CHAPTER IV

CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM IN MUSLIM THOUGHT
(1). Socio-political Conditions in early Islamic Society:

It is a fact that the problem of freedom of the human will has been a crucial and a vexed question from the beginning of man's creation to the present day. It has always agitated human mind in all ages and in all countries but, despite the various solutions advanced from time to time, it has remained a complex question. Like other communities of the world, the problem of freedom has also been raised as a problem with significant socio-political implications in the early Islamic society:

Like other nations of antiquity, the pre-Islāmīte 'Arabs were stern fatalists. The remains of their ancient poetry, sole record of old 'Arab thought and manners, show that before the promulgation of Islām the people of the Peninsula had absolutely abandoned themselves to the idea of an irresistible and blind fatality. Man was but a sport in the hands of Fate. This idea bred a reckless contempt of death, and an utter disregard for human life. 1

With the advent of Islām a new vision of life came into being. The teaching of Islām created a revolution in the 'Arab mind. With the recognition of a supreme Intelligence governing the whole universe, they were taught to believe and practice an attitude of self-dependence, self-awareness and personal responsibility

as well as the consciousness of moral obligation founded on the Islamic teaching of freedom (qadar) or human volition. The Holy Qur'ān is very eloquent on the issue of human freedom and responsibility:

One of the remarkable characteristics of the Qur'ān is the curious, and, at first sight, inconsistent, manner in which it combines the existence of a Divine Will, which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them, with the assertion of a free agency in man and of the liberty of intellect. ¹

Though this peculiar feature of human responsibility is also to be found in some other Holy Books like Biblical records etc.,

But the Mother of Books (Umm al-Kitāb عُمَّم الْكِتَاب), the Holy Qur'ān, has its own uniqueness in this regard. In the Qur'ān the conception of human responsibility is so strongly developed and emphasized that the question naturally occurs to the mind as to how these two ideas—Destiny and responsibility or say Divine Will and human will can be reconciled with each other.

If one simply goes through the verses of Qur'ān one will find both types of verses, one group of verses stressing upon human freedom and the other emphasizing the Omnipotence of God. There seems to be a contradiction between the two types of verses. On the one hand, it is mentioned in the Qur'ān that:

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¹ Ibid., p. 403.
"Lo! Allah is able to do all things."

"And He is able to do all things."

"Unto Allah (belongeth) whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; and whether ye make known what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will bring you to account for it. He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will. Allah is able to do all things."

"Allah is Mighty Wise."

"Neither those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture nor the idolaters love that there should be sent down unto you any good thing from your Lord. But Allah chooseth for His mercy whom He will, and Allah is of infinite bounty."

"Allah createth what He Will. Lo! Allah is able to do all things."

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2. Ibid., XXX:50. 3. Ibid., II:284. 4. Ibid., II:228 & 240
5. Ibid., II:105. 6. Ibid., XXIV:45.
"For thy Lord is ever Powerful."

"Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things."2

"He forgiveth whom He will, and chastiseth whom He will. Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and unto Him is the journeying."

On the other hand, one also clearly finds in the Qur'an that God (Allah) has given man freedom and power. The Holy Book vividly indicates that:

"Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk untill thy (first) change that which is in their hearts..."4

"And that man hath only that for which he maketh effort."5

1. Ibid., XXV:54.  
2. Ibid., III:26.  
3. Ibid., V:18.  
4. Ibid., XIII:11.  
5. Ibid., LIII:39.
"Whoso committeth sin committeth it only against himself."

"And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest, and whom the life of the world beguileth. Remind (mankind) hereby lest a soul be destroyed by what it earneth."

"And when they do some lewdness they say: We found our fathers doing it and Allah hath enjoined it on us, say: Allah, variely, enjoineth not lewdness. Tell ye concerning Allah that which ye know not."

"So whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever erreth, erreth only against it. And I am not warden over you."

"So Allah surely wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves."

1. Ibid., IV:111.  
2. Ibid., VI:70.  
4. Ibid., X:108.  
5. Ibid., IX:70.
There doth every soul experience that which it did aforetime, and they are returned unto Allah, their rightful Lord, and they which they used to invent hath failed them."

There are innumerable verses on human freedom in the Qur'an. We have quoted above a few of those to pin-point the issue.

It seems inconsistent at first sight that man should be judged by his works, a doctrine which forms the foundation of Islamic morality, though all his actions are ruled by an All-powerful Will.

Prophet Muhammad(S) set up an example by his conduct that may be of great value in resolving this riddle. The Imams of the Prophet's Family (the Ahl al-Bayt(A)) suggested a via media between fatalism and absolute freedom of man:

The earnest faith of Muhammad in an active ever-living Principle, joined to his trust in the progress of man, supplies a key to this mystery."

He (the Prophet (A)) struck a balance between the two extreme positions. In the light of vast Hadīth literature one is easily led to the conclusion that the question of human freedom is not a simple one. The Prophet(A) is reported to have forbidden the Muslims to indulge in this controversy. However, the problem, when raised by some groups of the Muslims during the

1. Ibid., X:30.
Caliphate of Imām 'Alī(A), elaborate lectures on this issue were
delivered by him, as we may find in Nahj al-Balāghah. A few
examples of 'Alī's treatment of the issue of freedom may be
quoted here:

'...They had been allowed time to seek deliverance,
had been shown the right path and had been allowed
to live and seek favours, the darkness of doubts
had been removed, and they had been let free in
this period of life...'

'...O' people who possess eyes and ears and health
and wealth... The present is an opportune moment
for acting. O' creatures of Allah since the neck
is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered...
You have opportunity of acting by will...'

The notion of freedom of human will is repeatedly emphasized and
radically elaborated in many Sermons (Khutbāt), Letters and Sayings
of Imām 'Alī. According to him God has bestowed upon man wisdom,
knowledge and power to act freely. He will be rewarded for his
good deeds and punished for evil ones. Whatever he does, he is
responsible, for God has given him freedom. To substantiate the
above mentioned points, some more relevant passages from Nahj al-
Balāghah may be given here:

'...You will be dealt with as you deal with others,
you will reap what you sow, and what you send today
will meet you tomorrow...'

1. Nahjul al-Balāghah of Hazrat 'Alī, (English Translation) Qum:
   Iran, Ansāriyān Publication, 1401 A.H. (1981 A.D.) p.155,
   (Sermon: 81).
2. Ibid., p. 159, (Sermon:81)
3. Ibid., p. 254, (Sermon:151).
...Allah has clarified to you the way of truthfulness and lighted its paths. So (you may choose) either ever-present misfortune or eternal happiness... Know, 0' creatures of Allah, that your ownself is a guard over you..."

"Allah has sent down a guiding Book wherein He has explained virtue and vice..."

"No doubt Allah sent down the Prophet as a guide with eloquent Book and standing command. No one would be ruined by it except one who ruins himself..."

Furthermore, in a Saying of Imām ‘Ali(A), one finds the theme of freedom vividly, when a man enquired from Amīr al-Mu'mīnin: "Was our going to fight against the Syrians destined by Allah?" Imām ‘Ali(A) gave a detailed reply. A selection from which is given as under:

"Woe to you, You take it as a final and unavoidable destiny (according to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there would have been no question of reward or punishment and there would have been no sense of Allah's promises or warnings. (On the one hand) Allah, the glorified, has ordered His people to act by free will and has cautioned them and refrained them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little (action). He is disobeyed, not because He is over-powered. He is obeyed but not under force. He did not send Prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them for nothing. And He created not the heavens and the earth in vain. "That is the imagination of those who disbelieve; them woe to those who disbelieve—because of fire." Qur'ān, 38:27."
In the light of this quotation, it may be held that two different types of the Qur'anic verses are not, in reality, contradictory to each other. When one goes through the definition and explanation of the Qur'anic verses emphasizing the Absolute Power of Allah, one will see that "the decree of God" clearly means 'the Law of nature.' The stars and the planets have each their appointed course; so has every other object in creation. The movement of heavenly bodies, the phenomena of nature, life and death are all governed by a 'law'. The second type of the Qur'anic verses unquestionably indicate the idea of Divine agency endowing man with freedom to act. But these verses are again explained by other verses, in which it is stressed that 'human will' is conditioned by God Almighty. This is also very important to note that it is to the seeker for Divine help that God renders His help. It is on the searcher of his own heart, who purifies his soul from impure longings, that God bestows grace (lutf; لطف). God has given consciousness and will to human person so that he may be able to differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil etc., and act accordingly. In this way, God has set down certain rules for the welfare of human beings for He is the merciful Creator of all the creatures. He is Omniscient and Omnipotent. Ameer 'Ali describes:

...There is nothing more assuring, nothing that more satisfies the intense longing for a better and purer world, than the consciousness of a Power above humanity to redress wrongs, to fulfil hopes, to help the forlorn.
Our belief in God springs from the very essence of Divine ordinances. They are as much laws, in the strict sense of the word, as the law which regulate the movements of the celestial bodies. But the will of God is not an arbitrary will: It is an educating will, to be obeyed by the scholar in his walks of learning as by the devotee in his cell.

