Al-Jāḥiẓ had already told us about his aims when he stated in his *Risāla fī al-radd alā al-Naṣārā* as follows: "I shall proceed to confound them further when I discuss anthropomorphism, a doctrine adhered by most of the Christian community, with the exception of some dissident scholastic and philosophers".⁸⁶³

5.3.2 Date of composition and addressee of the *Risāla*:

As usual, indeed, it is very difficult to have a precise time of composition of all al-Jāḥiẓ's works and the same problem occurred also to this *risāla*. Most valuably, when referring to another work of al-Jāḥiẓ entitle *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh* which al-Jāḥiẓ addressed to Abū al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād al-Ayādī, he himself remarks that he also wrote another work in the same subject entitled *al-Radd 'alā al-mushabbihā*. Based on this remark, Jirjīs assumed that both works has been written in the time of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim.⁸⁶⁴ At that time, Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād, the father was a chief Qāḍī for the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, while Muhammad, the son was his assistant, this occurs between the year 218/833 and 227/841.⁸⁶⁵ On the other hand, al-Ḥājirī assumed that this *risāla* has been written between the year 233/848 and 236/850 when Abū al-

⁸⁶³ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 351, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 264.

⁸⁶⁴ Jirjīs, *Kitābān li al-Jāḥiẓ*, Maḥba'at al-Sārūjī, 'Akkā, 1980, p. 95.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 96.

Walīd himself was a chief Qāḍī in the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil.⁸⁶⁶ From this point of view, it can be safe to say that the addressee of the *risāla* was Abū al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abī Du'ād, who was himself pro-Mu'tazilite. The time of composition was somewhere between the year 218/833 and the year 236/852. In other words, we can say that this *risāla* had been written after *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā* which will be discussed later. This is based on the statement made by the author at the end of the *risāla* when he declared: "I shall proceed to confound them further when I discuss anthropomorphism (*al-Mushabbihā*)".⁸⁶⁷

5.3.3 The title and the text of the *Risāla*:

Jirjīs in his book on the study of the two works of al-Jāḥiẓ remarks that "*al-Dhab 'alā al-mushabbihā*" was the correct title of the *risāla*. This is because that he found in the manuscript of the *risāla* from Topkapi Museum, Istanbul bearing that title.⁸⁶⁸ However, most scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ in the modern days agreed that the correct reading of this work is *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-mushabbihā*. This is based on the statement given by the author himself in the long introductory section which takes up the first hundred pages or so of Hārūn's edition of *al-Ḥayawān*. There is to be found remarkably interesting passage in which al-Jāḥiẓ describes fairly clearly the title of this work.⁸⁶⁹ In addition,

⁸⁶⁶ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 306.

⁸⁶⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 351, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 264.

⁸⁶⁸ Jirjīs, *Kitāb ān li al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 109.

⁸⁶⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. ?.

Yāqūt, al-Khayyāṭ and some other classical biographical authors stated that *al-Radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha* is among the title of al-Jāḥiẓ's work.⁸⁷⁰

The text of the *risāla* in the printed edition consists of eight pages which are divided into four portions with sub-titles. The first portion entitled "*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha*", and the rest of the portion only entitled "*Faṣl minhu*". However, many thanks to Abū Milḥim with his edition of this *risāla* in which he has divided the text of the *risāla* into sub-titles, this is very useful for the student of al-Jāḥiẓ like us, to understand the content. The *risāla* now is available in English.⁸⁷¹

5.3.4 The structure of the *Risāla*:

The body of the *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha* can be break down into these constituting elements:

1. The meaning of "*al-Tawḥīd*".
2. Refuting the claim, which said that Allah is visible?
3. Refuting the claim which considered that Allah as a body.
4. Some of the differences between anthropomorphisms.
5. The interpretation of the anthropomorphism concerning the Qur'ānic verse which related to possibility of Allah to be seen.
6. Refuting of some scholars concerning the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse.
7. The Qur'ān as a judge and arbiter.

⁸⁷⁰ See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, p. 107; al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār wa al-radd*, p. 111.

⁸⁷¹ Collville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 94-99. Thus, all quotations relating to the text of the *risāla* are from Colville's translation.

8. Anthropomorphism's evidence concerning Allah as a body.
9. Refuting on that evidence.

5.3.5 Analysis of the main issues in the *Risāla*:

5.3.5.1 The connection between the two *Risāla* (i.e. *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha* and *Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh*)

As has been mentioned earlier that al-Jāḥiẓ composed another work concerning anthropomorphism, which presumably was the introduction into *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha*. Now, before going into details analysis of the content of this *risāla*, it would be interesting to have some basic information about the content of the *Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh*⁸⁷² which will be useful to this study.

The whole introduction to *Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh*, in fact, was on the character of the common people, how to deal with them and how to gain control over them. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ expresses also various views of these category of people concerning anthropomorphism, he also complaints of the treatment meted out to the *Mutakallimūn*,⁸⁷³ and according to him, thanks to Ahmad b. Abī Duʿād, who brought this group under the protection of the authorities. On this situation, it is understood that al-Jāḥiẓ lays the

⁸⁷² According to Najm, al-Khafājī in his *Ṭirāz al-majālis* admits that the first part of this *risāla* was an introduction to the other work of al-Jāḥiẓ entitled *Risāla fī wasf al-ʿawwām*. However, she found that it was originally belongs to *Risāla fī nasy al-tashbīh*. This *risāla* then has been edited by Charles Pellat. See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 28.

⁸⁷³ *Al-Mutakallimūn* is a term used to describe the group of people who involve in the science which is concerned firmly with establishing religious beliefs by adducing proofs and with banishing doubts or known as *ʿilm al-Kalām* (dogmatic theology). Therefore, *al-Mutakallimūn* can be described as the doctors of *Kalām*. See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *ʿilm al-Kalām*, Vol. III, pp. 1141-1142.

importance of refuting the anthropomorphist. Here, he states: "You know that although the supporters of anthropomorphism have been crushed, reduced and subjected to the inquisition, their number have not decreased, the majority have not change their views, and only a tiny minority are dead... This situation in which cunning and persuasion are called for, since force and violence are ineffectual".⁸⁷⁴

Regarding to this situation, al-Jāḥiẓ admits: "I have therefore written a book in refutation of the anthropomorphist which will be neither beneath the notice scholars and educated men nor above the heads of tyros".⁸⁷⁵ However, he expresses his reason why he against the anthropomorphism by saying: "They have started to debate with us and challenge our friends, after insulting us, to pay great deference to us...."⁸⁷⁶

Afterwards, al-Jāḥiẓ asks Abū al-Walīd Muhammad to read it (the *risāla*) and give it a wide circulation. He also declares that it is everyone's duty to help the authorities with advices, for example by ordering the good and forbidding the evil. Then, al-Jāḥiẓ recorded his praise to Abū al-Walīd Muhammad by means of examples drawn from history. Finally, al-Jāḥiẓ explains why he writes to him and not to his father, Ahmad; perhaps Muhammad is still young at that time.⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 288; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 203.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 289; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 203.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, 289; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 203.

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 303; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 214.

5.3.5.2 The meaning of “*Tawhīd*”

The paragraph above is a brief introduction of the previous work of al-Jāhiz concerning the refutation of anthropomorphism. Now, al-Jāhiz employs small fragment of the *Risāla fī al-radd ‘alā al-mushabbīha* to elaborate the meaning of the “*al-Tawhīd*” which related to the main doctrine of Mu‘tazila. We already know that they considered and called themselves as “*Ahl al-‘adl wa al-tawhīd*”. Therefore, al-Jāhiz admits that: “not everyone who professes to be monotheist (*al-Tawhīd*) actually is one, since some treat the One (Allah) as made up of parts and consider Him (Allah) something divisible”.⁸⁷⁸

According to al-Jāhiz, there are two types of men who cannot be called as *Muwaḥḥid* or simply as the followers of Mu‘tazila. The first one is a man who claims that Allah is visible and can be perceived by certain of the senses, and sometimes he going far than that by saying Allah can be seen like a man and perceived in the same way as colours. The second is a man who considered Allah as a body.⁸⁷⁹ Here, it is safely can be said that al-Jāhiz, firstly draw a framework of the Mu‘tazila’s doctrine, before he goes further on the subject of the work.

5.3.5.3 Category of the Anthropomorphist:

Al-Jāhiz divides the anthropomorphist into two factions. The first faction said that Allah is a body and that all bodies have the attribute of length. Another faction also

⁸⁷⁸ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-radd ‘alā al-mushabbīha*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p.5; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 5.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 5-6; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, pp. 5-6.

maintain that Allah is a body but do not assert that He has the attribute of length.⁸⁸⁰ Then al-Jāhiz recorded the argument from the both factions which he concluded it as follows: “To claim that Allah has any particular physical shape – square, pentagonal, cruciform, and polygonal or what have you – is strained in the utterance and demeaning in the supposition”.⁸⁸¹

Al-Jāhiz then move to discuss the argument from those who contend that Allah can be seen visible by interpretation several of the Qur’ānic verses. He then responds to these arguments by interpretation of another Qur’ān verses. He says: “It has, however, given rise to much controversy among the opposition, since the literal meaning supports a position at odds with theirs because the jurists and scriptural exegetes themselves dispute its interpretation”.⁸⁸²

On the other hand, al-Jāhiz asks his opponents to go back to the Qur’ān on their principle issue, because according to him the Qur’ān is the judge and arbiter. And there is a long discussion between al-Jāhiz and his opponents concerning the interpretation of this Qur’ānic verse (4:153):

﴿ يسألك أهل الكتاب أن تنزل عليهم كتابا من السماء فقد سألوا موسى أكبر من ذلك فقالوا أرنا الله
جهرة فأخذتهم الصاعقة بظلمهم ﴾

“The People of the Book ask thee to cause a book to descend to them from heaven; indeed they asked Moses for an even greater (miracle) for they said; show us God in public, but they were dazed by their presumption with thunder and lightning”

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 7; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol IV, p. 6.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 7; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 6.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 9 ; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 7.

In the last point, al-Jāhiz recorded again the anthropomorphism's claim that the Qur'ānic verse, Sūra al-Fajr (89:22): ﴿ وجاء ربك والملك صفا صفا ﴾ which means "And God came with row upon row of angels" proves that Allah is a body. Al-Jāhiz replied: "Such is the trust of their argument".⁸⁸³ However, al-Jāhiz said that it is possible for one thing to be "in" something else in a number of ways. He hopes to show them what these are and define all permissible relationship. Finally, we find that al-Jāhiz employs the last two pages of the *risāla* for further explanation of the issue.

5.3.6 The style of writing:

Our examination of al-Jāhiz's argumentation in the *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-mushabbiha* reveals his Muʿtazilite conviction. He writes in a distinctive way arguing with thoroughness and orderliness to maintain reader interest. In order to achieve this aim, the author, as usual, gives his attention to quote several Qur'ānic verses as supporting elements into his idea. He then proceeds to refute the case made by his opponent for these verses. For instance, he mentions the argument of those who contend that God can be seen when they said as follows: "You advance as argument against us the Qur'ānic verse: "No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision".⁸⁸⁴ Nothing correctly that it is ambiguous and of a general, non-specific, nature. You are also correct in nothing that a genral verse remains so until God qualifies it with another. Thus, had He said: "No vision can grasp Him, but He grasps all vision" without subsequently saying: "Some

⁸⁸³ *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 13; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 11.

⁸⁸⁴ ﴿ لا تتركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار ﴾. Sūra al-Anʿām. (6:103)

faces that Day shall be Nāḍira (shining and radiant). Looking at their Lord Allah”⁸⁸⁵ we would not know that there are exceptions to the general rule”.⁸⁸⁶

Now, let find out how al-Jāḥiẓ responds to this argument. He says: “My response is that, because God revealed: ⁸⁸⁷ ﴿ تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ ﴾ after He revealed this verse: ⁸⁸⁸ ﴿ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ ﴾. We do indeed know that there are a certain exceptions to the general statement that He shall disclose nothing. There is no disagreement about this exception either textually or semantically and, in my opinion, the literal meaning of the text is the actual meaning. It has, however, given rise to much controversy among the opposition, since the literal meaning supports a position at odds with theirs”.⁸⁸⁹

In his discussion of these Qur’ānic verses, we see that al-Jāḥiẓ at work played as an interpreter of the Qur’ān. For instance, in the discussion of a number of the Qur’ānic passages; the author refers to the views of respected early authorities such as Ibn Abbās, Mujāhid and others. Referring to his quotation of two verses from Sūra al-Qiyāma (75:22-23), al-Jāḥiẓ states that Ibn Maḥdī (d. 198 A.H.) quoting Sufyān (d. 161 A.H.), quoting Maṣṣūr (d. 132 A.H.), quoting Mujāhid (d. 104 A.H.) interpreted that verses to mean “anticipating reward from their God”. He then adds: “A similar interpretation was offered

⁸⁸⁵“ ﴿ وَجْوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ . إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ﴾ . Sūra al-Qiyāma. (75:22-23).

⁸⁸⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ‘alā al-mushabbihā*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 8 ; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 7.

⁸⁸⁷“None in the heavens and earth knows the *Ghayb* (Unseen) except Allah”. Sūra al-Naml. (27:65).

⁸⁸⁸ “Nor will Allah disclose to you the secrets of the *Ghayb* (Unseen)”. Sūra Āl-‘Imrān. (3:179).

⁸⁸⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ‘alā al-mushabbihā*, in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 8; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 7.

by Abū Mu‘āwiya, quoting Ismā‘īl b. Abī Khālid, quoting Abū Ṣāliḥ. Mujāhid and Abū Ṣāliḥ were both leading figures in Ibn ‘Abbās circle and were eminent *Mufassir*”.⁸⁹⁰ It seems here that he refers to the famous figure in the field of the Qur’ānic interpretation.

The language of the *risāla* is also in the debate style. For instance, the usage of these passages “If you said”, “If they said”, “If someone said”, “If they said that” etc. can be found frequently in the text of the *risāla*. And for respond, the author will say: “I said”, “I said to these people”, or “We said”, and etc. It is interesting to note here that such passages have been used by the author more than ten times in the *risāla*.

In short, through this *risāla* we have had the chance to see examples of al-Jāḥiẓ vigorous arguments against this group of people. We find him concentrated much attack upon them and refuted their ideas whenever the chance came. So, his ability in argumentation gave him a special place in this apologetic movement.

5.4 *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* (Drink and Drinkers)

5.4.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

The significant of the *risāla* lies on its content whenever the author tries to discuss the issue of special drinks, which the people of the Abbasid society take after their meal. According to Ahsan, the Abbasid society generally has their special drinks taken after the

⁸⁹⁰*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 9; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 8.

meal. These drinks were known simply as *nabīdh*,⁸⁹¹ and sometimes known with the addition of the principal ingredient's name such as *al-Nabīdh al-^ᶜinabī*, *al-Nabīdh al-zabībī*, *al-Nabīdh al-tamarī*, *al-Nabīdh al-^ᶜasalī* and etc. These types of *nabīdh* were widely taken during this period by people from all walks of life.⁸⁹² As a result of this situation, there was a fierce controversy among the scholars and the jurists as to whether or not *nabīdh* belonged to the category of wine. In addition, there is also a wide discussion among the *fuqahā'* whether the consuming of this kind of drink is allowed or forbidden.⁸⁹³

The Qur'ān has clearly forbids Muslims from drinking *khamr* (wine) which has been stated in several verses. Because Islam found that wine drinking deeply rooted in the habits of people in *Jāhiliya*. However, Islam proceeded towards its prohibition only by gradual steps as can be found in the Qur'ān.⁸⁹⁴

The subject of wine and *nabīdh* is found in all periods of Arabic literature particularly in poetry.⁸⁹⁵ However, prose literature works devoted to wine and *nabīdh* are also found, but far less frequently. *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, *Risāla fī madh al-*

⁸⁹¹*Nabīdh* is a comprehensive designation for intoxicating drinks, several kinds of which were produce in early Arabia, made from barley, honey, spelt, dates and etc. For further information about the term *Nabīdh*, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Nabīdh*, Vol .VII, p. 840; E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. II, p. 2757. E.W.Lane particularly claimed that *Nabīdh* is a lawful beverage.

⁸⁹² Ahsan, *Social life under the Abbasid*, p. 111.

⁸⁹³ For example, Imam Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150 A.H.) interpreted the prohibited wine as meaning only that made from grape juice and regarded *nabīdh* (made by boiling dates or raisins) as permitted, provided the quantity drunk was not enough to cause intoxication, in which he was probably following Abdullah b. Mas'ūd al-Hudhālī, leader of the Iraqi school of law, See Harb, 'Wine poetry', in: *Abbasid Belles Letters*, p. 222; The same idea was brought forward by the Mu'tazilī Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933) who argues that God has created things which resemble those things which were allowed in Paradise but forbidden on earth. Among them is *nabīdh*, which is allowed for the believers so that they can guess what *khamr* will be like in the hereafter. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. *Nabīdh*, Vol .VII, p. 840.

⁸⁹⁴ See al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, Sūra al-Baqara (2:219), Sūra al-Mā'ida (5:277) and Sūra al-Mā'ida (5:90).

⁸⁹⁵ For further information about wine poetry, see Harb, *Wine poetry*, pp. 219-234.

nabīdh wa ṣifat aṣḥābih and *Risāla fī dhamm al-nabīdh* written by al-Jāḥiẓ were among the earliest prose work touching this subject matter.⁸⁹⁶ Afterward, in the fourth to fifth century of *Hijra*, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim (d. 383 A.H.) wrote *Qutb al-surūr fī awṣāf al-khumūr*.⁸⁹⁷ This work, as was described by Harb, is an encyclopaedic work discussing the etiquette of wine and wine parties, wine's remedial qualities, how to profit from its blends, textual citation dealing with it, legal argument centred on it, entertaining stories about it, and an appendix of poetical reference.⁸⁹⁸

Being a man of letter (*Adīb*) and religious scholar, al-Jāḥiẓ, the author of the *risāla* intends to explain the differences between *nabīdh* and *khamr* (wine) and giving more information about these types of drink to his reader. When describing the content of this work of al-Jāḥiẓ, Colville said that the author employs the methods and terminology of Islamic disputation in this *risāla*, to argue in favour of that most un-Islamic of vices – alcoholic drinks.⁸⁹⁹ Pellat, on the other hand admits that al-Jāḥiẓ has designed it to show that the drinking *nabīdh* is lawful.⁹⁰⁰ Moreover, it can be said here that the *risāla* was among al-Jāḥiẓ's contribution to the study of Islamic jurisprudence from the Mu'tazila point of view, which may be differed from other schools of Islamic juristic thought as can be seen later.

⁸⁹⁶ The text of *Risāla fī dhamm al-nabīdh* is not survived; Yāqūt in his list of al-Jāḥiẓ's works mentioned the title of this *risāla*. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, Vol. XVI, pp. 106-110; see also, Pellat, *Inventaire de l'œuvre Gahizienne*, No. 119, 120 & 152, pp. 169, 174.

⁸⁹⁷ His full name is Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Qāsim al-Qurawī al-Kātib al-Qayrawānī. He was known as Ibn al-Raqīq or Ibn al-Raqīq al-Nadīm. His origin is from Qayrawān. Amongst his works are *Tārīkh Qayrawān*, *Qutb al-surūr fī awṣāf al-khumūr*, and *Nazm al-sulūk fī musāmara al-mulūk*, see Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zimūn*, Vol. V, p. 7.

⁸⁹⁸ Harb, *Wine Poetry*, p. 219.

⁸⁹⁹ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 134.

⁹⁰⁰ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 16.

5.4.2 The addressee and the date of composition:

There is another work written by al-Jāḥiẓ, which related to the subject of *nabīdh* entitled *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh wa ṣifat aṣḥābih*. The work has been addressed to al-Ḥasan b. Wahb⁹⁰¹ who al-Jāḥiẓ asked him for some *nabīdh*. We find that al-Jāḥiẓ develops his idea about the effects of *nabīdh* and its advantages. For example, he claims that when *nabīdh* soaks into your bones, spread to every organ and suffuses into your brain, it clarifies your mind, redeems your spirit from care, relaxes you in body and soul, makes you carefree, and etc. Then he proceeds to praise al-Ḥasan b. Wahb and describes the quality of his *nabīdh*.⁹⁰²

Scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ agreed that the title of the work is *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, however, al-Jāḥiẓ in his *Risāla fī faṣl mā bayn al-ʿadāwa wa al-ḥasad* which has been discussed in chapter three called this work as *Risāla fī taḥlīl al-nabīdh*. He claimed that when the work was presented to the Caliph al-Maʿmūn, Muhammad b. Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Ṭūsī attack it and protest against al-Jāḥiẓ's arguments in it. By referring to Abū Miḥim's collection of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ, one could observe that the *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* is the second work on the subject of *nabīdh*. Although, al-Jāḥiẓ did not mention specifically his addressee, presumably the addressee of the *risāla* was also al-Ḥasan b. Wahb, because both of the *risāla* is on the discussion of *nabīdh*.

⁹⁰¹ His full name is al-Ḥasan b. Wahb b. Saʿīd b. ʿAmr b. al-Ḥaṣīn b. Qays b. Qanān al-Ḥārithī but was known as Abū ʿAlī. He was among the famous *kātib* for Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt and was also considered an excellent poet in the Abbasid period and contemporary to the two of great Abbasid poets, Abū Tammām (d.c. 231 or 232 A.H.) and al-Buḥturī (d. 284 A.H.). His brother, Sulaymān (d. c. 250) was a vizier to the Caliph al-Muʿtazz and al-Muhtadī. See al-Zirikī, *al-Aʿlām*, Vol II, 226; al-Kutubī, *Fawāʾid al-wafayāt*, Vol. I, p.136.

⁹⁰² Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī madḥ al-nabīdh*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 113-128; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 83-93.

However, it is difficult to give a precise date of composition the *risāla*, because the author as usual never mentioned the date of composition of his works. What can be suggested here is to put somewhere in the period of al-Ḥasan b. Waḥb was *al-Kātib* for Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt between 218 A.H. and 233 A.H.

5.4.3 The text of the *Risāla*:

The text of the *risāla* can be found in Hārūn's and ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition with varying length. This *risāla* in its scholarship edition consists of fifteen pages with no divisions other than paragraphs. It seems to us that the body of the *risāla* can be divided into two main parts. Part one starts with al-Jāḥiẓ's introduction in which he mentions his correspondent's request. Whilst part two begins with al-Jāḥiẓ's respond to the issue that has been highlighted by his correspondent. For example he states: "I understand everything you have said about the varieties of *nabīdh* and the difference between good and bad quality. I can see you just how interested you are in the subject".

