

FREE WILL
AND
PREDESTINATION
IN
EARLY ISLAM



By

W. MONTGOMERY WATT

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Lecturer in Arabic, Edinburgh University

THE aim of this study is to describe the course of thought during the first three centuries or so of Islam upon the questions of Predestination and Free Will, and to try to make clear the great underlying principles and influences in men's hearts and minds, and the manner in which these are derived from the original intense realization of God.

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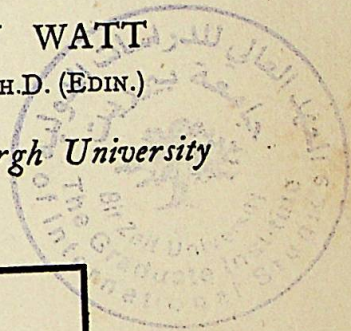
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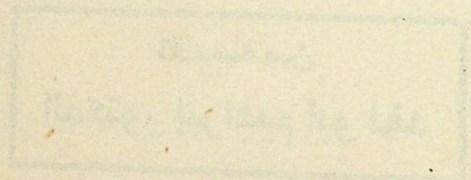


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TO MY WIFE
WITH MEMORIES OF LATHBURY

TO MY WIFE
WITH REMONDS OF LANGRISH

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PREFACE

THE present work was substantially completed in autumn, 1943, and was accepted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Edinburgh University in 1944. In the years that have elapsed since then I have become aware of some of its shortcomings. For instance, more attention should have been paid to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and to the persons included in Ibn Qutaiba's list of Qadariya, about whom some useful information could probably be gleaned from biographical dictionaries; the distinction drawn between Qur'ān and Traditions might be compared with that drawn by Muslim theologians between *qadar* and *qaḍā'* (cp. A. de Vlieger, *Kitāb al-Qadr*, Leyden 1902, 26-34, etc.); and judicious dipping into the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī would doubtless not be without reward. Despite this recognition of deficiencies, however, I have decided to allow my work to appear as it was originally written. It does not seem likely that the further collection of material would lead to any important modification of the chief points for which I have argued.

I take this opportunity of warmly thanking the Reverend Dr. Richard Bell for his generous and unstinted assistance, and of acknowledging the help I received from the Libraries of Edinburgh University and the London School of Oriental and African Studies.

Edinburgh, Easter, 1948.

W.M.W.

I

INTRODUCTION

I. AIM AND SCOPE

THE aim of this study is to describe the course of thought during the first three centuries or so of Islam upon the questions of Predestination and Free Will, and to try to make clear the great underlying principles and influences in men's hearts and minds, and the manner in which these are derived from the original intense realization of God.

In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to rid ourselves, as far as may be, of the preconceptions and prejudices of Western thought of the 19th and 20th centuries. There are certain similarities, for instance, between the views of the Mu'tazila and our so-called "liberal" thinkers, but to identify the two and call the Mu'tazila the "liberal theologians of Islam", as Horten did,¹ is definitely misleading.

The very title of this study, though the most satisfactory to convey to an English reader the scope of the discussions, is also to some extent misleading. The conception of Free Will, in the strict sense, does not occur at all in Muslim thought, but is replaced by the slightly different conception of man's power to act and to determine the course of events. The conception of Predestination does occur, but not so often as might be supposed; the Muslim is much more interested in what God is doing in the present than in what He did in the past. The debate about Predestination and Free Will thus becomes a discussion of the respective share of God and man in determining the course of events in the present. It will be seen in due course that this is also far removed from the modern discussion of Free Will and scientific Determinism.

Above all, then, a fresh and open mind is requisite in approaching this subject. Since complete impartiality is impossible, the

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best I can do is to make explicit the position I myself hold. In my opinion, then, this question of Free Will and Predestination or of the relationship of human and Divine power is one where there are two opposing yet complementary truths, which at the present stage of man's intellectual development cannot be wholly reconciled with one another, but which must nevertheless be held together. As a standard Anglican theologian writes :—

“ Scripture holds before us two great counter-truths—first, God's absolute sovereignty (cp. *Rom.* 9, 20 ff.), and secondly, man's responsibility. Our intellects cannot reconcile them. So far as we can reconcile them at all it is by right action and vigorous moral life.”²

Various syntheses have been attempted, but they have always been only partial, and have not proved stable. Islam—or perhaps one should rather say, the East—has tended to over-emphasize Divine sovereignty, whereas in the West too much influence has been attributed to man's will, especially in recent times. Both have strayed from the true path, though in different directions. The West has probably something to learn of that aspect of the truth which has been so clearly apprehended in the East.