The above quoted passage from Ameer 'Ali's 'The Spirit of Islam' brings into limelight the spirit of İslām regarding the freedom of the human will as against the stern fatalism of pre-Islamic 'Arabs. He says further:

The teachings of İslām created a revolution in the 'Arab mind; with the recognition of a supreme Intelligence governing the universe, they received the conception of self-dependence and of moral responsibility founded on the liberty of human volition. One of the remarkable characteristics of the Koran is curious, and, at first sight, inconsistent, manner in which it combines the existence of a Divine Will, which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them, with the assertion of a free agency in man and of the liberty of intellect. 2

With the advent of İslām as a perfect and dynamic system for human life, the whole phenomenon of the 'Arab mind underwent a radical change. Ameer 'Ali says:

Arabian philosophy, nurtured afterwards in other cradles, drew its first breath in the school of Medina. The freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be

2. Ibid., p. 403.
judged by the use he had made of his reason, was inculcated in the teachings of the Master, along with an earnest belief in a Supreme Power ruling the universe. The idea assumed a more definite shape in the words of the Disciple, and grew into a philosophy. From Medina it was carried to Damascus, Kūfa, Basrā, and Bagdād, where it gave birth to the eclectic schools, which shed such lustre on the reigns of the early Abbasides. ¹

Iqbal, like Ameer 'Ali, has cogently pointed out that the most degrading type of fatalism has prevailed in the world of Islām for many centuries:

This is true, and has a history behind it which requires separate treatment. It is sufficient here to indicate that the kind of fatalism which the European critics of Islam sum up in the word 'qismat' was due partly to philosophical thought, partly to political expediency, and partly to the gradually diminishing force of the life-impulse, which Islām originally imparted to its followers. ²

However, Ameer 'Ali and Iqbal are not fully justified in saying that the world of Islām had been under the influence of fatalism. In the early history of Islām we find true believers agitating and revolting against the tyrannical rule of Umayyads, who took recourse to the Qur'anic verses emphasizing the Absolute Will of Allah in order to justify their evil deeds. They not only did misinterpret the Qur'ān, but also shifted all responsibility of their crimes to God. This view was vehemently

¹. Ibid., pp. 410-411.
opposed by the Imám 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn(A), Sayyid-e Sajjād, in his rejoinder to Ibn-e Ziyād, the governor of Kūfā responsible for Martyrdom Al-Ḥusayn(A) and his companions, and Yazīd, the Umayyād King and the successor of Muʿāwiyah, in their courts.

Ghīlān al-Dimashqī, a slave of the Third Caliph, ʿUthman, asked Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the well-known mystic of the first era of Islām, as to whether the Umayyāh rulers' defence of their ghastly crimes against the pious Muslims like Imám al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali(A) was justified. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī answered that the Banū Umayyāh were the enemies of Allah. After this Ghīlān arose in revolt and was martyred. A similar case is recorded about another true believer, Maʿbad al-Juhānī, who was also killed by the tyrant Banū Umayyāh.¹

These political activities may be considered as the fore-runners of the Qadarite school that culminated in the Muʿtazilah.²

This issue at the level of philosophical thought was an outcome of the socio-political situation in the early Islamic society. During that time vested interest in the Muslim world pretended to believe that God was the real author of all that happened in the universe, because of the fact that he was Omnipotent and Omniscient. It was due to this misunderstanding of the rulers of the early Islamic times, that is the Umayyads, that they did many sinful things and attributed their acts to the


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Rida' (Will) or decree of God. Highlighting this point Iqbal has said:

...The practical materialism of the opportunist Omayyad rulers of Damascus need a peg on which to hang their misdeeds at Kerbala, and to secure the fruits of Amir Muawiyah's revolt against the possibilities of a popular rebellion. Mabad is reported to have said to Hasan of Basra that the Omayyads killed Muslims, and attributed their acts to the decrees of God. 'These enemies of God' replied Hasan, 'are liars'.

Muslim thinkers had been pondering over the problem of freedom of human will and other related issues during the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam. Among the other issues, the issue debated more seriously after the death of the Prophet(S), was that of the freedom of human choice. In Muslim World it may be said with authentic reasons that the problem of freedom was emerged as a socio-political conditions of the time:

After the Prophet(A) the Muslims differed among themselves on some other issues too. Some of such issues assumed immense importance during the tyrannical rule of the Umayyad rulers. Of such issues the most crucial was related to the problem of freedom of human will and action, on which opinion was sharply divided, giving emergence to the groups of the Qadrites and Jabrites. As early as the year 80 A.H. al-Hasan al-Basri is reported to have refuted the position of the Jabrites by dubbing them as the enemies of Islam. The doctrine of predestination was

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(ii). Iqbal, Sir Muhammad, Reconstruction, op. cit., p. 111.

(ii). Shibli Nu'mani, op. cit., p. 29.
1. Iqbal, Reconstruction, op. cit., p. 111.
propagated by the rulers and their agents in order to justify their injustices; they shifted the responsibility of their own acts to Divine Will, saying that man was helpless and whatever happened was willed by God. Thus this controversy, perhaps the first of its nature in the Islamic world, had its roots in the socio-political conditions of the time.

Thus, it was at this time that the problem of 'Jabr' (جَبْرُ) and 'Qadar' (قَدْرُ) or 'Ikhtiyar' (اختياء) pertaining to human freedom was openly discussed and came into prominence as a controversial issue in the history of philosophical thought of Islam. As explained earlier, Banū Umayyah themselves were doing wrong and to support their vested interests used to preach fatalism, and attribute their evil acts to the decree of Allah. In the words of Iqbal:

Thus arose, in spite of open protest by Muslim divines, a morally degrading fatalism, and the constitutional theory known as the 'accomplished fact' in order to support vested interest. 2

The Muslims having fatalistic ideology or otherwise have always sought the justification from the Qur'ān, and even though at the expense of its plain meaning, the fatalistic interpretation has had very far-reaching effects on Muslim masses. The whole history of Islam is replete with several instances of obvious misinterpretation of the Qur'ānic verses regarding freedom and determinism. It was and is, still due to this radical fact of


2. Iqbal, Reconstruction, op. cit., p. 111.
misunderstanding of the doctrine of 'Jabr' (حَبَر) and 'Qadar' (قَدَر) that Muslims at the time failed to understand the spirit of Islam. The doctrine of Jabr (حَبَر) (predestinarianism), which had been and is a crucial issue in the Muslim political as a moral thought, was resolved by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A), the Sixth Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt (أَهَلُ الْبَيْتِ) (The Prophet's Family), who has very lucidly expressed his view on the issue in the following words:

"Those who uphold Jabr make out God to be a participator in every sin they commit, and a tyrant for punishing those sins which they are impelled to commit by the compulsion of their being: this is infidelity."¹

In the same context, giving the analogy of a servant sent by his master to the market to purchase something, which he, the master, knows well that he cannot bring, not possessing the wherewithal to buy it, and nevertheless, the master punishing him, the Imam very emphatically declared that "the doctrine of Jabr converts God into an unjust Master."²

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A) has been quoted in Usul al-Kafi by Muhammad Ya'qub al-Kulayni as saying:

لاَحَبَرُ وَلاَ قَدَرٌ رِبْلُ آمَرُ بِهِنَّ إِلاَّ
لاَحَبَرُ وَلاَ قَدَّرٌ فَهُوَ نَهِيُ بِهِنَّ إِلاَّ

2. Ibid., p. 411.
'There is neither determinism nor freedom
(or delegated freedom) but the matter is
between the two.'

Or a similar saying is ascribed to the eighth Imām of the Ahl al-
Bāyt, (‘Ālī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā). ¹

Moreover, with regard to the doctrine of Qadar (تَفْویض;
delegation of authority)—meaning not the freedom of
the human will, but unqualified discretion in the choice of
wrong and right, the Imām Jāfār al-Ṣādiq(A) declared further that
to affirm such a principle would destroy all the foundation of
morality, and give all human beings absolute licence in the
indulgence of their animalistic desires; for each individual is
vested with a discretion to choose what is right or wrong; otherwise no
sanction and no law can have any force.²

From the above discussion it is clear that Ikhtijyar (اختیار)
is radically different from the doctrine of Tafwīd (تَفْویض).
Ameer Ali, with reference to the eighth Imām ‘Ali ibn Mūsā al-
Riḍā', writes:

"God has endowed each human being with the
capacity to understand His commands and to
obey them. They who exert themselves to
live purely and truly, them He helps: they
are those who please Him; whilst they who
disobey Him are sinners." These views are
repeated with greater emphasis by the eighth
Imām, ‘Alī ar-Riḍā', who denounced Jabr (pre-
destinarianism) and Tashbih (anthropomorphism)
as absolute infidelity, and declared the
upholders of those doctrines to be "the enemies

