

The Problem of Pre-Determinism and Its Impact on Muslim Thought *

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of interaction between freewill and determinism has always been at the very heart of theological and philosophical debates. This essay is not an attempt to elucidate and expound the theological conception addressed by various dogmatist scholars of the past. Instead, I shall attempt to analyse the historical basis of the issue and put our understandings and positions on the issue within the historical framework. In my opinion, it is important to know what caused the issue to occupy a central theological debate of early Islam and how their resolves had affected the way we view the issue today.

This essay shall thus be focussed on three essential parts:

- a. What caused the problem to sprout in early Islamic history,
- b. What were the discussions that led to the orthodox position, and
- c. Why there are attempts to re-evaluate our understanding of *qada'* and *qadar*?

It is undeniable that the issue of freewill, in relation to God's pre-determinism, is one of the most complex problems that had occupied a wide branch of human knowledge – from theology to philosophy to science and politics. Nevertheless, it is also an issue that concerns human beings the most as far as practical life is concerned.¹ Thus, I shall exercise

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discretion in my approach to this topic. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to seek the historical basis of the discussion and understand how the effects of that discussion had formulated into the orthodox Islamic position and permeates our present views of *qada'* and *qadar*.

1.1 Clarifications of Philosophical Terms

First and foremost, any discussion on such complex issues must begin with definitions. I had singled out three important terms and ideas that were often used indiscriminately, synonymously and interchangeably by many writers on this issue - *determinism*, *fatalism* and *predestination*, as against *freedom of will*, or *freewill* in short. It is important to note the subtle differences between these three terms and that these be distinctly set apart. This is especially so when expounding the doctrine of *qada' wa qadar*. Using the terms indiscriminately or interchangeably will only confuse and create further misconceptions over the issue. Only after qualifications can we question to what extent do determinism, fatalism and predestination a constituent of our understanding of *qada'* and *qadar*. And much more radically, is the belief in freedom of human will a defiant rejection of *qada' wa qadar*? These are as important as analysing *qada' wa qadar* within the historical context of the discussion.

Determinism is the view that our choices and actions are necessitated by earlier events and earlier events are without exceptions necessitated by much earlier events. But determinism *per se* may or may not imply fatalism. Fatalism is understood as the notion that past, present and future events were fixed and thus, “*what will be, will be, no matter what a person may do to avert its happening*”.² This might be closer to hard determinism since hard determinism asserts that determinism and free will are incompatible and each cannot exist when the other is true, even though one may consciously perceive that his actions are a result of his own choice.³ If hard determinism is true, it will imply that future events are fixed too since they are caused by present events, which were caused by past events – thus, making hard determinism a precursor to fatalism. But for soft determinism, there is freewill within the causal framework by asserting freedom at the point of choosing an act and ability to choose one way or the other.

Usually, fatalism would often involve a Higher Being, or God, as the One who chartered our fixed destiny. As such, fatalism is often a theological issue than a philosophical one⁴. God has chartered every choice and act of ours and we cannot do anything to change it. Again, this should be contrasted with the concept of predestination. Predestination is a religious concept that is often discussed on theological platforms, although it generates as much attention of the philosophers as the discussion on determinism and fatalism. It often goes along with other concepts like the notion of an Omnipotent and Omniscient God. It also presupposes a destination at the end of Man's journey in his life. This destination is embodied in the notion of Heaven and Hell. Thus predestination is the belief that God predetermines one's destiny. But like determinism, it may or may not adopt fatalism. In Calvinistic doctrine⁵, a person is destined for Heaven or Hell from the time he was created. But Calvinists will say that a person is free to act on his choice while on earth, which will have no bearing of his end in either Heaven or Hell. Thus, his soul is predetermined by God to be either in Heaven or Hell regardless of what he did on earth. It seems that this notion of predestination states that God creates every soul for either Heaven or Hell and we have no choice in deciding where we want to end up in.

All of the above is rejected by the libertarians (those who propounded free will), who argued, "*not everything is physically determined, and physical indeterminism allows for human actions to be determined mentally, by the will.*"⁶ Thus, libertarians reject that human choice and actions are determined. A human being can, by his own reason and will, determine his deliberate volition and exercise real command over his thoughts, deeds and formation of his character.

From the above definitions, it is clear that the Islamic creed of *qada' wa qadar* constitutes some form of *determinism*. However, to equate this determinism with causal notion of the natural law is unqualified. The very emphasis of the orthodox Ash'ari *kalam* [theological discourse] rejects the philosophers' notion of cause-and-effects. What is to be understood by determinism is in its theological context – that the determiner of our actions and choices is God, rather than the laws of nature.

Also, *determinism* as a concept that describes *qada' wa qadar* may not be comprehensive enough. What is missing is the understanding that God determines everything prior to its actualisation. Thus, a more accurate term will be *pre-determinism*. Several authors had also translated *qada' wa qadar* as *divine decree* or *preordination*. I believe that these terms are similar to the term pre-determinism. As such, I shall adopt pre-determinism as a substitute for the Arabic *qada' wa qadar*.

As for fatalism and predestination, it is rather contentious at this stage to equate these concepts with *qada' wa qadar*. However, it is commonly acknowledged that *qada' wa qadar* is a synonym, if not the actual meaning of them. But does the term *qada'* and *qadar* carry these meanings?

1.2 The Sixth Article of Faith and the Meaning of *Qadar*

The Muslims believe that the theological creed of belief in *qada' wa qadar* has its foundation on the *hadith* of the Angel Gabriel. When questioned on what is *iman* [faith], the Prophet [*pbub*]⁷ replied, among others, “*and to believe in the divine decree (al-Qadar), (both) the good and the evil thereof.*”⁸

The actual word used in the above *hadith* is ‘*al-qadar*’. The original meaning of the word *qadar* (as a noun) is *specified measure or amount*, whether of quantities or qualities. It has many other usages, which branch out of this core. Thus, *yuqad-dir* means, among other things, *to measure or decide* the quantity, quality, position and such, *of something before you actually make it.*⁹ The term *qada'*, on the other hand, is a term used to emphasize the orthodoxy understanding of God’s sovereignty. *Qada'* (as a noun) means *judgment or decision*.

It is implicit from the meaning of *qadar* that good and evil was decided in its measure or amount prior to its actualization, perhaps in a state of balance [*mizān*]¹⁰. Beyond this, what we have are interpretations. Thus, as a whole, *qada' wa qadar* linguistically means *amount or measurement of good and evil which had been predetermined or decided by God prior to its actualization*. This is the definition that seems most probable and one that I shall adopt.¹¹

The concepts of predestination and fatalism are definitely non-derivatives from the term *qada' wa qadar*. If ever *qada' wa qadar* is translated as *predestination* or *fatalism*, this is either an interpretation not derived from the actual meaning of the term itself, or a misunderstanding as to the actual meaning of the term. In fact, non-derivatively, *qada'* and *qadar* were used in a variety of meanings – from the traditional ‘*decree of God prior to Creation*’, to the Mu’tazilites’ ‘*God’s ordinance to enjoin good and forbid evil*’.¹² What we can see then is the absence of the concepts of fatalism and predestination from the linguistic understanding of the term *qada’wa qadar*. What was to be socially incorporated into our present linguistic understanding of *qada' wa qadar* is to be seen within the historical context and development of early Islamic history.

2. ORIGIN OF THE DEBATE

Several discussions had transpired over the origin of the freewill-determinism debate in the Islamic world. I had identified 3 major theses on this:

- a. Political Context
- b. Greek / Christian Incursions
- c. Duality of the Qur’an / Traditions

It is expedient to note that no single thesis can account fully for the rise of the issue in early Islamic history. It is more reasonable to believe that each forms a part of the entire fabric of the theological dispute in the 8th and 9th Century CE.

2.1 Political Context

The debate over one’s state of freedom and its conciliation with the notion of God’s supremacy could have developed from the volatile political situation of early Islamic history. With the rise of a perennial sect, the Kharijites, two major theological debates occurred. One was the question on the nature of *iman*. The second was the question of freedom of will. The latter was in fact a further extension over the issue of political legitimacy beset by them. The Kharijites had condemned Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu’awiyah as apostates for their agreement

to arbitration in the Battle of Siffin (657 CE). They argued that arbitration other than by God's Law nullifies a person's faith, thus making him an infidel (*kaafir*). The Kharijites then went further to develop a theological position over what constitutes *iman*. *Iman* is, to the Kharijites, outer deeds and expressions. Consequently, anyone who commits grave sin has nullified his faith – a contra-position to the Murji'ites' definition of *iman* as inner assent.