The study of this *risāla* will be based on English translation by Colville which can be found in "Sobriety and Mirth" under the heading "On Drink and Drinkers"⁹⁰³. In addition, the study also will refer to Pellat's collection of translated portion of al-Jāḥiẓ's work who has published some two pages selected from two places of the *risāla* entitled "Drink and the Drinkers"⁹⁰⁴.

⁹⁰³ Collville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 134-143.

⁹⁰⁴ Pellat, *The life and work of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 86-90.

5.4.4 The structure of the *Risāla*:

As has been mentioned before that the *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* is very short, however, one can observed that the author of the *risāla* has develop more information concerning the topic. Let us now break the *risāla* down into its constituting elements which can be divided into two parts. These are as follows:

- Part One:
 1. The subject matter of the *risāla*.
 2. The advantages of *nabīdh*.
 3. The disadvantages of *nabīdh*.
 4. The type of *nabīdh*.
- Part Two:
 5. The author responds to the issues.
 6. The differences between *khamr* and *nabīdh* in the light of legitimacy.
 7. The Prophet's Muhammad companions made a distinction between the *Farā'id* and drinking alcoholic beverage.
 8. There are many more things are permissible than are forbidden.
 9. *Ahl al-Madīna* (The resident of the Prophet's city) forbidden *nabīdh*.
 10. Some people from the Prophet's city drink *nabīdh*.
 11. The main purpose of the *risāla*.
 12. Conclusion.

5.4.5 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

5.4.5.1 The introduction of the *Risāla*:

In his introduction, al-Jāhiz praises his correspondent without naming the person. He then goes to explain the subject matter of this work. He said as follows: “You (his correspondent) have asked me to write on the virtues and vices of drink and of drinkers and to describe the condition of drunkenness. You asked me also to make clear the difference between *nabīdh* and *khamr*, and explain why the former is such a popular drink. I was to list all the points in its favour and detail the defects of bottled varieties ...etc”.⁹⁰⁵

5.4.5.2 The advantages of *Nabīdh*:

He then goes further to explain the advantages of *nabīdh* on behalf of his correspondent. For example he explains: “It settles the stomach, eases the temper, and removes traces of pallor and put colour back into the cheek. It transforms sickness into health. It puts energy into the weary and gives companionship to the lonely. It clears the mind, invigorates the body and puts backbone and heart in a man. It dispels inhibition and shame. It sharpens the appetite and reduces the consumption of water ...and etc.”⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁵ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, in: Hārūn’ edition, Vol. IV, p. 261; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 201.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 264-265; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 203-204.

5.4.5.3 The disadvantages of *Nabīdh*:

Furthermore, al-Jāhiz makes a list of the disadvantages of *nabīdh* such as “it loosens the tongue and adds to the level of nonsense around. It causes bad temper and incontinence, headaches and insomnia and leaves a hangover that spoils the whole day. It prevents a man rising for prayer. It demeans the soul and degrades the sense. It damages the character and stimulates bile. It gives malice free rein in the heart. It dries up sperm and creates paranoia. It causes jaundice, consumption and eye disease. It destroys a man physically and ruins him financially....., and etc”.⁹⁰⁷

5.4.5.4 Types of *Nabīdh*:

Al-Jāhiz also makes a list of the types of *nabīdh* and mentions the quality of each type as was described by his correspondent. Among the varieties of *nabīdh* which al-Jāhiz records in the *risāla* are as follows: *al-Sakar*, *al-Masjūr*, *Nabīdh al-zabīb*, *‘Aṣīr al-karm*, *Nabīdh ‘asal Miṣr*, *Rāzin al-Ahwaz*, *al-Dushab al-bustānī*, *Nabīdh al-jazar*, and *Nabīdh al-kishmish*, etc.⁹⁰⁸ In the following section, al-Jāhiz goes to answer the question from his correspondent. He states that he understands everything what his correspondent said about the varieties of *nabīdh* and the difference between good and bad quality.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 265-266; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, pp. 204-205.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 267-272; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, pp. 206-209.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 273; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 210.

5.4.5.5 The reason of legitimacy of *Nabīdh*:

Then he goes to differentiate between *al-khamr* and *al-nabīdh* in the light of its legitimacy. He writes: "It sometimes happens that thing classed as legally forbidden undergoes a sort of metamorphosis whereby the effect upon it of a new colour, smell, taste, etc. alters it in such way that a semantic shift occurs and, what had been forbidden is transformed into something legitimate!"⁹¹⁰

From al-Jāhiz's point of view, there is no doubt about the legitimacy of *nabīdh*. This is based on his personal evidence particularly against those people who disagree with him on that matter. For example, he points out as follows: "The scholars who disagree with my position on the legitimacy of *nabīdh* are contradicted by their own admission....because this view (legitimacy of *nabīdh*) is corroborated by the fact that at no time, past or present, has God ever forbidden man anything without allowing him something else with the same, or similar effect. He (Allah) thus provides men with a lawful substitute for everything He denies them".⁹¹¹

According to al-Jāhiz, although people of the Prophet's city (*Madīna al-Munawwara*) are forbidden *nabīdh*, but this is not the reason for it to be forbidden because the status of a particular community cannot be basis for prescribing or proscribing anything. Because according to him what is lawful and unlawful can be

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 274; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 211.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 275; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 211.

determined only by three elements, firstly, the revealed Qur'ān, secondly, established prophetic precedent and finally, the valid reasoning of sound minds. It is clear here that al-Jāhiz refused to accept evidence from *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, (the Ḥadīth scholars) but he prefers to use his mind to come to the conclusion on the matter.⁹¹²

We find that al-Jāhiz gives a list of men from the Prophet's city who drink *nabīdh* namely; Ma'bad,⁹¹³ Gharīd,⁹¹⁴ Ibn Surayj,⁹¹⁵ Daḥmān,⁹¹⁶ Ibn Muḥriz,⁹¹⁷ and some others. 'Uyūn al-Sūd in his editorial remark to the *risāla* claims that these people are contemporary musicians and singers.⁹¹⁸ Al-Jāhiz also claims that some of the Prophet's immediate successors and their own forefather who live in the Prophet's city without naming them were drinkers of *nabīdh*. Because of this reason, in the next step, al-Jāhiz attacked the Ḥadīth scholars' by calling them as a quite unprecedented in the chronicle of human fabrication and deceit.⁹¹⁹

5.4.5.6 Some additional juristic rules:

Al-Jāhiz also mentions other juristic rules in this *risāla*. For instance, firstly, he states that God has forbidden the consumption of blood that has been spilled but not of

⁹¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 276; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 212.

⁹¹³ His full name is Ma'bad b. Wahb known as Abū 'Ibād al-Madanī, died in 126 A.H.

⁹¹⁴ His real name is 'Abd al-Malik, his *kunya* is Abū Yazīd, but famous with nickname Gharīd because of his gentlemen appearance. He died in 95 A.H.

⁹¹⁵ His full name is 'Ubaydullah b. Surayj. He died in the reign of the Caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik when he was eighty five years old.

⁹¹⁶ His full name is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr. It has been said that the Caliph al-Mahdī has given him fifty thousand dinār for his one night singing show.

⁹¹⁷ His full name is Muslim b. Muḥriz, his *kunya* is Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, from Persian origin. He died in 140 A.H.

⁹¹⁸ 'Uyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā'il al-Jāhiz*, Vol. IV, pp. 213-214.

⁹¹⁹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla ft al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*, in: Hārūn' edition, Vol. IV, p. 280; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. IV, p. 215.

congealed blood in the liver, the spleen, etc. Secondly, God has forbidden the flesh of carrion but not the flesh of animals slaughtered in accordance with the law or of the fish and locusts. Thirdly, usury is unlawful but ordinary financial transactions are perfectly legitimate. Fourthly, short selling is unlawful but forward buying is permissible. Finally, he says that fornication is forbidden but sex within marriage is most definitely not and pig meat is unlawful to eat but suckling goat, lamb and veal are not. After all he writes “in fact, many more things are permissible than are forbidden”.⁹²⁰

5.4.5.7 The purpose of the *Risāla*:

Near the end of the *risāla*, al-Jāhiz again mentions his main aim from this work. He admits: “My reason for listing the above mentioned drinks and discussing their varieties and origins was a fear that this text might fall into the hands of someone who may not have heard of them all and would suppose that the references to some of these abominable, new fangled brands are the ravings of man stung by a scorpion. My purpose in noting them at the beginning was to advise upon which ones are lawful and which ones are not and to show how the Muslim community has failed to reach unanimity on this issue and why ambiguity and error have arisen”.⁹²¹

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 275-276; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, pp. 211-212.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 280; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 215.

5.4.5.8 The conclusion of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ concludes the *risāla* by saying: “Let that be sufficient for now. If this *risāla* went on any longer, you would find it too much to take in. Brevity can be more effective than thoroughness if it runs the risk of being boring. I have leavened seriousness with humour and spiced reasoning with jest to lighten the reader’s labour and spur the listener’s interest”.⁹²²

5.4.6 The style of writing:

There is only one Qur’ānic verse that has been quoted in the *risāla* i.e. from Sūra al-Mā’ida (5:90) when the Qur’ān said:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

“O ye who believe! Make not unlawful the good thing which God has made lawful for you, but commit no excess; for God loveth not those given to excess”.

Al-Jāḥiẓ quotes this verse to support his argument concerning the legitimacy of *nabīdh*. We find that al-Jāḥiẓ had already explained above his reason for the legitimacy of this type of drink, and finally, he concludes with this quotation of the Qur’ānic verse by saying: “I have sought not only to argue the case for the lawful but also to shed light on the illicit and give full recognition to each. In this way, I shall have affirmed the legitimate, acknowledge the unlawful and adhered to the injunction of God’s saying”.⁹²³

⁹²² *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 281; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 216.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 280; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. IV, p. 215.

We find that the author runs his argument in debate style. For instance, in the first part of the *risāla*, the author records the arguments which have been forwarded by his addressee by using the following passages such as “You have asked me”, “You asked my opinion of”, “What is your opinion”, “Tell me”, “What is your judgment”, etc. For instance, at the beginning of the *risāla*, he says:

- سألت أن أكتب لك صفات الشارب والمشروب وما فيها من المدح والعيوب، وأن أميز لك بين الأنبذة والخمر، وأن أقف على حد السعر... الخ.

(You have asked me to write on the virtues and vice of drink and of drinkers and to describe the condition of drunkenness...and so on.)

Then, he replies:

- قد فهمت، أسعدك الله تعالى بطاعته، جميع ما ذكرت من الأنواع الأنبذة، وبديع صفاتها، والفصل بين جيدها وردينها، ونافعها وضارها، وما سألت من الوقوف على حدودها. ولا زلت من عداد من يسأل ويبحث، ولا زلنا في عداد من يشرح ويفصح.

(I understand everything you have said about the varieties of nabidh and the differences between good and bad quality. I can see just how interested you are in this subject. You have always been the sort of man who keeps on asking and inquiring while I am one of those small bands which never ceases to explain).

In another occasion, we find that the author gives his response directly to the argument which has been highlighted by his addressee. For example, he says:

- ولعل قائل يقول: وأهل مدينة الرسول (ص) وسكان حرمة ودار هجرته، أبصر

بالحلال والحرام، والمسكر والخمر، وما أباح الرسول وما حظره، ... الخ.

(Suppose if someone say: People of Medina knew better than anyone else what was lawful and unlawful, about wine and intoxicating drinks and what the Prophet allowed and forbade....and so on).

Let us now see what his reply was, he says:

- وإنا نقول في ذلك : إن عظم حق البلدة لا يحل شيئا ولا يحرمه ، وإنما يعرف الحلال والحرام بالكتاب الناطق ، والسنة المجمع عليها ، والعقول الصحيحة ، والمقاييس المصيبة.

(My reply to this would be that the status of a particular community cannot be a basis of prescribing or proscribing anything. What was lawful and unlawful can be determined only by the revealed Qur'ān, established prophetic precedent and the valid reasoning of sound minds).

This argument obviously highlighted al-Jāhīz's point of view which based on Mu'tazilite doctrine. In short, our examination of al-Jāhīz's argumentation in the *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb* reveals his Mu'tazilite conviction.

5.5 CONCLUSION

When the Mu'tazilite thought began to assert itself in the early third/ninth century, its influence was far left beyond the field of theological polemics. For one thing, these polemics made for a more exact prose which left its mark on belles-lettres (*ādāb*). For another, the discussion of certain topics raised further problems which demanded concrete answers. Al-Jāhīz, as we have seen in this chapter, through his *rasā'il* concerning the semi-theological issues gives us some information on the method of his thinking which is based on Mutazilite doctrine. *Risāla fī ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, for instance, highlights the Mu'tazila teaching, when al-Jāhīz speaks about the sign of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) which is attested in the Qur'ān and contained in a trustworthy

report. In addition, the Qur'ān itself, according to al-Jāḥiẓ, is a sign because of unmet challenge to imitate it, its language, and the foretelling of events contained in it. Since Islamic theology aims at defending the religious belief which is based on the Qur'anic and prophetic sources against heretical aberrations and innovations, al-Jahiz through *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-mushabbihā*, highlights his arguments to the group of people known as *al-Mushabbihā*. Therefore, al-Jāḥiẓ appears as a leading participant in a sophisticated debate on theological issues by using his intellectual strenght.

It is seem that, in the hand of al-Jāḥiẓ, this Mu'tazilite argument is not only defended at length but is also to support the reality of the event of past ages as we have seen in *Risāla fī al-shārib wa al-mashrūb*. This *risāla* also show us that the literary form of *adab* often requires presenting all sides of controversial subject. In this regard, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ always put every single theological matter in the context of wether or not it is compatiable with the regulation of logic. In short, in this *rasā'il*, we have an example of Mu'tazilite rhetorical method applied to a controversial subject of relevance to theology. However, that aspect of religious arguments which presented by al-Jāḥiẓ through this *rasā'il* to his readers most vividly was the arguments and stories derived from the Qur'ān and Sunna.

CHAPTER SIX

THE *RASĀ'IL* CONCERNING THE SEMI-POLITICAL ISSUES

6.1 Introduction:

In general, the Mu'tazila refutation on non-Muslim doctrine was a basic element in their defence of religious belief and their stand with the Abbasid government. Al-Jāḥiẓ like many other Mu'tazilite scholars, including his teacher al-Nazzām,⁹²⁴ is not only defending the Mu'tazila against other Muslim schools, but also wrote in defence of Islam against Christians, Jews and other faiths. The present part focuses on the *rasā'il* of the defence of the Abbasid against their political opponent which can be described as a series of observations on al-Jāḥiẓ's works concerning the semi-political⁹²⁵ issues. Pellat has listed nine *risāla* of al-Jāḥiẓ which are connected with the topic, however, in this part of the study the focus goes only on two main *risāla* i.e. *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣrānā* and *Risāla fī manākib al-Turk*.⁹²⁶ Our intention is to identify some of the many historical and

⁹²⁴He was reported not only engaged in discussion about Christian doctrine, but also supposed to have memorised the Torah and the Gospel. For further information on his biography, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Nazzām, Vol. VII, pp. 1057-1058.

⁹²⁵The used of term 'semi-political' refers to the meaning of partially taking to a side in politics. For the detailed analysis of the meaning of 'political', see Simpson, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XII, pp. 32-33.

⁹²⁶The rest of *risāla* are as follows: *Fī al-'Abbāsiyya*, *Faḍl Hāshim 'alā 'Abd al-Shams*, *Bayān madhāhib al-Shī'a*, *Jawābāt fī al-imāna*, *Kitāb taṣwīb 'Alī fī taḥkīm al-ḥakamayn*, *Fī al-'Uthmāniyya*, *Fī al-nābita*, see Pellat, *The life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 16-18. Almost all of the *rasā'il* in this category has been studied by

political allusions to groups and events found throughout these two *risāla* and to illustrate how they serve al-Jāhiz's strategy in defence the Abbasid against their opponents.

6.2 *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* (Refutation of the Christians)

6.2.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

Let us first recall that Islam in its earliest period had to deal with two major religions, Judaism and Christianity. It not only showed respect for the two and tried to accommodate them, but it also tried to have dialogue with them on the basis of what was common between them.⁹²⁷ However, it is important to note here that as has been reported in Islamic history that at the Abbasid period, the Abbasid State openly changed its friendly policy to the Christians after the latter revolted in Armenia, which bordered the Byzantine Empire.⁹²⁸ Al-Ṭabarī mentioned that in the year 235/850, the Caliph al-Mutawakkil ordered new laws which related to the dress of Christian and to the social and education position of Christians. For instance, he forbade their employment in government offices and on official business where they would have authority over Muslims. He also forbade the display of crosses on Palm Sundays and Jewish rites in the streets and so forth.⁹²⁹ As a result, this period witnessed some interesting examples of interchange between Christians and Muslims, and also witnessed significant change with

El-ʿAṭṭār in his Ph.D. thesis entitled "The Political Thought of al-Jāhiz", and *Iʿṭ al-ʿUthmāniyya*, particularly has been studied by Zahniser in his Ph.D. thesis entitled "The ʿUthmāniyya of al-Jāhiz".

⁹²⁷ For excellent analysis on the story of the relationship between Islam and other faiths in classical Islam, see, Ismail R. Faruqi, 'Islam and other faiths', in: *The Challenge of Islam*, pp. 82-114.

⁹²⁸ El-ʿAṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāhiz*, p. 388.

⁹²⁹ See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-umam wa al-mulūk*, Vol. III, pp. 1389-1390.

respect to the position of other faith communities with the Muslims world.⁹³⁰ So, we assume that from this point of view, the debate and dialog between Muslim and Christian or other faiths had become an integral part of religious discourse in Islam particularly in the middle of the third/ninth century.

According to David Thomas in his book on Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (d. 247/861) that nearly all of the major theologians active at this time are known to have participated in debates or to have written some polemical work.⁹³¹ However, he points out that most of the works composed in the decades around the year 200/815-16, where al-Jāḥiẓ lived, are lost.⁹³² Writing during one of the most magnificent periods in the history of Islamic civilization, al-Jāḥiẓ could not ignore the reality of that time. So, as far as we are aware the text of *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* which will be analysed in this study is one of the earliest Muslim attacks on Christian doctrines, and it can be considered as the most comprehensive anti-Christian polemic that survives from the early Islamic period. Thus, the significant point of the works lies in the arguments that al-Jāḥiẓ employs in the body of his attack to prove his case against Christians and Jews. It also lies in the information he collects about the various Christian interpretations of their doctrine which stretched through out the *risāla*. Moreover, the *risāla* analysed in the immediately preceding pages

⁹³⁰Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2000, p. 66. For more detail on the development of Christians and Jews in Iraq particularly under the Sasanians and after the Muslim conquest and some aspects of their interactions with Muslims, see M.G. Morony, 'Religious communities in late Sasanian and early Muslim Iraq', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17 (1974), pp. 113-135.

⁹³¹ Thomas also assumes that al-Warrāq and al-Jāḥiẓ engaged in polemical exchange especially through the two of al-Jāḥiẓ's works entitled *Risāla fī madḥ al-warrāq* and *Risāla fī dhamm al-warrāq*, See Thomas, *Anti Christian polemic in early Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 31. Yāqūt in his list make reference to the title of both *risāla* of al-Jāḥiẓ, however, as far as we are concerned that the text of these two *risāla* not survived, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 109.

⁹³² Thomas, *Anti Christian polemic in early Islam*, p. 31. It is reported that ʿAlī b. Saḥl Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (d. c. 240/855) wrote also polemical *risāla* against the Christians. His detail biography can be seen in: *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Naṣārā, pp. 440-444.

belong to a recognizable literary type; the dialogue.⁹³³ In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ used the comparison technique for defending Islam by comparing it with Judaism and Christianity. From this point of view, it can be assumed that al-Jāḥiẓ is one of the biggest names in the field of comparative religious study.

6.2.2 The title and the text of the *Risāla*:

Most valuably, al-Qāḍī °Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) claimed that al-Jāḥiẓ composed two works on the subject of Muslim-Christian relations, firstly, known as *Risāla al-°asaliya*⁹³⁴ and secondly entitled *al-Mukhtār fī al-radd °alā al-Naṣārā*.⁹³⁵ However, as far we are aware, the latter is the only one which has survived. Therefore, there are different views concerning the correct reading of title of the *risāla*. Al-Jāḥiẓ for example, he himself mentions the title of this *risāla* in his introduction to the *al-Ḥayawān* as *Kitāb °alā al-Naṣārā wa al-Yahūd*, and in other occasion, he named it as *Kitāb °alā al-Naṣārā*.⁹³⁶

⁹³³ In this context, it is important to note that the etymology of the word "dialogue" is *dia* in Greek, referring to the act of seeing through. An essential component in dialogue is the willingness to reexamine one's faith in the light of how others relate to their tradition and the ability to strengthen or adjust one's own engagement and interaction with the sacred based on the experience of the other. For more information on the nature of interfaith dialogue, see Liyatakali, 'From Conversation: Interfaith Dialogue', *The Muslim World*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (2004), pp. 343-355.

⁹³⁴ Yāqūt did not make any reference to this *Risāla* in his list of al-Jāḥiẓ's work. See, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 107.

⁹³⁵ °Iwād, *Maʿ al-Jāḥiẓ fī risāla al-radd °alā al-Naṣārā*, Maktabat Zahrāʾ al-Sharq, Cairo, 1999, p. 5.

⁹³⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 9.

On the other hand, Yāqūt in his list of al-Jāhiz's works only named it as *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*.⁹³⁷ As a result, al-Ḥājirī assumed that al-Jāhiz has two works with different title, the first works is *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, and the other is *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Yahūd*.⁹³⁸ As far as we are aware *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Yahūd* is not extant. Sharqāwī claimed that the correct reading of the title of the *risāla* is *al-Mukhtār fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, because the original copy of the *risāla* is lost. And what we have now is a selection of text from the original work. In addition, he also claimed that it was the shortest *risāla* of al-Jāhiz as well.⁹³⁹ Based on this confusion, Ibrāhīm ʿIwad asked whether *al-Mukhtār fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* is the summary of *Risāla al-ʿasaliyya*?⁹⁴⁰ However, we have no further information about this matter, because as we have said earlier, that the text of *Risāla al-ʿasaliyya* has not come down to us.

Joshua Finkel was the first editor of the *risāla*. The text of the *risāla* can be found in his edition with other two *risāla* of al-Jāhiz namely *Risāla fī dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb* and *Risāla fī al-qiyān*. Afterwards Hārūn edited the *risāla* for the second time based on the Finkel's edition. The text of the *risāla* also can be found in ʿUyūn al-Sūd's with varying length. This *risāla* in the scholarship edition consists of forty-eight consecutive pages. It is divided into ten portions. The first portion entitled "*Faṣl min ṣadr kitābih fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*", and the other portions only begin with "*Faṣl minhu*".

