

# M.A. THESIS

Title of M.A.Thesis

## **Parallels of Stoicism and Kalam**

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Aspired academic grade

**Magister philosophiae (Mag.phil.)**

Vienna, October 2008

Study ref.number: A 296  
Field of thesis: Philosophy  
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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Questions

What are the differences between theology and philosophy? Theologians and philosophers have often a similar subject of study, use each others' methods. We can postulate that theology, study of God, is always a development of a certain religious opinion; on the other hand, philosophy is a research of relevant questions, as well as a research of this relevance itself. What theology postulates to be relevant, is for a philosopher always in doubt. The beginning is for both disciplines different, in former it may be a revelation of truth, in the other a question what truth is. The disciplines are, however, made up by a discourse, asserting and clashing of opinions, not only by the starting points. The both can be said of the Dialecticians, the tradition of philosophy going from Socrates through Sceptics and Stoics, as well as of the Mutakallimun, their equivalent on the field of Muslim sciences of religion. In a general scope of this work we have primarily the mutual development of these two disciplines, ways of how they can influence each other and were they set limits of it. Also if the both may bring reasons for ethics (on a personal level) or law (on the social one), a comparison of this process might help to discover the common terms of both.

In this work I'll present two important, although at first sight diametrically different traditions of thought - Stoicism and Kalam - especially for their theories of God, nature and ethics. On the one hand, the Stoics generally at first speculated about nature, and then consequently wrote ethical teachings grounded on those speculations. On the other, Kalam was (inversely) first a debate on the ethical teachings of Quran, which they secondarily tried to fit into a more scientific worldview, which became available by the rapid development in 9th century Iraq. It is probable that as their contemporary Muslim philosophers started to revive metaphysics based on ancient writings, the theologians needed their own. They needed a worldview, coherently linking physics and ethics, which would be based on Quran, thus being acceptable even by more literalist movements of the exegesis and jurisprudence. The question of application, how such a teaching can be reflected in personal life or in law, is thus also partly in this work's interest.

The main interest, however, are the points, in which these two traditions converged. Both were based on a radical monotheism, acknowledging only one God, a single active principle in the world, pervading and controlling every part of it. In fact, to accept the uniqueness of God is the basic

testimony of Muslim faith. Specialty of Kalam was their physics (*'ilm aT-Táb'*). They brought up an idea on the divine omnipresence, which may have been either influenced by Stoics directly. Another parallel to the Hellenistic philosophy, resembling one of the oppositions between the Epicureans and Stoics, was their debate on substance, where atomists faced supporters of a continuous matter. Epistemology of later Kalam, trying to find the role of reason in an empirically functioning soul, may also be analyzed for parallels. At last in ethics, the both teachings seem to be very distant from each other. Stoics had no basic text like Quran with ethical tenets. There are, however, some traces of the generally Stoic idea of reasoning as recognition of natural law, also in the later Kalam, which should be analyzed as well. If we expect that these parallels are not random (can they be?), then we come to another set of questions: how the Stoics could have influenced Kalam? If they couldn't, what were the factors, which caused the development to go in such a similar way? And, more general, how can a philosophical tradition influence a theological one?

## 1.2. Structure

As in every tradition of thought, the development of new ideas was followed by scepticism and conservatism in both Stoicism and Kalam. But this could only help their internal heterogeneity, which has to be analyzed first, before we can speak of general ideas "of the Stoics" resp. "of Kalam". Thus this work contains five chapters, first being this introduction. The second presents the teachings of Stoa, as well as a brief introduction to the context of Hellenistic philosophy, their influence on their contemporary and present culture and theology of other Abrahamic religions, and finally also the sources of Stoic thoughts available for the Muslim theologians. Kalam itself will be presented in the third chapter; because it is a more divergent tradition than Stoicism, we'll handle at first the basic questions, which they considered relevant, and then the primary divisions, which were set up more on the field of politics or jurisprudence already in the era of Umayyads. Latter two chapters are organized chronologically, presenting a rationalist development of Kalam in 9th century and the sceptic (or conservative) reaction on it in the next. Thus, the fourth chapter presents Mu'tazila, which tried to unify the answers on the basic questions in a coherent system, similar to those of philosophic authorities, focusing on the connections between physics (or metaphysics) and ethics. We handle the development of Mu'tazila as a certain school within Kalam, but the focus is given in fact to two men, who diverged from the Mu'tazilite mainstream, ie Dirar ibn 'Amr and Ibrahim an-Nazzam, because in fact their own schools were the source of most Stoic parallels. Finally in the fifth chapter we'll look on

the later development of Kalam, which was characterized in more coherently surviving teachings of 'Ali al-Ash'ari and Muhammad al-Maturidi, in fact often reacting on those of Dirar and Nazzam.

### 1.3.Method

To compare two historically distinct traditions of thought needs a summary of the questions they were based on, as well as of the answers, which were given by individual thinkers. These questions and answers are to be ordered in a way which would enable us to recognize various schools as coherent teachings. But the coherence (nor any criterium of the validity) of the teachings is not in the focus of this work. What we seek for are the parallels between them: both those on the level of ideas, methods of research or in evaluating relevance, as well as in their context, relation between the teaching and its application, development of these relations and so on.

It seems to me important to present a distinction between terms "parallel" and "influence". While the term "parallel" can be seen more general as a similarity between the two teachings, an "influence" denotes one of possible causes of a parallel. Influences are of more types: there can be (1) direct influences, ie if we had a proof that a certain theologian comments, quotes or in another way brings up a Stoic primary text; but we have no information about any works by Stoic authorities available to the context of Kalam, also we may focus rather on (2) indirect influences, which would be imposed on the theologians by commentaries, critical treatises, summas or other doxographic material, either in Arabic, Syriac or Greek<sup>1</sup>. Here we can count also other traditional sources like gnomologia<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, a parallel may emerge without any influence of a former tradition on the latter. We can say there may be two independently but nevertheless similarly formulated ideas. They may be taken as a premise for further reasonings and thus lead to similarities in the development of a teaching as well: for example, if both teachings took monism as a premise in ontology, it was likely for both to deal with fatalism in ethics<sup>3</sup>. These kinds of "pure" parallels, even if partly reflecting an influence of the former teaching in its later development, are the most valuable for the search of both the philosophical aspects of Kalam, as well as the theological aspects of Stoicism. There is yet another type of parallels, which I see as "illusionary". A particular teaching may include a formulation similar to that of the former tradition, but if it is answering a different question, we can hardly speak of a parallel event.

In four cases we can look deeper into the problem. The first (chapter 4) will be an earlier Basrian theologian Dirar ibn 'Amr, whom we'll present in a pure parallelist view, and then later a Mu'tazilite scholar Ibrahim an-Nazzam, where we can expect an (at least) indirect influence, especially in the problematics of physics. An intermezzo is presented by the later Mu'tazilite theologians Jahiz, Ka'bi and Jubba'i, as well as their contemporaries, who tried to harmonize their teachings of one discipline with the other ones. Another parallels may be found in so-called orthodox schools - Ash'ariya and Maturidiya - which will deal more with ethics, gaining more importance in contrast to the lesser role of physics and metaphysics, important more for the Mu'tazila. What we try to uncover is the role of Stoicism in the development of Kalam (chapter 5). It can be expected, that at least the Ash'arite theologians perceived Stoicism as a single ancient school of thought distinct from other philosophic traditions<sup>4</sup>, what may not be a case for the other ones. On the other hand, some authors present Ash'arites as the school which was mostly influenced by them<sup>5</sup>. In contrast to this idea, it is possible that when the Ash'arites reacted on the "natural philosophy", they didn't think of an ancient pagan school, but rather on the teaching, which was secondarily reconstructed in the works of Dirar, Nazzam and their followers.

1 - Of the earliest known Arabic sources, we have a summa from the 9th century, called "Plutarch's book of opinions on nature" although its real author seems to be (according to quotations in modern works like LS) a certain Aetius from the 2nd century BC. Because of this I prefer the latin name in latin named *Placita Philosophorum* in quotations. Its first part contains teachings of various philosophical schools from the pre-Socratic ones to those of the Hellenistic period. The Stoics, named generally as *ar-riwáqiyún*, *ahl al-usTuwána* or represented by Zeno (*zínún*) and Chrysippus (*xrúsíbus*), have a very prominent place in the text. Other sources could have been any commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias or Galen's book "On Ethics", which was translated in the second half of 9th century by Job of Edessa, the author of the contemporary Syriac encyclopaedia "Book of Treasures". Ibn Nadim's 10th century general bibliography *Fihrist* names only *Placita*.

2 - cf §3.2.2

3 - Of these are known eg writings of Ibn Fatik or the modern summa in Gutas' dissertation.

4 - Already in the beginning of 20th century Saul Horovitz wrote an essay on the influence of the philosophy on Kalam ("Über den Einfluss der griechischen Philosophie auf die Entwicklung des Kalam"), starting with a chapter on the influence of the Stoics. He mentions (cf p.6f) Shahrastani calling Stoics *mu'attila*, the term bound with the negation of the divine attributes (cf §3.2.1) and also *aS-SaHába 'r-rawáqi*, the literary translation of the term as "followers of the Stoa", similar to that of the term used in *Placita*. However, Horovitz' thesis (cf p.8) was that of an indirect influence: the theologians knew the Stoic concepts, but they didn't know anything about the original authorities.

5 - Stoic influence on the Ash'ariya has been mentioned and partly elaborated by Simon van der Bergh in his translation of Ibn Rushd's *Tahafut at-Tahafut*. He does not, however, hide the context of their Stoic-looking formulations, which often are more clear in a Sceptic or Neoplatonic context.

## 2. Stoicism

### 2.1. Contemporary Discourse

The Stoicism school emerged in the so-called Hellenistic period of classic philosophy. As it came, the Mediterranean Sea was the scene of a feeble equilibrium between few quite equally strong empires. The east - Egypt, Syria, Anatolia and Balkans - was dominated by the successor states of Alexander the Great. In the west, the most influential powers were Rome and Carthage. Alexander's conquests helped to spread the Greek language and it became the *lingua franca* of the educated; a status which it retained for long even after the region was wholly subdued by Rome. The centers of education were Egyptian Alexandria and Athens, which was the contemporary capital of philosophy. After the battle of Chaeronea (338 BCE) Athenians lost their independence to Macedonia, not to become a sovereign power any more. The democracy of a classic polis loses its meaning at this time, and thus also the philosophers' role changes. The teachings are based more on individual ethics and development; in contrast to predominance of physics and metaphysics, or objective truth, in the era of Plato and Aristotle. The new 3rd century schools, instead of bringing new teachings to control the world around, taught their students how to withstand the control of the world over them. A notion of free spirit (*thymos*) as the principle of human actions was replaced by a material breath (*pneuma*) functioning merely by natural regularities. The common starting point of the three greatest schools of this era - the Epicureans, the Sceptics and the Stoics - were empiricism and materialism. They spoke about what could be perceived; soul was seen as dependent on the temporal and corporeal changes. The ethical ideal of this era is a sage, able to recognize these regularities and prevent himself from being deceived, thus able to attain a peace of mind. However, in their particular ideas about how to attain this state, as well as in their other theory of nature and knowledge, these schools, differ significantly.

#### 2.1.1. Epicureanism

Teachings of Epicurus (341-270 BCE) are mostly known from the letters preserved by Diogenes Laertius and from the works of his later Roman followers, like Lucretius. Epicurus founded the school (better known as *kepos*, "garden") in the end of 4th century BCE, in the time when Stoicism emerged as well. His theoretical base seems to be atomism, which he adopted from the writings of Democritus<sup>1</sup>. His system doesn't include dialectics, a discursive method of knowledge; he defined canonic instead as the basis of philosophy, whose object was the criteria for truth. Epicurus chose perceptions (*aisthesiai*),



terms (*prolépsis*) and passions (*pathé*) for them. Perception is the most important of them, as all rational activity depends on its content. Epicurean theory depicts the world as an infinite void where all that happens is a motion of matter. Thus every perception, including that of illusions and dreams, is based on a certain motion and can be considered true. On the other hand, as long as we base the truth on experience, dialectically acquired knowledge may lead to deception<sup>2</sup>. The role of reason is to think about unclear visions; but everything unclearly seen is already an "awaiting" knowledge (*prosmenon*), needing an approach and a closer look from the observer<sup>3</sup>.

In nature we can perceive the (spatial as well as temporal) infinity of the universe and of quantity of matter within. Matter is composed of bodies, consisting of unchangeable and indivisible particles, atoms. These cannot be seen by themselves, but if there were no limits of division, bodies would be divisible into nothing. Epicurus thought<sup>4</sup> of atoms being of a heterogeneous shape, size and weight. Their motion differed as well (oscillating or direct), although they all had the same velocity. A soul also consists of perceptions. Perception happens when atoms of the perceived object enter our souls directly<sup>5</sup>. Passions, will, impressions (*phantasiai*)<sup>6</sup> and reason are all certain motions of the soul.

On this physics he based also the ethical doctrine. The good is equivalent to pleasure, the evil to pain. As with death we decompose and lose all perceptions, only life is relevant for philosophy. And it is enough for it to care making it pleasurable. Any pleasurable experience, *hedoné*, is to be preferred; Epicurus, however, did warn<sup>7</sup> that pursuing of some of them brings more pain than pleasure. Thus the perfect happiness isn't based on *hedoné*, but rather on limiting pain and living a rational life: being able to find causes for own activities and prevent self-deception<sup>8</sup>. He also considered gods to have attained this state; his theology is, however, in a critical attitude towards popular religion. Gods are so happy that they have no need to trifle in the matters of mortals. Because of that Epicurus criticized the rites to gain their favor, as well as the belief in an inevitable fate. If reason wasn't sufficient to attain pleasure, it was because of misfortune, not because of some divine fury or judgement<sup>9</sup>.

1 - DL X,2; Democritus influenced him by his atomism and materialism. Epicurus disagreed with him generally in ethical questions: he taught free will and rationality as an ethical value (DL X,134), while Democritus preferred determinism and considered fearlessness (*athambié*) to be the correct attitude towards the fate. It is interesting how radically they diverged on this; perhaps it was a Sceptic influence. Epicurus' teacher Nausiphanus learned under both Democritus and Pyrrho of Elis.

2 - cf DL X,31-33

3 - cf DL X,34 & X,41

4 - DL X,54; Aristotle already criticized Democritus on the problem of the minimal possible size of atoms. Democritus

defined atoms in a way, that they had no size. If two atoms met each other, they could be theoretically on the same place in the same time. For more details on this matter see the SEP entry by Kaston (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epicurus/>, 9.7.2008).

5 - cf DL X,49

6 - The term *phantasia* is central for all three epistemologies of this era. Impressions (Hicks translates them also "presentations" and "appearances") are caused by perceptions (*aisthesiai*) and they are the content of reason. It doesn't always mean the illusionary or creative ideas, reflected in a modern term "fantasy", which is closer to the Greek term *phantasma*, translated as "semblance in the mind", "images" or "illusions". However, Hicks translates "*phantasma*" sometimes as "presentations" as well (ie DL VII,60: *phantasma dianois*, "presentation to the intellect"), to this comes yet the version of Long&Sedley, who use "figments" instead (eg in LS 39B; see §2.2.1., n.5), what might cause the word to seem quite confusing.

7 - cf DL X,142

8 - cf DL X,129-132

9 - cf DL X,134

### 2.1.2.Scepticism

Scepticism was more a method or a movement than a particular school or tradition. Etymologically, the term comes from *sképtomai*, "to inquire", as their goal was to incite as many questions as possible<sup>1</sup>. The teaching gained respect especially after 266 BCE, when Arcesilaus (+241 BCE) became the head of the Athenian Academy. Arcesilaus<sup>2</sup> considered the teaching to be a continuity of the Socratic tradition, putting into question any certainty in attaining knowledge, committing life to reason alone. According to a later sceptic Sextus Empiricus, they taught the idea of *akatalepsia*, ie inability of human reason (and senses) to comprehend objects perfectly. There is some truth in fact that we have certain impressions, but it cannot be known in how far they correspond to the external reality.

Sextus, as well as the other Sceptics of the Roman era like Agrippa and Aenesidemus, doesn't agree with them in certain points. They claimed to be the real followers of the first teacher of the method, Pyrrho of Elis (+270 BCE). If a Sceptic of the Academy thought that nothing could be known, a Pyrrhonist wouldn't agree with that unless he could prove it. Even uncertainty should be a matter of question<sup>3</sup>. Unlike the Academicians, their method wasn't a doubt, but equipollence. This strategy was presented as a rhetorical play consisting of setting two contradictory, but nevertheless true arguments, which were set against each other, thus making the whole debate seeming vain, as the truth couldn't be judged by human reason<sup>4</sup>. The attitude promoted by Pyrrhonians was *epoché*, to hold on a judgment about the matter; this could lead to a peace of mind<sup>5</sup>. However, to preserve it was a similarly hard task:

as one faces many problems, one has to search for many arguments for every new one of them to maintain the equipollences.

1 - Literally it means "to seek", or look about; DL IX,69

2 - Cooper, p.98

3 - PH I,226; He criticizes here the New Academy of Carneades (+129 BCE), who taught that all perceptions could be doubted, but through certain tests some things seem more worth of belief than another ones.

4 - Categorizations of these tropes, which were used as a base of *epoché*, were preserved by both Diogenes (IX,79f and IX,88f) and Sextus Empiricus (PH I,36f and I,164f) in the same way. According to Aenesidemus, there were ten: differences between sensory perceptions of various species, between various humans, various organs of perception, cases, spatial position, admixtures, quantity, relations, frequency of a phenomenon or a life style of the observer. Agrippa listed them more abstractly in five tropes: a Sceptic could mention the contradiction of theory and practice, infinite regress (as every assertion has to be proven, and thus also every proof has to be proven *ad infinitum*), relativity, questionable hypotheses and circular arguments.

5 - However, Sextus (as seen in PH I,233) would consider promoting *epoché* as a virtue - like Arcesilaus did - to be a dogmatic approach as well. He tried to show *epoché* to be a necessary consequence of any argument, but not a moral goal to be attained.

## 2.2. Teachings

The name of Stoicism doesn't say much about the teachings. The term *stóa* means a "painted arcade", particularly the one on the Athenian Agora, where the students assembled to discuss the teachings. The founder of the school was Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE), originally a Phoenician merchant. After a crash of a ship he settled in Athens, where he started to study philosophy at first from books of Xenophon, later under guidance of the Cynic philosopher Crates<sup>1</sup>. He founded his own school about the end of 4th century BCE and led it until his death; then it passed to Cleanthes (331-232 BCE) and later to Chrysippus (280-207 BCE). System of study was based on logic (or dialectics, the art of debating) as the epistemological discipline. Logic defined the rules of making assertions on physics (or philosophy of nature, motion). Ethics was then the starting point for ethics (practical opinions)<sup>2</sup>. We can divide the development of Stoicism into three periods.

The first of them, the school of Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus, or early Stoicism, was more theoretical and also radical in its opinions in its opposition against the other schools. Although struggling for a rigid coherence between all three disciplines of philosophy, they were in no way just

followers of Zeno, like they had been called in the past<sup>3</sup>. In the second half of the 2nd century BCE the school was led by Panaetius (185-110 BCE), who promoted the teachings in Rome. He also started to prefer physics before logic as the fundamental discipline<sup>4</sup>, he was also adopted some ideas of the Peripatetic school. He and his followers are then starting a middle Stoicism. As mentioned above, the texts of the early and middle Stoics are only fragmentarily preserved. In the 1st century BCE, the school gained quite a significant respect in the intellectual elite of Rome, hence we also call the late Stoicism as Roman. Panaetius' student Posidonius (135-51 BCE) founded a new school on Rhodes, where could be found among his students Pompey and Cicero. In Greece, the school was maintained by Epictetus (55-135). Arius Dydimus was a court philosopher of Augustus, what can be said also of Musonius Rufus and Seneca, serving under Nero; finally, emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180) shows their influence as well. Their focus was on ethics.

1 - DL VII,2

2 - cf DL VII,39; Beside these general disciplines, Cleanthes divided dialectics and rhetorics, physics and theology, and also ethics and politics (ibid 41). The relation between the disciplines was differently explained. Some Stoics saw a tight correlation between them, seeing every discipline senseless without the others. The hierarchy was also changing. In general, later Stoics write about ethics, showing less interest in logic (cf LS 56B); of the early Stoics, Aristo found only ethics to be relevant for study as well.

3 - cf *Placita* XXI,18; On the one hand, Cleanthes is known for his religious poetry and devotion to the Stoic ideals in his personal life. On the other hand, Chrysippus was a logician, trying to minimalize the contradictions in Zeno's teaching and make Stoic philosophy a coherent system. Different aims sometimes also brought different conclusions. For example, Bobzien (p.46-47) mentions one difference between the two on the question of relation between God's will and presence of evil in the world. This question, which we'll see to be of dire importance in the context of Kalam (§3.2.2.) had developed in a similar way: at first, trying to support a religious tenet, Cleanthes declares that God has no effect on evil (cf his *Hymn*: "O God, without you nothing comes to be on earth/neither in the region of the heavenly poles, nor in the sea/except what evil men do in their folly"); unlike Chrysippus, who identified the Fate and the will of God. The variety of opinions within the early Stoicism doesn't seem so radical as that between the Stoicism and, say, Epicureans, but they should not be ignored even if we try to generalize the teaching.

4 - cf DL VII,41

### 2.2.1.Dialectics

Within the Stoic philosophy, the role of dialectics or logic is similar to that of epistemology. Its foundation was like that Epicurus. They both are empirical: in the time of birth, human mind is blank

and being filled only with later experience<sup>1</sup>. They are also nominalistic, both teach that we name the things in accordance to how they appear to us<sup>2</sup>. However, Epicurus was in some points closer to Sceptics. His canonics, a discipline similar in motive to the dialectics of Stoicism, was educating the mind in a way that it would maximalize the performance of the sensory organs. Unlike these, who preferred to analyze only particular situations, Stoics tried to find natural regulations of how mind works.

The thoughts are described as impressions, *phantasiai*, which appear through an 'imprint', a change in the soul<sup>3</sup>. There is also a common distinction between internal and sensory, the former being made by an activity of mind, the other by an effect of an organ on the soul<sup>4</sup>. The point of difference is in the truth value of the impressions. Epicurus thought that all of them were true, illusions and sensory views alike, although a more detailed view on the thing could reveal more of its nature. According to Stoics, to reach a more detailed view is irrelevant, as some of the impressions can be more telling than the others. These so-called comprehensive impressions (*phantasiai kataleptikai*)<sup>5</sup> are for them the criterion of truth. A comprehensive impression is that which "arises from what is and is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is, of a such a kind as could not arise from what is not"<sup>6</sup>. But here comes a question if or in how far we are able to have such impressions. Sceptics, for example, didn't refute this definition, but they also added that there are no impressions that are really comprehending the thing<sup>7</sup>. The trope pointing at different perceptions of senses of various humans was really of a great importance here.

A solution could have been a new category of probability: if we have reasonable cues that an impression comprehends the thing, it is probably so, but the assent itself doesn't make the criterium<sup>8</sup>. It needed a new criterion, the right reason or argument (*logos*)<sup>9</sup>, study of whose structure and value was very important for them<sup>10</sup>. By means of logic we can distinguish the true and false, plausible and ambiguous<sup>11</sup>. The persuasive power was always bound to the comprehension of senses, making the argument meaningful only if both corresponded to each other. The grammar and rhetorics are its indivisible parts because logic was per definition a science of the denotation<sup>12</sup>. Denotations are made by reason in a form of verbal expressions (*lektón*)<sup>13</sup>, which can be of three types: a judgment (*axióma*), question or a command. Of these, only judgments have a truth-value. An rational argument was formed of four sentences, where first two (*thémata*) form the major premise, the third a minor one and fourth is the conclusion. They also tried to find certain figures, which would be further indemonstrable, and thus useful for any reasoning as a logic proof<sup>14</sup>. But as already mentioned, true judgments didn't form the

knowledge alone. They had a meaning only in the moment facing the fact they were referring to. Logic didn't usually bring a truth prone to change; it was dependent on circumstances<sup>15</sup>.

1 - Sharples p.20

2 - cf DL VII,53 & X,33

3 - The ideas on the structure of the soul will be analyzed in the next paragraph.

4 - cf DL VII,50-53

5 - PH I,235; Unlike Epicurus, the Stoics distinguished the impressions (*phantasiai*) and illusions (*phantasma*). According to DL VII,50, the former is the process, the latter is the outcome, created by mind. Aetius (LS 39B) mentions a similar, but little more refined terminology of Chrysippus, showing a fourfold distinction of impression (*phantasia*), impressor (cause of an impression; *phantaston*), imagination (an "empty" impression without an impressor; *phantastikon*) and figment, the attractive illusion within an imagination (*phantasma*). Epicurus thought of impressions as they were made up by particles coming from the observed thing itself.

6 - LS 40E (quot.Sextus)

7 - cf <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arcesilaus/#3>, 9.7.2008

8 - DL (VII,177) illustrates the problem on the tale of Sphaerus, who let himself being deceived by wax pomegranates.

9 - cf DL VII,54

10 - DL VII,45: "The study of syllogisms they declare to be of the greatest service, as showing us what is capable of yielding demonstration; and this contributes much to the formation of correct judgments, and their arrangement and retention in memory give a scientific character to our conceptions of things."

11 - cf DL VII,46-47

12 - DL VII,43: *peri tón symainomenón*; Hicks uses "subject of discourse" instead, so I prefer the Czech version here.

13 - Lit."the said". Various authors (Bobzien, Sharples) translate the word as "sayable", the "verbal expression" is from Hicks. It denotes a whole sentence as said and heard, although not its subject nor the notion in our mind of it. Also its form seems quite advanced in comparison to the Aristotelian logic. In his system we deal with single terms, corresponding to ideas about the subject. A sentence is merely a connection of terms. Sharples (cf p.23) mentions also that Aristotle didn't consider a term to be a sign, a stand-alone connection of the speech and its subject. The *lektón* of Stoics can have such a function. A fact we can perceive both uttered speech and its subject, but still we may not understand the expression (in Sharples' example, if we hear an unknown language).

14 - cf DL VII,76-81; Chrysippus defined five of them, while all other possible proofs were thought to be based on them. In modern notation they stay for these:  $((p \rightarrow q) \wedge p) \rightarrow q$ ,  $((p \rightarrow q) \wedge \sim q) \rightarrow \sim p$ ,  $(\sim(p \wedge q) \wedge p) \rightarrow \sim q$ ,  $((p \vee q) \wedge p) \rightarrow \sim q$  and  $((p \vee q) \wedge \sim p) \rightarrow q$ . Beside the first two of them (*modus ponens* and *modus tollens*) the other formulations of a predicate logic were virtually unknown until 19th century.

15 - cf Bobzien p.25: "For the Stoics, a proposition is a complete sayable [ie *lektón*] that can be asserted, as far as it is concerned (DL VII,65). And at any one time a proposition is either true or false. As predicates can be actualized repeatedly, so (Stoic) propositions can be true or false repeatedly: they can change their truth-value."

### 2.2.2. Physics

Physics, the natural philosophy, is by definition<sup>1</sup> their teaching of the universe, elements and causality. Theology is one of its parts<sup>2</sup>. God (*theos*, Zeus) is the active principle contrasting to passive matter (*hylé*). It exists at first by itself, then it settles into the matter as its "seminal reason" (*logos spermatikos*), rearranging it in a way that other things may emerge. Thus appear the four elements (*stoicheia*) - fire, water, air and earth - whose mixture leads into creation of other things<sup>3</sup>. Unlike the Epicurean pluralist system, Stoic physics could be seen as monotheistic (although not really monistic). For Epicurus, gods were no important factor in the universe, and mentioning them had relevance only within the scope of ethics. God's position in Stoic physics can so be seen as the the major distinction, from which the other differences between both schools can be developed.