The precise scope of this study is limited in various ways. For the most part it is restricted to those theologians who come within the purview of the heresiographers, that is, those who flourished between the years 80 and 330 A.H. or so ; but I have also included views explicitly attributed to a particular man or sect belonging to that period, where such material was available.

What I have not attempted is to discuss Qur'ān and Traditions for their own sake. There is much of interest and value in this field, but an adequate discussion would require volumes and would probably contribute but little to the present subject. It would not greatly affect my argument if it were proved that the Qur'ān becomes more deterministic in its later passages. And even if, from the material of biographical notices and the *isnād's* of Traditions, we could make clear the exact “ tendency ” of each traditionist of the second and third centuries and could isolate the various strains within orthodoxy, we should probably add little to our knowledge on this question of Predestination and Free

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Will. In chapter II, therefore, I have briefly considered the Qur'ān as a whole and the Traditions as a whole, and have used them mainly as evidence for the existence of two great opposing trends within Islam.

Likewise I have not attempted to ferret out the external "sources" of doctrines propounded by Muslim theologians. There certainly were external influences at work, but they were never the sole cause. Rather they were a stimulus to which Islam responded; and what matters most is not the character of the stimulus but the quality of the response. The centre of interest in the present study is what is specifically Islamic. The quest is, through and behind all the bewildering variety of the phenomena, for that elusive reality which may be called the essence of Islam.

2. THE SOURCES

(a) *The Books of Sects*

These constitute the primary sources for the main body of this study, chapters III, IV and V. While they closely resemble one another in the general picture they give of early Muslim theology, they are of varying merits in particular questions.

Undoubtedly al-Ash'arī's *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, as it is the fullest, is also the most trustworthy of them. There are indeed many gaps in his account, which may at times be positively misleading.³ On the whole, however, so far as he himself is concerned, he seems to have recorded the views he describes with complete objectivity; but allowance has always to be made for his repetition of whatever bias there was in his sources, such as Abu 'l-Hudhail's caricature of the anthropomorphic views of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.⁴ I have throughout made the *Maqālāt* the basis of my work, and brought in the others only as supplements. (This is perhaps the place to state that I have neglected the distinction in the *Maqālāt* between "So-and-so" and "the associates of So-and-so (*aṣḥāb*)," since al-Ash'arī himself sometimes refers a view both to a man and to his followers.⁵)

Al-Shahrestānī's *Kitāb al-Milal wa-'l-Niḥal* is good in many

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ways. His logical mind helped him to understand the inner connections and structure of the systems he described, and he enables us to piece together the scattered details of al-Ash'arī. In the case of the smaller sects, however, he is too anxious to classify them and assign them to one side or other of the line in respect of the questions that interested him; cp. his account of the Shu'aibiya :

“The Shu'aibiya are the followers of Shu'aib b. Muḥammad, who with Maimūn belonged to the company of the 'Ajārīda, but dissociated himself from him when he proclaimed the doctrine of Qadar. Shu'aib asserted that God is the creator of the acts of men and man the 'acquirer' (*muktasib*) of them in respect of power and will. Man is responsible for the good and bad in them, and is rewarded and punished accordingly. There is nothing in existence except by the volition of God. He held the heresy of the Khawārij about the imamate and the threat, and the heresy of the 'Ajārīda about the judgement of children, the judgement of those who 'stay at home', and associating and dissociating.”⁶

There is little in this that could not have been deduced from the story of Shu'aib and Maimūn in the *Maqālāt*,⁷ but the fact that the argument turned on the use of *in sha'a 'llāh* is omitted, and instead we have some of the stock phrases of later disputes; *muktasib*, for instance, refers to a conception which, as will be seen in chapter V, did not make an appearance till about a hundred years after Shu'aib.