⁹³⁷ Yāqūt also does not make any reference to *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Yahūd*, see Yāqūt, *Miʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 107.

⁹³⁸ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāhiz ḥayātuh wa ātharuh*, p. 363.

⁹³⁹ Al-Sharqāwī, *al-Mukhtār fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, Dār al-Ṣaḥwa, Cairo, 1984. p. 17.

⁹⁴⁰ ʿIwad, *Maʿ al-Jāhiz fī risāla al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, p. 5.

The full translation of the *risāla* could be seen in “Sobriety and Mirth” translated by Jim Colville with the title in English translation: “Contra Christianorum”.⁹⁴¹ Pellat in his collection of translated portions of al-Jāḥiẓ’s work also has published some five pages selected from various places of the *risāla* under the heading “Refutation of the Christian”.⁹⁴² So, all quotations in the text relating to the *risāla* are from both Colville’s and Pellat’s translation.

6.2.3 The addressee and the purpose of composition:

The addressee of the *risāla* cannot be determined precisely, however al-Ḥājirī and El-ʿAṭṭār suggest that al-Jāḥiẓ addresses the work to the Turkish vizier, al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān.⁹⁴³ Their suggestions were based on al-Jāḥiẓ’s statement in the introduction of the *risāla* when he claimed that he had received al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān message about the Christians, particularly the confusion in argumentation which has come into minds of the young and the weak, and the fear that they may not be able to answer their questions, and asking how to help with good answers⁹⁴⁴. Al-Ḥājirī also states that Yāqūt recorded in his *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* that he relates to Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī that al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān urged al-Jāḥiẓ to write this *risāla*.⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴¹ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 71-94.

⁹⁴² Pellat, *The life and work of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 86-90.

⁹⁴³ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 363; El-ʿAṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 387.

⁹⁴⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 303, ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 231.

⁹⁴⁵ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 362.

By observing to the beginning of the *risāla*, it is clear that al-Jāḥiẓ himself declares that he has read the letter from somebody without mentioning the name of the person who asking him to write this *risāla*, he says as follows: "I have read your *risāla* (treatise) on the issue which Christian factions in your community have raised and I can understand the confusion which these have caused in the minds".⁹⁴⁶ As a result, al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, the vizier promised in his letter that he would give al-Jāḥiẓ one year's earning in advance.⁹⁴⁷ Concerning the addressee of the *risāla*, Abū Milḥim, on the other hand, claims that al-Jāḥiẓ did not refer to any person, but only an illusory man.⁹⁴⁸ This is based on al-Jāḥiẓ's statement; for example, he writes "I have read your *risāla* on the issues which Christian factions in your community have raised...etc".⁹⁴⁹ This is due to the nature of the methodology of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing which he always used a dialog style in order to attract the reader.

Pellat, however, only assumed that the *risāla* has been written as a supporting idea of al-Mutawakkil's view regarding the relationship between Muslim and Christians in the Abbasid society. Perhaps, Pellat has observed from the announcement of decree made by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil which has been designed to ensure the strict application to Christian and Jews of the discriminatory status in the year 235/850 and 239/853.⁹⁵⁰ Because according to Brockelmann, the Christians and Jews at the time had played a big

⁹⁴⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 303, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 231.

⁹⁴⁷ Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, Vol. XVI, p. 100.

⁹⁴⁸ Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 285.

⁹⁴⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 303, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 231.

⁹⁵⁰ Sourdel, 'The Abbasid Caliphate', in: *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970, Vol. I, p. 127.

role at court of the caliph.⁹⁵¹ Actually, we agree with al-Ḥajirī when he stated that al-Jāḥiẓ's main purpose of the writing of the *risāla* was as a respond to religious situation which according to him the Christians and the Jews are the sources of the atheists movement in the country at the time.⁹⁵² Based on all of this informations, it can be safely to say that the *risāla* seem to have been written according to a wish of an authority either by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil or his vizier, al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān. It is seems here that al-Jāḥiẓ was able to maintain his relation with the Abbasid authority, although the Abbasid government has no longer upheld Mu'tazilite doctrine at that period.

6.2.4 The date of writing:

The only discussion of the possible date of writing the *risāla* on the part of modern scholarship is that of al-Ḥajirī in his book on the life and works of al-Jāḥiẓ. He pointed out that the most logical date for this *risāla* would be during the period of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil.⁹⁵³ El-ʿAṭṭār also added the more specific period is in the third period of al-Mutawakkil in power which this era is classified as the era of the Sunni triumph and decline of Mu'tazila.⁹⁵⁴ In the light of both statements, the important thing can be said here is that this *risāla* was written under the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil which his power stretched from 232/846 until 247/861.

⁹⁵¹ Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic people*, p. 132.

⁹⁵² Al-Ḥajirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āhāruh*, p. 359.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁹⁵⁴ El-ʿAṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 387.

6.2.5 The structure of the *Risāla*:

Al-Jāḥiẓ seems to have compensated for the blow to the Muʿtazila by giving the praises to the Abbasids and responding to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān wishes that were aggravated by the first Christian rebellion that threatened the Abbasid sovereignty in Armenia, given its proximity to the Roman land.⁹⁵⁵ From this point of view, Pellat assumes that the *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā* is consistent with measure taken by al-Mutawakkil against *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Furthermore, he regards this *risāla* as a polemical work which was designed to furnish arguments against Christians occupying high position in Muslim countries.⁹⁵⁶ On contrary, Hugh Goddard only considered the *risāla* is as much an attack on the social position of Christians as it is on their system of belief.⁹⁵⁷ However, let us now go back to the text of the *risāla* to see its content which can be divided into these structures:

1. Introduction – contains main Muʿtazilite principle.
2. Some of Christian's criticisms on Muslims.
3. Note on Maryam (Mary) and ʿĪsā (Jesus).
4. Note on ʿUzayr (Ezra).
5. Note on Firaun (Pharoah) telling Hāmān “*Build me a high tower*”.
6. Note on Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā (Yahya son of Zacharias).
7. Note on ʿĪsā spoke in the cradle.
8. Al-Jāḥiẓ's strategic to tackle down Christian's criticisms.
9. Why Muslims are more favourably towards Christians than other faith.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁹⁵⁶ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 18.

⁹⁵⁷ Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, p. 67.

10. Clash between Muslims and Jews.
11. The Emigration of Muslims to Abyssinia.
12. The interpretation of some Qur'ānic verses.
13. Some of the Arabs king adopts Christianity.
14. Trade relation between the Arabs and Christians.
15. Christianity spread among the Bedouin.
16. The Arabs assumed that Christians are philosophers and sages.
17. The Christians gain a better place in the heart of Caliph and Sultan.
18. Tolerance with Christians.
19. The role of Christian in spreading of atheism.
20. Some of Christian's faith.
21. The Spread of castration between Christians.
22. Some of Christian's culture.
23. Uncertainty on the nature of the Christianity.
24. Refutation of the Christian on the issue of 'Īsā spoke in the cradle.
25. Refutation of the Christian on "al-Masīḥ (Messiah) is the son of God".
26. Refutation of the Christian on "God is poor".
27. Refutation of the Christian on "Uzayr is the son of God".
28. Refutation of the Christian on "Messiah is the spirit of God".
29. Conclusion.

6.2.6 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

One would gather from what al-Jāḥiẓ says about the *risāla* in his introduction to his *al-Ḥayawān* that he intended it to be as a response to the argument posed by Christians.⁹⁵⁸ However, it is interesting to note here that Ibn Qutayba, one of al-Jāḥiẓ's contemporary scholars was not satisfied with the content of the *risāla*. For example, he claimed that its content is like the list of the grievances that Christians have against Muslims. In other occasion, Ibn Qutayba also stated that al-Jāḥiẓ, as the author of the *risāla* highlights more Muslims weaknesses.⁹⁵⁹ However, a study of the *risāla* gives us a useful indication of al-Jāḥiẓ's evidences to defend Muslims against Christians. For instance, in the opening chapter of the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ talks about his role in this work when he clarifies: "I shall respond to each of these points – and to others besides – with powerful arguments and compelling evidence. Once I delivered my response, I shall proceed to address specific issues wherein lies, as Christians are well aware, the refutation of their teaching, and dissolution of their doctrine and complete collapse of their religion".⁹⁶⁰

And as a Muslim writer, he seeks from Allah Almighty for help and forgiveness, before he goes onto further discussion. He says: "I seek refuge in God from unfounded

⁹⁵⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. I, p. 8.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, p. 59.

⁹⁶⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 308, 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 234.

assumption. I beseech Him for clarity of purpose in word and in deed, for His sake and for the triumph of His religion. He is close at hand and to our prayers responding".⁹⁶¹

In his introduction, al-Jāḥiẓ as usual tries to explain some of the Mu'tazila doctrines to his reader. Here, we find him saying: "All praise be to Allah who has bestowed on us the knowledge of His oneness, inspired us to reject mankind's sophistry and contrivance and moved us to dismiss all distinctions between His apostles. We deny no scripture He has enjoined us to believe in and add nothing thereto that has no rightful place therein. He is the Glorious and the Omnipotent and alone is worthy of our praise".⁹⁶²

6.2.6.1 The issue of Muslims-Christians-Jews relation:

Among al-Jāḥiẓ's strategies to tackle down Christian's criticisms, he highlights the reason why Muslims are more favourably towards Christians than other faiths. We find that he starts by pointing out the main issue of Muslim-Christian-Jews relation in the past till his age by saying that "I shall begin by considering why the Muslim masses are more favourably disposed towards Christians than they are towards Zoroastrians andJews".⁹⁶³ From al-Jāḥiẓ's point of view, this refers to the case of Muslims and Jews relationship when they have bad relations since they lived side by side at Medina. On the contrary, the relationship between Muslim and Christian was in good condition because Christian's lands were distant from both Mecca and Medina, and they never

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 308; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 234.

⁹⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 303; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 231.

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 308; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 234.

resorted to intrigue against Muslim. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, this is the principle reason why Muslim opinion became set against Jews, but remains tolerant with Christians.

The second point al-Jāḥiẓ raised here is the history of Judaism and Christianity in Arabia before and under Islam. He writes: "Another point to note is that Christianity, unlike Judaism and Zoroastrianism, had spread among the Bedouin...".⁹⁶⁴ And then he adds "Christianity prevailed among the Arabs kings and the tribes of Lakhm, Ghassān, Ḥārith b. Kaʿab at Najrān, Khudhāʿa and Ṭayy, to name but a few. It later, spread among Rabīʿa, Tighlab, ʿAbd al-Qays, obscure elements of Bakr, in particular, among the Dhū al-Jaddayn. However, by the time of coming Islam, there were no predominantly Jewish tribes outside the Yemen, except for insignificant element of Iyyād and Rabīʿa...".⁹⁶⁵

Al-Jāḥiẓ then proceeds to explain wherein lies the apparent superiority of Christians, he writes: "The reason why the common people respects and love them is that they include among their number secretaries, kings, flunkeys, noblemen's physicians, perfumers and money-changers, whereas the Jews are dyers, tanners, barbers, butchers and tinkers".⁹⁶⁶

In his explanation to content of the Qur'ānic verse (5: 82-85) which means: "Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are *al-Mushrikūn*, and you will find the nearest in love the believers (Muslims) those who say: "We are Christians". ...". Such is the recompense of those who

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 313; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 237.

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 313; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 237.

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 314; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 238.

do well”⁹⁶⁷ al-Jāḥiẓ writes: “these same verses provide strong evidence that Allah Almighty was not referring to such Christians as the ones you speak of their Milkiya (Melchite) and Yaʿkubiya (Jacobite), but, rather, to the likes of Bahira and the monks whom Salmān served. Just because they all claim to be Christian does not mean we have to treat them all alike”.⁹⁶⁸ Concerning to this point of view, ʿIwād al-Karīm admits that al-Jāḥiẓ is the first Muslim scholars who had brought this idea into Islamic thought.⁹⁶⁹ However, it is seems that al-Jāḥiẓ assumed that not all Christian accepted in this category.

6.2.6.2 The doctrine and custom of Christianity:

One can notice that al-Jāḥiẓ in this *risāla* writes also about some of the Christianity doctrine. For example, he says: “It is simply astonishing that no primate, bishop, archbishop, Jacobite hermit, Nestorian (or any other) monk or nun anywhere engages in procreative activity, in spite of the legion of monk and nuns around, the army of priest who follow their lead, the hordes of campaign veterans in their ranks and their share or normal male and female sterility. Christian who does take a wife cannot divorce and remarry or take a second wife or concubine”.⁹⁷⁰

Besides this, al-Jāḥiẓ also writes about some of Christian’s bad custom, such as human castration, eating pigs, and etc. For example, he said about human castration as follows: “Proof of the moral corruption and lack of compassion of Christians is that they,

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 310; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 235.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 310-311; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 236.

⁹⁶⁹ Al-Karīm, *Maʿ al-Jāḥiẓ fī risāla al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, p. 9.

⁹⁷⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*, Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 322, ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 244.

uniquely, practice that grimmest of all human custom: castration. They even performed it on innocent children".⁹⁷¹ Then he attacks Christians: "He (Christian) may be better dressed, practice a higher profession and be less hideous to look at than the Jew but the Christian is, at heart, a foul and dirty creature. Why? Because he is uncircumcised, does not wash after intercourse and eats pig meat. His wife does not wash after intercourse, either, or even after menstruation and childbirth, which leave her absolutely filthy. Furthermore she, too, is uncircumcised".⁹⁷²

When he completed from describing some of Christian's custom, he moved to explain more specific about the reality of Christianity because according to him, it is impossible to discover exactly what their religion consists of. He asked: "Even if you made a supreme mental effort to grasp their teaching on the Messiah and, particular, the doctrine of the nature of divinity, you would fail to understand the essential point of Christianity".⁹⁷³ He says again: "How could you? If you corner a Nestorian and ask him about the doctrine of Messiah, he will tell you one thing. If you then corner his brother (also a Nestorian) and ask him the same thing, he will tell you something else. In consequence, we cannot grasp the truth of Christianity as we can of all other religions".⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 322; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 245.

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 322; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 245.

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 323; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 245.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 323; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 246.

6.2.6.3 The argumentative issues:

In the next paragraph, al-Jāḥiẓ starts his arguments about the main issue in Christianity. The first issue is the refutation of Christians about Jesus having spoken in the cradle. From al-Jāḥiẓ's point of view, in spite of their wish to glorify Jesus, it forms no part of their belief. He writes on the issue as follows: "Let me now respond to their denial of the infant Jesus in the cradle. When Christians thought up and posed this spurious issue, they supposed that their purpose had been achieved. Not so. It may charm their audience with superficial appeal but it is, in truth, a stark abomination and an act of desperation".⁹⁷⁵

It is a brilliant point from al-Jāḥiẓ to deal with the problem that has been arises among Christians. Then, he goes to another sensitive issue which can be crack down the relationship between Muslim and Christian. The issue is about the question "Is the Jesus son of God?" Concerning that issue, one can observed from the *risāla* that al-Jāḥiẓ had succeeded in handling this sensitive issue, he answers to the question that had been arise by Christians as follows: "I do not accept that God may have a son, either begotten of the flesh or by adoption. I believe that to allow such a thing is gross ignorance and cardinal sin. If it were possible for God to be Jacob's father, He would be grandfather to Joseph. Were it conceivable – without implying a paternity, supposing any sort of physical similarity or in any way demeaning His majesty – for God to be both father and grandfather, it would be conceivable for Him to be an uncle, too. Were it possible to call Him "father" out of love and obedience, it would be equally possible to Him "brother"

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 324-325; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 246-247.

out of honour and respect. It would also be conceivable that He find Himself a friend and partner. However, all this would only be deemed possibly by someone ignorant of the majesty of God and the insignificance of humanity”.⁹⁷⁶

In another occasion, al-Jāḥiẓ comes again with other evidence, he says: “If the Messiah is to be known as the son of God because God conceived immaculately, ought more properly to be described as the children of God – if, indeed, Immaculate Conception was the reason why God took Jesus as His son. If, however, it was because of how He raised him, we might ask in what way did He raise him any differently from Moses, David and the other prophets?”.⁹⁷⁷

Moving to next paragraph, al-Jāḥiẓ goes further to discuss the complain from Christians that we Muslims accuse the adherent of other faiths of believing certain things which they do not and could not possibly believe such as, Muslim claim that the Jews said, *God is poor and we are rich* (Sūra Āl ‘Imrān, 3:181), *the hand of God is tied* (Sūra al-Mā’ida, 5:64), and etc. As regards to this matter, al-Jāḥiẓ also brings a strong argument to deny the statement. He says: “My reply to them is that the accursed Jews vilify the Qur’ān, attempt to disprove it, look for faults in it, accuse the Messenger to whom it was revealed of making mistakes, attack it from every side and seek to undermine it with every device, to confuse the minds of the simple and lead the hearts of the foolish ashtray...How could anyone believe that God is unable to do anything man can do yet acknowledge that He is the One who created and sustains him? If He wished, He could

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 331; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, pp. 250-251.

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 342; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 259.

deprive him of everything he has. If He wished, He could torment him or forgive him. His power to do all things is as His power to do just one".⁹⁷⁸

Referring to the same issue, al-Jāḥiẓ as linguistic scholar, tries to explain the word "*qard*" when God quoted the Jews as saying: *Who is the one who will give unto God a goodly loan that He shall multiply for him?*" (Sūra al-Baqara, 2:245). Al-Jāḥiẓ states: "The verse in question obviously metaphorical and its interpretation is perfectly clear". Indeed, this is similar to this saying: "A man short of cash might tell his slave, "Lend me a dirham", although he knows that the slave and everything he owns belong to him. It is simply a speech act that demonstrates his decency towards the slave and indicates that he will repay what he himself has given him. This is not an incorrect or strained use of language".⁹⁷⁹

From this explanation, one can notice how luminous al-Jāḥiẓ when he replies to the Jews saying that *the hand of God is tied*. To prove this, he delves into the psychology of the scholar. He writes: "By saying, *the hand of God is tied*; they were really referring to God's goodness and mercy, even if they did not state it openly."⁹⁸⁰ Then, al-Jāḥiẓ relates it with another verse from al-Qur'ān which means: *Indeed, His hands are both stretched out. He bestows just as He wills* (Sūra al-Mā'ida, 5:64). And he proceeds: "This proves my point".⁹⁸¹

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 343; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 260.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 344; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 261.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 345; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 261.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 346; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 261.

Al-Jāhiz then goes to discuss the second Christians complains on behalf of the Jews that we Muslims accuse the Jews saying that *Ezra is the son of God*. He writes again: "Regarding the contention that the Jews do not really claim that Ezra is the son of God, there are, in fact, two Jewish positions, one of which is localised while the other is held by all Jewish communities".⁹⁸² He then continues: "The specific case is this: when some Jews realised the Ezra had, by himself, restored the Pentateuch to them after it had been effected and scattered, they went overboard and came up with the claim that he is God's son....They generally held position is that every Jews is begotten by Israel and it thus the son of God, since the son of the son must himself be a son".⁹⁸³

After further exegetical consideration, al-Jāhiz comes to the problem of the Christians denying that Jesus is the spirit and the word of God. He reply: "You have question us about what is accepted in our language and our religion not in yours....If in saying '*Jesus is the Spirit and Word of God*' (Sūra al-Nisā', 4:171), we were bound according to our own language to admit that God made him His son, to regard his as another god beside God, and to say that a Spirit was in God and left Him and entered into Jesus's body and Mary breast, then we should have to say the same of the angel Gabriel; for he also has been called Spirit of God and sanctified Spirit".⁹⁸⁴

This was the last point that al-Jāhiz wants to arise in this *risāla*. After all he says: "I have dealt with the issues which Christians have raised more rigorously than they themselves have done, in order to make this guide complete and my response

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 346; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 262.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 347; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 262.

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 347; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 262.

comprehensive. The reader who reflects on replies will appreciate that I have not exploited weakness or seized upon oversight but have been summoned by reason and confidence in salvation to speak candidly about their faith as they cannot do themselves”.⁹⁸⁵

However, as usual, in his digression, al-Jāḥiẓ comes again with the last point he would like to conclude his writing. Here, al-Jāḥiẓ endeavours to show that Jesus is a man like other men, asserting that Jesus only an anthropomorphist could accept that divinity could be incarnated in human body. He draws his last question: “Was the Messiah ... a man and not a god or a god not man? Or was he both god and man?”⁹⁸⁶ He says the answer of this question could be found his work entitled *Risāla fī nafy al-tashbīh*.

6.2.7 The style of writing:

Our examination of al-Jāḥiẓ’s argumentation in the *Risāla fī al-radd ‘alā al-Naṣārā* reveals his Mu‘tazilite conviction. One can see him reasoning logically in accordance with canons of rhetoric, as well as reasoning from the mean between two positions, or from the psychological realities of human motivation. He writes in a distinctive way arguing with thoroughness and orderliness surprising in its ability to maintain reader interest. For example, he starts his writing with this word:

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 349; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 263.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 350; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 264.

(أما بعد ، فقد قرأت كتابكم ، وفهمت ما ذكرتم فيه من مسائل النصارى قبلكم ، ومن دخل على قلوب أحداثكم وضعفانكم من اللبس ، والذي خفتموه على جواباتهم من العجز...) .

(I have read your essay on the issue which Christian's factions in your community have raised and I can well understand the confusion which these have caused in the minds of the young and easily-led. I sympathise with your concern for the latter's inability to respond adequately...).

While, on the other hand, al-Jāhiz has been portrayed as writing almost carelessly and sometimes given to digression and half serious, however, here in the *risāla* one can found that al-Jāhiz's writing systematically with a plan in mind, and, for most part, with seriousness. To illustrate that, let us find these elements particularly in the second portion of the *risāla*. For example, al-Jāhiz writes:

(وسنقول في جميع ما ورد علينا من مسائلكم ، وفيما لا يقع إليكم كم مسائلهم ، بالشواهد

الظاهرة ، والحجج القوية ، والأدلة الاضطرارية ، ثم نسألهم بعد جوابنا إياهم عن وجوه يعرفون بها

انتفاض قولهم ، وانتشار مذهبهم ، وتهافت دينهم)

(I shall respond to each of these points with powerful arguments and compelling evidence. Once I have delivered my response, I shall proceed to address specific issue wherein lies, as Christians are well aware, the refutation of their teaching, and dissolution of their doctrine and complete collapse of their religion).

Then, he writes:

(فأنا مبتدئ في ذكر الأسباب التي لها صارت النصارى أحب إلى العوام من المجوس ،

وأسلم صدوراً عندهم من اليهود ، وأقرب مودة ، وأقل غائلة ، وأصغر كفراً ، وأهون عذاباً)

(I shall begin by considering why the Muslim masses are more favourable disposed towards Christians than they are towards Zoroastrians and why they believe them to be more trustworthy, more sociable, less pernicious, lesser infields).