It is within this theological framework that a logical consequent emerged. Is man then free to act? Again, there are political overtones in the question. The Kharijites had insisted that anyone elected by the Muslim community and is able to dispense justice is a legitimate claimant to the Caliphate. This is in contrast to the Shi'ites insistence that Ali and his household is the legitimate claimant to the throne. But what is of interest here is that the Kharijites had set the precedent that man is free to set the political directions of the *ummah*. If a Caliph is found committing injustice or any other 'grave sins', then the Muslim community has the right to depose him and to even assassinate him – a fate that befell the fourth caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Thus, what we observed is that the theological question of man's freedom is in fact, an extension from the debate over political legitimacy and nature of *iman*. This is further carried into the Umayyad period where the debate had caused the rise of two major sects – the *Qadariyyah* and the *Jabariyyah*. The Qadarites were the proponents of freewill whilst the Jabarites were believers of fatalism.

Again, the issue had its political overtones with the Umayyad's deterministic position. Within decades, the Umayyad dynasty founded by Mu'awiyah began degenerating and committed atrocities towards their political rivals. These political struggles had been the impetus to the freewill versus pre-determinism debate. What transpired was the development of the two sects aforementioned. The Umayyads had justified their atrocities by claiming God's pre-determination of their actions and conducts. Against this background, four major figures appeared on the scene to challenge the Umayyad's stance – *Hasan al-Basri*, *Wasil b. Ata*, *Ma'bad al-Jubani* and *Ghailan al-Dimashqi*.

a. *Hasan al-Basri*

Al-Hasan ibn Abi al-Hasan Yasar Abu Sa`id al-Basri (642 – 728/9 CE) was a notable ascetic and the great Imam of Basra. During his time, it was the Umayyad Caliphate's stand that their actions and legitimacy to the Caliphate was not to be challenged on the basis that it was all God's predetermination. Thus, he was once asked what he thought of *'those kings [i.e. the Umayyad Caliphs] who spill the blood of Muslims, appropriate their possessions, do what they please and say: 'Our actions are indeed part of God's fore-ordination (qadar)'*. To such claims, al-Basri replied, *"The enemies of God are lying!"*¹³ In fact, al-Basri was vehement in maintaining the freedom of man and rejecting the Ummayyad Caliphs' fatalistic outlook. In a censure to Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, al-Basri quoted from the Qur'an that God was *'no unjust dealer with His servants'*.

In addition, al-Basri also rejected the claims of the advocates of predestination that they were simply following the footsteps of the pious ancestors, who acted in conformity with God's ordinances and did not diverge from the *Sunna* of the Prophet.¹⁴ For al-Basri, the Qur'an was clear in advocating freewill. In fact, any verse that seems to support predestination must be countered by an interpretation of the passage in light of other statements that advocates freewill.¹⁵

b. *Wasil b. Ata*

Al-Basri's rejection of the pre-determinism and his insistence on freewill had undoubtedly spurred the rise of the Qadari movement.¹⁶ A major proponent of the movement was al-Basri's own disciple, Wasil b. Ata (699 – 748/9 CE). Wasil was also attributed as the founder of the *Mu'tazilah* sect, which further extends the freewill position and incorporated it with the justice of God. The Mu'tazilites were in fact the successors to the Qadari movement. It is also highly probable that Wasil's inherited opinions over freedom of will had been influenced by his mentor, al-Hasan al-Basri.

Wasil and his followers were uncompromising in asserting the freedom of man. Their position was in total discord with the Jabarites, in particular, Jahm Ibn Safwan and his followers. Jahm repudiated categorically the concept of ‘created power’, or human ability to carry out their designs in the world, and attributed power in every shape or form to God.¹⁷ Jahm argued that actions were to be attributed to humans in the figurative sense. He noted that when we say, “*The tree bore fruit, the water flowed, the stone moved and the sun rose and set*”,¹⁸ there is no implication of freewill or choice. The same is true of human actions since God determined all actions. It should be noted that the debate between Wasil and Jahm over freewill and predestination was so great that “*almost all subsequent theological developments would take the form of variations on, or a synthesis of, these two antithetical positions.*”¹⁹

c. Ma’bad al-Juhani

Another major proponent of the Qadari movement was Ma’bad al Juhani (d. 699 CE). He was perhaps the first person to fully unleash the Qadari movement.²⁰ Little is known about Ma’bad or how he formulated his Qadarite views. However, he was known to have learnt *hadith* from Ibn ‘Abbas and ‘Imran b. Husayn who were both learned Companions of the Prophet.²¹ Presumably, Ma’bad held that at least some human acts were free, especially those that were wrong or dubious. This is because he denied that God determined the wrongs acts done by the Umayyads.²² In fact, Ma’bad had participated in an uprising against the Umayyads in 701 CE, together with other upholders of freewill – many of which had some form of contact with al-Basri, although al-Basri himself had refused to join the uprising.²³ It is for his participation in the uprising that Ma’bad was executed in 704 CE by Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik.

Ma’bad was also known to have engaged in discussions with Sawsan, a Christian scholar from Iraq.²⁴ It was said that Ma’bad could have derived his views from Sawsan although this cannot be ascertained. It could even be attempt to discredit the Qadarites by his opponents. But what we are certain of is the fact that

Ma'bad was singled out by later Sunnite writers as being the first to discuss the question of freewill and pre-determinism.

d. *Ghailan al-Dimashqi*

Ghailan al-Dimashqi was a disciple of Ma'bad, otherwise known as ibn Marwan. According to al-Awza'i, Ghailan was the next to speak about qadar, after Ma'bad. Like the other aforementioned individuals, Ghailan vehemently protested against the Umayyad's fatalistic position. In fact, as early as the reign of Caliph 'Umar (II) ibn 'Abd al-Aziz, he had written to the caliphate to urge for certain reforms. 'Umar, who was against the Qadarite doctrine, had warned him of the danger his views will bring and had warned others not to follow Ghailan's Qadarite views. This warning came into full effect when he was finally executed by Caliph Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik for insisting on the responsibility of the Umayyad caliphs over their atrocities.²⁵

It will be interesting to note an exchange between Ghailan and Maimun b. Mihran, who was commissioned by Caliph Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik, as narrated by at-Tabari. Ghailan was reported to have asked, "*Does God will that sins should be committed?*" Upon this, Maimun replied, "*Are they committed against His will?*"²⁶ Ghailan was purportedly silenced. However, in another account by al-Ash'ari, an answer was given, albeit the questioner was al-Fadl ar-Raqashi instead of Ghailan. Accordingly, al-Ash'ari noted that Ghailan's view was similar to al-Fadl. Thus, Ghailan would probably have answered Maimun's rhetorical response. The response given by al-Fadl (and probably Ghailan too) was by distinguishing between a previous willing of human acts and a contemporaneous willing. He also argued that God might bring about (*yaf'al*) things even when He did not will them.²⁷

What we had observed above was twofold:

- i. That the question of man's freedom of will followed consequently from the debate over political legitimacy, and

- ii. That the issue revolved around the political scene where the Umayyads had tried to justify their rule and actions with God's pre-determination.

All these point to the conclusion that the debate originated within the political context of early Islamic history. In fact, it can be argued that proponents of freewill would not have caused much concern if not for the political implications thought to be involved. And probably, the uprisings and discords that the Qadarite movement wrought during the reign of the Umayyads had made early writers brandishing it with schism and deemed the movement as heretical – this, despite the fact that many pious Traditionalists of that era were known to share the views of the Qadarites against the Umayyads including the venerable al-Hasan al-Basri. It was a major concern amongst early Muslims to stay within the fold of the *jamaah* and prevent further disunity after what had happened since the murder of the third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan.

2.2 Greek / Christian Incursions

One of the common assumptions made by Orientalists' studies of this issue is that the debate over freewill and pre-determinism had originated from Greek and Christian thought.²⁸ There may be facts that correspond to this thesis. As aforementioned, Ma'bad was known to have engaged with Sawsan, a Christian scholar from Iraq who had a short stint as a Muslim before reverting back to Christianity. Ghailan, on the other hand, was of Coptic descendant. In fact, the centre of Umayyad dynasty in Iraq was ripe for interactions with adherents of other systems of thought – be it Christian or Hellenic. It is also probable that many of the Muslim thinkers of that time came from Christian background. The freewill debate may well rise within this pluralistic context.

Further evidence may come from a tract attributed to Theodore Abu Qurrah (d. 826), Bishop of Harran and disciple of the great theologian of the Eastern Church of St. John of Damascus. The tract reported a debate between a Muslim and a Christian and the arguments levelled by the latter at the advocates of predestination, or Muslims.²⁹ Such arguments were in no way rare.

