

# Possible Relationship between Kalām and the Kalama Sutta

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## Introduction:

Many people within the realm of Buddhist Studies are familiar with the Kalama Sutta and its functionality [also known by the alternative title: the Kesaputta Sutta], found in the Anguttara-Nikaya.<sup>64</sup> Many people in Buddhist Studies do not know that this discourse is not an isolated teaching given to the people of a village – it is replicated in other locations<sup>65</sup>, and is

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<sup>63</sup> This article is about creating possibilities. I cannot be certain (as if anyone could?), if these people that the Buddha met were Jewish. I am not necessarily focusing on their Jewishness, rather the interest here is the Buddha's philosophical approach that parallels wisdom from those monotheists. Islam was not “invented” at the time of these circumstances. I'm not certain what languages these people at that time spoke, and while I operate on these assumptions, the claims are not permanent, and these ideas can be adaptable – who can be so sure? They may be Jews from various periods of their diasporas and operate in different languages – or kept some of their traditions. If this point is dwelled on for too long, there will be no article, so we proceed – under the aspiration that this uncertainty is comprehended.

<sup>64</sup> F. L. Woodward: *The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anguttara Nikaya Vol. I* (London: Pali Text Society, 1973), pp. 170-175

<sup>65</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi (translators): *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995), pp. 775-785 – in the Cankī Sutta, and pp. 827-838 – in the Devadaha Sutta

given to a small group of monks and a householder.<sup>66</sup> Kalām is familiar to anyone studying Islamic philosophy. Kalām and the Kalama Sutta? Are the similarities too obvious or just some mere coincidental spelling? This article will explore this situation freely, from different perspectives.<sup>67</sup>

## Literature Review - What is Kalām?

*Kalām* is an Arabic and Hebrew word, meaning: “speaking” – used in relation to theological conversations – discursive theology.<sup>68</sup> *Mutakallim* is the term to describe a scholar of *kalām*; and, the system of *Kalām* could easily be described as any utterances from God. Harry Austryn Wolfson’s “The Philosophy of the Kalām” was the main source available for considerations. All material referenced in this section comes from this book, and only page numbers will be mentioned in parentheses.<sup>69</sup> Wolfson cannot trace the origin of the exact word: ‘*kalām*’ – although he gives a Greek and Arabic translation (p. 1-2) or interpretation, this leaves more to be desired in terms of my study, here. In Arabic the term suggests: speech or word; and in Greek, the term is determined to be the familiar logos: word, reason or argument (p. 1). The word also implies an element of faith; to explain faith, intellectual expressions needed examined.

<sup>66</sup> For the monks, the advice is found in the Samyutta-Nikaya, see: Bhikkhu Bodhi [ed. and trns.]: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha – A New Translation of the Samyutta-Nikāya Vol.I (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2000), pp. 609-611. For the householder, Bhaddiya the Licchavī, see: F. L. Woodward: The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anguttara Nikaya Vol. II (London: Pali Text Society, 1973), pp. 200-204.

<sup>67</sup> Cautionary Note: The purpose of this article is not to examine that discourse – rather, the purpose here is to illuminate a perceived commonality between two words. Many academics site this “Kalama” discourse as a sort of justification for anarchy against doctrines perceived as dogmatic. The discourse has been exploited, as if it is the tool for sanctioned-skepticism for Buddhists, or liberational-ideas away from traditional Buddhist positions – using a Buddhist teaching against Buddhist doctrine. Another aspect of the discourse could be its functionality for inter-religious dialogue; or, rather, when missionaries are trying to convert someone to this other religion – the discourse provides the tools to see through the doctrines. While scholars can appreciate the value of the material, its usage should not be applied wrongly. This article, however, discusses other aspects of the discourse – which would likely cause additional controversy: The Buddha had a conversation with Jews. This article will attempt to reconstruct this possible scenario.

<sup>68</sup> See: Nuh Ha Mim Keller: Kalam and Islam - <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/kalam.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Harry Austryn Wolfson: The Philosophy of the Kalam (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1976)

Kalām<sup>70</sup> often seems to discover attributes or humanize characteristics of God. The early groups of Muslim philosophers borrowed ideas from the Greeks: “Blending the methods of the philosophers with the methods of the Kalām, they formed of the blend, a special branch of science. They named that science Kalām, and this either because the principle problem which they discussed and battled over was the problem of God’s speech (al-kalām) and therefore the entire range of problems discussed by them was called by the name of that particular problem.... the discipline of *manṭiḳ* [logic], for *manṭiḳ* and *kalām* are synonymous Arabic terms [both of them, like the Greek logos, meaning ‘speech’].... methods of the Kalām were... not told.” (p. 10) An example of performing kalām: if a verse in the Noble Qur’an mentions the hand of God, kalām would tell us that this is the “power of God”, and God’s face is his presence or existence, and the Throne of God is determined to be the dominion or realm of control. (p. 23). Certainly this is akin to the wisdom of Solomon. Some earlier or traditional schools of Islamic thought could determine that such illustrations were *bida*, and perhaps akin to heresy (p. 10). Using analogies was common and derived from religious data or the likeness between things (p. 30). “People [rose] in defense of the articles of faith by the use of intellectual proofs in order to repulse the innovations.” (p. 32)