Afterwards, he continues:

(وأول ذلك أن اليهود كانوا جيران المسلمين بيثرب وغيرها وكانت النصارى لبعدها

ديارهم ، من مبعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ومهاجره ، لا يتكفون طعنا ، ولا يثيرون كيدا ، ولا

يجمعون على حرب)

(The first point to note is that Jews and Muslims were neighbours in Medina and elsewhere, ... However, because their lands were distant from both Mecca (where Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was born) and Medina (where Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) emigrate), Christians never restored to intrigue, vilification and open hostility against Muslims).

He proceeds again by given his second reason:

(وأمر آخر ، وهو من أمتن أسبابهم وأقوى أمورهم ، وهو تأويل آية غلطت فيها العامة حتى

نازعة الخاصة ... وهو تأويل الآية : لتجدن أشد الناس عداوة للذين آمنوا اليهود والذين أشركوا

ولتجدن أقربهم مودة للذين آمنوا الذين قالوا إنا نصارى)

(The other thing which is one the most compelling reasons of all concern the interpretation of certain Qur'anic verse which have been misunderstood by the Muslim masses. Christians picked up on them and used them to bend the ears of the rabble. These are the verses in which the Qur'ān said : "Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are al-Mushrikūn, and you will find the nearest in love the believers (Muslims) those who say: "We are Christians").

Finally, at the end of the *risāla*, al-Jāhiz concludes with this humble statement:

(قد جعلنا في جواباتهم وقدمنا مسألتهم ، بما لم يكونوا ليبلغوا لأنفسهم ، ليكون الدليل تاما ، وأجواب

جامعا ، وليعلم من قرأ هذا الكتاب ، وتدبر هذا الجواب ، أنا لم نغتم عجزهم ، ولم ننتهز غرتهم ...

وسنسالهم إن شاء الله ، ونجيب عنهم ، ونستقصي لهم في جواباتهم ، كما سالنا لهم أنفسنا ،
واستقصينا لهم في مسائلهم)

(I have dealt with the issue which Christians have raised more rigorously than they themselves have done, in order to make this guide complete and my respond comprehensive. The reader who reflects on my replies will appreciate that I have not exploited weakness or seized upon oversight... I hope to have the opportunity of questioning them and scrutinizing their replies, just as I fully expect them to interrogate me. I have already considered the questions I shall ask.)

In addition, the *risāla* also draw heavily on verses of the Qur'ān, in which the author based his arguments and built his case. For example, in the first page of the *risāla*, the author told us that the Christians claim to have never professed, either in private or in public, about the divinity of Maryam (Mary). Here, he quotes this Qur'ānic verse Sūra al-Mā'ida (5:116):

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَلَمْ يَقُلْ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي آلِهَيْنِ مَعَ اللَّهِ ﴾

“And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: "Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?"”

In another occasion, al-Jāhīz again quotes another Qur'ānic verse to support his argument especially when he mentioned the claim by Christians or Jews. For instance, he quotes this verse (Sūra al-Baqara, 2:245):

﴿ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يقرض الله قرضاً حسناً فيضاعفه له ﴾

“Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, unto his credit and multiply many times?”

Al-Jāhīz then recorded what had been said by Jews: “They replied in that insulting and arrogant manner of their: “God, you say, wants loan but He would not be

asking us were He not poor". Afterwards, al-Jāhīz replied: "This verse in question is obviously metaphorical and its interpretation is perfectly clear. One man lends money to another as a favour and small profit accrue to himself, along with the eventual return of his capital, which remains at risk until it has been repaired."

This brilliant statement from al-Jāhīz shows us that our author also has his special skill in tackling the claims from his opponents.

The language of the *risāla* is obviously in the debate style. For instance, the author, frequently use these passages to express his view such as "They claim", "If they said" and "If they asked", etc. To illustrate that, let us follow these quotations:

- وأنهم زعموا أنا ادعينا عليهم ما لا يعرفون كما ادعينا على اليهود ما لا يعرفون ، حين نطق كتابنا ، وشهد نبينا أن اليهود قالوا: إن عزير ابن الله ، وإن يد الله مغولة ، وإن الله فقير وهم أغنياء ، وهذا ما لا يتكلم به إنسان ، ولا يعرف في شيء من الأديان.

- فإن سألونا عن أنفسهم فقالوا: ما لنا لا نعرف ذلك ولم يبلغنا عن أحد بته؟ أجبتهم بعد إسقاط نكيرهم وتشنيعهم، وتزويرهم. وجوابنا: أنهم إنما قبلوا دينهم عن أربعة أنفس.

- فإن قالوا: إنهم كانوا أفضل من أن يعتمدوا كذبا ، وأحفظ من أن ينسوا شيئا ، وأعلى من أن يغلطوا في دين الله تعالى ، أو أن يضيعوا عهدا، قلنا: إن اختلاف رواياتهم في الإنجيل ، وتضادها في كتبهم ، واختلاف في نفس المسيح ، مع اختلاف شرائعهم ، دليل على صحة قولنا فيهم ، وغفلتكم عنهم.

These quotations seem to us that the author made the structure of this *risāla* on the dialogue style. Or in other words, we can say that this style of writing is designed not to reveal the structure of the argument but to carry the reader along maintaining his interest and eliciting from him a positive response.

6.3 *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk wa ʿāmmat jund al-khilāfa* (The virtue of Turk and the whole army of the Caliphate)

6.3.1 The significance of the *Risāla*:

In general, Islamic history is not concerned with only one people such as the Arabs; it is the history of several nations, Turks and Persians, etc. However, the clash between these nationalities occurred in the Abbasid time. The Turks for example, they come into existence from Samarkand and Bukhara and marched to Baghdad.⁹⁸⁷ During the reign of the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim, as the Caliph himself having Turkish blood on his mother's side,⁹⁸⁸ he has invited many strong, healthy and pure-blooded Turks to join him in the government, and he founded a magnificent army and employed them in the most significant positions.⁹⁸⁹ Explaining the position of the Turks at that time, al-Masʿūdī said as follows: "The Turks became the owners of everything (in the Caliphate countries); the rest of the people were either listeners (to their order) or submissive (to their will)".⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁷ For further information on the origin of the Turks, see Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples*, p. 163; see also Kitapchi, *al-Turk fī muʿallafāt al-Jāhiz*, pp. 29-37.

⁹⁸⁸ There are some other Abbasid Caliphs who also has Turkish blood, namely al-Maʿmūn, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muʿtaṣim, al-Muktafi Billah, al-Muqtadir Billah, al-Nāṣir li Dīn Allah, al-Mustansir Billah, al-Mustaʿīn Billah and al-Muʿtaḍid Billah. See Kitapchi, *al-Turk fī muʿallafāt al-Jāhiz*, p. 194.

⁹⁸⁹ See, Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, p. 118.

⁹⁹⁰ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. II, p. 336.

The Turks reached their zenith in the time of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil in which according to al-Ṭabarī, at the time, there were two hundred thousand Turks in the Caliphate army.⁹⁹¹ This is the result of al-Mutawakkil's policy when he recruited a large number of Turkish slaves. Therefore, he created a sort of military class, whose role according to him, was to protect the caliph and the government. But the reverse happened; the caliph was assassinated following on a plot hatched by Turkish officers.⁹⁹²

Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk is the second work of al-Jāḥiẓ will be discussed in this part. The significant of this *risāla* lies on the question of inequality, racial and national which becomes the main social and political problem in the Abbasid society. Here, the author tries to explain his attitude towards the all nationalities and give them their rights and merit which according to him, every nation has their special characteristics, by which they are distinguished from each other. However, in this *risāla*, he stresses on the Turkish racial national and military characteristics and peculiarities more than others as we shall see later.⁹⁹³ When describing the *risāla*, Pellat said that is concern to conciliate the troops that al-Jāḥiẓ takes the opportunity of praising the Turks in order to flatter the court favourite al-Faḥ b. Khāqān, who was of Turkish extraction.⁹⁹⁴

⁹⁹¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-umam wa al-mulūk*, Vol. XI, p. 32.

⁹⁹² Sourdel, *Medieval Islam*, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London, 1983, p. 144. For more detailed views of the composition of the military from Umayyad to mid-Abbasid times, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. *Djaysh*, Vol. II, pp. 504-509.

⁹⁹³ In the same tradition, we can mention here *Risāla fī al-ṣaḥāba* by Ibn al-Muqaffa' which was cited with regard to military propagandas. It contains concrete proposal for establishing an enduring Abbasid state. For excellent analysis on the text of the *risāla*, see Latham, *Ibn al-Muqaffa' and early Abbasid prose*, pp. 64-73.

⁹⁹⁴ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 18.

6.3.2 The addressee of the *Risāla*:

Beeston claimed that the *risāla* is formally addressed to the Caliph al-Mutawakkil,⁹⁹⁵ however, most scholars of al-Jāhiz agreed that the real addressee of the *risāla* is al-Faḥ b. Khāqān.⁹⁹⁶ He was the son of Khāqān b. Ghurtuj of the Turkish ruling family at Farghana. Biographical information concerning him is scarce; nevertheless, he must have been born around 200/846, because he was probably same age as al-Mutawakkil. He was a member of the caliph's literary circle and he was himself a writer and poet.⁹⁹⁷ Amongst his works, as recorded by Ibn Khallikān are *Ikhtilāf al-mulūk*, *al-Ṣayd wa al-jāriḥ* and *al-Rawḍa wa al-zahr*, but, none of these works has come down to us.⁹⁹⁸

In addition to this *risāla*, al-Jāhiz wrote also another work entitled *Naẓm al-Qur'ān* which he addresses it to al-Faḥ b. Khāqān.⁹⁹⁹ However, as far as we know, this work also has not come down to us. Some scholars claimed that it was a book on the

⁹⁹⁵ Beeston, *Samples of Arabic Prose*, p. 12.

⁹⁹⁶ One should bear in mind that this person is not the other al-Faḥ b. Khāqān who is his full name, al-Faḥ b. Muhammad b. Ubayd Allah b. Khāqān. He is an Andalusian anthologist whose history is somewhat obscure. He is the author of the book entitled *Qalā'id al-'iqyān fī maḥāsin al-ʿyān*. He was assassinated at the date which various sources varies between 528/1134 and 555/1160, however the year 529/1134 being the most possible. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Faḥ b. Khāqān, Vol. II, p. 838.

⁹⁹⁷ For further information about this man, see Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawā'id al-wafayāt*, Vol. II, p. 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-Aʿlām*, Vol. V, p. 133; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 148; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Faḥ b. Khāqān, Vol. II, p. 838.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿyān*, Vol. III, pp. 177-179.

⁹⁹⁹ Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, Vol. II, p. 1964.

inimitability of the Holy Qur'ān in which the author analysed the content of the Qur'ān from literary point of view.¹⁰⁰⁰

6.3.3 The date and the purpose of writing:

The precise date of composition of the two parts of the *risāla* cannot be determined. However, as it has been mentioned earlier that the second part of the *risāla* was written during the reign of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, but it does not reached him. This means that the second part of the *risāla* was written between the year 218/833 and 227/842 when the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim was the caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. On the other hand, the first part of the *risāla* was written during the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil particularly in the time of al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān being his vizier. This means that this part was written by al-Jāḥiẓ between the year 232/847 and 247/861. And then it was combined together with the second part and hand over to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān. We know that under the caliphate al-Mutawakkil, the Mu'tazila policy was once abandoned and no Abbasid caliph ever attempted to return to it. And al-Jāḥiẓ of course, try to make his attempt to be more closer to this new policy, presumably this is the main reason of the composition of the *risāla*.

However, it seems to us that his main purpose of the writing of this *risāla* is an attempt of establishing an idea of equality through compromise between all the elements which the caliphate had to employ under its own power. Thus, the fact remains that it was

¹⁰⁰⁰ See al-Hājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ṣayātuh wa āthāruh*, p.322.

written in accordance with the Abbasid policy at al-Jāḥiẓ's time.¹⁰⁰¹ Therefore, Najm maintains that this *risāla* was written especially by al-Jāḥiẓ in praise of the Turks as soldier of the Caliphate.¹⁰⁰² Or in other word, it can be said the Turkish fighting units are compared to four other groups in the army of the Caliphate; i.e. the Arabs, Mawālī (clients), Abnā', and Khurāsānis.

6.3.4 The title and the text of the *Risāla*:

Yāqūt claimed that the title of the *risāla* is *Manāqib jund al-khilāfa wa faḍā'il al-Atrāk*. However, most of the modern scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ such as Pellat, Hārūn, al-Ḥājirī and others agreed that the correct reading of the *risāla* is *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk wa 'āmmat jund al-khilāfa*. On the other hand, some scholars simply named it as "*Faḍā'il al-Atrāk*".¹⁰⁰³ Al-Ḥājirī claims that the text of the *risāla* is in two portions which had been written by al-Jāḥiẓ in different time.¹⁰⁰⁴ The second part was written during the reign of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, while the first part in the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil as has been mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ in his introduction to this part. He states: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful. This is a book (the second part) I wrote in the days of al-Mu'taṣim Billah (May Allah is pleased with him). It did not reach him for reasons which would take a long time to explain. Therefore, I did not give information

¹⁰⁰¹ For analysis on the political aspect of the *risāla*, see Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 116-136.

¹⁰⁰² Najm, *Studies in the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁰³ Kitapchi, *al-Turk fī mu'allafāt al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 293.

about it".¹⁰⁰⁵ The both part afterwards hand over to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān when he was a vizier of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil.

Referring to the text of *risāla* in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, one can observe that the first part of the *risāla* begins with al-Jāḥiẓ's statement: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful. May Allah grant you success in following right course, help you to be thankful, make you and your hand sure, place us both among those who speak the truth", while the second part starts with this statement: "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful. This is a book I wrote in the days of al-Mu'taṣim Billah (May Allah is pleased with him). It did not reach him for reasons which would take a long time to explain ..."¹⁰⁰⁶

The *risāla* was published at Leyden in 1903 edited by G. van Vloten. But he died before completing the work; it was continued and sent to the press by de Goeje.¹⁰⁰⁷ Since then, it published again in the Muhammad Sāsī al-Maghribī's collection in 1907.¹⁰⁰⁸ The latest edition we have now is Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition.¹⁰⁰⁹ Both edition differs slightly from that G. van Vloten and Sāsī al-Maghribī and is cited throughout the text.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p.36; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.31.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 5 & 36; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 9&31.

¹⁰⁰⁷ This edition entitled "*Tria opuscula, auctore al-Djahiz*". It was printed by E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1903, pp. 1-56.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See 'Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk', in *Majmū' Rasā'il*, collected by: Sāsī al-Maghribī, pp. 2-53.

¹⁰⁰⁹ The text of the *risāla* can be seen in two places in Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition. See, for example in Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 6-86 & Vol. III, pp. 163-220; and in 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 9-66 & Vol. III, pp. 125-168.

An English translation was published by C. T. Walker entitled “Exploits of the Turks and the Army of the Caliphate in General” which he used the Cairo edition for his translation.¹⁰¹⁰ The text of the *risāla* is divided into three parts which he named it as Letter I, Letter II, and Letter III.¹⁰¹¹ The latest English translation of the *risāla* could be found in “Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ” by M. Hutchins entitled “The Virtue of the Turks”.¹⁰¹² Pellat also in his book on the life and works of Jāḥiẓ has translated some selected pages from various place of the *risāla* under the heading “The merits of the Turks and the Imperial army as whole”.¹⁰¹³

6.3.5 The structure of the *Risāla*:

Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk is dealing with the comparative qualities of the various racial elements in the army and their composition as can be seen in this brief outline which will be divided into these structures:

a. Part one:

1. Introduction – Dedication to al-Fatḥ b. Khāqān.
2. The unity of the imperial army.
3. Al-Jāḥiẓ compared the merits of Turk with those of other groups.
4. The Case of Khurasānīs.
5. The Case for the Arabs.

¹⁰¹⁰ See Walker, C. T. Harley, ‘Jāḥiẓ of Basra to al-Fatḥ Ibn Khāqān on the “Exploit of the Turks and the Army of the Caliphate in General”’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXIII, (1915): pp. 631-697. For discussion, see also Francesco Gabreili, ‘La risāla di al-Ġāḥiẓ sui Turchi’, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 32, 1957, pp. 477-483; Ramazan Sésén, *Hilafet Ordusunun Menkebeleri ve Türklerin Faziletleri* (including a Turkish translation, Ankara, 1967.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 633 (Letter I), p. 654 (Letter II), p. 659 (Letter III).

¹⁰¹² Hutchins, *Nine Essay of al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 175-217.

¹⁰¹³ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 91-97.

6. The Case for the *Mawālī* (clients).
7. The Case for the *Abnā'* (The descendant of the Persian immigrant).
8. The conclusion of the first part.

b. Part Two:

1. Time of composition.
2. The virtue of the Turks.
3. The Turks as horseman.
4. National characteristics.
5. List of the qualities required in war.
6. Quote a line of reasoning by which the Turks claim to be closer to the caliphate than the Arabs.
9. Some information about customary law among Khurasanis and the Turks.
10. Some anecdote.
11. Conclusion

6.3.6 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

In his introduction, al-Jāhīz starts his *risāla* by recording his praise to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān. He then declares that knowledge must precede action by saying as follows: “people have sought clear understanding and for love of safety from destruction and desire for prosperity, they have endured the burden of knowledge and hastened on with the hated part of reform, because there are few doers and many prescribers”.¹⁰¹⁴

¹⁰¹⁴ Al-Jāhīz, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p.5; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 9.

After that al-Jāḥiẓ expresses his admiration for the loyalty and zeal with which al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān defends his leader against the enemies of authority. He writes: "I have been pleased by what I have seen your zealous obedience to your leader, defence of your caliph's rule... For authority is never free of the vindictive busybody, a man angry at being convicted, a disparaging man whose sentence was redressed, the unemployed critic, a person pleased with his own opinion whose presentation is foolish, one who loves to scorn the right way, objects to sound management, until he seems a scout for all the nation and minister for the inhabitants of all the realm".¹⁰¹⁵

6.3.6.1 The composition of army:

The component of the caliphate army at the time of al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān consists of five groups; Khurāsānis, Turks, Mawālī, Arabs and Abnā'. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān had declared that the army could really be regarded as composed entirely of Khurāsānis, and there were no sharp distinctions between these various groups. However, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ propose to deal with the Turks and compare their merit with those of the other groups, and provides with evidences which conciliating him.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 6; *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 9-10.

6.3.6.2 The catalogue of virtues:

6.3.6.2.1 The Khurasānī group:

Al-Jāḥiẓ starts his comparison by the case of Khurasānī and immediately invokes the memories of the Abbasid revolution. They are the early Khurasānis who brought the Abbasid to power. Therefore, al-Jāḥiẓ records in this *risāla* some of the qualities that the Khurasānī were proud with. For example, they boast: “We are chieftains and the son of chieftains; they are nobles and the son of nobles. They are provided the Abbasid missionaries and it was through them the kingdom of their foes ceased from its place, and the kingdom of their friend was established. And they also claimed that they have conquered the lands and killed the enemies and destroyed the foe in every valley. And finally, they claimed that they are the people of this dynasty and the missionaries of this claim and the root of this tree; and from their direction blows this wind...etc. So, we deserve better to be preferred and have the better right to the first place”.¹⁰¹⁶

There then follows a list of major military campaign, beginning with the fortification of the villages in Khurāsān, and ending with an allusion to the siege of Wasīṭ. The author also cites a variant of the famous tradition in which Muhammad b. ʿAlī, considered where to send his *duʿāʾ* (propagandist). The Khurāsānī therefore boasts: “We are the best contingent for the best *imām*. We vindicate his opinion, confirmed his idea, and prove the accuracy of his insight”.¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 14; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 15.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 16; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 17.

Al-Jāhiz completes the case for the Khurāsānis with a description of their cultural background, fighting qualities, and armour. Initially, his praise for them seems to us is generous; unique in the history of Islam, highly discipline and remarkably well-behaved towards the civilian population.

6.3.6.2.2 The Arab group:

If these are the virtues of Khurāsānis, who are the Arabs and what are their claims? Al-Jāhiz's description of the Arabs is obviously presented. The next paragraph the writer moves on to record some of the qualities which the Arabs claimed. For instance, he quotes what the Arabs having said: "the Arabs that the merit is earned by established relationship and intermarriage and ancient association and obedience to parents and tribe, and by serviceable gratitude and adequate eulogy, and by measured verse, which endures as long as time and shines like a star, and is recited, so long as men start on pilgrimage and the east wind blows and the olive is pressed, by prose and speech worthy to be handed down, and description of the origin of the dynasty and argument on behalf of its claims and perpetuating its exploits, since the non-Arabs are not used to this, and this not related as known to any but the Arabs".¹⁰¹⁸

The Arab also boasts, "Who are most of the agents (*naqīb*), if not, in essence, Arabs (*min ṣamīm al-ʿArab*)".¹⁰¹⁹ A description of their military exploits is the same as

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 21-22; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 22; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 21.

that of the Khurāsānis. There is, one difference: whereas a Khurāsānī is credited with killing the last Umayyad Caliph, it is an Arab who spread the good news. If there any other subtle differences between the so-called Arabs and Khurāsānis of al-Jāḥiẓ, it is not clear from a reading of the text.

6.3.6.2.3 The Mawālī group:¹⁰²⁰

The smallest section of the *risāla* is reserved for the Mawālī. They were least significant compare to the other component of the Caliphate army.¹⁰²¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ records the Mawālī (the client) saying: “We are the really loyal and the really affectionate. We are trusted in a crisis. We are kinder to patrons, more dependable, and happier with what is provided. And to us belong, among the chief of nobility and to us belong the exploits of the people of Khurāsān and the exploit of the Abbasid propaganda; and we belong to them and are reckoned among them”.¹⁰²²

Their role as a distinct division of the army was limited. They were units under the name of Mawālī that fought in campaigns subsequent to the revolution, but these were relatively small and the occasions on which they served were extremely rare.¹⁰²³

¹⁰²⁰ Mawlā (pl. Mawālī) is Arabic term for clientship. For further information on this issue, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Mawlā, Vol. VI, pp. 874-882.

¹⁰²¹ Lassner, *The Shaping of the Abbasid Rule*, p. 123.

¹⁰²² Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p.23; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 22.

¹⁰²³ Lassner, *The Shaping of the Abbasid Rule*, p. 128. For more information on military slaves and their role in the early Abbasid state, see Daniel, *Slave soldier and Islam. the genesis of the military system*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981.

