"THREADS OF THOUGHT: HOW MUTAZILITE RATIONALISM AND ASHARITE ORTHODOXY WOVE THE FABRIC OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY"

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Abstract

Asharites oppose Mutazilites' views on free will. Instead, they argue that, while humans have some freedom of action and complete freedom of thought, only Allah has the ability to perform actions, whilst humans do not. Humans cannot fully comprehend notions like freedom and justice, which are exclusively the domain of God. The current study illuminates the fundamental concepts of Mutazilites and Asharites, as well as how they influenced individuals and states. Their contributions to the spread of Islam have been tremendous, leaving everlasting marks on the hearts of Muslim nations. The present research examines the influence of Mutazilite and Ashrite ideas on Muslim philosophy.

Keywords: *Islam, justice, freedom, contribution*

1.Introduction

The Mutazilah maintained that, while Allah only wants what is best for man, through free will, man chooses between good and evil and thus accepts ultimate responsibility for his actions, in contrast to orthodoxy, which taught a certain determinism in which all actions, whether good or bad, are ultimately determined by Allah. Mu'tazilism, or al-mu'tazilah in Arabic, was an early Islamic doctrinal movement that was particularly powerful in Basra and Baghdad (8th-10th centuries). Following the death of the third caliph, Hazrat Uthman (R.A), the Mu'tazila or Mutazilites were known for their objectivity in the battle between Hazrat Ali (R.A) and his rivals. By the tenth century, al-Mutazilah had come to refer to a certain Islamic school of speculative theology.

Sunni Islam's fundamental doctrinal school is asharism. Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari, a theologian, founded it around the beginning of the tenth century after splitting from the Mutazilite intellectuals who had served as his instructors and associates. Asharites are those who adhere to these teachings. Abdullah ibn Sa'eed ibn Kullaab taught Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari the philosophy of the Asharites. Al-Ashar suggested an intermediate path between the Athar and Mu'tazila schools of Islamic theology, based on both Qur'anic obedience and theological rationality regarding God's existence, characteristics, and power. The most important school of Islamic theology in Islamic history is claimed to have founded asharism, which eventually came to dominate theological thought within Sunni Islam. The Asharite school, commonly known as the Ashar school, rose to prominence among Sunni theological schools. Its followers are referred to as Asharites.

2. Research Objectives

1. To know the contribution of Mutazilites and Asharites thought.
2. To know the doctrines of Mutazilites and Asharites.
3. To know the Teachings of Islamic legacy in Muslim nations/countries with special reference to Mutalizites and Asharites.
4. To know and comparison the opinions of Mutalizites with Asharites.

3. Methodology

This paper is qualitative in nature. So the investigator uses secondary sources in order to collect the data. Data were collected from journals, articles, books and magazines. Libraries were also used for collecting the information.

4. Discussion

The subsequent **Mutazila school** created an Islamic version of rationalism based on three key principles: the oneness (Tawhid) and justice (Al-'adl) of Allah, human freedom of action, and the creation of the Quran. The Mutazilites are best known for contesting the Quran's concept of being eternal, and co-eternal with God, stating that if the Quran is God's literal word, he "must have preceded his own speech."This contrasted the mainstream Sunni position (adopted by the Ashar, Mturd, and Traditionalist (Athari) schools), which held that because God is all-knowing, his knowledge of the Quran must be eternal, and hence uncreated like him. The Quran, and by extension the Sharia, were created for a specific time and place alone, in this case exclusively during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, according to proponents of the idea that it was created. This finally meant that the Sharia might alter throughout time and space, particularly if a particular law did not follow aql (reason). The school attempted tackle the theological "problem of evil", contending that because Allah is just and wise, He cannot order actions that are contrary to reason or act without regard for the welfare of His creatures. As a consequence, Evil must be viewed as something that results from human errors, which arise by man's divinely granted free will. Although the Mu'tazila condemned secular rationalism, they thought that man's intelligence and reason enabled him to comprehend religious concepts; good and evil were reasonable patterns that might be "set up through unaided reason" The "mihna," an 18-year period (833-851 CE) of religious persecution instituted by the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun where religious scholars were punished, imprisoned, or even killed unless they adhered to Mu'tazila doctrine, until it was reversed by al-Mutawakkil, is when the movement reached its political zenith.

