Contribution of al-Ash'arī to Islāmic Thought
&
His Influence on the Later 'Ilm al-Kalām

ABSTRACT
THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN

PHILOSOPHY

BY

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In the Name of Allah

ABSTRACT

This is the abstract of my thesis entitled 'Contribution of al-Ash'ari to Islamic Thought and His Influence on the later Ilm al-Kalam'.

I have mentioned in my thesis, in its preface, a short account of Asha'ri's biography. In his biographic account I have mentioned about his life and works and how he converted to his own school of thought, named after his name, from M'utazilism. Abu Ali al-Jubbai was his teacher and he acquired education from him and remained with him for about forty years of his life. Abu Ali al-Jubbai, being a M'utazilite, stressed more on reason than revelation. Asha'ri also had followed his path, but he was not satisfied.

He again and again put his perplexity and anxiety before him, especially when he was defeated by his opponents in any assembly discussion (munazara). He, ultimately, decided to abandon M'utazilism, or the attitude of giving more importance to reason

than revelation. God helped al-Ash'ari, as He always does, by sending His Prophet in his dream who guided him to follow the path of righteousness. Ultimately Ash'ari decided to defend orthodoxy. He posed the question of three brothers (for details see the thesis), where he wanted to justify that reason is not enough to solve every problem.

In the Introduction, first chapter, I discussed 'Ilm al-Kalām', its meaning, sources and influences. Under the heading of **sources** I have mentioned Islamic and Non-Islamic sources. Islamic sources comprise the Qur'ān and the Tradition where there is emphasis on knowledge and its acquisition. Thereafter I have mentioned Greek and Indo-Persian influences under the heading of Non-Islamic sources and influences. In this section I wanted to show how scholasticism originated and how the translators got access to Greek learning that influenced Muslim mind.

In the second chapter I discussed different schools of thought existed before al-Ash'ari. I, in this chapter, depended mostly on Ash'ari's book '*Maqālāt al-Islā miyin wa Ikhtilāf al-Muslliyin*'.

Ash'ari has mentioned ten schools but I chose only six that are very important for further discussion. I have divided 'Ilm al-Kalām into early and later phases. In the early phase I included Jubriyah, Qadariyah, Khawāij, Shi'aism and Murji'ah, while I discussed M'utazilism under the later phase of Kalām.

I devoted third chapter for the discussion of Ash'arism. Here I depended most on Ash'ari's books *'al-Ibāna 'an Usul- al-Diyānah and 'Kitab al-Luma' fi Radd 'ala Ahl al-Zarigh wa al-Bida'* and *Istihsān al-Khawz fi 'Ilm al-Kalām.*

'Kitab al-Luma' and Risalah on *Ilm al-Kalām* were translated by Mc Carthy under one title, *'The Theology of Al-Ash'ari'*. In most cases I have quoted this book.

In this chapter I have shown how al-Ash'ari justified God's Unity and His attributes and that these attributes are neither identical nor separate from His Essence. Ash'ari justified the Qur'ān being uncreated, while M'utazilites believed it to be created. Ash'ari justifies man to be acquirer of his deeds while M'utazilites advocate of his being creator of his deeds. Ash'ari justifies beatific vision while M'utazilites denied it. Ashari briefly, justifies revelation while

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M'utaziles justify the supremacy of reason. This practice, I mean, justification of supremacy of revelation over reason, was followed by later Ash'arites. These later Ash'arites I have included in the last chapter.

In this chapter I have mentioned Bāqillāin, Juwaini and Ghazāli. Bāqillāni built metaphysical and epistemological bases for his schools of thought. He says that world is composed of substances and accidents. These substances and accidents are transitory and always need a Creator for their existence.

In his epistemological theory he divides knowledge into necessary and acquired, and gives importance to necessary ones. In this necessary knowledge he includes intuitive as well as authoritative knowledge. In this authoritative knowledge Divine knowledge interferes. He justifies this authoritative knowledge to be the most authentic one. Al-Juwaini followed him and al-Ghazali extendrd this school of thought. Ghazali not only refutes the philosophers and their beliefs on the basis of reason but also justifies Islamic tenets.

Ghazāli in his *'Tahāfat'* describes propositions of the philosophers and denies them to be true. He chooses three out of them and charges the upholders of them with infidelity and irreligiously. According to him those who believe, even a Muslim, in the (i) eternity of the world, and deny (ii) God's knowledge of the particulars and (iii) resurrection of bodies are infidel. Apart from, they are not infidels but heretics. In this book, he rationally proves that the philosophers are not true in their claims and beliefs.

He also rejects their theory of causation, especially the principle that everything is necessarily related to cause effect nexus and that only one thing can proceed from one. This is necessary because one cannot justify the occurrence of miracles. Miracles play an important role in Islamic Shariah.

In his endeavor he doubts sense perception, because he is a true seeker of the Truth. Truth is something where there is no possibility of error. He believes in reason but revelation is more important than reason, because reason is a human effort while revelation is Divine knowledge that he justifies in his 'Ihya 'Ulum al-Din' (Revivification of the sciences of the religion).

Contribution of al-Ash'arī to Islāmic Thought
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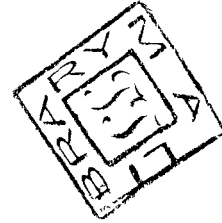# His Influence on the Later 'Ilm al-Kalām

THESIS

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DEDICATED

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This is to certify that Mr. Ataur Rahman has done his research work entitled **"Contribution of al-Ash'ari to Islāmic Thought and his Influence on the later 'Ilm-al-Kalām"**, leading to Ph.D. degree under my supervision. I am pleased to testify that the work is original . Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari, who has made a significant contribution to Philosophy and theology, was little known to the intelligentsia. I am confident that this thesis, when published, would be a fair acknowledgement of al-Ash'ari's contribution and would also bring home the aspects of his study so far undiscovered by the scholars.

I wish him all success and recommend strongly that the thesis may be submitted for the award of Ph.D. degree.

Dr. TASADDUQ HUSAIN
Reader (Muslim Philosophy)

Acknowledgement

Praise be to my Lord, the Sustainer of the worlds, and peace be upon His Prophet Mohammad.

My grateful acknowledgement is due to the inspirations of my grandmother and parents who always prayed for my success in all walks of life. I am also grateful to my brother, sisters, father-in-law, wife and children for the same.

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Ataur Rehman

Contents

Preface

Preface

The present study has been taken up to critically examine the contribution of Abul Hasan 'Ali b. Ismā'il al-Ash'ari to Muslim thought. He has rendered many invaluable works, some of which have been carried to us and others unfortunately have become extinct. All the available works have also not been translated into English and the ones which have been rendered into English are not translations up to the mark. We will mostly depend, in the body of our work, on the original Arabic versions of his works. We will make our best efforts to bring home the potentials that al-Ash'ari possessed. He indeed enjoys a pivotal position in the History of Islamic thought. He wanted to present the mid-way between the rationalists and the orthodoxy; both the schools played an important role in the growth of knowledge and development of Islamic civilazation. We have to examine this mid-way-solution which ultimately came closer to the Orthodoxy and resulted into puritanical endeavour to save Islam of all outside influences. Al-Ash'ari made a beginning to achieve this objective but, as we shall see later, he never wanted, perhaps, to overlook philosophy as his successors did in the later ages. He, however, averted the trend of rationalism which dominated for long the scene of Islamic thought.

In the proceeding lines we will give an account of his life and works to substantiate what has been said earlier.

Al-Ashari's biographical account is found in several books such as Ibn 'Asakir's[1] *"Tabyin-al-Kadhib-al-Muftari fi ma Nusiba ila al-Imam 'Abi-al-Hasan al-Ash'ari"* (The Exposure of the calumniators lying concerning what has been inputed to the Imam Abu-al-Hasan al-Ashari) summerized in English by Mc Carthy with the tittle *"Ibn 'Asakir's*

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Apology[1] ' Ibn Khalqan's *"Wafa yat al-Aayan wa Anba, 'Abna al-Zaman"*
and al-Subki's *"Tabaqat-al-Shafiyiyah al-Kubra"* V.II. Out of these Ibn-
A'sakir's book is the basic source of his life and works. This book is
devoted to the vindication and glorification of al-Ash'ari and all other
biographers do not have much to add to the accout presented by Ibn
'Asakir except some stray events which we will point out during the
course of our discussion.

Most of the biographers agree that al-Ash'ari was a descendent of
Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, a Companion of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and a
famous arbitrator in the Battle of Siffin between Ali and Muawiyah. Abu
Musa al-Ash'ari was the ninth forebear of Abul Hasan a-Ash'ari in the
ascending line. Ibn 'Asakir does not agree with the geneology given by
al-Ahwazi who does not believe that al-Ash'ari was the descendent of
Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, but his account may not be reliable for other
biographers seek no

concurrence with the thesis. Rather, reacting upon this Ibn 'Asakir says:
"(besides mentioned earlier) in another (testimony) reported from Abu
baker b. Uthman b. Muhammad, the Imam of Baghdad, the genealogy is
traced back through eight intermediaries to Abu Musa"[2].

One great grandfather of Abu Musa al-Ashari was born with hair
on his body and hence was called al-Ash'ar (hairy), thus the generation of
al-Ash'ari whose name was otherwise Nabt, was then called al-Ash'ari.
Al-Ash'ar was the twelfth forebear of Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari in the
ascending line [3].

Al-Ashari's name is Ali and Abul-Hasan is his nickname
(kunniyat). Abul-Hasan's lineage is as follows : Abul-Hasan 'Ali b.
Ismā'il b. Abu Bashr Ishaq b. Salim b. Ismā'il b. 'Abdullah b. Musa b.

Bilal b. Abi Burdah 'Amir b. Abi Musa al-Ashari (the companion of the Prophet) b. Qais b. al-jamahir b. al-Ashar b. Odad [4]. Ibn khalqan adds two more names to his pedigree after Odad b. Zaid b. Yashjab"[5].

Al-Ash'ari was born in Basra in the year 260/873-4. Though there is difference of opinion regarding his date of birth, yet Ibn 'Asakir firmly ascertains 260 A.H. as his year of birth [6]. But Ibn Khalqan is not certain about the year, rather he agrees to his being born between 260 and 270 A.H [7].

It is believed that after the death of his father Ismail, al-Ashari was entrusted to the care of the shafi'te jurisprudent Zakariya (b. Yahya) al-Saji.[8] Dhahabi[(ii)] holds that "he aquired the knowledge of Tradition from Zakariyah (b.Yahya) al Saji[(iii)] and Knowledge of Polemics *(Jadal)* and reasoning (nazr) from Abu-Ali al-Jubbai[9]. Ibn Khalqan saya that al-Ash'ari used to sit in the meeting of Abu Ishaq al-Marvazi[(iv)] every Friday in the Masque of al-Mansoor in Baghdad [10].

From the foregoing testimonies we can identify al-Ash'ari as a man of Tradition and jurisprudence. Subki also establishes his being a Traditionist and juris-consult by referring to some of the traditions and judicial interpretation, stating with *asnad,* carrying to the Prophet [11].

He was, however, reputed as a Mutakallim, rather the Imam-al-Mutakallimin. He started his career as a Mutazilite and continued to be the same for forty years of his life. He was an erudite disciple of Abu Ali al-Jubba[(v)], the chief of the Mu'tazilites in Basra, and al-Ash'ari lived with him under his training for forty years of his life defending the Mu'tazilities beliefs. He then being dissatisfied with this movement and commanded by the Prophet three times in dreams in the month of Ramadan, abandoned the Mu'tazilism and began to defend the Orthodoxy

with the help of reason. Al-Ash'ari's conversion seems to have taken place in the year 300/ 912-13.[12]

About his conversion many stories have been narrated, but all the account, related from the six ways *(Turuq)*, have a common theme with some differences. In the following lines we will try to justify this claim.

About his perplexity and dissatisfaction it is said that after the Shaikh Abul Hasan had gone deeply into the Mu'tazilite Kalām and mastered it he used to propose questions to his masters but when he got no satisfactory answer to his questions he became perplexed.

The evidence about his perplexity may be seen in this account : Al-Ash'ari was the disciple of al-Jubbai, under whom he studied and from whom he acquired learning, never leaving him for forty years. He was a master of learning in the assemblies and boldly attacked opponents. So when the necessity of attending the assemblies weighed heavy on him he used to send al-Ash'ari as his representative. That went on for a long time. One day al-Ash'ari was representing al-Jubbai in an assembly when another disputed with him and overcame him in the dispute. A companion of al-Ash'ari, one of the common people, started sprinkling almonds and sweetmeats on him. But al-Ash'ari said to him,. "I have done nothing. My opponent has triumphed over me and explained the argument and reduced me to silence. He is more deserving of your favour than I am". After that incident he manifested repentance and changed his belief[13].

This repentance is said to have manifested in seeking guidance from Allah. Consequently, He helped al-Ash'ari by sending His Prophet to him in dreams three times in the month of Ramadan.

This prestigious event occurred in the following way : "And it is related of him (al-Ash'ari) that he said : one night there occurred to my

mind a dogmatic question which had been occupying me. So I rose and prayed two rakas and after asking God to guide me along the straight path, I fell asleep. While I slept I saw the Apostle of God and I complained to him about the matter which was perplexing me and the Apostle of God said, you must hold fast to my Sunna! Then I awoke and I compared the theses of Kalam with what I found in the Quran and the Traditions and I affirmed the latter and cast all else away" [14].

The detailed account of this dream is as follows : Al-Ash'ari said : while I was asleep during the first decade of Ramadan, I saw Mustafa and he said : O' Ali, defend the doctrines related from me, for they are the truth". When I awoke I was considerably perturbed and gave much anxious thought to my vision and my pre-occupation with elucidating the proofs concerning the contrary position, then came the second decade and I saw the Prophet in my sleep and he said to me : "What have you done about what I commanded you?" I replied : O Apostle of God, what could I do in view of my having opposed the doctrines related from you in ways based on the interpretation of Kalām and my having followed the sound proofs which are applicable to the Creator? And he said to me : Defend the doctrines related from me, for they are the truth?" Then I awoke, much saddened and disheartened and resolved to give up Kalām. And I applied myself to Tradition and the recitation of the Qurān.

On the night of the twenty Seventh *(lailatul Qadar)*, and it was our custom in Basra for the Reciters and men of learning and virtue to meet for a global recitation of the Qurān during that night, I remained among them in accordance with our custom. But I grew so overpoweringly sleepy that I rose and went home and slept, regretting the splendid occasion which I was missing. Then I saw the Prophet and he said to me:

what have you done about what I commanded you? I answered "I have given up Kalam and have adhered to the Book of Allah and to thy Sunna". And he said to me, "I did not command you to give up Kalām, but I commanded you to defend the doctrines related from me, for they are the truth ! "I said, O Apostle of God, how can I leave a system after having thought about its questions and known its proofs for thirty years, because of a dream?" And he said to me, "Were it not for my knowing that God will give you his special help, I should not leave you untill I had given you a full explanation of those things. You seem to think that this my coming to you is a mere dream. Was my vision of jibril a mere dream? You will see me no more about this matter so be earnest in it, for God will give you His special help".

"Thus he spoke and I awoke and said : "After truth there is only error"[15] and I began to defend the Traditions on the vision of God, the intercession of the Prophet, the lawfulness of speculation and other points. And there used to come to me something which I swear I had never heard from an adversary nor read in any book, and I knew that it was due to the help of God which the Apostle of God had foretold me" [16].

In another account Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari was reported to have said : "I saw the Apostle of God in my sleep at the beginning of Ramadan. He said to me "O Abul Hasan, have you written Traditions ? "I replied," Certainly, O Apostle of God "Then he said," Have you not written that God Most High will be seen in the next life? "I answered," Certainly, O Apostle of God "Then he said to me, "Then what prevents you from holding that doctrine? I replied," Rational proofs have prevented me and therefore I have interpreted the Traditions. And he said to me, "Do you not find that there are rational proofs which prove that

God Most High will be seen in the next life ? I answered, "Certainly, O Apostle of God, but they are only doubts" He said to me, "Reflect on them and examine them most carefully; they are not doubts but they are proofs." And he disappeared, and I awoke in great fear and began to reflect on what he had said. And I preserved and found the matter to be as he had said. The proofs of affirmation grew strong in my mind, while those of negation grew week. So I kept silent and revealed nothing to men, remaining the while in great perplexity over my position.

Then in the second decade of Ramadan I saw the Apostle of God again. He approached me and said, "O Abul-Hasan, what have you done about what I said to you? I replied, "O Apostle of God, the matter is as you said, and power is on the side of affirmation." Then he said to me, "Reflect on the other questions and be mindful of them." Then I awoke and rose and collected all my Kalam books and set them aside and devoted my self to books on Traditions, Qurānic exegesis, and the legal sciences. However, I did ponder the other questions in accordance with his command.

And after we entered the third decade I saw him again on the night of Power *(Lailatul Qadar)* and he said to me, with an appearance of exasperation, "What have you done about what I said to you? I answered" O Apostle of God, I kept reflecting on what you said and continued to think about and ponder the questions. However, I have rejected and turned aside from all kalam and I have devoted myself to the legal sciences." Then he said to me angrily, "and who commanded you to do that? Compose books, and reflect in this way which I have commanded you, for it is my religion and truth which I brought," and I awoke and

thence forth began to compose books and to defend and expound the true doctrine" [17].

Being convinced of "after truth there is only error" and that he would be helped and guided by Allah and after composing books in defence of the Orthodoxy in accordance with the command of the Prophet, al-Ashari prepared himself to be exposed as a follower and defender of the Orothodoxy on the basis of Kalām and as the fiercest foe of the Mu'tazilites and their beliefs. This exposure, for the first time, took place in this way :

"Al-Ash'ari held the Mutazilite views for forty years and was one of their Imams. Then he withdrew from the society of men into his own house for fifteen days. After that he went out to the mosque, ascended the pulpit, and said, "O men, I withdrew from you for a while simply because I had reflected and found the proofs equal in my mind, the true and the false being exactly balanced so far as I could see, so I sought guidance from God, Most Blessed and High, and he has guided me to the belief in what I have confided to these books of mine. And I strip myself of all that I used to believe just as I strip myself of this garment." And he stripped himself of a robe that was upon him and cast it aside and handed over the books to the people. Among them were the Kitab-*al-Luma*, and a book in which he exposed the short comings of the Mu'tazilah which he called "kitab Kashf al-Asrār wa Hatk al-Astār"[(vi)] and others [18].

Another account states that al-Ashari after Friday prayer, ascended the pulpit of the mosque of Basra and said, "Be ye my witnesses that I have not been following the religion of Islam and that I now embrace Islam, and that I repent of the Mu'tazilite views which I held", then he came down"[19]. Hamudah Gharaba[(vii)] *is of the opinion that the basic*

reason of his conversion was his perplexity, and the command of the Prophet in dreams was the immediate cause [20]. In other words, al-Ash'ari was not satisfied and this was why he was proposing questions again and again to his master but when the Prophet came into his dream, he was supported and consequently took a decision firm and strong, composed books and came to the mosque and declare that he had given up Mu'tazilite views

Whatsoever the cause of al-Ash'ari's conversion might be but the fact is that he was disappointed and dissatisfied with the Mu'tazilite Kal ām, because this kalām was dominated by logical reasoning and it was assumed that nothing could occur without a genuine purpose and expected advantage, even Allah cannot do anything at random and without intending human welfare, and reason can resolve the purposefulness of Allah's Acts and that reason can solve every problem therefore reason must be superior to revelation. This was the attitude of the Mu'tazilites and whoever believed in this attitude was regarded as a Mu'tazilite[21].

Al-Ash'ari, attacking this attitude just after his conversion, proposed in an assembly to al-jubbai, his former Mu'tazilite master, the problem of three brothers, one being a believer, the other being an infidel and still another being a child who is not obligated of Divine injunctions and asked him, "what is their aftermath?" al-Jubbai answered, 'The believer would be in the men of rank and file and the infidel would be in the men of doom and perdition and the child would be in the men of salvation". Al-Ash'ari went on asking further, "Could the child be among the men of rank and file" ? Naturally al-Jabbai's answer was negative, upon hearing it, al-Ash'ari interrogated 'why'. Al-Jubbai asserted that the

believer had earned this status while the child had not. Al-Ashari made a pertinent remark saying that the death of the child in his early age was not of his choice, he died as God willed him to die. Al-Jubbai answered that God knew the fate of the child that he would grow as a sinner and He, therefore , deemed it fit in his well-being to let him die in the childhood. Al-Ash'ari, then, remarked that the infidel would ask God as to why He did not care for his well-being even after having the knowledge of his fate of growing as an infidel and did not let him die as a child. Al-Jubbai was then silent [22].

In this way, the first offence from al-Ash'ari was upon the authority and supremacy of reason. By doing so al-Ash'ari tried his best to prove that reason cannot solve every problem and that Allah can do acts which may be not graspable by reason. One should therefore, rely on revelation. In other words, this was an attempt to justify the supermacy of revelation over reason.

Al-Ash'ari was promised by the Apostle of Allah, in dream, to be helped and guided by Allah. This resulted in the way that al-Ashari, though was suitable to attend the assemblies, yet "he was not a writer. Whenever he took the pen in his hand he produced either nothing, or a kalam that was disagreeable"[23]. But after his conversion, he wrote many invaluable books, which exceed, according to one account, upto three hundred [24]. But this number is not agreed upon by the biographers. Ibn Hazm, for example, speaks of fifty five only[25], while Ibn Asakir provides a list of hundred and six books[26]. But when we look into the commentary of Mc Carthy (author of *"The Theology of Al-Ash'ari* pp. 211-30) on different books, we come to the conclusion that the correct number of works ascribed to al-Ash'ari should not be more than fifty five.

But most of them unfortunately have become extinct. The available books of al-Ash'ari are as follows :

1.   *Maqālāt-al-Islāmiyin wa Ikhtilāf – al- Musalliyin*, (The Views of the Islamists and Disagreement of those who Pray)

2.   *Kitāb-al-Ibānah 'an Usul – al–Diyānah* (Exposition of the Fundamental Principles of the Religion).

3.   *Kitāb-al-Luma fi-al-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Zaigh wa al-Bida'* (Highlights of the Polemic against Deviators and Innovators).

4.   Risālah Istihsān al-Khaud Fi 'Ilm Al-Kalām (A Vindication of the Science of Kalām).

Maqālāt the most comprehensive book consisting of two volumes, has not been rendered in any language while *Ibānah*, though translated by W.C. Klein with the little *"The Elucidation of Islam's foundation"* in "American oriental Series", Vol. 19, 1940, is not available.

Both Kit āb-*al-Luma* and *Risālah* on Kal ām, both the books have been translated by Mc Carthy under one title *Theology of al-Ash 'ari"*.

When the innovators like the Mu 'tazilites, the Jahamites and others introduced their doctrines into the tenets of Islam and Islam thus became an amalgam, the Qurān and the Traditions were interpreted with the help of and on the basis of absolute and abstract reason. God, His Attributes like power, knowledge, hearing, seeing and speech were either denied or interpreted otherwise. Al-Ash'ari, at that time, defended them by fuller explanation and proved them sound from the view point of reason. In other words, al-Ash'ari reinforced the beliefs and tenets of Islam. It is, therefore, believed that al-Ash'ari was the Renewer of the Faith in the third century A.H. Abu Huraira, a famous companion of the

Prophet stated a tradition of the Prophet, "God will indeed send to this community at the beginning of every hundred years a man who will renew for it its religion"[27].

Though there is difference of opinion about the persons having the status of *Mujaddid* (Renewer of the Faith) in these centuries, Ibn 'Asākir, along with other theologians confirms the status of Mujaddid to Umar b. Abdul 'Aziz,[(viii)] Imam al-Shāfe'i[(ix)] and al-Ash'ari in their respective centuries[28].

Regarding the *fiqh* and method of inquiry of al-Ash'ari we again find a difference among his biographers. Some believe of his being shafi'ite[29] while others classify him with Malikites,[30] but the fact is that he followed the way of the Salaf, the path of righteousness. This is substantiated in the words of al-Baihaqi : Our Shaikh, Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari, introduced nothing new into the religion of God, nor did he bring into it any innovation. On the contrary, he accepted the doctrines of the Companions, Followers and later Imāms on the fundamental principles of religion. These he defended by fuller explanation and exposition, and showed that those doctrines on the fundamental principles and what has come by way of divine positive law are sound from the view point of reason, contrary to the specious claims of the heretics that some of those doctrines do not square with the conclusions of reason. His exposition was both a corroboration of what had not been proved by any member of the *ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaah* and a defense of the doctrines of former Imams". Such former Imams were Abu Hanifa,[(x)] Sufiyān al-Thawri,[(xi)] al-Awza'i,[(xii)] Malik,[(xiii)] al-Shafi'i, Ahmad b. Hanbal,[(xiv)] al-Laith b. Sa'd,[(xv)] al-Bukhāri,[(xvi)] and Muslim b. al-Hajjaj[(xvii)31].

Al-Ash'ari was pious and upto some extent an ascetic, yet he could not agree with many mystic bounds. To prove his piety it is said that he used to observe his morning prayer with the night ablution, and that he never spoke about his zeal to anyone. In the words of Ahmad b. Ali, "I served the Imam Abul Hasan in Basra for several years and I was continually in his company in Baghdad until he died. I never met a godlier man or one who kept his eyes averted more, and I never saw a Shaikh more restrained concerning the things of this world or more active about the things of the next world[32].

It is also said that al-Ash'ari's yearly expenditure amounted to seventeen dirhams[33]. But according to Ibn Khalqan[(xviii)] who cited al-Khatib, his expediture was seventeen dirhams per day [34]. And this seems to be more convincing.

There is difference of opinion about the year of his death. Some are of the view that he died in Baghdad somewhere in between 320/932 and 330/943. Others are specific about the year of his death and say that he died in 324/935-6. Some of his contemporaries speak of his death falling a little after 330 A.H. But, according to Ibn 'Asākir, 324 A.H. is the year of his demise[35].

In the light of his biography, the eminence of Abul-Hasan al-Ashari is well established. Particularly after his self-conversion from the Mu'tazilite school he wrote prolifically on various issues concerning philosophy and theology. From the point of view of strict definition of 'Ilm al-Kalam, al-Ash'ari alone is an eminent genuine Mutakallim. He is rightly called Imam al-Mutakallimin[36] (chief of Mutakallimin). This has been acknowledged by various scholars of eminence. Bāqillāni, Isfrāni and many others, who themselves were men of edified repute have

exaltedly admired Abul-Hasan's scholastic prudence. Bāqillani says, "By God the best of my circumstance is that I understand the Kalām of Abul Hasan"[37]. This was retorted when someone said to him that his kalam was better than that of al-Ash'ari. Isfrāni holds, "By the side of the Shaikh Abul-Hasan al- Bāhili, I was Like a drop of water in the sea, and I have heard the Shaikh say that by the side of the Shaikh Abu – Hasan al-Ash'ari he was like a drop of water beside the sea"[38].

In order to have a fuller comprehension of al-Ash'ari's philosophy, the nature of arguments and the method that he adopted to avert the innovative trends in Islam, we shall now discuss the meaning, definition and sources of Ilm-al-Kalām.

Chapter-1

Introduction

'Ilm-al-kalām

CHAPTER – I

Islam, an Arabic word meaning peace, is, as a religion, a complete code of life, comprising theoretical as well as practical teachings and guidance. The word Islam is derived from its root letters slm. Islam, thus, is a religion that guarantees peace for human beings in both the lives; here as well as hereafter. Religion is called in Arabic *din* which means obedience and submission; as Allah says, "Religion with Allah is Islam"[1]. Thus Islam also means submission and obedience. In other words, since Islam is a religion given by Allah to man, therefore, Islam means a complete submission of man to Allah in every field of life, political, social, ethical, etc. Accordingly, the Muslim is one who submits, who is obedient and who believes in the sovereignty of Allah.

There is a delicate difference between Islam and Imam. For this purpose, we should refer to the Qurān and the Tradition of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). The Qurān distinguished between Iman and Islam as it said addressing the Bedouins (the desert Arabs) who had only submitted their wills to Allāh and followed the practical teachings of Islām, who had neither known Imān nor had confirmed it by their hearts "The desert Arabs say, 'We belive', say 'ye have no faith (Imān) but ye (only) say, we have submitted our wills to Allāh, for not yet has faith entered your hearts' "[2].

The Tradition, in this regard, was narrated by Omer b. al Khattāb, the second caliph of Muslims and collected by al-Bukhāri in his book, *al-Jame-al-Sahih-lil-Bukhāri*[3] which says that the holy angel Gabriel appeared in the garb of a Bedouin and sat very close to the Prophet touching his knees to the knees of the prophet and asked him about Islām and Imān (as well as Ihsān, but we are not concerned here with that).

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Clarifying Islām the Prophet said, "Islām is to confirm that there is no God but Allāh, that I am a messenger of Allāh, to observe prayer, to pay zakāt, to have fast in the month of Ramadān and to perform the hajj if you are able to do so". And defining Imān, he said, "To believe in Allāh, His angels, His books, His messengers, the day after death, and to believe in Qadar, in its goodness and badness."

In the light of the Qurān and the Tradition mentioned above, we can say that Islām is an outward submission of the slave to his lord, while Iman is inner one. In other words Islām includes the utterance of 'There is no God but Allāh' by the tongue, prayer, fast, zakat and hajj and Iman comprises of the belief in one Allāh, His angels, His messengers, Scriptures, in the Last Day and belief in predestination either good or bad, and it is obvious that the belief is an act of heart. More clearly we can say that Islam is an act of tongue and limbs or an act of body while Iman is an act of heart. However since religion is a complete way of life that consists of two kinds of duties, duties of body (*al-takālif al-badaniyah*) and duties of heart (*al-takālif al-qalabiyah*), therefore, if we use the word 'Islām' in the name of a religion, it will encompass both types of duties. In other words, Imān will be included in Islām (and vise versa), because the religion given by Allāh to us is called Islām by Allāh Himself in the last verse revealed chronologically and it will be absurd to say that Islām, here, means just outer submission to Allāh. The Qurān says, "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"[4]. Therefore, the term Islam, when commonly used, is all comprehensive, including Imān in its connotation. Nevertheless, from the view point of philosophy, the difference between Iman and Islam is significant.

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If the religion, Islām is divided into two types of duties, as Ibn Khaldoon does, duties of the body are the subject of Fiqh and duties of the heart are concerned with 'Ilm al-Kalām. "The former kind (duties of the body) consists of the divine laws that govern the actions of all duty-bound Muslims and this is Fiqh....the latter kind of duties concern with faith (Imān) which is defined as an affirmation by the heart in agreement with what is spoken by the tongue and is said to consist of six articles .....the belief in (1) God (2) His angels (3) His scriptures (4) His Apostles (5) the last Day and (6) the belief in predestination (al-qadar), be it good or bad. Thus, kalām means theology in contradistinction to Fiqh, which means juris prudence. It is the discussion of these articles of faith (*al-aqā 'id al-imāniyyah*) that, according to Ibn Khaldun, constitute "the science of the kalām"[5].

If the religion Islām is held to be 'knowledge' and action (*ilm* and *'amal* respectively) and in the words of al-Shahrastāni, *m'arifah* and *ta'ah* (knowledge and obedience) *m'arifah* is the subject of kalam and *ta'ah* of *Fiqh*.

The another distinction made by Shahrastāni himself is the distinction of *Usul* and *Furu*. *Usul* is the subject of Kalām and *Furu* is the subject matter of jurisprudence. Shahrastāni says, "Some theologians say that *Usul* means the knowledge of God in His oneness and His attributes and the knowledge of the prophets with their signs and proofs, but in general, every question whose discussion leads to the determination of truth belongs to usual. Now since religion consists of knowledge (*m'arifah*) and obedience *(ta'ah)*, knowledge being the root (*asl*) and obedience the branch (*fara*), whoever treats of the knowledge and unity of God is an *usuli* (theologian) and whoever treats of obedience and law

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is a *furu'i* (Jurisconsult). *Usul* is the subject of scholastic theology and *furu* is the subject of jurisprudence"[6].

Keeping this in view, we may conclude that the theoretical aspects of Islam dealing with the knowledge and *Usul* vis-à-vis the duties of heart is the subjectmatter of scholastic discourse (Kalām).

Definition

The word 'Kalām' means 'speech' and therefore the Qurān is called '*Kalām al-Allāh*' denoting the fact that the Qurān is the speech of Allāh. But, as a term, kalām has several implications. As Wolfson indicates, "The term Kalām, which literally means 'speech' or 'word' is used in Arabic translations of the works of Greek philosophers as rendering the term logos in its various senses of 'word', 'reason', and 'argument'. The term kalam is also used in those Arabic translations from the Greek in the sense of any special branch of learning, thus the Greek expression "discussions" about nature is translated by 'the physical kalām'. Greek term for 'theologians' is translated by 'masters of the divine kalām"[7].

Explaining the kalām, De Boer says, "An assertion, expressed in logical or dialectical fashion, whether verbal or written, was called by the Arabs generally, but more particularly in religious teaching, a kalām and those who advanced such assertions were called Mutakallimun. The name was transferred from the individual assertion to the entire system and it covered also the introductory, elementary observations on method, and so on"[8].

Though, kalām literally means 'speech' or 'word' but it has several, and special by nature, implications which render kalām as a tool of theological polemics. This is why some persons have translated it as

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simply 'theology' or 'speculative theology'. In the Encyclopaedia of Islam it is pleaded about kalam that it is "one of the religious sciences of Islam. The term is usually translated as an approximate rendering of 'theology"[9]. Mohsin Mehdi, on the other hand, translates Ilm al-Kalān as "the science of speculative theology"[10].

Since Kalām is dialectical in its nature, therefore, it was also translated as "dialectics" and the *Mutakallimin* (practitioners of the Kalām) as "dialecticians". De Boer says, "Our best designation for the science of the Kalām is "theological dialectics" or simply 'Dialectics', and in what follows we may translate '*Mutakallimun*' by "Dialecticians"[11]. If the Kalām is dialectical in its nature, it is polemic in its method. A *Mutakallim* always presupposes an opponent and tries his best to defeat him by his argumentation. In other words, the methodology adopted by the *Mutakallimin* to establish their view-point was polemical, therefore, some persons had translated it as 'polemic theology'. Mc Carthy, for example, says, "In the present work,[12] it might well be translated by 'polemic theology'. Most Muslim theology is polemic, and kalam seems to mean the kind of plemic which makes considerable use of rational argument"[13].

"In his '*Ihsa-al-Ulum*', al-Farabi regards *ilm al-kalām* as a science which enables a man to procure the victory of the dogmas and actions laid down by the legislator of the religion, and to refute opinions contracticting them. The doctors of Kalām (*Mutakallimun*) themselves were to take a very similar view. This is one of many well-known definitions. Kalām is the science which is concerned with firmly establishing religious beliefs by adducing proofs and with banishing

doubts (from '*Mawākif*' of al Idji 18th/14th century). Ibn Khaldun and Mohammad Abduh are also of the same opinion.

"Ilm al-kalām is the discipline which brings to the service of religious beliefs (aqā'id) discursive arguments, which thus provides a place for reflexion and meditation and hence for reason, in the elucidation and defense of the content of the faith. It takes its stand firstly against "doubters and deniers" and its function as defensive "*apologia*" cannot be over-stressed.