In the Pāli language of Theravada Buddhism there are a few words that express a similar linguistic connection: the Arabic ‘*al-aḳl*’ becomes – *kalām*. Additionally consider that the Pāli term: ‘*ākāra*’ [a state, condition, attribute, mode or reason] – respectfully.<sup>71</sup> Even the word for being entangled is similar, if one is confused by intellectual or linguistic-possibilities: *ākula*. The words could easily linguistically-morph into each other as a loan-word, given the various possibilities in languages. I should express the language-morphing possibility through the example of the Thai language [perhaps also influenced by Pāli-Sanskrit languages], which can seldom distinguish between “r” and “l” sounds. Then there is

<sup>70</sup> For an interesting on-line lecture, see: <http://vimeo.com/8664450> - entitled, Knowing God: Reason, Revelation and Intuition, by the SOAS Islamic Society – viewed on 11 June 2010. The claim in the lecture is that Kalam is not philosophy or theology, but based from rationality. The speaker claims it is dialectic-theology: having a rational basis for the cosmological reality – for which the theology is based, it is not scriptural theology.

<sup>71</sup> Rhys Davids: Pali-English Dictionary (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1921) – see relevant entries and definitions. Online version, .pdf file version, pp. 193-194

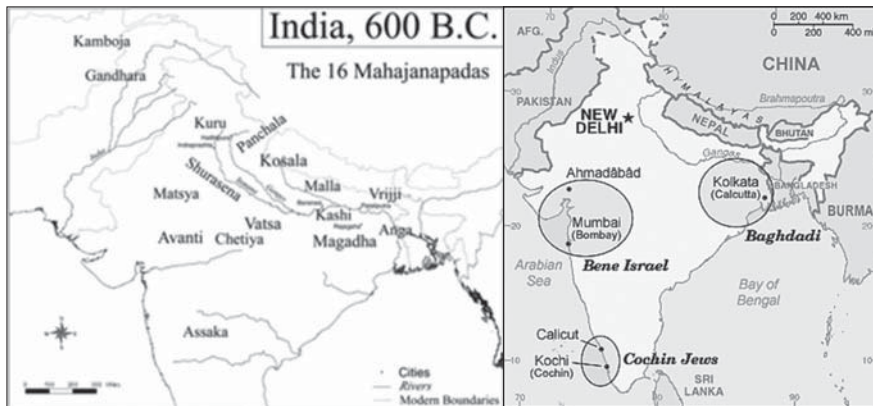
the manner of the two terms: *ma'nā* in Arabic and *mano* in Pāli – the two terms respectfully mean: attribute or thing within Arabic; and mind or thought in Pāli. An attribute or a thought about something can certainly be a manner or characteristic of the thing being examined. The word “kalām” also figures in a Buddhist text.<sup>72</sup> *Rasm* in Arabic is an impression; and in Pāli, *rasmi* is a ‘ray’ – again, another similar connection, as a ray of sunlight may leave a lasting impression upon the viewer, or a ray could be something perceived in meditation leading towards some insight. As the ancient people spread their cultural ideas, these expressions became nearly common or synonymous, as we have them today. Further, there is references to the Dualists [Persian Zoroastrians and Indian Naturalists, in the text (pp. 66-68)]: “The Indian doctrines were not so unknown to the Arabs as one ordinarily seems to think. Several authors and notably, some... leaders had pretty accurate notions of it.” (p. 67)

Primary works on Kalām began, although these came later than the Buddha, by Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā (died in 748), Harūn al-Rashīd (living from 786-809, respectfully) and later by Ibn Sa’d (died in 845), who was influenced by Ibn Ẓutaybah (living from 828-889). Then, proper academic words, later formed – these works dealing specifically with the study of Kalām originate from two Muslim scholars: Shahrastānī and Ibn Ḥaldūn (living from: 1086-1153 and 1332-1406, respectfully) and a Jewish scholar, Maimonides (living from 1135-1204, respectfully) (pp. 2 & 4). This illustrates that the proper study of Kalām is perhaps almost one-thousand three-hundred years old, and has undergone many refinements, and the fact that these authors lived after the Buddha and the established writings is dually noted, but obviously ideas can be present in the society prior to the capability to write something down.

<sup>72</sup> W.H.D. Rouse [translator]: The Jātaka – Stories of the Buddha’s Former Births, Vol. IV (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2005), p. 212 - Jataka 491: Mahā-Mora-Jātaka - IV.335 - (suvannaṇapaṭṭaṇṣāra--mañjūsāyaṇṭhapetvākālamakāsi...) – the translation, available pertains to, or to paraphrase: a father told a son that there is a place where a golden-peacock is found... but no one found it, and the king commissioned the whole story to be written on a golden plate... a later king arose and read what was written on the golden-plate. We can see in the phrase that the Father’s word and writing is figurative in the phrasing.