However, the charge that the debate over freewill and pre-determinism was a total result from Greek and Christian incursions on the Muslim mind is untrue. In the words of Watt, “*suggesting that Islam is nothing but a revision of Christian or Jewish or Hellenistic ideas...is misleading and a belittling of the uniqueness and originality of Islam.*”³⁰ As a matter of fact, the source of the freewill-predeterminism debate could well be from within the Islamic sources. In fact, many scholars would agree that the Qur’an and the Islamic Traditions do lend support to both positions (Watt³¹, Wensick³² and Kamali³³). However, the Muslims of the Prophetic era never did engaged in the duality of the issue. Perhaps, it may be due to the Prophet’s own prohibition to engage in such discussions (as recounted in several *hadith*)³⁴ due to the complexity and divisive nature of the problem.³⁵ Or it could be due to simplicity and broad principles of the Islamic creed that is characteristic of all new movements. And after the Prophet’s death, wars ensued with the Romans and Persians that completely absorbed the mental and physical energies of the early Muslims. In addition, the Muslims were also occupied with propagation of their newfound faith that they had little time to indulge in abstract discussions of dogmas.³⁶

It had also been noted above that the debate had emerged from the political struggles that took place after Uthman and Ali’s assassinations. Thus, Greek and Christian theology incursions had assumed a catalytic role but not the source of the debate. Seen from the anthropological and historical scholarship, the debate could also be made critical when dialectical reason encountered head on with pre-Islamic beliefs on fate.

The pre-Islamic Arabs did believe in fate or destiny, which were an embodiment of *time* and the *harsh workings of nature*. As observed by Watt, “*the pre-Islamic Arabs thought that the main events in a person’s life were predetermined by fate (or time), and the Qur’an seems to have accepted this idea but replaced fate by God.*”³⁷ Although Watt’s opinion that the Qur’an merely adopted and modify the pre-Islamic beliefs is too simplistic and incomplete, we cannot deny that pre-Islamic notions of fate did influence the early Muslim thought when it comes to formulating an understanding of *qada’ wa qadar*. In fact, it could also be an overture to the later Sunnite position of the issue.³⁸ Concepts like pre-determination of sustenance (*rizq*), term (*ajal*) and fortunes, were pre-existing amongst the Arabs before the coming of Islam. This could be a

reason why the Qadarite movement was not really in vogue, other than the need to challenge the atrocities committed by the Umayyads.

From the above discussions, we can reject the thesis that the debate originated due to Greek and Christian thoughts' incursions. What is probable is perhaps that the incursions of these foreign thoughts had acted as an impetus or assumed a catalytic role in the rise of the debate within its political context.

2.3 Duality of the Qur'an / Traditions

Although political struggles had led to the debate over man's freedom of will, it could not have happened without support within the Islamic sources. Expectantly, upholders of the two antithetical positions could find support within the Scripture and the vastly circulated *Sunna* of the Prophet [*pbuh*]. A brief survey of the Qur'an and the Hadith will reveal the duality of the Islamic position on the debated matter.

a. Pre-Determinism / Fatalism / Predestination

There are verses in the Qur'an and records from the *Hadith* that assert man's freedom of will. However, such verses are usually overshadowed by the emphasis on God's power and sovereignty. In the Traditions, the situation is more glaringly focused upon *qadar* than human capacity to choose and act. Significantly, two major canonical collections of *hadith*, al-Bukhari and Muslim, contain separate sections (or books) on *qadar* but no such sections on the nature of the good or on justice (divine or general).

In *Surah al-Hud*, 11:34, Prophet Noah addressed his rejecters as such:

"My counsel will not benefit you, much as I desire to give you good counsel, if God has willed to leave you in your misguidance."

In *Surah al-Tawbah*, 9:51, we are told:

“Say: Nothing will happen to us except what God has decreed for us. He is our protector, and in God let the believers put their trust.”

The Traditions were even more explicit in denying any form of freedom in humans. One’s destiny is fixed as narrated in the following *hadith*:

Hudhayfa b. Asid reported that the Prophet [pbuh], said:

“Two angels visit every foetus in the womb upon completion of forty or forty-five nights and say: ‘O Lord! Is it misguided or righteous?’ Then they write (the answer). Then they ask: ‘O Lord! Is it male or female?’ Then they write (the answer). They also write its deeds, wealth and means of livelihood, and time of death. Then they roll off the parchment to which nothing is added nor detracted afterwards.”⁹

The above *hadith* leaves no room for *ikhtiyar* to be asserted. If human deeds were pre-written, how can there be freewill? In addition, it would seem that wealth and means of livelihood are predetermined and has no connections whatsoever with individual efforts.

One very interesting narration in *Sabih Muslim’s Kitab al-Qadar* is a *hadith* reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah:

“In a discussion that occurred between Adam and Moses, peace be on them both, (in the presence of God) Moses said to Adam: God created you by His Hand and breathed into you of His spirit, (and made) the angels prostrate to you; God then admitted you in Paradise and then you brought down the people, because of your error, to this earth! Adam replied to Moses: you are the chosen of God, He honoured you with His speech and revealed the scripture to you; how long was it that God created the Torah before He created me. Moses replied: Forty years. Then Adam asked: Did you find in it the verse (and Adam disobeyed his Lord,

so he was led astray)? Moses replied “Yes”. Adam then told Moses: You blame me for an act I did which God had prescribed for me to do forty years before He created me. The Prophet (Mubammad) then said, “Adam reasoned with Moses as such” (he said this three time).”⁴⁰

One can easily, on the authority of this *hadith*, asserts the *jabriyah* position. Did Adam commit the sin of disobeying God’s commandment on the basis that God Himself had prescribed that rebellion on Adam? The inevitable question then would be: Can God willed *against* Himself (i.e. willing that man should go *against* His injunctions)? And if the answer is a yes, can man, in the ethical sense, be held responsible for his acts of rebellion against God? Will there be any meaning in the concept of Heaven (as a reward for good deeds) and Hell (as a punishment for rebellion)?

Consider also the explicit *hadith* in which the angel of God was commanded to write down four things – livelihoods, his death, his deeds and his fortune and misfortune –the moment the soul was blown into the womb after forty days of conception.⁴¹ In addition, the same *hadith* recounted that:

“Truly one amongst you will certainly act like the actions of the people of Heaven until there remains but the distance of a cubit between him and Paradise when suddenly the writing of destiny overcomes him and he begins to act like the actions of the people of Hell and he thus enters Hell. And truly another one amongst you will certainly act like the actions of the people of Hell until there remains between him and Hell the distance of a cubit and the writing of his destiny overcomes him and he begins to act like the people of Heaven and he enters it.”

It looks, upon a glance, that predestination is a foregone conclusion based on the above *hadith*. In fact, fatalism is evident from many of the reports quoted.⁴² But how should one view the above in the light of other verses and reports that seems to negate predestination and support freedom of will? Careful considerations must be

taken before one accepts the meaning of the Traditions quoted above, at face value and devoid of its context, socio-political situations and the *spirit* of the *hadith*.

b. Freedom of Will

In contrast to the fatalistic outlook of the above verses and *hadith*, there are Qur'anic verses that gave the impression that man is free to act according to the choices laid before him. One of the most often quoted verses is *Surah al-Kahf*, 18:29, where Allah says:

“Say, that truth has come from your Lord, let him who will, believe, and let him who will reject.”

In *Surah al-Insan*, 76:3, we also find the following indications:

“We have shown man the path (to truth and deliverance); whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will).”

One must also bear in mind that on the authority of the Qur'an, Allah said:

“God is never unjust in the least degree...”⁴³

This justice would imply, as the Mu'tazilah would assert, that man be rewarded in the Hereafter according to the deeds that he chose to perform out of his own freewill – not deeds that were assigned unto him without him having the ability nor power to reject it.

The following verses also explicitly state that man is morally responsible for his actions and that God will mete out the appropriate consequence in a just manner:

“Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul: nor is your Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His servants.”⁴⁴

“Verily God will not deal unjustly with man in aught: it is man that wrongs his own soul.”⁴⁵

A *hadith* in *Sahih Muslim* is even explicitly clear on the issue:

Abu Dhar says that the Prophet (pbuh) said that Allah says: “O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself, and have also forbidden it among you, so do not treat each other unjustly. O My servants! It is your deeds for which I will call you to account. Whoever receives any good, he should be thankful to Allah, and he whom any misfortune befalls should blame no one but his own self for it.”

What we observed in the above verses are clear Qur’anic stipulations on man’s position with regards to his actions: man is to be morally responsible for his actions and that God will deal appropriately with them in a just way. The Qur’an also rebuked those who said: “If only God had guided me, I should certainly have been among the righteous!” It is clear then that man rejected His signs out of his own free will.⁴⁶ This must be taken into careful consideration before evaluating our understanding of *qada’ wa qadar*. A real synthesis must, ultimately, satisfy polarities of freewill and God’s power (as emphasised in the seemingly ‘fatalistic’ verses and *hadith*) as well as positing a moral responsibility that is very much characteristic of a just and ethical system in Islam.

From all of the above, we can safely state that whether one believes in the Qadariyyah position or the Jabariyyah position, one can dig within the Qur’anic verses and wealth of Traditions to find support to either position. This is what makes the problem more intricate amongst the early Muslims. It is the duality of the nature of the Islamic sources that provides the theological bearings on the discussion over freewill and pre-determinism – without which the issue would have had a foregone conclusion.