"Another interpretation sometimes suggested explains ilm al-kalām as "science of the Word of God". The attribute of the Word and the nature of the Qurān were indeed among the first themes treated, the discussions on this subject continued throughout the centuries. But this was by no means the first question undertaken, nor that later treated at most length. It seems much more likely that kalam referred at first to discursive arguments, and the *mutakallimun* were reasoners". This was the case as early as the time of M'abad al-Djuhani (d. 80/699-700). Kalām became a regular discipline when these arguments and discussions dealt with the content of the faith. It is this character of discursive and reasoned apologia which was to attract the attacks both of the traditionalists and of *falasifa*."[14]

One thing should be clarified here, viz, why kalām was called Islamic scholasticism. For this purpose we should refer to its origin. Scholasticism was derived from Latin word *scholasticus* meaning the master of a school. St. Augustine[xix] (354-430) was the first Christian philosopher who, on individual level, tried his best to defend Christianity and the dogmas of its faith with the help of logical proofs and rational arguments. And in the medieval period in Europe, this footstep was

followed by some other philosphers like Abelard[xx] and Thomas Aquinas[xxi]. They attempted to harmonize between reason and revelation and defended the dogmas of Christianity on the basis of reason. Thus scholasticism was introduced in philosophy and theology as a defense method. C. G. Norm defines Scholasticism as, "A set of scholarly and structural techniques developed in western European schools of the late medieval period, including the use of commentry and disputed question, scholasticism is derived from Latin *scholasticus*, which in the twelfth century meant the master of a school. The scholastic method is usually presented as beginning in the law school and as being then transported into theology and philosophy by a series of masters including Abelard and Peter Lombard[xxii]"[15].

Since the Kalām aims to establish Islamic beliefs and dogmas with the help of reason and to harmonize between reason and revelation, therefore it was also called 'scholasticism'. But in order to distinguish the kalām from that of Christianity it was named 'Islamic scholasticism'. Islamic scholasticism is used for Kalām that generally covers the kalam of the Qadarites, the Jabarites, the Mushabbiha, the Mujassima, the Sifatis, the Khawarij and the Shi'ites but more particularly, it covers the kalām of the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites. Whereas the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites chiefly differ on the point of priority of reason and revelation. The former emphasize the importance of reason and the latter believe in the authority of revelation. Nadvi, for example, says, "It is clear that, though the Arabic word 'Kalām' meaning science of reason includes both Mu'tazilism and Ash'arism, the word 'scholasticism' which is generally used as an English equivalent for kalām, is not wide enough to cover the two. To avoid the confusion, therefore, I shall refer to

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Mu'tazilism as a rationalistic school and Ash'arism as a scholastic school"[16].

Accordingly, we can say that the Mu'tazilites were not the *Mutakallimin* in the real sense, rather they were the philosophers of this *Ummah*. Because *Mutakallimun* are those who take the truth of Islam as their starting point and they do never deny any of its dogmas at any cost. On the other hand, "a philosopher does not take them as his starting point but follows a method of research independent of dogma, without, however, rejecting the dogma or ignoring it in its sources"[17].

We can infer that the Mu'tazilites could not strictly follow this methodology, that is, they could not take the truth of Islām as their starting point and if they did so they could not justify the dogmas of the Faith. For example, they denied the very existence of Attributes thinking that this was contrary to the unity of God, or this did entail the plurality of the Deity and so on along with the fact that they stressed more on reason than revelation. Consequently, they were called rationalists rather than *Mutakallimun*. Abu Zuhra[(xxiii)], on the contrary, regards the Mu'tazilites to be the real *Mutakallimun*[18]. But in our opinion, the Ash'arites are the *Mutakallimun* in the real sense Nevertheless, the Mu'tazilites can also be regarded *Mutakallimun* at least in some respects, because they tried their best to defend the dogmas of faith and their efforts remained confined to the Islamic framework. Further, it were the Mu'tazilites who had introduced the term 'Kalām', as a special branch of learning in Islām. Their aim was to propound a science of their own, as a counterpart of *Mantiq* (logic) of Greek philosophers. Shahrastāni says, "The Mu'tazilite leaders studied the works of the philosophers as they became available during the reign of Māmun. They then introduced the methods of the

philosophers into theology, which they made into a branch of science. They gave it the name of kalām: either because the chief question on which they spoke and disputed was that of kalām (Gods Word), by which the whole discipline was called; or in imitation of the philosophers, who so called one of their branches of learning logic, for logic and Kalām are synonumous[19].

Briefly, Kalām includes in its connotation different methods of the study of theology including discourse, dialogue, defense, philosophication, etc., resulting into theosophical efforts to justify faith and beliefs of the religion either with the help of reason or revelation.

Kalām passed through three stages: in its primary and first stage it was directed only to refute the arguments of new converts against Islām and to prove Islāmic tenets by quoting Qurānic verses and traditions of the Prophet. In the second stage it became rationalistic in the hands of the Mu'tazilites, but in its final stage it was reduced to mere scholasticism aiming at a reconciliation between reason and revelation on the basis of reasoning that is the work of the Ash'rities.

Sources and Influences

So for as philosophy is concerned, in the pre-Islāmic Arab society there is not much to captivate our attention. But after the auspicious event of the deliverance of the message of God, called Islam, the life-style of the Arabs went through a progressive transformation resulting into a rapid development in all walks of life. The history of Muslim philosophy virtually commences from the advent of Islam when they had a respite from the earlier life which engaged them in conflicts and quarrels arising out of very trivial matters. They devoted themselves to profundity, depth and sobriety. The Qurān to which they owed their religion invited them to enter into the realm of the search of truth. This message of the Qurān encouraged them to contemplate on various questions related to the world and beyond. This marks the beginning of philosophy in Islam. The Arabs carefully studied the Qurān, analyzed the tradition and went through the classical works of other countries. We will discuss the sources, Islamic and non-Islamic, in the proceeding lines to present the rise of philosophical thought in Islam.

Islamic sources

Many of the orientalists, as usually they do, are of the opinion that 'Ilm-al-Kalām, a purely Muslim science, has its roots in the western sources like Greek philosophy and Christian theology. Thinkers, like Wolfson, include some Judaic sources of its origin, but we believe that Ilm-al-kalam is an outcome of categorically Islamic sources, the Qurān and the Tradition.

The Qurān

Islamic sources are mainly comprised of the Qurān and the Traditon and out of them, the Qurān stands as the most primary one. The very first revelation of the Qurān "Read ! in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher who created"[20] is a discourse of God with the Prophet, asking him to read which gave the Prophet a moment of perplexity, for he could not read, as he was unlettered (*ummi*), but the subsequent verses relieved him of his bafflement when he knew that God had taught man what he was not cognizant of. This first revelation talks of knowledge as a bounty which God has imparted to man for His cognition and comprehension. Therefore, during the course of revelation, many other verses were revealed to the Prophet emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge, application of reason for understanding the world and the use of knowledge in the proper direction. "Allah will exalt, in degree, those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge and Allah is aware of what you do"[21]. The Prophet was commanded to ask for knowledge as Allah said, "Say, my lord increase me in knowledge"[22]. Allah said, "None will grasp their meanings except those who have knowledge"[23] and Allah also said, "Are those who know equal to those who know not"[24]? It means that the knowledgeable and the illiterate are not equal.

If we carefully study the Qurān, we find that the very purpose of the Qurān is to impart knowledge to man. The Qurān encouraged man to reflect upon the world, its objects and their movements and to take admonition. "Behold in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day. In the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind ; In the rain which Allah sends down

from the skies, and the life which he gives there with to an earth that is dead. In the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth ; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth, (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise[25]. Qurān invites people to study it carefully and encourages those who ponder upon . "Do they not ponder on the Qurān ? Had it been from other than Allah they would surely have found therein much discrepancy[26]". If we study the Qurān we find that Allah has encouraged those who are wise and intellectual and use their intellects in proper direction.

Allah has used, at forty-two places, different verbs of the root word '*aql*', denoting the fact that those who use their intellect properly will grasp the truth and one should use one's intellect. We also find that the word '*Hikmat*' or similar words are used at eighteen places. All prophets were granted wisdom. In the *Sura, 'al-Inam'*, Allah has mentioned Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Zakeriya, John, Jesus, Elias, Ismial, Elisha, Jonas, and lot, and says of them,"These were the men to whom We gave the Book and al *Hukm* and prophethood"[27.] Here *al-'Hukm'* means wisdom as in the Sura, *al-Nisa* He says, "It is not possible that a man to whom is given the Book, and Wisdom, and the prophetic office, should say to people 'Be ye my worshipers rather than Allah'"[28]. In both the verses, the Arabic word *al-Hukm* is used to mean wisdom. The prophet Muhammad was also granted wisdom by Allah as He says, "It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered a Messenger from among themselves to rehearse to them His Signs, to purify them, and to instruct them in the Book and Wisdom, although they had been, before, in meinfest error"[29]. The Prophet was guided by Allah to call people by the way of wisdom. He says, "Invite

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(all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.[30]" Commenting upon this verse Arberry says, "This verse would be taken to confirm Aristotle's threefold differentiation of proof into demonstrative, rhetorical and dialectical[31]".

From the above citations of the Qurān, it is quite clear that the Qurān emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge which can be attained through various sources comprising of the testimony of both types, the divine and the personal, the personal one of the Prophet who was sent to impart to the people the knowledge of the Book and *Hikmah* (wisdom). Wisdom, again, to acquire the knowledge of the world through various signs that God concealed in the earth and the skies, and perception, reason, experience and intuition. But all these sources that man is blessed with must be used in the right direction for the pursuit of path of righteousness.

The Qurān particularly speaks of three categories of knowledge acquired through different sources, each of them having its own sphere and domain. They are the empirical knowledge, the rational knowledge and the intuitive knowledge. To substantiate our claim, we mention here the verses relevant to each.

1. Empirical knowledge (*aainul-yaqin*) : "Ye shall see it with certainly of sight"[32]

2. Rational knowledge (*ilm-al-yaqin*) : "Nay, were ye to know with certainty of mind, (ye would be aware)" [33]

3. Intuitive knowledge (*haqqul-yaqin*) : "But verily it is truth of assured certainty"[34].

These forms of knowledge include in their domain the knowledge of the past, the present and the future. Knowledge of future, of course, is a living issue in philosophy, sometimes negating and sometimes affirming the possibility of its acquisition. But the Qurān unequivocally admits the possibility of its attainment posing God as being *Alim-al-ghaib* (the Knower of the unseen), having power to impart as much knowledge of future as He desires. "Nor shall they compass ought of His knowledge except as He willeth[35]". At another place He says, "Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O, men)."[36]

The Qurān, thus, I dare say, is the first to lay so much emphasis on the socialization of knowledge and this, consequently, led to a rapid growth of knowledge for centuries in the Islamic era.

Besides, the Qurān is the first stylistic book in the Arabic language. It is the best model of eloquence and rhetoric, and it has been stated that the Qurān is the primary source of the religious and the worldly sciences. The Arabic grammar which existed, at most, in a dormant state was later compiled in accordance with the eschatology of Qurānic language. Lexicography also started with the word-morphism of the Qurān. Needless to say, before the Qurān there were three other divine revelations known to mankind but none of them had the impact which the Qurān did in the rapid growth of various sciences of positive and normative nature.

Although, the Arabic language was known for its tapestry even before the advent of Islam,, particularly rich in poetry, yet it was in its formative state, and rules were emerging for its guidance and foundation. The Qurān put on them a seal of authority and determined its semantics. The style of the Qurān is unique in its nature. At the time of revelation it

neither resembled the commonly known form 'saja' which in its earliest days, was used by camel-drivers nor did it correspond to the most prevalent form of literary verse. It includes the elements of both these forms and has a versified structure and is therefore commonly known as the Qurānic verses, having the structure of 'saja' and rhythm of poetry.

The grandeur and the gorgeousness of its style baffled the Arabs of its time and forced them to believe it to be the work of God and not the creation of the Prophet. The Qurān clearly asserts that the man chosen as the prophet was a completely unlettered person and was one from the masses. This fact was emphasized to clarify that such a perfect creation was not possible by the man who knew even no letters. "So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allah and His words; follow him that (so) ye may be guided"[37].

Many of them, however, took it as a challenge to copy the verses of the Quraān in its unique style but had to bear the agony of failure and distress and finally had to admit it as the work of God which man, by no means, could copy.

The Qurān itself threw the challenge to the Arabs to copy even its smallest sura, "Or do they say, 'he forged it' ? Say, bring then a sura like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth,"[38] and it was, as the Prophet instructed, hung on the wall of the Ka'aba for quite a long time and many noted Arabs, who were proud of their language and style tried their best to compose such verse but had to acknowledge that "it is not the work of man".

The Muslims rightly claim that the Qurān includes, in its content, the signs and symbols related to all walks of life and thus covers the various sciences of different nature acknowledging man as their nucleus.

The Muslims, then, in the first place studied the Qurān carefully, and profoundly involved themselves in its contents where they got access to various sciences inviting them to further probe and investigation. Thus, before consulting any other source, the Qurān served them as the primary source for the growth of knowledge.

The earliest problems of philosophy which lead to the origin of Ilm-al-kalm are definitely rooted in the Qurān itself. The Arabs were fully cognizant of their language. They understood the subtleties and intricacies of the language and were able to interpret the verses of the Qurān. It has been stated elsewhere that the Qurān has two types of verses, one clear in meaning and the other ambiguous, known in the Qurānic terminology as *Muhkamat* and *Mutashabihat*[39]. In the verses clear in meaning, there is no room for interpretation but the verses ambiguous in nature need interpretation posing challenge to the human wisdom and intellect. Such verses became more important for the non-believers. And they, more often than never offered ridiculous interpretations which in no way could be acceptable to the Muslims. The delusion led to the controversies and debates in which the Muslims had to involve themselves, perhaps, even against their will. The Qurān itself anticipates such controversies and warns the believers not to indulge in them. In the beginning, it was avoided for long, but notwithstanding the warning of the Qurān, Muslims could not abstain from participating in these controversies. The ambiguous verses were pondered over and interpreted to answer the harsh and unfounded criticism of the non-believers, including the Christians, the Jews and the infidels.

One of the discussions of the Qurān was regarded its being a miracle. We have already pointed out that the Qurānic language, its style,

its rhythm and its composition, which is amazingly beautiful, convinced the believers of its being miraculous. Many scholars supported the claim and others denied it. The Qurān, however, is treated as one of the miracles of the Prophet by most of the scholars and common Muslims. Those who did not believe in its miraculous nature, denied the occurrence of all miracles which again led to another controversy about miracles and their occurrence. The Qurān, thus, in brief, is an important factor in the development of many religious and worldly sciences. It developed the interest in philology, phonetics and semantics, grammar and lexicography, rhetoric and dialectics, hermeonatics and many auxiliary sciences, dealing with and contributing to their growth. Thus one may not agree with the orientalists who erroneously search out the source for the origin of these sciences in Greek philosophy. The Qurānic discourse has introduced us to many philosophical problems regarding the essence and attributes of God, justice, freedom of will and those concerning the articles of faith. The roots of all these questions leading to latter philosophical discourse lie in the Qurān itself and we need not look for the sources elsewhere. Thus the emphasis on knowledge, contemplation in the issues related to the world and beyond, human fate and its implications have been the source of many philosophical inquiries which resulted in the emergence of Ilm-al-kalām.

The Tradition

Next to the Qurān are the Traditions of the Prophet which include his sayings, doings and confirmations representing three categories : *Hadith-e-Qauli, Hadith-e-Fe'ali and Hadith-e-Taqriri* respectively.

It is believed that the Traditions of the Prohet are the application of the Quran in the personal and the social life of man. The Prophet has been

declared to be the Ideal person for human beings, especially for muslims :
"Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exampler for him
who hopes in Allah and the Final Day and who remember Allah much"[40].
The Qurān, verily confirms the Tradition, especially his sayings, as being
a revelation too: "Your companion (The Prophet) is neither astray nor
being misled, nor does he say (aught) of (his own) Desire. It is no less
than revelation (*wahy*) sent down to him"[41]. The Quran and the Tradition
are differentiated by describing the categories of '*wahy*' as '*Matlu*' and
Ghair-e-Matlu, the first being *Wahy-e-Matlu* (recited revelation) and the
other being *Wahy-e-Ghair-e-Matlu* (Non-recited revelation). This makes
clear that the Tradition, like the Qurān, emphasizes the acquisition of
knowledge and has served as a cause of inspiration for the seekers since
the advent of Islam. The Traditions that substantiate our contention are
given below:

1. "Virtue is nature, importunity against is vice, whomsoever Allah
    wills to deliver good to others, He blesses him with the knowledge
    of the religion".

2. "Whosoever follows the path of knowledge, God makes his way to
    Paradise easy, the angels lower down their wings for his bliss, all
    the creatures on the earth and in the skies including the fish in the
    water seek God's forgiveness for him, the savant is superior to the
    worshiper like the moon being superior to all other stars, the
    savants are the successors of the Prophets, the Prophets leave
    naught in succession barring knowledge, whosoever obtains it may
    aquire upto the brim".

3.   "To seek knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim and passing it
      out to the undeserving is like adorning the swine with gold
      necklace having precious jewels and pearls".

4.   "One who has the knowledge of something and if he conceals it
      upon being asked he will bear the reins of Fire on the day of
      judgement"[42].

From these Traditions one can easily conclude that Islam has
encouraged Muslims to acquire knowledge. A Muslim whose main target
is Paradise and salvation from hell is inspired in the way that if he
acquires knowledge his way to Paradise becomes easier and if he
conceals knowledge he may be punished in Hell. Here in the Traditions,
we see that the word ilm (knowledge) has been used in its general form
and it is not true for anyone to confine it within any particular religion or
theology. Rather, this knowledge covers all types of knowledge viz.
knowledge of theology and other sciences, applied or theoretical.

We have seen in the preceding lines that the Qurān and the
Tradition both have emphasized the acquisition of knowledge to a great
deal, which consequently led to growth of a rational attitude, at least in
respect of the understanding of the world and in defense of the faith. This
emphasis on knowledge directed the Muslim intelligentsia to contemplate
over the issues which confronted them in their intellectual pursuit and to
comprehend the philosophical insight of the other communities. The
Arabs were quite receptive and penetrative. The Prophet through the
Qurān and the Tradition did not only correct their faith but also guided
them to use their talents, prudence and sagacity. Thus it can be safely
asserted that the Muslims could rely on their own resources for the
growth of knowledge instead of groping them in other houses.

Nevertheless, it is true that the Muslim community on account of having useful discourses with the scholars of other communities accepted their influence and, thereupon restructured their thought with significant transformation of its inherited paradigm.

Non Islamic Sources and Influences

In addition to the Islamic sources, Muslim philosophy owes its emergence to various alien sources such as Greek, Syrian, Iranian and Indian ones. The Syrians and the Iranians, later on, were treated as Islamic, for after the conquests of these countries, they embraced Islam as their religion and there emerged a mixed culture which transformed the face of Islam by admitting some of their local ancestral tradition. Before the Muslims conquered these countries, they practised either Christianity, Judaism or Manichaeanism. Besides, they also learned Greek philosophy, theology and its methodology. There were various important centers of. Greek learning such as Alexandria, Harran, Jundishapur, Edessa, Qinisrin, Nisibis and Rasaina. When they fell to the Muslim militia, the Muslim intelligentsia interacted with their scholars who created in them a fondness and fascination for Greek philosophy and science. They fell to this attraction for the reason that their religion Islam encouraged them to acquire knowledge from all quarters. Through this interaction, Islamic philosophy was also influenced. Here we will try to ascertain the sources and their influences, firstly, of Greek and, thereafter, of Persia and India

Greek Sources and Influences

According to the author of '*Kashfuzzunun*' there were five masters in Greece who had influenced muslim intelligentsia most, namely Bandqlese Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

The above mentioned work consideres Bandqlese to be the most important of these masters. It describes him to have lived in the days of the Prophet David. He visited Syria to learn medicine and other sciences from Luqman (the great *hakeem*). Upon his return to Greece, he wrote a book which apparently denied the life hereafter. Due to this confusion many of the believers dissociated themselves from him. Jalal-al-Din al-Qifti, the writer of *'Akhbar-al-Hukama'* describes to have seen this book in the library of Jerusalem but denies that it contains any such assertion leading to the denial of the life-hereafter. The book, however, influenced the Batiniyah community in the formation of its faith. A noted Batini, Mohd. b. Abdulah b. Maisera (269, 319 A.H.) was greatly influenced by the philosophy of Bandqaelse and followed it as a religion. Due to his beliefs in Bandqlese's philosophy he had to resort to nomadic life to find refuge for himself. He was charged with heresy and people dissociated themselves from him. He retired into mystic life where he had had some impact, but it was wiped off after his heretic views became known. During his stay in Iraq he met some M'utazila dialecticians who showed keenness in his philosophical resolutions. It is held that Bandqlese was the first to believe in the Attributes and Essence being identical with each other. God is, according to him, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Merciful as to His Being. Abul-Hudhail al-Basari, a representative of M'utazilah agreed to his views .

Pythagoras was another important Greek philosopher who had a notable influence on Muslim schools and scholars, as mentioned in *'Tabaqat-ul-Omam'* and *'Akhbarul Hukama'*. He learned geometry and medicine from Egyptian scholars. Later on, he himself propounded number-theory and also made a valuable contribution in the field of geometry. Notwithstanding his skill in music, he was a great philosopher

of his time. According to *'Tabaqatul Atibba'* he was the first to use the word 'philosophy' for this kind of knowledge. This work cited above presents detailed accounts of his life and work based on the following two books: *'Tarikh-al-Falasifa'* of Ferfureas (Porphery) and *'Mukhtarul Hikam wa Mahasinul Kalim'* of Abul Wafa Mubashshir b.Falik. He believed in the mortality of souls and held that the virtuous souls will enjoy reward in the hereafter in the world of souls. Like his predecessor he also influenced some Muslim communities like Batiniyah and individual philosophers belonging to the group of Brethren of purity.

The Muslim philosophers were also influenced by Socrates who also carried a great deal of influence on Muslim thinkers. He was a disciple of Pythagoras and more inclined to divine philosophy. Socrates was better known for his method of dialectics. He wrote no book, yet gained world-reputation. He laid emphasis on discourse involving thesis and anti-thesis to reach a synthesis. *'Akhbarul Hukama'* and *'Tabaqatul Atibba'* give the details of his philosophy and method. He believed in monotheism and lived a life of asceticism. His monotheistic views confronted Greek Mythology which advocated polytheism.

Plato was one of the most important Greek philosophers, influenced the Muslim scholars to the greatest extent. In his youth he wrote poetry but it could not satisfy his quest. At the age of twenty, he became the disciple of Pythagoras. After Pythagoras death, he learned philosophy from his successor, Socrates. Thereupon, Plato resorted completely to philosophy and burnt all his poetic works. Plato learnt music from Pythagoras, the art he preferred to poetry. He was also influenced by the Egyptian philosophers who taught him physics and natural sciences. He acquired the knowledge of political philosophy from

Socrates and thus combined both in his works later. As Aristotle says, Plato started a new era in the Greek philosophy, for the Greeks had forgotten physics, which Plato revived without abandoning the Socratic tradition of political philosophy.

The Schools of Philosophy popular in Greek tradition before Plato were: Eleatics, stoics, Pythagorians, Sophists and Epicureans.

The stoics and Epicureans discussed the problems of Ethics. They were against the traditional philosophy. The Sophists were interested in political philosophy. The Eleatics showed keener interest in physics. The peripatetics concerned themselves with the problems of various fields. They favoured an inter-disciplinary approach.

Qifti and others divide the Greek philosophers, on the basis of their subject-matters into three broad groups; the first are the materialists who held that the world is eternal and uncreated. They also believed that the things have opposite qualities, consequently, they can't be a creation of any super natural power because of their being opposite in nature, for God is All-Good and Good cannot create evil. Thus they argued that God does not exist. As these philosophers were atheists, they could not influence Muslim philosophers. According to the author of *'Akhbarul Hukama'*, Thales of Milatus was the founder of this school.

The second group was of naturalists who believed in things being combination of various natural capacities. They held that the world is created by One Who is Wise, Independent and All-powerful, Who could combine different elements to create one particular being. These elements remain integrated upto sometime and thereafter they begin to disintegrate and, once they are disintegrated, they cannot re-unite. They, therefore, rejected any possibility of life hereafter. The Muslims treated them at par

with the atheists and therefore were not influenced by their philosophy because of its being against their religion.

The third one was the group of metaphysicians who believed in God and were closet to Islam. The Muslims, therefore, were most influenced by this set of philosophers which included Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. It was founded by no less a person than Socrates himself. Plato and Aristotle, disciples in lineage, made it popular. Aristotle had useful discourses with the atheists and naturalists. He established the superiority of his tradition over the earlier ones on the basis of his forceful arguments using all sciences of dialectics, logic and rhetorics. His discourses were more effective than those of his predecessors.[43]

Greek learning became widely popular after Alexander the great conquered many countries. Although he could not establish his desired 'one man's personal rule' in the world, yet, he succeeded in popularizing Greek language and learning. In his time, Greek language and literature crossed the boundaries and became popular in other parts of the world. Consequently, many centres of Greek learning in the world were established and the people showed their keenness in studying the Greek masters. Out of these centres, some important ones like Alexandria, Harran and Jundishapur were in the Meddle East. As a result, their works were translated into the important languages of those days like Syriac and Latin. People of Alexandria, Aleppo and Harran took pride in using Greek language in their written and verbal discourses. The aphorisms and the adages inscribed on Restates speak of the importance of Greek language. These centres existed even before the advent of Islam but they had no notable impact on Arab society. The Arabs became cognizant of them after receiving the message of Islam. These centres were mainly

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Christian and Jew populated and along with Greek, they had also accepted Roman impact. After the conquest of these lands, the Greek language, literature and philosophy also fascinated the Muslims. It opened before them new vistas of knowledge and thus the Muslim intellectuals also started taking keen interest in these alien sciences.

It is obvious that the Christians were familiar with the Greek language and literature long before the Muslims developed fondness of their sciences. It was for this reason that the Christians were encouraged in the Muslim empires to take up the task of translation of these books. The work was started in the days of Omawi dynasty. Khalid b.Yazid, who could not succeed to the throne, was keenly interested in the books of chemistry (Kimiya) and got them translated into Arabic and used them to earn his subsistence and also of his supporters who conceded to his claim to the throne. Omawis' contribution to the translation of these books is not, however, very significant but the Abbasides made an advent into this field right from their inception.

The Abbasides expressed their keenness and provided patronage to these scholars. Notwithstanding the puritan approach of the Orthodox schools, particularly of jurisprudence and some of early Kalam, like Murjiah and Zahirites, the Greek influences could not be resisted. Imam Ahmad b.Hanbal (d. 855) and his followers strongly opposed to questioning the apparent meaning of the Quran and the Tradition. Imam Malik b. Anas (d. 795), another eminent Jurist and important traditonist, explaining 'istiwa ala al-Arsh' is reported to have said that the sitting of God upon the throne is certain but its modes are not known and that we must believe in it without questioning its possibility, else we would commit heresy.[44] The example clearly shows that the revelation should be

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followed in letter and spirit and that there is no room for the application of reason in interpreting it. Such puritan efforts could not withstand the *prudent nature of man,* it did appeal to the common man; but could not satisfy the intelligentsia. Besides, the new converts of Syria and Egypt, who were cognizant of Greek learning and literature, unconsciously brought with them their legacy of contemplation and probe.

The early Abbaside Caliphs like al-Mansoor, Harun and al-Mamun, who were noted bibliofiles, patronized the advancement of Greek learning. Al-Mamun, in particular, sent an emissary to get the books of Greek masters from Bazantium and set up a board of translators and a library of these monumental books, called *'Bait-al-Hikmat'*. Thus many Greek books were translated in his time into Arabic. Some of them were translated into Syriac earlier through which the Muslims were initiated into Greek sciences.

It is significant to know that many of the translators like Hunain, Ishaq, Isa b. Yahya, Yahya b. Adi Abu Bishr Mitta, Qusta b. Luqa and Ibn-Naima al-Himsi were Christians and thus one can't deny the likelihood of the colour of Christian faith in the translation of various books of Greek masters. It is a fact, Wolfson holds, that many of the problems of kalam like that of Essence and Attributes, free will and determination, createdness of the Qurān, etc. emerged from Christian scholastic discourses. However, one may not agree with wolfson, for he traces out the origin of every Islamic philosophical discourse in Christianity, but it is certain that many of them do have Christian origin.

The Abbaside caliphs provided patronage to the scholars without any discrimination of colour and creed. It is evident from the fact that almost all the members of the board of translators, set up in the days of

al-Mamun to take up the task of translation, were Christians. The team, however, in all phases, consisted of Christians, Sabeans, Jews, Hindus and Muslims. Al-Kindi was the first Muslim capable of doing and supervising the work of translation.

The translation work is spread over in three phases. The first phase starts from al-Mansoor in which the books on morality, Logic, astrology and medicine were rendered into translation.

The second phase begins from al-Mamun who directed to translate books of all sciences. In the third phase, the scholars showed their interest in translating Aristotle's books of logic and metaphysics and writing commentaries upon them.[45]

Among the Abbaside Caliphs, the foremost figure was al-Mamun who in 830 A.D. set up the famous Bait-al-Hikmah or the 'house of wisdom' for the purpose of translation and research.[46] He was so interested in philosophy and kalam that he himself composed "a number of treatises, which dealt mainly with theological questions in a Mutazilite spirit, such as a 'Treatise on Islam and the Confession of Unity (Tauhid) and another treatise on the 'Luminaries of Prophecy' as well as a series of aphorisms and adages, which are preserved in ancient sources and testify to his brilliance"[47].

Thus, briefly speaking, the Abbaside period was quite furtile for the rapid growth of knowledge. The caliphs gave the scholars the best opportunities to show their talents in all disciplines.

Here we will mention, in brief, a few names of important translators of Abbaside period along with their services in rendering translations of some philosophically important books of Greek masters,

though they have translated the books related to medicine, astrology, Alchemy etc.

"The first translations of philosophical texts appear to be the work of Yahya (Yuhanna) b. al-Bitriq, who lived during the reigns of Harun and al-Mamun.

The most important philosophical work Yahya is credited with translating is undoubtedly Plato's *Timaeus*. This work, according to al-*Fihrist*, consisted of three books (*maqalat*).

Equally important is Ibn-al-Britriq's translation of the paraphase of Aristotle's *DeAnima*, which together with that of Alexander of Aphrodisias played a decisive role in the development of Arab conception of Aristotle's psychology and especially his doctrine of the intellect.

The other philosophical works this scholar is said to have translated are all Aristotelian: the zoological corpus (in ninteen books), *Analytica_Priora*, and the apocryphal *Secret of Secrets* which had a considerable vogue among medieval Latin authors and which Ibn-al-Bitriq supposedly discovered during his research for the *Politics_*of Aristolle."[48]

"But by far the foremost figure in the history of translation of Greek philosophy and science is that of Hunain b. Ishaq (801 – 873).

"Of the strictly philosophical works of Galen, Hunain cites his '*Treatise on Demonstration, Hypothetical Syllogism, Ethics*, his paraphases of Plato's *Sophists, Parmenides, Cryatylus, Euthydemus, Timaeus, Statesman, Republic and Law*".

"Of the Peripatetic works of Galen, Hunain claims to have translated his 'Treatise on the *Immovable Mover'_*into Arabic and Syriac

and his 'Introduction to logic' into Syriac only. The *Numbers of Syllogisms* he translated into Syriac, whereas his son Ishaq subsequently translated it into Arabic.

In addition, numerous Aristotelian works were translated, although hardly any directly into Arabic, by Hunain's associates, working no doubt under his supervision. Thus his son Ishaq, his nephew Hubaish, and his disciple Isa b.Yahya were responsible for translating almost the whole Aristotelian corpus, as well as a series of Platonic and Peripatetic works. To Ishaq is attributed the translation into Arabic of the *Categories*, the *Hermeneutica*, *De Generation et corruptione*, the *Ethica* in Porphyry's *commentary*, parts of the *Metaphysica*, Plato's *Sophist*, parts of Timaeus and finally the spurious De Plantis.

Apart from these translations, he composed a number of original scientific and philosophical works   such as: *A Greek Grammer, A Treatise on the Tides, A Treatise on the Salinity of Sea Water, A Treatise on Colors, A treatise on the Rainbow, The Truth of Religious Creeds, The Analects of the Philosophers, A Universal History* and even a work on Alchemy.[49]

"The scholar who was without doubt the equal of Hunain in the scope of his learning and his versatility was Qusta b. Luqa. The list of his philosophical writings includes *The Sayings of the Philosophers, the Difference Between Soul and Spirit*, A treatise on Atom, *An Introduction to Logic, A political Treatise, An Exposition of the Doctrines of the Greeks, An Historical treatise Entittled al-Firdaus.*

The chief philosophical translations attributed to Qusta are the first four books of Aristotle's *Physica* (together possibly with Books V and

VI), *On Generation and Corruption* (Book I), and pseudo – Plutarch's *Opinions of the Physicists*, or *Placita Philosophorum.*

"Abu Bishr Matta is credited with translation of Alexander's commentries on *Metaphysical, De Caelo, and De Generatione et Corruptione.*

"He is also credited with commentaries on Aristotle's four logical works: *Categories, Hermeneutica, Analytica Priora, and Analytica Posteriora* as well as a commentry or Porphyry's *Isagoge, An Introduction to Analytica* and a *Teatise on Conditional Syllogisms.*[50]

"Yahya b. Adi also earned a fine reputation in logic and was known as logician (*mantiqi*). In addition to Aristotle's *Poetica, Sophistica, Topica,* and possibly *Metaphysica,* he is credited with a translation of Plato's Law, a commentary on Topica and parts of Physica VIII and Metaphysic and the whole of Generatione, and many others related to logic, physics, metaphysics and even to theology.

Abu Uthman Dimashqi was another leading figure in the ninth century in the tradition of Aristotelian scholarship. He was responsible for translations of *Topica, Ethica Nicomachaea,* Physica IV, *De Generatione et Corruptione, Euclid's Elements,* Porphyry's *Isagoge,* and Alexander's three treatises on *Colors, Immaterial Substances, and Growth.*

"Isa b. Zurah is credited with translation from Syriac of Aristotle's *De Generatione Animalium, Metaphysica L, Sophistica* and of Nicolaus, *Five Books on the Philosophy of Aristotle.*

"Ibn-al-Khammar translated mostly from Syriac into Arabic. His translations include Aristotle's *Meteorologica,* the four books on logic

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(i.e. *Isagoge, Categories, Hermenetica and Analytica Priora),* The *Problems of Theophrastus and a treatise on Ethics.*

"Ibn Naimah al-Himsi and a certain Astar (Eustathius) are responsible for the translation of the apocryphal *Theology of Aristole,* played far-reaching role in the history of Islamic Neo-Platonism and *Metaphysica* of Aristotle respectively.[51]

Indo-Persian Sources and Influences

Besides the Greek influence on Muslim philosophy, there are some Indo-Persian influences as well. So far as Indian influences are concerned, we can make conjectures about the import of ideas of the Arabs, which originated from the Indian soil in the pre-Islamic era due to ancient Indo-Arab trade relations, but we have no evidence of such transportation. In the Islamic Arabia, however, we do discover such evidences showing the transfer of ideas, partly due to the trade-relations and partly because of the craving of the caliphs, particularly Abbasides, for the quest of knowledge in all fields. It is believed that the Arabs, in the first instance, became interested in the Indian astronomy, and *Siddhanta* of Brahmagupta was translated into Arabic in the days of al-Mansoor. The book was presented to the caliph al-Mansoor by an Indian scholar which, later on, was rendered into translation. Mohd. B. Ibrahim al-Fazari prepared an Arabic version of the book, based on its translation, under the title *'Sanad al-Hind-al-Kabir'*, which is said to be the beginning of astronomy in the Muslim world.[52]

Another important book translated through Persian text, from Pahlawi, was *Klilah wa Dimna* of Bidpai by Abdullah b. Muqaffa, a hypocrite, a moralist otherwise. The author of *Akhbar-al-Hukama* mentions that al-Kindi had gone through the translated version of this

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referred book. Apart from it, we find no notable book of any Indian philosophy rendered in Arabic through translation. Nevertheless, the imprint of the influence of Indian philosophy can be seen through the books of Shahrastani, particularly, the one he wrote on Indian religions. Apart from Shahrastani, Iranshahri and Biruni later on took keen interest in Indian philosophy, art and culture. Al-Biruni's account of India, in *Kitab-al-Hind*, is most valuable, for he learnt Sanskrit and other Indian dialects to have access to the original sources. These authors inspired the Arabs for a devoted study of Indian philosophy, art and culture.