## The Buddha and the Jews:

The maps below are interesting in several respects.<sup>73</sup> First, perhaps five different groups or waves of Jews arrived into India; those groups coming after the advent of Buddhism must be ignored, therefore there is only one group that possibly established itself in India during the lifetime of the Buddha: the Cochin Jews certainly, and perhaps there could have been contact from Bene Israel before official records were kept. Certainly, speculation could suggest that some adventurous, independent merchant-Jews could have meandered up the Ganges, and found their way into the Kosala Kingdom around the time of the Buddha – or Bene Israel settlers could have ventured overland into the Kosala region. Evidently, we cannot be certain, but this article suggests the remote possibility. Here is a map of the Kosala region<sup>74</sup> and again, the lands where early Jews settled:



From a website:

*At different times Jews arrived and settled in south India... the first forefathers of the Cochini Jews arrived in India during the King Solomon's period [about five hundred years before the time of the Buddha]. King Solomon had commercial business with a kingdom probably existing in the present state of Kerala in south India. Other version claims that the Cochini Jews are from the Lost Tribes. Another version claims that*

<sup>73</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Jews) --accessed on 08 June 2010

<sup>74</sup> [http://wpcontent.answers.com/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/ff/Ancient\\_india.png/300px-Ancient\\_india.png](http://wpcontent.answers.com/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/ff/Ancient_india.png/300px-Ancient_india.png) --accessed on 08 June 2010

*the Cochini Jews arrived in India after they were exiled from Land of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar... The Keralans take pride in the fact that the kingdoms of Kerala were world famous and merchants from around the world frequently visited Kerala, since the times of King Solomon and later on Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Chinese and others. Among the merchants, also arrived in Kerala many Jewish merchants and some of them settled in Kerala... The existence of the Jewish community in south India was known to other Jewish communities outside India and some other Jewish merchants also arrived in India. The Jewish merchants were influential community in their state and outside their state and were main reason for the prosperity in their kingdom.*<sup>75</sup>

There is also the connection between the Ethiopian empires and the Yemeni empires, where the ancient sea-routes provided valuable materials for the kingdoms' interests in trade into each other's kingdoms and elsewhere.<sup>76</sup> There was vibrant trade between Yemen and India.<sup>77</sup> This period of interest would be the Sabaean Empire<sup>78</sup>, where it is also stated that the Romans<sup>79</sup> knew of the location to get a better trade route into India.<sup>80</sup> A journal article asserts that Indians were sailing for more than 5000 years.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> <http://adaniel.tripod.com/cochin.htm> --accessed on 08 June 2010; further referenced: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin_Jews)

<sup>76</sup> See: <http://nationalyemen.com/2012/11/11/india-and-yemen-a-long-history-of-exchange/> - accessed on 27 November 2012

<sup>77</sup> See the Smithsonian Institute's galleries: <http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/yemen/launch.htm> - accessed on 27 November 2012; <http://www.cs.nmsu.edu/~fmohamed/ancient-ye.html> - accessed on 27 November 2012;

<sup>78</sup> See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_history\\_of\\_Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history_of_Yemen) - accessed on 27 November 2012

<sup>79</sup> See: The British Association for South Asian Studies, and their text: Migration, Trade and Peoples, edited by Roberta Tomber, Lucy Blue, and Shinu Abraham (London: British Academy), online at: <http://www.royalasiaticsociety.org/site/files/Part%201-%20Indian%20Ocean.pdf> - accessed on 27 November 2012. The text mentions that there are ships depicted in the art of the Ajanta caves, so it is likely that there was external contact well-prior to the illustrations.

<sup>80</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Islamic\\_Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Islamic_Arabia) - accessed on 27 November 2012

<sup>81</sup> See: [http://www.swahiliweb.net/ziff\\_journal\\_3\\_files/ziff2006-05.pdf](http://www.swahiliweb.net/ziff_journal_3_files/ziff2006-05.pdf) - the article entitled: Antiquity of Sailing Ships of the Indian Ocean: Evidence from Ancient Indian Art, by Dr. Alok Tripathi, Ziff Journal, 2006 – mentioning the Harappans and their ship-art.