6.3.6.2.4 The Banawī group:¹⁰²⁴

This group is among the early contingents of the army. Al-Jāḥiẓ linked them, as a group, to service in the Caliphate army. According to author, the Banawī is an expert at close combat. When weapons are exhausted, the Banawī grabs the neck of his foe. They also know how to stab with the knife and fend off the dagger and so on. On the Banawī origin, al-Jāḥiẓ says: “Banawī said that my root is Khurāsān. It was the place where the state originated and the call began... until the truth was established and covered the horizon with its light”.¹⁰²⁵ He continues: “And my branch is Baghdad. It is the residence of the caliphate and the place of the material resources. It is the Khurāsān of Iraq, the home of the caliphate, and the place of substance”. The Banawī also boasts: “We know how to fight at the entrances to protective moats and at the bridges.... We are masters of night fighting and kill openly in the markets and the roads.... We fight in the water as well as in the land”.¹⁰²⁶ Because of this, the Banawī says: “Thus who has more right to preference and is more worthy of high rank than one with these inner qualities and characteristics”.¹⁰²⁷ Other images of the Banawī in al-Jāḥiẓ’s description reappear in the description of the qualities of the Turks.

¹⁰²⁴ The term *abnā'* (sing. *Ibn*) literally means “sons”. See, Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 76. Lassner described *abnā'* as the foster sons of the Caliphs and the neighbours of the *wazīrs*. They are born in the court of their kings and under the wings of their Caliphs, see Lassner, *The Shaping of the Abbasid Rule*, p. 132. On the other hand, Pellat suggested that they are descendents of Persian immigrants in the Yemen, see Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 276. However, we are agreed with Beeston’s remarks on Pellat suggestion that al-Jāḥiẓ used the term not with reference to Iranians but to ‘second generation’ Iraqi-born troops of Turkish parentage, see, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ* by Pellat, rev. by Beeston, *Journal of Arabic literature*, Vol. II, 1971, p. 196.

¹⁰²⁵ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p. 25; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 24.

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.27; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 25.

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.27; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 25.

In his conclusion for the first part of the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ hopes that he has undertaken his book solely to bring together those hearts that differed, to add to friendship if they were friendly, and to tell of the agreement of their origins, so their that their word can agree and those ignorant of the amount of distance in lineage and extent of difference in descent will learn.

It seems that the main purpose of this part of the *risāla*, firstly, the author mentions some stories which related to the case of study, either matters seen or witnessed, or taken straight from mouths of men and heard, secondly, he will mention all the instruments and tools these groups have, and finally, he will examine which of them uses most, which are least dependent on them, and so on.

After all he hopes this work will be accepted because he said the choice is in the hand of the observer, who leafs through these ideas, ponder their aspects, reflect on the chapters, and compares the beginning with the end.

Moving to the part two of the *risāla*, we find that al-Jāḥiẓ told us the precise date of writing of the *risāla*. He said that he wrote this work in the days of the caliph al-Muṭaṣṣim Billah. However, he said it did not reach the caliph for the reason which would take a long time to explain. Therefore, he said he did not give information about it. He wants it to be a forthright book and a fair presentation. And he did not want it to be a book with immoderate praise for one people and excessive scorn for others.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 36; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. 1, p. 31.

Because of this purpose, he said he did not want to mention only the virtue of the Turks, but also the vices of the rest of the troops, and sometimes he said omitting of all would be more correct and forsaking this book more prudent.

6.3.6.2.5 The virtue of the Turks:

We find that al-Jāḥiẓ in the most part of this section focusing on the quotation of reasoning by which the Turks claim to be closer to the caliphate army rather than the other groups. For instance, al-Jāḥiẓ records that the Turks have claimed as follows: “The Turks can shoot beasts and birds, targets on spears and human being. The Turks also ride his horse with downward sweep from a mountain or down below inside a ravine at a greater speed. And one single Turk is as good as whole staff. And if a Turk is advancing along with an army composed of some other contingent, where the rest go ten miles, he goes twenty; and again the Turk does not march like other people at all, and does not proceed at all in a straight lineetc”.¹⁰²⁹

Al-Jāḥiẓ continues his praise and eulogy of the Turks and quoting informations borrowed from the man known as Ḥumayd.¹⁰³⁰ From these qualities that had been recorded by al-Jāḥiẓ was the great evidence which made up the Turks closer to the caliphate army.

¹⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 48; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 40.

¹⁰³⁰ The full name of this man is Ḥumayd b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ṭūsī, who was also known as Abū Ghānim. He is one of the famous the Abbasid *amīr* (leader), and he has played a big role in helping the caliph al-Ma’mūn against Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī. See ‘Uyūn al-Sūd, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. I, p. 34.

Al-Jāhiz also considers the Turks psychology by pointing out that they are characterised by great home sickness for their own country and exceptional fondness for moving about. He writes: "Homesickness is common to all nations and prevails over all mankind. But it is peculiarly strong among the Turks, and counts for more among them". Al-Jāhiz repeats: "Love of country and longing for it are mentioned in the Qur'ān and written of all people, although the Turk for the reasons we mentioned is more intense in longing and greater in desire".¹⁰³¹

From this point, al-Jāhiz passes on to a consideration of describing national characteristics other than the Turks. He said: "Good examples are the Chinese in craftsmanship, Greeks in philosophy and literature, the Arabs in fields that we mean to deal with in their proper place, the Sasanians in imperial administration". He added: "The Greeks are theoreticians rather than practitioners, while the Chinese are practitioners rather than theoreticians; the former are thinkers, the later doers".¹⁰³²

Afterward al-Jāhiz describes the Arabs by saying: "they were not merchants, artisans, physicians, farmers, mathematicians or fruit farmers. They dwelt in the plains, and grew up in contemplation of the desert..... They obtained every goal, and in some of these respects their souls became larger, concern higher and prouder than all of peoples. Their battle days have been better preserved and remembered".¹⁰³³

¹⁰³¹ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p.63; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p.

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¹⁰³² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.69; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 55.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 69; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 55.

Then he move on again to speak about the Turks. He explains: "The Turks likewise owners of the tent poles, resident of desert, and master of the flocks. They are the Bedouins of the non-Arabs. ... Since they were like that, they became in war like the Greeks for wisdom, the Chinese for crafts, the Bedouins in what we enumerated and wrote down, and the Sasanians in kingship and leadership".¹⁰³⁴ So as a result of these different characteristics and activities, al-Jāhiz claimed that had broadened their minds and exalted their inspiration, so that of all nations they are now the most glorious and the most given to recalling their past splendours.

At the end of the second part, al-Jāhiz concludes his work by apologizing for his own deficiencies. He writes: "We have mentioned the good points of all races, in collecting together what we have learned and what has come to our knowledge. And if we have hit the mark, it is by the assistance of Allah and by His appointment. If we have come short of their deserts, then the blame of our shortcomings must rest with the defects of our knowledge and the laps of our memory and our lack of information".¹⁰³⁵ He than adds: "If the author (al-Jāhiz himself) had been expected to aim at exhaustive treatment in very subject that he handled in it,.... then, indeed, it would have been a big book, filling many pages of large compass".¹⁰³⁶ However, the author suggests "a little that makes for concord is better than a great deal that makes for division".¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.70; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 55.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 86; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 66.

¹⁰³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 86; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 66.

¹⁰³⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 86; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 66.

To sum up, we can say that the Turks were the key element to any reconciliation within the Abbasid society, because of their central political and military role. So, through this *risāla*, it seems that al-Jāḥiẓ appeal for the acceptance of the Turks and the creation of a united society and he also called for new era, one whole values were to be rooted in the early years of the Abbasid regime. However, Lassner admits that the author's vision of new society was not destined to be realised.¹⁰³⁸

6.3.7 The style of writing:

Although al-Jāḥiẓ himself denies that he wrote the *risāla* as a refutation or argument, but the content of the *risāla* obviously part of his argument against the opponent of the Abbasid's policy as we have seen above. This is based on the style of language used in the *risāla*. Al-Jāḥiẓ's style indicates that he is in arguing with his opponent. The word such as (*za'amtā*) frequently was used in the text. To illustrate this aspect, let us follow this passage:

- وزعمت أن اختلاف التركي والخراساني ليس كاختلاف بين العجمي والعربي .. إلخ

- وزعمت أن هؤلاء وإن اختلفوا في بعض اللغة ، وفارق بعضهم بعضا في بعض

الصور ، فقد تخالفت ... إلخ

- وزعمت أنه أراد الفرقة والتخريب ، وأنك أردت الألفة والتقريب ... إلخ

- وزعمت أيضا أن البنوي خراساني ، وأن نسب الأبناء نسب آبائهم ... إلخ

- ثم زعمت أن الأتراك قد شاركوا هؤلاء القوم في هذا النسب ... إلخ

¹⁰³⁸ See, Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, p. 136.

- فزعمت أن أنساب الجميع متقاربة غير متباعدة ، وعلى حسب ذلك التقارب تكون

المؤازرة والمكاتفة والطاعة والمناصحة والمحبة للخلفاء والأئمة.

The tone of the above passages is, on the whole, indicates that the author in argument with his opponent. The rest of al-Jāhiz's argument run on the style of "If they say, we say to them" which is also in the framework of the dialogue.

Al-Jāhiz begins part one and part two of the *risāla* with the Islamic formula 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate', a formula used to begin all but one Sūra of the Qur'ān. However, we find that the quotation of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth is absent from this *risāla*. But this comes as not surprise at all, since the content of the *risāla* essentially informations of the composition of the Caliphate army, and we think here there is no space of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. On contrary, there are many occasions in this *risāla*, which could be called adaptation of the Qur'ānic stories, for instance, when al-Jāhiz tell his addressee: "He (Allah) created the angels, and He created Ādam without assigning to him father or mother, but formed him in a clay, and He created Eve of the rib of Ādam, and made her his wife, and He created 'Īsā without a male parent and traced his descent from his mother, and He created the Jinns from the scorching fire, and the heaven from the smoke, and the earth from the water, and Ishāq from the barren woman, and He gave the power of speech to 'Īsā in cradle, and He enable

Yaḥyā to speak prophecy as a child, and He taught Sulaymān the language of birds and the speech of ants... etc.”¹⁰³⁹

In addition, the author surprises with the quotation of the Qur’ānic verse in the type of the Qirā’āt (the variant reading of the Qur’ān). For example, in his explanation of the origin of *Abnā’*, he says: “Just Abraham was made a father to one he did not beget, the Banawī is Khurāsānī by birth and the client of Arab as a defendant and inclusion in the group responsible for paying blood money”. And in the same condition, he continues: “the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) made his wives mothers of believers. Yet they did not bear them or nurse them”. In conjunction with this statement, al-Jāḥiẓ quotes this Qur’ānic verse which narrated with according to some style of Qirā’āt:¹⁰⁴⁰

﴿وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَهُوَ أَبُو لَهُمْ﴾

(His wives are their mothers and he is their father)¹⁰⁴¹

Abdullah Yusuf Ali on his commentary said that this verse shows the dignity and position of the Holy Prophet’s wives, who had a special mission and responsibility as Mothers of the Believers. They were not to be like ordinary women; they had to instruct women in spritual matters, visit and minister to those who were ill or in distress, and do other kindly offices in aid of the Prophet’s mission.¹⁰⁴²

¹⁰³⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk*, in: Hārūn’s edition, Vol. I, p.25; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p.

24.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 86; see also ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. I, p. 66.

¹⁰⁴¹ Please refer to the Qur’ān al-Karīm, Sūra al-Aḥzāb (33:6).

¹⁰⁴² See, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’ān, Text, Translation and Commentary*, p. 1057.

In short, the style of al-Jāḥiẓ's writing in this *risāla* is excellent, as Lessner rightly points out, that the basic thematic lines of the text is clear enough and it does not readily lend itself to a thorough explication. The author's credentials for observing the government and military were impeccable.¹⁰⁴³ This is because; the author was an eyewitness to events which occurred in his days.

6.4 Conclusion:

This chapter reviews and attempts a critical assessment of the *rasā'il* of al-Jāḥiẓ, in particular those relating to the semi-theological and semi-political issues. All of them are the most interesting work of al-Jāḥiẓ and are worthy of the careful analysis. As for its connection to the subject of semi-theological and semi-political, it is the most helpful in revealing a side of al-Jāḥiẓ's interests in the theology and political life of his time. Through out this works, we can see that *Adab* and Mu'tazilism went hand in hand in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing particularly in all his exploration of different issues. From the *rasā'il* of the defence of the Abbasid against their opponent, we have seen how al-Jāḥiẓ, as Mu'tazila scholar, had presented his duty to attack and refute the ideas of the Abbasid's opponent either from theological (religious) or political perspectives. It cannot be denied that this group of the *rasā'il* presents a vivid picture of the Mu'tazilī systematic argument against other people or parties. For example, in *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*, al-Jāḥiẓ sets his task by attacking the Christians and Jews. While in *Risāla fī al-radd 'alā al-mushabbiha*, his argument goes to the group of people known as *al-Mushabbiha*. This

¹⁰⁴³ Lassner, *The Shaping of Abbasid Rule*, p. 119.

rasā'il helps us also to gain an idea about the scope of the activities of al-Jāḥiẓ and the Mu'tazila. They have done their best, as showed by al-Jāḥiẓ, to defend their belief by their unique understanding and interpretation of Qur'ānic verses. Therefore, it can be said that al-Jāḥiẓ played his main role as defender of the Islamic religion and Muslims from the people of other faith particularly Christians and Jews through his works. He also can be assumed as one of religious thinkers in the course of third century of *hijra* to propose and promote dialogue between Muslims, Christians and Jews. Through his *Risāla fī manāḳib al-Turk*, the author provides a concise and cogent statement about the general composition of the early Abbasid armies. Therefore, this *risāla* can be considered as a historical document that sheds light on the structure of the Abbasid military and certain aspects or problems of the army. In short, we can say that the text of the *rasā'il* in this group rich of illusion to historical events and personalities at the time of al-Jāḥiẓ. It also represents the sense of al-Jāḥiẓ's obedience to the Abbasid government against their opponents. From the discussion in this chapter, we are enabling not only to conceive the Islamic tendency in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, but also to see his view on historical situation as a Mu'tazilite thinker in a time and environment where various kinds of religious and non-religious tendencies faced each other in a strong dialectical dispute.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE *RASĀ'IL* CONCERNING THE QUASI-SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

7.1 Introduction:

There is no doubt that *al-Ḥayawān*, a monumental work in seven volumes, is an excellent study by al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the quasi-scientific¹⁰⁴⁴ issue in which the author takes certain animals and sets out verses, anecdotes and traditions concerning them.¹⁰⁴⁵ Pellat has listed six works of al-Jāḥiẓ in this category;¹⁰⁴⁶ however, this chapter is designed to deal with only two main *risāla* i.e. *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr* and *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān*. These two *risāla* are known as “the *rasā'il* of quasi-scientific” because they were based on the character of the work itself, as can be seen later on. An effort will be made here to present this aspect in their true light and to give a clear picture. Therefore, before we go into further discussion, it is important to note here that according to Pellat, the writings in this group are intended as a contribution towards a general education based on Arabic sources with some foreign elements. They also aim to

¹⁰⁴⁴ The term means seemingly; apparently but not really or in limiting sense. The word ‘quasi’ used in connection with the word following; hence usually treated as a prefix and hyphenated, e.g. quasi-art, quasi scientific, quasi-belief, etc. For the detailed linguistic aspect of the word, see Simpson, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XII, pp. 1001-1002.

¹⁰⁴⁵ We have already discussed briefly about this book. See, chapter two of the thesis. For more information about the theological aspect in *al-Ḥayawān*, see Saʿīd H. Maṣṣūr, *The World View of al-Jāḥiẓ in Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, Thesis Ph.D., McGill University, 1968. For instance, he argues that for a persuasive argument that the book is a work of philosophy and theology and better translated to “Book of life”.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The rest of al-Jāḥiẓ’s work in this category are as follows: *al-Ḥayawān*, *al-Bighāl*, *al-Amṣār wa ajāʾib al-buldān*, and *Aṣʿimat al-ʿArab*, see Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 21-23.

make the reader think, both about receiving knowledge and about the nature and the evidence it offers of the existence of God.¹⁰⁴⁷

7.2 *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr* (The circle and the square)

7.2.1 The Significance of the *Risāla*:

The significance of the *risāla* lies in its content, which consists largely of a series of ironic questions on a wide range of topics, as we shall see later. However, when describing the topic of discussion in the *risāla*, Zubaidi states as follows: “Many of them are religious questions relating to Ādam (p.b.u.h.) and Satan, to ancient prophets, kings, peoples and historical events mentioned in the Qur’ān, to angels and devils, to Paradise, Hell and the Day of Resurrection, to prophethood, divine revelation and inspiration, to faith, guidance and perversity”.¹⁰⁴⁸ Consequently, Pellat describes it as “a masterpiece of ironic writing as well as a compendium of all the questions”.¹⁰⁴⁹

Interestingly, we find that there is another significant element that can be pointed out from the content of this *risāla* which is related to the theme of the *risāla* itself. According to Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, the man of letter in modern Arabs world, the *risāla* can be categorised in the lampoonery theme.¹⁰⁵⁰ Indeed, it is a new approach in prose literature, because this theme normally can be found in Arabic poetry. Obviously, from the

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Zubaidi, *The Impact of the Qur’ān and Hadith*, p. 336.

¹⁰⁴⁹ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāhiz, Vol II, p. 387.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, *Min ḥadāth al-shīr wa al-nathr*, p. 56.

introduction of the *risāla*, one can notice that matter when al-Jāḥiẓ pokes fun at the personality of his addressee as will be seen later.

7.2.2 The title and the text of the *Risāla*:

Hārūn has cited in his editorial remarks on the *risāla* that al-Ḥuṣrī al-Qayrawānī recorded in his *Jamʿ al-jawāhir* that *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr* was also known as *Risāla fī al-ṭawl wa al-ʿarḍ* (The Lengthwise and the Breadth) and *Risāla fī al-tawassuʿ wa al-tadwīr* (The Expansion and the Square).¹⁰⁵¹ Hirschfeld stated that this work has been quoted by al-Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038) in his “*Thimār al-qulūb*” as *Kitāb al-tadwīn wa al-tadwīr*.¹⁰⁵² However, most scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ in modern times agreed that the correct reading of the title of the *risāla* is *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*.¹⁰⁵³

The text of the *risāla* has been published for the first time at Leiden in 1903 with two other works of al-Jāḥiẓ, i.e. *Risāla fī manāqib al-Turk* and *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān*.¹⁰⁵⁴ Then, it appeared again in *Majmūʿa rasāʿil* by Sāsī al-Magribī.¹⁰⁵⁵ However, the first academic edition of the *risāla* has been done by Pellat in 1955, and then reedited by Hārūn, followed by other scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ. Now, the text of the *risāla* in academic edition can be found in Hārūn’s, ʿUyūn al-Sūd’s and Abū Milḥim’s

¹⁰⁵¹ See al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, p. 260; in: Hārūn’s edition of *Rasāʿil al-Jāḥiẓ*, Vol. III, p. 55. For the meaning of the words “*al-ṭawl*”, “*al-ʿarḍ*”, and “*al-Tawassuʿ*”, see Baalbaki, *al-Mawrid al-Wasit, A Concise Arabic-English Dictionary*, Dār al-ʿIlm lī al-Malāyīn, Beirut, p. 479, 496, 242.

¹⁰⁵² Hirschfeld, *A Volume of Essay by al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 201.

¹⁰⁵³ See for example Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 10, Sandūbī, *Adab al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 127, al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 275, Khafājī, *Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 322.

¹⁰⁵⁴ See Van Vloten, *Tria Opuscula*, pp. 86-157.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Sāsī al-Magribī, *Majmūʿa rasāʿil*, pp. 2-53.

collection with varying length.¹⁰⁵⁶ It was divided into nine divisions; however, the first four pages of the *risāla* are missing from Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition. Therefore, the text of the *risāla* in their edition begins with this passage:

(فانظر لم تسالمت النفوس مع تفاوت منازلها ، ولم تجاذبت عند تقارب مراتبها ، ولم
 اختلف الكثير واتفق القليل)

For the translation, Pellat also has translated a selected text of the *risāla* in his book about the life and works of Jāḥiẓ under the heading "The circle and the square", which he claimed that it was the poor translation.¹⁰⁵⁷ Elsewhere, Pellat again comes another translation of the title of the *risāla* entitle "The Square and the Round".¹⁰⁵⁸ Apparently, the full translation of the *risāla* has been done by Colville in his *Sobriety and Mirth* entitled "Squaring the Circle".¹⁰⁵⁹ So, all English quotations in the text relating to the *risāla* are from Colville's translation.

7.2.3 The Addressee of the *Risāla*:

The addressee of the *risāla* is Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb is fairly plain in internal evidence; however the information of him is very little. Al-Jāḥiẓ himself described Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb as a *Kātib* (Secretary) and previously was one of his friends,

¹⁰⁵⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, pp. 55-109; 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, pp. 43-79; see also Abū Milḥim, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, pp. 431-490. For the study of the text of this *risāla*, in addition to Hārūn's and 'Uyūn al-Sūd's collection, we will also make use of Abū Milḥim's collection.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, p. 256-302. The text of the *risāla* has been translated into French by Maurice Adad and it was published in *Arabica* 13 (1966), pp. 268-294, *Arabica* 14 (1967), pp. 32-59, and 167-190.

but, not after Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb starts to show off knowing everything, and he then moved to Mecca. He belonged to Banū Bujayla, and has close relation with Ṣāliḥ b. °Alī and Sulaymān b. Wahb. He also was among the best companion of Ja°far al-Khayyāṭ. In many occasion in the *risāla*, al-Jāḥiẓ has referred his addressee as one of the Shi°ite Rāfiḍī's followers when he said clearly as follows: "You (Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb) are Rāfiḍite".¹⁰⁶⁰ And in another occasion, al-Jāḥiẓ suggests his addressee to substitutes the doctrines of the Mu°tazila for those of the Rāfiḍa.¹⁰⁶¹

Furthermore, Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī also gives some information about this man in his *al-Aghānī*. He said that Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb was not *Kātib al-Dīwān* (Secretary of the Administration), but he was one of the *Kātib al-Umarā'* (Secretary of the Abbasid leaders).¹⁰⁶² In other occasion, Abū al-Faraj claimed that Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb was being as associate of the vizier, °Abd al-Malik b. al-Zayyāt and he was also a famous poet.¹⁰⁶³ In modern times, al-Ḥājirī in his works says that al-Jāḥiẓ had described Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb in many places in the *risāla* as the Rāfiḍite i.e. the radical Shi°ite.¹⁰⁶⁴ On the other hand, Khafājī claims that Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb was working as al-Warrāq (copyist) with fanatic belief in Shi°ite.¹⁰⁶⁵ Of course, it can be seen in the *risāla* that al-Jāḥiẓ referred to him severely. However, the most important thing to say about him is that Ahmad b. °Abd al-Wahhāb was one of al-Jāḥiẓ's friends and his contemporary scholars.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla al-tarbī° wa al-tadwīr*, in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 102; °Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 74.