Needless to say that the socio-political controversies divided Muslims into different groups. The divisions became sharper after the conquest of adjoining and far away lands having different cultures and creeds. Amongst them, Persia was the most important, for it exercise a vital influence on the intellectual history of Islam. The Persian Philosophy of Mazdaism, Manichaeanism and Zoroastrianism influenced the Muslim mind, and later on many of the philosophers worked hard to present their theories rather forcibly in the framework of Islam without having a sagacious look at their conformity with Islam. Such theories gave way to the perilous insertions like the one of *Hulul* which may be identical with theory of incarnation. On account of it, we have a community like Nursairy in Islam who believed in the incarnation of Ali. This could partly be the result of Christian influence.

Shiaism, which emerged, later on, as a political group after being transformed into a religious community, was greatly inspired by these theories due to their proximity with the concept of Imamah. An Imam, being the spiritual descendent of the Prophet Mohammad, imbibes his

qualities so extensively that he appears to be the incarnation of the Prophet.

Many classical Persian texts were translated into Arabic and most of them were on morals, for morality was the main concern of the Persians of those days. Such books had a positive influence on the Arab mind. They taught them how to live as a moral being. Under this influence, many treatises like that of Farabi, Miskawaih, Nasir Khusru and others were written on morality. Here also we find a repetition of Aristotelian ethics with Muslim conviction. It is evident that besides Greek philosophy the growth of Muslim philosophy was influenced by Indo-Persian scientific tradition.

In this discussion, we have described the Islamic and non-Islamic sources and influences which helped in shaping the Muslim mind. This also shows the quick reception and deep insight of the Muslim community to pick up whatever is needed from anywhere. Nevertheless, one should not be mistaken, as the orientalists, like Wolfson are that everything in Muslim philosophy has been borrowed either from Christianity, Judaism or Greek philosophy.

The possibility of the proximity between Islam and these two religions is quite firm due to their being Semitic and revealed ones. The articles of faith, for instance, the essential features of these religions, are largely common having a difference of interpretation and historical sequence. Unity of God is one of them, which is readily acceptable to the followers of all these three religions, but the ingredients determining the nature of this concept and variety of faith are different. This may lead to some overlapping of interpretation and comprehension. If the concept is properly analysed and then presented its being distinct will become an

evident fact leading to the realization of the proximity being accidental. It should, then, be clearly borne in mind that the Christian authors, engaged in translation, indirectly pushed through their ideas which after a critical perusal were wiped out. Such a process of secretion was, in the first place, started by Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari himself whose contribution will be discussed later on in the body of this thesis.

Chapter-2

Schools of Thought
before al-Ash'ari

CHAPTER - II

Schools of Thought before al-Ash'ari

The Muslims have a very proud past in the medieval world. The Arabs, who once were regarded in history a savage community, became so civilized that they reached the apex of knowledge in all possible realms. True it is that they erected their edifice on the available foundation of Greek, Persian and some Indian remains, but the body of knowledge that rose high was entirely different, prepared with quite another material, the Quran and the Tradition. It was a distinct seat having a different frame-work, which, in its own right, was called Muslim philosophy. We should never agree with the orientalists who make arrogant claims that all the significant contributions of Muslim intellectuals owe their origin to Greek philosophy, Christianity or Judaism. So far as Christianity and Judaism are concerned, one may agree to their having some similarities with Islam due to their Semitic origin and revealed nature, nevertheless, Islam has its own paradigms creating enormous possibilities of interpretation. Greek philosophy, however, has helped in developing the philosophical insight and prudence to probe into the problems of intellectual significance. But in still does not mean that the Muslims were no wise community and they borrowed all wisdom from external sources. Their religion always taught them to seek knowledge and wisdom, which created in them a keen insight, a penetrative outlook and a sagacious, questioning spirit. It led to the growth of knowledge in all vital spheres, including philosophy, science and literature. Due to enormous intellectual activity, many schools of thought were nurtured, each advocating quite convincingly for the doctrines that were the fruit of its own contemplation.

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We will briefly discuss the factors responsible for the emergence of various sects in Muslim philosophy belonging to the two phases of Ilm-al-kalam; the early and the later ones.

In the early phase, the Muslim intellectuals felt more concern for the discourse on the six articles of the faith *(Imān)* as distinguished from infidelity *(Kufr)*, and the vital question regarded the position of a sinner about which much has been said in the Qur'ān, making the sinners aware of the dire and dreadfull consequences that may ensue in the life hereafter. It should be blasphemous to think that God has warned the sinners with frightful conjunctions only to frighten them and to make them abstain from committing sins. Such a belief would reduce the seriousness of God's command. Thus, the gravity of the question must be felt with a firm belief that God's warning is not merely to invoke fear and that ignoring it may result in significant consequences hereafter. The problem of sin and the consequences therof were discussed by the Murjia at length, and the latter one was seriously taken by the Wa'idiyah. Besides, the problem concerning the freedom of will also attracted the Muslim philosophers, which followed the emergence of Jabr and Qadar school. Sifatiyah and Mushabbihah largely took up the contentious issue of Essence and Attributes of God. The early phase of kalam had the following important schools; Jabariyah, Qadariyah, Murji'a, Wa'idiyah, Kharijah, Shi'ah, Sifatiyah and Mushabbihah. They became almost extinct in the later phase of kalam and M'utazilah and Asha'irah acquired the distinction of being the most representative schools of this phase.

Many contemporary and later historians of philosophy and culture recorded their doctrines and commented upon their origin and nature. According to the available information, al-Ash'ari was the first to write

about the various schools and groups which emerged to from the core of Muslim intelligentsia in the realm of philosophy and theology. Al-Ash'ari also apprised the Muslim world of the significant contribution these sects had made in the progress of philosophy and theology. Al-Ash'ari devoted a monumental book, commonly known as *'Maqalat'*, to these schools, giving a brief historical account of their emergence and the doctrines by which each sect was identified as a separate religious philosophical group. Ash'ari's *'Maqālāt'* was a valuable effort which became the source for all other hereseographers like Baghdadi, Shahrastāni and others. Here, al-Ash'ari reserves his comments upon the doctrines of various sects for his works which followed *'Maqālāt'*. Here he has tried to preserve objectivity by describing them in the order of their occurrence. But we are aware that such developments are not mere events and cannot be viewed as such. Al- Ash'ari's contribution, however, served as the guideline for the future generations. It is surprising to see that al-Ash'ari has not mentioned individual philosophers in any of his available works, even though they have exerted a serious influence not only on philosophers but also on the common man.

The emergence of Jabr and Qadar is arguably the most important as for as the intellectual scene of Islam was concerned. Some orientalists believe that these schools existed even before the advent of Islam. One may not agree to their suggestion about their formal existence, but it cannot be denied that the traits of Jabr and Qadar could be found, at least implicitly, even in the days of Arabilliteracy. The oracle of fate haunted every generation in almost all the parts of the world. Indian and Greek literature and philosophy present many such evidences of contrary beliefs about the destiny of man. We have no reason to disagree that the Arabs also held these contrary beliefs which, later on, received the nomenclature

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of Jabr and Qadar. There is little room to doubt that these views were prevalent in the pagan Arabs, They could be simultaneously held by the Jewish and Christian Arab residents, for they were religious communities and religion has an implicit element of paganism.

The scholars agree that Muslims were made cognisant of this discourse by M'abad-Al-Juhani, Gailan-Al-Dimashqi and Jaham b . Safwan who held contrary beliefs regarding free will. It is believed that the Qadar school came into existence under the Christian influence. M'abad b. Abdullah-al-Juhani was the student of Sosan, who had converted to Islam from Christianity and had then joined a group of Hypocrites. His motive in embracing Islam was obvious. He wanted to create a cleavage among Muslims by introducing a logistic based on the Quran and the Sunnah[1]. But, apart from this, Quran and Tradition themselves encourage debate over the contentious issues regarding destiny.

Belief in the destiny is one of the articles of faith and it attracted both the theologians and scholars a like to go ahead with fruitful discussions in its defence or otherwise, particularly in the early phase of the kalam. The freedom of will could thus be one of the basic questions which would have confronted the Muslim mind even without any foreign influence. The belief in destiny opens the possibilities of both Jabr and Qadar, thus inviting crucial discourse. The threads of the two can be traced to the Scriptures themselves. It is evident, then, that the Quran and the Hadith themselves are the source of this discussion. It is needless to assign any motive to any foreign mercenary. This, however, does not mean to deny the inimical attitude of the Christians and the Jews and their efforts to raise meaningless objections against Islam. This was done in the

past by joining with the hypocrites. Today it is done in the name of secular tradition. Jabr and Qadar, however, grew in the Muslim society and became popular in the days of Umawis and Abbasis respectively.

Jabariyah

Jabr school of thought was quite popular in the days of Umawi dynasty, the reason being that it was convenient for them to continue their licentious life style under the garb of predeterminism. They advocated for their innocent participation in the deeds by ascribing their creation and doing both to Allah. It was also convenient because the arguments in its favour could draw their strength rather substantively from the Quran and the Tradition. Many verses in the Quran and the Traditions may be quoted in support of Jabr (pre-destination). Common Muslims believe that God is the Maker of destiny. He writes the destiny of a child even before its birth in the womb of its mother or, perhaps, even earlier, in the Heaven itself. The common man's belief is, then, sustained by numerous instances from the scriptures.

Regarding livelihood, Allah says, " know they not that Allah enlarges the provision or restricts it for any He pleases? Verily in this are signs for those who believe!"[2] At another place, about guidance and misguidance He says, "For such as Allah leaves to stray, there can be no guide and such as Allah doth guide there can be none to lead astray. Is not Allah exalted in Power, the Lord of Retribution?"[3]. Still at another place, He declares, "If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed,- All who are on the earth."[4] Likewise there are in the Quran many verses that suggest thats the matters of livelihood, guidance, misguidance and even of faith are in the hand of Allah. The traditions supporting this viewpoint are as follows:

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"It is pre-writen for all the sons of Adam as to the exact amount of adultery he should commit. Now, the adultery of eye is a (lustful) look, the adultery of tongue is talk; the soul wishes and desires while the sexual organ(only) confirms or belies"[4]

Muslim and Bukhari report still another tradition. According to them, the Prophet said "(when the embryo is four months old), God sends an angel with four decrees which he writes down, viz. its action, life-span, sustenance and whether it is blissful or damned. I swear by Him other than Whom there is no God, one of you continues to perform Paradise-winning acts until, when between him and Pradise there is but a yard, fate overtakes him and he performs actions deserving of Fire and thus enters Fire (and vice versa)."[5]

On the basis of these evidences one may come to the conclusion that God is responsible for all actions and man is only a toy with whom He plays as He wills. The sect holding this view-point was called Jabariah (the Jabarites) or determinists. Jahm b. Safwān was regarded as its pioneer.

The Jabariah are divided into two groups: one being the hardliners and the other moderates. The hard-liners deny any power to man in choosing the action or its performance. All such power rests with God. Qadrah is one of His Attributes and cannot be exercised by man. The moderates assign the power of choice to man, but it is not effective. This again virtually means denial. The distinction later became almost meaningless.

There are three groups generally recognized as the Jabariya: The Jahmiyah, the Najjariyah and the Dirariyah. The first group consists of hardliners because they follow Jahm b. Safwan as their leader. Jahm is of

the view that the power to act given to man is created and with regard to this power "Jahm says that a man does not have power over anything nor can he be said to have capacity to act. Man is absolutely determined in his deeds. He has neither power, nor will, nor choice. God creates deeds in man just as He produces actions in all inanimate objects, and it is only in a metaphorical sense that deeds can be ascribed to man."[6]

The other two groups are included in the category of moderates, as Najjar is of the opinion that "God is the creator of all man's deeds, good and bad, right and wrong (but) man on his part acquires these deeds. He further maintains that the created power has a certain effect on these deeds. This he calls acquisition *(kasb)*, as Ash'ari does."[7] Dirariyah holds that "man's deeds are in reality created by God and man in reality aquires them. Thus it is possible for an act to be produced by two agents."[8]

Qadariyah

Qadar represents the other side of the argument. It grants the power of choice to man and firmly advocates indeterminism or libertarianism, considering man responsible for all the deeds that he commits, whether good or bad. Man is the maker of his own destiny. His reason is the best guide in exercising his choice between the performance of apposite actions. The followers of Qadar believe that man is the originator of all his actions. Their acquisition and completion both is in his hands. They conclude that in case the power is denied, the concept of the life hereafter and bestowing rewards or inflicting punishment by God thereof will become meaningless. The argument of Qadar is more forceful in the light of the other numerous verses of the Quran and many Traditions. For instance, regarding guidance to be received by man, God says, "Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in Truth, for (instructing) mankind.

He then that receives guidance benefits his own soul, but he that strays injures his own soul."[9] In a tradition recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet said, "Every child is born but then its parents make either a Jew or a Christian or a Magian of it". In another tradition recorded by Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja and Ahmad, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said about medicines and precautionary measures against illness and other calamities that "they are themselves a part of Divine determinism." To this effect, a tradition is also reported that when Umar b. Al-khattab ordered his militia to come back from a place stricken with plague and when someone objected saying "Do you flee from the Decree of God"? Umer replied, "I flee from the Decree of God to the Decree of God"[10].

One can easily conclude in the light of the Quran and the traditions cited above that taking precautionany steps against harmful things and even the matter of receiving guidance or rejecting it is in the hands of man. This is why a man deserves either praise or blame. But, at the same time, one should also remember that Allah is Omnipotent. Nothing is beyond His power. There, should, then, be harmony and balance between the power of man and the power of God. But Qadariyah became so rational in justifying libertarianism that Abdullah b.Umar, a famous companion of the Prophet had to warn people to avoid listening to M'abad b. Abdullah al-Juhani and, later on, Hasan al-Basari called Mabad a wayward person who leads others astray from the right path. Mabad al- Jahani was first to introduce this doctrine and Ghailan of Damascus later joined him in his movement. These two persons are considered the founders of this Qadariyah school.[11]

The problem of Jabr and Qadar is directly linked to the problem of good and evil. It is posed as a very relevant question as to who is

responsible for the creation of good and evil. It becomes still more important, for 'the belief in good and evil' is one of the articles of faith and is thus inevitable. The answer invokes three possibilities: (i) that God is responsible for the creation of good and evil both, as He is the creator of all things, (ii) that God being All-Good creates only good and evil is the creation of man and (iii) that God creates things and they are qualified as good or evil in the given situation. Such an answer would lead to relativism. While creating angels and jinns of different orders, God also created Iblis, a jinn otherwise. He was included in the pageantry of angels due to his sincerity, devotion, complete obedience and excessive worship of God. But a given situation changed his mind and he decided to disobey God, which otherwise would have been impossible. Shahrastani, a noted hereseographer, wisely postulates seven following questions the Devil poses in a discourse with the angels to justify his disobedience.

"Iblis is reported to have said:

I admit that God is my God and the God of creation, knowing and powerful; that His power and will cannot be questioned, and that whenever he wills a thing he says to it 'Be,' and it becomes. I also admit that he is wise, but concerning his wisdom a number of questions can be raised.

The angels asked, 'what are these questions and how many are they?' Iblis replied: 'Seven'. He continued:

The first question is, that as God knew before he created me what I would do and how I would act, why did he create me? And what is His wisdom in creating me?

Secondly, if he created me in accordance with His will and pleasure, why did He command me to know and obey him? Moreover,

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since He does not derive any benefit from obedience, nor is He harmed by disobedience, what is the wisdom in this command?

Thirdly, when He created and commended me to acknowledge and obey Him, I adhered to His command and acknowledged and obeyed Him. Why, then, did He command me to obey Adam and make obeisance to Him? What is His wisdom in this particular command, since it does not add to my knowledge of Him, nor increase my obeisance to Him?

Fourthly, when He created me and not only commanded me in general, but gave me also this particular command, then, when I did not make obeisance to Adam, why did He curse me and cast me out of paradise? What is the wisdom in this? I committed no other evil than saying, 'I shall make obeisance only to you.'

Fifthly, when He created me and gave me both a general and a particular command, and I did not obey Him, he cursed me and drove me away. Why, then, did He give me access to Adam, so that I entered paradise a second time and deceived him by my evil suggestion? Adam consequently ate of the forbidden tree, and God expelled him from paradise with me. What is the wisdom in this? Had he prevented me from entering paradise, Adam would have eluded me and would have been there forever.

Sixthly, after God had created me and given me both a general and a particular command; after He had cursed me and given me re-entrance to paradise, where a dispute took place between me and Adam, why did He give me power over his descendants in such a way that I could see them but they could not see me? Why were my evil suggestions able to influence them, but they had no power or influence of any kind over me? What is the wisdom in this? If God had created them and given them their

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nature with no one seeking to make them deviate from it, they would have lived pure, attentive and submissive. This would have been more fitting for them and more in harmony with wisdom.

Seventhly, I admit all this, namely, that God created me, that He gave me both a general and a particular command, and that when I did not obey him he cursed me and expelled me from paradise; also, that when I wanted to re-enter paradise He allowed me to do so and gave me access to it; that when I did the thing I did he cast me out but gave me power over mankind. Why, then, after that, when I asked him to give me respite, did he give me respite? I said to God, my Lord, respite me till the day they shall be raised.' He said, 'Thou art among the ones that are respited unto the day of a known time.'

What is the wisdom in this? If He had destroyed me at that time, Adam and the whole of mankind would have been beyond my power, and there would have been no evil in the world. Is not the enduring of the world in right order better than the world mixed with evil?

Iblis then added: 'So this is my argument for what I maintain on each question."[12]

These questions increase the intrigue and the problem becomes still more important. Jabr and Qadar, as al-Ashari also agrees, try to give some satisfactory answers. In the case of Jabr, the answer is easier, for it favours pre-destinarianism which makes reward and punishment as redundant. In the case of Qadar, the answer has a philosophical foundation. The early Qadariyah believed that God is the creator of all good, for He is Good Himself and the creator of evil is either Satan or man himself. This formulation poses some serious difficulties since it speaks of the possibility of another creator and (ii) evil is believed to

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have been created even without the Will of God. Belief in another creator would amount to having an identical God, which is the creator of evil. This is Magian in character and the early Qadariyah, therefore, were called "Magians of this Ummah" in the light of the tradition recorded by Ahmad and Abu Daud on the authority of Ibn Abbas *"Al-Qadariyah Majuso hazihi al-Umma."* Such a belief might owe itself to the Persian influence.

The later Qadariyah reformulated their doctrine and belief, and held that man is the creator of his good and bad deeds. This, however, does not improve upon their position of another creator except that it is not an identical power but a subordinate one. Nevertheless, man at least enjoys the power of creation of deeds. The Ashairah, whom we shall discuss later, criticise this position and return to the common man's belief that God alone is the creator of all things and actions too. The creation of evil still remains a problem.

Al-Khawārij

The Khārijah was basically a reactionary group. It emerged in the Battle of Siffim. Having seen that the rival army raised the Holy Quran overhead on the point of their daggers, Ali b. Abu Talib made a compromise with Mu'awiyah. A section of Ali's army did not agree to cease-fire, for they thought that Muawiyah was perpetrating thus using a fraud in the Holy Quran, and that it was only a strategy of emotional black mail. This section gave the proof of having a better political insight and acumen and it later on became evident from the historical developments.

The khārijah had a popular appeal in the beginning and they became popular as a strong political opponent of both Ali and Muawiyah.

They considered both of them as the perpetrators of the grave sin (i.e. massacre of Muslims). As a consequence, they could get no acceptability in either group. It was certainly difficult for the Muslims in general to believe that Ali could be the perpetrator of a grave sin. They could, however, believed that Omawis, who indulged in debauchery, could be the perpetrators of the grave sin. The kharijah themselves assumed the role of a judge which was finally not accepted by the majority.

Haraura and Naherwān were the first centers of the khawārij. That is whythey were first called Harauriyah. Al-Ash'ari uses five name for them: al-Harauriyeh, al-Shorat, al-Harariyahal-Mariqa and al-Muhakkimah. Barring Mariqa, they accepted these names.[13] They were named khawārij because they left the Muslim community in general, and Ali and Mu'awiyah in particular, and rebelled against them. We have already stated that the kharijah were not a group of scholars and philosophers. They only concerned themselves with socio-political developments and made an attempt to reform the society as they deemed it fit. They were basically puritans in their approach and wanted to purify Islam with their calculus. They primarily deliberated on the problem of sin not in the Christian or Jewish tradition but as a product of socio-political development, particularly Ali's compromise with Muawiyah. Their basic idea of sin was of a political nature. They, before being known as Kharijah, considered Muawiyah as infidel and believed that making compromise with an infidel was an infidelity in itself. They regarded Ali also as infidel because he made compromise with him. For them this compromise was a great sin and its perpetrators were infidels. In their political extremism and orthodoxy they overlooked all the traditions of the Prophet determining the status of his house-hold *(Ahl-al-Bait)*. The khārijah faced heavy political coercion. It is believed that to

save themselves from the tyranny of the proceeding caliphs, particularly the Omawis, they resorted either to seclusion or devoted themselves to studies. Those who withdrew themselves from the society, later on, became sufis. It is said that Abu-al-Hashim kufi, who is believed to be the first sufi, was a khariji. Those who devoted themselves to study later formulated themselves into the group of Mutakallimin. One can identify *Wa'idiyah'* amongst them. They jumped into the other field due to socio-political harshness and coercive attitude towards them. They could not stand it and finally became almost extinct.

According to al-Ashari, the kharijites, in general, agreed upon charging Ali b.Abu Talib with infidelity due to his appointing Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as an arbitrator. Before his appointment as arbitrator he was a legitimate Imam and caliph. Abu-Musa al-Ashari, Amr b.al-Aas and Muawiya were also regarded infidels by them. They believed in the imamate of Abu-Bakr and Umar and denied the imamate of Uthman when, according to them, he stopped following the traditions of his predecessors, that is, Abu Bakr and Umar, and adopted new practices[14].

They have their on concepts and beliefs about Tauhid, Jabr and Qadar, createdness of the Quran, grave sin, etc. On the basis of these beliefs, they are divided into the following sub-sects:

Al-Azariqah, the followers of Nafea b. Azraq al- Hanafi.

Al-Najadat, the followers of Najdah b. Amir al Hanafi. From this arose two other sects. One was called al-Atawiah, the followers of Atiya b. al-Aswad and the other is al-Fudaikiyah, the followers of Abu Fudaik but the later was rather uninfluential . From al-Atawiah arose a group called al-Ajarida, the followers of Abdul karim b. al-Ajrad and this was further divided into fifteen sub-divisions: (i) al-Mamumiyah, (ii) al-

Khalafiyah, (iii) al-Hamaziyah, (iv) al-Shuaibiyah, (v) al-Khazamiyah, (vi) al-Malumiyah, (vii) al-Majhuliyah, (viii) al-Salatiyah, (ix) al-Thalibah, (x) al-Akhnasiyah, (xi) al-Mabadiyah, (xii) al-Shabaniyah, (xiii) al- Ziadiyah, (xiv) al-Roshaidiyah and (xv) al-Makaramiyah.

3-   Al-Safariyah, the followers of Ziyad b.al-Asfar.

4-   Al-Ibadiyah. This group was further divided into four groups. The first among them is al-Hafasiyah, the followers of Hafs b. Abu-al-Miqdam. The second is al-Yazidiyah, the followers of Yazid b.Unaisah. The third one is al-Harithiyah, the followers of Harith al-Ibadi, and the last one followed Abu Hazail, the Mutazilite, regarsing the obedience. According to them sometimes it is an obedience without seeking the pleasure of God.

Ibadiyah are further divided into three groups on the basis of the definition and application of hypocrisy (al-nifaq).

5-   Al-Bihasiyah, the followers of Abu Bihas Hassam b.Jabir.They were further divided into three groups : (i) al-Ufiyah, (ii) al-Shabibiyah, the followers of Shabib al-Najram (also called 'people of question', Ashad-al-Suwal) and (iii) *al-Ashab-al-Tafsir* (the people of Quranic interpretation).

6-   al-Sufriah,

7-   al-Fadaliyah.

8-   al-Husainiyah.

9-   al-Shamrakhiyah.

10-   al-Rajeah. From this emerged a group called Shabibiyah, the followers of Shabib. Shabibiyah is known as Murjiatul-khwarij (the Murj'ites amongst the Khārij'ites). In other words, the Shabibiyah did not

pass any judgement against Salih. The background of this is that once Salih ordered to kill a man who claimed to be a Muslim. When he was killed, some of the followers of Salih reacted saying, "You have killed a Muslim", and dissociated themselves from him. They were called al-Rajeah (the people refrained from Salih and his action). Salih was regarded by them a perpetrator of grave sin, because he had killed a Muslim. But a man amongst them, called Shabib remarked," I am not to pass any judgement about Salih, whether he is right or wrong." Consequently, he and his followers were called 'Murjiatul Khawarij.'[15]

The common feature among the Khwarij is that they agreed upon the fact that every major sin is an infidelity, and that God will punish the perpetrators of grave sin forever, as He will do with infidels. But the Najadat differed from them at both points. Najadāt do not believe that major sin amounts to infidelity and that the perpetrators of grave sin will go to hell for-ever like infidels.[16] They hold that religion has two aspects , one is obligatory and the other is not. They believe that it is incumbent upon every Muslim that he should know God and His apostles. He should know it is prohibited to shed the blood of Muslims and to extort their properties. He should know that any type of compulsion in matters of faith as well as fleeing from the injunction of God is prohibited. This kind of knowledge about religion is obligatory. A partfrom, he is excused, therefore, fore example, if any one regards any prohibited act as to be permissible on the basis of his own independent opinion *(ijtihad)*, he is excused in that regard. They say, "We don't know whether God will punish the believers for their sins or not, and if He does He will do so anywhere other than hell in proportion to their sins. But they hold that whatever the case may be, He will not punish the believers eternally and they will get access to Paradise subsequently About minor sins they are of

the view that if any one commits minor sins like seeing a woman or telling a minor lie and he does so constantly and insists upon them, then he will be regarded as a polytheist, but if he commits adultery or drinks wine (major sins) without insisting upon them, then he will be regarded as a Muslim.[17] On the othe hand, al-Makramiyah a sub-sect of al-Ajarida, hold that one who ignores prayer is an infidel, not due to his disregard of prayer but due to his being unacquainted with God. They hold the same view about all grave sins. They believe that "one who commits a grave sin is unfamiliar with God, and it is due to his unfamiliarity that he is an infidel, and not because of his committing a sin."[18] One becomes neither an infidel nor a sinner unless he affirms any sentence of the Shariah in a sense otherwise (not in the sense of Islam). If he says, for example, "there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger" in the sense that Allah is here meant "an Allah having son and wife" as Christians believe, or "an idol assumed by him as Allah", he is an infidel[19.]

About Iman and Islam al-Bihasiyah hold that none can be a Muslim till he confesses the knowledge of God, His Prophet and the knowledge of what was revealed to him as a whole. It also includes association with His friends *(aulia)* and dissociation from His enemies and from all that has been interdicted by Him or He has threatened about.[20]

The opinion of the Khawārij about Oneness *(Tauhid)* of God is similar to the one held by the M'utazilites.[21] But al-Hafasiya amongst al-Ibadiyah believe that the belief in the Book and in the apostles is included in Oneness of God[22]

Al-Khawārij were unanimous in the belief that Quran is created. About the act of man and his destiny some of them believed in free will and some in predestination[23].

Shia'ism

Another in the pages of Islamic history was the movement of shia'ism which again was the product of socio-political developments. Shia'ism developed into a religious movement long after its origin. It is believed to have started just after the death of the Prophet. The appointment of the Caliph was the basic issue to which some people reacted rather sharply. They thought it was Ali's right and they had some evident arguments. Equally evident arguments were, perhaps, presented by the other side. The matter was somehow resolved after a long hectic activity, but it could not convince all, and a nascent group of the friends of Ali (Shi'ān-e-'Ali) gradually emerged on the political scene. A meek and feebles voice became strong when Uthman became the third Caliph. Just after his rising to the caliphate he started indulging himself in controversies. One of them was the return of Hakam b. Umayya to Medina who was expelled from the Madina by the Prophet himself. Inspite of his appeal against the decision of the Prophet, the first two caliphs did not revoke the decision. Uthman not only averted the decision and called him back to Madina but also married his daughter to his son, Marwan.

He exiled Abu Dharr who himself was a renowned Companion of the Prophet. Uthman also gave refuge to Abdullah b. sa'd. b. Abu Surh whose blood was declared forfeits by the Prophet and appointed him as governor of Egypt.[24] All these events are important because they reflect Uthman's personal sense of judgement where he did not agree even with

the Prophet. This could be a daring step but in its response there was a great deal of murmur and groaning in the muslim community.

All these controversies resulted into assassination of Uthman on the one hand and the emergence of socio-political conflicts on the other. Shia'ism, which was in a nascent form till then, became a strong political group and influenced the appointment of next caliph, Ali b. Abu Talib. There were many significant issues which led to a political upheavel. But perhaps most vital of them was the appointment of Imam. The lexical meaning of the word is 'a leader' and 'a scholar'. It has been used in both the senses in the early and the later phases. Moreover, the word has been used with different religious connotations by different sects in Islam. In the early phase of Islamic history, the word *'Imām'* referred to the Caliph. A note of discord was heard even in the beginning. A larger community of the Muslims thought that Imam could be appointed by a committee *'shura'* either unanimously or by a majority-vote and this referred council was to be formed by the Muslims. There was another group having almost no identity in the beginning which did not agree with any such criterion laid down by the people for the appointment of Imam. It believed that Imamate was divinely ordained. It is not left to the choice of the community and this group, whom we have referred to elsewhere, always emphasised the right of Ali to the position of Imam and tacitly rejected the appointment of other three as the Imams or the caliphs of the Muslims. Its members, mostly belonging to the family of the Prophet, believed in the imamate of Ali and continued it to his eleven other descendants. This sect was known as the Twelvers. There were other sects also about whom we will speak later.

The doctrine of imamate, being intricate in itself, involves some other issues which otherwise were not in comformity with Islam. One of the communities (*gholat,*) whom al-Ashari has mentioned, believed in the theory of incarnation which characteristically is Christian in nature. Another issue that followed imamate was messianism which meant the return of the imam to correct the follies of the world and to show it the path of righteousness and to establish the rule of God on the earth. Such a belief is found in Judaim, Christanity and in almost all the sects of the Muslims. It has been supported with various Traditions of the Prophet where he has made some predictions.

In the Islamic history we know that this doctrine has been used to achieve political aims. People, at different times, have claimed themselves to be Mehdi and, having aroused the religious passions have achieved politico-religious importance. For the student of philosophy, such doctrines are significant for the pursuit of consolation to overcome the evil and establish the rule of law based on justice, liberty and fraternity. It has an ethical importance.

Al-Ash'ari and Shahrastāni have described many sects of Shia'ism having differences on the basis of their doctrines and emphasizing either one or the other, but imamate and messianism are, however, common and have become characteristically Shi'ite in nature.

They include imamate in the articles of the faith which other communities of the muslims do not agree to. Notwithstanding the imamate being common, the Shi'a communities differ at the point of continuity. Besides, imamate had been an apple of discord and many people had claimed themselves to be the imams of their times.
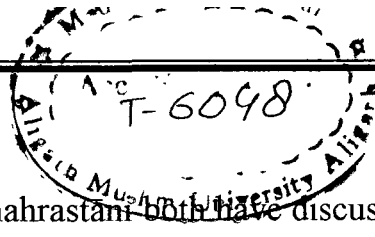
Al-Ash'ari and Shahrastani both have discussed the Shi'a sects and various groups along with their leaders and doctrines. Al-Ash'ari mainly speaks of three sub-sects, namely, (i) Gholat (extremists) (ii) Rafiza or Imāmiyah and (iii) Zaidiyah. Shahrastāni adds 'Kaisaniyya' in the main divisions. Al-Ash'ari does not skip over this sect but includes it into Imāmiyah. These sects are further divided into many groups but we are not concerned with these divisions, for they do not raise any significant doctrinal contention, but these three groups (we shall follow al-Ash'ari) discuss the theosophical issues along with imamate. Gholat, whom al-Ashari recklessly side-lines, raise very contentious and interesting issues along with the doctrine of Imamate, a common message of Shia'ism. They believe in the theories of transmigration of soul and in carnation. We have stated it elsewhere that such theories have no room in the well-vowen texture of Islam. Nevertheless, some groups and individuals do believe in the transmigration of the soul. The common Muslims and scholars never favoured the transmigration of the soul. Gholat believed in this theory but al-Asha'ri and Shahastāni both did not write the case with their arguments.[25]

So far as the theory of incarnation is concerned, we belive that in their conviction they must have been influenced by early Christian scholastic philosophy. Christianity follows it as one of its basic principles proclaiming Jesus Christ the son as due incarnate of God, the father. The Quran, however, categorically rejects this theory. Their interpretation of the Quranic verses has not been mentioned by any of these hereseographers. They, however, believe these five, Mohammad, Ali, Hasan, Husain and Fatima as incarnates of God [26]. Besides, they also believe in the prophecy of their Imams. Some of them regard Ali as prophet and others consider him the form of God. As we know the

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imamate is a common doctrine and all the schools of Shia'ism describe imams as sinless innocent people. The imams are included in the category of the Prophets whom they qualify with this apetect. Gholal also follow the doctrine of messianism which we have already commented on.

Al-Ash'ari also mentions that the Gholāt deny the existence of Heaven and Hell. It is again difficult to envisage the argument they present to hold their denial. But we can imagine that they denied the common man's positions regarding the categorical belief in the Heaven and Hell and upheld the metaphorical formulation that it exists in the world itself being experienced in the form of natural and human bliss and torture.

It is something peculiar that the Gholāt believe in Mohammad being the creator of the world. It is Allah who authorised him for creation,[27] they say. No school of muslim philosophy ever proposed any such doctrine. Al-Ashari might have deduced some wrong conclusions for the arguments which have not been reproduced here.