¹. Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishaq al-Kulānī (d.328 or
329 H.), Ḫusūl al-Kāfī, (Persian Trans. (Tehran (Iran);
Intishārāt-e Islāmīyyah) Vol. I, pp. 222 and 224 (In Kitāb al-
Tawḥīd: Chapter "Al-Jabr wa al-Qadar wa al-amr bayn al-amrayi:n;
of the Faith." He openly charged the advocates of Jabr and Tashbih with the fabrication of traditions. At the same time he warned his followers against the doctrine of discretion or Tafwiz. He laid down in broad terms, "God has pointed out to you the two paths, one of which leads you to Him, the other takes you far away from His perfection; you are at liberty to take the one or the other; pain or joy, reward or punishment, depend upon your own conduct. But man has not the capacity of turning evil into good, or sin into virtue."^1

The Banū Umayyah, many of them after embracing Islam, were like their forefathers, fatalists. They were doing wrongs, killing innocents and attributing all this to God. Under them arose a school which purported to derive its doctrines from the "ancients", (the salaf سلف), a body of Pre-Islamic Arabs. They bribed some persons to narrate Traditions in favour of them and their views to fabricate traditions and pass it as handed down by one or other of the Companions of the Prophet(S). Hence a school was founded on this line called the Jabrites. Jahm bin Saifwān was the founder of this school, which was called Jabira.2 'Jabrites' were the staunch opponents of 'free-will' of man. They maintained that:

"Man is not responsible for any of his actions which proceed entirely from God; that he has no determining power to do any act, nor does he possess the capacity of free volition; that he is the subject of absolute Divine sovereignty in his actions, without ability on his part, or will or power of choice; and that God absolutely creates actions within him just as He produces

2. Ibid., p. 412.
activity in all inanimate things; ... and that reward and punishment are subject to absolute Divine sovereignty in human actions." The Jabriyas maintained certain views regarding Divine attributes which have no particular significance."

In fact, what happened was that all "the Jabriya doctrines found favour with the Ommeyyade rulers, and consequently soon spread among the people."^2

A group of people in Damascus rose to oppose fatalism and they started to advocate the doctrine of human free-will. They were against the Jabrite tradition of the denial of free-will of man, and thus were called themselves "Qadariyyah". The uncompromising fatalism of the Jabrites occasioned among the intellectuals a revolt which was headed by Mābad al-Juḥānī, Yūnus al-Aswārī, and Gha’ilān Dīmashqī (i.e. of Damascus), who had evidently derived many of their ideas from the 'Alawīdīs'. They boldly asserted in the capital of the Ummayyads, in the very stronghold of predestinarianism, the free agency of man.3 Qadariyyah as mentioned earlier is a name commonly used by Muslim thinkers for representing a group of theologians who reiterated "in one form or another the principle of Liberum arbitrium (free will) in the early period of Islām, from about 70/690 to the definitive consolidation of the Muṭazilīyah at the beginning of the 3rd/9th century."^4 A few of the authentic sources of the Qadariyyah

1. Ibid., p. 412.
2. Ibid., p. 413.
3. Ibid., p. 413.
are as follows:

Forty names from Basrah, about 15 from Syria, 6 from Mecca, 5 to 7 from MedInah, about 5 from Kufah, 3 from Yemen and not a single one from Egypt and the whole of East. There may be some in other countries. However, these figures express only a part of the reality so far as the stand of Muslims in general is concerned. It is generally accepted that the biographical lists of the Qadariyyah were apparently compiled in Basra, where the pupils of Hasan al-Basri, and his pupils began to quarrel over the correct interpretation of his doctrine. In Syria the Qadarites stood against the tyranny of the Ummayyad rulers and started a revolutionary movement:

Elsewhere fuller information existed for Syria, where in the last twenty years of Omayyad rule, Qadarite played a part in history through their revolutionary activity.

It is further stated that the advocates of human free-will vehemently came forward as the vanguard of socio-political movement in Syria during the Ummayyad period. According to the nature of information, the Qadariyyah is seen in Syria primarily as a political movement; in Basra on the other hand it is viewed as a school of theology. The political argument developed from the principle that a ruler was answerable for his actions.

2. Ibid., p. 369.
3. Ibid., p. 369.
4. Ibid., p. 369.
and in case of unrighteousness should therefore be deposed or should abdicate. The theological stance arose from the idea that one must not "ascribe evil to God", because He is good and does not like evil. Man is bestowed with wisdom and free-will to act freely and choose good and avoid evil. God creates only good; evil stems from man or from Satan (Devil). Man chooses freely from the two. Thus, the Qadarites were strongly opposed to the Jabrite doctrine of predestinationism and vehemently advocated the free agency of man. But in the assertion of human liberty they sometimes verged on the doctrine of Tafwīd (توفیض) meaning not the freedom of human will, but unqualified discretion in the choice of wrong and right. Qadar or Ikhtiyar (اختیار) are, therefore, different from Tafwīd, because God had endowed each human being with the capacity to understand His commands and to obey them. They who exert themselves to live purely and truly, are helped by God. "They are those who please Him; whilst they who disobey Him are sinners."  

However, the advocates of freedom of human will, the Qadariyyah spread throughout the Muslim world. From Damascus the dispute was carried to Basrah and there the differences of the two parties assumed the form of two sections. The fatalists or Jabrites merged into a new sect, called the ۶۷۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴۲۲۰۴.).

1. Ibid., p. 369.
Essence, which the Jabrites radically denied.¹

The Attributists or Sifātiayyahuṣ claimed to be the direct representatives of the Salaf (ancients). According to 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī these followers of the Salaf maintained that certain eternal Attributes pertain to God, namely, knowledge power, life, will, hearing, sight, speech, majesty, magnanimity, bounty, beneficence, glory and greatness,—making no distinction between Attributes of Essence and Attributes of action. They also asserted certain descriptive Attributes (صَِفَاتُ خَبْرَيْهِ), for example, hands and face, taking the Qur'ānic words literally and accordingly, they gave them the name of descriptive Attributes.² Like the Jabrites the Attributists adhered to the doctrine of predestination in all its gloominess and intensity. Consequently a new group of the Sifātiayyahuṣ sprang out under the name of Mushabbihah. According to Shahristānī this new group linked the Divine Attributes to the Attributes of created things and they turned God into a similitude of their own selves.³ Thus, everywhere at that time, in the early Islamic society the problem of freedom and determinism (Jabr and Qadar) was being discussed and scholars started to interpret the Qur'ānic verses and Ahadīth (اَخْمَادِيَّة) (Traditions) in support of their arguments for or against the freedom of human-will. At that time one of the most

3. Ibid., p. 414.
renowned scholars and teachers, Hasan al-Basri, belonging to the anti-predestinarian party, who had imbibed the liberal and rationalistic ideas of the Imams(A) of the family of Muhammad(S), on setting at Basrah from MedInah had started a lecture class which was soon thronged by the students of Iraq. Here he discussed on the metaphysical questions prevalent in those days in the spirit of his masters. One of his most prominent pupil, Wasil ibn 'Ata', differed from him and founded a liberal and rational school named "Mutazilah" following the footsteps of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. Thus, in Muslim philosophical thought the problem of the freedom of the human will emerged as a problem with significant socio-political implications. On the one hand, the Ummayyads' tyrannical attitude was interpreting the Qur'anic verses in favour of predestination; and liberal and rational minds following the Imamiyyah philosophers were asserting man's responsibility and free will, on the other.
(ii). **Emergence of 'Ilm al-Kalām (Dialectical Theology):**

Islam is a religion of peace and goodwill. It has progressive and systematic ideals for humanity. Islam has in its essence the rationalistic and the philosophical spirit. It continued to adapt itself to the changing environment by assimilating the growth of learning and incorporating that form of reasoning which was suited to the times and circumstances. It was but natural that Muslim thought underwent various stages of development. In its primary stage it was synonymous with simple and pure reasoning, intelligible even to the people of common understanding. Slowly and gradually, with the passage of time it evolved rationalistic, scholastic, mystical and other forms in response to the need of the day.

To meet the challenge of Greek and other Western philosophies, Muslim scholars, during the course of evolution of Islamic ideals, brought into being a science of reasoning under the name of 'Kalām'.

'Ilm al-Kalām is translated as 'dialectical philosophy', because both the words kalām and dialectics mean dialogue. This branch of Islamic philosophy can be defined as 'the discursive approach to Islamic beliefs'. That is why Muslim scholars usually combine kalām with 'aqa'id, and this branch is called al-kalām wa al-'aqa'id. Usually attempts are made to trace back the origin of 'Ilm al-kalām in non-Islamic philosophies. But it actually originated in the intellectual climate created by Islam, which encouraged free enquiry and rational approach to the tenets of faith.