Further there is this:

*Some of the Bene Israel claim descent from the “lost” ten tribes of Israel. According to Biblical history, these ten tribes, which formed the Kingdom of Israel, were exiled from their capital, Samaria, by the Assyrian King Shalmaneser and subsequent kings from the year 722 BCE on. Others among the Bene Israel believe that their ancestors escaped by sea from Israel in the year 175 BCE, during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (prior to the events that led to the festival of Chanukkah).<sup>82</sup>*

Including:

*Jewish people - Sephardi, Paradesi, and Cochin Jews - who had settled in Kerala during the Babylonian exile.<sup>83</sup>*

And there is this:

*The oldest of the Indian Jewish communities is in Malabar coast. Traders from Judea arrived in the city of Muzirus, in what is now Kerala, in 562 BC. Most Jews, however, came as exiles from Israel in the year 70 C.E. after the destruction of the Second Temple. ...Excavations carried out at Pattanam in 2008 provided evidence that the maritime trade between Kerala and the Mediterranean ports existed back in 500 BC or earlier. It is possible that some of those traders who arrived from the west, including Jews, remained in Kerala.<sup>84</sup>*

Then there is this – related to the Port at Pattanam:

*These three seasons produced the largest number of Mediterranean amphora fragments excavated outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire<sup>85</sup>...was once the flourishing port known to the Romans as Muziris and sung in praise by the Tamil Sangam poets as Muciri.*

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.bh.org.il/database-article.aspx?48701> – Website for the Beit Hatfutsot: Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora --accessed on 08 June 2010

<sup>83</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knanaya> --accessed on 08 June 2010 – these people are said to be from the Kingdom of Judah.

<sup>84</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian\\_Malabar\\_Nasrani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Malabar_Nasrani)

<sup>85</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattanam>; <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/29/stories/2010052960400400.htm> ; <http://beta.thehindu.com/arts/history-and-culture/article244338.ece?homepage=true>

Professor Nathan Katz writes in his book:

*There was trade between King Solomon's Palestine (992-952 B.C.) and the Malabar coast. The Biblical name for India was 'Odhu' [Hodu]. Teak, ivory, spice, and peacocks were exported to Palestine. This established a linkage between India and Israel long before the birth of the Cochin Community, grafting the entire history of the community onto yet earlier traditions and making the splendor of Solomon's reign the taproot of glory for the Jewish princes of Shingly.<sup>86</sup> ...Archeological evidence from Northwest India indicates trade between the prehistoric Indus Valley Civilizations of India and Sumer between the twenty-fifth and nineteenth centuries B.C.E.<sup>87</sup> ...[E]vidence in the Book of Exodus of trade between ancient Israel and India, direct or indirect, in no less than four Hebrew words of Indic origin, the terms for cinnamon, emerald, sapphire<sup>88</sup>, and topaz. The Buddhist Baveru Jataka also refers to the ancient trade between India and Babylon, Baveru in Sanskrit. The text cites, 'Indian merchants who took periodic voyages to the land of Baveru.' Similarly, in the Kevaddhu Sutta, a sacred text that tradition holds was spoken by the Buddha himself during the sixth-century B.C.E., and that was first written down during the first century B.C.E., 'we read of how long ago merchants sailed far out of sight of the coast, taking short sightings birds, which were released from time to time, in order that they might guide the mariners to land.' Not only is this verse reminiscent of the Noah story, but these Buddhist texts indicate a much earlier use of Indian Ocean sea lanes than is commonly believed.<sup>89</sup>*

<sup>86</sup> Nathan Katz: Who are the Jews of India? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 13

<sup>87</sup> Nathan Katz: Who are the Jews of India? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 20

<sup>88</sup> Another instance of scholarly recognition of these ideas, can be read on the seventh page of the article, found here: <http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/amharic/holybooks/arkofthecovenant.pdf> - accessed on 27 November 2012

<sup>89</sup> Nathan Katz: Who are the Jews of India? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 27 – and confirmed the reference, for the Baveru Jataka story - <http://ignca.nic.in/jatak056.htm> --website for the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts; and for the Kevaddhu Sutta: Maurice Walshe: The Long Discourses of the Buddha – A Translation of the Digha-Nikaya (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), pp. 175-180 or <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.11.0.than.html#fn-2> Furthermore: Nathan Katz has written that the Mahosadha Jataka, which I cannot trace in my complete PTS edition, is the same

Above are several references to King Solomon, and perhaps there is something to interpret from any available “biblical wisdom”, from what is written about him in the First Book of Kings? Chapter Two of First Kings, in the third verse, details some interesting information: “And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses [*Leviticus?* – *because Leviticus 26:46 states: “These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses”*], that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.” We can think that the phrase concerning judgments is a form of interpretation that is very interesting for this brief study. Judgments certainly are a form of interpretation, or sensible determination after considering a variety of aspects of information – trying to discover the truth of the situation, and proclaim the verdict of the circumstance. 1 Kings 2:3, is a verse from David, to his son Solomon upon his ascension to the throne; another later verse from God, echoes this desire to close out a dream (1 Kings 3:14); and again is replicated to close out a supplication and a blessing to the congregation of Israel (1 Kings 8:58). A warning against this (1 Kings 9:6-7) would end the covenant God made with Israel. This verse illustrates also the reflection upon previous texts, through the mentioning of maintaining the Laws of Moses. In a dream, King Solomon asks of God, to: “Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this, thy so great a people?” (1 Kings 3:9). King Solomon was considered very wise: “And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4:34) King Solomon had cedar trees taken from Lebanon, brought into his kingdom by