Imāmiyah or Rāfiza is the second sect of Shia'ism. Al-Alsh'ari speaks of some twenty four divisions of this sect. Shahrastani describes only seven.[28]

Rāfida were called so because they denied the caliphate of Abu Bakar and Umar, [29] but according to Shahrastāni, being the pupil of Wasil b. Ata, Zaid bin Ali and his followers became M'utazilites. "Those who rejected Zaid bin Ali because he held views contrary to those of his ancestors on doctrinal matters, as well as on the question of association and the dissociation, became known as the Rāfidites. They were a group from Kufa".[30]

The Imāmiyah doctrines are largely related to the articles of faith. In the first place, some of the Imāmiyah sects discuss the faith itself. Even at the outset, one marks a basic distinction in the Shi'ā definition of faith. The majority of muslims believe that faith means belief in the six articles of faith, but the Shi'i definition of faith includes imamate therein, which for other Muslims is not an element of faith. The majority of Imāmiyah share this article with other shi'i sects. A bigger group of them defines faith as confession of God, his apostles and Iman. Imān also means to put into practice the teaching of the apostles and the other Imāms. Their assertions must be carried out. This subsequently defines actions also which would mean the enactment of their teaching. Faith comprises of three essential ingredients, knowledge, belief and obedience[31].

The other groups agree on the basic proposition. They only defer on the peripheral matters which are not important for our purpose. We have already mentioned that the Imāmiyah discussed, at length, the questions arising out of the articles of the faith. The most important of the them is, undoubtedly, the unity of God which, besides other questions, involves the issue of the Essence and the Attributes. The Imāmiyah are, generally, attributists and many of them believe in anthropomorphism. Some of them are even corporealists. On the basis of their interpretation of anthropomorphism they are divided in six groups[32]. The first two are corporealists.

The first is the Heshāmiyah. They believe in God being a body having all its dimensions: length, breadth and depth. His length, breadth and depth are in a perfectly balanced form. This has been stated just to emphasize His perfection which runs short in other bodies. It is curious that while explaining it to Abul Hudhail, Heshām speaks of God being

smaller than a mountain called Abu Qubaise pointed at by Abul Hudhail. Heshām's anthropomorphism, however, appears to be more imaginary. He believes in all body characteristics like motion and rest and ascribes them to God.

The second group of the Imāmiyah believe in the figurative anthropomorphism, God being existent is a body having no form or body characteristics. He is not an atomic compound or having composite parts, yet He is established on the '*Arsh*' (Throne) without being in the reach of our senses. It seems to be an effort to set up harmony in the anthropomorphic and non- anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'ān.

The third group believes God to be anthropomorphic for having the form of a man without body. This does not seem to be substantive. The forth group comprises of the followers of Hesham b. Salim al Jawaliqi. They believe God to be in the form of a man having no element of matter. God possesses all the senses and uses them as and when needed. But they are different from those of a man. This refers to God's infinitum.

The fifth and the sixth groups deny God being a form or a body. He is beyond the reach of our senses. He is pure light having no form of a man or animal. But He can assume one and may become a person.

The third and the fourth also deny God having material characteristics. He is a body in potentiality, not in actuality.

These differences arise because of their definitions of an existing entity and a body.

There are some other groups who categorically deny God being a body.

They deny Him being a body as He is not subject to any accident and a body, even the indivisible one, is characterised by accidents. Thus they deny God being a body, yet they believe in figurative anthropomorphism.

The other groups of Imāmiyah deny any kind of anthropomorphism to God. They believe in his attributes. But most of them do not ascend to their being eternal with God like the M'utazilah. These attributist groups mainly discuss the attributes of power, knowledge, and will. His Omnipotence includes His being All-hearing, All-seeing. The attributes of sight and audition have been emphasized to clarify that God being All-seeing and All-hearing does not necessarily mean to be of anthropomorphic nature.

The first of these groups is Zurāriyah, the followers of Zurarah b. Aaun al-Rāfizi. Denying the eternity of the attributes, they argue that God was once without attributes till He created them for Himself. It is not contended, however, that He has created these attributes for Himself all at one time or one by one as and when needed. They also do not take into account or perhaps mean it that God once without attributes was imperfect. The argument is not sustainable either ontologically or from the point of view of Islām.

Like their predecessors the second and the third group also speak of His imperfection and deny the eternity of the attributes. In the case of the second it is interesting to note that this group understands the attributes in relation to the objects. They believe that the attributes can be conceived only after the creation of the objects. Their denial of God's possessing these attributes, perhaps, refers to their meaninglessness. They

argue that the objects before their creation are nothing and God can not be believed to have power over and knowledge of nothing.

It is wrong to believe that the world before being created was nothing. Those who advocate for the eternity of the world believe it to be present in God in the potential form.

The third group makes God more materialistic by considering Him inorganic in the first place and organic thereafter. Life is a characteristic of matter not of spirit.

The fourth group, the followers of Shatānuttaq and the fifth one, the followers of Heshām, lay emphasis on His knowledge. Both of them agree that His knowledge is not eternal. It becomes meaningful only in relation to the objects known. They affirm God being omniscient but his wisdom and knowledge are actualised in the objectified form of something known. He knows them after He determines them and wills, for objects are nothing till they are determined or willed. Will and determination are taken here as synonyms.

Hesham is positive about the knowledge being His attribute like His Omnipotence and Omnipresence. But he denies God's knowledge of the objects before their being existent and argues that if the knowledge of the object is eternal, the objects known should also be eternal. He further argues that a priori knowledge of the objects would make the theory of reward and punishment meaningless. Because if God had a priori knowledge of the actions, man's being wicked or virtuous would be known to Him and the reward and punishment would become meaningless. Knowledge, however, is an attribute of God which is neither He nor other than He.

Ash'ari, later on, might have derived aspiration from Hesham. Like Ash'ari, the sixth group also believes that God is not All-knowing as to His essence. It argues that God knew the objects when He affected them and that He existed before. Like knowledge, action means to take effect and affect is volution. The knowledge of the objects follows the volution of God and as soon as He wills, the things are set in motion. It remains a question if it is a motion within Himself or outside. The outside is nothing and there is no menaing of motion in nothingness. It is, then, a motion with in Himself and if so explained, things would become eternal with Him and it is not acceptable to them.

The seventh group is constituted of the people belonging to both sections affirming God's being All-knowing as to His essence and holding the contrary one. Those denying God being All-knowing as to His essence repeat the same argument of His existence before His action. Those holding otherwise deny the eternity of acts despite His knowledge being essential. The last of these groups rejects both and anthropomorphism of God also. These attributists in the Imāmiyah sect can be classified either as anthropomorphists of both types, Mushabbiha and Mujassimah, and attibutists upholding M'utazilah position or presuming Ash'arism[33].

Another discussion that follows the attributes in the perspective of the unity of God is the doctrine of change (*bada'*). In our opinion it has reference to revealed books which have been abrogated and rejected. Suyuti and many other scholars of the Qur'ān describe, in detail, the problem of rejection and abrogation in the Qur'ān itself. The change in the revealed books raised questions in the minds of the believers also. The shi'i sect of the muslims, particularly Imāmiyah, took it more seriously,

for some of them taught that the part of the Quran related to the House of the Prophet has been deliberately left out or abrogated. God, however, claiming to preserve it in the Qur'ān itself, becomes ultimately responsible for this omission.

The doctrine of bada' (change) is related to the question of volution concerning its meanings and importance. There is bound to be a difference of opinion. Some believe that the volition is one of the attributes of God and being an attribute it is neither separate from nor identical with His Essence. They define will as motion. They are the followers of Hesham b. Hakam and Heshām al-Juwāliqi. The companion of Abu Malik al-Hadrami and Ali b.Metham agree with their predecessors on the definition of will as motion. They also affirm it to be an attribute but believe it to be other than God. Ashari does not mention their argument of defence.

Another group following M'utazilah denies will to be movement. It agrees that will is an attribute. God wills as to his being. Interestingly enough, these scholars differentiate between will and the things willed. On the basis of their being created God wills to create things. Here will and something created are different from each other. Another set of people denies such difference and also avoids to include sin in the objects of His will.

There are some other opinions but not of much importance.

In the doctrine of '*bada*' there is an indispensable question: if God wills before He makes a change. The answer would be in affirmation or negation as well. There are three important groups who have deliberated on this issue.

The first of them believe that change necessitates in God. It occurs after being necessitated in Him. It means that change is a compulsion, which occurs even in God by way of necessity. God is cognisant of it and acts accordingly. It is for this reason that He changes His Shari'ah and other things but always on the principle of good. This view also holds that God cannot make change in his communications to his servants. It is difficult to ascertain the reference to "His communications," for if it is the revelations, they have been ordained many times until the revelation of the Qur'ān and if it is the Qur'ān, God has promised not to change it. It means the change may necessitate God but He is not bound to effect it.

The second group does not deny the possibility of change even in His communications and message to man.

The third group rejects the idea of change in God[34].

The Rāfizah differ on the status of the Qur'ān. Earlier, there have been two prominent views: one of common Muslims and the other of Mutazilah. The common Muslims believe that the Qur'ān is uncreated and will remain preserved after the Doomsday. This common people's view poses some serious questions regarding the status of the Qur'ān. The Mutazilah, after profound contemplation, put forward another view that the Qur'ān is created, for in their opinion it resolves all questions. It was their conjecture and they could not anticipate the criticism which lashed at their contention and revived the common man's view.

One of the groups of Rāfizah as the 'unacknowledged precursor' of Asharism led by Hesham b. Hakam took a mid-way position by denying all the three possible positions that it is neither creating nor created nor uncreated. Ashari while describing this sect never gives its argument. Hesham, however, argues that the Quran being the speech of God is one

of the attributes of God. The qualification of an attribute cannot be ascribed to the other.

Arguing his position Hesham speaks of two levels of the Qur'ān and classifies it accordingly by calling it as the audible and the essential Qur'ān. The audible Qur'ān means the one recited in asundered voice and as the sound is created, the audible Quran is also created. The essential Quran being the attribute of God is uncreated. This form of Qur'ān is neither He nor other than He. This argument is almost the same, which al-Ashari, later on, presented in a changed shape.

The other group follows Mutazilah and Khawārij and agrees that the Qur'ān is created. It had a beginning and may have an end[35].

Like other schools of Muslim philosophy, the Imāmiyah also discuss the freedom of will. Naturally, the variety of opinion is the same. The followers of Hesham b. Hakam favour semi-determinism, holding that the creation of the action is in the hand of God. Man has the power of choice in so far as the will and acquisition is concerned.

The action is determined by the cause that occurs before its creation and becomes responsible for the same. Man has no power in the act of creation. Once the action is caused he has the choice of willing and acquisition. He may will either to perform or to reject. At another level he has the choice of translating his will into action. Thus will and acquisition is in the hand of man.

The other group agrees with no compulsion and champions the cause of full liberty.

The third group follows Mutazilah and denies the actions to be the creation of God[36].

The Imāmiyah also speaks of the capacity that is at work before the existence of the actions, but Al-Ashari provides no explanation. The concept, however, is interesting. Capacity assumes five conditions: cause, instrument, fitness, duration and emptiness of actions.

The Muslim scholars generally believe that no action is uncaused and the cause is one of the stimuli created before the eventual occurrence of the action. In the Imāmiyah scholars, some believe that the stimulus is prior to the actions. On this account, they are divided into four sections.

Hesham b. Hakam leads the first section. It holds that some of the stimuli are prior to the action and others come into being just before its occurrence. One of them is cause. No action can originate without a cause. Hesham believes that the action being the effect necessarily follows the cause. The other stimuli, though present a priori, may not follow the action. What Hesham means us that the cause is vital for action and that God creates the cause. It, he thinks, answers the questions *ad infinitum.*

The second section believes that the fitness of all kinds related to all things is the most important stimulus for the occurrence of the action. Although no explaination has been given, as the book follows in the usual style, it would, perhaps, mean that the person or the thing upon which the action occurrs must be in the fitness of all kind to bear the occurrence.

The third group describes the stimuli to come into existence just before the occurrence of the action. They add another dimension to the problem by calling the stimuli as not being universal but individual.

The fourth one is not so important. It emphasises the fourth stimulus: instrument along with effects. All these groups of Imāmiyah

scholars agree on the basic preposition that the stimuli are prior to the action. The difference lies only in the explanation[37].

In the passage of action and its occurrence there is yet another interesting discourse on the contention as to who is responsible for the subsequent action. In the opinion of one set of scholars, man is not responsible for the subsequent action. As a doer, he should be responsible for the action that he does, not for the one that follows in the aftermath, for example, pain following beating, taste following eating.

The other set of scholars believes man to be responsible for what he does and what follows in the aftermath. They argue that the subsequent action does not occur unless so caused. Thus the doer is responsible for the two. The Mutazilah also agree this view[38].

The Imāmiyah, in general, are semi-determinist: a midway position which al-Ashari held later on.

Regarding the Day of Judgement and the return of thedead, the Imamiyah are again divided into two groups.

The first believes in the Day of Judgement and supports the Messianic view of the Jews which states that some of the dead will return to the world for the removal of the evil and to establish the rule of God on the earth. We have described it elsewhere, as well as the fact that the return of Mahdi is a Mesianic concept, commonly prevalent in all Muslim communities.

The other group, interestingly enough, denies the Day of Judgement and supports Ghulat's (extremist's) view on the transmigration of souls. It believes that the evil souls return in the ugly and loathsome bodies where they are tortured and penalised. The virtuous

souls return in good bodies and enjoy the bliss and happiness of virtue. For them, this is the meaning of reward and punishment. Otherwise there is no Day of Judgement to account for the deeds and decide upon Hell and Heaven. They also believe that the world is eternal[39]. It is, of course, a minority view and is quite alien to Islam. Besides the other articles of faith, the Imāmiyah, very emphatically, advocate for the doctrine of Imāmah which speaks of the divine personage of Imām, convincing the community that there is always a need of a spiritual guide to keep up right on the track of Islam. Such a logic contends for the presence of Imām either in the Messianic form or divinely embodied material shape of man. The Imāmiyah amongst themselves agree on the divine stature of Imām but differ on his status. Some exaggerate it and consider it as higher to the angels and the prophets. Majority of them are, however, reasonable and place them after the angels and the prophets[40]. Most of the section of the Imāmiyah agree that the Imam is innocent and commits no sin. It does not appear to be logical and cannot be claimed even of the prophets.

Regarding the warning to the sinners, one section of the Imāmiyah believes that their opponents will be damned to hell and that they will be redeemed of sins after some questions. The belief is Christian in character. It is not in concurrence with Islām. Those belonging to the other section reasonable and hold that the perpetrator of grave sin will be damned to hell, despite the fact that he belongs to this or that community[41].

Regarding the creation of things they are again divided into two groups: one, the followers of Hesham b. al-Hakam, is of the view that God creates the attributes that become things like mortality from mortal,

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existence from existent. The attribute is neither the same nor other than the same.

The other group believes that the things are created and separate from their attributes[42].

Along with other doctrines, Al-Ashari also discusses their Epistemology. Apart from the testimony being the valid source of knowledge, the Imāmiyah also discuss perception and inference. Most of the Imāmiyah sects favour reason. They believe that the knowledge about the Shariah is innate. It is instinctive. God, however, has the power either to impart or deny a portion of knowledge He wills. It means that man can have only as much knowledge as God desires, but whatever portion of knowledge He wills is a priori and is actualised as and when required. Some scholars are of the view that knowledge can either be innate or acquired but its acquisition is on the will of God. On the contention of the application of reason they are again divided. Some advocate that the use of reason is possible after the arrival of the prophets. Others hold that reason was always a valid source before and after the arrival of the prophets[43].

Zaidiyah is the last important shi'ite sect. It has been named after its founder Zaid b. Ali b. al-Husain b. Ali b Abu Talib. Being the Shi'ite sect the Zaidiyah community, in general, agrees with their other compatriots barring some minor differences which are of the least significance for our purpose. Zaid, being a Mutazilah, follows their doctrines. Besides, he discusses the question related to faith and infidelity, position of a grave sinner, unity of God (ensuing a discussion on Essence and attributes) and freedom of will (covering the discussion on createdness of action and the forces determining the creation of action)

Regarding faith and infidelity most of them believe that faith means knowledge of God, affirmation of all that God has commanded and abstention from what God has forbidden. On the contrary, belief in the forbidden or its persuasion is infidelity but it cannot be designated as polytheism and disbelief. The smaller group holds that faith is all obedience and all the forbidden is not infidelity. It is, certainly, not to be pursued as it is forbidden and God has warned against it again and again.

Regarding the position of the grave sinner, the Zaidiyyah agree with the Khawārij having no confusion that the grave sinner will be damned to Hell forever and will have no chance of redemption. It is in concurrence with the larger shi'a sect. They advocate for such a severe view to argue that the first three caliphs being the perpetrators of grave sin, will be in such a position. The majority of Muslims disagree with this belief and reject the idea that the difference with Ali could be a major or even minor sin.

Zaidiyah, like their predecessors, believe in the unity of God. God is one, pure and simple. His attributes are neither identical with nor separate form His essence. They are neither the same nor other than the same. Hisham b. al-Hakam, a great Imāmiyah scholar, had earlier advocated that theory. His echoes are being heard in the writings of his successors. Sulaiman b.Jarir al-Zaidi believes that God is Omniscient on account of his knowledge and wisdom. He is Omnipotent on account of His power. His Omniscience and Omnipotence, though objectified, are not objects of form and mater. God is always willing. He rejects all apart from his will. His will is His pleasure and His rejection is His wrath. There is, however, a smaller group which does not agree with Sulaiman. They believe in His attributes but hold that God is Omniscient and

Omnipotent without knowledge and power. They also deny God as (eternally) willing and reject the concept of pleasure and wrath.

The Zaidiyah do not directly discuss the freedom of will, they deal with action. Those who believe actions being created by God are determinists. And those who hold the actions being the creation of man are indeterminists (or libertarians). In the former it is difficult to justify the concept of reward and punishment. It is overcome with the assertion that God is the creator of actions but their completion and acquisition are in the hands of man. This pre-envisages Ashari's position of semi-determinism and circumvents the Mutazilah position of categorical indeterminism. The other contemporary sect of Imāmiyah led by Hesham b. al-Hakam also holds almost similar views. The Zaidiyah, holding the action being the creation of man, reiterate Mutazilah point of views[44].

Murji'ah

We have already stated that the early Mutakallimin prudenty emphacised the distinction between Iman and Islam. It was, perhaps, the basic problem discussed in early Kalām for the explicit reason that it forms the core of Islam as a religion. It was also essential because new convertants required explanation. Besides, the social scenario of Muslim society in accordance with the direction of its development, raised some questions and doubts about the integrity of quite notable persons like Uthman and Ali. Some politico-religious groups like Khariah and Shi'ah came into being in the aftermath of these questions and doubts. The Murji'ah is also one of them which often takes a neutral position in answering these questions. For them the basic and contentious issues are the definition of faith and the status of a Muslim sinner.

The queries cited above provided room for the emergence of at least three political religious groups, that is, Kharijah, Shi'ah and Murji'ah. The Shi'ah and the Kharijah took extreme positions in answering the querries stated before. The Murji'ah advocated a midway position and did not regard anyone as a disbeliever unless socially declared aberrant. The word Murji'ah is derived from *irja'* which means 'to defer' of 'to giver hope'. The Murji'ah defer judgement about any believer unto God. He is the best judge and will do what He deems fit. They are always optimistic of God's Forgiveness and argue that disobedience with faith is not harmful just as obedience with disbelief is not beneficial and, thus, they look upon deels as secondary to intention and resolve[45].

The hereseographers disagree as to who is the founder of this sect. Al-Ash'ari, whom other historians followed, named Jahm, b. Safwan as its founder[46]. Shahrastāni, another important historian and hereseographer, considered Ghailan of Damascus to be the founder of this sect[47]. It may be noted that Jahm b. Sufwah and Ghailan Damishqi are also believed to be the proponents of Jabriyah and Qadariyah schools, respectively. Their names as the founders of this Murji'ah sect may not be acceptable. Baring these two, the other hereseographers like ibn Sa'ad, plead for the name of al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. Hanafiyah to be its founder. He is also believed to have written an open letter, which was first read in the circle of scholars and, later on, in public, under the little *'Kitab-al-Irja''* in which he argued that the matter related to the sinners must be left to the judgement of God, which He would decide on the day of judgement. We can make no judgement about their status. Other early sources name Qais b. Abu Muslim al Masir or Darr b. Abdullah, both Kufans, as the first propagator of *'irja'*. This, however, does not deny

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Hansan's role in the propagation of the doctrine of *'irja,'* but it does strengthen the argument that Kufa was the early seat of this sect from where it spread in other parts of the Muslim world[48].

In its early phase, the Murji'ah were a political group. They, unlike Shi'ah, did not believe in the innocence of Ali and Uthman. They also disagreed that both Ali and Uthman were grave sinners as Kharijah held and were, thus, to be condemned. The Murji'ah thought it to be politically and religiously wise to leave the judgement unto God about their position in Paradise. In declaring them sinful, the Kharijah, however, forgot that they were among the ten Companions for whom Paradise was promised even in their lives. The Murji'ah, by sustaining such claims, ventured no declaration. It is also believed that the Umaiyyah patronized the Murji'ah, for they made no comments on the licentious and debauched lives of the Umayyad Caliphs. This might be evident from their approach, but the fact is otherwise. Many important Murji'ah thinkers were persecuted by the Umaiyyads when they raised sword against their injustice to Muslim *Ummah*. Many Murji'ah like Qais b. Masir and Darr b. Abdullah joined the rebellion of Ibn-al-Ashath and fought in the Battle of Dayr al-Jamajim and the governor al-Hajjaj tyranically crushed them. They also organised themselves under Yazid b. al-Muhallab and fought against Yazid II. They, however, supported Omer II who himself was a pious man and is allegedly included in *'al-Khulafai Rashideen'*. It is obvious then that the Murji'ah were neither politically quietists nor were patronized by Umaiyyads for granting them licence to go ahead with their unjust and psychophancy oriented policies.[49]

Besides their political task, the Murji'ah also looked after their religious responsibilities. In their religious discourse they discussed the

problem of faith and infidelity (*Iman* and *Kufr*) at length. Here, again, they disagree with the two extremists, that is, Shi'ah and Kharijah, who are quite definitive about both faith and infidelity. The Murji'ah, in general forbid raising sword against any Muslim except in self-defence. They rather loosely define faith, and hold that mere knowledge of the articles may be regarded as faith. For them detailed knowledge is not a pre-requisite. Omer b. Uthman al-Shamzi is reported to have asked Abu-Hanifa that (I) if a person is unablse to distinguish the forbidden meat of the pig from the mutton and does eat none of them due to his doubt, an that (ii) if a person does not know as to where Ka'aba is situated and that (iii) if a person has no knowledge about the pedigry and geneology of the Prophet of Islam, can such a person be regarded a Nuslim. Abu Hanifa's answer to all these questions was affirmative, mere knowledge of the pig being interdicted, Ka'aba being the Holy pilgrimage and Muhammad being the Prophet of Islam will make him *mumin*. Abu Hanifa and his followers advocate that the knowledge and conviction of the unity of God and other beliefs comprise *Imān* (faith) and it neither increases nor decreases and that no one is superior or inferior on his basis. The Hanifi definition of faith imposes some serious difficulties. The Hypocrites *(Munafiqun)* may be declared *mumin* merely on account of their aquiscence with Islam and the verses of the Quran stating the superiority of a person on the basis of *'Taqwa'* (piety) would require different interpretation[50].

Abul-Hasan al-Ashari, in his *Maqālāt*, speaks of twelve groups of al- Murji'ah, most of whom are named after their propagators. They are (i) Al-Jahmiyah, (ii) Al-Satihiya, (iii) Al-Shimiyah, (iv) Al-Unusiyah, (v) Al-Janbaniyah, (vi) Al-Najjariyah, (vii) Al-Ghailaniyah, (viii) Al-

Shabibiyah, (ix) Al-Hanafiyah, (x) Al-Tulmaniyah, (xi) Al-Manisiyah, and (xii) Al-Karramiyah.[51]

All the sects, as we have already mentioned, have largely pondered over the problem of faith. Although it seems quite explicit, for the Quran has already defined it by mentioning six articles of faith, yet, it invited the attention of early theologians, probably due to the destructive role of the hypocrites or because of the non-Arab convertents who were not familiar with the temperament and variety of Arabic language and who actually needed interpretations to explain to them the real spirit of the contents of the holy Quran. Most of these groups agree that *Imān* (faith) is the belief in God, His apostles and what comes from Him. This may be interpreted as what has been said in the Book. Some of them, like Karramiya, hold that faith means pronouncement of the articles with the tongue. Others do not agree with such a loose definition which would include even the hypocrites in the category of Muslims. It would not be acceptable to many of the scholars and common Muslims as well.

The other Murji'ah groups rightly believe that the pronouncement with tongue and affirmation by heart, both are indispensable. Belief in God, His apostles and what He was ordained must be acknowledged by the tongue and affirmed by the heart.

Most of the groups define faith as the knowledge of God, but differ on account of its being primary knowledge or secondary knowledge. Some of them comprehend it to be the primary knowledge but the opponents *(like: Ghailaniyah)* hold otherwise. There could be yet another question whether faith is acquired knowledge or whether it is innate. Those who believe it to be the secondary knowledge advocate for its being acquired. And the upholders of its being primary knowledge

consider it as innate. It may be concluded that for some, faith is an empirical proposition, and for others it is empirical in the sense of its being acquired, not necessarily experimental, for faith is something beyond an experience of empirical nature.

Most of the groups are of the view that faith neither increases nor decreases. It can perhaps be interpreted that faith cannot be measured in quantum. It is qualitative in nature, and there is no meaning of its being less or more qualitative. Other groups, like Najjāriyah hold that faith can increase or decrease. Their definition of faith implies of its being quantitative in nature having a different way of its measurement. Unlike their other counterparts, they also believe in someone being superior or inferior on account of his faith. This doctrine seems to be in conformity with the verses of the Quran holding the superiority and the inferiority on account of *Taqwa*. .

Thus, the Murji'ah, in general, discussed faith, its nature and prerequisites and advocate that even the sinful is not debarred from the community. His occasional disobedience does not deprive him of his faith. They are ready to extend this concession even to Iblis. But his constant disobedience and pride against the divine order puts him in the rank of rejecters.

The Murji'ah have also discussed infidelity, the opposite of *Imān*. They are liberal in its definition too. Unlike kharijah they abstain from passing judgement. Most of them define infidelity as rejection and denial of God, His apostles and what He has said in the Book. The rejection or the denial of the articles of faith may either be pronounced with the tongue or by heart.

The *Murji'ah are divided into seven groups on this issue, but only* three of them are important.[52] They agree on the definition of infidelity which says that it is unbelief and rejection of either of the articles of faith or anyone of them. Abu Shimr, for intance, considers a person an infidel who rejects the idea of unity of God and destiny. Abu Shimr is an orthodox Mu'tazili, who support their doctrines to the point of being irrational, so much so that he even denies the religious status of the opponents. The Murji'ah also disagree on the point of the occurrence of infidelity and as to whether it means the rejection by tongue or by heart or by both. The Karramiyah, the followers of Mohd. b. Karram, understand it to be ominous even if it is rejected merely by tongue. The Jahmiyah believe that infidelity means rejection by heart. The other groups take infidelity to mean rejection by the tongue and the heart simultaneously.

The Murji'ah, besides these two vital issues, also discussed the other doctrines attributed to Mu'tazilah and Ashā'irah, but their basic contention lies in the doctrine of 'irjah' and for this reason they are spread across various Muslim sects. Keeping this in view, Shahrastāni and other Scholars broadly classify them into four groups, Kharijite Murji'ah (like al-Najadāt), Qadrite Murji'ah, Jabarite Murji'ah and pure Murji'ah.[53]

M'utazilism

So far we have been dealing with the early phase of Ilm-al-Kalam (Scholasticism). With the origin of M'utazilah school we enter into the realm of later Ilm-al-kalam where we come across a different set of problems while the former ones continue. The emergence of M'utazilah school is a landmark in the history of Muslim philosophy for the reason that it popularized rational thinking, scientific outlook and philosophical investigation amongst Muslims. Mutazilah is a thoroughly rationalistic

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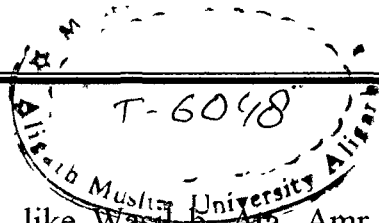
school. Its chief exponents, like Wasil b. Ata, Amr b. Obaid, Hudhail, Nazzam and others, do discuss problems arising out of theological diffferences, but their approach is categorically rational in their interpretation. In their contents, they include discourses on Essence and Attributes, vision of God, createdness of the Quran and so on with a slightly newer interpretation. M'utazilah's rational approach was not harmful for the cause of Islam, for many people belonging to Magians, Christians and Jews embraced Islam after being convinced by their forceful presentation of the argument. The great M'utazilah often participated in the organized discourses (munazirah) and prevailed over the opponents who after, being defeated, accepted Islam and propagated it thereafter. Nevertheless, the attitude of the M'utazilah became ultra-rational, which later on began to prove rather, harmful for the cause of religion. The common Muslims started getting deviated so much so that the need for of its reform was intensely felt.

Before the emergence of M'utazilah, particularly since the time of Siffin, the question regarding the fate of grave sinners, particularly those belonging to the Muslim community gained serious importance and was discussed in all the elite groups. This question became the cause of the origin of the M'utazilah. As it is stated, Imam Hasan al-Basari was teaching in a mosque when a man entered the mosque and asked Imam Hasan al-Basari the popular question regarding the fate of the grave sinners belonging to the Muslim community. A long-necked pupil named Abu Hudhaifa Wasil b. Ata, answered the seeker. This discourtesy irritated the teacher who in response to his pupil's unnecessary enthusiasm expelled him from his school. Wasil b. Ata, with scant show of modesty, readily accepted his rejection and seceded to another corner of the mosque and founded another school in the name of M'utazilah. The

name was derived out of what the teacher said at the time of his secession from him. Amr b. Ubaid also joined this group. Wasil b. Ata and Amr. b. Ubaid both popularized Mutazilism to the extent that it created great scholars like Hudhail, Nazzam and Jahiz who, in their days, touched the acme of renown and eminence both[54]. M'utazilism became so popular that all other schools of early Kalam got overshadowed. It was the creed of scholars belonging to different sects of Muslim community like Qadariya, Kharija and Shi'a. Wasil b. Ata, propounded some doctrines at the very outset which became the foundation on which the whole edifice of Mutazilism was erected.

Wasil b. Ata designated the followers of M'utazilah school as 'The people of Unity and Justice' (*Ahl-al-Tauhid wa-al-Adl*). It certainly means that he emphasized the basic principles, which formed the theoretical paradigm of M'utazilism. He included five doctrines in its basic structure: the Unity of God (*Tauhid*), Justice of God (*Adl*), intermediary position (*Manzilah-bain-al-Manzilatain*), promising and warning (*Waad wa Waid*) and enjoying good and prohibiting evil (*Amr bi al-Maruf wa al- Nahya an-al-Munkar*).

The one regarding the intermediary position is dear to Wasil b. Ata alone. Others found little interest in the matter and showed a varying degrees of agreement or disagreement. The other doctrines have been discussed at length by other scholars who have added new dimensions.

Monotheism (*Tauhid*) is the core of Islam. It is, of course, the constituent of other religions, particularly of Semitic ones like Judaism and Christianity. God is one according to these religions but the nature of their monotheism is different. The Christians believe in God being an assembly of three constituents: Father, son and the holy Ghost. Jews,

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however, do not agree to God having any triplets. They believe in an indivisible God but some of their sects advocate for incarnation. Despite this, the Jewish concept of monotheism is relatively closer to Islam. The Pentateuch describes God manifesting Himself in the form of calf, though the Quran says it was the creation of a famous magician Samiri. Moreover, the Jews also believe Uzair to be the son of God as stated in the Quran itself[55]. Islam totally rejects that God could be ascribed with the attributes of procreation and fatherliness. "He neither begets nor is begotten"[56]. When the Jews and Christians describe God as Father, they do not use the concept in a metaphorical sense but imagine the physical possibility. Islam shows its contempt to such a concept and denies even the flicker of such a possibility.

Islamic monotheism can better be comprehended by the term 'Unity' which means God is One, Pure and Simple (There is none like unto him) The Unity, however, poses several questions, like, whether it is unity of Essence, or of both Essence and attributes. In the case of the inclusion of the attributes in its premises, there is the danger of its being interpreted as pluralistic. Islam ventures to refuse all pluralistic possibility, and even at the outset of its acceptance negates the pluralistic tone with the assertion that there is no god but God, thereby ensuring a more important clause. It denies every possibility of any polytheistic interpretation. The Quran takes utmost care in the description of God and asserts with emphasis that God is one and there is none to share His attributes . The Quran, explaining the concept of Unity, generally uses two basic terms, ie. *ahad* and *wahda* that categorically reject any possibility of diversity and composition. It is also persistently uses the clause, 'there is none to share Him' (*La Sharika Lahu*), with the word

wahdah. It has been so emphasized to refrain people from any polytheistic interpretation of even its ambiguous verses.

The problem of the Unity of God, however, posed serious threats to Islam when the Jews and the Christians started criticizing Islam for its being the shade of Christianity or judaism. The scholars particularly the Mutakallimin, felt the future warning and decided to save Islam from such acrimony. Their different groups, including the M'utazilah, discussed the problem and explained the meaning of attributes being an integral part of His unity.

The scholars who contend the problem of Essence and Attributes can be divided into two groups, one affirming the Attributes as being entities and the other denying them as entities but taking their cognizance as identical with the Essence. Wolfsan and other orientalists trace the beginning of the discourse on the problem of the Essence and the Attributes in Islam to Christianity. They hold it to be the consequence of the discussion on the three Apostles being the constituents of God as the manifest of His Attributes. The Christian scholastists, like John, Plotinus and Alexander of Aphrodicias, the teacher of Plotinus himself, make an effort to justify the perception that Trinity is apparent. They substantiate with seemingly convincing argument that Christianity is a monotheistic religion and that Trinity is the manifestation of His Attributes which subsist in Him as essential properties, which could, in other words, be called as emanating modes. It gives way to the discussion of transcendence and emanence. It, however, does not prove that the contention of Essence and Attributes arose in Islam due to Christian scholastic philosophy. In our opinion, the root of this problem lay in the Quran and the Tradition where God despite being an object of Unity is

described to possess as many as ninety nine attributes, which are remembered as His names[57]. Again we know that these Attributes are not believed to be His properties which would mean that they are essential for His existence and would reduce Him to be mere substance. The Quran defines God as Light (*Noor*)of the heavens and earth, and Light is not substance.

The M'utazilah, in general, denied the Attributes. Thus, they disagreed with the common man. Since the denial was not in conformity with the holy Quran, they had to take recourse to its pages and interpret the verses which speak of His Attributes as being identical with His Essence to give the common man an impression that they do not reject their belief and are no heretics, but the fact is otherwise. Wasib b. Ata, the founder of the M'utazilah school, denied the Attributes on the contention of eternity. The Attributes, if taken to be entities, will become co-eternal with God while the Quran says that there is one eternal being, that is, God.[58]

Thus the Attributes, the M'utazilah argue, cannot be affirmed as being separate. It is, again, blesphamous to comprehend God having acquired them later, for such a proposition would endanger His perfection which He possesses infinitum. Both these arguments strongly deny the Attributes being separate entities. It was, in fact, an instance of deviation from the common man's belief. M'utazilah, however, were philosophers and not the advocates of common Muslims.