Stoics identify God and Fate (*heimarmené*) as the only continuous series of causes<sup>4</sup>. In their theology, God isn't a mere creator, a cause of the world's creation, but also the very process of this creation and evolution itself. As it had been pointed out by Baltzly<sup>5</sup>, this is the main point of difference between the Stoic and Platonic theology, in which God orders the world without being present in it. Stoic physics doesn't give space to any "metaphysical" entities; no incorporeal cause can influence a corporeal one<sup>6</sup>. God permeates the matter as its reason (*logos*), making thus the whole world a single animated being. Hence, as Diogenes mentions<sup>7</sup>, the term "world" (*kosmos*) itself was used differently - for God, for the order in general or in particular order of heavens and the Earth. The first use, however, is quite incoherent with the elemental theory. For the early Stoics, the world was destructible<sup>8</sup>. God is an immortal body<sup>9</sup>, either of a fiery or special nature, and seems to be the only everlasting one, as it causes the whole world to burn and be created once again. By influence of the heavenly bodies, cosmos becomes dry and splits into parts, thus attaining still more of the fire element, until it reaches a state of total conflagration (*ekpyrōsis*).

Elements represent the primary qualities of the matter, which are made prior to all the others<sup>10</sup>. We can understand elements either as different bodies or as qualities of the primal, formless matter in the moment when it is impregnated by the divine reason. Fire is a hot element, more fine than the cold air, dry earth is a more dense form in comparison to the moist water<sup>11</sup>. Fire and air are then affecting the earth and water; dualism of temperature (hot/cold) seems to be the cause. We should bear in mind, that no incorporeal thing can influence a corporeal one; and that counts for all qualities as well. All qualities can be reduced to a certain tension or intensity (*tonos*) of the heat and cold within them<sup>12</sup>. There is no

void between the elements, they are perfectly filling the whole world, held by a common tension (*syntonía*). The world has a spherical shape, on its other side is an incorporeal, infinite void (*to kenon apeiron*)<sup>13</sup>. Within the world fire is the most active element, being also the substance of the cosmic soul (*psyché*). Things are made and sustained in their shape through constitution (*hexis*), being constantly imposed by this soul.

In human beings, this *hexis* is on a higher level. Already animals are controlled by their own natural impulse (*hormé*), humans have beside it an individual soul. Both the cosmic and individual soul enable life, generation, perception and autonomous motion (*hegemonikon*). Besides the sensual and creative functions, human souls also contain the abilities of reason (*dianoia*), which stays for the *hegemonikon*<sup>14</sup>, and speech. The difference between the functioning of impulse and that of reason was considered an ethical problem. However, they both have the same function of sustaining bodies, as the *hexis* in inanimate things. Similarly as God permeates the world, also a human soul does permeate the whole body in a form of a spirit or fiery breath (*pneuma*). Although the soul was evidently identified with the material spirit, there were still differences in opinions regarding how it controls the body<sup>15</sup>. Unlike the cosmic soul, human souls may be destroyed, but also here we had a variety of explanations<sup>16</sup>. In general, it was thought that they lived for some time outside the body after the death, but that because of their fiery nature they were attracted by the heavens, where they dissolve<sup>17</sup>.

1 - DL VII,132; Sextus (LS 44A) mentions that Stoics distinguished the term "universe" (*to holon*) and "world" (*kosmos*). Diogenes speaks of *kosmos* in the mentioned section, but sometimes refers to the universe as well. In general, both terms can often be interchanged, as the difference is only that *to holon* does include also an infinite void (cf n.10) outside the *kosmos*. As an immaterial object, void can't be much described by physics, and thus most definitions for the world can be applied to the universe as well (cf DL VII,134).

2 - As already mentioned, Cleanthes distinguished the fields of theology and physics. Diogenes (VII,41) perhaps meant his cosmological model. According to Cleanthes, heavenly bodies were composed of the finest fire, aether, which is mixed with no other elements. Thus we have a similar image here as that of Ptolemy, which has an aetheric sphere of perfect circular motions in heavens and submundane Earth of changes. It was thought that there were two types of fire: destructive, which we can create and normally use, and creative, which is the substance of our soul (cf n.13) and for Zeno even of God himself. Sun, for example, has a similar substance as that of souls, because it has both the destructive (as it can burn) as well as the creative (it allows growth and ripening) power (cf LS 46D, Stobaeus).

3 - cf DL VII,136; The theory of these four elements has parallels in more philosophic traditions. Between the Hellenes, its first teacher was Empedocles (1st half of 5th century BCE; cf DL VIII,76), who spoke of their periodical mixture and division by influence of love and hate. Plato mentions the teaching in his dialogue *Timaios* (p.55). Even before them, an Indian sage Kanáda (cca 600 BCE) had a similar teaching, but instead of love/hate dualism he had chosen a special active



principle of their animation, aether. Stoics call the adjoining factor *syntonia* (cf DL VII,140). A similar theory of elements can be found later by Maturidi, whose theories we'll handle later (§5.2.2).

4 - cf Cicero, *De divinatione* I,125; Middle Stoics preferred sometimes to use the term of providence (*pronoia*) in a more aesthetic context (cf Pohlenz p.196)

5 - cf <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/#Phys>, 9.7.2008

6 - Sharples (p.34 & 43, quot.Cicero) mentions that by this doctrine Stoics admitted a possibility of the presence of two bodies (namely God and matter) on a same place. This is also another difference between their and the Epicurean cosmology, which had criticized the same point in Democritus' atomism. However, the major contrast was in a fact, that for Stoics there was no discrete matter, composed of indivisible particles and space between. Their physics isn't based on a random motion of particles in a void, but rather organic changes in a unified "body". The leading part (God) is extended everywhere, so it can cause these changes anywhere and in any time. Thus also Cooper (cf s.226) defined the difference between a Stoic and a modern understanding of a "natural law": "Nowadays, when we speak of laws of nature, we do so with reference to empirical generalizations like those about wood, stone and metals...backed up, no doubt, by much theory about the behavior of molecules and particles; but that theory is itself based on further empirically supported hypotheses about how molecules and particles behave under varying conditions...for the Stoics, the law or laws of nature consists not in such empirical generalizations, or physical theory based on them, but rather in the thoughts of Zeus, that are behind the behaviors of material things."

7 - DL VII,138

8 - cf DL VII,141; In an analogy to destructibility of common objects in nature, they (probably Zeno himself) set an argument for destructibility of the whole world: "of which parts are perishable is perishable as a whole. Now the parts of the world are perishable, seeing that they are transformed into the other. Therefore the world itself is doomed to perish."

9 - Interesting is, that in neither Diogenes' nor Long & Sedley's summa we have an argument for (nor against) immortality of God (or gods). It is just mentioned as one of the God's attributes (for example in DL VII,147), and seems to be taken from the contemporary religious traditions. They most possibly just tried to identify their own concept of a creative fire with the most-adored deity. The verses of Cleanthes' *Hymn*: "It is right for mortals to call upon you/since from you we have our being, we whose lot it is to be God's image" can be seen as an interesting example of pagan philosophical apologetics. Of course, having no source, we can't say that all Stoics would agree with the identification of *pneuma* and Zeus. We have texts mentioning a plurality of opinions only in the debate on perishability of the world. Diogenes mentions that Panaetius considered the world as indestructible (DL VII,142), perhaps because of his inclination to Aristotelian physics. The mentioned use of word *kosmos* for God would have a clear reason, but less in case of Chrysippus (cf LS 54B, Cicero). In the problem of perishability of the world, Posidonius held the opinion of the early Stoics again.

10 - cf DL VII,136

11 - cf DL VII,137

12 - cf LS 47C4 (Cicero) & 47K (Galen); The idea was that inside every being there has to be a certain motion.

13 - DL VII,140; PH III,124; According to them Stoics generally defined "void" as that which could be taken by a being, but it isn't.

14 - Bobzien p.239

15 - cf Cooper p.229; We can understand this better by an analogy to the idea of the God's extension in the world, coming from Chrysippus (DL VII,138): Reason is extended everywhere, but with a different intensity ("in some part there is more of

it, in some part less"). According to Cleanthes, an act appears when our motive part of the soul, *hegemonikon*, extends the *pneuma* into an organ, where the motion then emerges. It can be seen as a brain sending a neural signal. In contrast, Chrysippus thought that *hegemonikon* has an immediate influence: it isn't a part, but rather a function of *pneuma*.

16 - cf DL VII,157; Cleanthes thought that the souls live until the conflagration, Chrysippus thought it only about the souls of the wise men.

17 - cf Sharples p.67

### 2.2.3.Ethics

Happiness (*eudaimonia*) was the main goal of most ethical teachings of the Hellenistic period. It meant a happy life, a content state of soul; it wasn't of an eschatological nature, did not open questions of hope and abstract targets. The scope of philosophy was restrained with the physical world and solving only the problems within. They tried to know the world around and live by this knowledge a rational life, where rationality meant a way which would lead to this happiness. An immediate solution to the question of happiness had been proposed by the Cyrenaic and Epicurean schools: to focus on the pleasant, or at least minimize the painful. Sceptics, who saw pleasure and pain as too relative categories to be criteria, made their target some kind of a detached attitude towards them: happiness can be attained by holding an evaluation. But how to describe the Stoic goal? They also struggled for a kind of happy life, for a certain state of an undisturbed peace of mind (*ataraxia*)<sup>1</sup>. However, Stoics tried to compose a model demanding more activity from the subject. Happiness is in no way just an opportunity, but a virtue<sup>2</sup>, and thus also a duty<sup>3</sup>. In virtue, there is the true beauty, and it depends on rationality and accordance with the nature<sup>4</sup>.

Stoic ethics could be described from an eudaimonistic or deontic view, but their own goal seems to be a single concept, in which a notion of duty would support that of virtue, notion of virtue that of happiness etc. The concept of accordance with nature - and nature, as God, can never be evil - we can see how it is in a continuity of physics. In the subdivision of ethics<sup>5</sup> we don't have only the problems of good, virtue, duties and ends, but also those of impulses (*hormé*) and passions (*pathé*). As we've mentioned before, an animal impulse functions similarly as the cosmic soul in the inanimate things, imposing the *hexis* to hold it together. Thus the primary impulse is that of self-preservation. In the animals this impulse reflects a general nature, while humans have an independent reason to control themselves<sup>6</sup>. Reason replaces the impulse, but its task is the same as that of the impulses<sup>7</sup>, although with different means. The criteria of a right reason and of a nature creating the impulse in animals, however, are *in*

*essentia* the same, bound together in a sole causal chain.

The early Stoics implied from that an idea that the decisions are predetermined by the Fate. It may seem that if the fatalism is the base of their ethics, it can't say much at all. But they focused rather on the question of responsibility for the happiness. Zeno<sup>8</sup> united both happiness and rationality in a single term of "smooth flow of life", but didn't say this kind of flow comes easily. A rational life should contain both initiative and contemplation<sup>9</sup>. Similarly in the case of their physical theories, even in ethics there were debates for which acts we are responsible. Zeno and Cleanthes said we should follow the common nature, Chrysippus added that we should follow an individual nature as well<sup>10</sup>. The former two thought that some general rules could be found, which, when we are grown and educated enough to think, may be found by everyone. Where the individual reason doesn't develop, there functions only the natural law, contrasting with human foolishness. But as we've seen, Chrysippus was much interested in keeping a logical coherence of his teaching, and because of that he created a model, where all (even foolish) individual acts are predestined by the divine Fate. Even so a human still remains responsible for his acts, because he is the agent; every individual develops his character in accordance to the external circumstances, but then they are acting as an inner factor of determination. The evil comes out, when we always just react on the circumstances, instead of employing reason to form a correct, thus often an indifferent attitude<sup>11</sup>.

In the modern colloquial use, the phrase "stoic peace" reflects exactly this idea. It was also the division of value, which was common to all Stoic theories. Everything could be seen either as good, as evil or as indifferent (*adiaphora*). Indifferent are all the circumstances; of them, some could be considered as preferable (advantageous and natural things, like health or wealth), some neglectful (oppositely, diseases or poverty) and others as properly indifferent (like the number of hair)<sup>12</sup>. The categories good and evil contained only the actions. An act could be either an expression of virtue or of a vice. Relativity or scale had no place here, either an act was right (*oikeion*) or not. If there is a possibility of performing a rightful action or to hold an indifferent attitude, we are obliged to do so; but if our action is determined by something indifferent or by passion, it is wrong to do so. For example, health itself is an indifferent thing, as we don't have a full power over it. It is, however, a natural state which helps to preserve life. Thus we can say it is preferable and the acts, which support it, are rational. But also, Stoics don't say<sup>13</sup> that a good action always reaches the particular goal it is aimed to, like a therapy sometimes doesn't cure, because such things depend on various uncontrollable circumstances. That's why our end should be only happiness, which is attained by means of virtue. If health started to oppose

the virtue (like in case of fighting in war for a country), we can be happy only if we can sacrifice it. Happiness is attained by a correct attitude to reality<sup>14</sup>.

In politics, we can find by Stoics arguments for both active as well as a quietist attitude. The early Stoics taught at the Agora, which was in fact the center of the Athenian political activity; on the other hand we know, that the role of Athens in the world-politics was diminishing. Zeno and Chrysippus both wrote books on the Republic, which didn't survive until today, but were quoted frequently. Zeno thought that only a wise man is really free and able to live with others in friendship and harmony. Thus an ideal city could be attained only if there lived only wise people<sup>15</sup>. It doesn't depend on the king, but rather on the thinking of its citizens. He thought the best political attitude was that of cosmopolitanism<sup>16</sup>: a wise man sees a fellow citizen in every other one, as we all are controlled by a single natural law (and the wise are aware of it). The idea of a natural law was still being promoted by the Roman Stoics, but in a slightly different way. Cicero<sup>17</sup> remarked that we don't need to be politically active, because the true, natural law was independent on the laws of society. Philosophy here isn't a tool to determine a correct political decision, but rather a way of subjective ethics. The latest exponents of Stoicism actually showed a clear distinction between both areas<sup>18</sup>. Ethics, of course, doesn't prevent us from engagement in politics, but it makes us primarily aware of what we cannot control.

1 - LS 65E (Seneca)

2 - cf Arius p.21; Stoics saw happiness to be the end (*telos*) of virtue, but also as composed of it. The particular fragment came from Panaetius, but the early Stoics considered happiness to be the end as well (cf Arius p.41).

3 - cf DL VII,109

4 - cf Arius p.37

5 - cf DL VII,84

6 - Cooper (p.205) mentions Dio Chrysostom, a contemporary of Epictetus, that he was the first who elaborated the term of autonomy (as a creation of individual laws, similarly as God makes the laws of nature - cf §2.2.2.n.15) which he considers to be the base of human freedom (ibid p.209).

7 - cf DL VII,86; This is an example of an ethical issue being addressed by a quasi-physical argument. According to Diogenes they reacted to the hedonistic teachings, which emphasized that pleasure was a common goal for both humans and animals. Stoics thought the self-preservation is a prior impulse. God wants its creations to last, and thus it arouses a perception of self in them. The perseverance of this perception - ie life - is for the creator more important than the circumstances of the life; pleasure is thus just a by-product of life.

8 - ibid; Arius p.41

9 - cf DL VII,130

10 - cf DL VII,89; The original model of Zeno and Cleanthes shows that we can be happy by accepting Fate and following

it. We are like a dog bound to a cart; when the cart moves, we can walk behind it or be dragged on ground (cf LS 62A, Hippolytus). But in fact this idea gives more freedom to the personal will than that of Chrysippus, because it accepts some space, where the influence of Fate is lesser than elsewhere (cf below §2.2.n.3). They accept that we can choose an alternative, Chrysippus doesn't.

11 - cf Bobzien p.251 (quot.Gellius); Excerpt's context is a proof of predetermination of all things, but also to prove that this predetermination is a principle of morale. If we control ourselves by the right reason, we neglect the evil opportunities, which are offered to us by circumstances, like when a thief sees a wallet loosely laying on a bag. If our reason is mature, it'll analyze its impressions in a moral way and find a correct attitude. The difference between good and evil is that good is caused by reason and bad by the external things. Both reasoning and influence of impressions are similarly predetermined, but their effect is different.

12 - cf Arius p.51

13 - cf Sharples p.103; This point had been often criticized. As Sharples quotes Plutarchos, an archer should try to shoot as good as he can, but shouldn't consider hitting of the target as his goal. It was thought to be so, because he cannot influence the possibility of a sudden wind, which would deviate the arrow in flight. All he can do is to aim accurately and pull with adequate strength; that is the virtue of an archer, and it should be itself his goal.

14 - Virtue and vice are seen partly as customs, especially by Chrysippus. The early Stoics spoke always of a single virtue. If we were for example really moderate, we would have to be courageous as well etc; and also one vice was an indication of the others as well. But later this view was less radical, as the later Stoics aimed at recognition of the indifferent things.

15 - cf DL VII,33; In an ideal city the common law is implied from the natural one. What norms couldn't be reasonably supported should have been considered redundant. And so Zeno advised men and women to wear the same clothes or criticized the building of temples.

16 - cf LS 67A,H (Plutarch); DL VII,121: "the wise man will take part in politics, if nothing hinders him...thus he will restrain vice and promote virtue".

17 - cf LS 67S

18 - Some of the Roman Stoics were powerful politicians in their professional life. That's why their view of the relation between philosophy and politics was a much more practical one. Cf *Meditations* VI,12: "If thou hadst a step-mother and a mother at the same time, thou wouldst be dutiful to thy step-mother, but still thou wouldst constantly return to thy mother. Let the court and philosophy now be to thee step-mother and mother: return to philosophy frequently and repose in her, through whom what thou meetest with in the court appears to thee tolerable, and thou appearest tolerable in the court."

## 2.3.Influence

### 2.3.1.Roman Culture

Since the 2nd century, Stoicism was no longer a regionally bound school. In 155 BCE Athens sent Panaetius' teacher Diogenes and Carneades to defend the city in a lawsuit against a town of Oropus

before a Roman court. Although Plutarch<sup>1</sup> doesn't speak much about the outcome of the matter, they were welcomed by Romans and found a large audience. Dialectical skills of Carneades became very respected among the young scholars, but aroused suspicion from the conservative elite<sup>2</sup>. This double-edged reputation of Sceptics made the infiltration of Stoic thoughts into Roman culture easier. They presented a worldview, which was rationally consistent, as well as compatible with Roman moral values. At first, the most interesting ideas were those of a (1) natural law, of the rational base of both cosmic and individual regulations; of (2) duty to promote this natural law, and thus to support a lawful society and lead a virtuous life, (3) preventing morally indifferent circumstances and feelings to change the state of mind. These thoughts could be identified with the *virtus*, a character of a man with strong will employed for the good of the state<sup>3</sup>. Despite the original didactic succession of disciplines<sup>4</sup>, Stoic physics became interesting as the last. It can be said that not even dialectics was very important for the Roman Stoics. Both were employed for the support of ethics, which consequently could serve as a support for political decisions of many of their students<sup>5</sup>.

1 - cf *Life of Cato the Elder* XXII,2

2 - cf Baltzly: "The Skeptic Carneades addressed a crowd of thousands on one day and argued that justice was a genuine good in its own right. The next day he argued against the proposition that it was in an agent's interest to be just in terms every bit as convincing." (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/#influence>, 9.7.2008); It was this Cato, who before the Senate supported the expulsion of "men who could easily secure anything they wished", and also threaten the "young men, by giving this direction to their ambition, should come to love a reputation based on mere words more than one achieved by martial deeds" (*Life of Cato the Elder* XXII,4-5). The later banishments of philosophers from Rome under the emperors Nero (in 66 AD) and Vespasianus (71 AD) were reactions on their criticism of the monarchy (cf Pohlenz p.286).

3 - cf Pohlenz p.259-260

4 - cf §2.2.

5 - In how far it really did remains questionable. Cicero mentions the idea of law as a natural law (*lex est ratio summa, insita in natura*) in both a declamational (cf LS 67S) as well as in an affirming (cf *De legibus* I,18) way.

### 2.3.2. Patristic Theology

Besides the sphere of politics, the teaching also influenced that of subjective worldviews, of religion. Although already the early Stoics dealt with questions on religion, the spreading of various foreign cults in the imperial Rome (Gnosis, Christianity, Judaism, later Manicheism) created a possibility of using philosophy as a seemingly neutral arbitrary tool for their theological apologetics. The particular role of Stoicism was different. At first, it itself was in its core a way of personal attitude to God and a

world; it provided a coherent, clearly formulated set of beliefs and motives. Various Stoics (at most Cleanthes, Posidonius and M.Aurelius) wrote extensively on the personal relation to God. Others, like Chrysippus or Epictetus, didn't try to formulate a subjective prayer. For them "the essential property of piety towards the gods is to form right opinions concerning them"<sup>1</sup>. Although the former try a subjective and the latter an objective knowledge of God, ethical consequences are the same for both.

Theologians outside the Stoic discourse were interested in their ideas on cohesion<sup>2</sup>, divine providence<sup>3</sup>, monotheism and moral equality of men before the God. They usually contrasted it to ideas of relativism and polytheism, whose embodiment in philosophy were often Epicureans<sup>4</sup> and Sceptics. The goal could be to support creation of the world, unity of God and also theodicy. On the one hand, Stoic thoughts could be used as the friendly arbiter. An early Christian apologist Minucius Felix (200-245) wrote a dialogue, where a Christian defends monotheism against a Sceptic arguing for the pagan polytheism<sup>5</sup>. He tries to actualize opinions of Stoic philosophers in a context of a Christian problem, not to adopt their genuine worldview like Marcus Aurelius did. Between the arguments we have a notion of *ekpyrōsis*, (mis?)interpreted in a way that the philosophers already were aware of temporariness of the present world and resurrection in the future<sup>6</sup>. Stoic philosophy is here treated with respect, but it serves as a mere tool, without much attention to its own context. But this can't be said generally. Lactantius (250-326), who lived long enough to enjoy the acceptance of his faith offered by the Edict of Milan, in his *Divinarum Institutionum* criticized Stoics on various points. He acknowledged their "contribution" to the culture, but also thinks that the scope of their work was already exceeded<sup>7</sup>. He tries to analyze reasons why people did study the philosophy, but also emphasizes those reasons why they don't need to do so any more.

A more elaborate attempt to incorporate Stoic ideas into a theological system can be found in the teachings of Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 AD). As for a Hellenized Jew, Philo's religious basis was the Torah. In general, the core of his work is a biblical exegesis, while problematic terms are cleared with a help of philosophers' opinions. In comparison to the later attitude of Minucius, Philo considers himself to be a philosopher<sup>8</sup>. What he did was an eclectic combination of Biblical, Stoic and Platonic ideas. For pure theology, he was closer to the middle Stoicism. God is a transcendent being, which is prone to any change und unknowable by human reason alone; his essence may be spoken of only negatively, to prevent anthropomorphous and other naively attributed characteristics<sup>9</sup>. While the essence of God is hidden from us, we still can recognize an immanent side of Him, which Philo calls *logos*. Although Philo uses the term as a translation of the Hebrew term *davar*, used for both divine

words and works<sup>10</sup>, he describes it in a way similar to the *logos* of Stoics, as the power imposing cohesion, tone and life. He also speaks of *logoi spermatikoi*, "seminal reasons" implanted into matter to predestine its development<sup>11</sup>. He does not, however, accept the idea of Fate. Much deeper influence can be seen in his ethical theory. Philo adopted both the early Stoic psychology<sup>12</sup> as well as their passion/virtue dualism. *Hedoné* was the cause of all evil, and the passions were thought to be judgements preferring it over virtue<sup>13</sup>. Unlike Stoics, however, he viewed passions as sins, offences against God, and thus not as mere barriers in personal development.

1 - *Enchiridion* §31

2 - Namely that of all things being held together by God. The idea of cohesion may be split into two subordinates: term *logos*, the natural law, which things necessarily follow, on the other hand *syntonía*, common tension of things, which can be understood as the effect of *logos* (cf §2.2.2.).

3 - This (Latin *providentia*, Greek *pronoia*) simply stands for an idea that God rules the world in the best possible way. According to Pohlenz (cf s.191f) this theory was developed by the middle Stoics, especially Posidonius.

4 - cf Lactantius p.70

5 - cf Octavius; The work is quite eclectic. In chapter 19 he uses arguments from philosophers from Thales to Stoics, he mentions that even Epicurus accepted a supreme position of Nature, placed "above all". The Stoic arguments, however, take the most space. He mentions Zeno saying that the various gods are mere personifications of the elements or constituents of the world, while all of these are subordinated to the effect of nature/reason.

6 - cf Colish p.32

7 - cf Colish p.40f; He recalls especially the idea of providence, but also some of their ideas in physics. For example that God creates dualist elements in nature at first and only by their means the other things.

8 - Pohlenz p.369

9 - cf <http://www.iep.utm.edu/p/philo.htm#H7>, 15.7.2008

10 - cf <http://www.iep.utm.edu/p/philo.htm#H11>, 15.7.2008; According to Pohlenz (p.369) Philo personally didn't speak Hebrew and quoted Septuagint translation anyway.

11 - cf Pohlenz p.373; Sometimes he identifies these *logoi* with divine powers, angels or even Son of God, the idea which couldn't had been ignored by later Christian writings, including the Gospel itself.

12 - cf Pohlenz p.375; The parts, or rather functions, of soul we've listed in §2.2.2.

13 - cf Pohlenz p.376f

### 2.3.3.Modern Europe

In the early Middle Ages of Europe, the Stoic philosophy lost its position to Neoplatonism and later Aristotelian teachings. Although they bore some ethical parallels with those of Christianity, the others



were preferred as more compatible, unlike Stoic materialism and pantheism. Consciousness about the school was partly preserved thanks to the classic theologians like those we've mentioned previously. Of the Stoic authorities, only Seneca seems to have been respected between the scholars, but even that was based more on dubious assumptions<sup>1</sup>. The physics have been preserved in the works of Cicero. In early 13th century a certain David of Dinant tried to compile them, but he was charged for heresy because of pantheism and his books were burned<sup>2</sup>. It was merely an unknown school until the Renaissance, connected with the overall popularity of translations of ancient texts. The main sources were books of Roman Stoics. Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) wrote an essay *De constantia*, which compared the ethics of Seneca with that of Christianity, while "constancy", defined as "the upright and immovable mental strength, which is neither lifted up nor depressed by external or accidental circumstances"<sup>3</sup> was to be the value for interconnecting them. Later he also summarized Stoic physics (*Physiologia Stoicorum*), and thus propagated their teachings for the next generations. Lipsius' inspired many of his contemporaries including Guillame du Vair (1556-1621), who translated *Enchiridion* to French<sup>4</sup>. The idea of standing firm, "neither lifted up nor depressed by external or accidental circumstances", remained the main theme, and became identified with a notion of "stoicism" in the common language, influencing also our contemporary use of the term<sup>5</sup>.

1 - Already the Apologists revered Seneca over other Stoic philosophers (eg cf Lactantius p.76); another case is the apocryphal correspondence between him and St Paul.