story as found in 1 Kings 3:16-28 – and it does seem likely because of the parallels found in the Maha-Ummagga Jataka #546, section 5, but here the story is about a baby that was stolen, not a baby that was crushed under the weight of one of the women – both feature the revelation of the compassionate mother. See: E.B. Cowell: *The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Rebirths*, Vol. VI (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2005), p. 163. Nathan Katz presents this in: Perry Schmidt-Leukel [ed.] *Buddhist Attitudes to Other Religions* (Germany: EOS, 2008), pp.267-293. Nathan Katz claims it is impossible to state who borrowed from who, but since King Solomon lived before the Buddha, it would be more evident that the Fully Enlightened Buddha borrowed the story. All the additional cross-references and rechecking have suggested that the story is really found as Jataka #546, or the Mahā-Ummagga Jātaka.

sea – this verse (1 Kings 5:9) illustrates the sea-trade certainly was existent and active. King Solomon made the desire known: “That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.” (1 Kings 8:60) King Solomon had his own Navy docked at the Red Sea (1 Kings 9:26). The Queen of Sheba (Ethiopia) heard of his fame and sought after him to prove this with very difficult questions – but, King Solomon loved many other women of nationalities other than his own (1 Kings 11:1) – having 700 wives, 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). King Solomon also received the Navy of Tharshish (1 Kings 10:22), which is said to be some place in India (although there are good arguments for other locations), because of receiving gold and silver, ivory (Africa/Asia), apes (Africa) and peacocks (from India, the national bird); or more likely, these could just be a collection of the finest things from various nations with access to the seas. All the acts and demonstrations of the wisdom of Solomon are said to be written in the book of the acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41), and also Proverbs may have some phrases of interest.

The Book of The Proverbs, opens as such: “To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice and judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise and their dark sayings. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:2-7) “...For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof.” (Proverbs 1:29-30) “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser, teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:9-10)

Prior to King Solomon, aspects of wisdom that was available for him to learn, would have included Exodus 23:13 – “And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect...” Then, in a late discovery, Buddhist scholars learn that the Kharosthi script has

a distinct reliance or borrowing from the Aramaic – suggesting that writing could have been learned from the “Jews”. To learn more of this: “An analysis of the script form shows a clear dependency on the Aramaic alphabet but with extensive modifications to support the sounds found in the Indic languages. One model is that the Aramaic script arrived with the Achaemenid conquest of the region of northwest India in 500 BCE, and evolved over the next 200+ years to reach its final form by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE where it appears in some of the Edicts of Ashoka found in northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent, notably Pakistan and Afghanistan. ...[an] entire set of manuscripts are dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE making them the oldest Buddhist manuscripts yet discovered.”<sup>90</sup>

## Review of Buddhist Suttas:

There are at least five discourses, as mentioned above, that pertain to the same set of material. It may be beneficial to chart the material to best see the commonalities or differences:

| Original Five Criteria [OFC] merged with Kalama Sutta Criteria [KSC]:<br>Possible arrangements:  |  |                            |  |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Faith</b> (embraces Kalama Sutta's: <i>Report and Tradition</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Personal preference</b> (embraces: <i>Seeming possibilities</i>, and <i>Appearance</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Oral Tradition</b> (embraces: <i>Hearsay</i> and <i>An Idea of Our Teacher</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Reasoned Reflection</b> (embraces: <i>Authority of Texts</i>, and <i>Inference</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Acceptance after pondering</b> (embraces: <i>Logic</i> and <i>Agreement with a Considered and Approved Theory</i>)</li> </ul> |  |                            |  |  |  |
| Criteria:  | Bhaddhiya Sutta [KSC]                          | Kalama Sutta [KSC]         | Cankī Sutta [OFC]                      | Kosambi Sutta [OFC]                              | Devadaha Sutta [OFC]                         |
| <b>Participants:</b>   | The Buddha and Bhaddhiya the Licchavī          | The Kalamas and the Buddha | Young Brahmin Kāpaṭhika and the Buddha | Venerables: Musīla, Saviṭṭha, Nārada, and Ānanda | Buddha to the monks, referring to the Jains. |
| <b>Messenger:</b>  | The Buddha                                     | The Buddha                 | The Buddha                             | Saviṭṭha to Musīla and Nārada                    | The Buddha                                   |
| <b>Where:</b>  | Vesālī's Peaked-Roof House in the Great Forest | Kesaputta Village          | God's Grove of Opasāda                 | Kosambi's Ghosita Park                           | Sakyan village of Devadaha                   |

There are also some criteria that Al-Ghazali demonstrates: the knowledge of basic tenets of faith – a personal theology, determined to be influential; then there is a second, as a discursive ideology – as rational arguments to defeat heretics who would confuse people about the tenets of faith, determined to be valid and obligatory, but only to the extent needed; then finally is speculative

<sup>90</sup> [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kharosthi](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kharosthi) - accessed on 22 November 2010 – and to further support this, other websites were examined, on the same day, to verify: [www.ancientscripts.com/kharosthi.html](http://www.ancientscripts.com/kharosthi.html); <http://ebmp.org> – the homepage for the Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project.

theology, which is reasoning about principles of God, man, and being – to discover by deduction and inference the way things really are – and this is impossible for kalām to do.<sup>91</sup> Keller later writes that kalām has three main tasks: define the contents of faith, show that it contradicts neither logic nor experience, and provide the grounds to be personally convinced of it.<sup>92</sup> The Kalama Sutta, or the discourse of the Buddha being reflected on, pertaining to interesting assertions of logic is perhaps around two-thousand five-hundred years old.