The other important M'utazilah sect, led by eminent scholars like Hudhail and Nazzam, also denied Attributes and followed their founders but their arguments are different. They have categorized the Attributes as essential and non-essential. Knowledge, power and life have been

classified as essential ones and the non-essential, though eternal, ones include will, hearing, seeing and so on. Al-Ashari, whom we shall discuss later, has described the views of different M'utazilah leaders and their arguments in support of their views. To avoid repetition we shall abstain from describing them in detail. Some M'utazilah groups also support anthropomorphism in one or the other form, but others reject it in all its shades rather emphatically. All of them, however, are consistent in their denial. Some believe them to be identical with Essence while others hold them it to be a shade of dualism and thus, reject their being identical with the Essence. They conceive them to be no different from the Essence. Their emphasis is on their negation. Al-Ashari explains their concept of Unity (*Tawhid*) in the following way:

The M'utazilites agreed that Allah is alone, none is like unto Him, He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing, he is neither a body nor a ghost nor a corpse, nor a form, nor a person, nor flesh, nor blood, nor substance nor accident, having no colour, no taste no smell no sound, neither having any heat nor moisture nor coldness nor dryness, neither having any length, any breath and any depth, nor meeting nor separation. He neither moves nor does He rest, nor is He divided. He has no part and no limb. He has no side and direction either right, left, front, back, up and down. No space comprehends Him, no time is applicable to Him. Any kind of touching and isolation is not applicable to Him. He does not stay in any place. He is not qualified with any of temporal qualities nor with such implying His being finite nor is He qualified with distance, not with going any direction. He is neither limited, nor is He Father nor a child. Quantities can't comprehend Him. Veils can't hide Him. Senses can't perceive Him. He can't be compared with people. He does not resemble any creature. Epidemics are not to be applied to Him, No defect overcomes Him.

Everything occurring to mind or formed in imagination does have no likening to Him. He is eternally the first, the last, the antecedent of all products and the existent before all creatures. He is eternally all-knowing, all-powering and all-living. No eye sees Him. No sight perceives Him. No imagination comprehends Him, No ear hears Him, he is something unlike things knowing, powerful and living but unlike those having knowledge, powers all life. He is the Eternal alone. There is no Vizier (minister) in His rule, no assistant in the origination of what He has originated, nor in the creation of what He has created. He did not create this universe on the basis of any previous example. The creation of one thing is not easier for Him than that of any thing other as it is not more difficult than that of the other. He does not gain any profit nor does He lose. He does not get delight nor pleasure nor does He suffer from any hurt and pain, nor does He have finitude. Mortality is not applicable to Him or any impotency applicable to Him. He is far over and above being in contact with women and adopting any wife and sons[59].

The other important doctrine related to the unity of God is the one concerning with the createdness of the holy Quran. The common Muslims believe that the Quran is a revealed book and eternal with God. The philosophers agree with the common Muslims on its being a revelation as auxiliary to Islam but are divided on the question of its eternity with God. It has been a matter of controversy even in the early kalam. Some groups advocated for its being uncreated and consequently eternal with God like his Attributes and others denied its eternity with God on the argument they use to reject the attributes being separate from His Essence. They believe that nothing could be co-eternal with God for there is one eternal being and that is He. It is blasphemous to call it otherwise. M'utazilah, in general, believe the Quran as being created on account of its being the

product of one of His attributes viz. Kalam. The holy Qur'an is the Kalam which, of course, is a product even if it is believed to have been preserved on the Tablet for all times to come. It must have a beginning when God decided to write it on the Tablet and must also have an end which the Quran itself proclaims as the Day of Judgement. The M'utazilah, thus, on their rational principle believe in the Quran as created[60].

The M'utazilah also deny another common belief and give their own interpretation to the verses which promise the vision of God as reward to the virtuous people[61]. They believe that the vision of something is possible only in the space and God being beyond space cannot be seen[62]. Al-Ashari is true in his criticism of M'utazilah that they commit a fallacy by applying the criterion of space on something beyond space. There must be different criteria for the vision of something beyond. On the basis of distance, direction and position, the requisites for the right of something in space, the vision of God, which is beyond space, cannot be denied. The M'utazilah, however, were not rationally convinced of the vision of God. Their explanation, though founded on fallacious arguments, had an appeal to the common man and he being affected by it, got deviated. He, perhaps, felt discontented with the promises of God having little possibility of fulfillment. Their metaphorical value could be no solace for him to keep upright. The rejection of the vision of God also entailed the denial of such miraculous acts like ascension. It had a serious consequence which posed a threat to the basic paradigms of religion. The danger was, however, felt and cured.

The Wasiliyah amongst the M'utazilah showed a keen concern in one of the early controversies which, in fact, arose between the Kharjah and the Murjiah after the Battle of Siffin regarding the fate of the

perpetrator of grave sin. It, in fact, became the cause of the origin of M'utazilah school. The Wasilyah, the earliest shape of the M'utazilah, took a mid-way position between Murjiah and Kharijah and introduced the doctrine of '*manzilah Bain-a-Manzilatain*' (a destination between the two)[63]. The other groups of M'utazilah are not very about this discourse. They, however, support their founder. The most important of these doctrines is the belief in free-will. The M'utazilah inherit the legacy of their predecessors i.e. the Qadariyah. Wasil b. Ata, the founder, also belonged to this school. He was an eminent scholar and had not only the courage to face the wrath of his teacher but also the will to survive. He worked so hard that his school gained ground and became the cause of the impoverishment of the preceding school. In his inheritance Wasil brought with him the rejection of determinism. He favoured the belief that God has granted man the power of discernment through reason by which he could choose between the right and the wrong and be rewarded or punished accordingly in the life hereafter[64]. Due to their sharp opposition to the idea of Jabr, the M'utazilah also faced the charge of being '*Majusul Ummah*'. Besides drawing force of their argument from the Quran in favour of free-will, they also provided it a rational basis to make their argument even stronger and with better appeal. The M'utazilah regarded man to be the nucleus of all actions. They also held him as the author of his action which means that he is both the creator as well as the doer of his acts. God has nothing to do with his choice of the right and the wrong. He is free in this and, thus, is the maker of his own destiny. He creates action by way of both '*mubasharah*' and '*taulid*' (direct intention and consequence or Immediate and mediate actions). It is compared with the fable of Zaid's moving finger, which follows the movement of ring that he wore. He had no intention of moving it. In the same way, guidance or

otherwise is intentional and immediate and the success or failure therein is its consequence or mediate action. The former is the direct action and the later is indirect one. There is no doubt, if it is believed, that man is the author of these actions. He has to reap what he sows[65].

The M'utazilah, like their predecessors, are criticized for following the theory of dualism of the Magians regarding man and God both as creators[66]. For the M'utazilah, it was against the principle of justice that God should create a helpless man and make him responsible thereafter for something in which he has no choice. Moreover, that reward and punishment should be decided upon the merit and demerit of the action which is determined by God is, they hold again, unjust[67]. The critics also contend that in the face of God being Omnipotent, there should be no other potent. In case of being creator, man becomes potent and allowing potency to man means dualism[68]. In our opinion, the argument is pessimistically reductionist in nature and besides, it also overlooks the distinction of man and God having limited and infinite power, respectively. The M'utazilah seem to be convincing in their argument. If not so believed, justice is to be interpreted otherwise. The M'utazilah, however, give man the choice of either being obedient or disobedient .

We have already stated that free will has always been a matter of popular discourse in almost every nook and corner of the world. The scholars have either denied or affirmed it. Those who deny freewill to man favour the authority of God and those who affirm it believe in the justice and benevolence of God and assert that justice is greater than authority. Moreover, it is wrong to believe that appeal to His justice means to reduce His power. It only means a prudent use of power, justice and authority. In fact, both are methods of application of power. In the

former, there is a flexibility of mending something in man's favour, and in the latter there is a rigidity which gives no room to fret and favour. It, however, does not mean defying His Omnipotence.

Such discourse was popular in Arab society even before the advent of Islam. The two schools the Libertarians who were later known as Qadariyah and the predestinarians popularly known as Jabariyah, existed in the lifetime of the Prophet. It is evident from the traditions of the Prophet who has shown his strong dislike for libertarians, are the Qadariyah by calling them Magians. It was enough to reject the M'utazilah but even they dominated the academic scene for quite a long period due to the favour of the eminent elite and socio-political luminaries as well as the caliphs.

God as the M'utazilah hold, is Omniscient besides being Omnipotent. His justice and wisdom demand that He should be All-Good. It means that good and evil are in the nature of things. They exist as inherent qualities. This explanation of the origin of evil is also not very satisfactory and it does not resolve but enhances the controversy. God being the knower of all things, has the knowledge of evil inherent in things. Notwithstanding the denial of God being the creator of evil, he becomes its creator. In the controversy regarding the priority of reason and revelation, the M'utazilah are rather clear that reason alone is the criterion to judge good and evil or right and wrong. They evolved a rational criterion laying down that good and evil are synonymous with (i) merit and defect (ii) profit and loss and (iii) reward and punishment[69]. Apparently it seems to be very simple, but it invites several serious questions like if good and evil are individualistic. In such a case it will be difficult to have a universal criterion to recognize something as good and

evil. It is true that the Quran has emphasized the application of reason and has made occasional appeals to human prudence, but it does not mean that reason could serve as guide. The Revelation has to be taken into account as the primary source of guidance because it is based on divine knowledge. The M'utazilah make it subservient to reason instead and believe it to be only a seal on what reason judges as right and wrong. The common Muslims in general and the later scholars in particular agreed with the M'utazilah on the third possibility, that is, good and evil are synonymous with reward and punishment. In the case of the other two synonyms, revelation would be the true guide. The M'utazilah could not agree to this criticism, saying that if one is true, the other must equally be true. This, in our opinion, could not be accepted, for it undermines the importance of revelation. Justice if God also demands that God must not violate His promises He has made in the Quran. He has to carry out all His warnings He has given to man for being wicked and sinful. Justice demands that law be upheld and reward and punishment be confirmed accordingly. Some more of the controversial views of the M'utazilah can be summarized as under:

1. Denial of reward and punishment to the dead in the grave and the questioning by the angels, *Munkar* and *Nakir*.

2. Denial of the indications of the Day of Judgement, of Gog and Magog and of the appearance of the anti-Christ (*dajjal*).

3. Some M'utazilites believe that the view that full justice will be done on the Day of Judgement has only metaphorical meaning because deeds can hardly be weighed.

4. The M'utazilah also deny the existence of Recording Angels (*Kiraman Katibin*).

5. They also deny the physical existance of Tank (*Hauz*) and the Bridge (*al-Sirat*). They hold that Heaven and Hell are not in existance at the moment. Rather, they hold that they will come into existence on the Day of Judgement.

6. They deny covenant (*al-Mithaq*). They believe that God neither spoke to any prophet, angel, or supporter of the Divine throne, nor would He cast a glance towards them.

7. They hold that deeds are included in Iman and a grave sinner will always stay in Hell.

8. They believe in evidentiary miracles of the prophets but deny any miraculous act from any saint lest it may cause confusion. The same was the belief of Jahamites too.

9. They deny the ascension (*al-M'eraj*) of the Prophet but affirm his journey to Jerusalem.

10. They believe that the doer deserves to reap the reward of his action; none can get benefit from the deeds of another, for example, one who prays is alone entitled to reap the reward of the prayer.

11. As the divine decree cannot be altered, prayers serve no purpose at all. One gains nothing by them, because if the object, for which prayers are offered is in conformity with destiny, it is needless to ask for it, and if the object conflicts with destiny, it is impossible to secure it.

12. They believe that Message bearing angles are superior to prophets in rank.

13.   They hold that reason demands that an Imam should necessarily be appointed over the Ummah.

14.   For them, a Mujtahid can never be wrong in his views, as against the opinion of the Asharites. According to the Ash'artes, he sometimes errs sometimes hits the mark.

In the light of the summary it is evident that the Mutaziah are thoroughgoing rationalists. In their emphasis on reason they became oblivious of its limits. They also could not realize that reason is individualistic. It does not have any cosmic character and cannot, therefore, help in the evolution of a universal principle. Reason of one is different from the other. What can be true in one case may be otherwise in the other. Besides, the M'utazilah defied the authority of revelation. They, in fact, subordinated it to reason. It is certainly against the common outlook. Briefly, they differed from the sunni community on the following principles:

(i)   The Problem of Essence and Attributes,

(ii)   The Problem of createdness of the Quran,

(iii)   The Problem of free-will and determinism,

(iv)   The Problem of Beatific vision and,

(v)   The Problem of promise and threat[70].

It is obvious that M'utazilism declined because it could, impress only the elite. The common man could never relate to it. It was for this reason that when al-Ashari revolted against it, he was very widely welcomed, for his opposition to M'utazilism based on revelation as the primary source appealed to the common man's prudence.

Chapter-3

Contribution of al-Ash'ari to Islâmic Thought

CHAPTER - 3

Contribution of al-Ash'ari to Islamic Thought

We have mentioned elsewhere that the purpose of 'Ilm-al kalām is to justify the basic tenets of kalām on the basis of reason, and to assert whether it is possible to know God, His Essence and Attributes, specifically are generally with the help of such factors as the meaning of creation, motion and rest, body and accidents. The most disputed area of discussion is God's Essence and Attributes. The Mutazilite think it contrary to Oneness if it is maintained that God has knowledge, power, i.e. eternal entities. Those who maintain them are called Sifatiyah (Attributists) and those who deny are called Muattila (Strippers).

Shahrastani says, "Concerning the revealed attributes, there were two schools of thought among the early leaders. One school interpreted them in a way that could be suggested by the words themselves. The other group abstained from interpretation. They said: we know from reason that there is nothing like God: therefore, God does not resemble any created thing, nor does any created thing resemble Him. This we are sure of. We do not know, however, the meaning of the words applied to Him in such statements as "The beneficent sat on the throne', 'I created with my hand' 'God came', and the like. We need not know the explanation of these verses, nor how to interpret them; but we are obliged to believe that God has no partner and that there is nothing like him: that we have shown beyond doubt".

He further says, "Among those early leaders who did not follow the principle of interpretation or adopt anthropomorphism was Malik b.

Anas, Ahmad b. Hanball, Sufyan al- Thauri and Dawud b. Ali al-Asfahani, and their followers held the same view."[1]

These are the "orthodox groups, particularly the Zahirites, the Mujassimites (Anthropomorphists), the Muhaddithun (Traditionalists) and the Jurists, all of whom were wholly opposed to the use of reason or kalām in defending or explaining religious dogmas and condemned any discussion about them as innovation."[2]

Al- Ashari, at the first stage, had to confront them. He tried his best to justify kalām. For this purpose he wrote a 'Resalah' entitled, *Reslah fi Istihsan- al- Khawd fi- Ilm- al- kalam* (A Vindication of the Science of kalām). At the second, He countered those whom he believed to hold views contrary to Islam especially in his books, *al-Luma and al-Ibāna.* He criticized kharijah for their strict belief in w'aid, those anthropomorphists believing in God having human form or body and specially the M'utazilites for their denial of Attributes, belief in createdness of the Quran, belief in Qadar, denial of beatific vision, etc. We at first mention his justification of Kalām.

It is a peculiarity of al-Ashari that before answering it he positively puts the question of the opponent. The opponents of kalām, says al-Ashari, "calumniate him who scrutinizes the basic dogmas of religion and accuse him of deviation. It is innovation and deviation they claim, to engage in kalām about motion and rest, body and accident, accidental modes and states, the atom and the leaf, and the Attributes of the Creator.'

He further says, "They assert that if it were a matter of guidance and rectitude, the Prophet and his Companions would have discussed it, for, they say, the Prophet did not die until he had discussed and amply

explained all needful religious matters. He left nothing to be said by anyone about the affairs of their religion needful to Muslims, and what brings them near to God and removes them far from His anger." Illustrating their view point, he further says, "Since no kalām on any of the subjects, which we have mentioned, has been related from the Prophet, we know that such kalām is an innovation and such inquiry a deviation. For if it were good, the Prophet and his Companions would not have failed to discuss it. For the absence of such kalām on the part of the Prophet and his Companions can be explained in only two ways: either they knew and were silent about it; or they did not know it, nay were ignorant of it. Now if they knew it and did not discuss it, then we also may be silent about it, as they were, and we may abstain from plunging into it, as they abstained. For if it were a part of religion, they could not have been silent about it. On the other hand, if they did not know it, then we may have the same ignorance of it. For if it were a part of religion, they would not have been ignorant of it. So according to both explanations such kalām is an innovation and plunging into it is a deviation."

This is the summary of their argument for abstaining from reasoning about the basic dogmas of religion. Al-Ashari rejected their argument for three reasons. Firstly, he reverses their argument against them saying," It is true that the Prophet never said: "If anyone should inquire into that and discuss it, regard him as a deviating innovator." since you have discussed something which the Prophet did not discuss, and you have accused him of deviation whom the Prophet did not so accuse.[3]

Secondly, al-Ashari admits that the Prophet was not ignorant of any item of the kalām though neither he nor his companions ever discuss them. At the same time, he also admits that the basic principles of the kalām regarding body and accident, motion and rest, etc. have been mentioned in the Qurān in general terms. About motion and rest he says, "Their basic principle is present in the Qurān, where they prove the affirmation of God's oneness and so for union and separateness. In relating what His friend Abraham said in the story of setting of the star and the sun and the moon and their being moved from place to place, God said what proves that his (Abraham's) Lord cannot be subject to any of that and that one who is subject to setting and translation from place to place is not the divinity".[4]

About the oneness of God he quotes verses from the Qurān. Similar is the case with His justice also. Thereafter he raises the question regarding the possibility or impossibility of resurrection of the body and argues its possibility by quoting some verses from the Qurān. In his support he also uses rational argument. Because some people, according to him, "denied both the first creation and the second and maintained the eternity of the world, a doubt entered their minds simply because they said: It is our experience that life is wet and hot and death is cold and dry, akin to the nature of earth. How, then, can there be any amalgamation of life and earth-and decayed bones, resulting in a sound creation, since two contraries do not combine? For this reason, then, they denied the resurrection."

Al-Ash'ari answers "It is certainly true that two contraries do not combine in one substrate or in one direction or in what exists already in the substrate. But they can exist in two substrates by way of propinquity.

So God argued against them by saying: "He who makes fire for you from the green tree-for lo! You kindle fire from it (36.80) In saying that, God referred them to their own knowledge and experience of the emergence of fire from green tree notwithstanding the heat and dryness of the former and the coldness of the latter. Again, God made the possibility of the first production a proof of the possibility of the last production, because it is a proof of the possibility of the propinquity of life to earth and decayed bones and of making it a sound creation, for He said, "Just as We created man a first time, so We shall restore him" (21.104)".[5]

About cause and its effect and the relation between them and the first member of the things existing, al-Ashari says, "We find the basis of that in the Sunna of God's Apostle. On a certain occasion he said, "There is no contagious disease and no bad omen." And a Bedouin said: then what is the matter with camels, flawless as gazelles which mingle with scabby camels and become scabby? And the Prophet said, "And who inflected the first? And the bedouin was silent". And the belief that the body has a limit and the atom cannot be divided (*ad infinitum*), he says that the basis of this lies in the Qurān: " And everything has been numbered by us in a clear archetype (36.12). He rationally proves it by saying, "Now one cannot number what has no limit and the single thing cannot be divided (*ad infinitum*). For this would necessitate that they (endlessly) are two things and God has declared that numbering applies to them both".[6]

Thirdly, al-Ash'ari admits that all these questions and items were known to the Prophet and his companions but it was custom of the Prophet that he answered any question when it was raised. He himself did not pose any problem and the problems were solved as and when they

arose. Since this kind of kalām was not introduced at the time of the Prophet, therefore he did not discuss it, but the companions and the followers of the companions and their followers including Ahmad b. Hanbal, a renouned jurist, engaged in it. Ahmad b. Hambal held the view about the Quran that it is uncreated and the one advocating its createdness is a non-believer. He also referred to other three Imams saying that they wrote books while the Prophet did not write. By referring to them all He wanted to justify the science of Kalām and that this kind of Kalam is necessary for the justification of Islamic tenets and its beliefs.

Now we come to his second job, that is, his refutation of the ideas and the beliefs contradicting Islamic ones. His main opponents are the M'utazilites. At some places of his work 'al-Ibana' he also condemned the Qadarites and the Jahamites as deviators. Al-Ash'ari, at the outset, gives a general description of his opponents and their ideas. He says that there are some deviators from the right path, namely, the Mutazilites and the Qadarites whose wishes urged them to follow their heads and forefathers, so they interpreted the Qurān on the basis of their opinions as God did not reveal any authority in their support, nor did they report anything from the Prophet nor from any holy predecessors (al-Salaf). Moreover, they contradicted and disagreed with the Companions of the Prophet in their opinion regarding the vision of God with eyes while there are many traditions to support it. They denied the intercession of the Prophet for the sinners and the Tradition in this regard. They also denied that the unbelievers are punished in their graves, whereas the Companions and their followers unanimously agreed to punishment in the grave. They also believed in the createdness of the Qurān as their brothers associating partners with God said, "It is not but a speech of a man".[7] Moreover, they hold that man creates evil, as the Magians believed in two creators; one

creating good and the other evil. These are the Qadarites. After criticizing them, Ashari confronts the M'utazilah, denying any kind of anthropomorphism. He says that they also deny that God has a face, whereas He said, "All that is on earth will perish but will abide (forever) the Face of thy Lord, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour"[8]. Al-Ash'ari further says that they also deny 'two hands,' 'two eyes' ,knowledge and power to God while there are verses to ascribe them to Him.

After attacking in this section, al-Ash'ari the Jahamites, Kharijites, Qadarites and the M'utazilites in berief, he, in the other, briefly discuss the ideas and the path of(*Ahn-al- haqq wa al- Sunna*). He says, "we affirm that our religion is to hold fast the Book of our Lord, the Sunnah of the Prophet and what was related by the Companions of the Prophet, their followers (*Tabe'in*) and by the Traditionists. We hold them all and what was said by Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Mohammad b. Hanbal, may God bless him, elevate his status and make his reward plentiful." (It seems that he recognizes Ahmad b. Hanbal as his Imam, though he did not strictly follow him). He further says "All that we say is that we affirm and believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, His Messengers, what they brought from Allah and all that is related with authority. We do not reject any of them and that Allah is One. There is no Allah but He. He did not adopt any wife nor any child and that Mohammad is His slave and His Messenger whom He sent with guidance and with right religion and that Heaven and Hell are realities. The day of judgement will undoubtedly come and that God will resurrect those who are in the graves. Afterwards, al-Ashari affirms Allah as firmly established on His throne, having a face, two hands, two eyes and substantiats all these with Quranic verses. He affirms all His Attributes and Names, especially Knowledge, Power and Will, by quoting holy verses of the Qurān in his support. He believes in

human destiny being either good or bad and goodness or badness being determined by His decree and judgement. Beatific vision with sight is a reward for believers at the Day of judgement while the unbelievers will be deprived of this bliss. About the perpetrators of the grave sins he says that he should not charge anyone of infidelity even if he commits a grave sin like adultery, fornication, theft, etc. He says that he believes in Islam being wider and more extensive than Imān, and that Imān may increase and decrease. He also believes that the heart of man is between His two fingers and that He has kept heaven on one finger and earth on the other as reported by the Prophet. After this, he discusses the concept of intercession by the Prophet on behalf of the sinners amongst the believers at the Day of Judgement, and agrees to this concept and also believes in punishment in the grave. He also believes in Basin, Balance, Bridge and resurrection after death. Having mentioned them, he discusses the problems related to the Caliphate, Munkar and Nakir, and creation of Heaven and hell.[9]

The issues discussed and justified by al-Ash'ari are those denied either by the M'uitazilah or Jahmiyah or Qadaria. Some of them have been explained convincingly. We will discuss them one by one. They are as follows:

(i)   Essence and Attributes.

(ii)   The Qurān being created or uncreated.

(iii)   Beatific vision with physical eyes.

(iv)   Problem of Jabr and Qadar.

(v)   Promise of reward and threat of punishment.

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Before we elaborate upon these, one thing must borne in mind, that is, al- Ashari always sought to find a mid-way position. In the case of the Attributes of God, for example, he tried to seek reconcilation between the two extreme views held by Anthropomorphists and M'utaziltes. The former maintained that God possesses all the attributes mentioned in the Qurān and that all these attributes such as two hands, two eyes, a face, etc must be taken in the literal sense. In other words, God has bodily existence. The M'utazilites, on the other hand, considered themselves to be the 'Champions of Unity and Justice' maintaining that God is One, eternal, unique, absolute Being having no touch of dualism in Him. His Essence is self-subsistent and He does not have any attribute apart from His Essence. Therefore His knowledge is He Himself or His Essence and His power is He Himself or His Essence. Similar is the case with all His attributes like Seeing, Hearing, etc. These Attributes, if they exist, have no meaning other than His Essence or other than He.

In the same manner al-Ash'ari maintained a mid-way position regarding the case of free-will and determinism.

God's Essence and Attributes

According to al-Ash'ari, for God there is an Essence along with some Ninety-nine attributes mentioned either in the Qurān or in the Tradition. If we carefully study his 'al-Luma,' we find that he explained His Oneness along with His attributes like Knowledge, Power, Will, Hearing, Seeing, etc. and maintained all of them as neither separate nor identical with His Essence. Therefore God is knowing by knowledge, powerful by power and seeing by sight, or in other words, He has Knowledge Power, Hearing, Sight, etc.

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About the Unity of God he held that God is One, pure and simple. There is no God but He "He is Allah, the One, the Eternal, the Absolute, He beggetteth not, nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him"[10] and "He is the Lord of the worlds"[11]. He is the Creator of this universe. There is no Creator but He. He is the Governor and maker. Justifying His oneness al-Ash'ari says, "The Government of two will be neither harmonious nor consistently effective, but impotence will inevitably attach to one or to both of them. For if one of the two wills a man's life and the other wills his death, one of three things must ensue: the will of both together will be accomplished or the will of neither will be accomplished, or the will of only one will be accomplished. Now it is impossible that the will of both together be accomplished, for the body cannot be simultaneously living and dead. Similarly if the will of both together be not accomplished one must conclude to the impotence of both and the impotent can be neither God nor eternal. And if the will of only one were accomplished impotence necessarily attaches to the one whose will is not accomplished and the impotent can be neither God nor eternal. Thus what we have said proves that the Maker of things is One. And God Most High has said, "Were there gods other than God in them, the heavens and the earth would be in disorder" (21-22) This is the meaning of the argument which we have just presented".[12]

Ash'ari divides attributes into two categories: Essential and Operative. In his book *al-Luma*, al-Ash'ari has discussed seven essential Attributes of God, that is, Knowledge, Power, Life, Hearing, Seeing, Speech and Will. Speech and Will have been discussed in greater detail. Al-Ashari's concern is to prove that these Attributes are inherent in Him and that these are neither different nor identical with Him. Let us take the case of Knowledge.

Ash'ari mentions the question of his opponent who asked, "Why do you say that God is knowing?" and then he replies, "Well-made works can be wisely ordered only by one who is knowing. That is clear from the fact that a man who lacks skill and knowledge cannot weave patterned brocade or execute fine points of craftmanship. So when we behold in man an embodiment of wise organization, such as the life arranged in him by God, and his hearing and sight and the ways in which food and drink are distributed in him, and his perfection and completeness, and when we behold the firmament with its sun, its moon, its stars, and their courses, we see in that proof that the Maker of what we have mentioned could not have made it without knowing its mode and nature. Besides, if works of wisdom could be produced by one who is not knowing, but we could not know but that perhaps all the determinations, dispositions and works which proceed from living beings proceed from them while they are unknowing. (And this is impossible). The impossibility of that proves that well-made works can be produced only by one who is knowing".

With the same argument al-Ash'ari further proves that God is living and powerful. He says, "It is likewise true that works can be produced only by one who is powerful and living. For if they could be produced by one who is not powerful and not living, we should not know that perhaps all the things which proceed from men proceed from them while they are powerless and dead. (And this is impossible). Since that is impossible, the works prove that God is living and powerful." And in order to justify His being Hearing and Seeing, al-Ash'ari says, "One who is living, if he be not qualified by some defect which prevents his perceiving audible and visible things when these exist, must be hearing and seeing. Therefore, since God is living, and since He cannot be subject to such ailments as deafness, blindness and so forth, for ailments prove

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the temporal production of him who is subject to them, it is certain that God is hearing and seeing."[13]

These are five of God's essential attributes. Al-Ash'ari has so far proved His being living, powerful, knowing, hearing and seeing. But the question arises whether He is always (or eternally) living, powerful etc.? Al-Ash'ari maintains His being eternally living, knowing, powerful, hearing and seeing. Al-Ash'ari says that if we maintain that He is not eternally so and so, it means that he, at any time, was qualified by something contrary. We take the example of knowledge. He says, "One who is living, if he be not knowing, is qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects. So if the Creator had been ever living but unknowing, He would have been qualified by some contrary of knowledge such as ignorance, doubt or other defects. But if He had been ever qualified by some contrary of knowledge, it would have been impossible for Him ever to know. For if the contrary of knowledge had been eternal, it would have been impossible for it to cease to be; and if it had been impossible for it to cease to be it would have been impossible for Him to have made works of wisdom."[14]

Al-Ash'ari further maintains, God's being eternally powerful seeing and hearing. He says, "Similarly, had God been ever living, but not powerful, He would necessarily have been ever impotent, ever qualified by some contrary of power. And had His impotence been eternal, it would have been impossible for Him ever to be powerful and for acts to proceed from Him. Likewise, had God been ever living, but not hearing and seeing, He would have been qualified by some contrary of hearing such as deafness and other ailments, and by some contrary of sight such as blindness and other ailments. But it is impossible for the

Creator to be subject to ailments because they are among the characteristics of temporal production. So what we have said proves that God has always been knowing, powerful seeing and hearing".[15]

Al-Ash'ari has so far proved, that God is eternally living, knowing, powerful, etc., but he still has to prove that He is knowing by knowledge, powerful by power and so on. This is necessary for the reason that his opponents believed His being knowing, powerful, etc. but they held that He was knowing by His essence. The Jahamites denied altogether His knowledge, power etc., and the M'utazilites held, if they believed, His knowledge, power, etc to be identical with His Essence. Al-Ashari's contention is to prove all His attributes as being neither identical with nor distinct from Him and His Essence and that He is knowing with knowledge, powerful with power and so on.

Al-Ashari first advances his argument that "One's being knowing means that he has knowledge".[16] In the case of God he also believes that He has knowledge. He quotes these two verses: "He has sent it down with His knowledge"[17] and "No female conceives or bears save with His knowledge."[18] To justify His power he quotes another verse of the Qurān. In order to prove that these Attributes are not identical with His Essence, as the M'utazilites believed, he says, "Among the proofs that God is knowing by a knowledge is the fact that He must be knowing either by Himself or by a knowledge which cannot be Himself. Now if He were knowing by Himself, He Himself would have to be knowledge. For if one said that God is knowing by a quality distinct from Him, he would have to say that this quality is knowledge. But knowledge can not be knowing, nor can the knower be knowledge, nor can God be identical with His attributes. Do you not see that the ways in which one knows that

knowledge is that by it the knower knows? For the power of man, by which he does not know, cannot be knowledge. Hence the Creator cannot be knowledge, He cannot be knowing by Himself (or by His Essence). And if that be impossible, it is certain that He is knowing by a knowledge which cannot be Himself."[19] In relation to God's knowledge (similar is the case with His other essential attributes) al-Ash'ari has proved that it is not identical with God or with His Essence, while the second phrase of his conviction, i.e. 'these are not separate and distinct from Him', requires explanation. Al-Ash'ari, in this regard, says, "Granted that the work of wisdom that a man has knowledge, it does not therefore prove that the knowledge is distinct from him, just as, though it proves that the man is knowing, it does not prove that he is in any way distinct. Moreover, 'otherness' means that one of two things can be somehow separate from the other. Hence, there is solid proof of the eternity both of the Creator and of His knowledge, it is impossible for them to be two distinct things."[20]

One can think that this inference was made because if His knowledge or any other attribute be maintained to be distinct from Him, it would destroy the divine unity. That is why the Jahamites denied His attributes altogether and the Mutazilites believed them to be identical with His Essence. But Al-Ashari is of the opinion that these are not identical with Him because, one can think that this will nullify them, nor are they distinct and separate from Him because this will destroy His unicity. This argument prove that all His attributes, specially essential ones, such as life, power, hearing, sight, etc are neither separate nor identical with Him.

Essential attributes are those that are active at all times. If we deny them, their contraries will necessarily follow. In other words, if we say that God is not knowing, we must believe that He is All-ignorant. If we say that He is not willing we must say that He is not-willing and likewise if we say that He is not speaking, we must say that He is qualified with the contrary of speech such as silence or other ailment and if the contraries of will, speech, power, etc had been eternal, it would have been impossible for them to cease to exist just as it is impossible for them to begin to exist. Seven attributes are regarded as essential. They are life, power, knowledge, hearing, seeing, will and speech. Apart from them, there are other operative or active attributes. They are also eternal, but their contraries will not necessarily follow if we deny them. In the case of action and creation, if we say 'He is not acting, or not creating', it does not mean that He is qualified by their contraries. Because action, creation and even justice have no contraries. In relation to justice al-Ash'ari says, "the denial of justice does not necessitate the affirmation of a contrary, which is impotence. Nor does it necessitate the affirmation of injustice, because a man may not be just, when there proceeds from him no justice acquired or effected by him, and yet not be unjust"[21]. Mc Carthy says, "Ash'ari seems to have held that God's active (not essential) attributes (those concerned with His operations like creation, sustenance, etc) were entitively temporal, but denominatively eternal. Thus God is eternally 'creator' but not eternally 'creating', just as a weaver is a weaver even when he is not actually weaving"[22]

Anthropomorphism is yet another problem related to the Attributes. There are many verses in the Qurān ascribing face, hands, eyes to God. The problem is whether they should be treated as literal or metaphorical. The Mutazilites treated then as metaphorical i.e. face for

His Majesty, hand for His Power etc. But al-Ash'ari treats them as literal, whereupon question arises as to whether these words have bodily existence in their connotation, or in other words, whether God is a body or not. If He is a body, or has bodily existence, then there is no difference between Him and His creatures having bodily existence and that is absurd because He Himself has declared, "There is nothing similar to Him". On this very basis the Mutazilites denied Him having face, hands etc and interpreted them otherwise. But the Asharites affirmed them saying that since these words have been used by God Himself, and are ascribed to Him and they have no meanings other than face, hand etc. in Arabic, and Qurān was revealed in Arabic so the Arab might understand it well. Therefore, we are left with no choice but to accept them in their literal meaning and there is no reason to interpret them otherwise. But since He is not like anything therefore we should say that He has face unlike faces, hands unlike hands etc. In his book '*al-Ibāna*' Al-Ash'ari has quoted the verses describing these words to God and answered the M'utazilites interpreting them otherwise. For example, He says in the case of two hands, that when Satan denied to prostrate before Adam, He said to him, "Why did you deny to prostrate one whom we have created with my hands"? There God wanted to show that Adam was someone special for Him. He had created him with His own hand and this was the pride of Adam denied to other creatures including Satan himself If we interpret 'hands' in the meaning of Power, then everything is created by His power, and in this case, there is no privilege with Adam and there is no difference between Adam and Satan because Satan also was created by His power. Quoting another tradition al-Ash'ari says that both His hands are right.[23] Thus Ash'ari believes that God has face unlike faces, hands unlike hands, etc and that He is sitting on His Throne as suggested by

many verses of the Qurān. Throne, according to him, is the highest heaven. He comes every night to the nearest sky to forgive His servants if they seek His pardon, as reported in a tradition, and then goes back. Thus he believes in His coming and going. The verses of the Qurān also support this.[24] Here Ash'ari followed a midway between the two extremes: one of the downright anthropomorphism, like Hesham b. Hakam whom we have discussed in Shia'ism, and the other of the Mutazilites who stressed on anti-anthropomorphism *(Tanzih)* and, thus, denied to ascribe to God even face, hands etc. that were used by God for Himself in the Qurān.