3. THE FORMULATIONS OF THE ORTHODOX POSITION

The above discussions traced the origin of the issue within the political and social context of the early Muslims. Having briefly discussed the rise of the Qadarites and Jabarites, I shall now describe the position of the Mu'tazilahs and the revolt of al-Ash'ari that led to the formulations of the orthodox position of the *ablus-Sunnah wal jamaah*.

3.1 The Mu'tazilah's Insistence on Freewill

The Qadari movement was indeed anticipating the coming of the Mu'tazilah school of thought. With the coming of the Mu'tazilah, the issue of freewill and determinism took a turn from its political nature to systematic theology. Besides maintaining the freedom of man, the Mu'tazilites argued for the concept of God's justice. Wasil had criticised the Determinists such as Jahm Ibn Safwan for making a mockery of the concept of religious obligation (*taklif*) and rendered the concept of divine justice as meaningless. Humans could not be held responsible for their actions if they do not possess freewill. Denying freewill would also go contrary to the Qur'anic idea of reward and punishment according to the justice of God. Central also to the Mu'tazilah doctrine is the view that God cannot do evil. By attributing all human actions to God, we are in fact saying that God is also responsible for our evil doings. God, by virtue of His wisdom and justice, could only command what was right or commendable (*ma'ruf*) and prohibit what was reprehensible (*munkar*). Furthermore, God is not frivolous (*safih*). As such, He must have the best regard for the welfare of His creatures. These form the basic beliefs of the Mu'tazilah on man's freedom and God's justice.

Although the Mu'tazilites were defenders of the concept of freewill, there were differences in opinion as to the nature of that freedom. I shall briefly discuss four central Mu'tazilites' conceptions.

a. *Abu'l-Hudhayl and Bishr Ibn al-Mu'tamir*

Abu'l-Hudhayl (d. 841), a Mutazilite theologian who headed the School of Basra, conceived the notion of 'generation' (*tawallud*), or the causal nexus between the individual as the agent and the freely chosen action as the effect. He and his followers then divided all actions in two – those in which the modality is known and those in which the modality is unknown. An example of an action in which the modality is known is the releasing of an arrow. As for actions with unknown modality, pleasure, pain, hunger, satiety, knowledge and ignorance are some of the examples.

Accordingly, Abu'l-Hudhayl and his followers would say that man was the author of the first type of actions whereas God was the real author of the second type of actions. However, other Mutazilites like Bishr Ibn al-Mu'tamir of the rival School of Baghdad, did not recognise such distinctions and held the view that individuals were the authors of all the actions they 'generated', regardless of whether or not they knew their modality.⁴⁷ Despite these differences, both schools agreed that individuals are free in the domain of 'willing' as well as in the domain of outward action or 'doing' (*fi'l*). This stand is to be rejected by the Determinists who held the view that the power to choose and to act belongs exclusively to God.

b. *Ibrahim al-Nazzam and Mu'ammār Ibn 'Abbad*

Another Mu'tazilite theologian, Ibrahim al-Nazzam (d. 845) formulated a variation to the subject of 'generation'. Al-Nazzam put forth the theory of latency and manifestation (*zuhur wa kumun*). This theory states that all things were initially created together by God and imbued with certain specific powers or qualities. These powers or faculties are latent until such a time where they are ready to become manifested in human actions or physical occurrences. This theory should be viewed in the light of al-Nazzam's theory of nature (*tab'*) in which all actions were forms of motion, and God caused every such motion through a 'necessity of nature'. Thus, al-

Nazzam managed to assert human freedom and natural efficacy without fringing upon God's prerogative as the ultimate or primary Agent in the universe.⁴⁸

Some Mu'tazilites such as Mu'ammār Ibn 'Abbad (d. 834) had further refined al-Nazzam's theory of nature by arguing that God was the Author or Cause of bodies only whereas the accidents were the products of bodies. These accidents can occur naturally, as in fire that causes burning, or voluntarily as in human beings, of whom were the cause of knowledge, willing, hate and representation.

The Mu'tazilites formulations of the theories of generation, is also known as theories of 'causation'. In fact, we find that their idea of the natural law that governs the universe is a theme of modern science and allows for scientific studies based on inductive methods. The general idea behind this is that the universe exhibits a certain pattern and moves along specific laws of nature. This allows man to anticipate the next cause of event and thus formulate ways to control the happenings around him. The significance of the Mu'tazilite theory of causation is not to be downplayed since it was the worldview that made them great scientists of the Abbasid era. However, the Mu'tazilites' concern was more theological than practical. On their part, they were anxious to relieve God of the responsibility for evil in the world as well as to safeguard His justice.

3.2 The Ash'arites' Response

Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935) was a strong opponent to the Mu'tazilah school of thought. He was himself a Mu'tazilite up till the age of forty, after which he renounced his views and formulated his own school of thought that were to be widely accepted and regarded as the orthodox Islamic position. According to al-Ash'ari, positing man as the creator of his deeds implies that there is another power beside God's. This was tantamount to polytheism or at the very least, dualism. It is not surprising therefore, to find al-Ash'ari condemning the Mu'tazilites as Manicheans or Magians (*Majusi*) of Islam.

In one of his major writings, *al-Ibanah'an Usul al-Diyanah*, al-Ash'ari wrote:

“We believe that God has created everything by bidding it simply to be...and that there is nothing good or evil on earth except what God has willed...that no one can do anything before he actually does it, dispense with God or escape His knowledge; that there is no creator but God, and that man’s deeds are created and pre-ordained by God...and that the servants cannot create anything, but are themselves created...that God can reform the unbelievers and show them mercy, so as to become believers instead; but He actually wanted them to be unbelievers, as He foreknew, has abandoned them and sealed their hearts. [We believe] that good and evil are the result of God’s decree and pre-ordination (qada’ wa qadar), good or evil, sweet or bitter, and we know that what has missed us could not have hit us, or what has hit us could not have missed us, and that the servants are unable to profit or harm themselves upon it without God.”⁴⁹

It is difficult not to attribute a sense of fatalism in the above proclamation of al-Ash‘ari. Al-Ash‘ari seemed to have adopted the predestinarian position of the Jabarites, if not for his formulation of the theory of acquisition (*kasb*) that was understood to be a synthesis between freewill and determinism.

a. The Synthesis – Theory of Kasb

Al-Ash‘ari had formulated his soft-determinist position in the form of the *kasb*. However, strictly-speaking, the conception of *kasb* had been in existence before Ash‘ari. It could have been introduced by a Mu’tazilite, Dirar b. ‘Amr and developed considerably, directly or indirectly, by the Mu’tazilah of the school of Mu‘ammar.⁵⁰

Briefly stated, al-Ash‘ari distinguished between necessary or compulsory actions and voluntary actions. Necessary actions such as trembling and convulsion were undoubtedly beyond the human control and choice. Thus, al-Ash‘ari was more interested in analysing voluntary actions. He argued that voluntary actions are the result of humanity’s created power or capacity but in reality are the product of God’s creative power. Such actions then may be said to be created by God, but ‘acquired’ by humans. In other words, Ash‘ari made a distinction between creation (*khaliq*) and acquisition (*kasb*) of an action. For Ash‘ari, God is the Creator (*Khaliq*) of human

actions and man is the acquirer (*muktasib*). As for power, only original power (*qadimah*) is effective. Derived power (*hadithah*) can create nothing. Thus, man cannot perform any act even with his derived power, but God is the actual performer of his deeds. Still, God gives him free choice (*ikhtiyar*) between alternatives of right and wrong. But this *ikhtiyar* cannot produce any action but God does the actions for him. Therefore, it is only by intention on the part of man that he can be made responsible for his actions.⁵¹ By this, al-Ash'ari claimed that rewards and punishments are possible – an issue that was a thorn-in-the side for the Determinists.

However, al-Ash'ari's theory of acquisition, is largely obscure and raised as many questions as it answered. It was intended to be an intermediate position between the rigid predestinarian position of the traditionalists and the libertarianism of the Mutazilah. But despite the praiseworthy attempt, its position is still "*far too fideistic and therefore at times, unsatisfactory to a more searching mind*".⁵² But it was this intermediate position that was finally adopted by the Sunnis in general and became the official position of orthodox Islam.