Al-Baghdādī's *Al-Farq bain al-Firaq* is similar in many ways to the *Milal*, but the author had not the same philosophical insight as al-Shahrastānī, and was less objective. Nevertheless important details are often to be found in one or both of these. The annotated translation of the second half by Dr. A. S. Halkin, under the title of *Moslem Schisms and Sects, Part II*, is a scholarly piece of work and has many valuable references.

The more recently published *Tanbīh* of al-Malaṭī contains much of a book on sects by Abū 'Aṣim Khushaish b. Asram. This is of great importance in that it is half a century to a century earlier than the *Maqālāt* and contains many details not in any other printed source. The descriptive part is actually quite short, as most of the work consists of refutations, on Ḥanbalī principles, of

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the views described. The *Tanbīh* also contains some descriptions of sects from another source which are likewise of value, since they seem to reflect a non-Mu'tazilī tradition.

The book, commonly known as the *Munya*, which is really the chapter about the Mu'tazila from a longer work entitled *Kitāb al-Munya wa-'l-Amal* by Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840 /1437), published by Sir Thomas Arnold under the title of *Al-Mu'tazilah*, is valuable so far as it goes. It has practically nothing about theological and philosophical doctrines, but is full of biographical and chronological matter, some of which is not found elsewhere. This mainly concerns chapter IV, of course.

The *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* of al-Khaiyāṭ is not a heresiography, but is itself part of the controversies described in the books of sects, being a reply to assertions of Ibn al-Rāwandī, a renegade from the Mu'tazila. It is thus a unique source of information about certain aspects of the theological arguments of the third century. Dr. Nyberg's introduction and notes (in Arabic) are also useful.

Some other books of this type occasionally referred to will be found in the Bibliography.

(b) Sources for al-Ash'arī

The main sources for al-Ash'arī's views about predestination are the creeds in the *Maqālāt* and the *Ibāna*,⁸ and the body of the latter work, whose full title is *Al-Ibāna 'an Uṣūl al-Diyāna*. The creeds are very similar to one another; they are described as the beliefs of the "Ahl al-Ḥadīth wa-'l-Sunna" and the "Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa-'l-Sunna" respectively, but as this is presumably al-Ash'arī's name for the party to which he himself belonged, there is no reason for doubting that the views in them are his own. (They are not necessarily the whole of his own beliefs, however, for there is nothing about the attributes of God, for example.) The *Ibāna* is a work whose importance can hardly be rated too highly, and which will rise in our estimation as our appreciation of al-Ash'arī's position deepens. More will be said about it in chapter VI. The translation by Dr. Walter C. Klein is very helpful, but there are certain slight faults, as is pointed out in the review by Prof. W. Thomson in *The Moslem World*,⁹ and reference to the text is usually also necessary.

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The portion of al-Ash'arī's *Kitāb al-Luma'* translated by J. Hell¹⁰ deals with some of the topics with which this study is concerned; but there seem to be no essential differences from the *Ibāna*, and, as the text is at present inaccessible, I have made little use of it.

Al-Baghdādī has only the slightest references to the views of al-Ash'arī as distinct from those of the orthodoxy of his own day. Al-Shahrastānī has a section about the Ash'ariya, which distinguishes between the views of the master and those of his followers, and appears to be sound; but in respect of predestination it tells us practically nothing about al-Ash'arī's own views.

(c) Sources for the Ḥanafīya

For some reason which remains obscure to us—it may have had something to do with geographical distribution or with the rivalry of the followers of Al-Shāfi'ī—the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa are almost completely boycotted by the books on sects, and therefore we have to turn to other sources. Fortunately several early Ḥanafī documents have been preserved and are now easily accessible. Three important creeds have been translated and commented upon by Wensinck in *The Muslim Creed*, and I have little to add to what he has said except to draw attention to the point that these are distinctively Ḥanafī productions, representing the views not of all orthodoxy, but only of a section.