The Qurān being either created or uncreated

The M'utazilites believed that the Qurān is created and al-Ash'ari held that it is uncreated. In order to justify his claim al-Ash'ari argued that Speech is one of God's essential Attributes and that "God has ever been speaking. Had God ever been not-speaking (and He is one for whom speech is not impossible) He would have been qualified by one of the contraries of speech, such as silence or some ailment."[25] And this silence being an attribute of God would have been eternal and subsequently it would have been impossible for it to cease to be as well as to begin to be. Therefore we should believe that God has eternally been speaking and speech is one of his essential Attributes and the Qurān, being an eternal Attribute of God, must be uncreated.

Everything created, in order to take place, needs divine command, because it is God who is the Creator of all things, and in order to create anything He commands it to be. In case we maintain the Qurān being created, it should also have needed divine command. Because God says, "For to anything which We have willed, We but say 'Be' and it is."[26]

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Ash'ari holds that God has been ever speaking and that the speech of God (the Qurān) is uncreated. In order to justify this belief he says, "We hold that because God has said, 'When We will a thing Our only utterance is that We say to it, 'Be'! and it is' (16.40/42). So if the Qurān had been created, God would have said to it 'Be'! But the Qurān is His speech and it is impossible that His speech be spoken to. For this would necessitate a second speech, and we should have to say of this second speech and its relation to a third speech what we say of the first speech and its relation to a second speech. But this would necessitate speeches without end which is false. And if this be false, it is false that the Qurān is created. Moreover, if God could speak to His own speech, He could also will His own willing a thing which both we and they hold to be false. And if this be false, it cannot be that the Qurān is created."

It seems that al-Ash'ari has founded this argument on the basis that there should be an end to every thing and "the antecedently limitless cannot begin to be"[27] and cannot be counted as well because God has said "And everything has been numbered by Us in a clear archetype."[28] Ash'ari says, "now one cannot number what has no limit."[29]

Another argument advanced by al-Ash'ari is that God is the Lord of the worlds. He is the Creator of this universe. There are two things existing in this universe: one is God's command and the other is His creation. When God says, "To Him belong both creation and Command"[30]. He Himself differentiates between them. It means Command is not included in creation. If it were included, it would not have been used separately. It means that Command is something uncreated. This is the Command the heavens and the earth are sustained thereby. God says, ".[31]

This is the command *(amr)* of God that eternally exists because He says, "For Allah there is Command (even) before (the creation) and after (this)."[32] It means Command is something eternal and therefore uncreated. Since the Qurān, being the speech of God, is His command, therefore, it is not created.[33]

Ash'ari criticizes those who prove that the Qurān is created saying that they should, at first, prove that God is not All-speaking. If He is All-speaking, there must be His speech and His speech must be eternal like Him. Because, He is All-speaking. This is why there is no end of His speeches while there is an end of oceans if they are to write His speeches. God says, "Say: "If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid."[34]

Ash'ari says 'In case we admit that the Qurān is created this will not be the speech of an eternal. Rather, this will be considered to be the speech of a created entity either of a tree as the Jahamites hold that God had spoken Moses through a tree, His speech was inherent in that tree or of a man as the polytheist regarded this Qurān as to be the speech of a man.[35]

Therefore, those who maintain, Ash'ari says, that the Qurān is created are saying what was said by the polytheists and therefore they are like them.[36]

Ash'ari in this connection, refers to Ahmad b. Hanbal who said that a man believing in createdness of the Quran is *kafir* (infidel), and he himself holds this view.[37] When Ahmad was asked whether the Qurān is created or not, he replied with reference to the Qurān that God has said, "The Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qurān He has created

man"[38] *(Allama-al-Quran, khalaqa-al-insan)*. Here Ahamad b. Hanbal repeated again and again *allama* and *khalaqa* (taught and created). Thus he wanted to say that God himself has differentiated between the Quran and the man. In case of the Quran He says, 'He taught it", while in the case of man He says, 'He has created him'. If the Quran were something created He would have said, "It is He Who has created the Quran and He has created man". But He did not say so.

Another argument is that the Quran is Divine knowledge that He imparted to man and divine knowledge cannot be created, especially when it consists of divine Names and every Muslim believes these Names to be eternal.[39]

But the question arises, what does the Quran mean? Quran is composed of parts, words and sounds. Whether all these are uncreated and eternal or only its meaning is eternal and therefore uncreated. Here again al-Ash'ari adopts an intermediary position between the extreme views of the Zahirites and the Mutazilites. The Zahirites, including the Hanbalites "hold that the speech of God, that is, the Quran, is composed of letters, words and sounds which inhere in the essence of God and is therefore eternal. Some of the Hanbalites went to the extreme and asserted that even the cover and the binding of the Quran are eternal"[40] The M'utazilites went to the other extreme and asserted that it is created and, therefore, not eternal. But the Ash'arites, adopting a mid-way position, "maintained that the Quran is composed of words and sounds but these do not inhere in the essence of God. They made a distinction between the outward and concrete expression of the Quran in Language, and the real, self-subsistent meaning of it, and held that the Quran, as expressed in words and sounds, is no doubt, temporal *(Hadith)*, but the

Qurān in its meaning is uncreated and eternal. They further maintained that this meaning is an attribute other than knowledge and will, and as such, inheres eternally in the essence of God and is, therefore, eternal."[41]

Vision of God

The question of the Vision of God has three possibilities; one, whether God may be seen or not, two, if His vision is possible, whether it is possible in both the worlds, here and hereafter or in the Hereafter alone, and third, whether this vision is related to eyes or to the heart. Some of the M'utazilites believed that God would be seen by hearts, that is, the believers would have His vision not by sight but by their hearts and that it is a kind of knowledge. This controversy took place because of a verse in the Qurān where God says, "Eyes do not attain (perceive) to Him, but He attains to eyes." The verbs used in this verse are derived from the *'Idrak'* that means perception. The problem is what does this verse mean? Some are of the view that it denotes perception by eyes, which is evident from the verse and they, therefore, deny His vision but affirm His perception by the hearts, which is a kind of knowledge, and that is possible even in this world as it is possible in the Hereafter. On the contrary, "The extreme orthodox Muslims and the Zahirites, in particular, held that it is possible to see God and the righteous persons would actually have His vision as the chief reward for their good actions. They further held that God is settled firmly on His throne, He exists in different directions and is capable of being pointed out".[42]

This controversy is related to His vision with eyes. The Mutazilites denied His vision because it entails, firstly, His being a bodily existence and then, being located in space and time and even in a particular direction and God is above all these limitations. On the contrary, Ashari

is of the view that it is possible to see God and the righteous persons will see Him in the world hereafter, as the moon is seen in night, and that the unbelievers will not have this bliss. He quotes the Qurān, "Some faces that day, will beam (in brightness and beauty) looking towards their Lord."[43]

In this connection, there are two verses in the Qurān and both of them seem to be contradicting each other. One suggests, eyes don't attain to Him and the other affirms the possibility of His vision with eyes. Ash'ari tried his best to have reconciliation between them. He restricted the verse, apparently denying this possibility to this world alone so that it be in agreement with the other verse and with the Tradition also in which the Prophet said addressing his Companions that they would see in the world hereafter their Lord as they saw the moon, and shall receive no harm in seeing Him.[44]

The second argument advanced by al-Ash'ari is related to the language and its grammar. The verse affirming the possibility of vision contains the word '*nazirah*' that is derived from its root word '*nazr*,' and *nazr* can be used in three senses: (i) to consider or to learn a lesson (*nazr-al-'itibar*)[45], (ii) to wait and watch (*nazr-al-intizar*)[46] and (iii) vision with eyes (*nazr-al-ruyah*). Ashari has shown why and how the word '*nazirah*' is restricted to express the last meaning. Ash'ari says that these two verses mention righteous people and their reward in the Heaven, and Heaven is not a place of consideration and a place of learning a lesson, but it is a place of reward for the righteous . Therefore, this '*nazr*' (Look) is not a *nazr-al-itibar* (Look of consideration). Likewise, Heaven is not a place of waiting but it is a place of receiving. The righteous will get what they like. Therefore it is not a '*nazr-al-intizar*' (look of expectation).

Now, the last option remains and this is true that it is *nazr-al-ruyah* (Look with eyes).

The other argument, related to Arabic grammar and advanced by Ashari, is that when *'nazr'* is used with preposition *'ila'* meaning 'at', it does mean to see. In order to substantiate his contention he quotes a verse from the poetry of Imr-al-Qaise where *nazr* is used but is not followed by any preposition like *'ila'*. Therefore it means waiting. Likewise, he quotes two more verses containing this verb, that is, *'yanzorun'*, which also means waiting, while in the verse concerned, *'ila'* is used before the object of *'nazirah,'* therefore it means 'looking at'.

The other objection related to it is whether this look *(nazr)* is the look of the eye or of the hearts. Unlike the Mutazilites, Ash'ari is of the opinion, that this is the look of the eye, not of heart. Ash'ari refutes their contention with the same argument, that is,. 'look of consideration as well as look of expectation. That both are related to the heart has already been refuted. Therefore, it is not the look of the heart. Rather, it is the look of the eye, especially when reference is made to the faces also, which may be seen in the holy verse.[47]

There is an objection. If the vision of God with eyes was possible, the desire of the Prophet Moses could be fulfilled. Moses desired to have the vision of God but he could not accomplish it Ash'ari replies that it is true that Moses did not attain His vision in this world, but it does not probe the fallacy of his contention. Rather, it supports it. There are two possibilities, he says, one is that Moses did not know that His vision is impossible, but this is not true because he was a prophet and knew everything about his Lord. The other possibility is that he knew that His vision is not possible but under his strong urge to see Him, he demanded

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it in the temporal world, whereas His vision is possible only in the world hereafter. As God did not like to make himself visible to Moses in this world, therefore He postulated a condition that is fixity of the mountain. In other words, if the mountain was fixed, Moses could see Him but "When his Lord manifested Himself to the mount, He made it as dust and Moses fell down in a swoon".[48] Ash'ari says that if God liked to show Himself to Moses, He would have made the mount fixed in its place and Moses would see Him, but His vision is not possible in this world because this is a bliss and reward for the righteous in the hereafter. Therefore, He made it as dust. Since the antecedent, in its nature, is possible for God, therefore the consequent must also be possible for Him.[49]

The objection that seeing a thing requires space, time and direction, that is, a thing, in order to be seen, must be located in a space and in a particular direction, is countered in the following way.

Ash'ari says, "What is visible is not seen because it is limited or because it inheres in something limited or because it is an accident. Since that is not so, one must not apply that judgement to the invisible. We, likewise, have no experience of an agent who is not a body or a thing, which is neither a substance nor accident or of one knowing, powerful and Living how is not such by reason of temporally produced knowledge and life and power. Yet we must not apply that judgement to the Invisible. For the agent is not an agent because he is a body, nor is the thing a thing because it is a substance or an accident."[49]

The basic argument is that God should not be treated as we treat His creatures because "There is nothing like Him"[50] and that "There is no one equal to Him".[51]

In order to differentiate God from His creatures, Ash'ari denies His being a body or resembling anything. He says, "If God resembled anything He would have to resemble it either in all of its respects or in one of its respects. Now if He resembled it in all of its respects, He would of necessity be produced in all of His respects. And if He resembled it in one of its respects, He would of necessity be produced, like it, in that respect in which he resembled it. For every two like things are judged the same regarding that in which they are alike But it is impossible for the produced to be eternal and for the eternal to be produced".[52]

When God is not like other things such as body, substance or accident, He should not be treated like them. Ash'ari wants to argue that it is our habit that we see a thing located in a limited space and time. We, therefore, apply that judgment to everything. But the Invisible is not like visible. We, therefore, should not apply this judgement to the Invisible because He is above all these limitations and that "There is nothing like unto Him."

Theory of Acquisition

This theory is related to freewill determinism discourse. It has been established that the controversy of freewill and determinism existed even in the days of Ignorance amongst the pagan Arabs. After the advent of Islam, Muslims were also influenced by it. The early Qadarites concentrated on the Qurān and the Sunnah. They traced some verses in the Qurān holding man responsible for his deeds while there are some that emphasize that God is the ultimate cause of everything There is a verse saying that if there is good in our destiny it is from God, but if there is an evil it is from man. The Qadarities, we may suppose, held it fast and believed that good is from God and evil is from man or Satan.

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The Mutazilites modified this doctrine and held that man is the doer as well as creator of his good and bad deeds and thus they became the champions of *qadar*. Qadar is from *qudra* (power), and this *qudra* (power)was attributed completely to man by the Multazilites, while the Asharites are of the opinion that all powers belong to God. It is He Who creates and determines all things and deeds. One can thus think that this freewill determinism discourse deals with action, whether it is done or created or, as Ash'ari holds, acquired.

The main problem is that if a man is not the doer or creator of his deeds, why he should be held responsible and why he should deserve reward or punishment. The Mutazilites and the Asharites both hold man responsible for his deeds and thereby deserving of reward and punishment. In order to make a man responsible the M'utazilites regard him as doer and creator as well. But the Asharites consider him to be acquirer because for them there is no creator save God. Therefore, God is also the creator of man's deeds. The main problem is 'who determines human acts, God or man'? If God determines them He is the creator, and if man determines then the question arises whether he should be considered its creator or not. Ash'ari denies man's being a creator of his deeds, because, he says, God has said, "And Allah has created you and what you do"[53] From this Ash'ari wants to show that man and his handiworks both are created by God. At another place, Ash'ari refers to another verse where he wants to suggest that even the sperm is created by Allah, "Do ye then see ? The (human seed) that ye emit, is it ye who created it or are We the Creators ?"[54]

The sole force in this regard is the will of God.[55] Therefore, in order to explain the above cited verse of the Quran, Ash'ari says, " They

could not affirm with proof that they created what they ejected. Despite their desire to have a child he would not come, and despite their unwillingness to have him, he would come."[56] Thus the Maker and Creator of all is One Who is "Doer (without let) of all that He intends".[57] Therefore His will embraces all temporally produced things either good or bad. Ash'ari says, "All temporally produced things are created by God. Hence, if the Creator cannot do what He does not will, there cannot produce from another what He does not will—since all the things (including acts) which proceed from others are acts of God. Moreover, if there were in the world something unwilled by God (as the Qadarites hold that God does not will evil therefore He is not its creator), it would be something to the existence of which He would be averse. And if there were something to the existence of which He was averse, it would be something the existence of which He would refuse. This would necessitate the conclusion that sins exist, God willing or God refusing. But this is the description of one who is week and dominated and our Lord is very far above that."[58] It means if there are sins in the world they exist by divine will, because if He were to refuse, nothing would exist. In other words, if He does not will nothing can exist. From another point of view at another place, Ash'ari attacks the same group (the Qadarites) saying, "The champions of the *qadar* should be asked: Do not God's words "The Knower of everything" (2.29/27) prove that there is nothing knowable which God does not know? If they agree, they should then be asked: why, then, do you deny that Gods words "Over everything powerful" (2.20/19) prove that there is nothing which can be done over which God has not power? And that His words "The Creator of everything" (13.16/17) prove that there is nothing produced or made of which God is not producer, Maker and Creator?"[59]

The question arises, when God is the Creator of all things, even of human acts, God, then, should be responsible for both good and evil. Why should a man be responsible and deserving of reward and punishment?

Man is responsible, for al-Ash'ari, because he acquires them, while, for the Mutalizites, he creates his act, and there is no difference between doing and creation, but the Asharites "made a distinction between creation *(khalq)* and acquisition *(kasb)* of an action. Actions of human beings are created by God and acquired by them, because the creatures are not capable of creating any action"[60]. The creative power belongs to God alone. There are two types of power: one is original or eternal (qadimah)and the other is derived or temporal (halithah). "The original power alone is effective. Derived power can create nothing."[61] In the case of human action, God is Creator and man is acquisiter. Creation is His prerogative that takes place by the original and eternal power while acquisition proceeds from man under his derived and temporal power Ashari says, "The true meaning of acquisition is that the things proceeds from its acquirer in virtue of a created power."[62] Thus a man can; just, acquire a thing or make a choice between two alternatives, between the right and the wrong, though this free choice is not effective in the sense that he can produce the action. Actions are in their nature right or wrong, good or bad. Goodness or badness is their essential property. A man can neither create them nor can he change them. He is bound to choose one of the alternatives. In other words, there is compulsion on one hand and on the other, there is choice also, though so minute. This is why the Ash'arites are regarded here also to have adopted a midway position between pure fatalistic views of the Jabarites and the libertarian view of

the M'ulazilites. The best position is the moderate one and the moderate one is something lying between the two extremes.

Another problem related to the Jabar and Qadar discussion is the problem related to justice and injustice of God. The M'utazilites contention is that if God creates good and evil both and if a man does nothing except acquiring one of them, so his punishment is injustice on the part of God. Ash'ari replies that there is a difference between injustice for oneself and injustice for another. If a man makes injustice, it is for himself but if God makes or creates injustice, He makes it "as another's injustice not as His. Hence, since one who is unjust is not unjust because he makes injustice as another's injustice. God is not necessarily unjust because He creates injustice as another's injustice, not as His."[63] This argument is based on the analogy that if God creates motion, desire and volition for others, He, by creating them, does not become willing, moving and desiring. Likewise, if He creates injustice for another, He should not be unjust. The thing moving is responsible for its motion. The agent willing or desiring is responsible for his volition and desire. Therefore the man doing injustice is responsible for his injustice, not God Who creates it.

In the same context, at another place, commenting the verses: "God wills no injustice for creatures" (40.31) and "God wills no injustice for the worlds" (3.108), Ash'ari says, "They mean that God Himself has not willed to wrong them, although He has willed that they should wrong one another"[64].

Ash'ari wants to tell, one can think, that justice and injustice both are created by God and a man is responsible when he acquires one of them, not when he creates one or both of them. It is God who creates both

of them and He is not unjust by creating injustice because He is free to do what He likes. Ash'ari says, "He is the Supreme Monarch, subject to no one, with no superior over Him who can permit, or command, chide or forbid or prescribe what He shall do and fix bounds for Him. This being so, nothing can be evil on the part of God. For a thing is evil on our part only because we transgress the limit and bound set for us and do what we have no right to do. But since the Creator is subject to no one and bound by no command, nothing can be evil on His part."[65].

Related to this issue, that is, *Jabr* and *qadar*, is the problem of *istita'ah* (capacity) also. *Istita'ah* is the power by which a man either acquires an action, as the Ashrites believe, or creates it, as the Mutazilites hold. Both the schools believe in *istita'ah* (capacity). But there are many problems related to it, for example, whether it is perpetual or momentary, whether there is capacity with the act taking place or before it or after it or before and after it and how this capacity exists what are its conditions, etc, etc. It is generally held, as we have discussed earlier, that the conditions in which capacity takes place consist of a motive, fitness of the organ, instrument and emptiness of the action.

Let us examine them one by one. What does it mean that the capacity is perpetual? Surely, it does not mean that it is eternal. Rather, it means that it is as durable as the person concerned is. This is why the M'utazilah believed it to be inherent in man. According to this thesis, a man can do anything at any time. But there is its antithesis advanced by Ash'ari, that is, a man cannot do everything at all times because this capacity is not as durable as man is and, therefore, it is not something inherent in him. Ash'ari says that a man "is sometimes capable .and sometimes impotent. Just as he knows at one time and does not know at

another, and now moves and again does not move. Therefore, he must be capable in virtue of something distinct from him, and as he must be moving in virtue of something distinct from him, and as he must be moving in virtue of something distinct from him, for if he were capable of himself or in virtue of something inseparable from him, he would not exist save as capable. But since he is sometimes capable and sometimes incapable, it is true and certain that his capacity is something distinct from him."[66]

The thesis that a man is sometimes capable and sometimes incapable is also an argument against the durability of capacity. Because if it is durable he should always be capable. But Ash'ari formulates another argument against its durability. He says, "If it were to endure, it would endure either of itself or because of a duration subsisting in it."[67] And these two possibilities were refuted by Ash'ari on the ground that if it is enduring by itself, it should have been enduring also at the time when it existed and that is absurd. And if it is enduring because of a duration subsisting in it then this is also absurd because in this case, a quality subsists in a quality or an accident subsists in an accident and that is false.

The other problem related to capacity is whether capacity exists before the act, which Ash'ari denied, or after it, his was denied generally, or with the act as Ash'ari held and many others followed him. The problem is that if it is perpetual, it exists before and after the act takes place and even simultaneously, but if it is momentary, as Ash'ari believed, there is no question of its being before and after it. Since according to Ash'ari, a man has no free choice in the matter of undertaking and action are otherwise, because the capacity is, according to him, something created by God and unless and until it is created by

God a man can not acquire anything. Therefore, this is the power linked with the act, and its existence postulates the existence of the object concerned. Thus capacity is with the act and for the act and acquisition of the act exists only because the capacity exists. And if this capacity takes place with the act or, in other words, if its existence postulates the existence of the object concerned then that object should be only one, not more than one as some M'utazilites believed.[68] Therefore, Ash'ari denies that there may be one capacity over two volition, or two motions, or over two similar things. Because in this case, two volition, or two motions or like things will take place at one place at the same time and that is, according to him, impossible. Likewise, this capacity is not enough for two contraries as well. For example, if a man wants to under take an act, he is capable either to do or to omit it. His capacity is not enough for commission and omission both. Furthermore, the capacity does not exist perpetually. Likewise, in the case of obedience or disobedience to God, one will either obey or disobey Him. If the capacity of obedience is created by God, one will surely obey Him, and if there is no capacity, one will disobey Him. Respite being preached by the prophet, the people did not believe in God and accept His Message. God has said about them, "They were not capable to hear the Truth and to accept it."[69]. It means that the capacity was not created in them for the acceptance of the Truth. Therefore, they did believe in it.[70] Ash'ari's contention is that man is not a free hand, and it is Allah who creates capacity in man by which man acquires this or that, therefore a man is not absolutely capable either to reject or accept anything and thus capacity is not something inherent in him but it is something distinct from him.

The other point of Ash'ari's philosophy is that there is one capacity for one act. Those who believe have capacity to believe and

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those who reject have capacity to reject (or we can say that they have no capacity to believe). In both cases, capacity is something distinct from the man. One capacity is not enough for two motions, or for two volitions, or for two contraries or even for two similar things. The third print is that it co-exists with act. The fourth one is that it is not perpetual but momentary, and fifth one is that it is distinct from man. The last, but not the least; God can command his creatures beyond their power. Shahrastani says, "According to Ash'ari it is possible for God to command what is beyond the power of man to perform because for Ash'ari capacity is an accident, and an accident does not endure for two moments. At the time of command the one commanded does not have power to execute the command, because the one commanded is one who will have the power to do what he has been commanded. However, to command one who has no power at all to do what is commanded is impossible, even if it were found clearly written in the Book".[71]

From this, one can easily understand the role of capacity and its close association with the theory of acquisition. Human acts are acquired and an acquired act is one possible through or under the created power. But this created power has no effect at all. In other words, since it is not an absolute power therefore it cannot produce absolutely anything. Shahrastani says, "According to Ash'ari's principle, however, the created power has no effect on the bringing into being of an act, because from the point of view of coming into being there is no difference between substance and accident. If this created power had an influence on coming into being colours, tastes, smells and even to produce substances and bodies. This would lead to the possibility of heaven falling on earth through the created power. God, indeed, has established a custom of creating the resultant act, either immediately subsequent to the created

power, or under its mantle, or with it; when man has willed it and wholly directed himself to it. This is called acquisition. Accordingly the act will be the creation of God; that is, it is originated and brought into being by Him. It will also be man's acquisition, having taken place 'under' his power".[72]

Promise of Reward and Threat of Punishment

There are verses in the Qurān promising the believers and pious men of reward and Paradise and at places there are verses also threatening the unbelievers and sinners of their being punished. The question is whether these verses are universal or their implication is particular, or, more precisely, whether the sinners amongst Muslim will be condemned to Hell for ever if they commit sins like murder or any other grave sins. Ash'ari says no, they will not necessarily go to Hell forever because the application of the verses threatening punishment should not necessarily be universal. According to Arabic Language, "who does that unjustly" Ash'ari says, "may be interpreted as applying to all who do that or as applying to 'some'. Therefore one cannot affirm positively, from their form alone, whether they mean 'all' or 'some'.

Ash'ari further wants to say that there are verses suggesting that the believers will be in the Paradise and this is clear from the words of God; "those who will come with good work will have something better and on that day they will be safe from any fear", and "God indeed forgives sins of all of them".[73] From these verses and like that Ash'ari concludes that every sin, either minor or major, can be forgiven but the sin that can never be forgiven is the sin of polytheism because God has warned that He can forgive every sin except the sin of associating any partner with Him.

Thus Ash'ari denied the thesis of the M'utazilites that God will necessarily do what He has warned or what He has promised. On the contrary, Ash'ari is of the view that though He has warned and threatened but He can forgive the sinners, if He pleases provided that they do not associate partners with Him. Likewise He is not bound to fulfil His promises though He will do so because He is not unjust and one breaking His promises.

This belief of Ash'ari is related to his conception of faith *(iman)*. Because according to him, faith consists of six articles that have been mentioned earlier, and that action is secondary to intention. Actually intention and affirmation by the heart is faith and the submission by tongue and limbs is not as important as the former is. Through the later, a *mumin* either increases or decreases in his *iman*. Shahrastani says, "Ash'ari holds that iman is inner belief; as for its verbal expression and external practice, these are branches of belief"[74] One can conclude that Ash'ari, here, adopts the Murjite position. In the same way, we see, in the case of major sins, he condemns the Khawarij for their denouncement of he perpetrator of a grave sin as an infidel. He also criticises Wasil b. Ata particularly, and the Mutazilites generally, for their belief in intermediary position. Ash'ari says, "Before the advent of Wasil b. Ata, the chief of the M'utazilah, men followed tow opinions. The Khawarij among them regarded grave sinners as unbelievers, whereas the 'People of Rectitude' maintained that the grave sinner was a believer by reason of his faith and a sinner by reason of his grave sin. But no one said that he was neither believer nor unbeliever before the advent of Wasil b. Ata. The latter withdrew from the community and departed from its view, and because of his divergence from the consensus, he was called a "withdraweror" 'M'utazili'". Ash'ari, as against the Khawarij, believes that the grave

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sinner amongst the Muslim community is a believer. He is, says Ash'ari, "a believer by reason of his faith, a sinner by reason of his sin and grave fault." He argues thus: "Those who speak the language are agreed that he who strikes is a striker, and he who kills is a killer, and he who disbelieves is a disbeliever and he who sins is a sinner"[75] Therefore he who believes must be a believer and because he sins also, therefore, he must be regarded as sinner too. In other words, a grave sinner among the Muslims is both, a believer as well as a sinner as well. And the sin of the sinner may or may not be forgiven. It depends upon God's mercy even though he may repent. Therefore he is not in a position between the two; belief and disbelief *(manzilah bain al-manzilatain)* as the Mutazilites hold.

In the light of this contention of al-Ash'ari, one can reach the conclusion that the verses related to threatening of the profligates or the unjust, are not universal in the sense that they will not necessarily go to hell because God has threatened them unlike what M'utazilites hold, or although they are no more believers as the khawarij believe. Rather these verses are particular and therefore should be restricted to the unbelievers only. Likewise, the verses related to promise may not be treated as universal apprehending both; believers and unbelievers. In other words, the divine promise : "God indeed forgives sins, all of them", or other similar promises are true only for the believers and not for unbelievers because such verses are particular meaning 'some' not 'all'.

Chapter-4

Al-Ash'ari's Influence on the Later 'Ilm-al-kalâm

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The objective of al-Ash'ari' in general, and of orthodox section of the Muslim Community in particular, was to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements. Some of them, like Anas b. Malik and Ahmad b. Hanbal, opposed to any interpretation of religious dogmas. In the case of *Istiwa*, for example, Anas b. Malik is reported to have said that '*al-Istiwa* is known, its howness is unknown, belief in it is obligatory but the question about it is a heresy or innovation'. In other words, they strictly adhered to the Tradition and literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah and refused to admit any innovation in the Shari'ah. But as the time passed, this attitude had to be abandoned. Even Ahmad b. Hanbal had to come in the field and he vehemently refused to admit the thesis of the createdness of the Qurān. Consequently, he had to pass through *mehnah*. But he adhered strictly to his thesis that those believing in the createdness of the Qurān are infidels. This is the one case where the orthodox section of the people had to purge Islam of non-Islamic belief. Before the advent of Ash'arism', M'utazilism was on its height and its beliefs were imposed on the Muslim community by the Abbaside caliphs, particularly al-Mamun. M'utazilite approach was totally rationalistic. "They made reason the sole basis of truth and reality and thus identified the sphere of philosophy with that of religion. They tried to interpret the faith in terms of pure thought"[1]. We can identify their approach in the cases of the createdness of the Qurān, denial of beatific vision or even in the case of denial of Divine attributes. In all these cases their approach is purely rational, while the case is different. The basic principles of Islam must be accepted on the authority of revelation. Otherwise there is no

need of any Messenger to be sent by God to mankind for their guidance, if reason is enough.

The task to maintain the superiority of revelation over reason and to establish the supremacy of religious dogmas over rationalist hypotheses was taken by the orthodox Muslims, like, "in Mesopstamia by Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ari' (d. 324/935), in Egypt by al-Tahāwi (d. 331/942) and in Samarqand by Abu Mansoor al-Maturidi (d. 333/944). But of these three, al-Ash'ari became the most popular hero, before whom the Mutazilite system (the rationalist kalām) went down, and he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox philosophical theology, and the school founded by him was named after him as Ash'arism'[2]

Ash'ari tried his best to prove religious dogmas on the basis of reason maintaining the supremacy of revelation. His main opponents are M'utazilites, but this does not mean that the M'utazilites are enemies of Islam. Rather, it does mean that some of their beliefs are contradictory to it and al Ash'ari felt to purge it of them. Ash'ari's main objective, however, was to save Islam from all non-Islamic influences. We can easily reach to this conclusion if we only see the titles of the books attributed to him.[3] Ash'ari himself mentions one book in his *Maqālāt* entitled *'Kitāb al-Mulhidin'* (Book on Materialists)[4]. It suggest that Ash'ari's aim was not only to encounter the M'utazililes but to refute the philosophers also. Following his footsteps his followers also refuted those having beliefs contradictory to Islam. Some of them strengthened to his thought, like Bāqillāni and Jawaini and some added new things like Ghazāli. The list of his followers is quite comprehensive. Ibn Asākir mentions 81 eminent scholars. He gives a list in which he makes five categories.[5] The first consists of al-Ash'ari's contemporaries. The second

category consists of those who were the companions of his companions. In this category he mentions Qazi Abu Bakr al-Bāqillāni al-Basari (d. 403/1013). The third class consists of those who met the companions of al-Ash 'ari's companions and acquired knowledge from them. In this category he includes the father of Imam-al-Haramain, the Iman Abu Mohammad al-Juwaini (d. 438/1046) and Imam-al-Haramain himself is included in the fourth category where he mentions those who sought light in al-Ash'ari's penetrating exposition through imitating and following his views'. His full name is 'the Imam Abul Ma'ali Abdul Malik b. Abdullah b. Yusuf al-Juwaini al-Nishapuri (419/1028-478/1085-6). The fifth class includes the most eminent scholar and most appropriate personage for our purpose, the Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, al-Tusi (d. 505/1111), without whom the description of Asharism is incomplete. This chapter, I mean, 'Ash'ari's influence on the later 'Ilm al-kalām will be confined to mention these three personalities; firstly, al-Bāqillāni, secondly, Imam al-Haramarin and thirdly, al-Ghazali.

Al-Bāqillāni

As Ash'ari's interest was purely theological and he did not build any metaphysical basis for his theology, therefore, the elaboration of his theology was left chiefly to his successors. In order that their discipline should have a basis they payed their attention on two fundamental questions: "(i) the nature and limits of rational knowledge in relation to religious truth, and (ii) the metaphysical framework in which the concept of God's Sovereignty and omnipotence should be expressed"[6].

As the achievement of their objective of defending the faith and harmonizing reason with revelation is impossible unless the ultimate nature of reality is known and Ash'ari's theological system, without it,

would be considered to be incomplete. Therefore, the system was fully developed by the later Ash'arites, particularly by Qazi Abu Bakr Mohammad bin Tayyib al-Bāqillāni who was one of the greatest among them. He was a Basarite, but he made Baghdad his permanent residence and died there in 403/1013.[7] He is the author of several books, like *'Aejāz al-Qur'ān, al-Insāf, al-Bayān 'an al-Farq bain al-Mujezah wa al-Karamat,* Manaqib al-Aimmah, etc. But it is his *al-Tamhid* that contains the core of his philosophical ideas. This book, in the beginning, discusses the nature of knowledge, its types, sources and limits. Bāqillāni defines *'ilm* (knowledge) as the cognition of the known *(m'alume)* as it is in itself or as it really is'[9]. He divides beings *(maujudāt)* into two kinds; eternal *(qadim)* and created or temporal *(muhdath)*. Eternal is that exists from eternity and nothing precedes it in existence. *Muhadath* is something created from non-being *(adam)*.[10]

Bāqillāni says, in case we maintain that knowledge is the cognition of the thing concerned as the Mu'tazilites hold, it will be incumbent upon us to exclude non-beings from the data known to us. And it is self-evident that our data include things and that which is not a thing, consequently non-beings. Thus, a non-being is also known which is neither a thing nor even existent.[11] He classifies the data known (m'alumāt) into existent and non-existent in the sense that both these types are included in our knowledge.[12]

Another objection, one can think, that may be raised against the M'utazitiles in affirming knowledge as to be the cognition of a thing is that God will be excluded from the data known to us. In other words, we cannot have the knowledge of God because he is not a thing and one can have the cognition of a thing only; a composite of substance and

accidents, and God is not a composed being. His existence is not contingent but Necessary. Therefore, the definition given by al-Bāqillāni is proved to be certain.