2 - cf <http://www.iep.utm.edu/n/neostoic.htm#H2>, 15.7.2008

3 - *De constantia* I,4, in: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justus-lipsius/#2>, 15.7.2008

4 - cf <http://www.iep.utm.edu/n/neostoic.htm#SH4a>, 15.7.2008

5 - For example in mass-media reports on population's attitude towards natural misfortunes, eg cf <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSPEK173833>, 15.7.2008

#### 2.3.4. Muslim Science

As we've seen, the Stoic tradition was influential especially in ethics. However, their physical and logical works were indivisible from them and important for education as long as they were available. Christian theologians worked a lot with it, until they turned to other sources (as long as the social situation allowed them). The tradition seems to fade within time. At first, theological questions in Islam weren't bound to any older philosophic tradition. The main factor was at first politics; not only internal quarrels about hereditary rights, but also the rapid expansion of the Umayyad Empire. Arab elites did

not support the more developed sciences of Persians and Greeks<sup>1</sup> in the conquered territories. On the other hand, they tried to diminish the influence of these nations on their ideology. They solved the problems of ethnical plurality by keeping them out of any important offices in the administration. The ruling elite of the empire expected conformity towards a united, Muslim-Arabic culture. Also even within the ruling ideology, the centralized machinery of the Khalifate left not much room for philosophy. The important task was to formulate and preserve particular legal norms, to support them by a certain reasoning was only a secondary task. A discourse, *kalām*, appeared only in case of a contradiction between two traditional commandments. Too innovative theologians were, however, often silenced.

A change had come in the half of 8th century, when the Khalifate was claimed by the 'Abbasid dynasty, supported by the early Iranian Shi'a. In building of a new ideology, there were more parties able to assert their influence. What 'Abbasids needed, was to harmonize all possible points of the teaching of their allies not only in practice, but also in a theory. Similarly to the case of Christian apologetics, one can expect the first role of philosophy as a "neutral arbiter"; the study, however, led into many schisms within the theologic discourse. At this point, the teachings of Plato and Plotin could have been interesting because of their monotheism, those of the Sophists or Sceptics (who, unlike Epicureans, did not address theological questions clearly) were valuable in logic and rhetorics. Stoics and Aristotelians both brought a logically coherent philosophy, which could have been considered monotheist as well as a valuable tool for argumentation. This mere fact could make all these teachings relevant for the study regarding God's attributes. Aristotelian research developed into a separate discipline, called *falsafa*, which later went into odds with the theology<sup>2</sup>. In relation to theology, Stoicism (and the other philosophic schools as well) was in a similar position as with the case of Lactantius: its theories served as a source for inspiration for arguments in a different context when they were made in. Unlike in case of *falsafa*, Quran and hadith remained to be the main authority, and thus Stoic theories were fragmented into a number of separate opinions on the elements, constitution of material things, effects of divine or natural powers, and also in a wide field of anthropological or psychological concepts.

It is highly probable that Stoic theories often entered Kalam being mixed with opinions of the other schools. Thus, before we handle the specifications of the context of Kalam, we should open again the question of sources of Stoic teachings. Book *Peri ethon* of Galen mentions Stoics alongside Pythagoreans, Platonists and Aristotelians, but it was interesting more to the philosophic tradition of al-Kindi and Ibn Miskawayh<sup>3</sup>.

As mentioned earlier<sup>4</sup>, at least in the first half of the 9th century there was another book on Greek philosophy available in Baghdad, which contained a lot of information about Stoicism and was linked to the theology. Despite the Horowitz' claim<sup>5</sup>, the school of Stoa is recognized here as a historical philosophical movement. Its teachings (both under the school-name of Riwaqiyun and authorities of Zeno and Chrysippus) are only uncritically reported here within paradigm of various philosophical questions, contrasted to the answers of other philosophers<sup>6</sup>. Daiber wrote a philological dissertation on the *Placita Philosophorum*, tracing<sup>7</sup> the sources of Tajaddin Shahrastani (1086-1153) and other medieval Muslim doxographers of natural philosophy to this book as well. Shahrastani spoke<sup>8</sup> about 9th century theologians studying works of ancient philosophers, but if he personally was aware of Stoic teachings (and the criteria which made them specifically "Stoic") it doesn't mean that the theologians were aware of them as well. Appearance of the *Placita* sets at least the critical moment, when an alleged influence could take place; before that, any similarity should be handled as a parallel development.

1 - Ibn Khaldun (cf *Muqaddima* VI,18) reports the case of khalif 'Umar, who let persian books into a river, for if God wanted muslims to read them, he would have revealed their text in Quran too.

2 - cf ibid

3 - cf Fakhry (1991) p.6; The Galen's work, however, seems to mix the teachings, and also sometimes misplaces Zeno the Stoic for an earlier Zeno of Elea. As already mentioned, *Fihrist* doesn't mention this particular book as well.

4 - cf §1.3.n.1

5 - Namely that Stoicism wasn't perceived as a single school of thought; cf ibid n.3

6 - However, this structure basing on particular themes instead of history of development could have aroused certain anachronisms. For example, in I,11 (on causes) we have reports on three standpoints: Plato's (for whom the author ascribes the idea that reason is an efficient cause) Pythagoras' (and Aristotle's; for them only the first cause was incorporeal) and Stoic (for whom they are corporeal). The debate on causality between Stoics and Epicureans is not handled in that paragraph.

7 - cf Daiber p.110-120

8 - cf Shahrastani p.24

### 3.Kalam

#### 3.1.Definition

Arabic term *kalām* means "debate", "discourse", a mutual speech. We operate here with its derived meaning as a medieval speculative theology in Islam. From a contemporary viewpoint, the difference between the theology and philosophy or mysticism, as the other spiritual sciences, was in its discursive form. While the philosophy relied on the logic, coherence of the known facts, and deduction based on the ancient authorities; with mysticism relying on a personal experience, Kalam was always about an opening of questions, either abstract or practical. Where the philosophers tried to bring an objective logic, a system pervading all possible right assertions, the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) held an unbound form of thinking, speculation, often better systematized by later heresiographers than their own followers<sup>1</sup>. Already in eleventh century were the most important points summarized by Shahrastani<sup>2</sup>, whose criteria may help us until today. It is possible to systematize the Kalam in two ways: either spatially, by defining most frequently asked questions being solved by the theologians, or temporarily, by the evolution of answers, respectively to particular schools, traditions and sects, which were created by it.

Because of its rapid development in the first centuries of Islam we'll limit the extent of this study from its beginnings until 12th century; in that time, the schools of Ash'ariyya and Maturidiya established themselves as the theological orthodoxy of Sunnis. In general, Kalam is a much broader term than Stoa. At first, it contains teachings emerging often independently and in various cultural contexts of Iraq, Turkestan, (Greater) Iran, Egypt, Arabia and present-day Spain. Their only connection were just the fundamental religious texts; a communication between the schools was naturally limited by distance. Second, it is a tradition of discourse between various opinions. Although there have been differences in opinions of various Stoics, an equivalent category of Kalam would be the whole Hellenistic philosophy. Only since the era of Mu'tazila the theology started to face philosophers in a quite homogenous way, when Iraq first saw ancient philosophy books being translated into Arabic. After the Mu'tazila, which were the first representants of Kalam in these wider interdisciplinary polemics, this position was held by the so-called Orthodox<sup>3</sup> schools.

1 - The goal of a theologian was to prove that his opinion was orthodox; not that it is a deeper form of understanding. The goal was not progress, but orthodoxy. Lohlker (p.86) emphasizes the point that Kalam was based on a search for a middle way, which doesn't stack with extreme opinion. For example, in the debate on the *qadar* theme (cf §3.2.2.), the extremes were the supporters of free will and of predestination, whereas the later theologians usually tried to find a compromise. Heresiographers are to be understood as those, who do the dirty work of proving that one or another theologian actually was an extremist.

2 - cf p.12

3 - The term "orthodoxy" is based on the classifications of various sects by Shahrastani and Tritton. The contemporary understanding of orthodoxy will be handled in the fifth chapter. It denotes the schools of Ash'ari and Maturidi, but the use is merely nominal. From a religious viewpoint Shi'a adopts various Mu'tazili positions instead of Ash'arite ones; from a philosophical viewpoint, we don't have any criteria for the rightness of theological opinions.

### 3.2.Fundamental Questions

An ethymological definition of theology as the science of religious creeds and God alone wouldn't suffice. It wasn't only in the case of Muslim theology that beside the questions of ontology and ethics have been laid also those of jurisprudence, politology, psychology, epistemology or of a natural science (in its contemporary shape). Shahrastani<sup>1</sup> described their evolution and dividing influence on the Community of the faithful; as the mankind is divided into nations, also one can define basic questions, on which are based the particular debates. Kalam is the discourse about basic questions about truth (*uSûl*, "root"). A theologian comes with a speculation, discourse or another form of getting answers (*furú'*, "branches"), which are then asserted as a teaching for practical use. Shortened, theology deals with root matters, setting course for the growth of branches, that means defining maxims and arguments for jurisprudence<sup>2</sup>.

Thinkers could have been categorized to distinct "sects" (*mahál*), because an acceptance of a particular answer for even a very abstract question, often given by these discussions about "root matters", was understood as a reflection of the personal faith. Shahrastani ordered theological questions into four categories: the first contained questions about the identity or unity of God (*tawHid*), the other concerning *qadar* ("power", "determination" or "providence"<sup>3</sup>), next one about promise and threat, and the last one about the Revelation.

First category, questions about unity of God, contained also derived matters as His essence, attributes, abilities, obligations and actions; the second one about justice (*'adl*), as well as autonomy and morality of an active subject; third one more psychological questions, like inner attitudes, piety or faith of an individual; and the fourth one formed its specific epistemology, dealing with possibilities of knowledge of goodness and truth as such, as well as questions of legitimacy of an Imam, as the leader of the believing Community, and consequent political theories.

1 - p.11

2 - p.38; A similar definition of "roots" and "branches" we find by Ghazali (*Ihya*, p.31). Science of "roots" means for him mostly reading of the original authorities - Quran, Sunna, teachings of the Companions (*aṭar aS-SaHabá*), with commonly agreed (*ijma'*) texts as a secondary source. The "branches" then mean the process of their interpretation, helping us to determine right "activities of the world", or jurisprudence, and "conditions of heart", ethics. Beside these, Ghazali also defined other two types of religious sciences: auxiliary (*muqaddimát*; ie linguistics) and supplementary (*muTammimát*; research of the context, mostly biographies, useful for determining trustworthiness of authorities).

3 - The third one was proposed by Tritton (p.54n).

### 3.2.1.Unity of God

Surely the most basic question of theology is what a God is in fact, what kind of predicates may be attributed to Him. A Muslim believes primarily that God is one. It is the testimony, that there is no deity but God<sup>1</sup>, which (with acknowledgment of the angels, scriptures and prophets<sup>2</sup>) forms the first pillar of the faith. For a theologian, this is a dogma, a starting premise, from which the discourse begins. Although there were various attempts<sup>3</sup> to prove the existence of God, the main idea of the shahada was not as much focused on the question whether God exists or not, but rather at His uniqueness, His special position in the world, which a believer shouldn't compare to anything else. Quran itself handles primarily with the problem of idolatry, *širk*, not as much with atheism<sup>4</sup>.

This premise then served in other debates, which tried to describe God by other attributes. As for these, the tradition accepts 99 "most beautiful names", which can be found in Quran<sup>5</sup>. Other attributes have been derived from the Quranic verses as well, speaking about His actions or states; like his word or command<sup>6</sup>. The goal was *tawHid*, a description of God as a single being, but with a respect to the multitude of attributes. The question was, whether they were attributed by humans to Him or reflected His essence (*jawhar*). There were in general two problems arising from this. Namely, it was (1) the idea

that the divine attributes are independent predicates, which can be attributed to anything; it could be said that if they were eternal, there would have to be more eternal beings, more Gods. Because only He alone is a God, nothing can be from Him separated in a way, that it could had been a part of Him and in the same time possess an individuality. On the other side, a theologian had to deal with all descriptions he could find in Quran. The next problem was that of (2) anthropomorphous attributes, as Quran mentions his throne or hand<sup>7</sup>. It was a frequent question throughout the Kalam, whether they should be taken literally or as a mere allegory.

There were two extreme stances on the matter. The first was an inflationary stance, technically named as "likening" or "assimilating", *tašbīh*. The attributes of God can be understood in a similar way as human attributes: His word is a sound, His hand is a corporeal organ as well. It also included the teaching that Quran is eternal in both the sense of an idea as well as written text<sup>8</sup>. The second was a deflationary, "stripping", *ta'Til*. It has been usually connected to the school of Mu'tazila. They tried to show that all divine attributes are a made by human imagination, while divine essence is inseparable from God Himself, impossible to describe by anything in the material world. Throne and hand are then just allegories for His supreme authority or power.

In practice, they also categorized the attributes of God to essential, bound to His eternal being, and actual, based on His manifestation in the world. The actual attributes, however, needed a motive, what implied a hierarchy between the essences. For example, an act could be motivated by goodness; but then God as an agent could be separated from His motivation<sup>9</sup>. Their critics thus tried to unify the attributes again, a turn characterizing many debates. We'll return to them in the beginnings of the specific chapters about the largest sects, as the answer was a crucial premise for their stances on the other themes.

Relevance of this theme for the Stoic philosophy may not be apparent. In philosophy, it was possible to establish a system of two levels of existence, a phenomenal and an ideal. Theologians, however, could only comment the Revelation in the limits of the phenomenal world. Revelation itself is not a mere phenomenon, which was only "discovered" by humans on their quest for knowledge. It seemed to be eternally present and human could only try to actualize it. In fact, Stoics did restrain themselves in a similar way. Their philosophical creation was an immanent, all-pervading and controlling God/Fate, which they secondarily tried to describe in the terms of traditional religion<sup>10</sup>.

On the other hand, Mu'tazilites began with a traditional view, then elaborating it by means of a logical criterion<sup>11</sup>, thus trying to make traditional and philosophical theology compatible as well. Categories of divine attributes and His motivation were the first fields of mutual interest of the teachings of Stoics and those of Kalam.

1 - cf Q 3,18

2 - Q 2,285

3 - For example, Ash'ari provides one in his *Luma'* §3, which we'll discuss later.

4 - It speaks of various forms of širk. The pagan Arab religion was usually based on a worship of tribal deities. Of these some were thought to be daughters of the highest God (cf Q 17,40), who seems to have been known even before the time of Muhammad's activity. Acknowledgment of human leaders (including Jesus and Jewish rabbis) could also be seen as an idolatry (cf Q 9,31-33). The negative category of atheism or disbelief (*kufir*) was often put on the same level (cf *ibid*).

5 - To call the divine names is a kind of prayer, recommended by Quran as well; on the other hand, their abuse is considered a sin (eg Q 7,180).

6 - cf Q 28,51

7 - eg Q 7,54 & 3,26

8 - Consequently, one could teach the Arabic was the language of God or, in extreme cases, that the letters of its abjad reflected limbs of the divine body (cf Tritton p.24).

9 - cf Tritton p.80

10 - cf §2.2.2.n.9

11 - cf Shahrastani p.24

### 3.2.2. *Qadar*

The second set of questions dealt with moral responsibility and justice<sup>1</sup>. Term *qadar* denoted power, determination to act; the point of debate was that either the humans had this power to determine for themselves, or all actions were caused by God. It was a debate of an abstract nature, with higher requirements for individual reasoning, as the Scripture didn't provide many relevant guidelines for the topic. Actually, one could find various verses, coming near the matter from both sides, but explicitly closing to the latter. Supporters of the first idea, called Qadarites, argued that God, being just and compassionate, cannot be the source of evil as well. Thus humans have their own *qadar*, which they may employ in a good way, guided by God's will, or in an evil way, ie against God<sup>2</sup>. The idea had been for the first time elaborated by a Basrian theologian Ma'bad al-Juhani (+699) in the beginning of the 8th century<sup>3</sup>, later it was adopted by most theologians of Mu'tazila and Shi'a.



The opposite idea was that of *jabr*: there is only one power, which makes people active. A human is always an instrument of God, through which the power of the source is being applied on the nature. Humans thus cannot do anything else than what God wants of them<sup>4</sup>. They have neither power, will, nor choice<sup>5</sup> to act otherwise. First of the Jabrites was a theologian Jahm ibn Safwan (*jahm ibn Safwán abú miHráz at-tirmídi*; +745) who (unlike Ma'bad) didn't manage to found a lasting tradition<sup>6</sup>.

From the view of the first question, they asked about a relation between God's omnipotence and human life; to which extent is the development of the world determined by the act of creation and which phenomena (if there are any) are caused by the human will. To correctly understand the theme of *qadar*, one should review the crucial role of will/power (*iráDa/qudra*) contrast<sup>7</sup>. In history of Kalam we may find two major tendencies in the understanding of it. In first, usually linked with the Qadariyya movement, we can take unify will and the desired object: we assume a goal, analyze by reason what means it needs for fulfillment, and by employing them we may reach it. In this view, "power" means the latent ability to reach the goal, its application fully depends on the will of the subject. On the other hand, some interpret "power" as continuously present characteristics, even if it's not actually asserted by the will. A power is still present, what changes is its intensity (either of an inner feeling of competence or efficiency of its application), dependent on other abilities or opportunities. From this point of view, we may gain or lose it only partially, its creation and destruction are bound to the birth and death. Essential for power is the agent and its constitution, not will, which determines only the form how the power is applied. In a determinist version of this view, the so-called doctrine of acquisition (*kasb*), only God possesses *qadar*, and His will is nothing more than an absence of compulsion<sup>8</sup>. He creates in humans a temporary ability (*istiTa'a*) to perform an act. Human's own characteristic is only his ability to acquire an act, the capability ceases to exist once an action has been performed<sup>9</sup>.

From a certain point of view, the later doctrine of *kasb* and *istiTa'a* were not always aimed against that of *qadar*, which threatened the premise of the divine unity, but more against the radical determinism, which would undermine the ethics of Islam. If human would be given no responsibility as an integral subject, of what use would be the law<sup>10</sup>? The *kasb* doctrine could have preserved the role of God as an active source and human as a servant, which could be judged: an idea, that both good and evil are wanted by God, for He creates powers for every human action, was generally accepted. Influence of this doctrine was immense especially in the later Kalam of 10th century, also we return to the problem in the later chapters.

Of the other questions derived from the doctrine there were various stances on whether the responsibility lays on acts or on the faith (*imán*); what's the essence and object of a divine decree; what's, on the other hand, the essence of human abilities; what's the relation between *imán* and *istiTá'a*; whether Quran is created through this *istiTá'a* of men, ability to write and understand it; and also permanently actualized question of justice.

Because this debate began so early (late 7th century), it is hardly possible to expect any influence of the Greek philosophy in general. On the other hand, there can be found a parallel development of an idea, which was tagged as a soft determinism<sup>11</sup>. When speaking about the justice of God, the early Stoic authority Cleanthes had a similar view as that of Qadarites, namely that God wasn't responsible for evil acts. Divine influence is different in various situations, thus some people may act unreasonably, ie badly<sup>12</sup>. A determinist position, however, did prevail very soon as the school applied more logical means, leaving human responsibility only so far as the inner attitude (acceptance of circumstances) is concerned. As the doctrine of acquisition has been later revived in Kalam by the Ash'arite school in a similar way; we "feel" free, but we should seek the rules which, consciously or unconsciously, control us<sup>13</sup>. To search for an influence from the Stoics would be more relevant in their case, but *Placita* doesn't provide such ethical teachings. As in the first theme, Ash'arites were developing the moderate Jabrite teaching as an opposition to the Mu'tazila. This kind of Jabrism had some similar ethical consequences as that of Chrysippus' moral theory, but that one wasn't known to them.

1 - cf Shahrastani p.11

2 - cf Q 9,109: "God guides not the people of the evildoers"

3 - cf MacDonald p.128

4 - cf Q 81,28: "whosoever of you who would go straight; but will you shall not, unless God wills, the Lord of all Being"

5 - cf Shahrastani p.73

6 - *ibid*; Both doctrines of (human) *qadar* and *jabr* were in their times considered as radical opinions, and also both Ma'bad and Jahm paid for them with their lives. Jabrism could have been used to justify oppressivity of the ruling power (as it is interpreted by Fakhry), but it could be used as an argument for its enemies too.

7 - cf Tritton p.67: "[Will] was a guide and director rather than a cause. The cause was power, which was blind...Will concentrated power on an object and made it intelligent." Here one can see a contrast between Christian and Muslim voluntarism. Christianity considers "will" to be an ability to initiate and control an action (the Catholic position is purely Qadarite; cf Catechism of Catholic Church §1730, quot.Ireneus of Lyon). In the Muslim view, will seems to be resulting from an evaluation of consequences of the subject's activity. It is an idea, which we try to fulfill, not an immediate cause of some act. This cause is the power, qadar. In the Christian world these terms of will and power weren't so clearly divided. The later ideas of a "blind will" known from Schopenhauer, which binds itself with anything, or its opposite of a "pure

will", spoken of by Eckhart, which has no object at all, have no equivalent in Kalam. God is powerful, thus He applies His will through the acts.

8 - The view had been first developed by Najjar (cf §4.3.1, Shahrastani p.74 & Tritton p.72) and later elaborated by the school of Ash'arites.

9 - Term *qadar* denotes potency, *istiTa'a* capability, *kasb* an acquisition of this capability. Semantic difference between *qadar* and *istiTa'a* is not always that clear and the idea had only minimal foundation on the Scriptures; the latter word is derived from quranic command of *Hajj* (Q 3,91) and was used in combination with *kasb*. *IstiTa'a* meant favorable circumstances to perform an action, like corporeal health; the first, who used the term in this way, was an early Shi'a theologian Zarara ibn A'yan (+767; cf Tritton p.66), Najjar's contribution was the idea of its temporariness. MacDonald (p.127) connects the early idea of God as an unlimited ruler, who simply applies His power on the world (on what should have Ma'bad reacted) with the political situation of Umayyad khalifate. It is an interesting remark, but still, khalifas had various stances on the *qadar* doctrine (cf Tritton p.55).

10 - Tritton p.55: he writes about a beduin thief, who pulled with a stick some goods from a tent. When he was caught, he defended himself in a way, that it was the stick which was stealing, not him.

11 - cf Bobzien p.251

12 - cf §2.2.n.3

13 - cf §5.1.3.

14 - The 9th century source *Placita* (cf p.178f) mentions three Stoic positions on fate (*baxt*): Chrysippus' (fate is identic with an "utterance of Reason", *naTq 'aqli*, which Daiber translates as *logos*; this fate controls the whole cosmos), Poseidonius' (fate, God and nature are three distinct realities) and a general Stoic one (fate is the causal chain of nature, its beginning and consequences).

### 3.2.3.Promise and Threat

The third question mentioned by Shahrastani are "names and judgements" (*al-asma' wa'l-aHkam*), although more often described as "promise and threat" (*al-wa'd wa'l-wa'id*) or "reward and punishment" (*aṭ-ṭawab wa'l-'iqab*). It handles the judgment, rewards and punishments of humans, according to faith (*imán*) or another criterium. Quran speaks often about rewarding those who follow it and punishing those who don't<sup>1</sup>. The previous theme was a kind of philosophical ethics, while this theme handles with psychological problems like interpretations of piety and faith. The main object of questions was the faith alone as the reaction of a soul to the Revelation<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly as in the *qadar* theme, we also here have to deal with a question of responsibility. Responsibility doesn't reflect only will (as an instrument creating motives), it comes out from the competence or power of an individual on the external side, and from the faith, attitude of soul to the

world, which it faces, on the inner side. When a human errs, the question is whether it is possible to consciously repent or it is inevitable that he would be "led astray" and lose the faith as whole. One can answer by searching the cause, which power causes it, but also from the side of an object, how a human reacts on such a stroke of divine might, and when (if ever) he can ever become conscious of it.

The theology brought deontical ethics, but the base for it had to be found by every believer on his own: if he didn't, then he would become a subject under control of the others<sup>3</sup>. It may remind us of Zeno's idea that only wise men are free, as a way of self-justification of any theological effort<sup>4</sup>. But before opening such theme, the problem would be the motivation behind the moral handling: could we speak about faith, trust, reason, fear and happiness as interchangeable? This field seems to be less open for any comparison with or influence of an ancient philosophy.

Theologians were trying to describe the relation between acts and faith, basing themselves at most on Quran and other traditional sources<sup>5</sup>. Dealing with them, many major schools of Kalam had defined themselves already in the early era: in the question of judgement (until when we are just "warned" and when we suffer "punishment") came out the Murji'a<sup>6</sup> and Khawarij<sup>7</sup> as stand-alone sects, the question of sins and losing of faith created Mu'tazila<sup>8</sup>. It is still hard to say, to which extent a human is exposed to sins from his own and from divine will, also how he would (and should) then react. This theme stays as an important bridge between the debate on *qadar* and the question of corruptability of authorities, which led to serious problems of legitimacy of the imamate and interpretability of Revelation.

1 - eg cf Q 28,61 (promise) & Q 39,24 (warning)

2 - cf Q 8,2: "Those only are believers who, when God is mentioned, their hearts quake, and when His signs are recited to them, it increases them in faith, and in their Lord they put their trust"

3 - The problem of a "blind belief" (*taqlid*; namely an acceptance of judge's decree without thinking about it) was often open in later schools of Kalam, especially by Maturidi and Ghazali. On the other hand (but also with a more political undertone), Shi'a and Khawarij had specified themselves by recognition of a true authority (Imam), what we will open in next paragraphs.

4 - cf §2.2.3.n.15

5 - The debate can be found still in modern times. It is presented also by Hourani (cf p.27f). For example, in Q 2,231 ("do not retain them [women] by force, to transgress; whoever does that has wronged himself") we have an objectivist view: "to sin" means "to harm myself". However, in Q 35,8 ("And what of him, the evil of whose deeds has been decked out fair to him, so that he thinks it is good? God leads astray whomsoever He will, and whomsoever He will He guides; so let not thy soul be wasted in regrets for them") it is subjective, with morale depending on faith in Quran.

6 - "Those, who postpone" (Murji'tes; from *irja*, hope) divine reward or punishment to the times of the final judgement.

7 - "Exiles" (Kharijites; from *xaraja*, to leave), originally Shi'ites, who questioned the authority of the judge who tried to solve the conflict in the battle of Siffin (cf §3.2.4.n.5).

8 - "Separatists"; ie from the debate, whether a sinner is still a believer or not. More about them in the next chapter.

### 3.2.4.Imamate

Shahrastani connects the problems of imamate with those of epistemology. The epistemological question was in how far one can distinguish good and evil<sup>1</sup>. In general, an *imám* ("pattern") is a spiritual leader, who is able of this distinction, and also lives by it. The word is used for both leaders of ordinary prayers in mosque and for the highest authorities in Muslim jurisprudence, theology, and also (in case of Shi'a) in politics. Since the earliest times of Kalam, the term was used for the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammad; thus the original was more political, only later developing a religious background<sup>2</sup>.

After the Muhammad's death in 632, the Community agreed on his father-in-law Abu Bakr as his successor (*xalifa*), because 'Ali (599-661; *'alí ibn abí Tálib*), whom Muhammad himself appointed before his death, although he didn't succeed him immediately<sup>3</sup>. When he finally took the position of a khalif, some of Muhammad's Companions went into mutual conflicts. The unrests escalated in *fitna*, a civil war between 'Ali and the Syrian governor Mu'awiya Umayy (602-680), appointed by the previous khalif 'Uthman as his successor. In the Battle of the Camel (656), 'Ali defeated forces of 'Aisha (*'á'isha bint abú bakr*), Muhammad's widow and daughter of the first khalif. Consequently, 'Aisha repented, but Talha and Zubayr, Muhammad's Companions, were killed, thus inspiring many debates whether they were righteous or not<sup>4</sup>. Later 'Ali faced Mu'awiya in the battle of Siffin (657), where 'Ali gained an upper hand, but then let the conflict to be solved by an independent judge. He acknowledged Mu'awiya as the overlord of Syria and Egypt, while 'Ali retained the title of khalif and the rest of the territory in Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. 'Ali accepted the decree, what some of his followers couldn't agree with - 'Ali, as an Imam and khalif, shouldn't have accepted any higher human authority<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, this led to a division of the Community to three sects: Sunnis, Shi'a and Khawarij.