Hikmat and Kalām are the two aspects of reasoning or exoteric epistemology. *Hikmat*, which may be defined as "free thinking" is philosophy proper in the Western sense of the term. It aims at attaining truths regarding the fundamental problems of the universe, soul and God by rational argument acceptable to the general humanity, irrespective of their conformity or non-conformity to the religious dogmas of Islam. But, according to Muzaffar-ud-Din Nadvi, Ḥukamā' (Islamic philosophers) maintain that "the truths and findings of reason invariably conform to the religious injunctions".¹

Soon after the death of the Prophet(S) of Islam the Muslims were divided into two major groups: the supporters of Abū Bakr and the supporters of 'Ali. After the assassination of 'Uthmān, the third Caliph, the division assumed special significance. Muslims were divided into two distinct groups: the Shi'ah of 'Uthmān and the Shi'ah of 'Ali. But it would be incorrect to believe that those who were called Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'āt or the Sunnis were as a single body in the camp of the Shi'ah of 'Uthmān. The fact is that the majority of Muslims accepted 'Ali as the fourth rightly guided Caliph (Khalīfah al-Rāshid). It was only a minority that joined hands with Mu'āwiyah, the governor of Syriā, whom 'Ali had dismissed from his office and, therefore, he started a campaign against the universally accepted Caliph, 'Ali, in the Muslim world raising the slogan: "We want

¹ Nadvi, M.D., Muslim Thought and Its Source, (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabīyat-i Delhi, 1983 (Reprint), p. 105.
the assassins of 'Utbmān." Mu'āwiya and his supporters knew well
that 'Ali had no hand in this assassination, and that he had tried
his best to save the life of the third Caliph. However, political
exigency forced some vested interests to uphold the demand of
Mu'āwiya. Unfortunately Umm al-Mu'minIn, ‘A’ishah, the youngest
wife of the Prophet(S), and two of very close companions of the
Prophet(S) revolted against 'Ali. They were defeated at the Battle
of Jamāl. 'Ali almost defeated Mu'āwiya at Sīfīn, when the Qur'an
was raised by the defeated army as the arbiter (Hakam). This
issue gave rise to a number of puzzling questions, and consequently
a new sect, known as the Khawārij, emerged among Muslims. The early
Mu'tazilites are supposed by some historians to be on the side of
the Khawārij, but actually Wāsil ibn 'Atā' was totally opposed
to the Banu Umayyah, the successors of Mu'āwiya. The Khwārij
regarded both 'Ali and Mu'āwiya as infidels, while Wāsil ibn
'Atā' took a stand that was expressed in his doctrine of "inter-
mediate position" ('Amr bayn al-š-ramayn: آمَرُ بَيْنَ الْأَرْمَيْنِ). Nevertheless,
his sympathies were with 'Ali and his family.1

In fact the birth of the Mu'tazilites, as commonly believed,
owes its origin to a theological controversy between Wāsil ibn-
'Atā' and his teacher, Hasan al-BaṣrI on the issue of the status

1.(a) 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrūstānī, al-Mīlal wa al-Nihāl; Eng. tr.
Muslim Sects and Divisions: The Section on Muslim Sects by
A.K. Kāzī & J.G. Flynn, (London etc., Kegan Paul International,

(b) Nawābakhī, al-Fīraq al-Shī'ah; Persian trans. Muḥammad Jawād
Mashkūr, (Tehran, Markaz-e-Intishārāt-e ʿilmī wa ʿfarhangī, 1361
Shamsī), pp. 22-23.

(c) Abu al-Ḥasan al-ʿAsh'arī, Maqālāt al-ʾIslāmīyyīn fī Ikhtilāf al-
Musallīyīn, Per. tr. Muḥsin Mu'ayyadī, (Tehran, Intishārāt-e

(d) Hanna al-Fākhūrī and Khalīl al-Jārī, op. cit., pp. 114-126
of a fāsiq (sinner). We shall discuss those issues in the following pages. The real problem was political and it perturbed the minds of the right thinking and pious Muslims after the martyrdom of 'Ali and the surrender of the Caliphate by his son, Imām al-Hasan, in favour of Mu'āwiyah on certain conditions that were never fulfilled by the latter, for the Umayyads rule had been violating all the fundamentals of Islām and trampling the principles of social and political justice according to Islām.

As mentioned earlier, it is said that Ghīlān al-Dimashqī, a slave of the third Caliph, 'Uthmān, asked Hasan al-Baṣrī as to whether the Umayyads were justified in claiming that man was totally helpless and all the power to act belongs to Allah only. Hasan al-Baṣrī replied: "The Banū-Umayyah are the enemies of Allah and are liars." He rose in revolt and was killed. Similar is the case of another person named Ma‘abād al-Juhānī.¹ In the view of Montgomery Watt there were also some other persons who raised this question: "A similar story is told of al-Hasan's pupil Qatāda and another man 'Amr Ibn-‘Ubāyida. ..."²

This issue had its origin in the attempted defence of Yazīd and his officials, who, after the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā claimed that al-Ḥusayn and his companions were killed by God,

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for it is He who is all-powerful and man is only an instrument in the hands of Divine predestination (Jabr or Taqdir). Al-Ḥusayn's eldest son 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, popularly known as Imām Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, quoted from the Qur'ān the verses that said that man was responsible for his acts, because he was given by God the freedom of choice and action. This debate gave rise to the two different views among the Muslims. The supporters of the Banū Umayyah took recourse to the Qur'anic verses stressing the all-powerfulness of God. They were called the Jabrīyyah (جَبَرِيَّةٌ) (the advocates of predestination). The other group that based Islamic ethics on the freedom of human will was called the Qadariyyah. The Muʿtazilah were the successors of the Qadariyyah.

Ḥannā al-Fākhūrī and Khalīl al-Jarr, in Taʾrīkh Falsīfah dar Jahān-e Islāmī, say that it is wrong to suppose that Waṣil and 'Amr were the Khawārij, but they were in close contact with the 'Alīvīds, particularly the Zaydiyyah, the followers of Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn that revolted against the Banū Umayyah and was martyred. Later the Muʿtazilah were divided into two groups subsequent to the coming to power of the 'Abbāsides. 'Amr ibn-ʿUbayd, a Muʿtazili, joined hands with the 'Abbāsides in supporting their claim to be the Caliphate. He founded the Muʿtazili school of Baṣrāh that severed its relation with the Shiʿah. The other group of the Muʿtazilah at Baghdad remained loyal to the Shiʿah, particularly the Zaydiyyah. They differed among themselves on the issue of the Imām. The former supported the claim of the 'Abbāsides, while the latter were
the champions of the Imāma of ‘Ali’s family.¹

As is indicated by above mentioned facts the emergence of *‘Ilm al-Kalām* was instrumental in enlightening Muslims inclined to philosophization to ponder over the problems related to their religio-ethical and socio-political Islamic Weltanschauung.

*‘Ilm al-Kalām* (dialectical theology), as mentioned earlier, aims at arriving at truth logically within the framework of the teaching of Islām. Ḥukamā’ and Mutakallimūn both believe in conformity of reason to revelation, with this difference only that the former do not take into account the question of conformity at the time of attaining truths, while the latter start with it. Kalām is divided into various sects, of which three main groups are: (a) the Mu‘tazilah, (b) the Ashā‘irah, and (c) the Shi‘ah. The first two groups are known as Rationalistic and Scholastic schools of Muslim thought. The third one occupies a unique place because of its balanced approach in which reason and Divine guidance are reconciled. Anyhow, the Shi‘ah stress on the role of reason more than the Sunnīs, the majority sect of Muslims.

(iii). **Mu‘tazilites’ Position with Regard to Freedom:**

As indicated earlier, Mu‘tazilah were the successors of the Qadariyyah. The Qadariyyah were the advocates of the freedom of the human will. The Qadarite-Mu‘tazilite thinkers maintained that reason should be the touch-stone for knowing reality and man is responsible for what he does because he decides upon and creates his acts with his free choice. As W. Montgomery Watt puts it:

> The Mutazilites stood for freedom of the will and human responsibility; in other respects they adopted sensible, almost nineteenth-century-liberal attitude. ¹

Abu Hudhayfah Wāsīl ibn ‘Aṭā‘ al-Ghazzāl one of the most prominent pupils of Ḥasan al-BAṣrī, is considered the founder of Mu‘tazilah school of Muslim philosophy. Wāsīl was a man of deep thinking and analytical mind, thoroughly versed in the religious sciences and traditions and had also studied in Medīnah. He differed from his teacher Imām Ḥasan al-BAṣrī on a question of religious dogma—whether a believer who is the perpetrator of a grave sin would be considered to be an unbeliever and outside the Islām (as the ahl al-wa‘īd sect maintains) or would be be called a Muslim (believer)(as the group Murji‘ites holds).² Wāsīl placed a sinner in an intermediate state (manzilah bāyn al-manzilātāyn) and withdrew

himself from the lecture-room of Ḥasan al-Ṭabrī. He thereupon founded this school (Muʿtazilah) of his own and made his radical efforts to spread it. His followers have, from this fact, been called Muʿtazilah, or Ahl al-Iʿ tīzāl, i.e., the Dissenters.¹