As the existence is of two types: necessary and contingent, in the same way, knowledge is also of two types: eternal and temporal or created. This temporal knowledge was classified by al-Bāqillāni into (i) necessary and (ii) theoretical. This theoretical knowledge or acquired *(Kasbi)*, another name given by al-Bāqillāni himself, may be doubtful, because it is the result of prolonged reflection while necessary knowledge is that which cannot be doubtful because it is, somewhat, innate *(badihi)* or intuitive. Such necessary knowledge may be called empirical because it is acquired through one or the other of five senses. However, there is a type of necessary knowledge which does not rest on senses and that is the result of immediate apprehension of the mind, for example, man's knowledge of his own existence, feeling and instincts. This may be called intuitive knowledge. The third type of necessary knowledge consists of the knowledge of historical or geographical accounts, like historical personages, existence of other countries, etc. In this type of knowledge eternal knowledge interferes, because it is God who infuses directly into the souls or through. His Apostles His knowledge about ancient kingdoms or prophets, etc. This may be called authoritative knowledge, as named by Majid Fakhry.[13] This kind of knowledge is different from rational one. To this authoritative knowledge belongs the domain of faith. All these types of knowledge are included by al-Bāqillāni in the necessary knowledge.[14] Among these types of necessary knowledge, one can easily conclude, the authoritative knowledge is more sure and certain because it is eternal and based on Divine knowledge, while others are created and temporal that belong to His creatures

includings men, angels, jinns, etc. This authoritative knowledge contains the knowledge of the past, the present and the future. It is certain that historical events of the past cannot be know rationally, because their certainty depends upon informations of others; historians or hereseographars etc. It is also certain that these types of knowledge are not as certain as the authoritative knowledge is. Therefore, Bāqillāni supposedly seems to establish that the knowledge of God, His apostles, resurrection, Day after death, Heaven and Hell and all other informations of the Shariah are certain because they depend on the authority of revelation and eternal knowledge. Bāqillāni, however, does not ignore the importance of reason, though he does not give it priority over revelation. On the other hand, the M'utazilite's position is that they believe in reason in the sense that it can give us enough knowledge about God and His unity, and His knowledge may be obtained independently of revelation. *The Ash'arites believe in revelation. At the same time, they also hold that* the existence of God can be known rationally from the consideration of the createdness of the world that is composed of atoms and accidents. Because these atoms and accidents need a Creator for their existence, that Creator is God the Omnipotent.[15] From here starts a metaphysical discussion in Ash'arism. What is the reality of this world? What is the basic stiff the world is composed of? If the world consists of things, then what are the compositions of a thing? These are the metaphysical questions Bāqillāni deals with. We have mentioned earlier that Bāqillāni classifies beings into necessary and contingent. He further classifies contingent beings into three types: Composite body *(Jism muallf)*, individual substance *(Jauhar munfarid)* and accident that exists by substances. Substance is something mind reflects upon and the accidents exist thereby. These substances are atoms that subsist by themselves and

are not dependent upon accidents.[16] Since the bodies are composed of substance and accidents, therefore there are only two types of existence, instead of three. They, when composed, are either a thing or a body. In order to substantiate his claim about accident that it is transitory and does not exist for another moment Bāqillāni qoutes a holy verse in which the word *'ard'* is used; God says; "Ye Look for the goods *(ard)* of this world; but Allah Looketh to the Hereafter".[17]

The existence of these accidents is yet to be proved rationally. Bāqillāni says that the argument for their existence is the movement of a body after it rests and its rest after it moves and the body moves or rests either by itself or by a cause *(illah)*. In case we maintain that a body moves by itself then that body should not cease to move at anytime, while we see that the body sometimes rests and sometimes moves, therefore we should believe that it moves and rests by a cause that is movement or rest respectively. It means that there is something like accidents that exist and that are transitory.[18]

The existence of substance is self-evident because the accidents, in order to take place, need a substance. This is so because they cannot exist by them selves. Therefore, substances exist and they exist by themselves.[19] Substance, according to Bāqillāni, is that which assumes and accepts only one accident and if there are more than one accident, it does not remains as a substance.[20] Thus substance is an individual *(munfarid)* or an atom *(juz)*. Atom and substance are synonyms as qualities and accidents are.

These substances are also subjective like accidents, but unlike accidents, they subsist by themselves. They come into existence from vacuity and drop out of existence again. It means that these substances,

though exist by themselves, are not eternal. In other words, a substance is not God and God is not a substance, as some Christians hold, because it is self subsisting *(qaim bi-nefsihi)*. Rather it is created. It is God who creates and annihilates it. Further, these substances or atoms are located in space and time *(mutahaiyjiz* and *shaghil)*.[21]

Elaborating this metaphysical theory, M.M. Sharif says that the world is composed of things that consist of substances and qualities. Substance lies in the thing-in-itself and qualities in the mind of the perceiver. These qualities are accidents that are transitory and subjective, having only momentary existence. They can exist only in a substance. In other words, a quality cannot exist in another quality or an accident cannot exist in another accident. Quality and accident are synonymous for the Ash'arites. They do not believe in other qualities like place, time, etc. They believe in only two categories i.e. substance and quality. Further, no substance could exist apart from a quality. Thus substance and quality (or qualities) are integral constituents of a things. Since the substance is inseparable from its qualities or accidents, therefore, it should also be transitory, having a momentary existence like accidents. Thus everything that exists is composed of transitory units, that is, substance and accidents.[22]

He further says that if the Ash'arite atomism is compared with that of other philosophers we find it most comprehensive and most appropriate of others. For example, the atoms of Democritus and Lucretius are permanent and self subsisting but the atoms of Bāqillāni are not permanent. They come into being and go out of existence by the Supreme Being, God. The atoms of Democritus and Lucretius are material while Bāqillāni believes them to be non-material and ideal in

character. And if these atoms are compared with the monads of Leibniz we find, at least, one resemblance between them. The monad of Leibniz has some qualities as the substance of Bāqillāni assumes accident. All changes in the thing and subsequently in the world take place due to their coming into being and going out it. But there is difference between the two theses. Atoms of Bāqillāni are extended in space and time, while Leibniz believes that they have extension neither in space nor in time. Space and time are subjective. The other big difference is that it is God, for al-Bāqillāni, Who creates and annihilates the atoms and makes changes in them for a harmonious connection among them, but Leibniz holds that there is a Monad of monads or God by which there is a harmony and connection among them and this harmony is pre-established. Thus he founds a 'Theory of Pre-established Harmony'.[23]

As it has been said earlier that the objective of al-Bāqillāni, like his leader, is to defend religious dogmas, therefore, he builds metaphysical and epistemological bases for his school of thought. Bāqillāni has proved that there are only two types of existence; necessary and contingent or created *(muhdath)*. Contingent beings are either substances, accidents or bodies the world is composed of. And there must be a Producer *(muhdith)* of them as well.[24] Likewise, from the viewpoint of his epistemology he wants to prove that the most reliable type of knowledge among the necessary ones is authoritative knowledge where eternal knowledge intervenes and that is the revelation. It is revelation that tells us that God is the Creator of the world and that He has certain qualities or attributes. From here he starts criticizing the Mu'tazilites and Jahamites for their denial of attributes and argues for their being eternal with God. He affirms God's being only One. He says that it is impossible that there be more than one God because they will differ from each other in their

decisions, and impotence will necessarily attach to anyone of them.[25] This is the same argument advanced by al-Ah'ari. Likewise, Bāqillāni proves His being Alive *(haiy)*, Knowing *(aalim)*, Hearing *(sami)*, Seeing *(basir)*, Talking *(mutakallim)*, Willing *(murid)* and Powerful *(qadir)*. He also believes that Attributes are eternal with Him.[26] Regarding these beliefs, his argument are same as propounded by al-Ash'ari, but new things are also added. He says, for example, that it is not true for God that animal desires *(shahwah)* are attributed to Him.[27] It is also not true that non-existence *(adam)* is applied to Him because He is eternal.[28]

One thing related to His will and creation is that, he says, God has created this world without any cause *(illah)*. He argues that the cause is meant to provide benefits and to avoid evils. Therefore, the causes are not to be applied to Him. Further, if we believe that there is a cause behind the creation of the world then there are two possibilities, either it is created or eternal with God. If this cause is eternal then the world is also eternal and in this case we will have to believe that there is a duration of invention between the eternal cause and its effect (world). and in case one thing is earlier and the other is delayed, we apply time to them and any thing taking place in time cannot be eternal. Because eternal is something beyond time (and space). and if we maintain that this cause is not eternal but it is temporal, the question arises, whether its creator has created it with or without any cause. If it is produced with a cause, the present cause should also have been produced by another and that should also have been produced still another and so on. This will lead us to *ad infinitum* and that is inconceivable because in this case the world will never come into existence. The world will come into existence when its antecedent is true and here antecedents are inconceivable and therefore impossible.

He further says that in order to scope from the difficulty of limitless causes, if we believe that there is no more cause behind the cause of the creation, then it means, we affirm that a cause may take place without any cause. In this case if it is possible that a cause which is also created can take place without any cause then the whole world can also come into existence without any cause and if a Creator cannot be charged with insanity in creating a cause without any cause, He will also remain as wise and just in creating the whole world without any cause. He further says that cause means objective and God's objective of creation may however be different from ours. We judge according to our perception and He judges on the basis of His knowledge. Therefore, the thesis that the world is created with a cause is not true. The Eternal did not create it with a cause.[29]

One can think that al-Bāqillāni wants to affirm God's arbitration in the matters of creation and that He is not bound anywhere, neither by anyone nor by any cause whatsoever. Everywhere His monopoly prevails and He is the Supreme Monarch. He can do without let what the pleaseth. Creation and doing both belong to Him because a created being cannot do any work and that the Creator cannot be created *(muhdath)*.[30] In the system of cause and effect the existence of the one depends on the other and the chain of dependence is extended to *ad infinitum* Bāqillāni, therefore, rejects the idea that a created being may be the cause for the existence of another created. God alone is the Cause and the Creator of all things, independent of all exigencies.

Here one can imagine that the acts of human beings, because of their being created, cannot be the work of human beings, or in other words, man is not the creator or doer of his deeds because he himself is

created and a created cannot be a doer, as a doer of created acts can not be created. Therefore, the creator and producer is one, that is, God. But the problem is that if human acts are created by God and it is God Who creates, as Ash'ari believes, power or capacity in man by which he acquires them, whether this created power or capacity *(istita'ah)* has any effect on the act or does not have any? There are two interpretations of Bāqillāni's position,. According to the one; 'The created can have no effect on the created'. This has been argued. But there is another interpretation and in accordance with it, created power may have some effects. While dealing with knowledge and its types he says that a knowledgeable person has created power by which he can acquire further. More precisely, theoretical knowledge depends upon human efforts. Thus he affirms that created power has, upto some extent, its effect. This is what reported by al-Shahrastāni of him in relation to human actions. Shahastāni says, (One should remember, here that Ash'ari believes that created power has no effect on the bringing into being of an act), "Qazi Abu Bakr Bāqillāni has taken the matter a little further. According to him it has been proved that the created power is not capable of bestowing existence. However, an act in its attributes and aspects is not limited to coming into being alone, but it has other aspects also, such as, for example, in the case of a substance, its being a substance, occupying a place and receiving an accident. Similarly an accident has the aspect of being an accident, being black and so on. Bāqillāni holds that the aspect of an act's coming in to being with or 'under' the created power is a special relationship between the two, and this is called acquisition. It is this acquisition which is an effect of the created power".[31] It means that Bāqillāni believes that the created power may be have effect on the act to bring it into being, but this thesis of his fundamentally contradictory to

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his principle that a produced is incapable to produce anything or 'a doer of the produced *(muhdath)* cannot be himself produced'.[32] Therefore, one should believe that created power is incapable to produce anything or to do anything. In this case one have to believe in pure determinism, because theory of acquisition is not free from logical and ethical difficulties. This is why "some of the later Ash'arites, particularly Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi, discarded the veil of acquisition in order to scape the charge of fatalism, and advocated naked determinism".[33]

The other points discussed by al-Bāqillāni are related to the prophecy and miraculous nature of the Qurān. He justifies the need of prophecy on the ground that reason is not enough to lay down the principles of morality, permissibility, obligations, good and evil, because every philosopher in these matters has different views that rest on either perception, or reason, or institution, and these faculties of knowledge are not as sure and certain as the Divine knowledge is.

About the Qurān, in order to justify it as the Divine book and Divine revelation, he points to its miraculous nature. He says that it contains its own style, eloquence and language along with the order among its parts and that it also contains the truth about the past and the future and about seen and unseen. All these suggest that the Quarān is a Divine book and knowledge and that it is a miracle in itself. For this very purpose he also wrote a separate book entitled *'Kitab fi A'ejāz al-Qurān'*.

Al-Juwaini

Abdul Malik b. Abdullah b. Yusuf b. Mohammad al-Jawaini is another important Ash'arite theologian. He is called Juwaini because he was born in Juwain, a town near Nishapur, in 419/1028 and died in 478/1085 at Nishapur.

Due to their acceptance of reason as a genuine source of knowledge along with revelation, the Ash'arites were strongly opposed by the Hanbalites at every nook and corner. Revelation is, however, considered by them as the primary one. The Hanbalites regard revelation to be the sole criterion of truth. They are, somewhat, Zāhirites in their approach to Islam. They stress more on the literal meanings of the Scriptures. Ash'ari's opinions, therefore, did not get much recognition outside the Shafi'ite group to which he belonged. The Hanafites preferred the doctrines of his contemporary al-Maturidi. At that time, the emperor, Tughril Beg, was a Hanbalite, therefore he persecuted the Ash'arites. But his successor Sultan Alp Arsalan and his famous vizir, Nizamal Mulk defended and patronized Ash'arism. For this pupose Nizamiyah Academy was founded in the name of his vizir, Nizam al-Mulk, at Baghdad in 495/1066. Nizam al-Mulk patronized this academy and appointed Abul Ma'ali Abdul Malik al- Juwainiu as its head. There he got the chance of preaching the Ash'arite doctrines. Al- Juwaini was a great scholar. He got the titles of Dia al-Din (the hight of religion), Shaik al-Islam (the chief leader of Islam) and Imam-al-Haramain (the leader of two places, i.e. Makkah and Madinah). These titles were conferred upon him due to his vast learning and erudite scholarship. He wrote books on various subjects, like *al-Shāmil* that deals with the principles of religion, *al-Burhān* that discusses the principles of jurisprudence. *Al-Aqidah al-Nizāmiyah* and *al-Irshād* deal with theology. Besides, he wrote *Nihāyatul Matlab fi Derāyatul Mazhab'* and *'Mughith al-Khalq'*, but these two booked are in manuscripts form.[35]

As he was recognized as the Shaikh al-Isham and Imam al-Haramain therefore he was respected everywhere. His judgements about the religious matters were followed frequently, especially in the holy

places of Makkah and Madinah. He preached there for a long time. After his return from these holy places he was appointed the chief and the head of the Nizamiyah academy. Thus Ash'airaih became popular is the East.

Juwaini added nothing new to the doctrines of Ash'arism except some insignificant differences from his predecessors as Shahrastani points out. In the case of acquisition, Ash'ari is of the opinion that created power does not have any effect in bring about acts, while al-Bāqillāni holds that created power does have that effect. Imam al-Haramain supports the view of al-Bāqillāni with some added elaboration. Shahrastani says, "According to him (al-Juwaini) to deny the created power and capacity (we should remember that it is created power and capacity by which acquisition takes place) is contrary to reason and experience, on the one hand, to maintain the power which has no effect at all is equivalent to denying the power altogether. Similarly, to maintain the effect of power on a mode, no on an act, is equivalent to denial of effect particularly as modes, on the M'utazilite principle, cannot be predicated as exiting or non-exiting. A man's act must, therefore, be ascribed in a true sense to his own power, though not in the sense of bringing it into being and creating it. The reason for this is that creation expresses the idea of self-sufficiency in bringing a thing into being out of nothing, whereas man, although feeling in himself power and capacity also, feels in himself a lack of this self-sufficiency."[36]

Al this point, it should be clear that Juwaini, like his predecessors, believes that the Creator is one, that is, God. He is the Creator of our power and their effects also. Juwaini in his *al-Irshād*, says, 'All created things are created by the power of God, without any distinction between

those with which human power is connected and those over which Lord is alone in his power."[37]

It is certain because when we analyze and go into details we reach to the conclusion that the created powers have no effects because the powers and the capacities given to man are completely dependent upon will of God Who, if wants to produce anything, gives him capacity to perform, otherwise he is helpless and can do nothing. This is evident from the principles adopted by al-Juwaini. These are those propounded by al-Ash'ari on which his theory of acquisition rests. Ash'ari has postulated four principles for the power of acquisition. These are as follows:

(i)   The created power or capacity does not endure.

(ii)   It is simultaneous with the act.

(iii)   It is attached to only one object and

(iv)   It is applicable only to that which is within its limits. [38]

These principles are adopted by Juwaini and it is evident that if premises are same the conclusion will also be same. Therefore, we see that Juwaini himself, finally, reaches to the conclusion that man is helpless in producing anything and it is God upon whom everything is dependent in order to take place. It is God Who is absolutely independent, lacking in nothing whatever. In the case of human acts, they may depend upon some approximate causes and obviously these causes have their effect but they are evidently dependent upon the First Cause.[39]

Besides, he elaborated the doctrines and defended the concepts and methods to which the school as a whole was committed. This celebration includes epistemological and theological explanations of Ash'arism. For this purpose he wrote *al-Shāmil*, of which an abridgement, *al-Irshād* was

made by the author himself.[40] It is *al-Irshād* in which he proves the createdness of the world and adopts 'somehow' a syllogistic method. He says,

"What does not precede originated things is originated.

Substances do not precede accidents (which are originated).

Therefore the world (the totality of substances and accidents) is originated."

This is an example of his knowledge of logic. He introduced it into theology. On this very basis (the createdness of the world) he proves that God is not a body and that He exists. According to him, as in the case with al-Bāgillāni, body is a composite of substances and accidents and these are originated, therefore, God is not a body.

In order to prove the existence of God he says, "An originated thing may exist or not exist, therefore, it requires a determinant to determine whether it is to exist or not to exist at a particular time. The determinant may be either a cause *(illah)*, or a nature *(tabi'ah)* or a conscious agent, various arguments show that it is not a cause or a nature, therefore is must be a conscious agent"[41] (and that conscious agent is God, obviously).

Al-Ghazāli

Al-Ghazāli is the most important person in the history of Islam, who, being a student of al-Juwaini, is an Ash'arite in his beliefs, but he followed al-Imam al-Shafe'i in rituals. His name was Mohammad. His father and grandfather both were Mohammad by their names. He had the tittle of Abu Hamid and was born at-Tus. Therefore, he was also called as al-Tusi. But he is generally called al-Ghazāli because of his belonging,

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most probably, to a village in the region of al-Tus where he was born in 450/1058.

He belonged to a poor but intellectual family. After the death of his father he and his brother Ahmad were entrusted to a sufi friend of their father for education according to their father's instruction. After sometimes they were admitted to a Madarsa where they were provided free food and lodge as well as instruction. It is the age of nineteenth in 1077A.D. when he went to Nishapur, the then capital of Persia, for higher education. At that time Imam al-Haramain al-Juwaini was the chief of that academy. Al-Ghazāli received education from him and became well-versed in theology. He remained there till al-Juwaini's death in 1085, A.D.. Afterwards he went to Nizam al-Mulk, the founder of Nizamiyah academy, who received him with honour and respect, while a-Ghazāli was only twenty seven. After some years, at the age of thirty three, in 1091, A.D., he was appointed at another, but more important, Nizamiyah college in Baghdad.

Since he was devoted seeker after truth and was completely dissatisfied with the methods of theologians and that he had already studied philosophy and logic, and logical methods seemed to him comparatively stronger, therefore, doubts and skepticism became to strike at him regarding the theological subjects that he taught. He realized that the dialectical methods of the scholastics had no basis and that the religion should have been based on more sound foundations. For this purpose he began to examine theological beliefs and wanted to erect then on rational proofs. Simultaneously, he realized that reason is not enough, for it had its own limitations and "it could not go very far. The Ultimate, the Supreme Truth could not be reached through it."[42]

When he studied philosophy and knew its limitations he turned to the people of *batin* (esoterics), or the Batinites. This was a group of the Shi'ite sect, who sometimes were also called the *talimites*, the party of anthoritative instruction.[43] the Batinites stressed more on the esotesic meaning of the Shariah, that might be imparted only by an Imam knowing its secrets, and ignored more or less its outward and literal meanings. Hasan Ibn al-Sabbah was the exponent of this school. This concept was derived from the teachings of the Isma'ilites amongst the Shi'ites.[44]

After studying carefully the doctrines of the Batinites and their ways he reached the conclusion that there is some thing wrong with them. No body can be as innocent as the Prophets are. In the matters of the Shariah, it is the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) who is an infallible Imam who has the knowledge of its esoteric as well as exoteric aspects. It is he who can guide us to the right path, and he has done this job successfully. Therefore, no body has the quality of a charismatic leader except the Prophet Mohammad.

Lastly he paid his attention towards Sufism. He thought that Sufis were knowledgeable as well as practical, therefore, he could acquire knowledge of certitude from them. But when could not get satisfactory response, he once again turned to theology and when he was offered professorship he, after some hesitation, accepted the chair at Mamuniyah Nizamiyah college at Nishapur in 499/1106. However, he did not stay there for long and retired once more. Then he established a Madarsa in Tus where he devoted his life to study and teaching his disciples till his last breath in 505/1111. [45]

Ghazāli has written many books and treatises. Some major books are as follows:

i.   *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din,*

ii.   *Iljam al-'Awam 'an 'Ilm al-Kalam',*

iii. *Raudat al-Talibin wa 'Umdat al-Salikin.*

iv.   *Al-Mustasfa min 'Ulum al-Usul*

v.   *Minhaj al-'Aabedin,*

vi.   *Minhaj al 'Aarefin,*

vii. *Mizan al 'Amal,*

viii. *Al-Wajiz,*

ix.   *Mehakk al-Nazr fi al-Mantiq,*

x.   *Tahafat al-Falasifah,*

xi.   *Me 'yar al-'Ilm fi Fann al-Mantiq,*

xii. *Kimiya al-Sa 'adah and*

xiii. *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*

These books are related to theology, philosophy, logic, Sufism and Batinism. He criticized every descipline except theology. This is evident from his '*al-Munqidh*' (Deliverance from Error). *Al-Munqidh* is the book in which he mentions different phases of his educational life. To him, there are four groups of men who claim themselves to be the seekers of Truth. Ghazāli says that he himself has practiced their ways but found them in vein. He, finally, reached where he had started from, that is, theology. All these ways have their own limitations, but the religion, Islam, leads to the Truth in the right sense. It is the religion that is based on Divine knowledge. But it faces strong criticism from the philosophers. Philosophers are said to have reasonable bases and their philosophies are, according to them, founded on reasonable principles. Al-Ghazāli, thus,

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found strong opposition from them. He, therefore, decided to refute their philosophies and, consequently, made his first appearance against them when he wrote '*Maqasid al-Falasifah*'. In this book he mentions their philosophies. The remarkable book in which he not only mentions their philosophies but strongly attacks and refutes them also, is his '*Tahāfut al-Falasifah*'. In this book he refutes their suppositions and principles related to either metaphysics, like staircase of emanationists, or causation, like their hypothesis that only one can proceed from one. All goal that he wants to achieve is to establish and justify basic tenets of Islam on reasonable foundations.

All that is important to say is that Ghazāli studied very carefully and with open mind. He had no prejudice where he was studying the books of different groups. He was sincere in his investigation and quest after Truth. Even about religious matters and dogmas he was, at one phase of his life, sceptic, therefore, he studied theology also with critical point of views. He attacked theologians saying that their methods to prove and justify the dogmas were not satisfactory and that they needed modifications. The dogmas should be founded on certitude and there should be no room for doubt, nor any possibility of error.

In the search for Truth, where there should be no doubt, he firstly relies on sense perception but when he equates this sense-perception with dream where it seems that man perceives something or the other while he is asleep, he finds that there is no difference between awakening and dream, because in both conditions he perceives. If he, in dream, perceives something and does not differentiate it as dream except when he awakes, likewise, one can say that what we see in awakening conditions is a dream and this will be clear when we will be resurrected after death.

Therefore, there is doubt in sense perception. Thus he recognizes that the life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come. He also refers to a Tradition in this regard.[46]

When his confidence in sense-perception has been skaken he turns to investigate what he calls the necessary principles, that is, factual bases or mathematical principles. For examples he thinks 'Is ten more than three? Can it be necessary and impossible at the same time ? Thus one can think that his doubt regarding sense-perception made him reluctant even to accept rational and mathematical data. He thinks that if reason tells us about the falsity of sense-perception when we see that a coin covers the sun or the moon while they are thousand times bigger than the coin, there should be some other judge besides reason that can tell us about the falsity of reason. Of course, it is revelation. However, he does not reject the role of reason; neither in worldly matters nor in Shariah. It is reason on the basis of which he refutes philosophers and justifies the tenets of Islam. Philosophers are the most troublesome in the seekers of Truth. They engaged his attention more than others. The philosophy, as stated elsewhere, is based on reason, particularly the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle Ghazali confronted with. The Arabs were familiar with their ideas just before the time of al-Ghazali. Farabi (d.950) and Ibn Sina (d.1037) were regarded genuine exponents of Aristotelianism. Ghazali had studied their philosophies that is evident from his autobiographical treatise, '*al-Munqidh*', where he admits that he had gone through them and reached the conclusion that their philosophy, though aimed at Truth, did not succeed in it. They are, however, the seekers of Truth.

It is a peculiarity with al-Ghazāli that he never criticized anything without its complete knowledge. He followed it in the case of the

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Batinites and Sufis. Similar is the case with the philosophers. This is evident from his '*al-Munqidh*'.[48] When he became acquainted and had a complete grasp of their philosophies, he, first, wrote '*Maqāsid al-Falasifah*' (The Intentions of the Philosophers) and then '*Tahafat al-Falasifah*' (The Incoherence of the Philosophers). In *Tahafat* he vehemently attacked their methods, theory and thought.

Al-Ghazāli broadly divides the philosophers into three categories: the materialists (*dahriyun*), the naturalists (*tabi'iyun*) and the theists (*ilahiyun*). The materialists do not believe in God and hold that the universe exists eternally without a creator and that matter, space and time are eternal. The naturalists admit the existence of a wise creator or Deity but reject the spirituality and immortality of the soul. It is explained by them to be an epiphenomenon of the body and that it will also die with the body. They do not believe in heaven, hell, resurrection, etc. The theists received his attention more, because this group held a comparatively more strong position. Al-Ghazāli regards Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as theists but he rightly holds Aristotle more significant due to his tremendous influence on the predecessor Muslim philosophers; al-Farābi and Ibn Sina, etc.. They are the most faithful commentators of Aristotilian corpus. They regarded Aristotle as their master. "Thus al-Ghazāli came finally to concentrate on that philosophical thought of his day which had emerged from the writings of these two theist philosophers (particularly Ibn Sina) and applied himself to its examination in a systematic manner."[50] He refutes only that ideas which are based on sheer metaphysical speculations; having no sound proofs. He, however, readily accepts the mathematical and natural sciences based on factual evidences. The philosophical ideas refuted by him are generally those which contradicted the principles of religion. He refutes

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and attacks the philosophers because he thinks that their arguments are logically false and lack coherence. In his refutation al-Ghazāli justifies his claim and proves their falsity, for example, their assumption that every event has a cause or everything is causally determined neglecting the occurrence of miracles.[51]

Being a true theologian, Ghazāli's principle is different from that of the philosophers. He does not accept any philosophical assumption unless and until it has logical consistency. On the other hand, he does not reject any of religious dogmas unless and until it is self-contradictory. One can say that it is a double-faced criterion to judge the truth but, it is certain that a Muslim always believes in revelation to be true because it is Divine knowledge, while philosophy is based on human knowledge. And it is a big difference that al-Ghazāli maintains and follows as method.

Ghazāli divides philosophic sciences into six sections:

(1) Mathematics; (2) Logic; (3) Physics; (4) Metaphysics; (5) Politics; and (6) Moral philosophy.[52]

He accepts all except metaphysical speculations of the philosophers. About logic he is of the opinion that "this science contains nothing for or against religion. Its object is the study of different kinds of proofs and syllogisms, the conditions which should hold between the premises of a proposition, the way t combine them, the rules of good condition and the art of formulating it".[53] One can conclude from this remark of his that he admires this kind of knowledge, that they, for him, use a particular set of technical formula that lead them to irreligious conclusions. All the ideas of the philosophers that were condemned by him are the examples of such speculations. Ghazāli reduce them to twenty problems:

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i.   eternity of the world,

ii.   everlasting nature of the world,

iii.   their assertion that matter is ultimate reality,

iv.   their assertion that God is the creator of this world and (at the same time) that the world is His product,

v.   their inability to prove the impossibility of two gods by rational arguments,

vi.   their denial of Divine attributes,

vii.   their theory that the Divine Being is not divisible,

viii.   their theory that the First (Principle) is a simple unqualified being,

ix.   their inability to show that the First Principle is not body,

x.   the thesis that they are bound to affirm the eternity of the world and to deny the creator,

xi.   their inability to maintain that the First (Principle) knows anyone other than Himself,

xii.   their inability to maintain that He knows Himself,

xiii.   their doctrine that the First (Principle) does not know the particulars,

xiv.   their doctrine that the Heaven is a living being whose movements are voluntary,

xv.   their theory of the purpose of Heaven's movement,

xvi.   their doctrines that the souls of the heavens know all the particulars,

xvii.   their belief in the impossibility of a departure from the natural course of events,

xviii. their theory that the soul of man is a substance which exists in itself and which is neither body nor an accident,

xix.   their belief in the impossibility of the annihilation of the human souls and

xx.   their denial of the resurrection of bodies. [54]

These are twenty points of the philosophers. Al-Ghazāli either refuted their beliefs or showed them unable to prove their hypotheses. Ghazāli charges the upholders of these beliefs with heresy or irreligiousity. In his '*al-Munqidh*', he says, "Their errors can be reduced to twenty propositions: three of them are irreligious and the other seventeen heretical". [55] The three propositions about which he charges with infidelity or irreligiousity are related to (i) their belief about the eternity of the world, (ii) their denial of God's knowledge about particulars and (iii) their denial of bodily resurrertion.[56] Due to the seriousness of these three views of the philosophers we choose them to comment upon along with some other important ones.

Eternity of the World

This is the most serous and challenging problem between religion and philosophy. A religious person cannot believe in the eternity of the world, for there is nothing eternal save God. The philosophers' claim of the eternity of the world, thus, could not be acceptable for a theologian like al-Ghazāli. Seeing its seriousness, therefore, he allotted a great space of his book, *al-Tahafut*, to refute the thesis of its eternity. The thesis is in conformity with the Aristotelian philosop[hy. This was why that Farabi

and Ibn Sina, being true paripatetics, believed in this theory. At the same time they also believed God to be an eternal Creator of the Universe. But to make anything co-eternal with God is to violate the basic principle of monotheism. Ghazāli, therefore, could not swallow this poison and vehemently attacked the philosophers.

In order to justify that the world is not eternal, Ghazāli refutes the basic assumption of the philosophers. Philosophers claim that (i) every effect has a cause, (ii) cause must be the action of some force external to effect, (iii) the cause must immediately lead to effect and (iv) the world being an effect of eternal cause must also be eternal.[57] Ghazāli says that it is not necessary that there should be a cause for every effect. One can remember here that this is the contention of al-Bāqillāni also. The other point that there should be an external force for the effect is also refuted. He says that God's will is the cause of the world and that this cause does not lie outside His will but in itself. The third point is also not accepted by him. He says that it is not logically necessary that the cause must have immediate effect, rather it may have a 'delayed effect'. In other words, the cause may be eternal and effect may be temporal. God can eternally think and will to create anything but the effect may come into existence at any specific time. Ghazāli further says that God chose one particular moment rather than another for world's coming into being and that lies in itself. He says that the difficulty arises with the philosophers because they understand the nature of Divine will in terms of man's will. They ignore the vast difference between the two.

The other argument is related to space and time. According to philosophers, time is infinite. Ghazāli holds that time is finite. He says, "We believe that periods (of time) and time (itself) are created".[58] He

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further says that those who believe time to be infinite and space to be finite are wrong in their approach because, according to Aristotelian position, space, time and movement in space are all related to one another. Therefore, if space is finite, time is also finite.

Another argument advanced by the philosophers in this connection is related to matter. According to them, matter is eternal. They hold that the world before its coming into being must have either been possible or impossible or necessary. It cannot be impossible because it does exist and it cannot be necessary because it may be deprived of its existence, therefore, it is possible and its possibility must inhere in matter because it cannot inhere in possibility itself, nor in the agent nor in any other substratum. It means its substratum is matter and this matter is eternal. They argue, "Every originated thing is proceeded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter and Matter itself is not originated. It is only the Forms, Accidents and Qualities (like heat and coldness, blackness and whiteness and motion and rest) passing over matter which are originated".[59] Ghazāli says that this is not true to have any notion like possibility because if there is nothing corresponding to the notion of impossibility, likewise there is nothing concrete in reality that may correspond to possibility. It is merely a concept like concept of impossibility.[60] And if we think like Aristotle that the world came into existence from matter, it is mere a metaphysical jump from thought to actual existence and thus an ontological fallacy.[61]

God's knowledge of the particulars

The philosophers believe that God has knowledge and His knowledge, like His essence, is universal and beyond the limits of time. There was no time when His knowledge was existing. There was no

concept of divisibility of time in past, present and future. Since His knowledge is universal therefore He knows the particulars only in a universal manner.

It is elaborated as; any change in the universal and Divine knowledge is not permissible. Ghazāli says "We do admit that He knows things by a knowledge which is one from eternity to eternity and that His state is unchangeable. The philosophers only desire to reject change and to that extent, every one will agree with them".[62] Ghazāli differs from them because he does not see any change in the universality or oneness of His knowledge of a thing whose states change in accordance with the past, the present and the future. On the contrary, the philosophers believe that if there is any change in the object of knowledge, there will be change, to that extent, in knowledge itself and in the state of the knower also.[63] They say, "Change means nothing but a difference in the knower. He who did not know something, and then comes to know it does undergo a change"[64]. Ghazāli says that if the periods of time create change and difference in the knowledge and hereby in the knower, the diverse Genera and Species should create more difference and disparity in the knower and on the basis of the philosophers' opinion one should reject the idea that God has the knowledge of the Genera and Species. But if they make no change and havoc in the oneness of Divine knowledge, the divisibility of time in the past, the present and the future, and the states of things accordingly should create no difference in its oneness.

This problem has serious consequence, according to al-Ghazāli. He charges with infidelity those who believe in it. Since this position had been adopted by Ibn Sina also, therefore, he was also charged with irreligiousity and infidelity. The consequence of this position, for al-

Ghazāli, is that it totally destroys the religious laws. He says, "It imply that, for instance, whether Zaid obeys God or disobeys Him, God cannot know this newly emerging states, since He does not know as an individual, i.e. as a person whose actions came to be after they had not been". [65] He further says that God cannot know even his infidelity or Islam because He knows only the infidelity-in-general or man in general in the absolute and universal manner, not in specific relation to individual. He says that He cannot know that the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) has proclaimed his prophecy, because all such things have occurred in certain circumstances and in certain periods of time. And the knowledge of such circumstances will necessitate change in Him. This is why that he charges the upholders, including Ibn Sina, of this theory with infidelity.

The Problem of Resurrection of Bodies

This is the third point where al-Ghazāli charges the upholders with infidelity. It is generally believed that there are two realities; one is spiritual and the other is material. Theist philosophers believe in these two realities, but at the same time, they also believe that spirit or soul is eternal while body is temporal. On this very basis they deny the resurrection of bodies. They say that souls will not return to bodies. Only souls will be punished or rewarded in the life hereafter. They say that Paradize, Hell and the *Hurs* with large eyes, etc are mentioned in the Qurān and the Traditions as symbols. They have no physical existence of theirs. They have been mentioned only to facilitate common men's understanding of spiritual reward and punishment. Common people have no taste of spiritual happiness. As a child does not have the taste of sexual pleasure and we represent it to him by reference to a play or anything else

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with which he is familiar. In the same manner these things are mentioned in the Qurān in order o make understand the reality of spiritual happiness. Otherwise they have no physical existence. These things are related to body or matter and there will be no body to taste them. On this very basis the philosophers deny bodily resurrection in the Doomsday. They say, "After the death of the body, the soul continues to have an everlasting existence either in the state of indescribably great pleasure, or in the state of indescribably great pain. In some cases, the pain or pleasure will be everlasting; in others, it will pass away in the course of time. As regards its degrees, men have different ranks which are marked by as great a variety as characterizes their mundane ranks. Thus:

i.   the eternal pleasure is for the pure and perfect souls,

ii.   the eternal pain is for the imperfect and impure souls, and

iii.   transient pain is for the impure but perfect souls."[66]

How can one make his soul perfect and pure and can save himself from eternal pain ? Philosophers say that soul can attain perfection from knowledge and purity from virtuous action and thereby it can attain eternal bliss and happiness. Knowledge comes through rational faculty and it deceives happiness from the cognition of intelligible. Body is an obstacle in the way of rational faculty which prevents it from discovering the intelligibles. This is why the pleasures we get are sensuous and pleasures attained through senses are inferior to spiritual happiness. Therefore we see the ascetic or devotee man never prefers sensuous pleasures to spiritual ones. After the death of a man if soul wants to have union with, for example, God or angels (intelligibles), body will be an obstacle there also and soul, consequently, will not be able to attain absolute bliss and perfect happiness.