¹⁰⁶¹ Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶² Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, Vol XXI, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāḥiẓ ḥayātuh wa āthāruh*, p. 276.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Al-Khafājī, *Abū°Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 322.

El-[°]Attār in his thesis comes with new idea when he assumed that Ahmad b. [°]Abd al-Wahhāb is expected to be a 'charismatic' Imam for the Shi'ite particularly between Rāfiḍite followers.¹⁰⁶⁶ This point of view comes from this passage of the *risāla* when al-Jāḥiẓ says as follows: "Even you were the Imam of the Rāfiḍa, you would have been killed in twinkle of the eye! And if you were so killed, the Umma would then perish, as you are a man without offspring". This is the reason why El-[°]Attār admits that *Risāla al-tarbī[°] wa al-tadwīr* is anti-Shi'ite in outlook.¹⁰⁶⁷

On the other hand, we would like to add that al-Jāḥiẓ merely pretends to address his victim and in realty speaks to other readers. Among these other readers the foremost one is al-Jāḥiẓ's patron Ibn al-Zayyāt, which according to Gelder, at whose instigation to *risāla* was written.¹⁰⁶⁸ Indeed, from the internal evidence, al-Jāḥiẓ himself asserts that his work is pleasing to the vizier and the general reader, not to the addressee.

7.2.4 Time and Purpose of Composition:

Al-Jāḥiẓ claims that he was written *Risāla al-tarbī[°] wa al-tadwīr* against Ahmad b. [°]Abd al-Wahhāb, a *Kātib* (secretary) who is describes by our author as a person who boasted to know everything. From this point of view, we think that this *risāla* is closely connected with *Risāla fī dhamm al-kuttāb* in which al-Jāḥiẓ regrets of some of *kātib* in his

¹⁰⁶⁶ El-Attār, *The political thought of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 307.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Gelder, *Jest and Earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p. 98.

time was preoccupied with false education and appearance.¹⁰⁶⁹ Scholars of al-Jāhiz have not given precise date concerning the composition of the *risāla*. Al-Ḥājirī for example, admits that the *risāla* was written in era of ʿAbd al-Malik b. al-Zayyāt when he appointed as a vizier of the Caliph al-Wāthiq between years 220 until 233. However, El-ʿAṭṭār in his thesis extends to more specific date when he listed this *risāla* among the works which al-Jāhiz has written in the second period of the reign of the caliph al-Wāthiq, which stretched from the year 229 until 231. At the same time al-Jāhiz has already written some early part of *al-Ḥayawān* and *Risāla fī madh al-tujjār*.¹⁰⁷⁰ However, it seems that the *risāla* was written prior to *al-Ḥayawān* because al-Jāhiz in his inventory for the first volume of *al-Ḥayawān* does not refer to this work, he does refer to it as a complete work later in the same volume.¹⁰⁷¹ Pellat, however, assumed that this work was written between 227 and 230 A.H.¹⁰⁷²

Another important thing to note here concerning the purpose of the composition of the *risāla* is that it is likely that al-Jāhiz wanted to ridicule the person, who in al-Jāhiz's words "claimed the knowledge of everything", by facing him with series of one hundred puzzling questions. However, we find that al-Jāhiz avoids giving answer to the issues he raises in the *risāla*. Nevertheless, he suggests the reader especially his addressee to find their solution in his other works mainly in *al-Ḥayawān*. According to El-ʿAṭṭār, the *risāla* also targeted against the interpretations of some old doctrine such as Mazdaism,

¹⁰⁶⁹ For more detail on the *risāla*, please refer to chapter four of this thesis.

¹⁰⁷⁰ El-Aṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāhiz*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁷¹ Al-Jāhiz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol 1, p. 308.

¹⁰⁷² Pellat, *The life and Works of Jāhiz*, p. 10.

and Manissm, etc.¹⁰⁷³ This concern has been clearly mentioned by the author in his brief outline of the content of the *risāla* while inviting the vizier to examine his denial of this line of reasoning.¹⁰⁷⁴

With careful reading of the *risāla*, one can notice that al-Jāhiz's real aim of his work is to examination the knowledge of his addressee. This is clear from his following statement: "I have asked you questions, knowing very well that you are completely unable to answer them. If you wish to know what is true and false in them, what is fictitious or absurd, what is sound and what corrupt, you must make a point of reading my books and coming to visit me at home".¹⁰⁷⁵

7.2.5 Outline of the *Risāla*:

The *risāla* can be classified under various subjects as possible. El-°Aṭṭār for example, classified it as the history of ideas as well as a useful literary mirror, which reflect the intellectual concern of the third century.¹⁰⁷⁶ Pellat claims that this *risāla* contains some literary features and it also draws attention to a variety of problems whose solution is unsatisfactory to a Mu°tazilite. From this point of view, he has recorded what the Arabs say "this book is the central pearl in the necklace".¹⁰⁷⁷ In some extent, one can notice that the *risāla* is the collection of al-Jāhiz's questions he directs at his correspondent which relates to the folk tales, legend and ancient beliefs, etc. However,

¹⁰⁷³ El-Aṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāhiz*, p. 304.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla al-tarbī° wa al-tadwīr*, in Abū Milḥim's collection, p. 486.

¹⁰⁷⁶ El-Aṭṭār, *The political thought of al-Jāhiz*, p. 304.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Pellat, *The life and woks of Jāhiz*, p. 21.

the considerable Islamic interest attaching to the *risāla* is reason enough to examine its content in detail. Now, let us divide the text of the *risāla* into this simple outline to see its content:

- a. Introduction (Description of Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and the purpose of the *risāla*).
- b. List of the some embarrassing questions:
 1. Question on the flood.
 2. Question on the history.
 3. Question on the nature.
 4. Question on the science of life.
 5. Question on the archaeology
 6. Question on the geographic and population.
 7. Question on the idols.
 8. Question on the science of the physiognomy.
 9. Question on the Shiʿite beliefs.
 10. Question on the fairies.
 11. Question on the chemistry.
 12. Question on the philosophy.
- c. Digression from questions to:
 1. Note on the disadvantages of the joking.
 2. Apologise from al-Jāḥiẓ.
 3. Note on the advantages of the joking.
 4. Praise for Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.

5. Imamate of the Shi'ite.
 6. Reason for digression.
- d. Return to the embarrassing questions:
13. Question on the prophethood.
 14. Question on the religions.
 15. Question on the magic.
 16. Question on the remembrance and the forgetfulness.
 17. Question on the mathematic.
 18. Question on the music.
 19. Question on the some of the book that has been translated into Arabic.
 20. Question on the knowledge.
 21. Question on the mirrors works.
 22. Question on the colours.
 23. Question on the desert tracking and darkness.
 24. Question on the internal organ.
 25. Question on the magic and Satan.
 26. Question on the some of animals strange action.
- e. Al-Jāhiz's proclaim that the answers of these questions can be found in all of his works.
- f. Note on the wise people saying.
- g. Conclusion.

7.2.6 Analysis of the main issue in the *Risāla*:

7.2.6.1 The Introduction:

The *risāla* begins with the introduction in which al-Jāḥiẓ used it in a descriptive method to introduce his addressee by drawing his picture in the bad look. For example, he writes: “Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb is a very short fellow who believes he is exceptionally all. Square shaped and squat with a broad chest and spreading waist, he could be mistaken for a ball. His hands and feet are podgy and his fingers short and fat”.¹⁰⁷⁸ From this description, one knows that Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb shape was very ugly.

Al-Jāḥiẓ then proceeds to describe more ironic picture of his addressee, saying that: “He is very old, but claims to be still in the full bloom of youth. His pretensions to knowledge exhibit an ignorance of all fields of learning and his efforts to display it are matched by a staggering incomprehension. He is disagreeable, quarrelsome, stubborn old man, always anxious to have the last word but out of his depth in debate”.¹⁰⁷⁹

Afterwards al-Jāḥiẓ adds some worse thing about Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, he says: “I know that you envy nothing as much as you do a handsome appearance, a good looking physique, a large head with clear and bright eyes, a fine reputation and the gifting

¹⁰⁷⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*, in Abū Miḥim’s collection, p. 431.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

of largesse and favour".¹⁰⁸⁰ He then goes on to tell his addressee and his reader as well about the subject in which he would write in this *risāla*. He says: "Having put up with him for so long that I had almost grown used his ways, I have now had enough. Accordingly, I have decided to expose him to one and all – nomad and townsman, villager and city dweller – by asking him one hundred questions. By poking fun at him in such way, the world might come to know the measure of his ignorance".¹⁰⁸¹

It seems that al-Jāhiz firstly addresses him ironically, then pokes fun at his build, his knowledge, etc., and gives him some advice.

7.2.6.2 Catalogue of embarrassing questions:

At a later stage, al-Jāhiz decides to expose this person by asking him one hundred embarrassing questions. These questions contain elements of religious history, pre-Islamic tradition, Arabic legends, the genealogies, scientific, etc. Now, let us put it in order some of these questions, he says:

1. Tell me, what the Flood was like? When did the Ma'rib dam collapse? When did the mountains appear and the seas pour from the mountainsides go? In which seas does it end up? Which valley has it filled? How much land has been created and how many new springs have appeared? etc.¹⁰⁸²

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 433.

2. Tell me, at what date did mankind comprise a single community speaking the same language? How many generations did it take for the Zanj to become black and the Slav white? Why did skin colour change more rapidly than other bodily features? Why is it that a child exhibits physical characteristics acquired by its father, not innate in him, and yet no Arab child is born insane? What is the factor that prevents this happening? How long it was after the Tower of Babel before each group had a complete language of its own in general use?¹⁰⁸³
3. Tell me, pray, which animal live longest: the vulture, the onager, the snake or the lizard? When can snake go without food? When do lizards live on nothing but air? When do vultures stop breeding? Why is it that the mule, which is a cross between an ordinary pigeon and ring-dove, reproduces itself, and the *bukhti*, which is a cross between two humped camel and a female dromedary, likewise? Tell me about the giraffe: is it really a cross between female hyaena and she-camel?¹⁰⁸⁴
4. Tell me about the Anqa' Mughrib; what were its father and mother, and was it created spontaneously or by the union of a male and a female? Why is it said to be sterile, though supposed to be a female? At what point does it make a cradle for this child, and when does it cover the imam's supporters with its wings? When does it have a bridle put on it?¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 446-447.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

5. Tell me about the building of the ramparts of Ubullā and the founder of al-Hira'; who raised the building of Miṣr, and who was the founder of the city of Samarkand? Tell me about the buildings of al-Madā'in: are they really, as is supposed, Shem's handiwork? And is Palmyra really Solomon's? How much time elapsed between the reigns of Ahab and Nimrod? And between those of Alexander and Solomon?

The questions are interrupted by some ironic comments on longevity and on legends about people who lived to a great age. Then the author resumes his questioning about various legends, jinns, magic, a passage in the Avesta, the manufacture of glass, the effects of poison, etc. There are more questions about true and false prophets, the various religions, socerers and their tricks, the important humours, numerals, music and the mysteries of India. For instance, he says:

6. How do false prophets compare with those candidates for prophecy who did not declare their calling or who did declare it but wore themselves out or whom no one responded to or who did not fulfil their promises? Describe for me the varieties of their trickery and schemes? Etc.
7. Do you believe that the Prophet once cast a spell on a piece of palm-bark which he then placed underneath the steps of a well? Tell me what Prophet Isa is supposed to have said inside his mother's womb and, later, in the cradle?

In addition, al-Jāhiz asks various other questions about the sense-organs, and about Solomon, Jesus, etc., and interrogates his opponent about the mirror. He says:

8. Tell me about mirror. How is it that faces and other external shapes can be seen in them and in any clean, smooth, polished surface such as a sword-blade, a metal sheet, bottles or still water, or even in gleaming ink....? How is it that running water, flames and the glowing sun do not catch the reflection or fix the image?
9. Indeed, what is this image that is caught in the mirror? Is it accident or substance, thing, reality or illusion? Is what you see your face, or something else? If it is an accident, then what gives rise to it and create it, seeing that your face has not touched it or exerted any influence on it? Does the image seen in the mirror obliterate the image of the space it occupies? Why, since you do not see the image on the surface of the mirror, and why, since you seem to see it in the air behind the body of the mirror?
10. Does this colour, which resembles that of your face, obliterate the colour of the mirror? If not, then there are two images in one body, or two colour in one substance. If it does, how can it do so without having some action on them metal?

The author continues with his questioning, especially about the colour of peacock's tail, tides, physiognomy, shadows, etc. He says:

11. Tell me about darkness: is it a physical substance that appears when light disappears or are we to understand it simply as the displacement? If darkness is an entity, do you reckon that it is occluded as light diffuses or is the earth itself a disk of darkness, just as the sun's core is a disk of light? If one were superimposed upon the other, would they not cancel each other out, in which case we would see neither light nor darkness?

Then he turns to soothsayers and their mood of operation. He writes:

12. Tell me who would undertake to do such things (magic)? The devil, you say? Why should he do it for anyone?

Finally, on some animals' strange action, he says:

13. Where do the saying, "more caring than a lizard" and "more devoted than a cat" come from, when both these animals eat their young? Why does the wolf raise a hyena's orphaned young? Is it true that the wolf sleeps with one eye fast asleep and the other one alert? And etc.

Near the end of the *risāla* he says: "I have only a few questions left and with these shall bring this *risāla* to a close".¹⁰⁸⁶ Then, the author closes up with questions about Greek philosophers and logic and complaints about the ignorance of the age. Finally, he ended this *risāla* with this humble statement: "If I have succeeded, it has been because I have only sought the truth. If I have erred, it has not been due to dereliction or

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

indifference but because, perhaps, some trait of character betrayed me or ingrained habit led me astray".¹⁰⁸⁷

7.2.7 Analysis of the use of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth:

Remarkably to note that there are several quotations through out the catalogue of embarrassing question in the *risāla* which can be called as Qur'ānic such as the story of ʿĀd and Thamūd,¹⁰⁸⁸ the Abābīl bird,¹⁰⁸⁹ Prophet Sulaymān,¹⁰⁹⁰ Yūsuf,¹⁰⁹¹ ʿĪsā,¹⁰⁹² etc. On contrary, the usage of the Qur'ānic verses was very limited in the *risāla*. The first Qur'ānic quotation can be found is in the paragraph on the discussion of the shape of human body. Al-Jāhīz said that only stubborn oppose the plain truth and only the ignorant find fault with the facts. However, to fault an ungainly frame or alarmingly over-stuffed gut is not inconsistent with God's saying in the Qur'ān:

﴿ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ ﴾

(You can see no fault in the creation of the Most Beneficent) Sūra al-Mulk (67:3)

In the discussion of the merits of width over height, al-Jāhīz said that his addressee claimed that the earth is described in terms of the former because width is superior attribute. However, according to al-Jāhīz, God would not have described

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

¹⁰⁸⁸ He says: "Where is the lost tribe of ʿĀd and Thamūd?" See *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sūra Hūd (11:59-61)

¹⁰⁸⁹ He says: "What can you tell me about the 'heavenly missiles'? Were they enormous hailstone or block of baked clay dropped by flights of birds?" See *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sūra al-Fīl (105:3-4)

¹⁰⁹⁰ He says: "Why did Sulaymān not know about the Queen Sheba, although she was powerful sovereign? Did he not have the genii at his command?" See *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sūra al-Naml (27:23-25)

¹⁰⁹¹ He asked: "How did Yūsuf not know where his father was? He was no less distressed, after all, and was a prophet and powerful man. And how could his father not have known where Yūsuf was?" See *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sūra Yūsuf (12:93-97)

¹⁰⁹² He asked: "Tell me what ʿĪsā is supposed to have said inside his mother's tomb and later in cradle?" See *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Sūra Maryam (19:29-34)

paradise in terms of that attribute alone. Here, al-Jāhīz quoted what has been mentioned in the Qur'ān:

﴿وجنة عرضها كعرض السماء والأرض﴾

(And towards Paradise, the width of heaven and earth) Sūra al-Ḥadīd (57:21)

In his advice to his addressee, al-Jāhīz reminds: “Just drop us kind word and you will have us on board. Take more moderate line and you will me on your side. Then I will tell everyone you behaved with propriety; transgress and I will say you acted quite correctly”. However, al-Jāhīz told us that his addressee comes up with thing similarly to what Allah has mentioned in the Qur'ān:

﴿تكاد السموات يتفطرن منه وتتشق الأرض وتخر الجبال هدا﴾

(As if the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin) Sūra Maryam (19:90)

Near the end of the *risāla*, al-Jāhīz asks his addressee to wonder at truth not at error. Here, he relates with what has been mentioned in the Qur'ān when Allah said to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.):

﴿وإن تعجب فعجب قولهم﴾

(And if you (O Muhammad) wonder (at these polytheists who deny your message of Islamic Monotheism and have taken besides Allah others for worship who can neither harm nor benefit), then wondrous is their saying) Sūra al-Ra'd (13:5)

And in another verse, the Qur'ān said again:

﴿بل عجبنا ويسخرون﴾

(Nay, you (O Muhammad) wondered (at their insolence) while they mock (at you and at the Qur'ān) Sūra al-Ṣāfāt. (37:12)

On the other hand, there is only one quotation from the Ḥadīth of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). This can be found in the paragraph on the question of magic and evil. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, the Qur'ān has already mentioned magicians. Here, he records Ḥadīth of Prophet Muhammad in which he said as follows:

(كاد البيان أن يكون سحرا)

Eloquence is within an ace of witchcraft.

And in another Ḥadīth, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) also said:

(إن من البيان لسحرا)

Indeed, eloquence is a form of witchcraft.

The above Ḥadīth indicates that the term *Siḥr* which has been used by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) means “eloquence” not “magic”.

The *risāla* revealed that al-Jāḥiẓ urged his addressee to follow his approaches towards Muʿtazila, for instance, he asks him: “to start by repudiating anthropomorphism and the theory that God can amend an earlier decree; substitutes the doctrines of the Muʿtazila for those of the Rāfiʿa”.¹⁰⁹³

¹⁰⁹³ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr*, in Abū Milḥim's collection, p. 431; in Hārūn's edition, Vol. III, p. 102; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. III, p. 74.

7.2.8 The language of the *Risāla*:

As we have seen above that a large part of the *risāla* consists of questions without answers, hundred of them, posed in order to demonstrate the ignorance of the addressee. Many of these questions are serious enough in themselves; but according to Gelder, the long list with all its peculiar juxtapositions is irresistibly comical.¹⁰⁹⁴ In this *risāla*, we do find passages explicitly on seriousness and jesting. For instance, al-Jāḥiẓ says: “Tell me about the difference between Sind and Hind; between Hind and Mayd; tell me about about those who perished because of nose-bleed; about those that were destroyed by ants....What can you say about palmistry of examining shoulders-blades? What can you say about nibbling mice?What about a white cock with a split crests? and a black cat? And urinating in hole in the ground?”¹⁰⁹⁵

It is remarkable to note here that almost all these question seems to highlight the elements of jest and earnest in the addressee, where al-Jāḥiẓ, at least apparently, intends to assist his reader, relieve his boredom with debate by relaxing him and giving him new energy by means of jest and earnest mixtures. The author himself already mentioned it: “This *risāla* is pleasing with all the mixtures it contains of a likes and opposites, of seriousness and jest, of restriction and letting free, of resuming and breaking off, off preserving and wasting,...etc”. Al-Jāḥiẓ admits also that when he speak about physical size, shape, height, and so forth about his addressee, all these words according to him may have a serious tone but the are, in truth, mere jest. This is clear that in another

¹⁰⁹⁴ Gelder, *Jest and earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p.104.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla al-tarbiʿ wa al-tadwīr*, in Abū Milḥim’s collection, p. 431; in Hārūn’s edition, Vol. III, p. 102; ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 74.

occasion, he stresses: “You know I am only poking fun at you because I want to see you smile”.¹⁰⁹⁶ Gelder suggests that al-Jāhiz may have done it here, partly to defend himself against possible accusations of ‘traechery and injustice’ by Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, the addressee, or by others readers including his patron Ibn al-Zayyāt.¹⁰⁹⁷ Therefore, we do find that the author several times mentioned in the *risāla* with apologise to his addressee by saying (جعلت فداك) “I would ransom you with my own life”. This special passage indicates that al-Jāhiz, as the author of the *risāla* has his own view towards his addressee. Remarkably to note here that such word has been repeated by the author more than in eight occasions of the *risāla*.

The use of digression or *Istitrād* is obviously in this *risāla*, we do find the author transferred his discussion from one topic to another such as from listing the entire question onto the discussion on the joke, and then he comes back to the same subject again. However, the author has his reason for that usage, he says: “I have led you from one topic to the next because it is only natural to find too much of anything tedious and to be put off by what goes on for too long, even if it does contain much that is useful and good. I sought to entice you onto next topic before you had time to get bored with the last”.

Al-Jāhiz also used debate style in his writing of this *risāla*. His arguments, however, are sometimes presented in a systematic way in spite of the generally

^{1096c}Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition, Vol. III, p. 45.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Gelder, *Jest and earnest in classical Arabic literature*, p.104.

disordered nature of the work. The usage of the following phrases *Haddithnī, Khabbirnī, Mā al-farq, Wa mā taqūl* and *Lima za'āmta*, etc, are frequently used by the author.¹⁰⁹⁸

7.3 *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān 'alā al-bīdān* (The Boasts of the Black over the Whites)

7.3.1 The Significance of the *Risāla*:

The Qur'ān gives no expression to the idea of that there are superior and inferior races and that the latter are foredoomed to a subordinate status. However, there are only two verses in the Qur'ān which have direct mentioned about the race and colour. The first of these occurs in Sūra al-Rūm (30:22):

﴿ ومن آياته خلق السموات والأرض واختلاف ألسنتكم وألوانكم ، إن في ذلك لآيات

للعالمين ﴾

“And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations, in your languages and your colours; verily in that are signs for those who know”.

The second quotation, Sūra al-Hujurāt (49:13), is rather more specific, when the Qur'ān said:

﴿ يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا، إن أكرمكم عند

الله أتقاكم ، إن الله عليم خبير ﴾

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despice (each

¹⁰⁹⁸ A detailed analysis on the syntax in this *risāla* can be seen in Malkmus, *Syntax and epistimology in the Kitāb al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr of al-Jāhiz*, Thesis Ph.D., University of London, 1983.

other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)".