Montgomery Watt, in his Islamic Philosophy and Theology: ("Islamic Surveys-I"), narrates the same story in a somewhat different way. He is of the view that it was not only Wāṣil ibn-ʿAtā who may be considered as the founder of the Muʿtazilism, but it was ʿAmr ibn-ʿUbāy who is often referred to as the founder of the Muʿtazila school:

Once when al-Ḥasan was asked his view on the dispute between the Murjiʿites, who said the grave sinner was a believer, and most of the Khārijites, who said the grave sinner was an unbeliever, a man interrupted before al-Ḥasan could reply and asserted that the grave sinner was in a "intermediate position." This man, WĀṢIL IBN-ʿAṬĀ', then withdrew from the circle, and al-Ḥasan remarked, "He has withdrawn (iʿ tazāla) from us"; from this remark he and his party were called the Muʿtazila (the corresponding participial form). Unfortunately this is not the only account of the origin of the Muʿtazila. A similar story is told of al-Ḥasan's pupil Qatāda and another man ʿAMR IBN-ʿUBAY; and this latter man is often referred to as the founder of the Muʿtazila. ²

Generally, Wāṣil's school of Muʿtazilism is also named as the school of Divine Unity and Divine Justice. (al-Tawḥīd and al-ʿAdl). The Muʿtazilah hold five basic principles upon which

2. Watt, W.M., Islamic Philosophy and Theology, op. cit., p. 60.
they built their theological system, but two of them are so significant that they are known as ahl al-Tawhid wa al-Adl (the people of Divine Unity and Justice). ¹

By Divine Unity, Mu'tazilites mean that God is one, pure and simple. No shadow of dualism can be attached to Him. He has no Attributes apart from His Essence.

By Unity they imply the denial of the divine Attributes. Undoubtedly they admit that God is knowing, powerful, and seeing, but their intellect does not allow them to admit that these divine attributes are separate and different from the divine essence. ²

The reason for this view of theirs is that if the Attributes of God are not considered to be identical with the Essence of God, "Plurality of eternals" would necessarily result and the belief in unity would have to be given up. This is, according to their opinion, clear unbelief (Kufr). Again they maintain that the Holy Qur'an is the "work" of God, and so His creation, and not the "word" of God. ³

By Divine Justice, they meant that God is ever just and can never be cruel. "By Justice they imply that it is incumbent on God to requite the obedient for their good deeds and punish the sinners for their misdeeds." ⁴ Here Mu'tazilites vehemently

1. The five basic principles of the Mu'tazilah school are as follows: (a) Tawhid: (Unity of God); (b) Adl: (Justice); (c) Wa'd wa wa'Id: (Promise and Threat); (d) Manzilat bayn al-Manzilatyn: (the Intermediate Position); and (e) Amr bi al-Matruf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar: (the Principle enjoying good and Prohibiting evil).

Contd...
advocated freedom of the human will:

...(Mutazilah) maintained that God has endowed man with some freedom of volition and liberty of actions. Man can make or mar his fortune according as he exercises that power in a right or wrong direction. ¹

Man, according to them, is responsible for all his actions, and gets reward for his virtuous acts and punishment for his malicious deeds.

The Divine Unity and Divine Justice are the basic principles of the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites and this is the reason why they call themselves "the people of Unity and Justice" (Ahl al-Tauhid wa al-'Adl).

Now keeping in view the basic beliefs of Divine Unity and Justice, we may discuss other important beliefs that necessarily follow from the first two in order to understand Mu'tazilites' position with regard to freedom.

(1) The first question, then, is concerned with man's conduct and destiny. Mu'tazilites hold that God Almighty's justice necessitates that man should be the author of his own acts. In such a condition alone can he be said to be free and

(References from previous page)*
1. Nadvi, M.D., op. cit., p. 25.
responsible for his deeds. The same view was held by the Qadarites. T.J. De Boer, in this connection, writes:

The forerunners of the Mu'tazilites, who were called Qadarites, taught the freedom of the human will; and the Mu'tazilites, even in later times, when their speculations were directed more to theologico-metaphysical problems, were first and foremost pointed to as the supporters of the doctrine of Divine Righteousness...¹

Thus, Mu'tazilites accepted totally the theory of indeterminism and became true successors of the Qadarites. According to them if man were not the author of his own acts and if these acts were the creation of Almighty God, how can he be held responsible for his deeds and deserve punishment for his sins? In such a condition would it not be injustice on the part of God that, after creating a human person helpless, He should call him to account for his sins and send him to hell? It seemed illogical to Mu'tazilites. Despite the differences among different Mu'tazilah all of them agree in the matter of man's being the creator of his volitional acts. He is, they maintain, free at his will to do whatever he likes. Whatever he does, they assert, he is responsible for that and not God. God will reward or punish him on the basis of his good or bad deeds. "Since man is the author of his own acts, it is necessary for God to reward him for his good deeds"² and punish him for his evil

acts. As Al-Shahrastānī puts it:

"The Mu'tazilites unanimously maintain, that man decides upon and creates his acts, both good and evil; that he deserves reward or punishment in the next world for what he does. In this way, the Lord is safeguarded from association with any evil or wrong or any act of unbelief or transgression. For if He created the wrong, He would be wrong, and if he created justice, He would be just." 1

(2). Furthermore, Mu'tazilites assert that the justice of Almighty God makes it incumbent upon Him not to do anything contrary to justice and equity. Since God is just and loves His creatures, He always does good and wishes best for His crown of all the creatures—human person. Mir Valiuddin maintains:

It is the unanimous verdict of the Mu'tazilites that the wise can only do what is salutary (al-salāh) and good, and that God's wisdom always keeps in view what is salutary for His servants; therefore, He cannot be cruel to them. He cannot bring into effect evil deeds. He cannot renounce that which is salutary. 2

In this way, Mu'tazilites point out that God cannot ask His human creatures to do that which is impossible. Consequently reason also suggests that God does not place a burden on any creature greater than it can bear because He is a just, merciful and a Supreme Good.

The Mu'tazilites also maintain that reason is the true criterion of good and evil. "Things are not good or evil, because God declares them to be so. No, God makes the distinction between good and evil." In reality, they say, goodness and evil are inherent in the essence of the things themselves. This very goodness or evil of things is the cause of the commands and prohibitions of the Law. The human intellect is capable of perceiving the goodness and evil of a few things and in this connection no laws are required to express their goodness and evil, for instance, to declare that it is commendable to speak the truth and despicable to commit oneself to untruth. Mu'tazilites hold that all this shows that the evil and goodness of things are obvious and require no proof from the Law (Shari'ah). God does not like evil and shameful acts:

Shameful and unjust deeds are evil-in-themselves; therefore, God has banned indulgence in them. It does not imply that His putting a ban on them made them shameful and unjust deeds.

Al-Shahrastānī has very lucidly expressed this theme of thorough-going rationalism of the Mu'tazilites in these words:

"The adherents of justice say: All objects of knowledge fall under the supervision of reason and receive their obligatory power from rational insight. Consequently, obligatory gratitude for

1. Ibid., p. 201. 2. Ibid., p. 201. 3. Ibid., pp. 201-202."
According to Mu’tazilites God is just and has bestowed upon man the faculty of free will. Man is the creative efficient of his actions, good and bad, and gets reward and punishment in the future world by based on what he does; and that no moral evil, or unequity of action, or unbelief, or disobedience, can be ascribed to God, because, if He had caused unrighteousness to be, He would be Himself unrighteous. They also unanimously maintain that the All-wise-God does only that which is beneficial and good for human beings. It is so because of the fact that a regard in the light of wisdom (wujūd al-khilāfa) for the good of humanity (maslāl al-‘ubūd) is incumbent upon Him, though they differ as to His being obligated to secure the highest good and to bestow grace (hamal al-‘aslah wa al-lutf). Fazlur Rahman in his book The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra, made similar remarks:

The Mu’tazila,... nevertheless affirmed that God acted for the benefit and "in the best interests (al-aslāh)" of His creation and, further that God allowed man a totally free will so that man might be entirely responsible for his own actions and God might be free from

3. Ibid., p. 418.
the blame of determining men's behaviour
and then rewarding or punishing him."

All mentioned above "they call the doctrine of 'adl, or justice."^2

Now from the second main principle of the Mutazilites, i.e.
the Unity of God, the following beliefs necessarily result as
corollaries:

(a). The Mu'tazilites deny the possibility of beautific vision. They hold that vision is not possible without proper place and
direction. As God is beyond place and direction, a vision of
Him is possible neither in this world nor in the
next world.

(b). They believe that Qur'ān is a created speech of Allah. Amir 'Ali, with reference to al-Shahristānī, points out: "They
also maintain that the word of God is created, and when created,
is expressed in letters and sounds...."^3 It was held by the
Mu'tazilites that the Qur'ān is an originated work of God and it
came into existence together with the prophethood of the Prophet(S)
of Islām.