One may recall the wisdom found in the Kalama Sutta, that Buddhadasa and other Thai philosophers decide to invoke regularly; Buddhadasa has said: “...in Buddhism there is no dogmatic system, there is no pressure to believe without the right to examine and decide for oneself. This is the greatest special quality of Buddhism which keeps its practitioners from being the intellectual slaves of anyone... Intellectual and spiritual freedom is best. ...Parents should teach and train their children to know how to understand the words and instructions they receive, to see how reasonable the words are and what kind of results will come from them. When parents teach or tell their children anything, the children should understand and see the benefits or practicing what they are told.”<sup>93</sup> If a child does not understand something, youths should question adults. The purpose of the Kalama Sutta is to remind the person as a listener/reader to have wisdom before one has confidence or faith in a teaching. The Kalama Sutta is rarely placed in its proper context, added here to invoke ‘authority’<sup>94</sup>:

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<sup>91</sup> Nuh Ha Mim Keller: Kalam and Islam - <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/kalam.htm> - this paragraph above is largely phrases taken from Keller, without quotation marks.

<sup>92</sup> Nuh Ha Mim Keller: Kalam and Islam - <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/kalam.htm> - further, on the second criteria – it is interesting to read: “Members of world faiths may be expected to question their religious beliefs for coherence, logicity, applicability and adequacy... one does not have to hang up one’s mind to enter Islam.”

<sup>93</sup> Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Keys to Natural Truth* (Bangkok: Mental Health Publishing 1999), p. 5-6

<sup>94</sup> Phra Prayudh Payutto: *Dictionary of Buddhism* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn University Press, 2000), p. 274-275; F. L. Woodward: *The Book of the Gradual Sayings – Anguttara-Nikāya*, Vol. I (London: Pāli Text Society, 1970), p. 170-175

- ☐ Do not be led by report
- ☐ Do not be led by tradition
- ☐ Do not be led by hearsay
- ☐ Do not be led by the authority of the texts
- ☐ Do not be led by mere logic
- ☐ Do not be led by interference
- ☐ Do not be led by considering appearances
- ☐ Do not be led by the agreement with a considered and approved theory
- ☐ Do not be led by seeming possibilities
- ☐ Do not be led by the idea: 'This is our Teacher'

Certain scholars like to cease the 'message' here, as authority to dispute Buddhist doctrine, never furthering to suggest why, for our individual selves, because, if:

- ☐ These things are unprofitable
- ☐ These things are blameworthy
- ☐ These things are censured by the intelligent

These things when performed and undertaken conduce to loss and sorrow

...Then indeed 'we should' reject them. This is the advice. The advice is not to disregard the teachings of the Buddha, based on what is inside the authoritative scriptures. Revisionists attempt to illustrate this, through deceptive logic. Some people use the line about texts to suggest that this is a later addition to the Tipitaka, because Buddhism did not have written texts, but perhaps this is again referring to Jewish scrolls. This does not seem like something that can be considered gradually as found above in the Islamic and Buddhist forms of gradual training.

This takes some swift intellectualization to consider. This precedes Buddhadasa's statement by a few decades: "Only people who are overtly stupid will be unable to benefit from this advice... the ten examples ...are a surefire defense against intellectual dependence or not being one's own person: that is, neglecting one's own intelligence and wisdom in dealing with what one hears and listens to, what is called in Dhamma language '*paratoghosa*' (sound