These harsh conflicts have shaped a wide part of history of the Muslim lands. Trying to solve them intellectually, in Kalam came up the questions of legitimacy of an Imam<sup>6</sup>, as well as that of relevance of Companions' teachings for the Sunna. Later, they have turned more abstract. If the criterium for a

legitimacy was sinlessness or perfection, it was important to define what these qualities meant. Thus it includes also the questions of the essence of good and evil, or whether God does the best for His creation or not<sup>7</sup>. Another criterium was an Imam's knowledge, his ability to judge correctly according to the divine law. Consequent debates included some kind of an epistemology: in how far can we understand and reinterpretate Quran<sup>8</sup>? How can we know what is good or evil? What responsibilities does bring such a knowledge? Similarly, it could ignite the debate on attributes, when they opened the problem whether an Imam could become corrupt or whether it was permissible to rebel against such one. These all could have been avoided by a criterium of genealogy or direct appointment, but even this could become unclear<sup>9</sup>. For our own debate, the primary questions are not as important: one could not even exclude one of these criteria to be more important than the others. The spin-off abstractions - the essence of good, change of a personal character, role of reason in comprehending the Revelation - may create a wider picture of theologians' worldviews and their relation to Stoic or other philosophies.

1 - Hourani (1985; p.23f) finds out some general positions on the relation of epistemology and ethics. We can either see "good" as something that can be (1) objectively found, or (2) subjectively ordained. The first (a classic philosophical or Mu'tazili position) can be further subdivided: such a knowledge may be (1a) naturally accessible for anyone reasonable, (1b) limited to people possessing special qualities (ie Imams) or (1c) unaccessible to reason; provided only by the Scriptures. In how far the (2) position could be divided was one of the points of schism between Mu'tazila and Ash'ariyya (cf §5.1.3.). Shahrastani thus encompassed a part of a general ethics theme, which includes also those of *qadar* and recompenses.

2 - cf Tritton p.20

3 - cf Lohlker p.101; He was considered too young to rule yet, and thus the Companions agreed on Abu Bakr. A *xalifa* ("successor") differs from an Imam in its definition, as it denotes always a political authority representing the Prophet. Sunni Muslims recognize four righteous (*ra'shidun*) khalifas - Abu Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, 'Uthman and 'Ali; after them the title is considered to be secular, although all Sunni dynasties claiming the title tried to ground their legitimacy on a certain continuity of the righteous khalifas. For the Shi'a, an Imam (I prefer to distinguish the term for leaders of prayer and the Shi'a definition of their highest spiritual leader with a small "i" in the former and capital "I" in the latter case) can have a certain political power, but his authority stretches more in moral questions. It doesn't come from Prophet, but rather also from God.

4 - cf Shahrastani p.21

5 - cf *ibid*; This movement, Khawarij, was rapidly dividing itself into many sects yet in the first decades after Siffin. Nearly any dispute, which couldn't have been solved by the Scripture, was accompanied by a schism. A very stark example of their reasoning is provided by Tritton (p.37; quot.Tabari): "The followers of Najda [+693] decided that he had done wrong in writing to 'Abd al-Malik and...called him to repent. He repented. They then decided that the imam could do nothing of which he could need to repent and summoned him to repent his repentance. He refused and there was a breach." He remarks (cf p.35) however that the term of Kharijites became later broadly used for any bandits.

6 - According to Ibn Khaldun (*Muqaddima* VI,14) discussion of imamate was seen as theological only because the school of Ash'arites reacted on Shi'a in this matter. For him, to accept political authority isn't an expression of faith, but rather a

matter of public interest.

7 - cf Shahrastani p.11

8 - Arberry (1957, p.17) quotes Q 3,5 to show its different readings. At first in a "Sunni" way: "and none knows its [of Quran] interpretation, save only God. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say: 'We believe in it; all is from our lord'", and then in the "Shi'ite": "and none knows its interpretation, save only God and those firmly rooted in knowledge; they say: 'We believe in it; all is from our lord'". For Shi'a, "those firmly rooted in knowledge" are Imams.

9 - A typical example (cf Shahrastani p.23) is the case of sons of the sixth Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq (*ja'far ibn muhammad aS-Sadiq*): from their followers came up various sects like Imamiya, 'Ammariya, Isma'iliya, Mubarakiya and many others. Imamites, the present majority of Shi'a, accepted Musa (*músa al-káZim*), because Ja'far was thought to say, that "the seventh is your *qá'im* [the Awaited One]; he is the namesake of the one who brought the Torah". Isma'ilites, however, accepted Ja'far's eldest son 'Isma'il as an Imam, as he appointed him at first; the problem was that 'Isma'il died before Ja'far himself; and thus others took 'Isma'il's son Muhammad as the seventh. On the other hand, a relation to the family of the Prophet, or at least to the Quraysh tribe, was a serious expectation for many titles - especially for the Shi'a, but generally for many various forms of authority reaching from Sufi sheikhs to Arab kings. More in §3.3.2.

### 3.3.Sects and Schools

In case of Kharijites and Shi'a, their religious specification was conjoined with a political separation from ahl as-sunna. However, Shahrastani's term of "sect" (*milal*) is in theology more abstract than its present meaning. The term is philosophical here, denoting more a movement of thought than a separated community. There was a term of equivalent meaning as excommunication (*tabarra'a*), but it meant only physical avoidance of contact with a certain person, it was not to have any effect on his moral situation<sup>1</sup>. But still, religious divisions had in times of Umayyads significant meaning. Opinion could have defined the person as a payer of a special tax per capita, paid by all non-Muslim population (*jizya*). Since 9th century, with rise of the Mu'tazila, there came up also an institution for preservation of dogmas (*miHna*), which controlled the correct opinion of judges and similar servants of the state<sup>2</sup>.

Contemporary doxographers tended to categorize the sects by their own doctrines. A sect was usually defined by its answer to one of the basic questions, other answers being deduced from this premise. Shahrastani defines four principal sects: Qadariya, Sifatiya, Khawarij and Shi'a. Qadaris were those, of course, who supported the doctrine of free will; Sifatis accepted divine attributes (*Sifát*); Khariji defined himself by his rebellious attitude to the khalifate or belief in unforgiveness for grave sins; and Shi'a specified the demands for a legitimate heirs of 'Ali. In his work, Shahrastani uses also partly political divisions and reflects the reactions on Sifatis (Mu'tazila), Qadarites (Jabriya) and Kharijites

(Murji'a) too. His division was clear and categorized the teachings of individual theologians. However, such a division seems to be very general, as most of the significant theologians were dealing with all basic questions. Shahrastani presented at first those answers, which had the most influence. Qadaris weren't established as a coherent school of thought. When Ash'ari used the name for Mu'tazila, he thought it more in a way of convicting them of heresy, rationally supporting it in this way<sup>3</sup>.

Also newer works about Kalam tend to use a simplified division of sects, partly based on the fourth theme: on the (more) traditionalist and (more) rationalist sects. We can say it was ment more for a general attitude than an exact expression. Many traditionalists used very rational methods to support the authority of Quran; many rationalists also were persuading their opponents about the trustworthiness of their method by Quranic verses<sup>4</sup>.

The extremes of both stances were in fact considered to be outside of theology. Pure traditionalism, belief in the leading power of a revealed text like by Ibn Hanbal, was often criticized by theologians as *taqlid*. On the other hand, to put too much trust on own intellect was seen as a heathen-philosophic attitude<sup>5</sup>. This view shows an important aspect of the evolution of kalam, which is present in theologies of various religions too. However, search for analogies with other theologies should not be a natural argument for such a division. Theological assertions of Kalam had had often an important influence on contemporary jurisprudence and politics. Movements changed into active forces within the society, some of them even to armed powers<sup>6</sup>. That's why we may accept the Shahrastani's term of "sect" as the abstract category based on a doctrine, and "school" as a historical tradition of discourse.

1 - cf Tritton p.36n; Mostly a Khariji matter, not of the inner faith. See also §3.2.3.

2 - This *miHna*, often translated as "inquisition", came up in times of khalif Ma'mun, to spread (and enforce) the doctrine of created Quran.

3 - Ash'ari's *Kitáb al-Luma'* deals a lot with this matter.

4 - eg cf Q 3,5.

5 - Kalam seems to have tried to find a middle way, where rational and revealed element support each other. Philosophy was either understood as an alternative way to the truth (mostly in the Peripatetic tradition) or solved the dichotomy by its synthesis. Suhrawardi taught, that the highest knowledge is also caused by divine illumination, similar doctrines was developed by some Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites too. The contact was surely mutual, but their relations with Platonic or Zoroastrian philosophy would need a separate work (one of them – Arberry's "Revelation and Reason" – is elaborating this point enough).

6 - For example an Isma'ili dynasty of Fatimids, introduced in §5.1.n1.



### 3.3.1. Murji'a und Khawarij

These two sects were in essence based on the "promise and threat" theme: Murji'tes focused more on "promise", Kharijites on "threat". The background of these sects is, however, significantly different, what could be understood from their teachings too. Murji'a became a theological sect, a discursive movement, which tried to find a way of compromise between both the secular and religious power<sup>1</sup>. Their thoughts were influential between theologians of various schools<sup>2</sup>. They taught a certain openness to the others: everybody, even somebody, who would disagree with their opinion, may hope for a divine reward, if he's faithful. A human is tested by many ways during the life, but he isn't in general in full control of the situations. That's why he's judged only after his death, when God rewards or punishes him for his faith. The teaching was quite cosmopolitan, although not in a rationalist way. For example Ibn Surayj (*al-Hariġ ibn surayj*) criticized the preference of Arabs in Umayyad administrative in a way that national identity is no factor of person's moral quality. They did not, however, judge the administration itself. If a man had faith, it was also irrelevant if he did good or evil acts. Good deeds led to no improvement, sins did no harm<sup>3</sup>.

Kharijites were, oppositely, a closed sect in a modern sense, considering everybody who didn't agree with them to be damned. At first they were the political opposition of Sunni khalifas and Shi'ite Imams: the theory was that judgement belongs to God alone (*lā Hukma illa li-llāhi*), and thus no man is a legitimate judge. Shahrastani, commenting this point, literally demonizes them<sup>4</sup>. In practice they were unifying the bedouins against the central government. The sect was defined more negatively than positively; more from the side of Sunni writers than from their own<sup>5</sup>. 'Uthman, 'Ali and their political heirs were considered to be sinners, because they didn't follow Sunna; resistance (both in personal opinion as well as in politics or war) against such leaders was an obligation for Kharijites<sup>6</sup>. By definition, a person loses his faith, when he commits a grave sin<sup>7</sup>. Extreme, but in those times broadly present view was the stance called Wa'idiya (*wá'id*, "what is believed to be evil"): a sin and the consequential loss of faith meant an eternal damnation for the sinner. For the question of imamate it meant that everybody, from any ethnic group or even a woman or convertite may become an Imam, if his/her moral character and devotion to the divine law is perfect; however their Imam would pay with life, if he sinned<sup>8</sup>.

About their influence on the later Kalam, Murji'tes were the first to give a number of definitions of faith and Kharijites brought the doctrines of Imam delegation and creation of Quran. Both teachings are

at opposite poles of the theme, when God judges the men. Either we call the judgement upon ourselves by an act or we are constantly approaching it. An act or sincere faith can be evaluated only by God, specifically by a reward or punishment. This doubt of authority of human judges was common to both sects: only God was a sufficiently legitimate judge for them.

1 - Shahrastani p.121; Ghassan al-Kufi thought Abu Hanifa, the founder of the great school of Sunni law, was a Murji', because he taught that faith is of primary importance for God, acts and virtue only secondary.

2 - Tritton p.43; Besides the controversial case of Abu Hanifa, Tritton ascribes Murji'te thoughts also to Jahm, teacher of the *jabr* doctrine, as well as to Ghaylan of Mu'tazila. Shahrastani (cf p.119) mentions, that Murji'te thoughts were present even between some Kharijites (eg Shabib), while only the Shi'ites disagreed with them utterly.

3 - cf Tritton p.44

4 - cf Shahrastani p.16

5 - cf Shahrastani p.98; Kharijites of course didn't call themselves so, the term having been imposed on them by remaining followers of an ("commonly accepted") Imam, against whom the group rebelled.

6 - Khariji teaching is often reduced to the practice of *isti'rad*, the killing of unbelievers; they are sometimes seen as a historical prototype of terrorist movements (cf Lohlker p.137). Murji'a is from this view an opposite extreme, a philosophy of pure tolerance, although the base for both arguments - Kharijite and Murji'te alike - is in essence the same, ie that only God may judge the morale and fate.

7 - An extreme case was that of Azariqa (Tritton p.40; Shahrastani p.102f), a separatist sect founded by Nafi' ibn al-Azraq in second half of 7th century. The sect conquered a wide territory from Ahwaz to Kerman; in the beginnings their manpower was about 30 thousand horsemen, as Shahrastani mentions. They killed everybody who didn't agree with them on sight; children alike, as they considered all unbelievers damned. Even if one did agree with their teaching, but didn't join the sect, he was considered to be an unbeliever too. To join them meant also various tests. They were in a nearly constant war with the khalifate since 685, until they were defeated and scattered by Umayyad general Ibn Hajjaj in 698. However, the later sect of Ibadites allows to kill the others only if war was openly declared by either side and the unbelief of the enemy is proven (cf Shahrastani p.115).

8 - cf Tritton p.40

### 3.3.2. Shi'a

In a contrast to Murji'a and Khawarij, Shi'a accepts human authorities. Original definition was primarily political - they were the followers of 'Ali (arab. *šī'a 'alī*, "'Ali's faction") during the wars of fitna. After his death in 661, his descendants tried more times to rebel against the Umayyads, but unsuccessfully. Thus the Shi'ite Imam changed from a military-political to a primarily spiritual leader, although this had no effect on a form of this sect. Similarly as to Kharijites, even here is the Imamate a

religious matter. However, there are very strict rules for his appointment, it's independent from will of the people<sup>1</sup>. The extreme in this question was presented by the sect of Kaysanites, which identified the obedience to a man with piety as such<sup>2</sup>. Opinions about the Imamate were, however, more differentiated. Real extremists (*ghulát*, what means "extremism" also literally) considered Imamate to be a light, special soul reflecting ultimate truth (*Hujja*), which incarnates from one Imam to another, since it was brought down to the world by 'Ali, identified with God, an angel or at least a "piece of heaven"<sup>3</sup>. A similar, but perhaps not as fantastic view on imamate was that of Isma'iliya. These believed in a historical circulation of periods of seven visible and seven hidden Imams, which manifest a special esoteric knowledge. The longest chain of Imams had the Ithna'shariya ("Twelvers"), or simply Imamiya, which believed in particular 12 Imams. The last one of them, Muhammad al-Mahdi, vanished in Samarra in 870, and he is expected to return once again to unite the faithful<sup>4</sup>.

The person of an Imam is often not only in the center of politology, but also of a certain kind of epistemology. It is primarily his knowledge, not that much his moral quality, which makes him trustworthy in the eyes of his followers. The main idea is, that a human doesn't always solve his problem alone, but tries to find somebody more competent, either learned or experienced, who knew a similar situation. An idea of instructive leadership (*ta'lim*) came up with Isma'iliya, but had a broad influence on Kalam. Competence doesn't imply the authority, also from a believer one can't expect taqlid, blind trust. One has to recognize his Imam.

But also what he's searching for, so a believer should turn the questions against himself. Such a temporary "socratic turn" had been originally present only in a closed community of the Brotherhood of Purity (*ixwán aS-Saffá*), based on Isma'iliya. Their members had been given an exact plan of their personal growth. At the age of 15 they should have developed their intelligence and purity of heart, until 30 various social skills etc<sup>5</sup>. For a European it may evoke an idea of an elitist society, but the Brotherhood was primarily a religious community, which considered a human to be an improvable being, obliged for his own personal development. This view had a significant influence on Shi'a psychology. Mu'tazila, a movement at first defining Sunni theology, united this Shi'ite individualism with the *qadar* doctrine.

1 - Shahrastani, p.125

2 - At first they followed Kaysan, teacher of 'Ali, who should have possessed supernatural perception and knowledge. Kaysanites were anthropomorphists and believed in reincarnation generally. Their teaching had been spread in the first half

of 8th century in Khorasan by Rizam, who appointed his student Abu Muslim as next Imam, to lead a rebellion against Umayyads. Abu Muslim declared himself to be an incarnation of God's spirit and then helped 'Abbasids to claim the khalifate. See Shahrastani, p.132.

3 - Shahrastani (p.152) considers this to be an influence of zoroastrian teachings. These sects gained no significant importance, however such teachings were present already in the times of 'Ali's khalifate. Tritton quotes (p.19) a report that he burned them, a similar fate awaited numbers of Ghalite theologians.

4 - The influential idea of a "hidden Imam" was brought already by Kaysanites. After the vanishing of al-Mahdi, Imamites had been led for a century by so-called representants (*ná'ib*; this time is also called *ghayba sughrá*, "minor hiding"), which has been followed by an era of awaiting al-Mahdi's return (*ghayba kubrá*, "major hiding"), which lasts until today. Isma'elite circle was also based on the chain of Imamiya, but they consider Muhammad ibn 'Isma'il to be the seventh Imam instead of Musa. The main difference is that the circle from 'Ali to Muhammad ibn 'Isma'il is only one of many periods in history, while for Imamites there is only one family beginning with the Prophecy and 'Ali. An important question was then presence of *Hujja* between the people, whether it's intelligible to humans even during the *ghayba*.

5 - Fakhry p.169

### 3.3.3. Qadariya and Sifatiya

Of the particular sects, the Qadariya didn't establish itself as a school of thought. As we have already mentioned, there were just few polarized answers present when the debates regarding power were opened; these were the doctrines of *qadar* and *jabr*. Shahrastani gave no specific space in his work for this sect, incorporating the doctrine into Mu'tazila. Similarly we can speak about Sifatiya. In Quran are mentioned many antropomorphic divine attributes like God's face<sup>1</sup>, sometimes interpreted as if God really had a physical body<sup>2</sup>. These sometimes were connected to a view that the universe consists only of material bodies. The question of attributes was generally answered by Mu'tazilites: such an attribute is only an allegorical description of the divine essence. In this they were attacked by Ash'arites and others, something to which we will later return.

1 - Q 2,109

2 - Mushabbiha; cf Tritton p.48-51. Many of such scholars were extreme Shi'ites, but some of them, like Ibn Karram, were accepted among Sunni theologians.

## 4. Mu'tazila

The method of the early theology was based on debates, where Quran was to be the main source of arguments. Mu'tazila, "people of unity and justice" (*ahl at-tawHíd wa'l-'adl*), was the first movement, which tried to define the orthodoxy by philosophic terms, and thus make it reasonable even to the *đimmi* and unbelievers. Beside the intracultural discourses, in the same time grows the intensity of the contact with Christian and Zoroastrian theology as well. A next stage in development of Kalam begins in the times of khalif al-Ma'mun (813-833), who founded the first Muslim university and supported translation of the Greek philosophical texts. Kalam opens itself for newly discovered ideas of so-called Metaphysicians (*al-iláhiya*) and Naturalists (*aT-Tab'íya*) too, where the former will be later roughly recognized as followers of Plato and Aristotle, the latter as Stoics, Epicureans and other materialist schools. On the other hand, it begins to draw exact lines of an orthodox doctrine not only in the spiritual matters, but also in the area of physics, or natural philosophy. Many well-known ideas, often in forms of interpretations from the first centuries AD, seem to be accepted by Mu'tazilites too. As they became the dominant school of theology, imposing *miHna* on the officials, many of these ideas were considered as a standard part of any debate concerning God.

The general creed was laid down already in first half of the 8th century in Basra by Wasil ibn 'Ata, in the end of the century was established another Mu'tazili school in Baghdad. Under al-Ma'mun they developed further, led by Abu Hudhayl and Nazzam in Basra and Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir in Baghdad. After the era of downfall during al-Mutawakkil and Ash'arite reaction in 10th century their thoughts spread throughout the Muslim world. Mu'tazila had not developed much further in the Sunni world, as the Ash'arite theologians declared it a heresy, but had influence between the Shi'ites, partly surviving until today.

### 4.1. Roots

The founder was Wasil (*abú huđayfa wáSil ibn 'aTá al-ghazzál*, 700-748), known as a perfect manager and student of Hasan al-Basri<sup>1</sup>. Another great promoter of the early Mu'tazila was 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd (+762), who also served to khalif Yazid III<sup>2</sup>. They distinguished themselves at first in a debate concerning the divine attributes: their answer was such that God had none, despite the popular beliefs and literary meaning of Quran. This doctrine, known as *ta'Til*<sup>3</sup>, became a standard assertion of the

contemporary theology. The same answer was given by Wasil's best known opponent, Jahm ibn Safwan, teaching in Khorasan and developing his teaching parallelly. Fakhry mentions<sup>4</sup> Wasil's students sent to Jahm, who at first identified him with their school.

However, Wasil and Jahm didn't agree on another important doctrine defining the Mu'tazili creed, namely that of qadar. Jahm, as we've already mentioned, was a pure determinist. His teaching about jabr was often considered as an influence of Christianity<sup>5</sup>: when God wants to change something, He affects it at first by His spirit (*ruḥ*), which is omnipresent, although cannot be perceived. In the same way doesn't function only nature, but also the human, who has no individual power or will. Unlike Wasil, Jahm had not enough productive students, and after his execution his ideas saw only minimal development, until the Mu'tazila itself didn't assimilated few of His points. Wasil represented the second pole of the *qadar* topic, namely Ma'bad's teaching of Qadarism. God gives to men a full power over the goal of his acts. According to Wasil, a human has powers to move, to rest, to choose and consider, to reflect the done and knowledge<sup>6</sup>. Qadarism created ethics on a philosophical foundation Mu'tazila, however, held its theological foundation. The rules were written down to serve as laws: they were to be written for all Community, not only for the learned.

1 - Hasan al-Basri (*abū sa'īd al-Hasan al-baṣrī*, 641-728), a Persian by origin, was an ascetic and later a qadi. He emphasized self-examination (*muḥāsaba*) instead of trying to understand as much as possible from the world outside, which he sought rather negatively. However, his attitude was in no way quietist as in case of Murji'tes. He often criticized the Umayyad dynasty: when he heard they were cruel because they followed God's decree he answered simply that "enemies of God lie". But he didn't support Shi'a as well. It was he, who brought the thesis into Islam, that from God is everything but sin (for both cf Tritton p.58). He founded a school in Basra, which had an important role in later development of both theology and mysticism. He had between his students both Wasil as well as Rabi'a, the famous reformer of the Sufi movement (Fakhry 2004, p.242). There was a debate between Hasan and Wasil about Murji'tes and Kharijites and their definition of Muslims, who committed grave sins. The question was, whether they could be considered believers yet. Hasan said it would be just a hypocrisy from the sinner, Wasil answered it's a corruption (*fiṣq*) of a believer; a position between a true believer and a sinner. The idea didn't gain support of the other debaters, so he left (*i'tazala*) the Hasan's circle. It is said the word "mu'tazila" rooted in this event, as "those, who separated themselves". According to Fakhry (2004, p.46) this main quarrel between Murji'tes and Kharijites was an effect of mischanging the terms "sinner" (*fājir*; or "hypocrite", *munāfiq*) and "unbeliever" (*kāfir*). However, Wasil taught that belief means primarily good characteristics of a person (Shahrastani p.45). Similarly Kharijites called sinful Muslims to be "monotheists" (*muwaḥḥidūn*; and thus not "unbelievers", *kuffār*), although they lose the status of true "believers" (*mu'minūn*). This idea remained as one of the Mu'tazili tenets.

2 - Tritton p.61; Yazid III, one of the last Umayyad khalifs, ruled for only a half-year in 744, gaining a reputation of a Qadari.

3 - More on *ta'Til* doctrine in the next paragraph.

4 - Fakhry (2004) p.47

5 - Tritton p.63 quot.Ibn Hanbal; The question was, whether it was possible to see God.

6 - Shahrastani, p.44

#### 4.2. Basic Creed

Since the beginning there were five principles defining the Mu'tazili creed<sup>1</sup>. They can be seen as a way to unify the moral concepts of Quran with the qadar doctrine. The idea of an omnipotent God became abstract and his followers put a lot of efforts to describe His justice in a more logically coherent way than in the case of Ma'bad. The tenets, with some changes, were adopted by the most adherents of the school throughout the medieval period.

The first tenet was that of divine unity (*tawHid*), foundation of Islam as such. In the interpretation of Wasil (and most of Mu'tazila), it meant in fact the doctrine of *ta'Til*. As already mentioned, they reacted on a common-sense answer on divine attributes: if God is knowing or living, it is caused by His knowledge or life. The premise of Mu'tazila was that God is single and eternal; if we would have accepted the existence of some of his attributes, it would have to be eternal too, and then we would have two eternal entities. Two eternal things, two Gods. As God is only one, there can be no particular attributes defined<sup>2</sup>. Abu Hudhayl (*abú 'l-huḏayl Hamdán ibn al-huḏayl al-'alláf*, 750-841) tried to overcome the mere denial of attributes by replacing them by a concept of an unified divine essence. The whole cannot be divided to separate parts, each being a cause for a different activity (ie life causes living, knowledge knowing etc), but rather it is one God having various manifestations<sup>3</sup>. In fact they spoke of one special predicate in the essence, namely its eternity, proneness to change; the other attributes were metaphores or derivates of it<sup>4</sup>. Bishr (*abú sahl bišr ibn al-mu'tamir*, +825) came up with a difference between indivisible essential attributes (of which eternity was the first one) and those of His actions in the world, including creative actions and moral commands<sup>5</sup>. In short, God becomes a creator first when He creates something. Similarly they made it through quranic anthropomorphisms. Hand of God<sup>6</sup> or His throne<sup>7</sup> were allegorical names for His generosity or power, things which people tend to associate with hands of thrones in their world<sup>8</sup>.

Next four tenets defined Mu'tazila as a specific school of theology more clearly. (2) God is just, what means that (3) He rewards good and punishes evil<sup>9</sup>. Another two were ethical categories: already mentioned definition of (4) a corrupted believer and their basic deontical ethics (5) to do obligations and avoid doing evil deeds. Baghdadi Mu'tazila derived the definition of justice from the division of His essential and actual attributes. Every action has its cause and end, while God changes only the ends, as His essence (the only cause of His action) does not change<sup>10</sup>. Human is created to worship God. Divine will is created to create the world. Justice became an essential attribute, which is a cause for His acts, however it is hard to define the end here. If there is a concept of good or law, which we also may ascribe to His essence, then this essence would not be unite; its parts would be in a teleologic relation. Because of this, later Mu'tazilites<sup>11</sup> tended to show that God does not create concept of good as such, but it is an absolute principle, which He does necessarily follow. However, if there is any absolute principle beside Him, it contradicts the first tenet.