(1) The first of these, *Fiqh Akbar I*, is found, among other places, in the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* ascribed to Al-Māturīdī (discussed below). Wensinck has argued convincingly that this creed, "though not composed by Abū Ḥanīfa, is proved to be derived from genuine utterances of the master, with the possible exception of article 7."¹¹ The creed as a whole has a Murji'ī colouring which fits in well with the reports in various reliable sources that Abū Ḥanīfa belonged to the more moderate groups of the Murji'a.¹² Wensinck's doubts about the importance of the Ghassāniya in connection with the importance of the article about Moses and Jesus¹³ are less cogent when it is realized that Ghassān was a pupil of Abū Ḥanīfa,¹⁴ of whose views the master may have disapproved. Article 7, too, states a belief characteristic of the Aṣḥāb al-Ra'y, who are closely associated with Abū Ḥanīfa.

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Thus *Fiqh Akbar I* can safely be regarded as an accurate account of certain of the main beliefs of Abū Ḥanīfa and some of his immediate followers, and might be dated about 150.

(2) The *Waṣīyat Abī Ḥanīfa*¹⁵ was printed at Hyderabad in 1321 A.H. along with a commentary by Mulla Ḥusain b. Iskandar al-Ḥanafī, in the same volume as the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* and al-Ash'arī's *Ibāna*. It is a peculiarity of the Ḥanafīya that they seek anonymity by ascribing many of their works to Abū Ḥanīfa himself—to the perplexity of modern scholars. The *Waṣīya* is clearly not the work of the master; according to Wensinck it "seems to have originated in a period between Abū Ḥanīfa and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and probably belongs to the latter part of that period"—that is, to about 200 A.H.¹⁶ (The relationship of the author or authors to various sects is discussed below in ch. V, sect. 6.)

(3) The *Fiqh Akbar II* is printed in the same volume as the above with a commentary by Abu 'l-Muntahā. Wensinck's conclusions about date and authorship are not altogether satisfactory, since he has not allowed for the opposition within orthodoxy between al-Ash'arī and the school of Abū Ḥanīfa. Thus, while he remarks that "it would appear that we do not possess sufficient data to ascribe it to himself (*sc.* to al-Ash'arī),"¹⁷ the truth is that we have quite sufficient data for saying definitely that it is not al-Ash'arī's. The ascription to Abū Ḥanīfa is itself a presumption in favour of connecting it with the school which professed to follow him; and an examination of the articles in detail shows that they differ in several salient points from those of al-Ash'arī and his followers. The actual contents, however, are best discussed in connection with two other documents closely related to it.

The first of these is the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī, printed at Ḥalab in 1344 under the title of *Bayān al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a*, and translated into both German and English.¹⁸ It claims to be the creed of the Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a according to the position of Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. Al-Ḥasan al-Shaibānī.¹⁹ As al-Ṭaḥāwī (according to the biographical note appended to the *Bayān*) was born in 230 and died in 321, the creed is probably to be dated somewhat before 300. (On the

title-page he is called Aḥmad b. Ja'far, but from the note and other sources it appears that he was Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Salama Abū Ja'far.)

The other is the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. In the Hyderabad print of 1321 it is ascribed to al-Māturīdī, but a manuscript of it in Cairo has Abu 'l-Laith al-Samarqandī as the author.²⁰ Wensinck rejects the authorship of al-Māturīdī, but admits that it is the product of his school.²¹ This conclusion seems to be justified, though one of the grounds he gives, the fact that al-Māturīdī is mentioned by name in the work, is not completely decisive, since authors of this period sometimes referred to themselves by name in their own works.²² Nor is it absolutely necessary that the "doctors of Samarqand" on p. 22 should be "the spiritual progeny of al-Māturīdī." But the references to the Ash'ariya as a party, and the fact that the doctrines ascribed to them, while largely those of the al-Ash'arī we know otherwise, are slightly developed beyond them, argue for a date about a generation after al-Ash'arī's death. On the other hand, I am inclined to think that this book cannot be much later than that; it uses early names of sects, like 'Adliya, Mujbira and Shakkākiya, which later died out; and it seems to regard the Ash'ariya as a sect quite distinct from the orthodox Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a. It is impossible to form any definite conclusion without considering the readings of the various manuscripts, which are not at present accessible, but I rather expect that it will be found that the author is a pupil of al-Māturīdī of the first or second generation. For convenience I have referred to him in ch. VI, section 4 as "al-Māturīdī" (in inverted commas).