It is also important to note that several assumptions need to be clarified. Several Ash'arite theologians tried to refine this theory or clarify the assumptions in variety of ways. Amongst the most elaborate of these attempts was by al-Baqillani (d. 1013), who adopted the atomic theory. This was followed thus by al-Baghdadi.

b. Ash'arism's Atomic Occasionalism

According to al-Baqillani, everything in the world is made up of atoms and accidents. The atom (*juz'*) was then defined as the 'bearer' of accidents. Accidents, according to al-Baqillani, cannot endure for two successive moments, but are continually created by God, who produces and annihilates them at will.⁵³ Another Ash'arite theologian, al-Baghdadi added that the atoms in which these accidents inhere are continually created by God and can only endure by virtue of the accident of duration created in them by God.⁵⁴ What the atomists of the Ash'arite school of thought developed was no doubt Greek in substance. Democritus and Epicurus had

put forth a semblance of Ash‘arite atomism several centuries before, although Democritus believed in eternal nature of the atoms.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, what we find is a convenient adaptation of Greek atomism that suits the notion of God’s absolute creative Power. But a much more proper term to be used in describing Ash‘arism metaphysics is *atomic occasionalism*, which can be briefly stated as *“the universe composing of atoms which are not only created by God ex nihilo but recreated from one instant to the next.”*

c. *The Critics of Ash‘arism*

Al-Baqillani had indeed played a pioneering role in developing Ash‘arism’s metaphysical structure. Ibn Khaldun, for example, regarded al-Baqillani as being responsible for introducing *“the existence of atoms, the void, and the proposition that an accident does not inhere in another accident or endure for two moments.”*⁵⁶ He viewed this as the rational premises upon which Ash‘ari’s proofs or theories depend.

But al-Baqillani’s atomism had been a widely circulated view in the eighth and ninth century. The Ash‘arites had merely adopted atomism as a convenient device for bolstering their theological claims. Accordingly, Aristotelian causal processes cannot accommodate God’s prerogative to act freely and imperiously in this world. Thus, atomistic theories became the accepted alternatives of the Ash‘arites. What is surprising is that although Ash‘arism itself was against the metaphysical speculations of the Mu‘tazilah, they too could not escape from speculative metaphysics, which in their case, was done to provide support for the traditional Islamic position.⁵⁷ Majid Fakhry remarked that it is therefore strange that *“despite the triumph of Ash‘arism, later Ash‘arite scholars continued their assault on the Mutazilah, on one hand, and the philosophers, on the other.”*⁵⁸ This observation was in fact an echo of Ibn Rushd’s⁵⁹.

The later Ash‘arites were seen as no better than the Mu‘tazilites on their speculative metaphysical reasoning that distinction between them were unclear other than their doctrinal stand.⁶⁰ As a result, the followers of Ahmad ibn Hanbal opposed strongly the metaphysics of Ash‘arism. The Hanafites too disagreed with Ash‘arism

and preferred to adopt the Maturidian doctrines instead, which differed with Ash'arism in minor controversial points. Similarly, Ibn Hazm criticized Ash'arism. And so did the Sultan Tugharil Beg, founder of the Seljuk Dynasty and a follower of Imam Abu Hanifa. Tugharil had in fact banished all Ash'arites from his empire.⁶¹ His minister, Abu Nasir Mansur, who was a Mu'tazilite, had persecuted many Ash'arite scholars. On the other hand, Tugharil's successor, Sultan Alp Arslan and his famous vizier, Nizam al-Mulk, supported and ended the persecution of Ash'arites. Nizam in fact, founded the Nizamite Academy in Baghdad in 1066 CE for the defence of Ash'arism. Under his patronage, Abu al-Ma'ali 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaini got to preach Ash'arites doctrines freely. Al-Juwaini incidentally was the teacher of al-Ghazali, who popularised Ash'arism. But al-Ghazali, strictly speaking, was not an Ash'arite himself. Nevertheless, al-Ghazali thought that the Ash'arite mode of thought was excellent for the masses.⁶²

What we had observed so far is how Ash'arism rejected the Mu'tazilah's insistence on freewill and instead, chose to formulate a synthesis between freewill and determinism within what is known as the *kasb*. Right from his renunciation of Mu'tazilism at the age of forty, al-Ash'ari proceeded to discuss and formulate the Sunni creed, which was largely a response and a contra to the Mu'tazilah school of speculative theology. Thus seen within this angle, it is rightfully said that Ash'arism should be seen as or categorised more as a reactionary movement against Mu'tazilism.⁶³ It is this reactionary movement that had mass appeal and was adopted as the orthodox Islamic position within the fold of the *ablus-Sunnah wal Jamaah*.

4. IMPLICATIONS

The triumph of Ash'arism had in fact reduced all theological discussions into creedal statements.⁶⁴ Thus, the creed of the *ablus-Sunnah wal Jamaah* was narrowly defined and whosoever differ from these creedal statements are considered not within the fold of the accepted group by Allah – out of 72 other 'schisms' within Islam, as a famous *hadith* in Tirmidhi's *Kitabul Iman* recounted.

However, Ash‘arites’ conception and understanding of *qada’ wa qadar* was not to be easily overlooked without criticisms by the modern scholars of this age. As a whole, modern scholars had their fair share of criticisms of the debate that occurred in medieval Islamic period.

4.1 An Assessment of Modern Scholars’ Views

Generally, modern scholars tend to see both Mu’tazilite and Ash‘arite discourses on the issue as representing two extremes. As put forth by Fazlur Rahman, the Mu’tazilah had went to one extreme by linking the idea of divine justice to that of human justice. On the other hand, the orthodox had gone to the other extreme in forfeiting the rationality of justice to the transcendent mind of God alone.⁶⁵ Another scholar, George F. Hourani, wrote that Ash‘arites had “*little to say on a general theory of ethics beyond criticism of their opponents. The logical consequence of their position was just the theory of an all-embracing divine law, which had indeed been worked out by jurists prior to Ash‘ari.*” On the Mu’tazilah, Hourani added that they (i.e. the Mu’tazilah) “*had the strongest stimulus to develop a system of ethics in the sense understood today*” but was challenged to show “*how it was possible for man by his unaided reason to know the right and the good, and if possible to define what these were in their reality, independent of the divine will.*”

Within the Mu’tazilah’s extremity and Ash‘arism’s harsh responses, modern scholars seek to adopt a balanced understanding of the issue. For instance, Muhammad ‘Abduh seems to choose a conciliatory line between the Mu’tazilah and the Ash‘arite theology on this. The Mu’tazilah, ‘Abduh claimed, had committed the fault of representing God as a servant enforcing the dictates of man. The Ash‘arites and the Hanbalites on the other hand, had represented God as a despot who acts as He pleases. But both groups agreed that God’s actions exhibit His wisdom and that caprice or folly cannot be attributed to Him. Thus, ‘Abduh believed that the differences between the two groups are merely verbal. Another modernist, Ghulam Ahmed Parvaiz gave an interesting insight into the medieval dispute. The Qur’an did stressed on His limited power but, at the same time, it also mentioned of Him using His power according to the principles which He Himself had laid down out of His own freewill.⁶⁶ It is easy to see the novelty of Parvaiz’s understanding of the issue. The principle argument of Ash‘arism had always been that God cannot be limited in any form

whatsoever. Therefore, when the Mu'tazilah limited God on what He can or cannot do, the Ash'arites condemned them. But the point of the matter, as Parvaiz saw it, is that God in His own accord and will, limits Himself. God indeed has the power to limit Himself.⁶⁷ For example, who are we to say that God cannot choose to put it upon Himself that He *must* punish the wicked and reward the faithful? This is indeed the situation that had been largely ignored by the Ash'arites.

In fact, Ash'ari's *a*-ethical position is an apparent weakness and was criticised by many modernists. Fazlur Rahman, for instance, was vocal in pointing out the scepticism and relativism of the orthodox position. "*If there is nothing good or evil in itself, then neither human reason nor yet Divine Revelation can declare anything to be either good or evil in itself.*"⁶⁸ This is a refutation to the views promoted by orthodox scholars like al-Amidi and al-Shatibi.

Another crucial criticism against Ash'ari theology is on the conception of God's will and Omnipotence. Azizan Haji Baharuddin, for instance, saw Ash'ari's conception of God's will and Omnipotence as "*the greatest grip*" that "*could have created the 'deadening' effect on the thinking of the Muslim masses during those periods often called the backward period of Islam.*"⁶⁹ He added that despite Ash'arism's praiseworthy attempt at synthesis, its position is still "*far too fideistic and therefore at times, unsatisfactory to a more searching mind*".⁷⁰ Others commented that as much as al-Ash'ari was to defend God's prerogative to act as He wills, his theology had denigrated God to the position of an unjust and capricious position - a God who is "cold-blooded" and shows no effect whether His creatures do good or evil.⁷¹ But on the account of Ash'arites own system, one can hardly faulted them since they defined God's justice as totally different from human understanding of justice. This position seemed to have no support from the various Qur'anic verses that emphasised on *taklif* and responsibility of man. Moreover, should justice as we understood is in fact different from God's justice, no ethical system is possible to be constructed and no meaning can be assigned to obligations and responsibilities – for what, we questioned, will guarantee salvation for us, if even a disbeliever can, on accounts of His mercy, be put into Paradise? On this, a distinguishing aspect of the difference between modernists and traditionalists is related to the question of man's ability to grasp divine moral imperatives as well as the position of individual responsibility. The modern rationalists would of course, insist on the ability of the human

mind to grasp religious and moral imperatives, very much close to the Mu'tazili position. They would also insist on individual responsibility for all human acts. The traditionalists, following the Ash'arite *kalam*, would say that many religious and moral imperatives are beyond man's understanding and will cautiously view the use of reason as well as positing that God is the ultimate mover of affairs, relieving man of some of the happenings that seemed to be 'beyond his control'.