This problem occurs often in Mu'tazili debates, but every possible solution brought up so many questions that it paved a way for criticism from outside<sup>12</sup>. It was similar with the third axiom, that we may expect from God a reward and punishment for certain deeds, which is a simple justification for setting a law and even ethics as such; the question was, why in fact the people break the rules? Why does God allow it, is it just? Qadarism, as described in the previous chapter, was to become a partial solution for this problem. As we have seen, the problem set by Mu'tazila by it was much wider. It expects an absolute definition of good, which would affect God in the same way as human. This would serve God as a guide for His judgements and rewards, for human it would serve as a source of moral (reasonable) fundamentals for his acts. Basic goal of theology would be to research this absolute moral law, if there weren't two another contradictions. Beside the problem of unity, can we know motives of the divine will? For theologians, third axiom reduces God to a mere machine and foundation of legality of religious law. On the other hand, if only God was to be an absolute, he would have to be the cause and creator of good as well as of evil. However, if God was the cause of evil, second pillar of the Mu'tazili creed would crumble.

1 - cf Tritton p.79 quot.Khayyat

2 - It was Wasil already who put up this kind of reasoning (cf Shahrastani p.43, Tritton p.62), as well as the very term "attribute" (*Sifa*), as some kind of a separate quality causing an activity (creating, knowing et al.). Names attributed to God don't reflect such attributes but rather what we see of His manifestations. It seems that most of the early theologians didn't open the question (whether an attribute is different from the divine essence) at all, only the anthropomorphists and some of the Shi'a (eg cf Tritton p.31).



3 - cf Shahrastani p.46

4 - cf Shahrastani p.41-42

5 - cf Tritton p.96

6 - Q 3,26

7 - Q 7,54

8 - Very often they addressed the vision of God after resurrection in the Paradise; cf Shahrastani p.42.

9 - cf *ibid*; Another (and perhaps more important) conclusion was that God can't do injustice.

10 - The proneness to change of divine essence was promoted here by Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbad. He criticized the use of term "eternal" for God on the ground that it meant originally "everlasting", while according to him God didn't belong to the sphere of time at all; cf Shahrastani p.59.

11 - These ideas (cf Shahrastani p.65-67) were presented especially by the 10th century Mu'tazila schools of Jubba'i (in Basra) and Ka'bi (in Baghdad). Unlike the earlier Baghdadi branch (ie the schools of Bishr and Mu'ammār), they also held the opinion that God does the best for men.

12 - cf §5.1.1.

### 4.3.Philosophical Themes

#### 4.3.1.Causality

The mere doctrine of qadar couldn't solve the contradictoriness between the first two tenets, and thus the Mu'tazilites started to develop ideas merging with those of another directions. One of these was their two-fold description of causality. Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir opened a question: if an archer fires an arrow, but then he is killed before he hits the target, is the archer responsible for the death of his target<sup>1</sup>? According to Bishr, when archer looses the string, only the loosing is the direct effect of his action; consequent shot and death of the target person would be secondary effects (*mutawallad*) generated by the act of firing<sup>2</sup>. The justice depends on responsibility: the archer is the agent only in the moment of firing, but it may not mean he determines the hit as well. This created a physical terminology comparable to that of Hellenistic philosophy. All motion in the passive matter was thought to be an effect of a certain agent. The questions like in how far the body of the agent was involved in the "primary" act, or how God determines the secondary effects,

1 - This problem was inspired by a typical Shi'ite controversy (cf Shahrastani p.21; §3.2.4.). After 'Ali had been accepted as khalif, two of Muhammad's former companions, Talha and Zubayr, rebelled against him. After they had been defeated, Zubayr was shot in flight by certain Ibn Jarmuz. According to one hadīḥ the murderer of Zubayr was condemned to hell. However, the Shi'a theologians (and Wasil as well) always seen these two as enemies of 'Ali, thus setting into question

many sayings concerning them.

2 - cf Tritton p.67

#### 4.3.1.1. Qadarite View

A standard Qadarite (and Bishr's<sup>1</sup>) answer is that the humans are responsible for all consequences generated by their actions as well. The problem is that a human can't be aware of all consequences of his action, and then, in how far he can be considered morally responsible for things he cannot foresee? Thus Bishr founded his epistemology on the theory of the secondary effects too. Human causes his sensory perceptions, being secondary effects of his actions. He says the perceivable accidents of things are then caused by humans as well. According to Shahrastani<sup>2</sup>, he took the idea from the *Tab'iyah*. The possible source<sup>3</sup> hints here how the parallel could appear: the emergence of perceived accidents (impressions, we can say) is described only from the viewpoint of Stoics (Rawaqiyun). Senses (hearing, sight etc) are identified with certain parts of the spirit, whose activity make up the impression<sup>3</sup>. Bishr thought of human to be a composition of body and spirit, while only together they could be considered an agent<sup>4</sup>. However, from what is available, it is impossible to say whether his idea of spirit (*ruh*) was in other aspects the same as that mentioned in *Placita* too.

He categorized knowledge into intuitive (which is not influenced by a human), sensual (caused by human actions in the world) and rational (acquired by thinking, actions within). Intuitive and sensual knowledge was necessary; rational was thought to be secondarily acquired. It is the rational knowledge, by which we know properties of the things. Knowledge of the whole or perceived phenomena were thought by him to be necessary; knowledge of "them" didn't necessarily mean knowledge of their details. Human doesn't have to know, what his act will cause, but he still remains responsible for it. On the other hand, it leads into an idea, that one can know God, as well as moral category of good, by his own mind alone. Human does not need more knowledge about Him. While God doesn't determine (primary) acts, He judges their moral status<sup>5</sup>.

The other view was that of Abu Hudhayl; namely that we are responsible for all consequences of his acts, even those occurring after his death; but excluding those how they are perceived. Human is the body, life and soul are its accidents. He thought that mind comes out from heart, and thus he brought also a dichotomy of cordial (ie mental) and manual (ie corporeal) acts. In the former, the power (*qadar*)

is present only during the act, in latter case it depends on the constitution of body<sup>6</sup>. The typical cordial act was will, which according to Abu Hudhayl causes illusions and knowledge, typical corporeal act is the motion<sup>7</sup>. He taught also we don't cause perceived qualities, like color. It should be noted he brings this idea further. We can "cause" knowledge only in ourselves, but we're not responsible for what we teach the others<sup>8</sup>. He seems to present some kind of a self-defence: a view that when I instruct somebody, it depends only on God, how the other would hear and consequently understand me.

1 - cf Shahrastani p.56; "Whatever is generated from our deeds is our doing." (Fakhry 2004, p.50, quot.Ash'ari quot.Bishr)

2 - cf ibid

3 - cf *Placita* p.280-282; The author speaks of Stoics in general, but it can be either the Cleanthes' version of the spirit's function (cf §2.2.2.n.15) or that of Epicurus. Epicurus' view on physics had a similarity in acknowledging atoms instead of continuous *stoixeia*, as well as the secondary position of accidents in composition of things. On the other hand, the Mu'tazilite atomism (cf §4.3.2.1.) wasn't necessarily a development of the Hellenistic version. Bishr thought the things are at rest when created (cf Tritton p.97), and also his assertions that heat and cold are mere accidents (and not bodies) could had been a reaction to the previous views of Dirar ibn 'Amr, which we'll present in §4.3.2.2.

4 - cf Tritton p.98

5 - cf ibid; It is interesting that in Bishr's view the secondary effects are irrelevant for the moral quality of the act. The agent can't foresee all the consequences, only God can do that; but he still can perform his own actions in accordance to the divine commands offered in Quran. The reasoning is very similar to the one ascribed to the Stoics by Plutarch (cf §2.2.3.n.13), although it wouldn't help Ibn Jarmuz in a hypothetical plea, as he evidently did the best to kill Zubayr and the moral base is somewhat different.

6 - Abu Hudhayl here partly adopts the theory of acquisition, ie the Najjar's version (cf next paragraph).

7 - Precisely quoted, action of heart is not a motion. Tritton (p.84) mentions an antinomy; he could not have answer why people find slumber pleasurable. When we sleep, there is no thinking, which would cause the perceived pleasure, when awoken, there is no slumber, which would cause the pleasure as such. The problem was in his connecting of an object with its cause, when defining it. The logic went up from an axiom, that a non-existent cannot cause effects.

8 - cf Shahrastani p.47

#### 4.3.1.2. Jabrite View

As we've seen, in the second half of the 8th century a few tried to find a moderate form of jabrism by the doctrine of double cause of acts. An act was at first created by God and then acquired by human, either directly or by creation of a certain capability (*istiTá'a*) to acquire it. The teaching was speculative at most, but the both central terms - *kasb* and *istiTá'a* - retained support of a certain quranic foundation<sup>1</sup>. Capability to act is per definitio ability to acquire, not to create the act. An act is a matter

of a moment: in moment we are capable of performing an act, but later not anymore. It could be present only during the act or it could be present in a latent form before it, as it was taught by Bishr<sup>2</sup>. Another question was, what exactly did this capability mean.

Dirar ibn 'Amr (*Dirár ibn 'amr*, + cca half of 8th century) was a student of Wasil and the second leader of the Basrian school. His doctrine was itself a compromise between Jabriya and Qadariya. Thanks to its soft-deterministic model, it was also the first one in Kalam bearing parallels with Stoicism<sup>3</sup>. He taught that God is so different that He can't be known; it was possible to speak about God by only negative definitions: He is defined in that way He is without limits. His attributes did not exist in the meaning as if He is powerful, then it means He isn't impotent in any case; also He is not dead (living) and not ignorant (knowing)<sup>4</sup>. During his time, the theory of causality and secondary effects wasn't developed yet, however his teaching led to the same conclusion as Bishr's, namely that a human is responsible for consequences of his actions. A human act had two causes: divine and actual. God creates the act, human is its agent (actual cause). In other words, human acquires the act - an idea, which will be later very influential. Role of God as the creator of the acts leaves enough space for maintaining His omnipotency; on the other hand, human remains a moral agent, which can be judged and rewarded, if he acquires the act. Divine will as such could be then divided to two forms, either it was the creation itself, or a command, reflected as an act, if the human acquires it. Human will is seen by Dirar as some kind of a *liberum veto*, he can disagree with the act. If a human could have not wanted the effect (if he could not want to hit the target), then he is responsible for it<sup>5</sup>. But still, it seems that Dirar saw even this disagreement as an act created by God: for He creates belief as well as unbelief<sup>6</sup>. Human will reflects then its moral quality on consequences of the act.

His follower Najjar (*Husayn ibn muHammad ibn 'abdalláh an-najjár abú 'abdalláh ar-rázi*, early 9th century) was a pure determinist. Responsibility for every event, which occurs in the world, could be ascribed only to God. Najjar accepted most of Dirar's metaphysics, but also in a more idealistic tone. He accepts his negative theology, although he considers God as the source, which defines of good and evil. God wills all what is done, because He sees Himself in it; according to Shahrastani, "He wills Himself as much as He knows Himself"<sup>7</sup>. When speaking of the relation between God and the world, Najjar says God is unwilling all that, which doesn't occur. He is omnipresent, but not materially, more just as the "light", which controls all phenomena, including human. It was also interpreted in a way, that His being gains a phenomenal level by it (a pantheist view). Unlike for Dirar, human was no mere matter, but also a spirit, although more in the sense given by Jahm ibn Safwan than that of Bishr. Jahm

taught about a divine spirit, being the cause of most activities of men, what was an idea coming not from Stoicism, but rather from Christianity<sup>8</sup>.

1 - According to Tritton (p.68), Quran mentions word "*istiTá'a*" about forty times. On the other hand, root of "*qadar*" occurs only four times, and even these are in a form of a verb. Actions of humans are often described as their acquisition (*iktisáb*) of good resp.evil.

2 - cf Shahrastani p.56; According to Bishr, while the Jabrites state this similarly, capability was just the health of a body. An effect, which was usually thought to be not only temporarily but also spatially distant from the agent - as an arrow doesn't usually hit the same bow it is fired from - did not fall into this capability. However, Bishr thought the agent were responsible for it too.

3 - In his physics can be found more similar aspects (cf §4.3.2.2.&.3.).

4 - cf Baghdadi p.17

5 - cf Tritton p.70, quot.Iji

6 - It is a similar logic as that applied by Chrysippus on Cleanthes' view (cf §2.2.3.n.10). Similarly as Cleanthes his fatalist view faced the fact humans feel responsible for their actions, and even if we are forced to do something, we can at least disagree in mind. But as Chrysippus also added, even this disagreement depends on God.

7 - cf p.74

8 - cf Tritton p.63

#### 4.3.1.3.Compromise

The debate came into a dead-end compromise. Thumama (*ḥumáma ibn ašras an-numayrī al-baSri*) was not very coherent with it. He was from Basra, however he lived more in Baghdad on the khalif's court. He had especially good relations with al-Ma'mun; he had a significant influence on his positive attitude towards Mu'tazila<sup>1</sup>. He was a student of Mu'ammār, who will be mentioned more in the next paragraph. Thumama adopted from him the these that human was primarily his spirit. Body is just a tool, the closest object under an influence from the spirit. Spirit is a controlling monad, without accidents or space. However, it has will, knowledge and power. He was in a contact with Bishr, with whom he had much opinion in common, like the understanding of capability. They identified it with health, absence of illness. Human acts only by his will; responsibility of an act depends on understanding of good and evil, not on the capability. Fulfillment of a will is a secondary effect, which can't be directly ascribed to the will alone. Secondary effects should have no agent at all. The argument was the one we've seen in the beginning of the theme: if human could have been the agent of a secondary effect, then dead could become agents too, what Thumáma finds absurd. We could have also

ascribe it to God, but then He would be responsible for evil and injustice, what is for him absurd thought too, because He acts according to nature, which is always just<sup>2</sup>.

Thumama perfected this thesis into interesting dimensions. Knowledge is a secondary effect of perception (or Revelation), and thus it has no agent, which would make it. In a certain twist of terms he also interprets the thesis of creation of Quran. On the one hand, Quran may be a direct creation of God; on the other hand, if it weren't created by God, then it would be a product of nature, thus it would be a secondary effect, having no creator at all. "Uncreated" means absence of any creator. It is surely not absolutely correct to read the answers of Thumama as a system, however it seemed to have an influence on the further development of Kalam physics. Causality couldn't solve the problem of responsibility, and thus the theologians had to redefine the idea of a natural necessity again.

1 - cf Tritton p.99

2 - cf Shahrastani p.65

#### 4.3.2.Substance

As we can see, the questions concerning consequences of our acts, essentially an ethical problem, developed into an area not very typical for theology. And so we may enter the theme of what they saw as pure physics. The main term is the substance (*jawhar*, pl.*jawáhir*) which constitutes bodies (*jism*, pl.*ajsám*). Accidents (*'araD*) then were either identified with the substance, its specific form or as a separate third category of being. In Mu'tazila there were two physical models contesting against each other. Both models were in basic materialist, but in detail we may see a difference based on this aspect. One of them, quasi-rationalist model, became the mainstream. It was the theory of Abu Hudhayl, Mu'ámmar and Bishr, whose concept was partly adopted by the Ash'arites as well. Their idea of substance was that it were an atom, hypothetical indivisible particle of material being. It represented the ontological substance of bodies as well as the carrier of its characteristics<sup>1</sup>. Another one, quasi-empirical model, began its development already in the times of Dirar ibn 'Amr, while we may consider Nazzam as its main defender. In his time it was usually formulated in spite of the atomistic model, while it was also condemned because their sources were primarily philosophical; that is, of the Naturalists between them<sup>2</sup>.

1 - The idea of atom in Kalam could be found similar as that of leibnizean monad. However, as even Hudhaylites saw human materialistically, it would be precise to say it only about the definition given by Mu'ammār, who had been because of it often accused for dualism (Tritton, p.102).

2 - cf Horovitz p.10

#### 4.3.2.1.Atoms

"Atom" is a general translation of the term *jawhar*, although the term isn't the correct equivalent. The Arabic term *jawhar* could mean both part of a body as well as its constitutive substance in a general sense<sup>1</sup>. As the smallest particle it was often denominated as *jawhar waHid* ("unit of substance"; the formulation was used mostly by Nazzamites) or *al-juz' allađi lá yatajazza'* (indivisible particle, plural *ajzá'*). In space, it represents the same as a geometric point; in time it presents a moment (*zamána*). Body (*jism*), any material object, is created only by composition (*ta'lif*) or simply mutual contact (*mumássa*) of more atoms. Body itself could be thus defined as a thing with dimensions, while an atom is dimensionless<sup>2</sup>. The opinions about the minimum number of atoms necessary for constitution of a body were changing<sup>3</sup>: according to Abu Hudhayl six would suffice, Mu'ammār saw eight as minimum, their colleague Fuwāti (*hišám ibn 'amr al-fuwaTi*) said 36. Atoms also couldn't exist outside of bodies<sup>4</sup>.

Another details were different, but the relation between atoms and bodies was the same. Followers of Abu Hudhayl stated<sup>5</sup> five proofs of the existence of atoms against the Nazzamites. (1) The first plays with term of infinite: if there were no atoms, then the distance would be infinitely divisible; there would be an infinite number of particular distances, and thus it would be possible to reconstitute whole distance from it as an infinite. (2) Two bodies in a contact need at least one atom, which would touch the end of the another. The argument was, that an infinitely small body would not be able to touch a much larger body. Also (3) God created the bodies from certain particles; if He could not have destroyed them back into particles, He would not be omnipotent. Next one (4) is quite empirical: the same divisibility was in small as well as in large bodies. In that case, it would be absurd to think, that a mountain would have the same (infinite) number of particles as a mustard seed<sup>6</sup>. The final one (5) is again theological: God has to know the number of the particles in the world, so the bodies cannot be infinitely divisible. Especially the third and fifth open an important question - whether or not there comes up a fully new phenomenon or if there are existing particles only reconfigured. Unlike the ancient Atomists, in Kalam we don't have an idea that atoms are eternal. They are created and

destroyed, just the opinions about the means of this are differing.

Another school of Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbad as-Sulami answered with an interesting idea. Similarly as Thumama, he saw human as an immaterial and indivisible spirit<sup>7</sup>, controlling the body. He also supported the thesis, that secondary effects are ascribed to no one. He distinguished will (as a true human activity) and corporeal activity, which may be ascribed to a human only metaphorically. It is, technically speaking, a secondary effect of the will, and thus it cannot be ascribed to us in reality. In physics, he held a similar view about the relation between God and the world. God controls the world from outside, He isn't present in space nor time<sup>8</sup>. Because of this, Mu'ammār said that God wasn't eternal, before He creates the world. Then, God creates only bodies. Accidents and powers are created only by the matter alone. Matter contains the laws, determining how to gain power, life or knowledge. The system was, however, apparently inconsistent. Mu'ammār for example considered endurance to be an accident too; but if the bodies create their accidents alone, we can imply they create and destroy themselves too<sup>9</sup>. He thought that every accident was caused by another one, which makes the presence of the caused accident necessary. Because of this, he considered the number of accidents to be infinite<sup>10</sup>.

The system seems to be fully deistic here: God has a will, which formulates itself as the laws of change, instead of creating every particular change<sup>11</sup>. God creates time (He Himself was supratemporal, what wasn't usually so clearly formulated in that time<sup>12</sup>) as well as the matter as such, which then becomes independent of Him. Atoms change and organize themselves alone, existing forever. Mu'ammār defines the beginning, but no end. In fact, as he tried to prevent ascription of evil to God, he prevented everything, what exists in the world, to be ascribed to Him. Mu'ammār left here the Hudhayliya wing of Mu'tazila and comes closer to the conclusions of Nazzamites.

1 - A deeper analysis of the term jawhar could be found in Pines p.3-4. Similarly, a grain of sand may be equivalent to "a sand", but not to "a dune".

2 - Number of atoms is based on dimensions of a body, not its minimum critical weight, like quanta in modern physics. Dimensions are also always relative. Hypothesis of six-atom minimum is based on a formation of a central atom, which has another ones over, under, ahead of, behind and on the left and right side. Pines (p.112) finds a parallel with Indian philosophical schools Vaishesika and Jayna, which had a similar view on atom as a constituent of dimensions, which itself is dimensionless.

3 - Pines p.5, quot.Ash'ari; Fuwati defined three levels: 6 atoms (in the same way of Abu Hudhayl) form a single "part" (rukṅ, pl.arkān), 6 arkān form a minimal body.



4 - cf Pines p.97-99; Pines compares the term of atom in Kalam to that of Epicurean *elaxista*, a minimum, which was defined to replace the dimensionless character of Democritean atoms. However, the Indian influence seems more coherent.

5 - cf Pines p.11, quot.Ibn Hazm; It's interesting that while Christian theologians tried to prove the existence of God by philosophical means, the Muslim ones were using theological arguments to prove the existence of atoms.

6 - Pines (p.113) mentions, that a vaishesikan scholar Jayanta Bhatta used this formulation in the same time. Nazzam thought that a mountain is larger because its particles are larger too.

7 - cf Tritton p.99; Pines (p.101) mentions, that Mu' ammar used term *juz' lá yatajaza* for human too.

8 - cf Tritton p.101

9 - Shahrastani (p.57) reacts that according to Mu' ammar God does nothing while creating. Bodies create themselves as whole, their matter and nature as well.

10 - cf Shahrastani p.58; Tritton (p.100) considers this to be an Indian influence. Mu' ammar was sent to a certain king in India to present Mu' tazila teaching. Another source could have been another theologian of Baghdad, Ibrahim ibn as-Sindi. The idea roots, however, only in his name. By the way, the doctrine of "entities" and infinity of accidents became another point of criticism (cf Tritton p.101f). The number of bodies (created by God) was limited, but the number of accidents (created by bodies) infinite. Thus it seemed the matter is more powerful than God Himself.

11 - This point, preserved by Tritton (ibid), doesn't contradict the problem in n.9 with the present definition of secondary effects.

12 - Shahrastani p.59: "It is related of Mu' ammar that he objected to saying that God is *qadim* (eternal), because the word *qadim* is taken from *qaduma*, *yaqdumu*, hence *qadim* (active participle). It is, therefore, a verb, as for example, 'He took from it both what had become old, *qaduma*, and what was new, *Hadutha*.' He also said that *qadim* implies priority in time, whereas God's existence does not belong to the sphere of time."

#### 4.3.2.2. Accidents

Term *jawhar* was more a rationally defined "matter", and that was also how they worked with it. Empirically, we perceive only certain characteristics<sup>1</sup> (*ma' ná*, pl. *ma' áni*), which belong to the bodies (or their substance). Beside this general term there were thought to be two various categories, which at first were very close in definition, but became widely distinguished in the Mu' tazilite discourse. They both came up in the early debate about capability (*istiTá'a*) in the end of 8th century. The question was: what is the nature of it and how long does it occur in man, when he performs an act? It was needed to overcome mere words and describe something corresponding with perceivable reality.

First of them was the term of an "attribute" (*Sifa*, pl. *Sifát*), which meant a description of its state<sup>2</sup>. The term was brought into Kalam by Hisham ibn al-Hakam<sup>3</sup> (*hišám ibn al-Hakam*, +814), who, as a Ghali and an alleged anthropomorphist, was perhaps in the most striking opposition against Mu' tazilites. He

spoke only about bodies and their attributes; there was no need for him to speak about substance at all. *Sifa* meant an inherent property, which can't be separated from a thing. A typical definition was that *Sifa* is "not body and not different from body"<sup>4</sup>, but some of them were thought to be material (like colors). It is an always applicable description (*waSf*). The term became widely used for divine attributes, to ensure a notion of their eternity and proneness to change. However, the later generations didn't identify it with *ma'ání* any more and used it only for descriptions. In Hisham's view, a capability wasn't some special attribute of human but a word denoting the variety of factors, favorable for an act. It contained some attributes like health or a motive, but also tools or enough time to perform it. Also, for him all acts are determined by God, whom he considered to be material (ie *jism*), or at least His attributes similar to those of other things<sup>5</sup>.

The second one, an "accident" (*'araD*, pl. *a'ráD*), meant any characteristic of a body which was imposed from without and which could (or had to) change. In definition, it was the property different from body<sup>6</sup>. The term was introduced by Dirar ibn 'Amr to describe differences between bodies. Unlike Hisham, in his theology we have a clear difference between an incorporeal God, which cannot be known, and corporeal nature, where all bodies are determined by the divine will in the same way. Accidents were the very constituents of all bodies<sup>7</sup>, as the term *jawhar* wasn't developed yet. There are two further types of accidents. The first are (1) material, inherent ones (color, taste etc) which can't exist separately and endure for a longer period of time<sup>8</sup>. Dirar also thought, that bodies have not only the perceivable accidents, but also their opposites, while there is always one of the opposites turned into body and the other one latent (*kumún*) state. Into this category belonged the capability too, while it is God who interchanges it with the incapacity<sup>9</sup>. However, Najjar was even more radical in his saying that accidents are created separately even before they unite in a body<sup>10</sup>. Beside these (2) there is yet the class of accidents created only in the latent state, not able to subsist longer than one moment; these include motion or pain.

But the later development, led by Abu Hudhayl and Bishr, was generally a reaction against Hisham with his anthropomorphism and against Dirar with his fatalism. Mu'tazila, pointing at difference between God and men, adopted the term *a'ráD* for description of properties and *Sifa* for divine attributes. Pointing at difference between men and nonsentient bodies, they defined distinct natural laws for *jawáhir*, for *a'ráD* and for their interaction. Human will was considered to be one of the accidents, thus subordinating the atoms not only to God, but also to man.

1 - cf Pines p.11; Root *ma'n* means "devotion" or "deep research", *ma'ná* denotes its result. Horovitz translates it in his book as "der Begriff", what does make it quite hard to distinguish from the term "attribute". In fact, Horovitz (cf p.54) points this out to describe Mu'ammār's sect of followers (*aS-Sahaba al-ma'ani*) as "idealists".

2 - cf Pines p.16, quot.Ash'ari

3 - cf Tritton p.77; According to Tritton the reports of when he lived aren't unanimous. He should have studied under Jahm (+745), discussed with the early Mu'tazilite 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd (+762) and been invited to Baghdad by viziers of the Barmaki House in 812. The Barmakis (ruling in 782-803) were already expelled by that time. A similar problem is with the biographic reports about Abu Hudhayl, who is said to had lived for hundred years.

4 - cf Pines p.16, quot.Ash'ari; Hisham's idea was that only bodies may be different from each other.

5 - cf Shahrastani p.159; According to Hisham, if there was no similarity between God and the world (and humans) it would be impossible to have any idea of Him at all. However, as Horovitz (cf p.39) mentions, in Ka'bi's report Hisham teaches that God is a body, but not similar to anything else. That's why Ka'bi also doesn't count him between "anthropomorphists" (*Mushabbiha*), as the others do, but rather between "materialists" (*Mujassima*). Ka'bi's report tempts comparison with the Stoic theology (§2.2.2.), Hisham's sources are unknown. He was known for changing opinions (cf Tritton p.76) and that he discussed with scholars of various traditions; thus he could be inspired by some Stoic ideas, but it is unlikely he went through them as a coherent teaching. His own theory is too inconsistent, there are too many contradictory reports.

6 - cf Pines p.19f, quot.Ash'ari

7 - cf Tritton p.69f

8 - cf *ibid*; Every body has at least ten of such accidents (like color, taste, but also life/death etc) and the bodies were created already with them.

9 - cf Shahrastani p.76; If capability to act means health, then we can say the diseases are inherent in our body. For Dirar there is no functional difference between humans and other things.