These three Ḥanafī documents, the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī, the *Fiqh Akbar II*, and the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, agree in various distinctive points, of which the chief are the rejection of extreme predestination or Jabr, and the assertion that the "active attributes" of God are eternal (*ṣifāt fi'līya*). Al-Ṭaḥāwī is presumably the earliest, since he uses no technical terms in making the latter point, but simply says God was creator before He created, and so forth;²³ on the question of man's utterance or writing of the Qur'ān, he is even more conservative than the *Waṣīya*.²⁴

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There are several slight differences between the *Fiqh Akbar II* and the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* which rather indicate that they come from different groups within the Ḥanafīya. Thus the creed says that prophets are preserved from both light and grave sins, but may commit errors, while the commentary allows that prophets may commit slight sins, but adds that "some of our associates" hold that they may not commit slight sins but may commit errors, and uses the word for "errors" used by the creed, *zilla*.²⁵ Their views on whether man's utterance of the Qur'ān is created are different, but both are opposed to the views of the creed in the *Maqālāt* and of the Ash'ariya.²⁶ The presumption is that the *Fiqh Akbar II* has some connection with the group referred to as "some of our associates", and that it is the earlier of the two.

Most of the statements made in modern works about the views of al-Māturīdī are derived from *Al-Rawḍat al-Bahīya* by Abū 'Udhba, written in 1125/1713 and printed in Hyderabad a year after the volume containing the *Ibāna*.²⁷ It is a discussion of the differences between the Ash'ariya and the Māturīdiya, but it is by no means confined to the views of the masters. Several of their followers during the next few centuries are mentioned and quoted; many of the views of the Māturīdiya, however, are simply given the customary ascription to Abū Ḥanīfa. The Māturīdiya are explicitly referred to in question 7 of Part I (about *kasb*) and question 2 of Part II (on whether God is known by revelation or by reason); al-Māturīdī himself is mentioned, rather incidentally, in the latter section, and more fully in the following two questions, on the active attributes and on whether what is heard is the uncreated word of God.

Abū 'Udhba is quite a competent and intelligent scholar, albeit too anxious to minimize the differences between the schools. Yet he is to some extent aware of these differences; thus he suggests that the view that the active attributes of God are eternal was not held by the Ḥanafīya before the time of al-Māturīdī (which is on the right lines, but not quite correct, since it has just been noticed that al-Ṭaḥāwī, whom he mentions as not holding the doctrine, does in fact hold it, though in non-technical language); and on pp. 67 f. there is a discussion

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of some differences between al-Ash'arī and his followers. The fact remains, however, that Abū 'Udhba is not so very much nearer the times of which he writes than we are, and probably had much the same sources available to him. He quotes the *Waṣīya*, the *Fiqh Akbar* (presumably II),²⁸ and he has passages which are based on the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* or some very similar work.²⁹

The conclusion is therefore forced upon us that in general there is little to be learned from Abū 'Udhba, especially about the early period. There is the one possibility that he may occasionally quote from a book not now accessible to us. The one instance I have noticed in which this possibility is realized is on p. 44 where he quotes from the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* of al-Māturīdī about the word of God; but this is not relevant to the present study. It also follows from this that all statements about al-Māturīdī in modern works are to be received with the utmost caution where no reliable Arabic sources are quoted.

NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER I

- ¹ *Die philosophischen Systeme, passim.*
- ² Bicknell, *Thirty-nine Articles* (1936), p. 286. Thus the standard Christian position does *not* give unqualified support to the doctrine of free will, though it is commonly supposed to do so.
- ³ Strothmann, see Bibliography.
- ⁴ *Maqālāt*, 32. It should be noted that al-Ash'arī's impartiality is not so great as it is sometimes said to be. He does sometimes criticize his sources; e.g. 404, l. 12 ff.; 428, 3; 476, 13; 541, 5; 572, 14 f.; 586, 10. He also gives his own views, as on 552, 8, and mentions his disagreements with his master, al-Jubbā'ī, 419, 7.
- ⁵ Cp. *Maq.* 37 f. with 493 f., and 41 with 515.
- ⁶ *Milal*, 97.
- ⁷ *Maq.* 94 f.; translated below, ch. III, sect. 1: a.
- ⁸ *Maq.* 290-7; *Ibāna*, 7-13, tr. 49-55.
- ⁹ *Moslem World*, XXXII (1942), 242-260, esp. 257 ff. This article also contains valuable remarks about al-Ash'arī and about the Jahmīya.
- ¹⁰ *Von Mohammed bis Ghazālī*, 49-60. Fuller details in Dr. Klein's Introduction to his translation of the *Ibāna*, 29 f.
- ¹¹ *Muslim Creed*, 123; translation and comment occupy 102-124.
- ¹² *Maqālāt*, 138 f.; *Milal*, 105; al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi'a*, 7, 10, 13.
- ¹³ 114.
- ¹⁴ *Maq.* 138 f.