(c). God is Eternal. Eternity is the peculiar property
of His Essence, and hence it is the distinguishing attribute

1. Fazlur Rahman, The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā: (Ṣadar al-Dīn al-
Shīrāzī), (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975),
pp. 174-175.
3. Ibid., p. 417.
of the Divine Being. No mutability is attributed to Him. In this respect according to the Muʿtazilites, God's pleasure and anger are not attributes (ṣifāt) (صِفَات), but states (āḥwāl) (أَحْوَال). They declare:

God's pleasure and anger should not be regarded as His attributes, because anger and pleasure are states and states are mutable, whereas the essence of God is immutable. They should be taken as heaven and hell. ¹

The Muʿtazilites were a group of rationalists who made a radical attempt to judge all Islamic beliefs from the view of theoretical reason and renounced all those ideas that lay beyond the reach of reason. They rejected the view that revelation could be contrary to the dictates of reason. In this regard, Mir Valiuddin writes:

They hardly realized the fact that reason like any other faculty with which man is gifted, has its limitations and cannot be expected to comprehend reality in all its details. ²

Ameer 'Ali has eloquently praised the services of the Muʿtazilites to the cause of the development of Muslim philosophy. He says:

2. Ibid., p. 204.
Mu'tazilism has been, with considerable plausibility, compared to the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages in Europe. Scholasticism is said to have been the "movement of the intellect to justify by reason several of the dogmas of the faith." Mu'tazilism also directed its endeavours to establish a concordance between Reason and positive revelation. But there the parallel ends. In the Christian Church, the dogmas requiring explanation and justification were many. The doctrine of the trinity in unity, of the three "Natures" in one, of originals sin, of transubstantiation, all gave rise to a certain intellectual tension. The dogmas of the Church accordingly required some such "solvent" as scholasticism before science and free though could find their way into Christendom. In Islam the case was otherwise; with the exception of the unity of God—the doctrine of Tauhid, which was the foundation of Mohammed's Church—there was no dogma upon which insistence was placed in any such form as to compel Reason to hold back its acceptance. The doctrine of "origin and return" mabda(مبدأ) and ma'ad(ماعد), "coming (from God) and returning (to Him)" and of the moral responsibility of man, was founded on the conception of a Primal Cause—the Originator of all things.

Mu'tazilites have in one way or the other, attempted to prove their beliefs and tried to rationalize the Islamic ideas in the light of Qur'ān and Hadīth. The chief exponents of the Mu'tazilah school are: Wāsil ibn 'Atā', Abu al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf, Al-Nazzām, Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir, Mu'ammār, Thamāmah ibn Ashras al-Numayrī, 'Amr ibn Bahr Al-Jāhiz, Abu 'Ali al-Jūbbāl and Abu Hāshim etc.

(iv). The Ash'arites' Position with Regard to Freedom:

Ash'arism has rightly been characterised as a reactionary movement against Mu'tazilism. It is the name of a philosophico-theological school of thought in Islam that developed during the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries. This movement was "an attempt not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious thoughts of Islam." This is a theological school and its founder was Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (260-1/873-4). Sometimes it is also called the Asha'rah. The Ash'arism laid the foundation of an orthodox Islamic theology or orthodox 'Kalam', as radically opposed to the rationalist 'Kalam' of the Mu'tazilah school. In contrast to the extreme orthodox sects of Muslims, it made use of the dialectical method for the defence of the authority of Divine revelation as vitally relevant to the theological subjects. The Ash'arites "had fought against Reason with their usual repertory of traditions."

Ash'arism disfavoured Mu'tazilism because of its limited and merely rational approach. The Ash'arites contended that

2. Ibid., p. 220.
4. Ibid., p. 694.
the Mu'tazilite doctrines were too abstract for the general Muslim Community. They very quickly apprehended that "the masses might be led into the conclusion that religion was no longer binding and that they might rid themselves of its control as they liked." The apprehension may have been ill-founded, but the fact seemed quite clear that it was genuine enough. They, therefore, rightly sought a movement suited to the generality as against one which was suited only to the abstract-minded people.²

The general condition of the Muslim society at the end of the 3rd/9th century was such that the development of such a movement as orthodox 'Ilm-ul Kalâm was inevitable. The rationalization of faith, which developed at the beginning of the second century of the Hijrah as a systematic movement of thought in the name of rationalism in Islâm or the Mu'tazilite movement was, in its original stage, simply an attempt to put Islâm and its basic principles on a rational foundation by giving a consistent rational interpretation to the different dogmas and doctrines of Islâm. But when the Mu'tazilite rationalists began to study the 'Arab translations of the works of Greek physicists and philosophers made available to them by the early 'Abbâsid Caliphs, particularly by al-Ma'nûr and al-Mâmûn, they began to apply the Greek philosophical methods and ideas to the interpretation of the basic principles of Islâm as well.

1. Nadvi, M.D., Muslim Thought and Its Source, op. cit., p. 52.
2. Ibid., p. 52.
It is stated that this reactionary movement Ash'arism (or Muslim Scholasticism) came into existence on the following grounds:

(a). The Mu'tazilite's doctrines were too abstract for the general Muslim Community of the time and it was rightly apprehended that the masses might be led to the conclusion that religion was not a binding force and they might do whatever they like. Thus they would deviate from the true spirit of religion.

(b). Some of the early 'Abbasid Caliphs, particularly al-Ma'mūn began to patronize the rationalism of the Mu'tazilites in public. The scholars, during this period, began to apply the Greek trend of philosophizing to the interpretation of the fundamental principles of Islam. In this context Mu'azzafaruddin Nadvi writes:

A group of scholars with Catholic attitude came forward with a mission of compromise. To put a stop to the dissensions in the Muslim ranks, they started a society of brotherhood with the object of harmonising various schools of Islam. 1

(c). The main point to emphasise is that Mā'mūn and his immediate successors did not allow their co-religionists belonging to other schools to exercise their freedom of thought to which they were entitled. As M.D. Nadvi puts it:

1. Ibid., p. 53.
Mā'mūn may have been inspired by good motives, but as a free-thinker himself he ought to have allowed others to think freely. The result of all this coercion and repression was what might have been expected in the circumstances. ¹

While the above mentioned three factors besides many others were operating during that time, it was necessary, the Ashʿarites hold, to stop the false interpretations of Islām and present the true Islamic spirit in order to restore its peculiarity and significant identity. Thus, some mutakallimūn (orthodox theologians) came forward and started a new movement. It was at first a subterranean movement. It could not come into the open for fear of public criticism. Al-Junayd, for instance, had to discuss the Unity of God behind closed doors. Al-Shāfiʿī held that some trained people could defend and purify the faith but that this should not be done in public. Al-Muḥāsibī and other contemporaries of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal incurred his displeasure for defending the faith with argument or reason.

Al-Ashʿarī was not the first to try to apply Kalām or rational argument to the defence of orthodox doctrine; among those who had made similar attempts earlier was al-Hārith bin Asad al-Muḥāsibī. ²

But slowly and gradually the movement gathered momentum and began to be openly preached almost at different places of the

¹. Ibid., p. 53
Muslim World in Mesopotamia by Abu-al Hasan 'Ali bin Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī (d. 330 or 334/941 or 945), in Egypt by al-Tahawi (d. 331/942), and in Samarqand by Abu Maṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944). But of all these, al-Ash'arī became the most popular hero, before whom the Muʿtazilite system (the rationalist Kalām) went down. "Al-'Asrāfī seems to have been the first to do this in a way acceptable to a large body of orthodox opinion. He had the advantage, too, of having an intimate and detailed knowledge of the views of the Muʿtazila"¹, because he was closely affiliated with this rationalistic school upto the age of forty.² Henceforth, 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.³

The chief points⁴ of the Ash'arites movement which was radically opposed to the doctrines of the Muʿtazilah were as under:

(1). Ash'ariyyah held that God is one, unique, eternal existent Being. He is not a substance, not a body not an accident, not limited to any direction and not situated in any space. He has, they say, eternal Attributes such as knowledge, sight, speech, and that it is by these that He knows, sees, speaks, whereas the Muʿtazilites said that God has no Attributes

1. Ibid., p. 694.
2. Ibid., p. 694.
distinct from His Essence.

(2). The Mu'tazilah said that Qur'anic expressions, such as God's hand and face must be interpreted to mean "Grace", "Essence" and so on. The Ashā'irah, whilst agreeing that nothing corporeal was meant by these expressions, held that they were the real Attributes whose precise nature was unknown. Al-'Ashārī, "took God's sitting on the throne in a similar (literal sense) way." The Ashā'irites, as against the Mu'tazilites held that "God has Attributes which inhere eternally in Him and are in addition to His Essence." According to them these Attributes were eternal but they were neither identical with His Essence, nor were they quite different from or other than His Essence. On the contrary, the Mu'tazilites held that God is one, eternal, unique and absolute Being, having no touch of dualism in Him. They further maintained:

(God's) Essence is self-contained. He does not possess any attributes apart from His Essence. His Essence is, for instance, knowing, powerful, seeing, willing etc. They denied the attributes of God as anything other than and in addition to His essence.