10 - cf Tritton p.72

#### 4.3.2.3.Nazzam's model: Elements

Before the physics based on bodies composed of atoms and accidents became the prevalent one in Iraqi Kalam, its creators had a strong opposition not only between the followers of Hisham and Dirar, but also in their own ranks, thanks to Ibrahim an-Nazzam (*abú isHáq ibrahím ibn hání' ibn sayyár an-naZZám*, 808-844). Significantly younger than Abu Hudhayl, he already had numerous sources available for his studies, including those about (if not of) ancient philosophers<sup>1</sup>. He also adopted some ideas of Dirar and Hisham, as well as certain "Dualist" (*Dahriya*) and "Sceptic" (*Samaniya*) teachings, in a quite eclectic way. Hisham and Stoics, reported under their school-name, seem to had inspired him at most. His physical theory has been reported in two ways. According to the first<sup>2</sup> the world consists of substance and motion, which is the only accident. By motion are created all other accidents

created, even rest. The other<sup>3</sup> says he followed Dirar in saying the substance is "composed of an aggregation of accidents". From Shahrastani's report, it seems that he was using both categories (bodies and accidents) for description of each other<sup>4</sup>. He didn't consider them to be separate ontological classes, like the Hudhaylite wing.

According to Horowitz<sup>5</sup>, his materialism is itself is the proof that Nazzam adopted Stoic teachings, while the particularities of his own teaching prove the general similarity isn't "random", ie parallelly developed. Horowitz, operating mostly with reports by Shahrastani and Baghdadi, mentions at first Nazzam's theory of accidents, namely their material nature. Stoics operated with term "element" (*stoicheion*, ar.*sTuqs*) to denote both the primary qualities and substances, while the other were considered as dependent on their configuration. Similarly, Nazzam thought<sup>6</sup> of every accident - not only the primal qualities, but also perceivable qualities like sounds, colors - to be of a material nature as well. In fact even this point may be compared to a certain Zeno's expression: "Color is the first shape [*šakl*, pl.*aškál*] of matter"<sup>7</sup>. But it is only of a particular nature, as we don't have a word about "accidents" in general in *Placita*. On the other hand, within the general physical theory Nazzam himself doesn't speak of elements at all. Yet we can trace the similar idea to Hisham al-Hakam, who is reported as his source as well<sup>8</sup>. He thus used a terminology of Kalam (especially of Dirar) and described by it a theory, which in its core mixed Stoic/Hishamite ideas of a material continuum as the model of universe and qualities as a principle of differentiation of things.

Another interesting part was his theory of motion. As we've already mentioned, Nazzam opposed the Hudhaylite view that substance, space and time may be divided to smallest units, atoms, which are dimensionless. First of the Abu Hudhayl's arguments for the existence of atoms was that of infinite distances. Distance between two places would be infinitely divisible, and thus a body would need to pass through infinite number of places to get through. Nazzam's answer<sup>9</sup> was that a body moves in a "leap" (*Tafra*). Hudhaylite idea was that a motion is a number of rests: a body comes from one particular place to another and when we speak of traversing distance, it is just a summa of these motions. The "leap" theory meant a body can traverse through more places at one moment. It is possible Nazzam adopted this view from critics of ancient Atomists<sup>10</sup>, although this can't be clear. The point is there are no "places", acting as obstacles to a continuous motion. According to *Placita*<sup>11</sup>, both Atomist and Stoic physics considered the world to be filled with matter, while Nazzam supports the original standpoint of Stoics: motion means change in bodies, not a travelling of parts from one place to another.

1 - cf Shahrastani p.48

2 - cf Tritton p.92, Rudolph p.290

3 - cf Shahrastani p.50

4 - According to Horovitz (cf p.11 n.1) this reasoning was present in Plutarch's *De communibus notitiis*, ascribed to Stoics in general.

5 - cf p.10

6 - cf Tritton p.92, quot.Ibn Hazm

7 - *Placita* p.170; "Shape" is defined as a surface and limit of a body (*jism*). Thus it is the most manifest part of it. Author (or translator) distinguishes it from the term "form" (*Súra*), equivalent to the Greek term *morphé*. Stoics (cf *Placita* p.168) are reported to think of these forms, of "incorporeal substances" (*jawáhir lá jismi*) as phantasies in our minds. It is more similar to the term *Sifa* as used by Hisham than to *'araD*, preferred by Nazzam and other Mu'tazilites. However, the translator of *Placita* didn't use the term *'araD* at all; he uses the term "quality" (*kayfiya*) instead.

8 - cf Horovitz p.38

9 - cf Shahrastani p.50; According to Shahrastani, Nazzam argued in a quite weird way: let's imagine a well and a bucket within it, hanged on a rope. To take water from the well, one may pull it up by another rope with a hook. Both ropes have the same length, say 50 yards. The bucket will then go through 100 yards, the length of both pulling and holding rope, one by pull, other by leap. Well, this could have been a mocking of what the Hudhaylites were doing: replacing the idea of a distance, a merely descriptive category, with real places, some hard-predetermined preconfiguration of space. Also, Hudhaylite definition of motion and rest was even more unwieldy: "Movement and rest are not the same as modes of existence and both need two times [ie moments]...rest is the arrival of a second body in the first place, movement the arrival of a first body in the second place" (Tritton p.86).

10 - cf LS 11D3

11 - p.172

#### 4.3.3.Psychology

Another thing which makes Nazzam's teaching interesting for this work is his psychology. There were two general tendencies of describing soul and men in early Kalam already, evidently reflecting the qadar question. Some theologians didn't speak much about the soul as a separate entity, which survives the body. As we've seen by Dirar, it was usual to reduce human to a mere piece of matter, while life is just one of the accidents, similar to eg color of his skin. Some Shi'a theologians introduced an idea of spirit. Hisham too made a threefold model of man: body was for him a passive part, being controlled by a soul or spirit (an active, decisive part, a mind) and a light (the perceptive powers)<sup>1</sup>. Of what we know of Hisham already, this division of human was more on functional than on a substantial basis. All three

were "bodies", ie of a material nature, and thus there wasn't a lot of difference with the Jabrite/Dirarite view.

On the other hand, Mu'tazilites in Baghdad, Bishr and Mu'ammār<sup>2</sup>, elaborated their own theory, showing soul as some separate entity. Especially that of Mu'ammār: he considered it a special substance, which is incorporeal, not of accidental nature, and also not occupying space as well<sup>3</sup>. To define some kind of incorporeal soul was on one hand a natural way to define an agent of free will separate from God, but also from the matter, which is perfectly predetermined by Him. Abu Hudhayl's standpoint was a quite vague one. He defined soul as an accident of human, but different from body, senses, spirit and life<sup>4</sup>. It seems to have been a mere negative answer to those of his adversaries in debates: his distinction of soul from body could have been a reaction to Jabrites, and the distinction from spirit against Nazzam.

1 - Tritton p.77

2 - cf §4.3.1.1.

3 - cf Tritton p.102

4 - cf Tritton p.87

#### 4.3.3.1.Nazzam's model: Spirit

Even if we were able to reduce Nazzam's physics to a synthesis of theories of Dirar and Hisham, in his teaching about the soul we have statements, which are very clearly similar to the general Stoic psychology. First, it differs from the other Mu'tazilites in the identification of soul and spirit. Shahrastani reports<sup>1</sup> he thought that the body is just a tool of soul, while he described it as "a fine substance permeating the body". It is diffused perfectly throughout the whole body. Although the fiery nature of spirit has not been explicitly mentioned, it can be derived from other reports, like soul's upward motion after a body dies<sup>2</sup>. As Horovitz mentions<sup>3</sup>, Nazzam also thought the spirit in human is shared by all alike. We've already seen these ideas: it is the materialist psychology of early Stoa, closest to the Chrysippean model: an action occurs when the organ is affected by the spirit directly<sup>4</sup>. Nazzam thought the same at least about perception, what was in their time similarly reported about Stoics in general as well<sup>5</sup>. Motion of spirit was identified with other accidents denoting mental actions and life. It also bears the capability, *istiTá'a*, before the performed action as well. This capability is the spirit

itself, to speak of other, especially imposed accident in the moment of action would be redundant. Here we don't have any preceding way of thinking in Kalam. Identification of soul with a fiery breath is interconnected with the ideas of fire's inherent upward motion and restless activity. Jabrite authorities, like Jahm or Dirar, didn't speak of any accidental entity as being inherently active and changing. On the other hand, it also doesn't fully stack with the Mu'ammār's physics, which comprehends the idea of a natural necessity (instead of a direct divine decree), but still considers human soul to be independent on it.

1 - cf p.50

2 - cf *ibid*; *Placita* p.254

3 - cf p.11 n.3, *quot.*Baghdadi

4 - cf §2.2.2.n.15

5 - cf Tritton p.93; *Placita* p.260

#### 4.4.Theologic Questions

As the Mu'tazila is primarily a school of theology, it characterizes itself mostly on the definition of the divine essence. On the one hand, they tend to refuse ascription of any attributes to God (*ta'Til*), what had already began with Wasil. On the other hand, they were defining another necessary factors, which were to determine His actions. Yet there was a general difference in understanding the divine essence, which separated the branches of Baghdad (Bishriya, Thumamiya) and Basra (Hudhayliya, Nazzamiya, Ma'mariya). Mu'tazila of Baghdad asserted a definition between necessary and phenomenal being, which are in a causal relation: if a certain phenomenon is to endure, it means that the necessary principle, God, creates an accident of endurance in it. Basran school didn't find this necessary. According to them, phenomena were enduring inherently, until they were destroyed (or left to be destroyed) by God. Both schools followed the idea that essences of world and God were similar, but in a different way. For Baghdadi theologians, God was the foundation of their physics and theory of causality. Divine activity is tightly bound with all the changes in the world. For Basrans, God was more transcendent, spiritual, known only by reflections of His acts, labelled as commands or "creative words". Their system could not be physically, causally understood; metaphysics were based on divine will. God functions like an overseeing ruler, who orders the world according to His knowledge and taste. For both, however, a physical cause of the world is an ethical in the same time as well. God

knows what is best, and that is done. The question whether God does the best for men or if He could have done something better was present in Baghdadi Kalam too. In short, Baghdadi school thought He could have done better. The difference was already set by Abu Hudhayl and Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir, and thus we can look on their followers.

#### 4.4.1. Basrian Theology

Despite the differences in their physics, Abu Hudhayl and Nazzam had similar opinions in this matter. Nazzam was, however, little more radical with his stoified theology. As reported by Tritton<sup>1</sup>, he asserted God had no will nor life. God has no will, because He doesn't need it. According to Nazzam, only imperfect beings need will due to their lack of knowledge and thus they sometimes need to aim their powers by pure choice: like humans do. However, unlimited knowledge and power form the very essence of God. His knowledge contains everything: what was created, what is and what will become out of it. It is reflected in the latent motion, which we mentioned in the previous paragraph. Matter has a predestined form, into which it develops. Nazzam also says that the world could have been created infinite times over and again, but never in a better way. It is similar to the cyclic model of ekpyrósisis and consequent re-creation of world in an identic shape. The idea was characteristic for Stoics, of whom only Panaetius is known to have not followed it<sup>2</sup>. The knowledge of God may be seen also as a preconfiguration of the world, which is then reflected on the world's development. This divine knowledge is always not only affecting the world, but also constituting it<sup>3</sup>. Creator's knowledge is also always reflected perfectly in the creation, otherwise He wouldn't be perfect. This is used also for his theodicy. Theoretically, God could have chosen by His will and created the world in a worse way, but as He is perfect, He would not. A later Nazzamite, Muhammad ibn Shabib described it in the way, that if God says, that only a donkey may enter a certain house, and then no man would enter it, it doesn't mean men would change into donkeys if they did it<sup>4</sup>.

Nazzamite thoughts had been reviewed directly by Jahiz (*abú upmán 'amr ibn baHr al-jáHiZ al-baSri*, 781-869). He followed the idea God had no will, but also said it may be ascribed to Him in a way that as He never choses evil, it would be more correct to say He was not careless<sup>5</sup>. Jahiz saw will as a knowledge and absence of refusal, also if we see divine essence as a universal knowledge itself, it doesn't have to be denoted separately. Another interesting point is the connection between morality and knowledge: a change in God would be seen, according to Nazzam, as injustice; for Jahiz it seems to be



already a redefinition of morality. In this way his view is similar to Stoics, in identification of divine knowledge and universal morality, with *logos*. This point became characteristic for the Maturidites, who will be handled in the last chapter.

1 - cf p.91

2 - cf *Nature of Gods* II,46

3 - The Nazzamite term of latent being may be again took up here. God creates latent accidents in things which are inherently determined when to actualize. Stoics called the idea of latent accidents as *logos spermatikos*, seminal reasons which determine how the things develop from elements (cf above §2.2.2., Colish p.32). Later theologians were interested in this reasoning as well. The idea is used in the beginning of Ash'ari's *Kitáb al-Luma'* (§3) to prove the capacity of human mind to discover its Creator.

4 - Tritton p.127; Perhaps if he would think it himself, but then he wouldn't need to enter.

5 - cf Tritton p.131

#### 4.4.2. Baghdadi Theology

Baghdadi theologians were not so clear with it. God surely knows and can do what is best, but why should He? Bishr asserted God had the will, because His essence is that, what is reflected at most. It opens many ethical questions, about which could Nazzamites think they were already solved. Bishr distinguished two forms of divine will: essential (commanding good) and active (creative), the latter being unlimited in effect. That was the cause, why he considered those, who asserted that God did best (*al-aSlaH*) for them, to be unbelievers<sup>1</sup>. Term of God is wider here, connected to human activity as well. The *ta'Til* doctrine is avoided. Divine attributes are seen as essential and active too, where acts are identified with its object.

Mu'tazila of the 10th century differed much more in this question. The mainstream was still formed by Hudhaylites, Nazzamites and Bishrites. Most theologians preferred a certain attribute, from which they deduced all other attributes. There were two duos of a teacher and a student: in Basra there were Jubba'i and his son Abu Hashim (*abú hášim 'abd as-salám*) and in Baghdad Khayyat and Ka'bi (*abú 'l-qásim 'abdulláh ibn aHmad al-balxí al-ka'bi*). The main question was now the meaning of the quantity of divine names. Jubba'i had a quite complicated view on His essence, perfecting the *ta'Til* doctrine. It could be read as a direct sharpening of Wasil's teaching. He thought, that the divine essence was different from everything, because it is eternity. As God is eternal, we shouldn't understand the

attributes as eternal separate substrates too. Then we would have (at least) two eternal entities at once - two Gods. Ontologically, only He is eternal, besides we can speak only about His essence, inseparable from Him, as it is Himself. Thus His attributes would be the divine will (*iráD*) as well as its negation, refusal (*kiráh*)<sup>2</sup>, but their cause (*iráDiya* resp. *kiráhiya*), as well as causes of His power and life, is the essence alone. Then, only humans see His actions in variety and thus they give Him various names. All names are based on the same essence, thus an attribute is just a word, ascription (*waSf*) of an action to Him. Abu Hashim followed the thesis, that God had no attributes, as even a denomination of an attribute could be understood as a separation. His activities are in no way varieties of His attributes, but it is a change of whole state (*hal*, pl. *ahwal*) of the essence. He distinguished caused and uncaused states, former being those, derived from a fact, that He lives (life, power, will), the latter in fact describing the attributes essence, like an ability to occupy space or be a substrate for accidents. Names of God are given to these states, which are attained by essence, not the essence alone<sup>3</sup>.

It is quite similar to the problem of universal terms, later coming up in the Christian philosophy as well. In case of Jubba'i, we have a pure nominalism: names themselves have no separate existence. Their variety reflects only colorfulness of our imagination. View of Abu Hashim seems more conceptualistic. A term could be used only for a certain thing, although the thing isn't its essence; the concept exists in the mind only. There is no grave difference between these conceptions: Jubba'i himself argued to his son, that the essence of an attribute and a state is the same, so it could be said, that a state is in a certain state, and this may also have states ad infinitum<sup>4</sup>. As later could be seen, nominalism was to prevail in the debate. Khayyat and Ka'bi were deducing more from the viewpoint, that the primary attribute was His knowledge. There is a sign of a Nazzamite influence: as He has a perfect knowledge, He has also a perfect power. They took from him also the ideas, that God had no will and that things change according to their motion, not because of a direct decree of the Creator in the moment.

1 - Tritton p.96; Baghdad branch brought similar assertions very often. However, it wasn't always taken seriously. Once Murdar (*'ísá ibn SubayH abú músá al-murdár*) declared, that everybody who doesn't accept his teaching is an unbeliever. Theologian Sindi (the friend of Mu'ammar) asked him then, if he thought, that whole enormous Paradise was created just for him and his three followers!

2 - cf Tritton p.143

3 - cf Tritton p.151; The universalistic realism had its champions too, but it was not the same as that of philosophically inclining directions. There were various schools of Sifatiya, presenting a literal meaning of names, like Mushabbiha or particularly that of Ibn Karram. Ash'ari was more a conceptualist like Abu Hashim, although the philosophical basis of this problem is to be doubted. Jubba'i himself realized, that a not yet created thing may be already considered a thing, what

seems incoherent with his view on divine names. This contradiction had been pointed out already by Shahrastani (cf p.68).

4 - cf Shahrastani p.68

#### 4.4.3.Practice

There was a lot discussion about death: what happens then and what does that imply for life. At first, there is a question, whether death is created, if it could be understood as a certain "accident", or if it isn't only an annihilation of another accident, life. For example, Ka'bi saw death as a separate organism, perhaps more precisely an "anti-organism", which is in us created in the appointed moment to destroy our life. From aspect of the *qadar* debate there is a question, who can cause death: how precisely does God predetermine our time, if we can think about it even if a man is murdered, or if one can cause his own death. Abu Hudhayl found this all irrelevant. There could be only one appointed time of death, no matter the cause of it. In Ka'bi's view we have two various times of death: a natural and a violent<sup>1</sup>, in certain cases. Third basic question had been even based on death, or to be exact, on what comes after it. Eschatology of Kalam contained debates about the endurance of rewards, recompansetions and punishments, where Mu'tazila erected very strict rules, as well as the problem of who everybody will be affected by a certain judgement. The fourth question was connected with the problem of death too. There were ideas how death affects our knowledge, responsibility, sinfulness and even imamate.

Mu'tazila - already yet in person of Wasil - brought the teaching about a corrupted believer (*fāsiq*), what became a technical term for many later debates. And thus the first problem was, when a believer becomes a *fāsiq*. Often it is identified with a grave sin (*kabá'ir*)<sup>2</sup>, but Nazzam for example set a financial limit; if the damage reaches an equivalent of 200 dirhams<sup>3</sup>. Another problem was the form of the Paradise and the Hell. Quran is clear<sup>4</sup>, but there were many interpretations. Mu'ammār tried to describe both as immaterial realms<sup>5</sup>, it was, however, thought of a minority. Another idea came up from Jabriya. Jahm refused the eternity of punishment and said, that in a certain time, all motion in the heavens and hells will cease, leaving only God alive, who thus destroys both spheres. This was adopted by Abu Hudhayl too<sup>6</sup>, who speaks about an eternal rest, in which the heavens will come in the end. Paradise and Hell will be created after the end of world, when God will also resurrect all humans. In the next world, nothing will be necessary to be done. The idea was connected with the material heaven, stars flying eternaly in the same lines. Most theologians were, however, speaking about the world

beyond only from the Revelation. Despite their characteristic rationalism, only Murdar's student Qasabi (*dža'far ibn mubaššir al-qaSabi*) and no other influential Mu'tazilite brought a thesis, that the duration of a reward or punishment could be found by the human mind alone<sup>7</sup>.

We should also look at the relation between world of present and the one beyond. Nazzam formulated, in spite of his Stoic teachings, that reward and punishment can come only after the death. There is a certain grace (*lutf*), by which God blesses the living believers, but according to Jubba'i, it is usually nothing sensually pleasant<sup>8</sup>. In general, Mu'tazila sees a difference between spheres of now and beyond as the realms of ratio and of Revelation. Concept of good is absolute, often determinant even for the divine activity, its goal, however, lays without the world, where it is done. Mu'tazila thus could not find something like a natural ethics; to live morally in the world without the Revelation about the next world. But not to present the view of Mu'tazila as void of Stoic influence in the matters of ethics, we may also note that Jahiz had a quite naturalist view on the concept of sin. Like all things try to adapt to their environment, thus also sinners are attracted by the fire. Thus they act in the way, which enables them way to the ultimate fire, which is in the Hell. In the end they are fully swallowed by it, changing their nature to that of a fire<sup>9</sup>. This idea remembers us on the idea of universal burn-out, ekpyrōsis, which affects all souls. The ethics of Revelation, however, enable us to think, that the good won't be consumed with the world, but transcend into a new world, the Paradise. On the other hand, he wrote an essay on praise of self-control (*Hilm*), where he puts interesting arguments for the rational control of emotions<sup>10</sup>.

1 - Tritton, p.160

2 - Like murder. The gravest sins like polytheism (*širk*) or unbelief (*kufir*) don't belong to this category as they are a per definitio speaking about belief as such.

3 - Shahrastani p.52; minimal taxatible property.

4 - Q 9,107

5 - Tritton p.103

6 - Shahrastani, p.47

7 - Tritton p.122

8 - The best (al-aSlah) could contain pain. Cf Shahrastani p.67

9 - cf Tritton p.133

10 - cf Pellat p.223f

## 5.Sunni Kalam

In the second half of the 9th century, theological scene becomes more diverse. The primary role is still played by the followers of Mu'tazila, but new traditionalist schools begin to grow beside them. Development of the traditionalism was caused by many factors, political and spiritual alike. On the one hand, the effective power of the 'Abbasid Khalifate had been seized by the military. During his reign, al-Mutawakkil (\*821, ruling 847-861) relied much on Turkish slave soldiers, whom he used to suppress unrests of nobility and hostile sects. In the time he was murdered, this personal army was so influential that they could depose his son and replace him with their own choice. Khalif himself had since then only symbolic or internal power, not reaching beyond his court in Samarra. The real power was in the hands of amir al-umará, commander of the army. Khalifate was also no longer controlling the realm. In the beginning of the 10th century three great Shi'a dynasties came to power: Egypt and Syria were subdued by Fatimids<sup>1</sup>, Bahrayn and part of Iraq by Qarmatians<sup>2</sup>, and Persia by Buwayhids<sup>3</sup>.

Sunni orthodoxy became formulated in a reflection. The population, in their view on four righteous Khalifs, did not follow the Shi'ite opinion. Theologians and jurists of the old regime tried to preserve their spiritual authority by repelling innovations. In the spiritual sphere comes out philosophy, based on the quanta of newly translated texts, as well as on a support of Ismai'li governments, fascinated by their metaphysics. It brings, primarily, an advanced rhetoric and logic, effective arts of persuasion. As a new science, defining the truth as such, it has the crucial role on further form of Kalam as well as of juridical formulations, especially that of the Shafi'i school. Also there are Sufis, which enters public consciousness at first in forms of heresies. Both "new" spiritual sciences have their opponents. Already mentioned jurist Ahmad ibn Hanbal (*aHmad ibn muHammad ibn Hanbal abú 'abdalláh aš-šaybání*, 780-855) went so far to forbid using analogies (*qiyás*) as means to decide judgements, core of the Shafi'i and Hanafi method<sup>4</sup>, promoting use of literal meaning of the traditional scriptures. This tendency, after being at first persecuted under Mu'tazila supremacy (Ibn Hanbal himself suffering torture for it), received full support of al-Mutawakkil. He was the last "independent" khalif, combining political and spiritual authority in one person, and thus his role in forming future Kalam was significant as well.

'Ali al-Ash'ari (*abú 'l-Hasan 'alí ibn ismá'il al-aš'arí*, 874-936), originally a student of Jubba'i, adopted more of Ibn Hanbal's theses, but also tried to set his own rules of interpretation. He was repulsive to the teachings, or more exactly, to conclusions of philosophers, as well as to those of Mu'tazila, whom he considered to be a theological branch of them. However, he accepted their logical

method. His own method was even more empirical, not bound to mere syllogism. His method was to show faults of the philosophers (and especially Mu'tazilites) by their own means, by attacking premises of their theories. He tried to prove their unbelief and harmonize what he found to be discovered through mind alone with the Revelation. Logic, as a tool of proving truth, was accepted; interpretations (*ta'wil*), although being within the borders of logic, not anymore, as its possible conclusions he found to be generally infinite. Ash'ari struggled for a compromising teaching, which would not oppose rational and sensual knowledge, but exploiting it for support of the tradition. His greatest follower Ghazali (*abú Hámid muHammad ibn muHammad al-ghazálí*, 1058-1111) summarized the teaching of Ash'ariya into a form, which had been in 15th century adopted by Ottoman theologians too, thus broadening its influence from Egypt to Bosnia.

With the development of Turkestan came up in Kalam also another school considered as orthodox by the Sunni theologians, being based on the teaching of Muhammad al-Maturidi (*ibn muHammad ibn maHmúd abú manSúr muHammad al-máturídí*, +944). Maturidi was from Samarqand in Mawarannahr, today's Uzbekistan, having only scarce influence in the Iraqi debate, immediately having an influence only in his native region. Their influence was more widely spread in 12th century by the dynasty of Ayyubids, who adopted Maturidiyya as their own and supported contrasting ideas against the Ash'arites, seen as the ideology of Seljuks<sup>5</sup>. Doxographers of Kalam, like his contemporary Ash'ari or later Shahrastani, in fact didn't mention his teaching at all. It is hard to say to which extent, if he ever was influenced by the Ash'ari's creed or method, but his criticism of Mu'tazila theology stays on similar principles. School of Samarqand itself was based on the law school following Abu Hanifa<sup>6</sup>, while Mu'tazila, and the philosophy as well, seemed to their theologians as a strange innovation. Later this school became predominant in the Kalam of Central Asia and India, as well as in other regions adopting the Hanafi law. It seems for both Ash'ari and Maturidi, that both of them discovered, if not founded by themselves, the prevailing trend in the theology, and their followers retained this position in Sunni Kalam until these days.

1 - Fatimids (*al-fáTimiyyún*) took their name from Fatima Zuhra, daughter of Muhammad and first wife of 'Ali, from whom they also claimed their descendancy. The dynasty was founded by 'Ubaydallah al-Mahdi (ruling 909-934). By aimed propaganda he gained a significant power in Ifriqiya (Tunis) and declared himself a khalif. In 969 his descendants conquered Egypt, where they founded Cairo, which became their new center. In next years they subdued even most of Syria, Libanon and Hijaz. However, wars with Seljuks and crusaders weakened the empire, until it suffered the mortal blow by Salahaddin ibn Ayyub in 1171.

2 - Qarmatians (*qarámiTa*) were another Isma'ili dynasty, or rather a sect, founding its power by Abu Sa'id al-Jannabi in

899 in Bahrayn. Their original center of propaganda was in Kufa, where their first teacher Hamdan Qarmat lived as well.

3 - Buwayhids (*al-buwayhi*) were descended from a tribe originating in the region of Tabaristan (south coast of the Caspian Sea). Their bravery was valued already by the Sasanid rulers of Iran, later they adopted Islam of the Twelvers' creed. In 10th century they founded a number of emirates throughout the Middle East, which were in 945 unified by Ahmad ibn Buwayh. He expelled Yaqut, the amir of Baghdad, and captured Iraq. He took the title of the highest khalif's commander and of a persian emperor (per.*šáhinšáh*, literary "king of the kings"), with the name Mu'izzaddawla ruling until 967. The empire fragmented with every generation, as the rulers parted the domain unto all heirs. Finally, in the half of 11th century they were defeated by the Seljuks.

4 - Arberry p.18; The method is based on a comparison of a cause (*far'*) to another one mentioned in the tradition (*asl*). Unlike the literalists (ie Hanbalites) they thought human reason was capable of extracting the essence of this *asl* (*illah*) as well as its judgement (*Hukm*) be it a command or prohibition. If the essence of *asl* is a similar to another one, met in the practical life, then we should apply the traditional *Hukm* on it. *illah* is the main problem here. Traditionalists required its basis to be written in Quran, Sunna and often supported by a consensus of the community (*ijma'*) too, many innovators (including some of the Maliki school) permitted a use of analogies as *asl* for another ones. For details cf Hannan, part "Qiyas".