Cognition of intelligibles also includes knowledge of God, His Attributes, His angels, His books, etc.

So these are arguments on the bases of which philosophers deny the resurrection of bodies.

Ghazāli says that he believes in most of these things, like immorality of soul and that the spiritual pleasures in the Hereafter are superior to sensible pleasures in this world. But, at the same time, he also says that all these things he does not know on the basis of reasoning but on the authority of religion and revelation. Besides, these are some such elements as opposed to religion, for example, the denial of revivification and Hell, the denial of the existence of Hurs in Paradise and the denial of physical pains and pleasures. Ghazāli says that all these things are mentioned in the Qurān and the Tradition. He further says that sensuous pleasures and spiritual pleasures, when combined, make perfection and God promised us perfect bliss and happiness.

The objections that all these things are mentioned as symbols, not as real, is removed by him as that there is no need of any interpretation other than to take them as real, because they are clear in their connotation. Interpretation is true where there is ambiguity and if there is no ambiguity, interpretation is not true.

Philosophers justify their contention on the basis of the impossibility of bodily resurrection in real and actual form. They say, if we believe it to be true, it involves three alternatives. They say, "Therefore, resurrection will mean (a) the restoration by God of the body which had perished; (b) the recommencement of the existence of the body; and (c) restoration of life which had perished". All these three alternatives were refuted by Ghazāli. The first was denied on the ground

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that return means the continuity of one thing as well as the emergence of another. For example, if anyone is said to have returned to a city, the meaning is that he continued to exist elsewhere: that formerly he had been in the "city; and that now he resumes his being in the city which is similar to his original state."[67]

The second alternative was denied, up to some extent, on similar ground. Ghazāli says that it is impossible because the body of a man is reduced to dust and gets mixed up with the air, the vapour and the water of the whole world. Therefore, the collection of the same body in its previous from, while it is changed, is impossible.[68]

Now remains the third alternative, that is, the restoration of life or soul to a body made of any dust or substance. This was also denied by al-Ghazāli on the ground that substances or matters are infinite in number while the souls departed from body are finite, therefore, it is impossible. Secondly, the soul directs body, and dust, as long as it is dust, can not receive direction from soul. In order to get direction, its all elements should be mixed in the manner it may have resemblance with sperm or any other organism capable of receiving direction. Since it is impossible therefore this alternative is also impossible.

Briefly, Ghazāli justifies that reason is unable to certify the doctrine of resurrection of bodies. Reason is unable to affirm it or to reject it, therefore, we should believe in revelation, and revelation affirms its possibility.

This is last point where al-Ghazāli charges with infidelity those who deny bodily resurrection.

God's Essence and Attributes

This has been essential problem for both the M'utzilites and the philosophers. The M'utazilah denied the Attributes under the influence of the Greek philosophers. This is evident from the fact that the arguments advanced by the M'utazilah are the same as propounded by the philosophers. They assert, says al-Ghazāli, "It is not right to affirm attributes which are additional to the Divine essence, as our knowledge or power is an attribute additional to our essence. For (They assert) such a thing necessitates plurality."[69] They further say that if we believe these attributes to be co-extensive with or co-existent even then they necessitate plurality and that plurality is impossible.

Ghazāli refutes their contention of plurality saying, at first, that how they are able to know that the plurality of this kind is impossible and that if anyone says so he only means that 'plurality of attributes is impossible' and there is no rational argument contradicting the possibility of many attributes.

But the philosophers argue their point of view in two ways. One is that if we say an attribute and its subject we just mean that they are two things, that is, "*This* is not *That*, and *That* is not *This*. Now, (a) either the existence of each of the two will be independent of the other, or (b) each will need the other (c) one will be independent while the other is not."[70] In the first case, both are necessary that will amount duality[71]. In the second place, neither is necessary, because a necessary being must be self-subsistent. In the third alternative one, being independent, is cause and the other, being dependent, is an effect. It means that effect, being dependent, cannot inhere in its cause that is self-subsisting and independent, and there must be an external cause to unite them.

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Out of these three alternatives, the second one is meaningless in respect with God's essence and attributes.

There is no cause to assert that one needs other because essence and attributes coexist and attributes inhere in the essence. Now, there remain two alternatives. Ghazāli refutes the first alternative, that is existence of both is independent, on the ground that duality is conceiveable where there is distinction between two things which are alike in all respects, therefore there is no duality. In the case of essence and attributes, there is no distinction between them because they are neither identical not separate and distinct from each other, and if they say that they are distinct and that this is a kind of compositions of essence and attribute in the case of the First Principle, it is, says Ghazali, an arbitrary assumption on the part of the philosophers that has no proof behind it.

Now we take third alternative, that is, one is dependent and the other is independent. In other words, essence does not depend on the attributes while they depend on their subject. The philosophers' argument is that which depends on someone else cannot be a necessary cause and that it needs an efficient cause. Ghazāli says, in the case of God's essence, if they believe that there is no need of any efficient cause because it is eternal and independent, what prevents them to say so in the case of attributes if they are also eternal and independent of an efficient cause ?

He further says that if they mean by a necessary being, a being without a receptive cause, attributes are in this sense, not necessary. Nevertheless, they are eternal and need no efficient cause. He says that rational arguments do not deny anything to be independent and eternal if there is cause, that is, essence, receptive to it. What they prove is only

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that there must be an end of cause-effect series. Beyond this any claim is an arbitrary one. If we do not stop at any point it will are lead us *ad infinitum* that inconceiveable. Therefore, it is God Who is the Last Cause and Who has attributes eternal and independent of an efficient cause.

The second point of the philosophers is that if knowledge, power etc. are attributed to human being, it means that they do not enter into their quidity or essence, for they are only accidents. Similarly, if these attributes are ascribed to the First Principle, that is, God, they will not inhere in His essence. Rather, they will remain as accidents related to His essence and it is evident that accidents are inseparable in relation to the things, but, at the same time, they do not constitute their essence or quidity. Being accidents, they are always subordinate to their essence and essence is always their cause. Ghazāli refutes their assertion that if they mean by their being subordinate to essence or by the assertion that essence is their efficient cause and that the accidents are effects of the cause, it is not true even in the case of human beings, what to say of Divine Being. In the case of human beings, essence is not an efficient cause of knowledge, power, etc. But it is true that accidents exist in their subjects and subjects are their substrata. Likewise attributes exist in the Divine essence and they are eternal and independent of an efficient cause."[72]

The problem with the philosophers is that they apply their methods and arguments upon Divine being in the same manner as they do it with His creatures, while there is no resemblance between them. Human qualities like knowledge, powers etc. are acquired and Divine attributes exist from eternity.

Causality

He discusses this problem in his *Tahafut* in the seventeenth disputation where he refutes the alleged necessity of the causal connection maintained by the philosophers. They insist that there is logical connection between cause and effect and this connections is necessary. Ghazāli challenges the validity of this necessity. He says, at the very outset of this problem, "In our view, the connection between what are believed to be cause and the effect is not necessary. Take any two things. *This* is not *That*; nor can *That* be *This*. The affirmation of one does not imply the affirmation of the other; not does its denial imply the denial of the other. The existence of one is not necessitated by the existence of the other nor; its non-existence by the non-existence of the other.[73] He gives the examples of quenching of thirst and drinking, hunger and eating, burning and fire, light and sun and healing and the use of medicine. He says that they are connected as the result of Decree of God which proceeded their existence;[74] not as the result of logical or necessary connections among them. He mentions their claim: fire is the agent of burning and it can not refrain from burning, after it comes into contact with any subject, and then he denies it. He says, "We say that it is God who through the intermediacy of angels, or directly is the agent of burning. Fire, which is an in inanimate – has no action. How can one prove that it is agent?[75] He further says that it is our observation that fire is with burning or burning is with fire and observation shows only that one is *with* other not one is *by* other. He justifies his point of view with the example of a blind man whose eyes are diseased and when his disease is cured he sees different forms of colours and thinks that the agent of the perception of these colours is the opening of his eyes. But if sun sets he

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will know that the agent and cause was sun that impressed the colours upon his sight. It means that Ghazāli wants to say that if we say anything to be agent, it is based on our observation and perception. He agrees that fire when comes into contact with anything it burns it. At the same time he also believes that when a certain prophet (Abraham) was thrown into the fire, he was not burnt. He says, it was so because either the attributes of fire had changed or the attributes of the prophet's person had changed. And this change had taken place because of God's direct interference or through His angels[76]. Thus al-Ghazāli justifies that there is an interference everywhere and it is God Who is sole agent and determinant and if there is any connection between two things it is by God's Decree. Whenever He wants He will suspend the connections, but there prevails a causal nexus in nature and God does not intend to interrupt it.

After refuting the beliefs of the philosophers in his he, according to his promise, wrote an invaluable and voluminous work entitled *'Ihya 'Ulim al-Din'* (Revivification of the Sciences of the Religion). This is the book which, as its title suggests, revives the sciences related to Islam. In this book, at the very outset, I mean, in the second section of the Chapter I, [77] he classifies knowledge into two broad categories: praiseworthy and blameworthy. In the category of praiseworthy knowledge he includes, first of all, the knowledge of religious beliefs, actions and prohibitions and he names it as *farz ain* (Obligatory upon every Muslim). In the second category, that is, blameworthy, he includes sorcery, talismanic sciences, juggling and gambling.

Among the religious sciences some duties are included in *farze kefaya* that are obligatory but not on every Muslim. Rather, it is

performed on behalf of whole community if some of them fulfil the duty. *Farze-ain* and *farze kefaya* are related to the religion.

Worldly sciences are divided into praiseworthy, blameworthy and permissible. The case of blameworthy knowledge is the same, but the praiseworthy knowledge includes medicine and mathematics because they are necessary for progress in the world. Permissible sciences include poetry, history, geography and biology.

After seeing this classification of knowledge one can easily conclude that he encourages those sciences that are religious and that can lead a man to the right path, because Ghazāli always keeps in his mind that man, after his death, will be before his Lord at the Day of judgement where he is accountable for his deeds. Therefore, he rejects those sciences that are not contributive to this purpose, while he encourages even those worldly sciences that might contribute to this purpose or at least, to progress in worldly matters. It means that he does not ignore this life, though his stress is on the life after death.

Besides, he mentions in this book, other religious matters like prayer, zakat, repentance, pilgrimage etc, but the discussion is theological, not philosophical. It suggests that Ghazāli, ultimately, abandoned philosophy and returned to theology.

Conclusion

The emergence of Muslim philosophy is not merely an accidental phenomenon, it is a result of serious contemplation and deliberate attempt. It is evident that Muslim philosophy, at least at the outset, worked through the religions contents of the religion. But the contents were treated rationally and logically to give them a shade of philosophy. We may controvert the philosophical disposition of the Muslim thought, but we cannot deny the logical excellence of the arguments used to explain the position of Islam on different issues. It is again true that Muslim philosophy takes up and interprets the problems from the religious angle, but the nature of the arguments makes it philosophical. We should not reckon only Asharite philosophers as eminent, while determining the definition of Muslim philosophy. We also have to consider the other earlier philosophers who raised the level of rational thinking and built up the arguments in the manner of pure philosophy. The history of Muslim philosophy records many such names, sources belonging to the Ikhwan-al-Sifa and others to M'utazilah, who used philosophical paradigm in the explanation of religions issues.

We have discussed at length in the main body of our thesis the problems which attracted the Muslim mind just after the death of the Prophet. Some of them were the product of social change and others were purely academic in nature.

The Muslim society was a transformed face of the pre-Islamic Arab-society. Although this society suffered all kinds of

perversions and was dotted with evil, and the people even took pride in evil and in evil deeds, yet it had a tremendously pleasant literary history. It is evident from the exquisitely composed panegyrics. They are still regarded as the best piece of classical literature. They performed the evil in the manner of value. Islam after its advent caused a complete social transformation and brought not only happiness but also prosperity and peace. The change naturally resulted into a physical comfort and mental solace. The people who had constantly indulged in intrigues against their enemies and rivals now devoted themselves to the worship of God. They showed to Him their complete obeisance and surrendered unto Him all their passions. Their valour was now expressed in the wars wagged for God and His Prophet to extend His empire. The rule of evil gave way to the rule of Law. Their nasty instincts got transformed. Their piety became exemplary and they readily submitted to God's message. The changed social order provided them occasion for contemplation and reconstruction.

In the life-time of the Prophet they cleared away all their doubts and suspicions about religious truth. All remained obedient except hypocrites who after the death of the Prophet posed serious threats to Islam and its followers. They were able to raise questions in the minds of the Muslims regarding vital problems like unity of God, justice of God, creation of the Quran and so on. Besides, the death of the Prophet gave rise to many controversies which resulted into social-political turmoil. The first one was regarding the appointment of the

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Caliph of the Muslim Ummah. It was to be resolved immediately as the appointed Caliph had to lead the burial procession and the last prayers. The Arab chieftains, after hearing the shocking news of the Prophet's demise, assembled at Saqifah with heavy hearts and worried mind to settle the issue. It was the first instance when the Muslim elders representing the noted Arab tribes had to come to a decision without the Prophet amidst them. The instance proved to be a bone of contention. It took quite a long time for them to come to an agreeable decision, but the agreement reached was not satisfactory to a section of Muslims, particularly those who advocated the Caliphate of Ali b. Abu-Talib who, they thought, was the rightful claimant but denied on feeble counts. It, however, remained contentious issue at the time of the appointment of Abu Bakr Umar and Uthman as Caliphs. The supporters of Ali felt relieved when Ali succeeded to this position but till then much had changed. Uthman, during his reign, took some very controversial decisions which ultimately led to his assassinations.

Ali's reign could bring no peace to the Muslim empire. He had to fight at least two important Battles with Amir Muawiyah who, after Uthaman's assassination, very strongly desired to rise to the Throne. Many Muslims regarded him as debauched and were dread against his succession. They could not tolerate him as their ruler. Besides, Ali's reign also saw the ugly face of a sharp division of Muslim Ummah into many groups, particularly after the Battle of Siffin which resulted into the emergence of three strong groups: the Shi'ites, the

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Khangites and the Murzites. These groups later on attained religious sanctity. The socio-political turmoil did not only reduce the political strength of Muslim community but also harmed its religious solidarity. It was not, indeed, a good development. The Muslilm Ummah was divided to the extent that they refused to tolerate each other. The personal judgment is not encouraged in Islam, yet they regarded each other as infidel. This old-age tendency still dominates the Muslims and each of the communities, even in the present, takes pride in its being true Muslims.

In the aftermath of socio-political turmoil there emerged a group which segregated itself from the actual scene and avoided to participate in the upheavals. Instead, it devoted itself to the path of knowledge in accordance with the interest and capacity. Some of its members resorted to .the pursuance of worldly knowledge and others chose the path of gnosis and engaged themselves in the pursuit of **taqwa** penitence. The former looked after the exoteric part of religion and the later emphasized the esoteric aspect. Thus, latter and spirit both were taken care of with a positive approach. The former was the group of philosophers and the later comprised of the mystics of Islam. Both of them presented religion in their own way without indulging in useless castigation of each others. Their varied explanations were serious efforts to offer an acceptable solution of the ensuring problems. The attempts of this group were appreciated by the Muslim Ummah with a sigh of relief since they could clear the suffocation caused by the political chaos. The development marked a new beginning

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which touched new horizon in the hands of the Mutazilah scholars.

The Battle of Siffin posed a question of vital importance regarding the fate of the Muslim sinner. The erstwhile political group assumed religions importance. The khariyah, the Shiah and the Murjiah offered plausible solutions, but the Muslim community in general supported the approach of the Murjiah who deferred the judgment to God with the hope of a perdition. The khariyah were rather obstinate in their attitude and passed a cruel judgment on infidelity even against the Muslim sinners. In their explanations they always had Ali and Muawiyah in their mind. Their obstinacy went to the extent that they advocated for severe punishment even to their children. Their strong feeling of recompense denied their acceptability in both the communities, the Murjiah and the Shiah consequently, they were completely extinguished due to their strongly negative approach. Nevertheless, the khariyah held their conviction firm to their hearts. No atrocities could change their savage attitude.

Besides, there were some other problems also, including freedom of will, which invited the attention of Muslim scholars belonging to the early phase of Kalam. It may be historically true that the freedom of will was the significant content of the intellectual efforts in the pre-Islamic Arab society and the thinkers were divided on the issue. Some advocated fatalism and others opposed it. Their point of views are evidently expressed in their literary works. This cannot

certainly be denied due to its being one of the initial questions that human consciousness came across. After the advent advocating fatalism or otherwise assumed philosophical significance, Jabr and Qadar became prominent schools which argued rather systematically fatalism and libertarianism respectively. Islam added another dimension to the problem by relating it to justice of God. It was certainly not the influence of Christian conviction of the original sin. The Jew influence, nevertheless, cannot be denied without argument. The freedom of will also led to the rise of yet another problem related to evil. The Muslim theologians always saw the Qadariyah with an eye of suspicion and regarded them as the advocate of dualism for their belief in man being creator of both his actions belonging to virtue and vice. The theologians might have a puritan approach and a prejudice against philosophers but the problem of evil remains unresolved. God being All-Good could not be the creator of evil and man can create nothing but choose from within that which is created.

The early mutakallimin, as we have described in the thesis, were seriously occupied with the discussion about the definition of Iman (faith) and its articles. It was deemed indispensable for the new converts who embraced Islam after being conquered to amalgamated elements of their ancestral faith. The discourse on faith also led to the question of infidelity (kufr). The philosophers pondered over it by taking into account the basic tenets of Islam. They preferred argumentative approach. Whereas the theologians, whereas, adopted a puritan approach which, however, was not positive.

The kharijah were rather severe in their attacks. The Murjiah were comparatively reasonable. They always avoided passing judgment. The problem of faith and infidelity is rooted in the Quran and the Tradition. No outside influence originated the discussion. The philosophers and the theologians both desired to keep the Muslims upright, but the attitude of the philosophers, particularly of the later mutakallimin, led them to deviation and distress. It was later on corrected by the Ashairah thinkers who adopted the theologians' approach. It, of course, resulted into the decline of philosophical thinking.

In the basic tenets of Islam unity of God is the most important article of faith. It is the initial point wherefrom one gets into the realm of Islam. Metaphorically speaking it might be called the gate of the religion, Islam. We have elsewhere printed out that the basic assertion in the wake of the acceptance of Islam is the negation of polytheism. It is suggestive of the historical fact that polytheism was practiced all through the world in various forms and shades, but the Semitic religions rejected it at one go in all its forms and shades. Nevertheless, its roots were so deep in society that it always reappeared in a new garb. Judaism and Christianity both taught this lesson but it was forgotten. The earlier three revealed books also preached the Oneness of God but it was forgotten. There was a great deal of omission and commission even in the revealed books. Their followers did not care for their teachings and included in them their own whims and fancies and thus marred the basic spirit of the guidance of

God. Finally the Quran was revealed with the promise of preservation and no change in its contents could be made.

The Quran also taught the same basic lesson with the consciousness that it has been averted many times before. The Quran declared Judaism and Christianity as the shades of Islam and viewed it as different **Shariahs** (Legal systems) revealed in conformity with the need of the hour and the level of human consciousness. Polytheism, thus, was finally rejected but the religion being social phenomenon could not be changed. There has, and perhaps shall never, be a time when society admitted one religion; all have existed simultaneously.

The unity of God ensured the emergence of some new problems. The first is related its definition. Monotheism in Islam is certainly not identical with that of Christianity and Judaism. Islam admits no shade of polytheism either in the form of Trinity or incarnated beings. It also rejects the concept of personage which is the hallmark of Christianity or some sections of Judaism. Right from the early days the Mutakallimin, on one hand, and the theologians on the other, tried to define and elaborate the concept of monotheism in Islam. They were always at variance with the Christian and Jew scholars who also argued their concept of monotheism. Their arguments were rooted in the Greek philosophical sciences. The Muslim scholars of Kalam very ably accepted the challenge and paid them in the same coins. The cause of Islam opened new vistas of knowledge which made them

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perfect in these sciences. The platonics and peripatatics both defended the doctrine of unity of God better than the theologians who could not argue in the same manner and with the same force.

Another problem related to the unity of God opened the debate on the Essence and the Attributes. The community of scholars was divided on the issue right from the early times. Some supported the common point of view and held the Attributes to be separate from the Essence and others went to the extent of denying them. The denial, of course, raised doubts about God's perfection. Wolfson and others wrongly assign its introduction from Christianity or Judaism. It is, however, undoubtedly a debate based on the Quran and the Tradition.

The Muslim scholars engaged themselves in their interpretation. They never admitted any alien influences. The Essence and Attributes also gave way to yet another question. It was regarding the personality of God. Although it is difficult to ascribe personality to God, yet some Muslim scholars believed in the **marifah** of God. The anthropomorphic verses in the Quran were understood rather literally. For those who denied the Attributes it was unarguable. They never ascribed any form to God even by way of similes. Such a view was mainly supported by Shiite thinkers to justify the concept of Imamah based on the principle of **hulul**, incarnation. The idea seems to have been introduced under the influence of Christianity and

Manichaeanism which professed such belief. In this debate, we are of the opinion that the Mutazilah held a rational position. Thin interpretation of the Unity of God is rather realistic and most convincing.

Yet another problem related to the Unity of God is the creation of Quran. Common Muslim's belief is quite evident, but it could not be acceptable to many of the philosophers belonging to different schools. Despite its creation, there are certain other discussions of vital importance. The Muslims generally believe that the Quran has no omissions and commissions and it has been preserved as it was not revealed. Some non-Muslim scholars, having taken a literal interpretation, objected to the compilation of the verses arranged in the present order, for the reason that it is not in conformity with the order as it was revealed. The Muslims are aware that the Quran was revealed in bits as and when the Prophet sought guidance from God or He deemed it fit to guide him. It took some twenty three years to complete. The order of revelation could not, however, be maintained. The Prophet himself had arranged it in this order. The compilation, nevertheless, became controversial on account of different manuscripts. It was finally resolved in the days of Uthman. The mutakallimin defended the order of the revelation and supported that the Quran has been preserved in letter and spirit.

In accordance with the common belief God has made a promise to preserve the holy Quran and that there shall be no

commission whatsoever; such attempts have always been strongly opposed as and when made, but the possibility of omission cannot be ruled out. Not only the philosophers but also the theologians have admitted the omissions made from time to time. There is a great deal of discussion on the quantum of omission. Once the possibility has been accepted the number of omitted verses went on increasing to the extent that the Shiah community, at least covertly, believed in the ten **paras** (chapters) having been omitted. The number may have been exaggerated but the fact of omission not, however, be denied. It again became a point of objection for the hypocrites and non-believers but the Mutakallimin and the theologians strongly defended the sanctity of the holy Quran arguing that every omission has been made by the command of God. He being the creator has every right to reject whatever is deemed as not essential. The Mutakallimin, particularly the Mutazilah, remained awaken to all such controversies and deliberated upon them with an aim of defense, not apologetically but with forceful arguments and convincing contents.

The rise of philosophy saw its dusk in the hands of Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari. We cannot ignore his contribution to Ilm-al-Kalam and other related sciences, but his attitude towards philosophy reduced it to the level of common man. It has been stated that Abul Hasan al-Ashari started his career as a Mutazili but he suddenly changed his mind when he rightly noticed that the rationalism of the Mutazilah was being harmful to the common Muslims. He was to true to a great

extent, for the Mutazilah did not restrict their debates to the philosophical issues but also extended them to religion which, of course, is a common man's food. In the interpretation of the Unity of God they altogether denied the attributes. Besides, they projected God having limited powers; of course, with the presumption that the limits are self-imposed. It certainly shocked the common man. No Muslim other than the intellectuals could understand such presumptions.

Ash'ari and some other thinkers had a genuine concern. They felt the severity of the hazards. Abul Hasan-al-Ash'ari voiced their feelings and defended common Muslims' faith. Being originally a Mutazili he could not reject its doctrines altogether. He, therefore, took a midway position in most of the cases. In his attempts he sometimes invited confusion. His explanation of the attributes of God is a good instance of one such confusion. The position could not be well-argued; it, however, satisfies the common man. Ash'ari has convincingly argued the semi-determinism in explaining the freedom of will. It is, in our opinion, in conformity with the Quran and the Tradition, where we find support for Jabr and gadar both.

While going through his writings one can conclude that Ash'ari had a philosophical insight which he used in the defense of theology. He desired to avert the influence of rationalism and, therefore, argued the case of religion to save it from the anticipated perils to the Muslim community and their religion. His efforts were intellectual in character. He never abandoned his philosophical training but his followers, particularly Ghazali made philosophy a common man's mind. His

attempts to defend theology proved to be disastrous for the growth of philosophy. It, in fact, declined and was reduced almost to naught. Ghazali's efforts, however so ever genuine yet they could, affect the growth of knowledge in all fields. The Muslim intellectuals thereafter were so deeply influenced by his thought that they could never return to pure philosophy. There are, no doubt, some big names like Razi, Ibn-Taimiyah and others after him, but all of them spent their efforts in repeating him. Thus, Ash'ari started a tradition which caused the decline of knowledge in the Muslim empire, he, however, saved religion and marked its progress.

FOOT NOTES

(i)   Asākir, Abu Qasim Ali b. Hibatullah, Theqatuddin Ibn Asakir, (499-1106 – 571/1176). *'The Theology of al-Islam'*, p. 145.

(ii)   Dhahaki, the author of *'Al-Iber fi Khebere Man Ghabar'*.

(iii)   al-Saji, author of several books, including the book *'Ikhtelaf al-Fuqaha'*, was a Shafe'ite Jurisprudent from whom 'al-Ash'ari related many traditions in his own book *'Kitab al-Tafsir'* that is extinct. *'The theology of al-Ash'ri'*, p. 156.

(iv)   al-Marvazi, Ibrahim b. Ahmad al-Marvazi, Shafe'ite Jurisprudence, to him ended the chairmanship of Shafe'ites in Iraq, born at Marv, stayed for a long time in Baghdad and died in Egypt. Wafayat vol. I p. 4.

(v)   al-Jubbai, Mohammad b. Abdul Wahhab, born in 235 A.H. and died in 303 A.H.. *'The Theology of al-Ash'ari'*, p. 158.

(vi)   This book has become extinct like his other several books.

(vii)   Hamuda Gharabah has done his research work on al-Ashari.

(viii)   Umer b. Abdul Aziz (61/81-101/720). His lineage is Umer b. Abdul Aziz b. Marwah b. al-Hakam al-Umawi al-Qureshi. He is included in *Khulafae Rashideen'*, that is, fifth of pious Caliphs. He succeeded to the Caliphate in 99 A.H. *Aalam* by Khairuddin Zarkeli.

(ix)   Al-Shafe'i, Imam Mohammad b. Idrees b. al-Abbas b. Uthman b. al-Shafi al-Qurashi al-Muttalibi, Ibn Abdullah. He was born at Ghazna in Palestine in 150/767 and died in Egypt in 204/820. A'*alam* by Khairuddin Zarkali.

(x)   Abu Hanifah, Noman bin Thabit, One of four legal Imams, born in Kufa in 80/699. The Caliph Mansoor when wanted to appoint him as the Judge, he denied. Consequently he was imprisoned in Baghdad where he died in 150/767. *A'alam* by Khairuddin Zerkali.

(xi)   Al-Thauri, Sufyan b. Syeed b. Masroq al-Thauri Abu Abdullah, Amirul Muminin of the science of Traditions. He was born in Kufa in 97/716, but treveled to Makka and Madina, died in Basra in 161/778. *Aalam* by Zarkali.

(xii)   Al-Awza'i, Abu Amr Abdur Rahman b. Amr b. Yuhmid al-Awzai. He was born at Balbak in 8/707 and lived in Bairuit where he died in 157/774. Aalam by Zarkali.

(xiii) Malik b. Anas b. Malik al-Asbahi al-Humairi Abu Abdullah, Imam of Madina. One of four legal Imams, born in Madina in 93/712 and died there in 179/795. He is the author of famous book 'al-Mu'atta'. *'Aalam'* by Zarkali.

(xiv)   Ahmad b. Hanbal, Abu Abdullah Ahmad b. Mohammad b. Hanbal al-Shaibani. One of the four legal Imams. He was born in Baghdad in 164/780. When he denied to believe in the theory of createdness of the Quran, the Caliph Mu'tasim imprisoned him for eighteen months and he died in jail in 241/855. He wrote his *'Musnad'* in six volumes *'Aalam'*.

(xv)   Al-laith b. Sa'ad b. Abdur Rahman Abul Harith, born in Egypt in 94/713 and died in Cairo in 175/791. Imam al-Shafe'i said about him that he was more intelligent than Imam Malik, *'Aalam'* by Zarkali.

(xvi) Al-Bukhari, Mohammad b. Ismail b. Ibrahim b. al-Mughirah al-Bukhari, Hibrul Islam, Hafiz of the Traditions and the author of '*al-Sahih al-Bukhari*'. He was born in Bukhara in 194/810 and died in 256/870, '*Aalam*' by Zarkali.

(xvii) Muslim, Abul Hasan Muslim b. Hajjaz b. Muslim al-Qushairi al-Nisaburi. *He was born in Nishapur in 204/820. He collected twelve thousand Traditions in fifteen years in his '*al-Sahih*'.* He died in 261/875. '*Aalam*' by Zarkali.

(xviii) Ibn Khalqan, Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Abu Bakr b. Khalqan Abu al-Abbas. He was the judge in Syria.

(xix) St. Augustine. (354-430) Christian theologian and Bishop. A creative genius of mystical piety and great philosophical acumen, not only his thought seminal for the development of western Christianity, his moral values and personal piety remained norms for medieval and reformations Europe, born in Taqasti (present day Souk-Ahras, Algeria to a pagan father Patriclus and a Christian mother Monica. On 20 August 430, while prayers were being offered in the Churches of Hippo, Augustine died. It was designated his day in the Lexicon of Roman Catholic saints. '*Encyclopaedia of Religion*', Vol. I, pp. 520-526.

(xx) Abelard Peter (1079-1142), Logician and Christian theologian, born at Le Pallet, outside of Nantes (Britanny) '*Encyclopaedia of Religion*', vol. I

(xxi) Thomas Acquinas (Tommaso d'Aquino, 1225-1274), Italian Dominican theologian, doctor of the church, patron of Roman Catholic Schools and Christian saint. He has been honored with the scholastic titles Doctor Communis (thirteenth century) and Doctor

Angelicus (fifteenth century), among others. '*Encyclopedia of Religion*', vol. 14, P. 485.

(xxii) Peter Lambard (1100-1160) Christian theologian and teacher, born in Northern Italy, went to France for study. He then taught in Paris at the Cathedral school of Notre Dame, '*Encyclopedia of Religion*', vol. 11, p. 257.

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4. *'Tabyin-o-kadhib al-Muftari fi ma Nusiba ela al-Imam Abi al-Hasan al-Ash'ari'*, (hereafter cited as 'Tabyin'). P. 3

5. *'Wafayat al-Aayan'*, p. 326

6. *'Tabyin'* p. 146, *'Tabaqat al-Shafiyiyah al-Kubra''*, (hereafter cited as the 'Tabaqat) p. 245 and *'The Theology of al-Ashari'*, p. 169

7. *'Wafayat'*, p. 326

8. *'The Theology of al-Ashari'* p. 150, *'Tabyin'*, p. 35

9. *'Al-'Ibar fi Khabare Man Ghaber'*, vol. V p. 202

10. *'Wafayat'* p. 326

11. *'Tabaqat'*, p. 249-50

12. *'The Theology of al-Ash'ari'*, p. 158

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14. ibid , pp. 150-1

15. *Al Quran* 10: 32

16. *'The Theology of al-Ash'ari'*, p. 152-153

17. ibid. pp. 154-5

18. ibid. p. 151

19. ibid. p. 152

20. *'Al-Ash'ari'* by Hamudah Gharabah p. 65

21. *'Tabaqat'* p. 251

22. ibid

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24. *'Tabaqat'* p. 251

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29. ibid p. 162

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33. ibid p. 169

34. *'Wafayat'* p. 337

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36. *'Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun'* p.

37. *'The Theology of al-Ash'ari'*, p. 165

38. ibid

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4. *The Quran*, S-5, 3

5. *'The Philosophy of the Kalam'*, pp. 3-4

6. *'Islamic Sects and Divisions'*, p. 38

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27.   ibid., S-6, 83, 89

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52.   ibid., pp. 45-48, *'Hukama-e-Islam'* p. 67

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3.   ibid., S: 36-39

4.   ibid., S: 10, 99

5.   cf. *'Islamic Methodology in History'*, pp. 63-4

6.   *'Muslim Sects and Divisions'*, p. 73

7.   ibid., p. 75

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39.	ibid., pp. 114

40.	ibid., pp. 115

41.	ibid., pp. 120

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70. ibid., pp. 202-3, *'Al-Ibanah'*, pp. 75-6

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38. ibid., p. 689

39. *'Muslim Sects and Divisions'*, p. 83

40.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 243

41.   *'Muslim Intellectual'*, pp. 121-2

42.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 582-585

43.   *'Muslim Intellectual'*, p. 73

44.   ibid., p. 81

45.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 586-7, *'Muslim Intellectual'*, pp. 134-5

46.   *'Ihya Ulum al-Din'*, vol. IV, *'al-Munqidh'*, p. 18

47.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 589, *'al-Munqidh'*, p. 18

48.   *'Al-Munqidh'*, p. 13

49.   *'Al-Munqidh'*, pp. 27-30, *'Tahafat'*, p. 5

50.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 594

51.   ibid., pp. 596-8

52.   *'Al-Munqidh'*, p. 31

53.   ibid., p. 34

54.   'Tahafat', pp. 11-12

55.   *'Al-Munqidh'*, p. 37

56.   ibid., p. 37-8

57.   *'Tahafat'*, p. 54

58.   ibid., p. 23

59.   ibid., p. 47

60.   ibid., pp. 48-9

61.   *'A History of Muslim Philosophy'*, p. 601

62.   *'Tahafat'* p. 158

63.   ibid., p. 157

64.   ibid., p. 156

65.   ibid., p.

66.   ibid., p. 229

67.   ibid., p. 237

68.   ibid., p. 238-9

69.   ibid., p. 109

70.   ibid., p. 110

71.   ibid., p. 99

72.   ibid., p. 112-3

73.   ibid., p. 185

74.   ibid., p.

75.   ibid., p. 186

76.   ibid., p. 190

77.   *'Ihya Ulum al-Din'*, translated by Fazlul Karim pp. 29-32

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