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- ¹⁵ *Muslim Creed*, 125-187. ¹⁶ *ib.* 187.
¹⁷ *ib.* 246; translation and comment, 188-247.
¹⁸ See bibliography.
¹⁹ *Bayān*, 2; "Abū 'Abdallāh b. Muḥ. al-Ḥasan" is doubtless a misprint
for "Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥ. b. al-Ḥasan."
²⁰ *Muslim Creed*, 284. ²¹ *ib.* 122 f.
²² E.g. al-Malaṭī in *Tanbih*.
²³ *Bayān*, 2 f. ²⁴ *ib.* 3 f.
²⁵ Cf. arts. 8 and 9 with *Sharḥ al-F. al-A.*, 26.
²⁶ *Fiqh Akbar II*, art. 3; *Sharḥ*, 23; *Maq.* creed art. 8.
²⁷ It is briefly and not quite accurately summarized by Spitta, *As'art*, 112-4,
and this has unfortunately been followed by Dr. Klein, Introduction
to the translation of the *Ibāna*, 37. There is a fuller, and, so far as
it goes, fairly accurate summary in Horten, *Systeme*, 531. Goldziher
appears to have used it in *Vorlesungen*², 106 f., 112 f., but strangely
enough gives no references.
²⁸ *Rawḍa*, 19; the definition of faith on p. 21 referred to *Fiqh Akbar* (it would
have to be *II*, art. 18) agrees better with the text of the *Waṣīya* (art. 1)
or of *al-Taḥāwī*.
²⁹ Part I, quest. 1 (on *istithnā'*), pp. 6-8, and *Sharḥ*, 14 f.; quest. 2 (on change
of destiny), esp. p. 9, and *Sharḥ*, 12 f.; etc.

II

THE OPPOSING TRENDS IN ISLAM

THE primary basis of Islam is the vivid realization of the power and majesty of God which came to Muḥammad. This experience is crystallized in the Qur'ān ; and the history of the interpretation of the Qur'ān reflects the growth and development of Muslim thought.¹ This applies to the period under consideration as much as to any other, but it is obscured by the fact that most of our information is only about the conclusions of the arguments and not about the arguments themselves.

The Qur'ān, however, is not the only basis of Islam, as Muslims themselves early recognized. Tradition or Sunna is another basis of the same sort, allegedly going back likewise to the experience of the Prophet, but being his own inspired sayings and not direct revelation.

From these two the theologians of Islam wove a more or less harmonious whole. But if, abandoning the Muslim standpoint for that of the West, we look at them as objectively as we can, and take words at their face value, a profound difference is to be traced, which it is important for the purposes of this study to make clear.

I. THE QUR'ĀN

In the Qur'ān, regarded as a unitary whole, are to be found both of the complementary ideas of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility. As Wensinck concludes, after illustrating this "dual aspect of the matter," "the advocates of predestination, as well as those of free will, could claim a scriptural basis for their view."²

(a) *Human Responsibility.* The conception of the Last Judgment, which is so prominent, especially in the earlier Sūras,

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would be meaningless apart from the presupposition of human responsibility. A man must be responsible for what he does, at least in the sense that he may justly be rewarded or punished for it. The warnings uttered by the Prophet, and his call to repentance, imply in his hearers the capacity to respond.

“ And say : ‘ The truth is from your Lord ; so who wills let him believe and who wills let him disbelieve ’ ; verily We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire. . . . But those who have believed and done the works of righteousness—verily We do not allow to go lost the reward of any who do well in deed. For these are Gardens of Eden . . . ” (Q.18, 28-30.)