Development

Rival organizations in modern Salafi jihadism use the term "Mutazilite" as a derogatory term in an effort to discredit one another. The North African "Institute for the Faith Brigades" criticized Bin Laden for his "misguided errors" and said that Abu Hafs al Mawritani, a prominent member of Al-Qaeda's judicial council, is a Mutazilite. After Uthman, the third caliph, was killed in 656 CE, an issue arose about Al's leadership of the Muslim community. This is where the name [Mu'tazila] first arises in early Islamic history. The Mutazilah were those who took a middle path and would neither reject nor sanction Al or his opponents. In the words of Carlo Alfonso Nallino, this first political Mu'tazilism was just passed on by Wasil and his successors as theological Mu'tazilism. Sunni sources argue that Mu'tazili theology began in the eighth century in Basra (now in Iraq), when Wilibn 'A' (died 131 AH/748 AD) left Hasan al-Basri's teaching sessions due to a theological disagreement over the matter of al-Manzilah bayna al-Manzilatayn (a position between two positions). The fundamentals of Islam were Mu'tazilis' starting point and ultimate guide, even though they later depended on logic and various components of early Islamic philosophy, ancient Greek philosophy, and Indian philosophy. The claims made against them by competing schools of theology that they handed extra-Islamic paradigms full power are more a reflection of the intense rivalries between these schools of theology than they are of any objective fact.

Beliefs
The Five Principles of Mutazilites
The Mutazilite credo is composed of five fundamental principles, which were "clearly enunciated for the first time by Abu al-Hudhayl," according to a "leading Mu'tazilite authority" at the end of the ninth century (al-Khayyat):
1. Monotheism (al- Tawhid);
2. Justice and unity(al-Adl);
3. The certainty of God's threats and promises (al-wād wal wāid");
4. The intermediary position (Manzilan bayān al manzilatayn) i.e., Muslims who die without repentance after committing a serious sin are neither mu'mineen (believers) nor kuffar (non-believers); and
5. The commandment of right and prohibition of wrong (Amr bil Maruf wa al nhy al munkar), as well as the intermediate position.

One of the great Sunni schools of Islamic theology, **Asharianism or Ashar** theology developed in the ninth and tenth centuries by the Arab Muslim scholar, Shfi jurist, reformer (mujaddid), and scholastic theologian Ab al-asan al-Ashar. It established an orthodox rule based on rationality, theological rationalism, and scriptural authority. Al-Ash'ar offered a bridge path between the Athar and Mu'tazila doctrines of Islamic theology, based on both adherence to the

Qur'an and theological rationalism in regards to the existence, qualities, and power of Allah. The most significant school of Islamic theology in Islamic history is considered to have been asharism, whose finally came to dominate theological thought within Sunni Islam. The Asharite school, also known as the Ashar school, became one of the most significant theological schools in Sunni Islam. Its followers are known as Asharites. Along with the Athar and Mturd, Ash'ar theology is accepted as one of Sunni Islam's three orthodox creeds. Amongst the most recognized Ashʿarite theologians are Imam Nawawi, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Ghazali, al-Suyuti, Izz al-Din ibn 'Abd al-Salam, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Ibn 'Asakir, al-Subki, al-Taftazani, al-Baqillani and al-Bayhaqi. Al-Biruni, Ibn al-Haytham, Ibn al-Nafis, Ibn Battuta, and Ibn Khaldun were among the scholars and researchers affiliated with the Ashari school.