5 - Seljuks were a turkish tribe controlling Syria, Iraq and Anatolia in the 11th century. Their wars with Greeks and conquest of Jerusalem from the hands of religiously quite tolerant Fatimids were a significant factor behind the crusades. Ash'arite Kalam developed in Iraq thanks to the vezir Nizam al-Mulk, who founded madrasas in Baghdad and Nishapur, led by Juwayni and Ghazali.

6 - According to Tritton (p.174), the school of Kalam founded by Maturidi is often called Hanafiyya as well. Ash'ari and Ghazali were learned in the Shafi'i law. The difference in reasoning of these schols may be partly reflected on their theology too: where Ash'ari tries to found a logically coherent system of justice, Maturidi leaves responsibility in acts as much on an individual as possible.

## 5.1.Ash'ariya

### 5.1.1.Theology

At first there is the question of divine unity, particularly its relation with plurality of His names. In general, Ash'arites tend to accept more of them than Mu'tazila; their image of God, though always abstract, is a little more colorful. There were only minor differences in accepting one or another attribute between the scholars. Ghazali<sup>1</sup> summarized them in a quite coherent form in his *Ihya'ulum ad-din*: within the first part of the Muslim creed (*lá iláha illá-'lláh*, there's no deity but God; Q 3,18) we should not think about all the attributes, which we know by the tradition, but only of seven principal ideas. At first there is His transcendency, separation from all creation, being immaterial on the one

hand, on the other hand being closest to any of its created things<sup>2</sup>. Then there is His life and power, ability to create the things, change and destroy without changing or weakening Himself. Next is knowledge and perception, containing and overseeing places of all atoms, every motion and change alike. Will, by which He determines the rules of the universe, presence of good, evil and being as such, is the fourth: all He wants, is, what He doesn't want, is not. Fifth, His seeing and hearing, an add-on for the knowledge, is His ability to see without eyes and hear without ears all what could be seen or heard. Next is His eternal speech, through which are the moral maxims set, including the content of books of prophets. And at last also His activity, including the whole world. Here it could be said, that it is a mere effect of His will and speech, He is in no need for it. God creates the world just because he wants it.

Already Ash'ari opposed the doctrine of *ta'Til*, acknowledging plurality of divine attributes. In his interpretation of Revelation he accepted fifteen divine attributes. On the other hand, he supports them with logic. By the *ta'Til* doctrine, supported by Jubba'i, it seems that knowledge and power, as divine attributes, denote the same thing. There was a question, for what reason it would be revealed under two various names? Ash'ari brought two possible answers. It could have been understood in terms of Abu Hashim's modes of the essence. One name is used for a perceived attribute, another for a latent one, which neither is, nor isn't. Ash'ari also marks out the feebleness of this argument, as it contradicts the basic rule of logic, exclusion of the third. Another answer can be only to doubt the premises: there have to be attributes in God, which are named by the divine names<sup>3</sup>. But still, he was a follower of Jubba'i in the idea that some attributes of God have double meaning, interpreting it nominalistically. Every name reflects a certain attribute subsisting within His essence.

He categorized them into three types: those denoting the essence as a whole, by which we may consider God as adequately described (as *wáHid*, One or *kádim*, Eternal); the names reflecting the attributes of actions, which describe His external activity (like *xáliq*, Creator), in other words just "parts" of Him<sup>4</sup>; and also predicative names, showing relative properties (*Hakím*, Wise; including the attributes of "hand" or "sitting on throne"), which "neither are Him nor are different from Him". These latter attributes, mentioned in Revelation, are meant to be accepted literally, without any further description or deeper analysis<sup>5</sup>. We can say about them, generally, only that they are eternal, as they subsist on an eternal essence. Ash'ari saw His life<sup>6</sup>, will<sup>7</sup>, sight and speech<sup>8</sup> as such predicative attributes too. As created we may consider only the effects of His life; what He wants, sees and speaks, but not by what He sees or what He speaks about. His commands, prohibitions and messages are created and perceived by men, but in essence they are a unified speech. Ash'ari searches for signs, which would show us the



way to God, something more clear than a mysterious character present in the holy scripture. From the names he found the Creator to be very important; it should have been an original meaning of the Arabic term of God (*alláh*). We see primarily the world around us, while our mind should lead us to discovery of a creator, needed by all these things, whose activity is bound to everything<sup>9</sup>. About the divine knowledge Ash'ari thought it were uncreated and eternal, on the other hand different from God Himself; nor "view" of God nor changes in the world don't change it. It was either an idea of a universal "writing tablet", all what objectively may be known, or, more likely, a faint trace of Nazzam's teaching, that the world may be created only in one, the best way.

Ash'ari tries to maintain the unity of God through His immunity to change, while accepting the plurality of the attributes in spite of Mu'tazila. In short, there is nothing beside God, what could influence Him. The question is now, whether God exists in time forever but remains unchanged or He is unaffected by time at all. The idea is no Ash'arite invention. In Kalam, already Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbad speculated that God is a supratemporal phenomenon, as He is the cause of time itself<sup>10</sup>, although most of Mu'tazila thought God was primarily uncreated and everlasting. In the view of Mu'ammār we have a God, who is conscious of the presence, containing time as a (let reader forgive me the anachronism) fourth dimension of the world. God is fully separated from the world, and in His single moment He perceives whole being with all the changes within as well. It isn't a purely eternalist view: as we've seen, Mu'ammār also taught, that God can't be called eternal before (!) the world isn't created. He inclines to the idea of divine meta-time, which would be independent from that of the world (meta-time being its cause), but implying certain changes and causal relations in God. World itself has a cause, which creates an effect in a certain "moment"; this cause had to have a cause too, and this one its own cause *ad infinitum*<sup>11</sup>. If this was a result of placing God out of time, the other option to present God as everlasting was more likely to be adopted.

One of the first Ash'arite theologians, who have made a system out of the teaching, Baqillani (*abú bakr muHammad ibn aT-Tayyib al-báqillání*), qadi of Baghdad and a diplomat<sup>12</sup>, adopted the theory of states of Abu Hashim. His intention was to harmonize the common language with that of theology; thus he tried to explain the existence of God in the same way as the one of the world, as well as divine knowledge in terms of human minds. Attributes were for him like model situations, into which the essence tries to reconfigure<sup>13</sup>. There is a finite number of them, also these states are causally interrelated; also one state is a cause of the necessity of all other states. Ash'ari, however, didn't accept any form of a "reconfiguration" within the essence. God can't be influenced, none of His activities could

be generated by something particularly existing, like an attribute. Nor any of His activities can't cease and be replaced by another one. Existence of the world and the God were different for him in the way, that divine activities were aimed at the world only in one way, God doesn't receive anything<sup>14</sup>. God creates a throne for Himself and grants grace towards the believers, but also this has no recurrent influence, neither human believe nor sins. His later follower Juwayni (*abú 'l-ma'áli 'abd al-malik al-juwayní al-Haramayn*), added that God has reflects no love towards us, and thus He also can't be loved<sup>15</sup>. He has the power like the universal principle, through which all is defined: good, truth and justice alike. In this idea, Ash'ari seceded from Jubba'i: once Ash'ari gave him a question, how would three brothers be rewarded, if one dies as an elder believer, second as a sinner and third as a child. Jubba'i thought the first was in Paradise, second in Hell and third in a secure place; Ash'ari opposed, why God left the child to die before being able to earn a better reward, on what Jubba'i answered, that He knew the child would sin. A rhetorical trap closes, why didn't God leave to die the sinner sooner as well<sup>16</sup>?

Ash'ari thought the question was simply answered: why should He? Justice is defined by His acts alone; if we point out its general properties, it remains possible they would be suddenly changed. It is a characteristic Ash'arite view of the punishment and reward. What we see on one day as good and worthy of reward may be punished by God on the other<sup>17</sup>. He defines His own logic. Ash'ari also teaches, that God wants the good deeds of the other beings as well as the bad ones, what seems problematic. From a Mu'tazilite view, He wouldn't be then just, at and also "good" would be a separate category. Logic, which Ash'ari sets here, would also be readable, that no act in a human could be considered as evil. Ash'ari tried to solve it, that God doesn't wish the evil directly, but only as he wants and act to be done by an evil man<sup>18</sup>. It may be also described as a problem of His will. The will is seen in the lines of the basran tradition: will (*iráDa*) contains the idea, which motivates and act (in case of God, His knowledge), satisfaction (*riDá*) is nevertheless different from the idea. This opens the field of ethics. In short, it seems that God wants everything, even if not all is satisfying Him (what doesn't affect Him though). Ash'ari concentrated himself on so many purely theological questions (*tawHid*), that then he had to show, what is done by the men.

1 - Ihya-faith II,1

2 - He also quotes famous aya Q 50,16: "We verily created man and We know what his soul whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."

3 - Shahrastani p.79

4 - "they are not Him" literally; Tritton p.168

5 - cf Shahrastani p.85; Besides the Mu'tazila, Ash'ari attacks here also his contemporary Karramites, who spent time with discussions like if God were heavier than His throne. He didn't forbid interpretations to his students, however himself was an agnostic. Double meanings he accepted "without (asking) how" (*bi-lá kayfa*). He accepted certain phenomena, like God on the throne, as "real", but there should be said nothing about; there can't be said nothing fruitful on the matter. Ash'ari was inspired in this stance by Ibn Hanbal, who aimed it on the anthropomorphisms too. Ghazali (*Ihya-faith* II,2) adds: "The true middle-road between this complete allegorism and the rigidity of the Hanbalites is subtle and obscure. It is found only by those who enjoy divine guidance and comprehend things by the aid of divine light, not by hearsay. Then when the mysteries of things are revealed to them, so that they see them as they are, they go back to the Quran and traditions and their wording; whatever agrees with what they see with the light of certainty they affirm, and whatever disagrees with it they interpret allegorically."

6 - There was a question to Murdar what he thought God was before He lived.

7 - God without will was quite a mechanistic view, which would hardly make it a true theological and ethical factor.

8 - Divine speech was in mind. It's verbal reflection is in quranic recitations. Recitation is caused by a poem, but poem itself is not the recitation. He also saw a difference between a commanding and creative word. Both are present eternally, but only the creative is perpetually actual in the world. This interpretation was aimed against another anthropomorphist school called Hashwiya, which taught that every particle of the Divine speech was eternal. One of them called 'Ijli went so far to teach that the letters of Arabic abjad were His limbs and organs. Cf Arberry p.22.

9 - Attribute of a "Creator" remained very important for the Ash'ariyya. The most chapters of the Incoherence of the Philosophers argues on the fact, that philosophers lead to unbelief by doubting creation and promoting eternity of the world.

10 - Tritton, p.101; Mu'ammār's theory of time is similar to that of Augustine (Confessions XI). Although we don't have many reports of Mu'tazila debates on matter of time, it seems to be a reaction on the anthropomorphists too. Namely, there was a problem if God can change His decree.

11 - More about two interpretations of eternity - eternalist and temporalist - is in the article by Paul Helm in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Eternity", which is at the moment online available.

12 - cf Tritton p.177; On the other hand, he liked to show some intellectual superiority everywhere. Once he had an audience by the Byzantine emperor, whose meeting hall had so small doors, that one had to bow to enter. Baqillani thus entered backwards. An interesting stance he had also when debating; as Tritton comments, he would rather attack the principle of truth by definition than to admit his thesis was proven false.

13 - *ibid*; according to Baqillani, there is no difference in definition of a state and attribute.

14 - cf Tritton p.168; Baghdadian Mu'tazila considered granted endurance to be a cause of things' continuity to exist. In the same way, it could be seen with God: as He granting Himself it to His essence. Ash'ari disagreed with it, proclaiming that endurance was not an entity but a fact; not a cause, but an effect.

15 - cf Tritton p.185

16 - A more allegorical version of the story presents Ghazali, often depicting this grave difference between Mu'tazila and Ash'ariyya. A child dies and asks God: "Why did you let me die so soon?" God: "I knew you would sin and go into hell." Then a strong cry comes from Hell: "And why didn't you kill us to?"

17 - According to Leaman (cf p.109) the Ash'arite stance was such that the definition of good and justice changes not only in present and future times, but also in the past. Justice exists in a way, how it is defined by a divine act. Ash'ari looks

incoherent with his thoughts on the unchangeability of the divine knowledge, as God not only knows the meaning of good, but even controls it. Leaman's interpretation opens another problem. In the case of the three brothers, we may go into an extreme: in one moment, a divine act is good and just, but then comes a contrary one. One believer could be taken to heaven and later be punished. Is it possible, that the previous act, the reward, would become unjust? Or are both, despite being contrary, just? Ash'ari seems to choose the latter.

18 - cf Tritton p.168

### 5.1.2.Epistemology

The question "what can men know" became more important following the rising influence of philosophy. Ash'ari followed Jubba'i here: knowledge is belief in a certain fact about the things, while true is that knowledge, which is consistent with the real facts. It's the standard correspondence theory. Similarly, Ash'arites also taught difference between a necessary and acquired knowledge. Necessity isn't reflecting a causality or temporal order, but rather a hierarchy of meaning. Necessary knowledge is gained in a way, which can't be affected by will. Juwayni defined it in a way, that such knowledge carries an inherent proof within. According to Ash'ari, there are two types of necessary knowledge: at first there are facts known a priori (*yaqīni*), then sensual perceptions. Our mind is based on both of them. Rational knowledge is the acquired one<sup>1</sup>. Besides these, Juwayni mentions also intuitive knowledge, which is also unaffected by human will. It's content is, however, not necessarily predestined, it's a spontaneous imagination. Mind itself can't think alone, it has to work with a certain object, idea, which it would support or negate through arguments (*dalīl 'aqlī*). Usually, mind activates by a doubt about accuracy or sufficiency of the perception, but it doesn't have to be the only condition. Although a mind works with all knowledge, thanks to the Revelation we may define also another properties of certain knowledge: besides their necessity or acquirability also their moral value<sup>2</sup>.

Baqillani thought that if morale would be a certainty, necessary knowledge, all men would be able to agree with each other on it, what (apparently) isn't the case. Mind is able to discover, that the world is not eternal, as well as God, it's creator, what Ash'arites see as an obligation for everyone. Also His influence and presence of His messenger could be recognized by a mind alone. Necessities and obligations then, are all based on the Revelation, as well as the predicates of God, like limbs, His mercy and various characteristics of the prophets and imams. All Ash'arites but Qalanisi (*abú 'l-'abbás aHmad ibn ibrahīm al-qalānisi*) preferred empirical knowledge to be more exact than the rational. They used the traditional naming of the senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Baqillani added a

sixth sense, representing the feeling of pleasure or pain. It was usual to assert that God can be seen, for everything, what exists, can be seen as well<sup>3</sup>. Sight and hearing were for them the best sources of knowledge; mind is more a negative element, which defines the borders of acceptability of the facts, Revelation more a positive one, bringing content to be followed. Something like a philosophical ethics can't be defined here, every ethics can be negated. But also the Revelation is never enough effective, if it won't leave enough space for men to discover the foundation of its authority by the mind. Their collaboration is necessary, as if we would prefer one mean in spite of another one, we would be led astray by heresy or blind believe<sup>4</sup>.

The real task of Kalam was for them to support or create a method of formulations for religious jurisprudence. Perhaps in a reaction to the development of the philosophy, however, they tried to create a similar method for the profane sciences like physics and mathematics as well. Ash'ari's empirism is here in a brighter contrast with the Mu'tazili rationalism; especially with Nazzam, who as we have seen tried to describe all the phenomena in the nature by abstract notions of matter and motion. Ash'ari disagrees with an idea, that one and the same force would cause both power as well as weakness. They are two different accidents, which are present in a powerful resp. in a weak being. He saw it in a similar way with most qualitative accidents: they endure when they are perceived, not being based on the nature of the object, but of the perceiving subject, or their creator. A fire doesn't cause heat, only human feels it, when he comes near<sup>5</sup>. This idea occurs later in the Christian philosophy as well, known here as occasionalism<sup>6</sup>. A substance has no inherent power, which would have an influence on its environment. All influence is caused by the functional accidents, capacities. A capacity to act doesn't endure more than a duration of an act, being defined purely by the divine will. Not only the laws of nature and matter are created, as Nazzam thought, but also every single motion. Ash'arites tend to follow the idea to two characteristic extremes.

First is the negation of any notion of a natural causality, or nature in the meaning of inherent powers (*Tab'*). A natural law is a thing of formulation during an observation, God can change it in any time; thus it isn't needed to formulate it at all. A theologian could use this as an argument when somebody asserted a doubt his ideas about nature were relevant for the science. The second extreme is a negation of inherent endurance of all created beings. It's in fact a negation of time as such. The accidents don't endure in the substance, and thus even the substance alone is nothing, if it isn't perceived by its Creator. From this follows that the whole world is in every moment wholly destroyed and again recreated in a slightly different form by God. Human sees the changes and because of a character of his mind he

perceives it as a natural change. Both extremes are in fact just different formulations of the same idea: for the Ash'arites, time and causality are in a semantic equivalence. The idea came out from the debate on jabr doctrine: as an act of human is created by God, according to Jahm, the same applies to any spatio-temporal atom in the universe. This used also Ghazali<sup>7</sup> when criticizing the ideas about divine knowledge of Ibn Sina<sup>8</sup>. According to Ibn Sina, God knew only the universals, not particular situations. From an occasionalist view, God is the only relevant factor during any change in the material world. Thus He wants every situation, which occurs in the world. We see them in natural relations with another facts, those out of a common logic seem as miracles to us. Universals are thus just an imagination of a natural order, which comes out in a human mind.

The problem of universal terms had been present within Kalam already with the school of Ibn Karram (*abú 'abdulláh muHammad ibn karrám*) in the half of 9th century. Ibn Karram taught in Iranian city of Nishapur, a Sifati, devoted more to negate Mu'tazili doctrines on divine attributes than to systematicize his own teaching. It was said that none of his students but few could understand it<sup>9</sup>. However, in the teaching could already be seen few influences of new philosophic texts, which became available; for example he considered the divine will to be an eternal form. He also adopted few thoughts of Khawarij (idea, that everybody who hears a prophet should follow him even without a proof of his message), Mu'tazila (acknowledging, that good and evil could be defined by the mind alone) as well as Mushabbiha. A system into Karramiya doctrine was brought by Ibn Haysam (*muHammad ibn haySam*), who interpreted anthropomorphisms as allegories. He opens the matter of universals more in ontology than in epistemology. As primary attributes of God were His will and speech. Speech, which is reflected in quranic "Be"<sup>10</sup>, occurs when every particular thing is created, be it a substance or an accident. Every created thing is willed by God. The eternal divine will, however, is a will of universals; this will is a special substance on which subsist all possible accidents. Divine will would contain both good as evil as categories (unlike Jubba'i and Mu'tazila in general) what Ash'ari adopted as well. But Karramites, according to Tritton<sup>11</sup>, defined truth in a quite Platonic way. Moral categories could be understood only through the mind, and yet mind itself had to be restrained from searching proofs in case there was a prophet teaching what was good. Thus they were on a way to define an objective reality of universals, but their incoherence and Khariji-style antiintellectualism were barriers for it. Ash'arites reacted by denying any idea of universals, expecting that God is involved in every phenomenon directly.

The main common element of both Stoic and Ash'arite teachings was empirism, identification of knowledge with present, immediate perception. Subject and object are not in a clear distinction; human is a natural system, which is the same as what he perceives. Human is only better refined, able to hold the perceptions in memory and great quantity. The activity is, however, purely mechanical. For example, pressing a key is as well a motion of finger as well as of the key. Finger is no subject, though being defined so by human mind. The only subject is God as a creator of all changes, and also the motion in both things at once.

Ash'arite theory of necessary knowledge also resembles the idea of autonomous function of senses: they collect information on the environment whether we want or not, human mind can only think about it. Sight doesn't have to mean a consciously focused glance, it is a system perpetually collecting visual images, which may occur to be later examined by mind. They create impressions by physical necessity, not by any effect of will. Placita even says that the objects of perception stamp themselves on perceiving organs<sup>12</sup>. It's not only the general empiricism which Ash'arites seem to prefer; it's also their understanding of a knowing and perceiving subject, who is more like a spatial convergence of more autonomous systems. The soul has a leading part, the mind, which converges the impressions and proceeds with their development, but has no influence on their emergence. But as we can see, the necessity in physics had a fully different meanings for the Ash'arites. They saw every change in the universe as an act of divine will, not as an act of nature separated from God. The question is in how far the Stoics differed: is there any difference between divine knowledge and will?

In both views, God is the sole active and integral subject, and upon Him are based all the other natural laws. Ash'arite occasionalism may be interpreted as a denial of any natural law; especially when we consider their epistemology to be a reaction against that of Mu'tazila and philosophers. But from another view, it integrates God into physics, in the Stoic way known since their early exponents, not influenced by Platonic model of God. In the view of Mu'ammār, we saw God and natural law to be two subordinate eternal constants, which makes God a quite redundant category at all - as the causal chain of creators would follow ad infinitum. Ash'arites presented natural law as will of God, integrated into the world. Placita mentions the pantheist source of the natural law<sup>13</sup>, but it is hard to say if the book was their source. It is in a formal contradiction with Ash'arite voluntarist model, if we overlook the context, which seems of greater importance. These thoughts, however, may have been adopted from the earlier periods of Kalam. They may have been adopted from Nazzam, who already elaborated them a century ago. Nazzamite teaching was generally condemned by Ash'arite doxographers, but in these details they

extracted points which were parallel points with that of Stoics. The parallel remained only partial: unlike Stoic, the Ash'arite epistemology didn't have any consequences for their ethics. It seemed so that ethics taught by Revelation don't need any philosophical reasoning for legitimacy. The role of reasoning is to prove there is no other way.

An individual Stoic, in the end, defines his morale alone; and only then it is in a harmony with the divine will, if he would use the term. Flood of empirical data may lead the leading part to pathetic decisions, but it remains self-sufficient, as it is a seed of omnipotent God. On the other hand, Ash'arites saw a grave difference between the minds of men and God. Human can know the creation of things, but not the means, how to morally act with them. Thus he would search primarily for what he should be learned. Ash'ariyya teaches the identification of rationality and divine will in so deep extent that any rational being should have nothing else to do, than to search for any formulations of this will. Any categories of matter, including good and justice, would be only of a secondary value, abstractized by human for himself, having no real essence. These categories show not a principal value of things, they are an effect.

1 - Tritton p.187

2 - Tritton p.169

3 - Mentioned by Qalanisi as well (Tritton p.182)

4 - To quote Ghazali (*Ihya*-knowledge p.12): "Verily I pity no one as I pity a man who seeks knowledge but understands not, and him who who understands but seeks not."

5 - Tritton p.170; This interpretation shows a tendency, or rather its extreme, not an explicit formulation. From an interpretation of miracles (eg cf Shahrastani p.87) is obvious, that an "ordinary course of nature", which is placed in contrast or contradiction with a miraculous event, was not thought to be a random coincidence of two phenomena, but the causality, at least in a sense as defined by Mu'tazilites.

6 - It's another extreme interpretation, tough not as often formulated. Ghazali (*Tahafut* XI) says, that "everything besides Him is temporally created by Him trough His will", and also "nothing is everlasting but His essence", it doesn't have to mean already, that the created doesn't endure a certain period of time. The extreme was brought up by Baqillani, who thought, that matter has its inherent power to destroy itself. On the contrary, Qalanisi thought the matter has an inherent power to endure; creation and destruction are two different accidents, created by God in one moment, causing in next the substance' birth or annihilation.

7 - cf *Tahafut* XI; the problem is derived from a major difference in thought between Plato and Aristotle. Later it also characterized the development of Christian philosophy in Middle Ages. In these times many possible solutions were given: besides extreme realism and nominalism came up also compromises in teachings of Aquinus and Abelard. With Kant the problem seemed to be solved, however recent developments in logic show again uncertainties.

8 - Ghazali's reputation as a theologian could be in philosophy equalled perhaps only by Ibn Sina (*abú 'alí al-Husayn ibn*



*'abdallāh ibn siná*). Both were born in Transoxania and perfectly educated in both platonic and aristotelian philosophies; and too, both tend to see them as a single system, a wide tendency caused possibly by the apocryphal Theology of Aristotle, in fact an excerpt of Plotinus' Enneads. Metaphysics of Ibn Sina was inspired by Farabi's commentary on Aristotle. He thought, that God is an unmoving primary cause, which permanently creates a principial active intellect (*'aql al-fa'al*), where we also have a first difference between necessary and possible being. For Ibn Sina, a cause is necessary, an effect (eg existence of things) possible. This intellect, contemplating its own existence, creates a second intellect, which by its own contemplation creates a third one, developing still clearer form. There are ten of these intellects, being reflected on the contemporary cosmology: second intellect is the universe (sphere of the spheres), then follow the angelic and astral spheres, planets, Moon and finally ninth intellect is so clearly formed and remote from the source, that it is divided as a universal soul in all material being; tenth then is decomposed to individual souls of men. The idea, that divine power and knowledge over clearer particulars would diminish by development of creation, is itself unacceptable for Ghazali. Ibn Sina goes even deeper. Spirit, as the carrier of will and conscience, is never effective, when it isn't connected to matter by an active, changing soul. God wouldn't have no effect, if He wouldn't create humans. Thus God created human by necessity, for a certain goal - He needs him.

9 - Shahrastani p.92

10 - Q 16,40: "And Our word unto a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say unto it: Be! and it is."

11 - cf Tritton p.109: "truth is a report, which has a spiritual reality behind it"

12 - cf p.260; And not vice versa, the organs reaching the objects actively, by means of some rays, like the Atomists thought.

13 - cf p.149

### 5.1.3.Ethics

Another answer on the question of what men do lays beyond them. We prepare for ourselves a judgement, which we'll suffer after death. However, it would be hard to apply any moral category on an act, which is created by God. Could there be anything considered evil, when God is a creator of all human acts and He Himself also defines what is good and what not? It could be understood fatalistically: God creates human motives, circumstances and acts as well. He may create some people nominally as evil, while the act itself, creation, would be still considered as good. Ethical field, where human activity may be evaluated, would be only an introspective of will, understanding of the own situation. Ash'ari, trying to ascribe all activity to God, tried also to redefine freedom of will. A willed act is that, which has a goal determined by mind. If we are to act rationally, we have to consider all effects caused by the act, we need a detailed plan<sup>1</sup>. However, a human is very limited. We see only those consequences, which are closer and somehow connected to us. If we would think about past for personal development, we would find out that we didn't have much plans, but that we often had to make compromises and assimilate ourselves to the environment, thus accepting only certain

opportunities proposed by it. Thus we can say that a human has free will, in meaning that he can choose, but receives all other causes for an act from the environment<sup>2</sup>. That would be also the reason why he searches for God, who created these circumstances in a way, that human could find a clue about Him in them. Ash'ari develops here the idea of *kasb*, acquisition of an act, which was brought up first by Najjar. As we've seen, he thought, that every act has two agents: an active and a passive. Human will is free and untouched, but also powerless. God would be the one, who moves all things of the world and human can only want to stop or affirm it. We can only learn how to think in harmony with the divine will, with the circumstances which occur by us and according to which we may act. Practically, we can only declare ourselves to be agents.