of others<sup>95</sup>). When listening to anything, one should give it careful attention and full scrutiny. If there is reason to believe what has been heard and it results in the genuine quenching of suffering, then one finally may believe it one-hundred percent.”<sup>96</sup> What is interesting is Buddhadasa recognizes those who act as repeating-parrots with paratoghosa [is there a root-word/linguistic link?]. This lesson teaches those who heed this advice, not to become the intellectual slave of others, even at the highest levels.<sup>97</sup> It is interesting that the Kalamas were not ‘intellectual slaves’ but were asking the Buddha which teacher they should believe, because there are a multitude issuing various doctrines – the Buddha taught the Kalamas a set of tools to use in determining acceptable doctrines. Thus the summary of the KesaputtaSutta, becomes: Is what one is stating: rooted in greed, hatred or delusion – if so, it must be rejected. This analytical ability, on determining whether or not something is conducive to wholesomeness, is only ‘partial’ knowledge, only a portion of the *abhiññā* the Buddha possessed. The term, ‘*Asavakkhayanana*’, must have some weight inclusive to the above definition, which goes largely unexplained, by Phorn Ratanasuwan.<sup>98</sup> Thus, the Dictionary provides ‘*Asavakkhayanana*’ as being the knowledge of the destruction or exhaustion of all mental intoxicants<sup>99</sup> in several similar manners. It is through the hearing of another’s doctrine that one is able to recall, practice/apply for one’s self, and then determine if success results. Every discourse of refutation of other’s [non-Buddhist] doctrine results in conversion [either as lay-disciple or as a bhikkhu], or death.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>95</sup> As included into the two sources/conditions for the arising of correct views, Phra Prayudh Payutto: Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn University Press, 2000), states: paratoghosa – another’s utterance, inducement by others, hearing or learning from others – p. 80

<sup>96</sup> Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Keys to Natural Truth (Bangkok: Mental Health Publishing 1999), p. 5 – from a 1988 speech

<sup>97</sup> Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Keys to Natural Truth (Bangkok: Mental Health Publishing 1999), p. 8

<sup>98</sup> Phorn Ratanasuwan: Abhiññā – Supra-mundane, Psychic Powers of the Buddha (Bangkok: Home of Psychic Research, Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University), p. 382-384 – suggests to deal with in another volume.

<sup>99</sup> Phra Prayudh Payutto: Dictionary of Buddhism (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkorn University Press, 2000), p. 119 – as on-third of the Threefold Knowledges, the other two: reminiscence of past lives and knowledge of decease and rebirth of beings; p. 235 – as the final sixth of the relevant Abhiññā discussed in this section; p. 280-282, as one of Ten Powers of the Perfect One – one of the Buddha’s or Arahant’s powers.

<sup>100</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha:

Shahraṣṭānī writes in one of his works: most of their anthropomorphisms were borrowed from the Jews, for anthropomorphism is characteristic of them [...or at least amongst the Karaites]. (p. 68) Anthropomorphism is such a serious offense to Muslims, that al-Ghazālī was said to have stated: “Be an out-and-out Jew, or else play not with the Torah...” (p. 104)

### The northwestern part of the world when the Buddha was living...



There is a term in Arabic: *fiḵḥ* – which is interpreted to mean: “the divine laws that govern the action of all duty-bound Muslims” (p. 8) and, “the root of all the traditional sciences... the subject matter of each of these sciences, the problems which they deal with, and the methods of demonstration which they use in solving those problems... all originate in man by reason of his being a thinking human being.” (p. 5) A portion of a chapter of Deuteronomy reads:

A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya (Boston: Wisdom Publications 1995), p. 492: Since the NiganthaNataputta (leader of the Jain’s) was unable to bear the loss/conversion of one of his chief supporters to the Buddha [the magic to convert others, another attribute!], hot blood, then and there gushed from his mouth; and page 1257: A heavy sorrow arose in [NiganthaNataputta] because of the loss of his lay supporter, and this produced a bodily disorder that resulted in the vomiting of hot blood. After vomiting hot blood, few beings can continue to live. Thus they brought him to Pāvā [of the Mallas? – the Buddha died with ‘them’ as well, a chedi/stupa erected containing relicts of the Buddha] and shortly after [the Jain] passed away.

“Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons...” (Deuteronomy 4:5-9). This is taken to mean that there is not much innovation allowed in maintaining the traditions suggested by the Most High God – maintaining these codes is considered wisdom. One is wise to operate under these impositions; one is wise to tend only to oneself, and to teach one’s youth.

Innovations or deviations from revelation can be considered forbidden, or *bida* [further, in Pāli: *pāpa* means: sinful, or something bad. A derivative word is: *pāpita* – meaning: one who has done wrong. In Thai, the word: “pit” means wrong, and it is easy to assume that the Arabic term *bida* is linguistically related.] Related to *Kalām*, Wolfson further writes that the term *Kalām* came to mean: “argumentation formed from the intellect.” (p. 5). These intellectual-interpretations could only occur after passages from the Qur’an and Sunnah/Hadiths were consulted – *Kalām* originates from post-scriptural analysis.

The Noble Qur’an has another term, found at 25:33, as translated: “And no example or similitude do they bring (to oppose or find fault in you or in this Qur’an), but We reveal to you the Truth, against that similitude or example, and the better explanation thereof.”<sup>101</sup> The term “*tafsīr*”, is the word up for consideration – defined as meaning: “interpretation”. If the earlier verses are considered before 25:33, we can read that from 25:29 onward, speaking of a non-Muslim: “29. He indeed led me astray from

<sup>101</sup> Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan: Translation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur’an in the English Language (Madinah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur’an, 1420 AH), p. 482

the Reminder (this Qur'an) after it had come to me. And Shaitan (Satan) is to man, ever a deserter in the hour of need. [Tafsīr Al-Qurtubī] 30. And the Messenger (Muhammad, peace be upon him), will say: 'O my Lord! Verily, my people deserted this Qur'an (neither listened to it, nor acted on its laws and teachings). 31. This have We made for every Prophet an enemy among the Mujrimun (disbelievers, polytheists, criminals). But Sufficient is your Lord as a Guide and Helper. 32. And those who disbelieve say: 'Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?' Thus (it is sent down in parts), that We may strengthen your heart thereby. And We have revealed it to you gradually in stages. (It was revealed to the Prophet, peace be upon him, [over] 23 years.)"