From the above verses, it is clear that the Qur'ān expresses no racial or colour prejudices. However, according to Lewis, the question of race and colour appeared in later times particularly when the attitude to black people remains on the whole negative.¹⁰⁹⁹ He further suggests that there are two main factors which helped develop a new sense of colour differences between the different races of people who lived in the Abbasid era. Firstly, the Arabs expansion into Africa and secondly, the growth of the slave trade brought large number of black Africans into Abbasid society.¹¹⁰⁰ We find in Arabic prose literature that the question of colour particularly blackness, was discussed in special work by our author in his *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdān 'alā al-bīdān*. Thus, we assume that this *risāla* was among the earliest references, which discussed the origin of black people and deals with the reasons for their blackness and contains collections of anecdotes illustrating good and pious deeds by them. The same subject was discussed at some length by the later authors such as Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faraj b. al-Jawzī (d. 1200) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) in their works.¹¹⁰¹

Pellat describes *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdān 'alā al-bīdān* as a piece of anthropological work by al-Jāḥiẓ because the author devotes much space to his theory that the skin colour

¹⁰⁹⁹ Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 52.

¹¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Jawzī by his book entitled "*Tanwīr ghabash fī faḍl al-sūdān wa al-ḥabash*" (The Lightening of the Darkness on the Merits of the Blacks and the Ethiopians), and al-Suyūṭī through his book "*Raf' shaf'n al-ḥubshān*" (*The Raising of the Status of the Ethiopian*). These two books have been mentioned by Ḥajjī Khalīfa in his *Kashf al-zunūn*, Vol. I, pp. 501 & 910. According to Lewis, Ibn al-Jawzī attempts to defend both groups against the various accusations made against them, while, al-Suyūṭī's work was based in part on the previous one. See, Lewis, *Race and slavery in Middles East*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 32.

of black people was solely the result of soil and climate.¹¹⁰² However, Pellat might be wrong when he claims that this *risāla* is the evident of al-Jāḥiẓ's racism, particularly when he says that al-Jāḥiẓ intended to disparage the white race to which the Arabs belong. Indeed, as one can see, al-Jāḥiẓ certainly displays a good deal of vigour in recalling the glorious history of his own race, because according to some biographers, it was said that al-Jāḥiẓ was partly African descent.¹¹⁰³ But, this does not mean that al-Jāḥiẓ was indulged of racism, we can see that al-Jāḥiẓ was among the authors who gave balanced and factual accounts, based on his personal knowledge, of the black territories. In addition, Lewis admits that al-Jāḥiẓ's defense of black people may perhaps be understood as a parody of Shu'ūbiyya tracts, intended to throw ridicule on Persian pretensions by advancing similar arguments on behalf of the lowly and despised Zanj (blacks).¹¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Gelder describes this *risāla* as a sample of new genre in Arabic literature known as *taḥsīm wa taqbīḥ*. He writes: "his (al-Jāḥiẓ) epistle on the superiority of black to the white (i. e. *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān 'alā al-bīḍān*) is another instance of beautifying what was commonly deemed ugly".¹¹⁰⁵

¹¹⁰² Pellat, *The life and works of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 23.

¹¹⁰³ See *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Al-Djāḥiẓ, Vol. II, pp. 385-387.

¹¹⁰⁴ Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 33. The term *Zanj* (pl. *Zunūj*) originally is found in Arabic literature, and it is given by the Arabs to the black tribes. They come from the coastal regions of East Africa, which were a source of slaves for the Muslim countries in the middle age. The term *Bilād al-Zanj* was used for the territories. See, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, art. Al-Zandj, Vol. XI, pp. 444, Glassé, *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. Zanj, p. 432.

¹¹⁰⁵ Gelder, *The Paradox in Classical Arabic literature*, p. 333.

7.3.2 Title and date of composition:

The title of the *risāla* is *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ‘alā al-bīdān*. Yāqūt called it as “*Kitāb al-sūdān wa al-bīdān*”.¹¹⁰⁶ While al-Mas‘ūdī in his *Murūj al-dhahab* named it “*Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān wa munāzaratihim ma‘ al-bīdān*”.¹¹⁰⁷ Al-Jāhīz himself mentions this *risāla* under the following description: “... the book of *al-Ṣurahā’ wa al-hujanā’* (The pure Arabs and the mixed), and *Mafākhir al-sūdān wa al-ḥumrān* (The boasting of the black and the red), and *Muwāzana mā bayn ḥaq al-khau’ūla wa al-umūma* (The comparison between maternal and paternal relation).¹¹⁰⁸

Therefore, based on the above statement, Pellat suggests that *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ‘alā al-bīdān* is part of the whole work of *al-Ṣurahā’ wa al-hujanā’*.¹¹⁰⁹ The following remark of al-Jāhīz himself confirmed this suggestion, he says: “As for the criticism, praising and boasting of the black and the red,¹¹¹⁰ it is all collected in the book of *al-Hujanā’ wa al-ṣurahā’*.”¹¹¹¹ However, al-Ḥājirī, on the other hand, suggested that al-Jāhīz indicates only the one books, it was *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ‘alā al-bīdān*.¹¹¹²

¹¹⁰⁶ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, Vol XVI, p. 108.

¹¹⁰⁷ Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. I, p. 167.

¹¹⁰⁸ Al-Jāhīz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. III, p. 510.

¹¹⁰⁹ Pellat, *Gāhiziana*, p. 175.

¹¹¹⁰ Al-Ḥājirī admits that the Red, according to al-Jāhīz, seems to be the white people, such the Roman, etc. See al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāhīz ḥayātih wa āthāruh*, p. 241. Pellat said that this title might suggest that al-Jāhīz, who was probably of African origin, and was a racist. See Pellat, *The life and works of al-Jāhīz*, p. 23.

¹¹¹¹ Al-Jāhīz, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. III, p. 510.

¹¹¹² Al-Ḥājirī, *al-Jāhīz ḥayātih wa āthāruh*, p. 240.

The *risāla* itself which was published under the title of *Fī fakhṛ al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān*,¹¹¹³ we understand, however, that al-Jāḥiẓ had already written the book of *al-Ṣurahāʾ wa al-hujanāʾ*, when he said: "You have mentioned, may Allah save you from deceit, that you have read my book about the judgment of *al-Ṣurahāʾ wa al-hujanāʾ*, and the answer of the latter ones and the answer of their uncles, and that I have not mentioned in it anything about the boasting of the black. So, I have written what I remember of their boasting".¹¹¹⁴ This note seems contradictory to what al-Jāḥiẓ said about this book in *al-Ḥawayān* as has been quoted above. However, from this point of view, as was suggested by Najm, that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote the general book on *al-Ṣurahāʾ wa al-hujanāʾ* and then, after he was asked to write in detail about the subject, he wrote another work on the same theme; this was the *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān*.¹¹¹⁵

The date of the composition of the *risāla* is not given precisely by scholars of al-Jāḥiẓ. The nearest date has been given by Najm when she suggests that al-Jāḥiẓ had written this *risāla* before the *al-Ḥawayān*.¹¹¹⁶ This indicates that this *risāla* has been written during the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil. What is noticeable here is that the *risāla* seems to have been written according to a wish of an authority. Although al-Jāḥiẓ attributes the arguments in the *risāla* to the *Sūdān* (Black)¹¹¹⁷ themselves, it is evident that al-Jāḥiẓ wrote the *risāla* in their mouth.

¹¹¹³ See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān* in: *Majmūʿ rasāʾil*, by Sāsī al-Maghribī, pp. 54-81, and also in Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 177-225; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 123-162.

¹¹¹⁴ See also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 123.

¹¹¹⁵ Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 45.

¹¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹¹¹⁷ Whilst the term *Bilād al-Sūdān* is applied in classical Arabic usage to the whole area of black Africa south of the Sahara, from the Nile to the Atlantic and including such West African black states. Sometimes, according to Lewis, it is extended to the countries of South and Southeast Asia. See, Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 50.

7.3.3. Text and Structure of the *Risāla*:

The text of the *risāla* firstly edited by G. van Vloten in his *Tria opuscula auctore al-Djāhiz* (Leiden, 1903, pp. 58-85), reedited by ‘Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn and the latest edition we have is by Muhammad Bāsil ‘Uyūn al-Sūd. The *risāla*, in the printed edition, consists of thirty nine pages with only one division other than paragraphs in both Hārūn’s and ‘Uyūn al-Sūd’s edition. The only division we find in the text entitled *Manāqib al-sūdān* (The Virtues of the Blacks), which located in third page of the *risāla*. The text of the *risāla* is now available in English translation. Tarif Khalidi, for the first time, translates it under following title “The Boasts of the Black over the Whites”, and the latest translation of the *risāla* that we have is Colville’s translation in his *Sobriety and Mirth*.¹¹¹⁸ So, all English quotations in the text relating to the *risāla* are from Khalidi’s and Colville’s translation.

Before exploring the content of this *risāla* in depth, it is first necessary to break its content into its constituent elements. We would like to note that M.V. McDonald has divided this *risāla* into these elements:¹¹¹⁹

1. Dedication.
2. Eloquent saying of pre-Islamic blacks.

¹¹¹⁸ See Khalidi, ‘The Boasts of the Black over the Whites’ in *The Islamic Quarterly*, Volume XXV (Number 1&2) 1981. The translation of the text started from page 3-26, and followed by the Arabic text from page 27-51. See also, Colville, *Sobriety and Mirth*, pp. 25-52, abridged English translation in B. Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, Vol. II, *Religion and Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 210-216. The *risāla* also has been translated into German by O. Rescher, in *Orientalische Miscellen*, Vol. II, Istanbul, 1926, pp. 146-186.

¹¹¹⁹ See McDonald, *al-Jāhiz’s method of composition*, pp. 305-306.

3. Virtues of Luqmān (held to be black by Arab tradition).
4. Account of Saʿīd b. Jubayr (Contemporary of al-Ḥajjāj)
5. Bilāl b. Rabāḥ.
6. Wahshī (killed Hamza at Uḥud).
7. Various black poets.
8. Julaybīb (black warrior at the time of the Prophet).
9. Faraj (the Prophet's cupper).
10. Long poem with *sharḥ* (explanation) of al-Jāḥiẓ, by black poet al-Hayquṭān.
11. More early Islamic black heroes.
12. Ethiopian conquest of Yemen.
13. Account of black uprising in Iraq.

Having reach the end of this more or less historical or *khavar* type material, al-Jāḥiẓ moves on to a more argumentative style of discourse which in fact forms of the major part of the *risāla*. McDonald assumed that topic one to thirteen can be therefore reasonably regard as an extended introduction.¹¹²⁰

14. Good qualities of the *Zanj*. The latter part of this is an extended argument intended to show that their generosity is not caused by stupidity.
15. The pre-Islamic Arabs had no prejudice against black; yet despite the coming of Islam such a prejudice is now found.
16. Several poems in praise of *Abraha*.
17. Praise of the Negus of Abyssinian; the prophet's respect for him.

¹¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

18. Good properties of the colour black.
19. Famous black Arabs, including the ten sons of °Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Abdullah
 - b. °Abbās, and the family of Abū Ṭālib.
20. Proof on the basis of Ḥadīth that the Arabs belong to the black division of mankind.
21. Black are more numerous than whites, and thus superior.
22. Blacks are highly civilized in the interior of their countries (where Arab trading vessels do not penetrate).
23. Black has more offspring than whites.
24. Black does not feel sexual desire for whites.
25. Curious anecdotes about *Zabaj* (Jawa/Sumatra)¹¹²¹ tending to show that the population of these regions (classified by al-Jāḥiẓ as black) is enormous.
26. The Prophet married Māriya al-Qibṭiya (the Copt also regarded by al-Jāḥiẓ as black), who bore him a son; he was addressed by Jibrīl as Abū Ibrāhīm.
27. Black Arabs; al-Jāḥiẓ's theories about the properties of the soil, which affect the coloration of men and animals.
28. A piece of pride (*fakhr*) by black poet.
29. Skill of the Indians (cookery, music and financial acumen).
30. Final account of another famous black (°Ubaydullah b. Abī Bakra).

¹¹²¹ For more detail information on the origin of *Zabaj*, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. XI, art. *Zabadj*, pp. 367-368.

7.3.4 Analysis of the content of the *Risāla*:

7.3.4.1 The Virtue of the Blacks:

In his introduction, al-Jāhiz sets out to write a disquisition on the glories of the *al-Sūd* race. It seems that the first part of the *risāla* contains quotations, anecdotes and poetry and other sayings of *al-Sūdān*. For example, the author enumerates the famous men such as Luqmān al-Ḥakīm, Saʿīd b. Jubayr and Bilāl b. Rabāḥ, etc. who were black, and then he quotes apposite verse by each of them. He begins with Luqmān al-Ḥakīm. He describes him as follows: "He was one of the blacks, and it is he who says: "There are three types of men whom you do not know except in three moments: the moderate man in moment of anger, the courageous man in moments of fear and the friend in your moments of need..."¹¹²² He then mentions Saʿīd b. Jubayr who according to the author was also one of them. He states that al-Ḥajjāj killed him at the age of forty-nine, six months before al-Ḥajjāj's own death at the age of fifty-three. When he was killed, men said: "We are all in need of him"... Also among the ranks of the blacks was Bilāl the Abyssinian, of whom ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, said: "Abū Bakr is our lord, and he manumitted our lord (Bilāl) while Abū Bakr yet comprised a third of the Muslim community"¹¹²³

The author mentions other famous black people and refers to the exploits of the Abyssinians and their country's economic and artistic contributions. He asserts that black is superior to other colours. They are strong, brave, cheerful, and generous, and not as

¹¹²² Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān ʿalā al-bīdān* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 179; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 125.

¹¹²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 180; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 126.

people says, "because of weakness of mind, lack of discernment, and ignorant of consequence".¹¹²⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ also highlights another false charge towards black people: that of stupidity. To those who ask, "How is it that we have never seen a Zanjī who had the intelligence even of a woman or of a child?" the answer, says al-Jāḥiẓ, is that the only Zanj they knew were slaves of low origin and from outlying and backward areas".¹¹²⁵

Another point is that the blacks are proud of their great number; also, the Arabs do not really know them, since all they see is black slaves. Al-Jāḥiẓ stresses: "Black say: Black men are more numerous than white. The most whites can count as their own are, Fāris, Jibāl, Khurāsān, etc." Again he adds: "The Arabs are of our number, not the whites, because their colouring is closer to ours".¹¹²⁶ Lewis said that this certainly true, since al-Jāḥiẓ, along with some other Arabic authors of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, includes the Copts, the Berbers, the inhabitants of India, South east Asia, and China.¹¹²⁷

After some reflections on cross-breeding between races, and on men's taste for the female slaves commonest in their own countries, and he repeats that the blacks outnumber the whites, and gives his view on the origin of black skin. The author reiterates his theory about the influence of environment on skin colour. He says: "Blackness and whiteness are in fact caused by the properties of the region as well as the God-given nature of water and soil and by the proximity of remoteness of the sun and

¹¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 196; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 139.

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 212; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 153.

¹¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 215; see also 'Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 155.

¹¹²⁷ See, Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 32.

the intensity or mildness of its heat. Such differences in colour are not the result of any deformity or punishment, disfigurement or shortcoming".¹¹²⁸ It seems here that al-Jāhiz noticed that blackness is not a curse or punishment, as is commonly alleged, but as result of natural condition. By the above statement, it shows us the quasi-scientific element of al-Jāhiz's thought in the *risāla*.

Later, we find him quoted some verses such a poet, praising ʿUsaylim b. al-Aḥnaf al-Asadī when he made mention of the black colour of the Yemenite Arabs,¹¹²⁹ and verses of ʿAmr b. Shas (d. 20 A.H.) in which he described the children of Abyssinian and Zanj women.¹¹³⁰ Then, he proceeds to deal with Indian culture in which he said that they are among the leaders in astronomy, mathematic – in particular, they have Indian numerals and medicine, they have the art of carving statues and painted figures. They possess the game of chess, they have splendid music; the book of *Kalīla wa Dimma* originated with them, and so on.¹¹³¹

The concluding lines of the *risāla* are once more concerned with the Zanj particularly concerning one of another famous black people namely ʿUbaydullah b. Abī Bakra (d. 79 A.H.), who was the blackest of blacks.¹¹³² At the end, al-Jāhiz declares that "this, in sum, is what came to my mind of the vaunts of the blacks".¹¹³³

¹¹²⁸ Al-Jāhiz, *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūlān ʿalā al-bīdān* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, pp. 216-217; ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, pp. 155-156.

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 221; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 159. For the translation of these verses, see, Khalidi, *The Boast of the black over the whites*, p. 24.

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 221; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 159. For the translation of these verses, see, Khalidi, *The Boast of the black over the whites*, p. 25.

¹¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 223; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 160.

¹¹³² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 225; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 162.

¹¹³³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 225; see also ʿUyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 162.

7.3.5 The Style of Writing:

As we have seen, where the praises are sung of everything is black, such as black horses, sheep, stone (including the Black Stone in the Ka'ba), dates, earth, ebony, the pupils of the eyes, musk, ambergris, the state colour of the Abbasids, etc. This *risāla*, as described by Lewis, is an essay purports to be a defense of the dark-skinned peoples, especially of black people, against their detractors, refuting the accusation commonly brought against them and setting forth their qualities and achievement.¹¹³⁴

After careful reading, we find that there is limited quotation from the Qur'ān in the *risāla*. However, McDonald suggested that there is only one topic in this *risāla*, which could be called Qur'ānic, i.e. Luqmān.¹¹³⁵ On the other hand, there are accounts of saying and doing of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and of pious contemporaries of the Prophet. Therefore, there is no doubt that the *risāla* is strongly Islamic in flavour, especially in the introductory section where we might expect to find this. We find also in the earlier part a fair selection from the Arab tradition, which could certainly be classified as *khābar*.

The bulk of the main part of the *risāla*, as seen in the outline above, consists of argumentative *qiyās*, and the approaching conclusion is signalled by a selection of *nawādir*. When, therefore, al-Jāhīz concludes quite abruptly by saying, "this is all that

¹¹³⁴ Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 31.

¹¹³⁵ See McDonald, *al-Jāhīz's method of composition*, p. 306.

comes to my mind on the subject of the black",¹¹³⁶ this comes as no surprise to the reader. The use of the poetry is interesting since there is no exclusive block of poetry; it occurs throughout the *risāla*, and serves to break it up into smaller units.

The language of the *risāla* is very clear, since the author used the dialogue style which is the standard structure upon which a prose text is usually founded (*ḥadīth* structure). The phrases like *Qāla* (He said), *Qīla* (It has been said), *Qālū* (They said), *Qad qāla al-nās* (Some people said), and etc, are frequently used in the text.

To conclude, Lewis said that the reader of al-Jāḥiẓ's defense of the black may sometimes wonder whether its intention is wholly serious.¹¹³⁷ The reason is that al-Jāḥiẓ was generally known and famous as a great humorist and satirist. We do find his statement in other works, such as *al-Bukhalā'*, *al-Ḥayawān* and *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, where he expresses or perhaps cites in several occasions a negative views of the Black (Zanj), for instance, he says:

-We know that the Zanj are the least intelligent and the least discerning of mankind, and the least capable of understanding the consequences of actions.¹¹³⁸

-Like the crow among the mankind are the Zanj for they are the worst of men and the most vicious of creatures in character and temperament.¹¹³⁹

¹¹³⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī fakhṛ al-sūlān 'alā al-bīdān* in: Hārūn's edition, Vol. I, p. 225; Uyūn al-Sūd's edition, Vol. I, p. 162.

¹¹³⁷ Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 32.

¹¹³⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bukhalā'*, p. 253.

¹¹³⁹ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, Vol. II, p. 314.

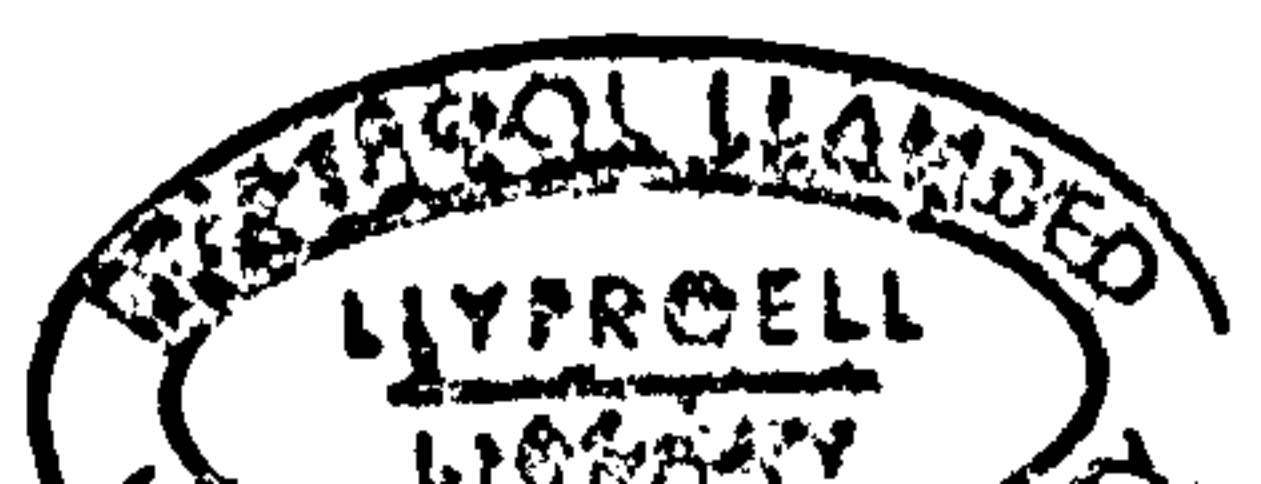
-They (the Shu'ūbiya) maintain that eloquence is prized by all people at all times-even the Zanj, despite their dimness, their boundless stupidity, their obtuseness, their crude perceptions and their evil dispositions, make long speeches.¹¹⁴⁰

7.4 CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages we have merely highlighted the two works of al-Jāḥiẓ concerning the quasi-scientific issue i.e. *Risāla al-tarbī^c wa al-tarwīr* and *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān^c alā al-bīdān*. The first shows us that a large part of it consists largely of series of ironic questions on wide range of topics including science, environment, religion, history and so forth, however, the entire question without answers. This indicates that al-Jāḥiẓ, as the author of the *risāla*, has wide knowledge and experience with the topics which had been discussed. The central message of the text may also reflect the ambiguities of the author's self-identification. He was familiar with attitude towards mixing jest and earnest in his works. Therefore, he is regarded as the most interesting author on jest and earnest in the history of Arabic prose literature. For instance, we find on several occasions in *Risāla al-tarbī^c wa al-tadwīr* that al-Jāḥiẓ justifies and explains his habit of inserting passages which bring some sort of light relief. Whilst, *Risāla fī fakhr al-sūdān^c alā al-bīdān* shows us the author interest in the subject of race and colour. It seems from the content of the *risāla* that the author relates his discussion with scientific elements particularly when he suggests that the influence of environment on the skin colour. However, after a close reading of the text seems to suggest that with al-Jāḥiẓ's skill and subtle sense of humour, the problem of establishing his real attitude towards

¹¹⁴⁰ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, Vol. III, p. 12-13.

race and colour is likely to be difficult. Indeed, he devotes this *risāla* to praise of the blacks; while on the other hand, he elegantly pokes a fun at them in another occasion of his works. In short, we find this variety of subject in al-Jāhīz's discussion support the suggestion made by many scholars that one of the purposes of *Adab* literature is extension of the readers' knowledge into new areas.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Before attempting to reach a conclusion on this research, let us now review the information available about al-Jāḥiẓ and his works.