We cannot deny the extensive support for freewill by the modern scholars. Hamid Enayat gave a stark observation on this: "*Like the Mutazilah, the modernists think that Islam upholds the principle of free will (ikhtiyar), as opposed to that of predestinarianism (jabr), since it has been obvious to both groups that Muslims will never desist from meekly enduring injustice unless they become first convinced of their capability to determine their destiny.*"⁷² For instance, 'Abduh argued for freedom of will as a necessity for the concept of responsibility, which in turn is the basis of religious obligations [*taklif*]⁷³. 'Abduh "*energetically rejects the doctrine of fatalism commonly attributed to Islam. For him true Islam is the negation of fatalism and the affirmation of freewill.*"⁷⁴ He also argued that forty-six verses of the Qur'an explicitly maintained freewill and that the Prophet and his Companions, through their works and actions, "*testify to an unshakable faith in the freedom of our actions.*"⁷⁵ Man in principle, argued 'Abduh, is responsible for his actions. Again, a similar view was echoed by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. Sir Sayyed argued: "*Man is free to employ all his natural endowments but only within the limits set by his nature. Taklif...becomes meaningful only when the faculty of free choice given by God to man is fully acknowledged.*"⁷⁶ The issue of *taklif* is an important project of the modernist movements. For the modernists, *taklif* is seen as a broad and general ethical sense of the need to do social good and not in the narrow sense of obligation to perform specific liturgical and ethical acts prescribed by rituals (*'ibadat*).⁷⁷ This is in line with the concept of man as assuming the role of the *khalifah* on this earth. Religious obligations is thus seen not in the limited sense of specific individual worship (*'ibadah khusus*), but in a larger context of his position as vicegerent. All these are possible, the modernists assert, if man is free and were given the power to act.

Apparently, the canvass for freedom of will is seen in other writings by 'Ali Shari'ati and Mohammad Iqbal. Iqbal is clear on his denial of predestination. Iqbal did not believe that *taqdir* entails predestination. He said that "*the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be*

traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility...Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities'.⁷⁸ And further on, Iqbal defined 'destiny' as such: "(destiny is) not an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie between the depths of its nature, and serially actualize themselves without any feeling of external compulsion".⁷⁹ As for Shari'ati, he saw mankind becoming a "true human being only if it can liberates itself from [their] deterministic conditions".⁸⁰ But a point to be noted here is that although a common theme amongst the modernists is the emphasis on man's freedom and ability to enact changes within himself and society, the outward expressions are different. Shari'ati, Amien Rais⁸¹ and Iqbal may express the issue within a sociological and perhaps political framework whereas the likes of Harun Nasution⁸², Fazlur Rahman and possibly 'Amir Ali⁸³ may assert the metaphysical and historical framework of the doctrine of freewill.

We could also see a tendency amongst the modernists to interpret *qada' wa qadar* as God's setting of a universal law of cause-and-effects [*sunnatullah*]. 'Abduh again explained that the term *qada'* did not mean predestination as understood by Muslim fatalists. Rather, it meant a "*principle of causation in nature, but within this framework freedom of the will still operates*". Such view is not uncommon amongst other like-minded reformists of the modern age. Shibli Nu'mani for instance, saw the law of cause-and-effects at play in Prophet Muhammad [*pbuh*] and his immediate successors' military victories⁸⁴ – a variant against the 'Traditionalists' view of Divine support at work. But this did not mean Shibli denied any Divine factors or intervention at play.⁸⁵ Instead, he argued that causal nexus could not be totally disregarded or ignored. If cause-and-effects are not in place, how then can one account for the defeats suffered in, for example, Uhud and Yarmuk? Similar views of *qada' wa qadar* or 'decrees of God' as principle of causation in nature is apparent in other modernists' writings like Amir Ali, Ghulam Ahmad Parvaiz and Hili.

What we had observed is the stark emphasis on the concept of man's ability to change destiny. Although none of the modernists mentioned above can be described as neo-Mu'tazilites, their ideas on the issue of freewill and pre-determinism is undoubtedly Mu'tazili in principle. With regards to worldview, they are more inclined to accepting the Rushdian as compared to Ash'arism-Ghazzalian ones, especially in the understanding of the principles of

causation and scientific/rational laws. *Qadar* is to be seen or interpreted in the light of causal nexus, argued the modernists and reformers in unison. It is obviously clear that the reason for the assertion of cause and effects is to uphold man's freedom and power – an agenda that was necessary to bring the Muslims out of the stagnation and decay.⁸⁶ However, rigid belief in causation ironically destroys freewill and led to a conception of God's limited power. Herein lies the delicate position of the modernists-reformers.

But as a whole, I agree with Hashim Kamali in observing a wider support of *ikhtiyar* and partial support of determinism amongst the modernists-reformers. The modernists-reformers' stand is also “*more balanced and reasonably free of some of the exaggerations of the earlier scholastic discourse*”.⁸⁷ This may well help us in our reformulation of our understanding of *qada' wa qadar*.

5. CONCLUSION

We had seen how early Islamic history saw the coming of the freewill problem. We had also seen the resolve made by the Sunni doctors, particularly Ash'ari and Maturidi. And we had observed some of the tendencies and attitudes of modern scholars on the issue. Although many conclusions can be drawn from these, I would highlight several key issues that we can derive and ponder upon:

- a. Much of our present understanding of *qada' wa qadar* is tinted by the historical developments of early Islamic history.
- b. The discussions and eventual resolve of the issue occurred in medieval periods.
- c. Several modern advancements and thought had caused an aversion from medieval scholasticism.

Can we therefore treat the issue of freewill and determinism as an ‘*open problem*’? Or shall we claim that our understanding of the majestic nature of God's will and its true interaction with the human will, as final and complete? None can say that one's speculative answer is the definitive one, although one can maintain that the views offered do not by far, run contrary to the selective Islamic ethos. It is utterly wrong to assume that the Mu'tazilites'

views on *qadar* is not bounded within the Qur'anic statements. This was a common mistake by many European scholars who relied mainly on works like the heresiography of ash-Shahrastani that gives a summary of sectarian views without their detailed arguments. This together with rationalistic outlook of the Mu'tazilah led scholars to assume that all their arguments were purely rational.⁸⁸ However, actual writings by Mu'tazilites themselves had dispelled such misconceptions. One such writing is *Kitab al-Usul al-Khamsa* by Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar, which argued for man's ability or power [*qudra*] to act based on Surah 65:7.⁸⁹ Another would be al-Jubba'i's argument for freewill which centres around the Qur'anic verse 14:4 that says: "...God leaves astray those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases." Though at a glance, this verse implies predestination, Jubba'i interpreted it as a state of affair *after* the Day of Judgment where the righteous will be guided to Paradise and the wicked to be caused to stray from it.⁹⁰

In no way no way can we say that our understanding of *qada wa qadar* is comprehensive, coherent and complete. I found that even the most convenient answer – *that we are free in our choice and actions, but God simply know in advance what will be our choice and actions* – is flawed.⁹¹ Such a position is either self-defeating or generates into *fatalism*, the very thing that the explanation seeks to reject. As the philosopher Anthony Kenny remarked:

*"Whether determinism is true or false, therefore, it seems that there cannot be a God who infallibly knows future free actions, and yet is not the author of sin. If determinism is true, it is comparatively easy to explain how he can infallibly foresee free action, but impossibly difficult to show how he is not the author of sin. If indeterminism is true, the Freewill Defence can be offered to exonerate God for responsibility for sin, but no coherent account seems possible of his infallible knowledge of future free actions."*⁹²

We need to understand that Divine Message was sent within the context of a particular time frame. This is an indication that we need as many researches and inquiries there are to try and understand this knowledge as clearly and correctly. C. A. Qadir wrote that "*Old interpretations may not be enough or may not suit the requirements of the age we are passing through. Hence to rely entirely on past precedents and past solutions may be disastrous. Questions may be asked even about dogmas which are regarded as eternal and indisputable.*"⁹³ In addition, on whether the

Sunna advocates freewill and man's ability to act autonomously may well depend on one's understanding of the concept of *Sunna* as contrasted with *hadith*. Thus, modern scholars like Fazlur Rahman would see the *Sunna* as the general spirit of the Prophetic mission, passed along to his followers rather than a specific statement of a dogma. As such, it is understandable why Hasan al-Basri contended in his letter to Caliph 'Abd al-Malik that although there is no specific *hadith* defending his position on freedom of will, he is nevertheless following the *Sunna*.⁹⁴ Such view is also held by S. M. Yusuf.⁹⁵

It should be noted that there are serious threats to theism on the issue of freewill-determinism. This comes in the form of *atheistic existentialism* that asserts total freedom of man. Jean-Paul Sartre argued that if a sovereign God existed, then persons would not be free agents.⁹⁶ But the anxiety humans faced when having to make crucial decisions shows that our decisions are not already pre-programmed by God, our nature, genes or social conditioning. For Sartre, he concurred with Leibniz and most theologians and philosophers that a God who created the world would fill it with creatures having certain given natures. If so, then everything a person does would simply be determined by the sort of nature that God had given people as part of His plan. But since this is not true, Sartre concluded that a sovereign God does not exist. How are we to respond to such assertions in modern times?