(3). As against the view of the Mu'tazilah that the Qur'ān was created, the Ashā'irah maintained that it was God's speech,

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1. Ibid., p. 694.
3. Ibid., pp. 226-227.
an eternal Attribute, and therefore, uncreated. As regards the eternity of the Qurʾān, the Ashʿarites adopted again an intermediary position between the extreme views of the Zāhiriyyah and the Muʿtazilites:

The Hanbalites and other Zāhiriyyah (extreme orthodox schools) held that the speech of God i.e., the Qurʾān, is composed of letters, words, and sounds which inhere in the Essence of God and, is, therefore, eternal.

The Muʿtazilites and a section of the Rafidiyyah, on the contrary, went to the other extreme and maintained that the Holy Book was created.

Here it may be pointed out that this interpretation is untenable, for it was the shīʿah Imāms who said that neither the Qurʾān was creator nor was created. The Ashʿarite view holds that the Qurʾān is co-eternal with God. While the Shīʿah say that the spirit or meaning of the Qurʾān is eternal and the words through which the Qurʾān was revealed were created.

(4). In opposition to the stand-point of the Muʿtazilah that God could not literally be seen, since that would imply that He is corporeal and limited, the Ashʿariyyah held that the vision of God in the world to come was possible, though men cannot

1. Ibid., p. 233.
2. Ibid., p. 233.
understand the manner of it. The Muʿtazilites and the "philosophers" denied the possibility of seeing God with eyes, as that would imply His bodily existence, which is absurd. The Ashʿarites, as against the Muʿtazilites and the "philosophers" and in agreement with the orthodox class i.e. the Zāhirites and the Mushabbīhah, held that it is possible to see God; but they could not agree with their view that God is extended and can be shown by pointing out.¹

(5). The very crucial question at issue between the two schools the rationalist and the traditionalist of Islamic thought was that of the freedom of the human will. On this very problem of free-will or on the ability of man to choose and produce actions, the Ashʿarites took up again an intermediary position between the libertarians (Qadariyyah) and the fatalists (the Jabariyyah). The orthodox people and the Jabarites maintained a purely fatalistic view. They held that human actions are predetermined and predetested by the Almighty God. Man has no power to produce any action. They asserted that "Every thing is from God." He has absolute power over every thing (as the Qurʾān declares)² including human will and actions. The Qadarites and their successors the Muʿtazilites, on the other hand, held that man has full power to produce an action and has

¹. Ibid., p. 234.
². Al-Qurʾān, II:284.
complete freedom (Qadar) in his choice though the power was created in him by God. They further said that it is only on the basis of human free will that man would be rewarded or punished by God for his good or bad actions.

The Ash'arites struck a middle path. They made a distinction between 'creation' (Khalq: خلق) and 'acquisition' (Kasb: كسب) of an action. The Almighty God, according to them, is the Creator (Khaliq: خالق) of human actions and human person is the acquisitor (Muktasib: مكتسب). Al-'Ash'arî, in his 'al-Maqalât', says:

"Actions of human beings are created (makhluq) by God, the creatures are not capable of creating any action."

Again, in a similar way, he, in his other famous treatise, 'Kitâb al-Ibânah 'an Usûl al-Dîyânah, declares:

"There is no creator except God and the actions of man are, therefore, His creations."

In short, one can easily come to the conclusion that the Mu'tazilites emphasis was on the reality of the choice in human activity, while the Ash'arites, on the contrary, insisted on God's Omnipotence, and therefore, maintain that everything, whether good and evil, is willed by God and He creates the acts of men by

creating in men the power to do each act.¹

(6). While the Muʿtazilah—with their doctrine of al-Manzil bāyn al-manzilatān—held that any Muslim found guilty of a serious sin was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. The Ashāīrah, on the contrary, insisted that he remained a believer, but was liable to punishment in hell-fire.

(7). The Ashārites maintained the reality of various eschatological features such as the Basin, the Bridge, the Balance and intersession by Muḥammad(S)—, which were conspicuously denied or rationally interpreted by the Muʿtāzilites.² Regarding human freedom the Ashārites' position is restricted. Their system is mainly based on the idea of necessity in which man is completely bound and can not exercise morality. Osman Amin, in this regard, in his article "Renaissance in Egypt: Muḥammad ʿAbdul and His School" writes:

The system of the Asharites (the dogmatic theologians of Islam) was based on the idea of necessity. Following their idea of metaphysics, if one should admit this necessity, then no morality would be possible. As Kant has said, there is no morality without freedom.

2. Ibid., p. 694.
Generally, it is affirmed that the basic difference between Mu'tazilism and Ash'arism is that the former gives prominence to "reason" and therefore, called 'Rationalistic' school of Muslim thought, while, on the contrary, the latter gives preference to "revelation" and termed as 'scholastic' school of Muslim thought. The Mu'tazilites held that 'reason' is the real criterion of truth and 'revelation' only confirms the dictates of reason. They further asserted that the object of revelation is to remove doubts and misgivings from the wavering minds by inviting them to adhere to reason. Conversely, the Ash'arites maintain that 'revelation' is the real criterion of truth and the business of 'reason' is, thus, to substantiate the religious tenets and injunctions by its arguments.¹

¹ Nadvi, M.D., Muslim Thought and its Source, op. cit., p. 6.
(v). The Shi'ite Position regarding Freedom:

The Shi'ite faith is based upon the five principles:

1). Unity of God \(\text{al-Tawh\(\hat{\text{d}}\)}\).

2). Divine Justice \(\text{\'adl-i-Ilha\(\hat{\text{i}}\)}\).

3). Prophethood \(\text{al-Nub\(\hat{\text{u}}\)wwah}\).

4). Im\(\hat{\text{m}}\)ah. \(\text{Am\(\hat{\text{m}}\)\(\hat{\text{a}}\)}\).

5). Day of Resurrection \(\text{al-Ma\(\acute{\text{r}}\)\(\acute{\text{d}}\)}\).

Of these only three are believed to be the principles of faith by the Sunnis: (1) Unity of God, (2) Prophethood, and (3) \(\text{Ma\(\acute{\text{r}}\)\(\acute{\text{d}}\)}\).

The Mu\'tazilah, along with the Shi'ah accept Divine Justice \(\text{\'adl-i-Ilha\(\hat{\text{i}}\)}\) as one of the basic principles. Accepting Divine Justice as a principle of faith makes much difference with regard to men's own freedom of will and action and their reward or punishment. The Ash\(\acute{\text{f}}\)\(\hat{\text{ir}}\)ah and other sects of the Sunnis that do not believe in Divine Justice as a principle of faith hold that God is not bound by any law to reward virtuous deeds and punish evil deeds. They say that God is Almighty and to believe that He is governed by the law of justice amounts to curtail His all-powerfulness. Good and evil as well as their rewarding or punishment depend on the Will of God not on Justice. The Shi'ah and the Mu\'tazilah, on the contrary, hold that as Justice is an attribute of God, identical to His Essence, It is God who is the Maker of the law of Justice. In this case if God follows His own law, it does not in any sense mean curtailment.
of His power. On the basis of this principle of faith they say that it is according to Divine Justice that man should be free and capable of acting according to his will, otherwise man may not be responsible for his acts, and consequently he may not be rewarded or punished. They say further that if God does not reward the virtuous and does not punish the vicious He would be unjust, which is impossible.

The whole system of ethics is based upon the postulate of the freedom of human will. In the Shi'ie faith, human freedom is a logical corollary of Divine Justice. The Shi'ah like some of the Asha'irah and all Mu'tazilah, hold that man's action are of two types: reflexive that is unvoluntary, and willed or chosen. There is no dispute as regard the reflexive acts, for they are instinctive and man has no control over them but the acts which are chosen by man to perform are voluntary acts: In these cases man can act in two ways, for he may choose between right and wrong, good and evil. We have seen that Mu'tazilah believe in total freedom of man with regard to voluntary acts. This freedom is called 'qadar' (قُدْرَة) or 'tafwīd' (تَفْوِيد). The term 'tafwīd', as discussed earlier in this chapter, means 'delegation' or 'authorization. According to some Mu'tazilah, God has delegated power to man for performing good or evil acts. This means that power is always with man. On the other hand Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari's disciple, Abu Bakr al-Baqallani, a later Mu'tazilah, believes that power being a
Divine Attribute solely belongs to God, and He is the Creator of all kinds of acts. It is only God who bestows power upon man to choose between good and evil, right and wrong acts. Man possesses this limited power only. This doctrine is called the doctrine of 'acquisition' or Kasb (کسب). In this way, the Mu'tazilah and the Ashâ‘irah take two extreme positions, while the Shi'a, according to the teaching of the Imâms of the Prophet's Family (Ahl al-Bayt), take an intermediate position. The saying of the Imam Ja'far al-Sâdiq(A) is:

لاَّ أَجْبَرُ وَلَأَنْفُشُ وَلَأَقْدَرُ عَلَى هَذَا أَمْرٍيَّةٍ،
لاَّ أَجْبَرُ وَلَأَنْفُشُ وَلَأَقْدَرُ عَلَى هَذَا أَمْرٍيَّةٍ

(neither determinism nor freedom or delegated power, but an intermediate position).