Ayats 29-33 are interesting for the context of Kalām – the words of Allah. We have people being led away from Allah's advice by the forces of distraction – going away from Allah's advice and regulations; and despite the various unfriendly-forces, Allah's advice should always be enough. There is always a course of gradual guidance, in order that one can grow stronger in faith towards having more confidence in Allah. If stated differently, but within the same context – further interpreted: people are led away from Allah's advice, easily by evil-minded people, however one's heart is strengthened by these repeated and gradually revealed proofs from Allah. Allah alone is sufficient, and will guide someone needing assistance. To parallel the above verses – in a different training-system: Buddhism also has a recognized gradual path: through laws or regulations (sila), and teachings of meditation and words towards the further development of wisdom (samadhi and paññā). There is no rapid development in these systems, as Islam and Buddhism take time to learn.

There are different words in Arabic that denote "interpretation"; maybe the most common are: ta'wīl and tafsīr. Ta'wīl would illustrate a return to the beginning – or the suggestion would be towards the earliest words which dispense of the traditional renderings; but tafsīr replaced this – based on hadith, rather than personal opinion or expertise. There is a lot of debate over the proper definition of these terms, but to further illustrate, for the purposes here, Jews also used these terms. When Islam spread, many of these new converts

did not know Arabic, so interpretation was a natural development in the spread of Islam; and actually this can be said with the developments of any religion moving into previously unknown areas. Any act of a prophet, explaining the words of God, can be seen as tafsīr. If someone is reading the Qur'an in Arabic, the meanings are quite clear, but in translations, every word is interpretation. There are numerous references towards clear proof, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc. – for anyone to comprehend. These verses, for instance: 58:5, 34:5, 3:7 – all suggest that there are clear and unclear verses to the minds of humans, and despite their curiosities and attempts to rationalize hidden and unhidden meanings of what was said – of course the final authority alone, is Allah.

The great Muslim scholar-philosopher Al-Ghazali (died in 1111), suggested: that there are the practical issues that are easier to comprehend inside the Qur'an, and then there are verses that take a deeper level of cognition to comprehend. He further suggested that kalām is faulted because the exponents based their arguments on unquestioned propositions from opponents and were compelled to admit to these by reliance on authority or by the consensus of the community. Further, none of the early sages of Islam needed to use philosophy – and what is left to consume for students of the Kalām school are utterances of “unintelligible and incoherent phrases.” (p. 42)

Kalām was also responsible for the formulation of four common beliefs amongst Judaism, Christianity and Islam: “the beliefs of the creation of the world and the existence, unity and incorporeality of God.” (p. 45) The Jewish scholar Maimonides was largely responsible for the formation of this criteria. Wolfson additionally states that only Greek and Syrian languages and not Latin were available to the Muslim-Arabic scholars, and that post-Nicene Council works were rarely referenced (p. 51). It was the work of Heretical Christian Scholars working mainly in Arabic, unconsciously deviated from orthodox positions, and: “began to accommodate their doctrine of the Trinity to the Muslim doctrine of attributes.” This could have been a factor in the extinction of the Kalām philosophical schools. (p. 81)

## Conclusion:

The nature of this article is not to detail some profound philosophy – other people have done that; rather this was more of a light-historical presentation of similarities and creating possibilities for demonstrating religious tolerance and the coexistence of different systems. In the first section of this article tried to illustrate for Buddhist readers: Jews have been in India since before the foundation of Buddhism, and it may be greater than likely that the Enlightened One, encountered such people during his 45 years of ministry to the people of the Land of Rose Apples. There is even biblical and a lot of archeological evidence of these ancient encounters during the reign of King Solomon, whose mighty-navy went beyond the Red Sea. While the Kalām “system” as a proper ideological method or philosophy is younger than the days of the Buddha, it is evident from biblical evidence that methods of textual-interpretation existed before the time of the Buddha. All of the judgments and interpretations that exist in the Torah and other Jewish texts were available to the communities in diaspora, and it must be remembered that these empires that held Jews in their exile, were neighboring nations to ancient India, like the areas now known as Ethiopia and Yemen. King Solomon prayed for and was rumored far and wide to possess great wisdom and understanding – interpreting the divine words he received. This similar methods of interpretation existed in Buddhism, and it was the Buddha who reinforced the criteria of interpretation amongst the people he visited, and some of these people were learned in an unformalized kalam-system.

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