Perhaps, the problem of freewill-predeterminism has no answer indeed. If we were to accept this proposition, then we could be agreeing with the likes of Albert Camus, Wittgenstein and many post-modernists in seeing contradictions and absurdity as a structure of life. The problem of freewill-predeterminism is in fact a universal problem that besets theologians, philosophers and every thinking, conscientious individuals. Boustead may therefore be right in stating that the problem "*arise out of human experience at its source...If the logical problem is a problem for anyone, it is a problem for all human beings.*"⁹⁷ He added: "*A 'determinist' may have solved to his own satisfaction a logical dilemma and indeed may have decided 'empirically' that all deeds are caused; but he too must still make decisions...Whether I believe my behaviour is thoroughly determined or more or less free, I want must still get on and live.*"⁹⁸ This I believe, is the crux of the matter. One who believes that his destiny is fixed is merely professing a belief that runs contrary to his own conscience and actions in every day life. As Hili noted, such persons would continue repairing their houses and locking their valuables and properties

when away. This is also echoed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr that “*despite all the debates among theologians, men did and do continue to live with a consciousness of their free will and hence responsibility before God.*”⁹⁹

In addition, modern advancements in thought and science had created a need for us to re-evaluate our understanding of *qada wa qadar*. Both the *ulema* and the scientists have a role to play. To what extent can we still accept *atomistic occasionalism* as a metaphysical ground for our understanding of *qada wa qadar*? Can modern psychology and the fields of neuroscience and quantum physics provide clues to the issue of determinism? What we are saying is not to do away with the sixth article of faith but rather to seek new ways to assist us in our understanding of the doctrine – and not to pick and choose only the verses and Traditions that seems to support one position.¹⁰⁰ This may not be impossible for the Prophet [pbuh] himself used to beseech God: “*Lord, increase me in my knowledge*”. The great *abl al-falasifah* and *mutakallimun* had endeavoured to articulate the doctrines of Islam in a fashion that does not betray the sources of the religion. But when their views became popular and developed into orthodoxy through stifling all further intellectual activities, the Muslim world went into an unavoidable decline and degeneration. Social and intellectual parameters have change in today’s world. While the broadly revealed Islamic principles and doctrines remain true and changeless, interpretations are, sadly, fallible in nature. As such dogmatic assertions may no longer be viable in satisfying the thirst for Islamic truths. In addition, it will be unfair if, our ignorance and unwillingness to think is garbed under the convenient excuse that such ‘problems’ that sprang from human experience is posited as Divine mystery. For how then, can one distinguish between truths and falsehoods? This is the dilemma that comes along with human existence and will continue to occupy the thoughts of men.

NOTES

¹ This is also stated by Syed Muzaffar-ud-din Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*. Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1946, p. 12.

² Rosemary Goring (ed.), *Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions*. New York: Larousse, 1994.

³ One may think he is free simply because of his ignorance of the factors that led him to choose a particular act. See Arthur Shopenhauer's thesis in *On the Freedom of the Will*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.

⁴ A philosophical form of fatalism can be found under the term *Logical Determinism*. This view argues, "a given future event must either occur or not occur. Whichever happens, the prediction that it will happen will turn out to be correct, and therefore was correct all along, whether or not we know it. Therefore, since one statement about the apparent future alternatives is already true, nothing we can do will alter matters." (cf. A.R. Lacey, *Dictionary of Philosophy*. See also the entry "logical determinism" in Ted Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.) It seems that the nature of truth is questioned here with the puzzle: *Can a statement about the future be true when the future comes but not true before the future comes?*

⁵ See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (trans.) John Allen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949.

⁶ G. Vesey and P. Foulkes, *Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990.

⁷ *phub* denotes "peace be upon him", a salutation to Muhammad whenever his name is mentioned, fulfilling a doxological function amongst Muslims.

⁸ *Sahih Muslim*, Ch. 1, Book I, No. 1. Surprisingly, the version found in *Sahih Bukhari* omitted this part.

⁹ Jaafar Sheikh Idris, *The Pillars of Faith*. Riyadh: Presidency of Islamic Research, Ifta and Propagation, Riyadh 1984, p. 24.

¹⁰ Surah *Al-Furqan* 25:2.

¹¹ Dr. Basharat Ahmad for instance stated that: "the term fatalism or predestination may more appropriately be substituted by pre-measurement; for this, in fact, is the sense the Arabic word *taqdir* conveys." See "Taqdir (Pre-Measurement) in Islam" in the *Islamic Review*, Vol. IX, August 1921.

¹² Lutpi Ibrahim, "Pengertian Qada' dan Qadar di dalam al-Qur'an" in his *Antologi Pemikiran Islam*. Malaysia: Hizbi, 1993.

¹³ 'Abdullah Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitab al-Ma'arif*. Cairo: 1969, p. 441. Cited in Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism*. England: Oneworld Publications, 1997, p. 14.

¹⁴ Majid Fakhry, *al-Fikr al-Akblaqi al-'Arabi*. p. 20. Cited, *ibid*.

¹⁵ Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (2nd Edition)*. London: Routledge, 2001, p. 73ff.

¹⁶ For a discussion on whether al-Basri himself was a Qadarite, see William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*. England: Oneworld Publications, 1998, pp. 99 ff.

¹⁷ Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa'l-Nihal (Muslim Sects and Divisions)*, (tr.) A. K. Kazi & J. G. Flynn. London: Keegan Paul International, 1984, p. 78.

¹⁸ *ibid*.

¹⁹ Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction*. p. 16.

²⁰ See *Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman*. Ch. 1, Book 1, No. 1.

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- ²¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam*. England: Oneworld Publications, 2000, p. 43.
- ²² William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*. England: Oneworld Publications, 1998, p. 85.
- ²³ *ibid.*
- ²⁴ Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, XCIV, p. 1589. Cited, Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction*. p. 15.
- ²⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam*. p. 42.
- ²⁶ William Montgomery Watt, *Freewill and Predestination in Early Islam*. London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1948, p. 40-41. What we observed here is that Maimun's counter-response was an attempt to equate and identify God's will with His activities. Thus, what God wills is simultaneous to His actions.
- ²⁷ William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 86.
- ²⁸ See for example Carl H. Becker, *Christianity and Islam*. London: 1909; Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with Reference to the Church Fathers*. London: 1964; and Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study*. Cambridge: 1981.
- ²⁹ Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, XCIV, p. 1589. Cited, Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction*, p. 15.
- ³⁰ William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985, p. 30.
- ³¹ William Montgomery Watt, *Freewill and Predestination in Early Islam*.
- ³² A.J. Wensick, *The Muslim Creed*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965.
- ³³ Hashim Kamali, "Causality and Divine Action: The Islamic Perspective". Presented in the *God, Life and Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives*, International Conference, Islamabad. 6-9 Nov., 2000. Paper available in www.kalam.org.
- ³⁴ One such *hadith* is: "Restrain yourselves (from talking) about fate". This *hadith* is narrated by Ibn Mas'ud and recorded by al-Tabarani. It is classified as *hasan* ("good", in terms of authenticity).
- ³⁵ Muhammad 'Abduh adopted this stand in his *Risalat al-Tawheed*. See 'Abduh, *The Theology of Unity*, (tr. Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg). London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966.
- ³⁶ M. Saeed Shaikh, *Studies in Muslim Philosophy*. Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1994, p.1.
- ³⁷ William Montgomery Watt, *A Short History of Islam*. England: Oneworld Publications, 1996. p. 58. A treatment of pre-Islamic fatalism can be found in Helmer Ringgren's work, *Studies in Arabian Fatalism*. Uppsala: 1955.
- ³⁸ See Shaikh Inayatullah, "Pre-Islamic Arabian Thought" in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, Germany, 1963, p.133.
- ³⁹ Muslim, "Kitab al-Qadar", *Mukhtasar Sahib Muslim*, (ed.), Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Abani, hadith 1848.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, hadith 1842. See also Bukhari, "Kitab al-Qadar", *Sahib al-Bukhari*, hadith 611.
- ⁴¹ This *hadith* is narrated by Abi Abdur Rahman Abdullah bin Mas'ood and can be found in *Sahib Bukhari*, "Kitab al-Qadar".

⁴² The Prophet once said: “There is none of you but has his place assigned either in the Fire or in Paradise.” When queried whether to depend on what is already fated for them, the Prophet replied: “No, but carry on your deeds, for everybody finds it easy to do such deeds (as will lead him to his place).” *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. VII, Book LXXVII, No.602.