Anthropology of Ash'arites is an attempt to find a middle way between *jabr* and *qadar* doctrines. We can feel the difference between an act, which we want, and those which happen unconsciously, like trembling; thus human has a free will<sup>3</sup>. But it isn't a Qadari as well. As we've already seen, we're not creators of our acts, nor of its moral value. We don't affect the causes and effects of acts, only its performance. An act is primarily a material change, motion of body. For example, writing this may be seen as a formulation of thoughts in language of letters, but also as an ordered motion of hands on a keyboard. There is a difference in the empirical data: we don't see the thoughts. Already Jubba'i tried to bring a materialist method. Human was primarily a body for him, soul was an accident, meaning constitution of an organism (*binya*) capable of bearing life<sup>4</sup>. Ash'ari twisted it: life could exist without a body, organism would not move without it. His argument was, that if life itself would be an accident of body, either one accident would have to exist in many atoms, or body would be just an ensemble of autonomously living atoms<sup>5</sup>; he found both ideas absurd. Ability to act, *istiTá'a*, occurs only during the act, as an accident of one time-unit<sup>6</sup>. Technically we aren't able to perform anything before we actually do so, as well as after it is done, as all circumstances change.

This idea was deeper developed in the thoughts of Baqillani. He identified life with a spirit, which he distinguished from soul. Human is for him a being, which gives to an event specific individuality and character, making it an act, which could be judged. In both cases it is knowledge, which connects a human with his act and environment. Human accepts a motive, and thus also an act too. The means of performance are derived from opportunities proposed by an environment. We can choose from them on basis of our knowledge, thus we can't speak about full predestination. If human doesn't want to do anything, then he doesn't have to, but when he wants, he has to hold on opportunities. If we want to write on a keyboard, we press a certain key with a letter, as our knowledge leads the finger to the

position of the correct key. This knowledge is empirical, unless we haven't constructed the keyboard by ourselves. Also, even if the knowledge has a certain power when determining the act, it doesn't mean the will is fully free and a man is the true creator of his acts. Perhaps that's why Baqillani says, that the difference between voluntary and involuntary activity is just a feeling; human becomes conscious of the fact, that he didn't choose the motion<sup>7</sup>. As we've seen in the previous chapter, Ash'arites thought that an individual person doesn't have the control over creation of his knowledge as well. The development was not one-sided. For example, politically active Juwayni criticized the kasb doctrine. To deny man a certain power or capacity to act would contradict the experience. If we would consider human power to be ineffective (*'ajz*), it would be a denial of the term of power as such. An act should come out of the power of man. However, Juwayni still accepts the Ash'arite differentiation between creation and acquisition of an act. To not diminish the divine power, he thought the human power has to be caused by something, thus defining God as the only independent being, a sufficient agent able to create something out of nothing<sup>8</sup>, in this context the capacity, present in the moment of action.

Perhaps the most important role of Kalam was to formulate obligations (*taklif*), which are given to men by means of Revelation. They are interpreted in the hard-line way. According to Ash'ari it is possible, that God obliges men to do something what they are incapable to. God Himself isn't obliged to anything; on the other hand, He doesn't have to show mercy (*tawfiq*) by creating belief, which contains the consciousness of the obligation as well as a motive for its fulfillment<sup>9</sup>. Belief is a certain knowledge, it contains both sincerity of heart as well as good external acts; there cannot be one without another. Only God may cause it, and thus an unbeliever is being placed outside the sphere of moral activity. An unbeliever has no possibility to do good, as he doesn't know his obligations and has no real term of "goodness" as well. The primary obligation, to know God as his creator, is imposed upon him, but not revealed. Only the others, while human has to recognize their use in particular situations. To know God brings immediately next obligations according to Quran and Sunna. As long as a human is rational and follows Quran<sup>10</sup>, his belief "grows", but if he commits a sin or ignores the obligations, he loses it. It is like the universal virtue of early Stoics, either we believe completely or not at all<sup>11</sup>. There can't be developed only one virtue without the others, as then the vices brake the integrity of the person as good. Juwayni formulated the idea, that goodness is more important than particularly good matters<sup>12</sup>. However, although the term of logos and God is the same as the creator of goodness in soul, it isn't so with evil. The Stoic doctrine differs in leaving more responsibility to an individual. Logos cannot by itself corrupt a man, only his own ignorance can, holding on a spontaneous idea without thinking it over. Ash'ari, however, speaks of leading astray and sealing hearts<sup>13</sup>. God is the creator of

evil as well; but not as an evil from His sight, but as an evil of man<sup>14</sup>. Evil is in the unbelief. Unbelief is not exactly the opposite of belief. It is a different belief, different idea of rationality, by which an unbeliever also can justify his actions. The stance of Ash'arites, seen often as a traditional Islamic view, is that in this way humans do damage to themselves. Stoic idea of rationality isn't bound to any Revelation or particular commands, it is a general ethics, which may contain the idea of an Ash'arite good believer as well as of a sinner with a "sealed heart". God, in the Ash'arite view, is a cause of both belief and unbelief, Stoic logos may develop only into the phronésis.

There is still a problem behind these thoughts left: even if we find the borders of human power and responsibility, it doesn't answer the question how it will be evaluated. According to Mu'tazila axioms, good should be rewarded by a just God. However, we've seen that God isn't affected by any conditions. Acts of God towards one does not imply, that He will do the same for another one<sup>15</sup>. His activity would be still just in the same way even if it from our viewpoint would change. Why does God have free hand and human only uncertainty? The goal seems to be to carry the ethical problems from levels of reasoning and philosophy, as the Mu'tazila did, to the Revelation and belief in it only. Revelation is clear with answers. Here lays also the main distinction to Stoics, who have always tried to equal morality with reason. In a personal development of virtue they expected no eschatological reward, as eudaimonia, a state of spiritual joy, is reached in the life. In Ash'arite notion of Paradise, reward and recompensation has to be at first deserved. Desert itself may be postulated as the meaning of an act: the goal is to be positively evaluable, to have no dirt on self before oneself and God as well. Both systems (as well as eg Christianity) find in this aspect a common notion of immediate evaluability. A person should act in every moment like if it was the last one. The same is in their understanding of character changing; in every moment should be a person aware of a possibility, that he is imperfect and may lose the faith<sup>16</sup>. Human could easily corrupt himself, if he doesn't direct his awareness on himself. An Ash'arite, as well as a Stoic, have a quite hard system of obligations, through which one gains a rational meaning of his own acts, but still must be sure, that he may lose this meaning in any time. It is more this negative idea of self-corruption, which makes human responsible, than the idea of good acts<sup>17</sup>. Ethics is complicated here as much as the ontology is simplified: I won't think about the motive or source of the situation, and thus I may face even such demands, which I won't be ready for<sup>18</sup>.

Ash'ariyya way of thinking was in the end at most defined by Ghazali. He tried to solve the problems, which came up from compromises made by Ash'ari, like the relation between divine justice and human freedom, as well as a meaning of declaration of faith. Ghazali recalls traditional stance on the

endurance of faith; but immediately he defines the term in a way to prevent any mixing with another terms, like that of faith and reward<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, his ethics (at least in his theological age) was identic with commands of the traditional texts. Reason is a tool only to discover, understand and implement them to life. Kalam and reasoning themselves don't create any ethical assertions, any norms or commands, they have only one meaning: to spread and support the religion in the nation<sup>20</sup>. As such, spiritual sciences were thought to be used only there, were they are necessary to support the basic creed. If somebody studies them only superstitiously, he may only "injure" his mind. Even few centuries later, historian Ibn Khaldun criticizes philosophy, logic and Kalam in the same way<sup>21</sup>. Ethical consequence of Ash'arite determinism was thus not a promotion of knowledge, as in the Stoic case, but rather a sceptic approach.

1 - cf Tritton p.171

2 - cf *al-Luma'* §96

3 - cf Shahrastani p.81; It's a matter of feeling, but also it remains a free choice to denominate it so. When we say something is our action, it is our freely. A similar definition of the sphere of influence may be read in Epictetus: "Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions. Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions." (*Enchiridion* §1)

4 - cf Tritton p.145

5 - cf Tritton p.171

6 - Hourani p.121: "No one can do a thing before he does it"; There is a distinction between Ash'arites and Stoics in understanding of the objective future. Either it is a gradually developed causality in time or the world has no causality, enduring purely on the will of God, it is in no way a cyclical time. However, for both traditions the higher importance was ascribed to an individual life-time. Questions were like how God defines the time of death or other occurrences. Also, while the early Stoics agreed on some logic in divination, Epictetus (Discourses II,7) did not. Not that he would disagree with a method or trustworthiness of divination in general, but he says the information gained by it won't show to us what is important. Only individual reason may do so.

7 - cf Tritton s.180; The difference between a necessary and acquired act isn't more deeply developed. In fact, Ash'ari himself said, that humans acquire their voluntary and involuntary facts in the same way (*al-Luma'* §95).

8 - Shahrastani (p.83) says this idea was inspired by "metaphysicians" - (Neo)Platonists.

9 - cf Shahrastani p.81

10 - Hourani (p.38) speaks much about the connection between guidance (*hudá*), Revelation and rationality in general. He also cites Q 39,17-18 ("Announce the good news to my servants who listen to the statement and follow the best of it. They are the ones whom God has guided, and they are the possessors of minds."), where the identification of being rightly guided, following Quran and being rational ("possessor of mind") is written explicitly.

11 - cf Colish p.46; She mentions the term *tonos* ("tension") is based on an idea of harmony between thoughts of a human and of God. It is no harmony of norms, words, which we see in Revelation, the idea was more musical, like when two strings - will of God and human mind - are being tuned to the same tone. Of course, God defines the tone and mind is

obliged (if not "set") to follow it.

12 - cf Tritton p.189

13 - cf Hourani p.122; Q 13,27

14 - *al-Luma'* §97: "q: Has not God, then, created the injustice of creatures? a: He created it as their injustice, not as His."; In §107 is this view a little more clear: question is, whether evil comes from God (the debate is continuing a problem, whether an evil-doer or a cause of evil is worse, where Ash'ari chooses the latter), then he answers, that God was a creator of everything, not "only" of evil. He uses an analogy to saying, that we may accept, that the whole world belongs to God, but it would be absurd to say that a particular woman or what would belong to Him. By induction we may say, that He knows the whole, but doesn't deal with particular facts, a problem answered by Ghazali in the opposite way. A possible interpretation would be, that evil, justice and ownership are only relations between men; however this would imply, that God is neither good, nor just, nor the world belongs to Him, what would be *ta'Til* and in general a quite unorthodox formulation. This distinction of particular and general is often a weak spot of the Ash'arite Kalam.

15 - In §186 of *al-Luma'* is the problem of particular and general viewed from another aspect. The question comes out of Q 82,14 ("while the profligate will certainly be in a burning fire"), whether these profligate men (including believers) are condemned forever? Ash'ari points out, that the verse has no quantifier, also it could mean for all as well as for only some of them. Suddenly he abandons this argument, because if it was applied on Q 39,53, God would forgive all sins.

16 - Shahrastani p.82; Arabic language has no distinct conjugation for imperfect/present and future tense of verbs, thus a standard declaration "I'm a believer" would mean "I'll be a believer" as well (ie *aná mu'min*). Thus it would be correct to add always "if God wills" (*inša'alláh*) to it.

17 - *al-Luma'* §85; "faith is good (*Hasanan*), toilsome (*mut'iban*) and painful (*mu'liman*)"

18 - This will be seen as one of the major differences with the school of Maturidi.

19 - cf *Ihya-faith* II,2; (quot.Ibn Mas'úd) "If I say that I am a believer it will be like saying that I am in Paradise.", on which reacts Yazid ibn 'Amira: "O Companion of the Apostle of God, what is belief except to believe in God, His angels, books and aspostles, as well as in resurrection and the balance, and to perform prayer, observe the fast, and pay alms. Yet we have trespasses which, if we but knew that they will be forgiven us, we would know that we will be of the people of Paradise. For this reason we say that we are believers, but we do not say that we are of the people of Paradise."

20 - *ibid*; "Disputation...has only one benefit: it preserves the creed for the common folk and safeguards it against the confusion of innovators by different kinds of argumentation."

21 - cf *Muqaddima* VI,31

## 5.2.Maturidiya

### 5.2.1.Epistemology

Where Ash'ari differs from Stoa at most, Maturidi seems to be much closer to them. The main difference between Ash'arites and Maturidites in Kalam reflected that between Hanafi and Shafi'i schools of Fiqh. Namely, Maturidi taught it was possible to judge good and evil by reason alone. One doesn't imply from the creation the existence of the Creator only, but also his relation to Him. He speaks of signs in the nature (*dalá'il*), which we perceive and through it we come to knowledge of God, as well as about His knowledge, wisdom and unity; through knowledge about the divine wisdom, one finds the notion of morality. However, Maturidi also adds that it would be insufficient to rely on the senses only, as that would imply too deep connection between God and the world. Between one of his definitions, world is that, what is apart from God<sup>1</sup>. Thus Maturidi still promotes the tradition, speaking of prophets, to whom He speaks directly<sup>2</sup>.

In other points, the epistemology of Maturidi wasn't very different from the Ash'arite one. Human is defined in an aristotelian way as a living, mortal creature, equipped by reason<sup>3</sup>. He preferred empirical knowledge instead of rational as well, although he found that truth could be reached only by cooperation of one with the another. Unlike the Mutakallimun of Iraq, he didn't distinguish necessary and acquired knowledge and focused on the means of its acquisition: knowledge could be sensual (*i'yán*), intellectual (*'aql*) or learned from the others (*sam'*, lit."heard"), while every type helps to evaluate the truth value of another two. Sensual knowledge is composed of perceptions (*'ilm al-Hiss*), which are clear and certain, but also very limited. It perceives the parts of the world, an ability common to all living beings. Intellect, on the other hand, tries to understand the whole by speculation (*naZar*); thus it is composed of conclusions (*'ilm al-istidlál*). Disadvantageous on it would be, that often two conclusions while speculating over the same matter may contradict each other, and in this case the senses would have to judge. Also the learned knowledge doesn't include only the Revelation, but everything taught to us. Maturidi was cautious when speaking about this learned knowledge; he thought that taqlíd, trusting authority without reasonable proof of it, was the primal source of errors in theology, and also the cause of plurality of the Community. Knowledge from a single source is not only inaccurate without a certain support of another one, but also it can't be created at all. Even in perception, it is the mind, which defines and names a thing. Inversely, the intellect must follow certain premises acquired through perception. Maturidi didn't have to mention, that even while learning there

has to be perceived a text or voice, as well as the mind has to understand it.

1 - Otherwise, the part could have been a criticism of putting too much value on signs instead of significant, such as Quran (49,37) mentions: "Among His signs are the night and the day, and the Sun and the Moon; adore not the Sun and the Moon, but adore the God, who created them, if you wish to serve Him."

2 - cf Rudolph s.293

3 - cf Rudolph p.335 (quot.Maturidi 43,3)

### 5.2.2. Physics

The debates at Transoxania were way too different from those of Iraq. Maturidi himself considered the questions of physics to be of only secondary importance<sup>1</sup>. He was reacting not only on Mu'tazila, but also against Manichees and Isma'ilis. Manicheists were more materialist and dualist movement<sup>2</sup>: in their ideas we have two substances, where one tries to gain supremacy over and consume the other. Both substances, physically described as light and darkness (matter) or ethically as forces of good and evil, were also a source of their motion. External properties, gained by bodies, were not important for Manichean philosophy; only their primary cause was important, all other attributes would be only derived from it. Isma'iliya based its (meta)physical teaching on Neoplatonism, they were more idealistic and monists, they believed in a hidden ideal world, while the material one is its reflection. Matter itself has no inherent capacity to change. Accidents do change according to the presets in the eternal forms. Substance, however, is always united, controlled by divine reason. All the characteristics of the material world - temporariness, quantity, dialectics - were just to be illusive reflections of the hidden, unified reality. Mu'tazila offered the atomist compromise to this debate: there was to be only one principle (as they were still Muslims), ideal, but functioning as a *causa prima* in the material world, composed of atoms and their accidents. Maturidi himself reacted especially on Ka'bi, who inspired him with the idea, that bodies endure due to a granted accident of endurance, giving the atom a spatio-temporal meaning. Maturidi's teaching, however, is in general speaking about matter as a continuous phenomenon. Matter can be divided into bodies and parts, in theory *ad infinitum*; one can't speak about a unit of existence, an atom (*jawhar wáHid*).

In previous chapters we've seen similar views of Dirar ibn 'Amr and Nazzam. As many contemporary theologians (as well as scientists), Maturidi was using the terminology of objects (*a'yán*) and accidents



(*a'ráD*), where the former denotes a perceivable whole, a body (also *maHsús*) and the latter its properties. Of accidents, similarly as Dirar's student Najjar, he also distinguished some as enduring, common to all bodies<sup>3</sup>. These are constituents, not mere reflections, of the substance. Najjar thought, that the constitutive accidents fill space (*taHayyuz*); these include perceivable properties as color or taste, but also abstract ones like for example life. Maturidi uses a similar term of nature (*Tabá'i*<sup>4</sup>), which may be defined as primary qualities of a body. Natures are denoting more objective properties, an essence of a body, instead of focusing on empirical source, if there could such a distinction made. Namely, these natures account to the ancient attributes of heat, cold, moistness and dryness; specific on them is their contrary effect on each other, all try to divide themselves from each other<sup>5</sup>. At first sight, the universe of Maturidi seems to be very dialectical; substances of matter are mutually destructive natures, while all other accidents are thought to be created by their interaction and (very) temporary configuration. A very interesting fact about this idea is, that he uses it in a debate against Manichees: their dualist stance wasn't correct, as empirical knowledge leads us to at least four natures, yet if we don't count the bodies (*ajsám*) themselves (substance, which unites the natures) as a fifth principle. Then Maturidi refutes also the dialectic ontology. Contrariness of natures was for him a proof, that these powers don't really have any inherent power at all, but they are empowered by God in a way that leads to their perfect configuration in the world<sup>6</sup>. Natures try to part from each other, and thus if there was no God reordering them, they would never constitute a body. Maturidi applies the same functionality to a human. There are various contrary desires, needs and feelings in our souls, while there is a mind, which weakens them or focuses them in a right direction<sup>7</sup>. The ontological notion may remind us on early Stoic physics of an active God, configuring the passive matter composed of four elements. Configuring, or controlling (*tadbih*) of matter contains creation, formation, enduring (*baqá'*) and destroying too. However, it isn't this, in which the traditions of early Stoa and Maturidiyya come close. Later Maturidite scholar Salimi (*abú šakúr as-sálimi*), reacting in fact against the "natural philosophers"<sup>8</sup>, pointed out a difference in definition between an element and nature; which would perhaps better mark a distinction between Maturidi and Najjar. Element itself may be understood as a wider body, changing its mass and spatial dimensions in spite of another element. Natures were to be more of an accidental character, a form of matter: they don't "subsist in themselves, but substances and organs"<sup>9</sup>. However, although Maturidi could only do better for himself by using a scientific argument when proving the unity of God, the context itself was more important for him than an accuracy of a part.

1 - Rudolph (s.289) expects this to be an influence of Sufis, who were very numerous in the region. They were spreading

belief mostly between the nomadic population; religions of settlers were in general more distinct and in terms of systematic theology also more detailed. Samarqand itself was an ancient junction between two great caravan routes between China and the West: northern route from Black Sea and Russian cities through Khwarizm and southern (the well-known Silk Road) from Levantine shore through Baghdad and Marw. From Samarqand led generally a single route through the Tarim Basin to the great rivers. This brought a very colorful demographic composition for the city, as well as frequent shifting of eras of intensive progress and rapid downfall; the same reflected on its intellectual scene. For peculiarities of the intellectual life of Central Asia see Adshead (1993).

2 - Another great dualist religion, beside Manichees, which gained some support in Transoxania, was a gnostic sect of Nabateans, worshipping John the Baptist as the real Christ. They were accepted as *ahl al-kitáb* in the Muslim world in general. Few disciples of Nazzam (*aHmad ibn HáiT* and *al-faDl al-Hadabi*) worshipped one eternal and one created God (Jesus), who created humans and himself had a human form. Beside that, Ibn Hait also did accept eternity of the world (in fact of five worlds - primordial, two heavenly, our "testing" world and hell), another important problem, which Maturidi criticized. See Tritton, p.137

3 - cf above §4.3.1.2., Rudolph p.290, Baghdadi §196

4 - Maturidi adopted the term from Ka'bi. Root *Tab'* means nature, as well as pressure; it reflects an idea of animal instincts or four humors, on whose equilibrium Galen defined health. Rudolph translates the term *Tabá'i'* as "die Naturen". Here it means a nature of a body, not nature in general, physis; however, out of context would be the meaning blurry in arabic as well. Similarity of Maturidi's physical theory with those of Dirar and Najjar was marked out already by his student Nasafi (*abú 'l-mu'in an-nasafi*). As Rudolph (p.280) adds, this similarity may distract us from seeing a difference between *a'ráD* and *Tabá'i'*, where natures are no spatial entities.

5 - It's obvious, that these primary qualities are based on an older (mythical) idea of four basic elements of matter - fire, air, water and earth - while the idea was a foundation of the early Stoic cosmogony as well (see DL VII,137).

6 - Rudolph, p.284; Actually, there are six principles: God, bodies and four natures; from these are made all objects (*a'yán*) and their accidents (*a'ráD*). If we would need an ontologic hierarchy, bodies and natures are secondary forms. Objects and accidents are nominally defined parts of our perception, more epistemic than ontologic categories.

7 - *Tawhíd* V,2; Natures, desires and pain were thought to be common for the world in general as well as for its smaller form, microcosm (*'álam aS-Saghir*) - a human.

8 - Rudolph, p.286; As already known, Horovitz shows (p.14) evidence this term (*aT-Tabá'i'íya*) was used for Stoics or their later theologian followers. However, he adds that the term may denote a discipline of science instead of a particular school, like Ghazali does (*Ihya-knowledge*, p.47). On the other hand, Salimi criticizes a particular idea of natural philosophers, that of seeing nature as a fine substance (*jawhar laTif*), which seems to be of Stoic origin. If we recall note above §2.2.2.n.2, about the difference in theology between Zeno and Cleanthes, it may have been so the Zeno's position (namely that God was made of a fine fire) was less acceptable.

9 - *ibid*; For comparison: "Hence, again, their explanation of the mixture of two substances is, according to Chrysippus in the third book of his Physics, that they permeate each other through and through, and that the particles of the one do not merely surround those of the other or lie beside them." (DL VII,151)

### 5.2.3. Metaphysics

In his Book of Unity (*kitáb at-tawHid*) Maturidi uses two arguments, reflecting a physical theory. The problem had been already mentioned many times: foundation of the Muslim creed is, that there is only one, unique God. It was no problem within Ash'arite and Mu'tazila discourse; Iraqi kalam uses this creed more as a premise, harmony or contradictoriness of a theory with it was to serve as an argument. On the one hand, Manichees possessed a widely developed worldview based on two principles, while a dialectical debate with them would itself support their opinion. The apparent difference of opinions could be understood as an influence of two different Gods: of two moral systems, two different beliefs. In physics, the point of discussion between them and Islam wasn't in such a contrast. In fact, we've seen that contrariness of natures within a body was used as an argument for an idea of a higher power, which holds them all. The problem is, if there could be two such powers, which would form things differently, according to their own properties. Muslim theologian had to deal also with many questions of theodicy and plurality of religions; idea of a devil could lead to a certain dualism as well<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, there was another opponent, which accepted an idea of God, parted from the world and known through prophets and imams. The teaching of Ismai'liya, however, included also an everlasting influence of God on His creation; He can't "turn" His activity somewhere else. He perpetually creates the world, what leads to an idea, that it endures forever (*dahr*), despite temporariness of its particular phenomena. Endurance of the world would mean then, there are two eternal entities. The idea is criticized in a similar way as by Jubba'i and Ash'ari: two eternal things would mean two Gods. Maturidi uses against this "Dahriyya" arguments based on empirical as well as on traditional knowledge<sup>2</sup>.

Traditional arguments are primarily those of Quran, but they include even such ones, like semantic connection between number "1" and glory or power. Quran itself is clear in the matters like unity of God and creation of the world. One would argue, that a dualist would not accept such an argument, which expects from him to be Muslim. Authority of Quran would be the matter of question; however Maturidi states, that if there were two (or more) Gods, another one would try to prevent any monist Revelation. If He would, there would be two Gods in a conflict. Reality would be of a dialectic essence, what Maturidi considers to be an absurdity and thus an argument for him, what may be questioned, as conflict of principles is exactly what Manichean metaphysics uses as a foundation. However, the idea is developed further. A conflict would mean certain insufficiency in power, which both sides try to solve somehow; even if one of the parties would be in a superior position<sup>3</sup>. Insufficiency of power would mean a contradiction with God's omnipotence: if a being may gain or lose something, it changes,

therefore it can't be eternal and not a God. Of empirical arguments, Maturidi uses the already mentioned problem of natures, both. In a way quite as Stoics did. Against dualists he says, that contrariness at first needs a unified principle of interaction and formation; reversibly, their configuration also seems to be based on a unified principle. Against Dahriyya he asserts, that the influence of natures is always very limited. They can't uphold their configuration forever, and thus also an everlasting existence of a thing. Maturidi continues, that finite parts can't compose an infinite whole; thus also the world is temporarily limited<sup>4</sup>. World itself is insufficient for its own upholding, it can't endure as a whole forever. It needs an external principle, which would also be its cause of existence, motion and all the accidents<sup>5</sup>.

The idea, that this principle can't be material, is refuted only by tradition - besides Revelation, there are is nobody saying he lived from the beginning of the world. In general, he doesn't refute the Dahriyya completely, he only relativizes their assertion. If God wanted, the world could endure forever, in question would be then the beginning. Maturidi uses yet an interesting ethical argument against the Manichees, namely that nobody is completely good or evil. We're not perfect, but nor we are fully incapable<sup>6</sup>. He thought, that Manicheism didn't give much free space for human efforts or rationality, ethics was purely a matter of choice. In an everlasting world there would be no final goal, which would define this rationality; or which would be possible to discover by a mind and in which its sense would be fulfilled.

1 - According to Quran, the devil (*şayTán*) may influence human only by distracting his awareness of God and the truth; for example by wine or hazardous games (Q 5,91).

2 - Rudolph, p.258-264 & 299-302

3 - An interesting solution to the problem, contrary to that of Stoics (and later that of Maturidi), was an idea of an infinite (spatially, materially and temporarily as well) world, whose configuration would be based on a chance; the idea of Democritus and atomists. In such a world, there could theoretically be at once an infinite number of Gods. If their domains were perfectly isolated, their omnipotence would be sustained. Maturidi's arguments don't consider an infinite whole composed of infinite parts; medieval logic didn't have tools of dealing with such problems yet.

4 - For comparison: "They hold that the world must come to an end, inasmuch as it had a beginning, on the analogy of those things which are understood by the senses. And that of which the parts are perishable is perishable as a whole. Therefore the world itself is doomed to perish." DL VII,141

5 - Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* I,3) uses these arguments (primal mover and cause) as two of his famous "ways to prove God's existence".

6 - Rudolph p.302

## **6. Conclusion**

Stoics entered the field of Kalam generally only there, where the tradition was silent: in psychology of Nazzamites, in physics of early Jabrites and Maturidites, in epistemology of Ash'arites. Their reception was vague, they were thought of as mere "natural philosophers" of the past, who nevertheless excited interest by their themes, unusual in the contemporary science. Even if this interest was never as intense as in case of Aristotle, Galen or Ptolemy, it was enough to incite debates with a worldview, which may not have been so different as that of most Stoics, although different in details. It was a way to see divine directions not only in proscribed laws and texts, but in everything actually happening, thus being open to a wider experience, transcending subjective convictions and expectations in the try to discover the universal one.

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