Some points of the ideas:

Al-Jāḥiẓ was born in Basra; it was a centre of commercial and intellectual life where many nationalities and ideologies met. Al-Jāḥiẓ was a child of this Basran *milieu* and perhaps its best representative. Without a doubt he was a product of the first century of the Abbasid period. He had an Islamic education particularly with the Mu'tazila idea which emphasised the importance of the rational faculties for seeking and verifying the truth. In other words, al-Jāḥiẓ's characteristic method of thinking manifests itself most significantly in the attempt he makes to compromise between, on the one hand, rational principles and on the other, social fact as they stand in the actual conditions of society. Later on, the importance of this way of thinking appears in the philosophy of history as founded by Ibn Khaldūn.¹¹⁴¹

The great energy of al-Jāḥiẓ in recording all his thoughts by putting them in books seems to have been one of the reasons why al-Jāḥiẓ's works deal with almost every subject. His *rasā'il*, apparently dealing with different matters, contains many interesting remarks. Through this *rasā'il* we have tried to show that al-Jāḥiẓ lived in intimate contact

¹¹⁴¹ See Najm, *Studies on the writing of al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 223.

with the intellectual, political, social and religious tendencies of his age. His contribution to literary form and expression is a key to the Islamic thought of his time. Based on this great contribution, Beeston believes that al-Jāḥiẓ deserves to be ranked with Ibn Khaldūn, however, what he lacked was the power of organizing and systematizing his observations which is so conspicuous a feature of Ibn Khaldūn's work.¹¹⁴² His examples in giving the groups of professions a special place in Arabic literature was followed by later writers who carried on this interest in their work. For instance, in the fourth/tenth century, writers like al-Tha'ālibī and al-Tanūkhī quote al-Jāḥiẓ on various occasions on themes pertaining to professional groups, classes and the personal characteristics of people.

It is remarkable to note that some of the writers during the Abbasid period lived exclusively by their pens and al-Jāḥiẓ himself is an example of those who lived by their own writing. With his modest background and powerful court connection, he received large sums of money through the dedication of his books to some of the Abbasid authorities. He seems to have held the opinion that books were the best way by which one could face one's rivals in arguments, whereas in arguing with them face to face, there is the risk of quarrel and rage which spoil the free spirit of reasoning and argument.

Above all, al-Jāḥiẓ was aware of the value of his work as much as he was aware of the fact that many people, especially his fellow writers, were going to attack him and disagree with him over the ideas within his works. Though al-Jāḥiẓ is in no way comparable to the Muslim philosophers and thinkers of succeeding centuries, he nevertheless occupies a prominent place in the early history of Muslim thought. He was

¹¹⁴² See, *The life and works of al-Jāḥiẓ*, rev. by: A.F.L. Beeston, p. 195.

not, perhaps, a profound thinker, but he observed widely and his comments on every subject are inspired by solid good sense and sound reason;¹¹⁴³ all of which later scholars have been able to draw upon to get a picture of the various strata of religious, political and social elements during the third/ninth century. For this reason, Hirschfeld remarks in his account of the subjects discussed in al-Jāḥiẓ's works as follows: "A perusal of al-Jāḥiẓ's essays [*rasā'il*] well repays the time spent on them. He is a keen observer, an original thinker, and reveals deep thought even in apparently trivial subjects. His field is wide".¹¹⁴⁴ For instance, he continues: "In the essays of which our MS is composed he has much that is relevant to say on matters theological, historical, philosophical, psychological, social, rhetorical, grammatical, and pedagogic, with occasional anecdotes interspersed".¹¹⁴⁵ Indeed, this variety of subject matter applies, as we have discussed in this thesis, to *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*.

Some points about language and style of writing:

For all that al-Jāḥiẓ has won almost universal acceptance as the most outstanding writer of the Abbasid period and enjoys a preminent position in the history of Arabic literature, the dimensions of his contribution to the development of Arabic prose cannot be measured in precise term.

Turning to the criteria of language and style, the corpus of *rasā'il* or essay of al-Jāḥiẓ can be characterized as a mixed style. This can be distinguished from the corpus of

¹¹⁴³ Pellat, *al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 93.

¹¹⁴⁴ Hirshfeld, *A Volume of essays by al-Jāḥiẓ*, p. 200.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 200.

rasā'il of the early period of Islam, which can be characterized as generally brief and concise and seems to be looser in style and simpler in diction.

Al-Jāhiz's works in general, are often not merely literary and ethical, but are combined with one or more branches of scholarship, be they the natural sciences, ancient and modern history, linguistics, dogmatic theology, or jurisprudence. His writing typifies the Abbasid concept of *Adab*, literature designed to impart essential knowledge and personal manners, while at the same time offering amusement and entertainment. His method of writing was characterized by assonances, balance phrasing and a tendency to digress. In addition, his works are distinguished by prolixity of diction, the love of accumulating synonyms, almost to weariness, and of expressing the same idea in as large a variety of phrases as possible. Indeed, the most important of these is his digression or *istiṭrād* which has been recognised as the hallmark of Jāhizian style. Therefore, it is worth quoting al-Mas'ūdī's dictum on al-Jāhiz's writing: "Their organization is excellent and their description is very good.... He clothed them in language of the most magnificent kind. Whenever he feared that the reader might be bored or the listener become tired, he shifted from something serious to something light, from a penetrating insight to a choice witticism".¹¹⁴⁶

As religious controversies spread among the scholars of his time, therefore, as a Mu'tazilite thinker, the flavour of this school of thought becomes apparent in his works, both in content and in method. The method or argumentation throughout the *rasā'il* is

¹¹⁴⁶ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, Vol. 1, p. 172.

that of a Mu'tazilite dialectician and we find this influence through the treatment of various aspects of his arguments which he presented with variety and linguistic skill.

As the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth were the starting point of the religious, literary and linguistic sciences which developed among the Muslims scholars, al-Jāḥiẓ employed both of these main sources of Islam in his writing. There are good deals of Qur'anic verses and stories which can be found scattered throughout his works which shows the author's tendency towards Islamic elements. As for quotations from the Ḥadīth, we find that they are not always authentic (saḥīḥ) and this indicates that he tends to pick texts from those Islamic sources which confirm his own attitudes. Furthermore, he does not mention whether a particular Ḥadīth is authentic or not and they will sometimes come in different wording from the original. However, it seems that the differences in wording which do not affect the meaning, favor al-Jāḥiẓ as a composer of literary prose. Based on the usage of these two important sources of Islam therefore, we can say that his theological, ethical and political writings are in tune with the religious principles of the writer which reflect the spirit of Islam.¹¹⁴⁷

Be that as it may, the importance of al-Jāḥiẓ in the history of Arabic prose writing is of the highest order and has never been questioned. Of its importance there can be no better assessment than that encapsulated in Pellat's verdict on the man: "Jāḥiẓ was not, however, merely a polemical writer in defence of the regime (Abbasid), the Arabs and Islam. He was also, indeed mainly, an *adīb*. It was precisely because of his literary ability

¹¹⁴⁷ For an excellent analysis on the usage of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth in al-Jāḥiẓ's writing, see al-Juwaynī, 'Naẓr al-Jāḥiẓ fī fahm zawq al-naṣ al-Qur'ānī wa al-Ḥadīthī', *Majallat al-Majma' al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya*, Vol. 27 (1971): 141-154.

that he was used by the authorities as a means of popularising the religious views of the moment and expounding current policies to the literate public".¹¹⁴⁸

With his books and *rasā'il* being of a deliberately mixed style, al-Jāḥiẓ achieved several things: he was read and appreciated and rewarded by a different kind of readership; he popularised scholarly and theological ideas; he created a new genre and a new style in Arabic literature; and thus he contributed to the lighter and more exhilarating strain in Arabic literature that serves as a counterbalance to sobriety and gravity. Therefore, al-Jāḥiẓ has never lacked at least some admirers who explicitly praised him such as Thābit b. Qurra, al-Mas'ūdī, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī and of course, modern scholars and researchers.

Pointers to future research:

Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ is an essay by al-Jāḥiẓ in which Arabic literature and Islamic thought merge together. This is a fruitful area of research which would repay further investigation. The *rasā'il* itself would yield rich information to the student of Islamic thought through al-Jāḥiẓ's discussion and reflection of specific subject matters. All the ideas that we have met in the analysis of al-Jāḥiẓ's Islamic tendency in this thesis deserve another independent study in order to see their place in the historical development of Islamic thought. His *rasā'il*, have been analysed and they combined anecdotal prose with other elements, including Qur'ānic verses, traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), poetry etc. We have already mentioned in passing issues such as *Adab*, social

¹¹⁴⁸ See Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ*, p. 12.

problems, theological issues, inter religious dialogue etc. With this thesis, we hope that the vacuum in the scholarly library has been substantially filled. However, that is not to say, of course, that there is not an enormous amount of research that is still needed on the works of al-Jāhiz. There might be some other directions which are worth taking. For instance, his *rasā'il* provides one of the richest resources for research on the social, political and religious life of the Abbasid age. His *rasā'il* on subjects such as trade, teachers, singers, writers etc. demonstrates the realistic attitude in his prose literature. It would be best to treat each *risāla* separately and to indicate its relevance to al-Jāhiz's theological, historical, political and social outlook. Al-Jāhiz's views on such aspects would make an interesting field for researchers.

In this, I have come to the conclusion that the study of al-Jāhiz's works seem to me to have become even more interesting and essential. His great ability was to produce works which to this day remain a masterpiece of Arabic prose. He was like a mirror to his time, reflecting in his works its richness, diversity and novelty. Finally, I cannot do better than quote the saying of al-Jāhiz:¹¹⁴⁹

(فإن كنا أصبنا فالصواب أردنا وإلى غايته أجرينا ، وإن كنا قد أخطأنا فما ذلك عن فساد

من الضمير ولا عن قلة احتفال بالتقصير . ولعل طبيعة خانت ، أو لعل علة حدثت ، أو لعل سهوا

اعترض ، أو لعل شغلا منع)

“If I have succeeded, it has been because I have only sought the truth. If I have erred, it has not been due to dereliction or indifference but, perhaps some trait of character that has betrayed me or ingrained habit that has led me astray. Perhaps inadvertency waylaid me or distraction”. (Colville's translation)

¹¹⁴⁹ See al-Jāhiz, *Risāla al-tarbī' wa al-tadwīr*, in Abū Milḥim's collection, p. 489.

GLOSARRY OF ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TERMS APPEARING IN THE TEXT

Adab (pl. *Ādāb*): Bellers-letters, refinement, culture, manners, literature.

Adīb: Writer of *adab*; man of letters.

Ahl al-kitāb: The People of the Books.

Al-Khabar (pl. *al-Akḥbār*) or Ḥadīth (pl. *al-Aḥādīth*): Narrative anecdotes.

ʿArūḍ: prosody.

Al-ʿAṣr al-Jāhilī or *Jāhiliyya*: The term used by Muslim writers to denote the period before Muhammad mission or known as “The Heroic Age”.

Āya (pl. *Āyāt*): Sign; miracle; verse of the Qurʾān.

Badīʿ: The art of rhetoric.

Al-Balāgha or *al-Bayān*: These two terms had each the meaning of bothh rhetoric and eloquence. Specifically, the terms meant eloquence and, when prefix with *ʿilm* (science), they meant rhetoric, i.e. the science of eloquence.

Bayt (pl. *Abyāt*): Verse in Arabic poetry.

Diwān al-rasāʾil: Correspondence office; the bureau which dealt with correspondence.

Fann al-rasāʾil: The art/genre of writing *risāla*.

Fiqh: Islamic law.

Al-Fukāḥa: Humour.

Al-Ghazal:

Ḥadīth: The Prophetic Tradition.

Ḥalqa: Circle of student listening to the lectures.

Al-Ḥamqā: The silliness people.

Hijra: The Emigration of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina.

ʿImāma: Chalipate.

Al-Istitrād : Digression or in other word a temporary departure from one subject to another more or less distantly related topic before discussion of the first subject is resumed.

Al-Itāwa: Land tax.

- Al-Jidd*: Seriousness.
- Al-Hazl*: Joking.
- Kāhin*: Pre-Islamic soothsayer.
- Kātib* (pl. *Kuttāb*): Secretary.
- Khaṭaba*: It was used to denote both oratory and rhetoric; and *khiṭab* (pl. *khuṭab*) from the same root, was the term for speech or sermons.
- Kitāba* : Writing.
- Kunya*: Name compounded with *Abū* ... or *Umm* ...
- Laqab*: Name alluding to a personal characteristic (earlier); honorific title (later).
- Majlis*: Meeting; Session; scholarly discussion; salon.
- Masjidiyyūn*: Members of the bourgeois, or idlers who exchanged ideas and held conversations on varied subjects at the *masjid* (mosque). The group was diverse, including, among others, poets and transmitters of poetry.
- Mathal* (pl. *Amthāl*): Proverbs.
- Mirbadiyyūn*: Scholars who were based their lessons at Mirbad.
- Mukhadram*: Islamic poet born in pre-Islamic period.
- Mutakklimūn*: Dogmatic theologians.
- Nādir* (pl. *nawādir*): Literally means rare thing, and its denotes a pleasing anecdotes containing wit, humor, jocularities of type which has never ceased to be an integral feature of all social gatherings, whether intimate or official.
- Nathr*: Prose.
- Al-Nathr al-adabī*: Prose literature.
- Al-Nawkā*: The idiocy people.
- Qāfiya*: Rhyme.
- Qaṣīda*: This term is generally defined according to its length that is from fifteen to eighteen lines of poetry.
- Al-Qāṣī* (pl. *al-Quṣṣāṣ*): The story tellers.
- Al-Qirā'āt* : The variant reading of the Qur'ān.
- Risāla* (pl. *Rasā'il*): The literary essay; treatise; or epistle which addressed to a name (or without naming) person as a literary device.

Sajʿ: Balanced and rhyming prose; utterance originating with pre-Islamic soothsayers, of primitive style, short and with a single, invariable monohyme at the end of each member.

Shiʿr (pl. *Al-ashʿār*): Poetry.

Shuʿūbiyya: Anti-Arab political and literary movement, especially strong in Iranian circle.

Tabaqa (pl. *Tabaqāt*): Generation; Class; Layer (mainly biographies of the illustrious men, cities, etc.).

Al-Tabyīn: The clarity of exposition.

Tafsīr: Exegesis.

Tibāq: Acronym or antithesis.

Uslūb al-mutlaq or *Uslūb al-mursal*: The free unadorned style.

Uslūb al-muzdawaj or *Uslūb al-mutawāzin*: The assonantal style; Rhythmic Balance and measured termination style.

Uslūb al-musajjaʿ: The rhyming style.

Uslūb al-qasam: The Oath Style.

Al-Warrāq: A term used to call people who are working as copyist.

Al-Waṣiyya (pl. *al-Waṣāyā*): Commandments.

INDEX OF AL-JĀHIZ'S WORKS AS APPEARED IN *MU^cJAM AL-UDABĀ'* BY YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMAWĪ (d. 626/1229)

1. *al-Ḥayawān.*
2. *al-Nisā'.*
3. *al-Na'l.*
4. *al-Ibil.*
5. *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn.*
6. *al-Zar' al-nakhl.*
7. *al-Nabī wa al-mutanabbi'.*
8. *al-Ma'rifa.*
9. *Jawabāt kitāb al-ma'rifa.*
10. *Masā'il kitāb al-ma'rifa.*
11. *al-Radd 'alā aṣḥāb al-ilhām.*
12. *Nazm al-Qur'ān.*
13. *Masā'il al-Qur'ān.*
14. *Faḍīlat al-Mu'tazila.*
15. *al-Radd 'alā al-mushabbiha.*
16. *al-Imama 'alā madhāhib al-Shī'a.*
17. *Ḥikāya qawl aṣḥāf al-Zaydiyya.*
18. *al-'Uthmāniyya.*
19. *al-Akḥbār wa kayf taṣiḥḥ.*
20. *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā.*
21. *'Iṣam al-murīd.*
22. *al-Radd 'alā al-'Uthmāniyya.*
23. *Imāma Mu'āwiya.*
24. *Imāma Banī 'Abbās.*
25. *al-Fityān.*
26. *al-Quwwād.*
27. *al-Luṣūṣ.*
28. *Dhikr mā bayn al-Zaydiyya wa al-Rāfiḍa.*
29. *Siyāgha al-kalām.*
30. *al-Mukḥātabāt fī al-tawḥīd.*
31. *Taṣwīb 'Alī fī taḥkīm al-ḥakamayn.*
32. *Wujūb al-imāma.*
33. *al-Aṣḥāb.*
34. *al-Wukalā' wa al-muwakkalīn.*
35. *al-Shārib wa al-mashrūb.*
36. *al-Iftikhār al-ṣayf wa al-shitā'.*
37. *al-Mu'allimīn.*
38. *al-Jawārī.*
39. *Nawādir al-ḥasn.*
40. *al-Bukḥalā'.*
41. *Fakhr mā bayn 'Abd Shams wa Makhzūmī.*
42. *al-'Urjān wa al-burṣān.*
43. *Fakhr al-Qaḥṭāniyya wa al-'Adanāniyya.*
44. *al-Tarbī' wa al-tadwīr.*
45. *al-Ṭufayliyyīn.*
46. *Akhlāq al-mulūk.*
47. *al-Futyā.*
48. *Manākib jund al-khilāfa wa faḍā'il al-Atrāq.*
49. *al-Ḥāsīd wa al-maḥsūd.*
50. *al-Radd 'alā al-Yahūd.*

51. *al-Ṣuraḥā' wa al-hujanā'.*
52. *al-Sūdān wa al-bīdān.*
53. *al-Ma' āsh wa al-mā' ād.*
54. *al-Nisā' .*
55. *al-Taswiya bayn al-[°]Arab wa al-[°]ajam.*
56. *al-Sulṭān wa akhlāq ahlih.*
57. *al-Wa' īd.*
58. *al-Buldān.*
59. *al-Akhhbār.*
60. *al-Dilāla [°]alā anna al-imāma fard.*
61. *al-Istiṭā'a wa khalq al-af'al.*
62. *al-Muqayyinīm wa al-ghinā' wa al-ṣan' a.*
63. *Hadāyā manhūl.*
64. *al-Ikhwān.*
65. *al-Radd [°]alā man alḥad fī kitāb Allah [°]Azz wa Jal.*
66. *Āy al-Qur' ān.*
67. *al-Nāshī wa al-mutalāshī.*
68. *Ḥanūt [°]aṭṭār .*
69. *al-Tamthīl.*
70. *Faḍl al-[°]ilm.*
71. *al-Muzaḥ wa al-jidd.*
72. *Jamharat al-mulūk.*
73. *al-Sawālija.*
74. *Zamm al-zinā.*
75. *al-Tafakkur wa al-ītibār.*
76. *al-Ḥajar wa al-nubuwwa.*
77. *Āl Ibrāhīm al-Mudabbir fī al-mukātaba.*
78. *Ihalat al-qudra [°]alā al-ḡulm.*
79. *Ummahāt al-awlād.*
80. *al-ītizāl wa faḍlih [°]an al-faḍīla.*
81. *al-Akhtār wa al-marātib wa al-sinā' at.*
82. *Uḥdūhat al-[°]ālam.*
83. *al-Radd [°]alā man za[°]am [°]anna al-insān juz' lā yatajazza'.*
84. *Abī al-Najm wa jawābih.*
85. *al-Tuffaḥ.*
86. *al-Uns wa al-salwa .*
87. *al-Kibr al-mustaḥsan wa al-mustaqbaḥ.*
88. *Nadq al-ḡib.*
89. *al-Ḥazm wa al-[°]azm.*
90. *Anāṣir al-adab.*
91. *Taḥsīm al-amwāl.*
92. *al-Amthāl.*
93. *Faḍl al-Furs.*
94. *al-Himlāj.*
95. *Risāla ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāḥ fī imtiḥān [°]uqūl al-awliyā'.*
96. *Risāla ilā Abī al-Najm fī al-kharāj.*
97. *Risāla fī al-qalam.*
98. *Risāla fī ittikkādh al-kutub.*
99. *Kitmān al-sirr.*
100. *Madḥ al-nabīdh.*
101. *Dhamm al-nabīdh.*

102. *Risāla fī al-ʿafw wa al-safh.*
103. *Risāla fī ithm al-sukr.*
104. *Risāla fī al-amal wa al-ma'mūl.*
105. *Risāla fī al-ḥilya.*
106. *Dhamm al-kuttāb.*
107. *Madḥ al-kuttāb.*
108. *Dhamm al-wurrāq.*
109. *Madḥ al-wurrāq.*
110. *Risāla fī man yusammā min al-shuʿarā' ʿAmr.*
111. *Risāla fī al-yatīma.*
112. *Risāla fī farṭ jahl Yaʿcūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī.*
113. *Risāla fī al-karam ilā Abī al-Faraj b. Najāh.*
114. *Risāla fī mawt Abī Ḥarb al-Ṣaffār al-Baṣrī.*
115. *Risāla fī al-mīrāth.*
116. *al-Asad wa al-dhi'b.*
117. *Risāla fī kitāb al-kimiyā'.*
118. *al-Istibdād wa al-mushāwara fī al-ḥarb.*
119. *Risāla fī al-quḍāt wa al-wulāt.*
120. *al-Mulūk wa al-umam al-sālifa wa al-bāqiya.*
121. *al-Radd ʿalā al-qawliya.*
122. *al-ʿĀlim wa al-jāhil.*
123. *al-Nard wa al-shiṭranj.*
124. *Ghishh al-ṣināʿāt.*
125. *Khuṣūmat al-hawl wa al-ʿawr.*
126. *Dhawī al-ʿāhat.*
127. *al-Mughannī.*
128. *Akhlāq al-shuṭṭār.*

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