⁴³ Surah *An-Nisa'* 4:40.

⁴⁴ Surah *al-Fussilat* 41:46.

⁴⁵ Surah *Yunus* 10:44.

⁴⁶ Surah *al-Zumar* 39:57-59.

⁴⁷ Majid Fakhry, *A Short Introduction*, p. 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁹ cited in R. J. McCarthy, *The Theology of Ash'ari*. Beirut: 1953, pp. 238 ff.

⁵⁰ William Montgomery Watt, “The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition” in *Early Islam: Collected Articles*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990, p. 117-128.

⁵¹ M. Abdul Hye, “Ash'arism” in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 230. See also William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*. Edinburgh: 1979, p. 227.

⁵² Azizan Haji Baharuddin, *Science and Belief: Discourses on New Perceptions*. Malaysia: Institute for Policy Research, n.d., p.168.

⁵³ Al-Baqillani, *al-Tamhid*, p. 18. Cited, Majid Fakhri, *A History of Islamic Philosophy: 2nd Edition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 211.

⁵⁴ Al-Baghdadi, *Usul al-Din*, p. 56. Cited, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ M. Abdul Hye, “Ash'arism” in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 240.

⁵⁶ Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah*, p. 465. Cited, *ibid.* p. 213.

⁵⁷ “Willingly or unwillingly, they [the Ash'arites] had to philosophize 'in order to meet the contemporary philosophers on their own ground.' But when they began philosophizing, they were very earnest and became great metaphysicians.” See M. Abdul Hye, “Ash'arism” in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 238.

⁵⁸ Fakhry, *A Short Introduction*, p. 68.

⁵⁹ Ibn Rushd went further to say that the theory of *kasb* is in fact, self-contradictory and leads to fatalism. See M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 550.

⁶⁰ Muhammad Muslehuddin, *Islam: Its Theology and the Greek Philosophy*. Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1974, pp. 80-81.

⁶¹ Syed Muzaffar-ud-din, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*. p. 55.

⁶² See M. Abdul Hye, “Ash'arism” in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 242-243.

⁶³ Syed Muzaffar-ud-din Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 49.

⁶⁴ See for instance Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, *al-'Aqida al-Tahawiyya*.

⁶⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 89.

⁶⁶ Ghulam Ahmad Parvaiz, *Salsabil: 1st Edition*. p. 311-312. Cited in Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Modern Reformist Thought in the Muslim World*. Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute Press, 1982, p. 50.

⁶⁷ See for instance the *sound hadith* related from Abu Dharr who said that the Prophet (*pbub*) said that Allah says: "O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself, and have also forbidden it among you, so do not treat each other unjustly." (*Sahih Muslim*)

⁶⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*. New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1994, p. 156-157.

⁶⁹ Azizan Haji Baharuddin, *Science and Belief: Discourses on New Perceptions*. p.168.

⁷⁰ *ibid*.

⁷¹ See Firitjof Schuon, "Dilemmas of Theological Speculation With Special Reference to Muslim Scholasticism" in *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 17, 1974, no. (1 & 2). pp. 36-63. See also Kenneth Cragg, "Legacies and Hopes in Muslim Christian Theology" in *Islam Christiana*, Vol. 3, 1977. pp 1-10, and Z. Sardar (ed.), *The Touch of Midas*, Manchester: 1985.

⁷² Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*. Cited in Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994, p. viii.

⁷³ See Muhammad 'Abduh, *The Theology of Unity*, (tr.) Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966.

⁷⁴ Osman Amin, "Muhammad Abduh – Islamic Modernist", p. 165. In Benjamin Rivlin and Joseph S. Szyliowicz (eds.), *The Contemporary Middle East: Tradition and Innovation*. New York: Random House, 1965. pp. 161-187.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

⁷⁶ Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978. p. 37.

⁷⁷ Richard C. Martin *et al*, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*. England: Oneworld Publications, England, 1997, p. 151.

⁷⁸ Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1998, p. 49.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁸⁰ 'Ali Shari'ati, *Modern Man and His Prisons in Man and Islam*, (tr.) Fatollah Marjani. Houston: Free Islamic Literature, 1981, p. 46.

⁸¹ Amien Rais noted that despite the common belief that Ash'arism is a middle position between Jabriyyah and Qadariyyah, it is in fact very much an ally of the Jabriyyah. (M. Amien Rais, *Cakrawala Islam: Antara Cita dan Fakta*. Bandung: Mizan, 1987, pp. 118-119.) This view is supported by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p. 19.

⁸² See Nasution, *Teologi Islam*. Jakarta: n.d..

⁸³ See Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*. Selangor: Thinker's Library, 1996.

⁸⁴ Shibli Nu'mani, *Maqalat-e-shibli*. Vol. IV, 1934. p. 48. Cited in Mazheruddin Siddiqi, *Modern Reformist Thought in the Muslim World*, p. 8.

⁸⁵ Interestingly, the traditionalists use the example of Surah *al-Anfal* 8:17 as an indication that man has no power other than God working through him. On the battle of *Badr*, God said: "It is not you who slew them; it was God: when you threw (a handful of dust), it was not your act, but God's..." But according to Kamali (*Causality and Divine Action: An Islamic Perspective*), the verse may be read literally or figuratively and perhaps "as a proof of the Omnipotence of God rather than a description of the precise nature of causality."

⁸⁶ An observation made by Pervez Hoodboy is that Ash 'ari theology is "anti-science...(because) any kind of prediction is impossible". (Pervez Hoodboy, *Islam and Science*. Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed & Co., 1992, p. 119 ff) This is apparent from Ash'ari's rejection of rationality and causal connections in the world. This is what impedes any form of a scientific revolution in the Muslim world; the very agenda of the modernists' call for reforms.

⁸⁷ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Causality and Divine Action: An Islamic Perspective*.

⁸⁸ Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*. p. 309.

⁸⁹ See Richard C. Martin *et al*, *Defenders of Reason in Islam*, for details.

⁹⁰ Edward Craig [Gen. Ed.], *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge, 1998.

⁹¹ Iqbal, for instance, found the issue so perplexing that he adopted the stance of denying God's foreknowledge. Iqbal recognised the inevitable conclusion of fatalism once you posit Divine Omniscience and Foreknowledge. (See Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 78.)

The traditionalists will argue that God knows our future and destiny. Support for this line of argument is aplenty. In the Islamic doctrine, there is the doctrine of fixed destiny that is written in the Book and placed in *al-lawh al-mahfuz*. There is also the issue of prophecies. Many religious beliefs acknowledge the notion of prophecies. Prophets like Joseph and Daniel were said to possess the power of prophesying of the future. It is also acknowledged that prophecies do in fact come true. Even the Qur'an is said to prophesy about specific events in the future. One famous prophecy by Prophet Muhammad as recorded in the Qur'an was on Abu Lahab. The chapter of *al-Lahab* 111:1-5, which talks of the torment of Abu Lahab and his wife in Hell, is an early Makkan surah. Abu Lahab died only ten years after the verse was revealed. Abu Lahab fulfilled the prophecy by dying as a disbeliever, although he could have destroyed Muhammad's authority by accepting Islam and proving the Qur'an wrong. Is this then, not a question of predestination? Was Abu Lahab predestined for Hell? Does the proof of prophecy posit the notion that the future is fixed? If such is the case, it definitely is a strong support for fatalism and predestination.

As much as God's foreknowledge inevitably leads to predestination and fatalism, it also posed serious problems to the idea of God's justice. Accordingly, God knows what is to happen in our future. Thus, He knows that some men and women will use their inherent power to do evil. Yet, God still endows them with that power. The question then is, why does He confer powers and privileges on those persons who are sure to abuse them and ruin themselves? It seems that God cannot be removed from being partly responsible for the evil that mankind wrought. In this light, it will be problematic to reconcile with God's Absolute Justice. As much as the Mu'tazilites would accuse the Ash'arites with denigrating God to an unjust position, they themselves cannot be totally acquitted from the same charge. (See Syed Muzaffar-ud-din Nadvi, *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, p. 62.)

⁹² Anthony Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers*. New York: Clarendon Press/ Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 87.

⁹³ C.A. Qadir, *Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World*. London: Routledge, 1988, p. 11.

⁹⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*. p. 12.

⁹⁵ See S.M. Yusuf, *An Essay on the Sunnah: Its Importance, Transmission, Development and Revision*. Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1966.

⁹⁶ See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, (tr.) Hazel Barnes, *abridged edition*. New York: Citadel Press, 1965, I:xiv

⁹⁷ John Bousfield, "Islamic Philosophy in South-East Asia" in M.B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983, p. 99.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Fazlur Rahman attributed the decline of intellectualism in medieval era to the "passive acquisition of already established knowledge." This, according to him, is "not conducive to original inquiry and thought, since it assumes that all that can be known about reality is already known except, perhaps, for a few 'gap' to be filled by interpretation and extension or some angularities to be smoothed out". See *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of An Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 38-39.)