In Usul al-Kâfî, in Kitâb al-Tawhîd, there is a chapter entitled: 

الْجَبْرُ وَالَّاقْدَرُ وَالْآمْرُ بَيْنَ الْآمْرَيْنِ
(al-jabr wa al-qadar wa al-amr bayn al-'amrayn) the Persian translator and commentator, Sayyid Jawâd Mustafawi, defined qadar (قدر) as synonymous with another 'Arabic word Tafwid (تفويض). After explaining the doctrine of determinism and human free will, he writes:

"The doctrine of freedom or 'amr bayn al-'amrayn (an intermediate position) forms the content of all the Traditions narrated in this chapter, and all the Traditions reaching us through the Imâms of the Prophet's Family (Ahl al-Bayt: ﷺ). In all these Traditions Jabr and tafwid (or qadar) have been rejected, and by refuting them an intermediate position ('amr bayn al-'amaryn)

is posited, that is neither man is as helpless in his acts as the tools in the hands of a worker, not having any power not to do anything or defend himself, nor is man fully capable of performing his acts independently, as if God has no power over his acts. In reality all his acts are related, on the one hand to God, and on the other, to his ownself."

The commentator regards this issue as a very critical one that has embarrassed and worried many scholars. He quotes the author of Kifāyat al-Usūl as saying:

"The late ʿAllāmah Majlīsī (Muhammad Bāqir) referred to the eight different views of eminent scholars and raised objections against them; he forwarded his own ninth view considering it based on the Traditions. Most of the scholars regarded pure consciousness of man as the ground of freedom. According to this view, man can claim: 'I wish to do this and not to do that'. This is considered to be the clinching argument in favour of the claim that man has freedom of action."

Jawād Muṣṭafawī regards the 12th Hadīth (Tradition) of this chapter conclusive in this matter. The 12th Hadīth is as follows:

"...Ahmad ibn Muḥammad says: "I asked Imām ʿAllāmah Rida': "Some of our scholars say that we the Shiʿiah believe in jabr, while some others believe in man's capacity to do acts (istītāʿah)". The Imām said: "Write: In the name of God, the Merciful and the compassionate. ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said that Allah has proclaimed: O the son of ʿAdam, thou performeth the obligatory acts

1. Ibid., pp. 215-216.
2. Ibid., pp. 215-216.
with My Will and My (delegated) power, and ist capable of disobeying Me with all the bounties that I bestowed upon thee. I made thee listening and seeing. Whatever good reacheth thee ist by God, and whatever evil reacheth thee ist by thine own wish, for I am more praiseworthy for thine virtues than thyself and thou ist more to be blamed for thine own vices than Me, because what I do will not be judged by anybody and what thou doest will be judged." Afterwards the Imam said (or narrated what God has said) that what a man wished was actualized for him."

It would not be out of place to quote here some rather lengthy passages from an article by an Iranian Shi'ite jurist, Dr. Abulqasim Gorji:

"About the Divine Will (irādah), the Ash'arites hold that Divine Will and Omniscience (ilm) are two separate Attributes. But the Shi'ites and a group of Mu'tazilites maintain that God's Will is the same as His Knowledge, and they call it Dā'i, meaning "Divine Intention". ...

There are some differences of opinion as to whether actions can be regarded as "good" or "bad" in independence of the decree of the Divine Lawgiver (al-Sharī'a).

The Ash'arites believe that a "good" action is that which the Sharī'ah has ordered the people to do, and a "bad" action is that which it has prohibited people from doing. But the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites hold that "goodness" or "badness" of actions can be recognized by human reason; that is, regardless of the decree of the Sharī'ah. Some actions are good and some bad. The Lawgiver orders people to do what is "good" and prohibits them from doing "bad" deeds.

1. Ibid., pp. 222-223.
Is man really free to perform actions which are apparently done of his own free will, or is he compelled to perform such actions? A group of the Ash'arites are of the opinion that man's will and power have no effect in bringing about these actions, and it is only God's Will and Power that is effectual in their taking place. This belief is called "Jabr".

The Mu'tazilites hold that the only factor causing these actions to take place is man's will and power. God has only created man and given him power, will and intelligence. As long as God has not taken these forces and potentialities away from him, he can independently do whatever he wants; there is no need for him to be instantaneously and constantly given power, will and other potentialities by God. This belief is called "al-tafwid".

However, the Shi'ites believe that man's actions depend on his own will, but not in the same sense that he is totally independent in doing them. Rather just as God is the initiating cause (al-illah al-muhdithah) of man's life, power and will—that is, God has originally given man these qualities and abilities—so God is as well the maintaining cause (al-illah al-mubqiyyah) of these potentialities and qualities. That is to say, God grants these powers and abilities constantly and perpetually, otherwise man cannot perform any action. Thus, such actions can be attributed both to God and man. This belief is neither determinism nor free will, but something between the two (amr bāyn al-'amrayn).

About Divine Destiny and Providence (qaḍā' wa qadar), there are also differences of opinion among Islamic thinkers. If by "Destiny" (qaḍā) it is meant that all things—even man's actions—are brought into existence by God, and if by "Providence" (qadar) it is meant that the qualities and particulars of all things—even of those things originated by man's will—have taken place and shape solely as a result of God's Will, then qaḍā' and qadar, in this sense, are accepted by the Ash'arites and rejected by the Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites. And if by "qaḍā" and "qadar" other senses are meant,
such as: 'The existence or happening of everything, even man's free actions and their particulars, depends on God's Will, but not directly, and rather through the special means of that thing, including man's will and power', or if "qaddā" and "qadar" are taken to mean 'declaration and determination of some another by God', then in both of these senses, qaddā and qadar are admitted by the Imāmiyyah Shi'ites. Moreover, there are certain verses in the Qur'ān and ahadith of the Holy Prophet and Imāms affirming this belief.

The Shi'ites and the Mu'tazilites consider it reprobate and wrong to attribute certain qualities or actions to God such as oppression, tyranny, giving of a duty to anybody beyond his strength, and so on, and believe it necessary and right to attribute certain qualities and actions to Him such as mercy, compassion, assigning of prophets and so on.

The Ash'arites due to their negation of rational foundation of goodness and badness of actions (al-busn wa al-qubh al-aqlīyyān) and also owing to their maintaining that nobody can possibly assign duties and obligations to God, reject both of the above viewpoints.

But it is obvious that both of their own viewpoints rest on shaky grounds. Because, as to the first position, it has been established that the goodness and badness of actions are ration, as to their second position, it may be said that by denial or certain qualities and actions to be attributed to God, what is meant is that such things as tyranny and oppression are inappropriate for the sublime station of God, and if some acts—like assignment of prophets—are considered to be incumbent upon God, it is meant that refraining from such acts is not becoming to God, the Almighty, which is affirmed by reason. And this notion of denial or incumbency, in this sense, by no means entails any imposition on God by somebody else.

Like the Mu'tazilites, the Shi'ites believe that since God is Wise (Hakīm), He never does any useless or frivolous action, any action which is in vain and devoid of benefit and expedience,
because God is absolute and total perfection; the benefits of His actions accrue to His creatures, not to Himself. But the Ash'arites believe that since God has absolute perfection, His actions are not out of motives and purposes.\(^1\)

Saūr al-Din al-Shirāzī (popularly known as Mullā Ṣadrā) too with the reference of Al-Tūsī, maintains that "man is neither absolutely pre-determined nor totally free but shares a part of both."\(^2\)

With regard to freedom of the human will Shi'ite position is mediatory, while Mu'tazilah and Ashā'irah hold opposite extremes preaching libertarianism and predestinarianism respectively.

The thrust of the two major schools of Kālam (the Mu'tazilah and the Ashā'irah) is rooted in the following issues:\(^3\)

1. Priority of reason over revelation or vice versa;
2. Status of the Attributes with relation to the Divine Essence;
3. Freedom of human will or predestination;
4. Whether the Qur'ān is created or eternal;
5. Divine Justice, its import and implications; and finally
6. The criterion of good and evil.

But when one goes through the shi'ite Imāmiyyah doctrines, one will find, in general, somewhat different position as:

(1). There is no question of priority between reason or revelation, for both are complementary to each other and they do not contradict each other, as is wrongly held by the Ashâ‘irah in some matters.

(2). The Divine Attributes are essentially included in the Divine Essence, as the Mu‘tazilah hold.

(3). There is neither absolute freedom or tafwîd (الترميم) nor absolute determinism. The Shî‘ite position is a via media between the two extreme positions taken by the Mu‘tazilah and Ashâ‘irah in this matter.

(4). The Shî‘ah believe that the words of the Qur‘ân are created, and cannot be held as eternal.

(5). Divine Justice implies that man is not asked to do what is beyond his capacity (îstî‘âh: استطاعة).

(6). The criteria of good and evil are provided by ‘revelation, but they are in conformity with the dictates of reason.