Development:

Al-Ashar formed the Asharite school in the 10th century based on the methods taught to him by his teacher, Abdullah ibn Sa'eed ibn Kullaab. Asharism grew to be the dominant school of early Islamic philosophy. The name "Asharite" is, nevertheless, very broadly used now because to the numerous modifications the Asharite school suffered throughout history (for example, differences between Ibn Furak (d. AH 406) and al-Bayhaqi (d. AH 384)). For instance, the Ash'arite viewpoint held that it was impossible for humans to fully comprehend the peculiar attributes and nature of Allah. Al-Ash'ar's solution to the tashbih and ta'til issues acknowledges that the Supreme Being indeed holds the divine qualities and names showed in the Quran. These names and traits are distinct from the essence to the extent that they reflect a positive reality, but they lack any independent existence or reality. Al-Ash'ar's inspiration in this area was to first distinguish between essence and attribute as concepts, and then recognizethat the duality between essence and attribute should be situated not on the quantitative but on the qualitative level — something that Mu'tazilite thinking had not been able to do. The Mutazilites called to Asharite theologians as "those who make firm" or "muthbita."

Beliefs:

Two popular sources for Ash'ari creeds are *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* and *Ibana'an Usul al-Diyana*.

Allah and Allah's Attributes(sifat)

Asharites have their own particular views on the Creator's qualities, such as:

- Existence;
- Eternity without beginning;
- Endurance without end;
- Absoluteness and independence;
- Distinction from created things;
- Unity;
- Allah is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-living, all-seeing, all-hearing, all-speaking (signifying characteristics).

Allah and relationship with humans

The Ashari school of Islamic theology holds that:

- Allah is all powerful (Omnipotent)
- Good is what Allah needs and is by definition right; evil is what Allah forbids and is equally unjust, as revealed in the Quran and the Hadith. According to the divine command view, morality and wrongdoing cannot be chosen intuitively or naturally because they are not immutable truths.
- Due to Divine omnipotence, there are no "natural laws" (of issues like gravity or thermodynamics) because doing so would place restrictions on His power. However, there are Divine "customs" that require that "certain so-called 'effects'" typically occur after unique "causes" in the natural world.
- The Quran is the uncreated word of Allah, meaning that it does not exist separately of Allah but rather as Allah has always existed. It can also be claimed that anything is created when it assumes a shape in words or sounds.
- Human reason and the five senses are unable to fully comprehend Allah's special essence and qualities.
- Reason must be used instead of sources of knowledge because it is a gift from Allah.
- The Quran and the Islamic prophet Muhammad forbid intellectual investigation, hence the interpretation (tafsr) of the Quran and the Hadith should advance with the aid of earlier interpretations.
- Only the Creator has the power to discern who is faithful and who is not.

- Although Allah has "absolute freedom" to "punish or praise as It pleases," He may forgive the sins of those in Hell.
- Kalm (rationalistic Islamic doctrine) is supported.

Criticism

According to one historian, Jonathan A. C. Brown, Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Muslim philosopher, attacked Ashar theology as "a Greek solution to Greek problems" that "never" should have bothered Muslims.Ibn Taymiyyah and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi both attacked Ashari "speculative theology" for lacking literalism and promoted "straightforward acceptance of Allah's description of Himself." Eduard Sachau, a German researcher, disagrees, contending that the highly literal nature of Ashari theology and its chief proponent, al-Ghazali, contributed to the decline of Islamic science beginning in the 10th century. The two clerics, in Sachau's opinion, are the only thing preventing the Muslim world from developing into a nation of "Galileos, Keplers, and Newtons."

Conflicts between Mutazilites and Asharites

The Asharites disagree with the Mu'tazilites' theories of free will. Instead, they contend that while humans do have some degree of free will and absolute freedom of thought, only Allah possesses the capacity to initiate new actions; humans do not. Ideas of justice and freedom, which belong only to Allah, are concepts that humans cannot completely comprehend.

5. Conclusion

Most of the Mu'tazilites' activity occurred between the eighth and tenth centuries AD. Their beliefs have persisted and have especially influenced Shi'a theology. The Mu'tazilites argued that because Allah is absolutely intelligent and good and cannot cause evil, humans must have complete free choice**.** In Islam, Ash'ariyyah is a school of theology that encourages the use of speculative theology (kalm) and reason to defend the religion. The Asharites disagree with the Mu'tazilites' theories of free will. Instead, they contend that while humans do have some degree of free will and absolute freedom of thought, only Allah possesses the capacity to initiate new actions; humans do not. Ideas of justice and freedom, which belong only to Allah, are concepts that humans cannot completely comprehend.

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