“ We shall place the balances—justice—on the day of resurrection and no one will be wronged at all ; if it be but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed We shall produce it. ” (21, 48.)

“ Now today (sc. the Day of Judgement) no one will be wronged at all, nor will ye be recompensed except for what ye have been doing. ” (36, 54.)

Thus not only is human responsibility the underlying assumption of a large part of the Qur’ān, but it is sometimes explicitly stated—as in the first of these passages. What a man does is his own deed and will go on one side of the balances or the other to his account. In 21, 46 f. even the people who are described as deaf to the warning (as if it were not their fault) later admit their responsibility for their actions—“ O, alas for us ! We have been wrongdoers. ” Thus in the Qur’ān man is clearly presented as a responsible agent.

(b) *Divine Omnipotence.* Just as clearly God is presented as the almighty Lord of the Worlds. His omnipotence is based on His power of creating. Perhaps the most succinct expression is in 42, 48 f. :

“ To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, He createth what He pleaseth, giving to whom He pleaseth females and to whom He pleaseth males, or conjoining them males and females, and He maketh whom He pleaseth arren ; verily He hath knowledge and power. ”

Men are completely subordinate to this overruling power of God. They cannot do anything unless God wills it, at least in the sense of permitting it.

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“ Verily, this (*sc.* the Qur’ān) is a reminder, and he who wills, chooseth to his Lord a way. But ye will not will, except it be that God willeth, verily God is knowing, wise.” (76, 29 f.)

“ If thy Lord so willed, all those in the land would believe in a body . . . It is not for any person to believe except by the permission of God. . . .” (10, 99 f.)

“ It (*sc.* the revealed message) is nothing less than a Reminder to the worlds, to whoever of you wills to act straight ; but ye will not so will except it be that God, Lord of the worlds, willeth.” (81, 27 ff. ; cp. 76, 29 f. ; 74, 54 f.)

At times the statement of the aspect of Divine sovereignty is given an extreme form, in which human responsibility appears to be completely eclipsed ; *e.g.*, in the account of Lot :

“ So We delivered him and his household all except his wife, whom We decreed to be of those who lingered.” (27, 58.)

(c) Besides the primary conceptions of human responsibility and Divine omnipotence, there is a whole series of subordinate ones, falling under headings like *Guidance, Favour, Succour, Leading Astray, Abandonment*, which play a part in later discussions. Muḥammad was greatly concerned that many of those who heard his warnings paid no heed to them and did not believe in God, and much of the Qur’ān deals with this problem of belief and unbelief. Some passages emphasize the Godward aspect.

“ If God will to guide anyone He enlargeth his breast for Islam, but if He will to send him astray He maketh his breast narrow and contracted as if he were climbing up into the heaven ; thus doth God lay the abomination upon those who do not believe.” (6, 125.)

“ Then when they (*sc.* the people of Moses) swerved, God caused their hearts to swerve ; God guideth not the people who are reprobates.” (61, 5.)

“ If God had so willed, He would have made you one community ; but He leadeth astray whom He willeth and guideth whom He willeth, and assuredly ye will be asked about what ye have been doing.” (16, 95.)

“ If God help you, no one can overcome you ; but if He abandon you, who will help you after Him ? Upon God let the believers put their trust.” (3, 154.)

“ Had it not been for the bounty and mercy (*faḍl, rahma*)

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of God towards you, ye would have followed Satan, except a few." (4, 85.)

"Whom God guideth, he is the (rightly) guided; whom He sendeth astray, thou wilt not find for him a patron to set him right." (18, 16.)

"Had it not been for the bounty and mercy of God towards you, not one of you would ever be pure, but God purifieth whom He willeth." (24, 21.)

On the other hand, there are many passages where it is made clear that God's guidance and leading astray follow upon men's acts of belief and righteousness or unbelief and wickedness, and that God's guidance is only effective when men believe in God and are willing to receive the guidance. It is even suggested in the first two of the above passages that being led astray by God is a sort of punishment for unbelief. Cp. the following verses:

"As He began you, ye will come again, He having guided a part and a part having justly incurred the penalty of going astray." (7, 28.)

"How will God guide a people who have disbelieved after having believed, and (after) they have testified that the messenger is true and that the Evidences have come to them? God doth not guide the people (who are) wrongdoers." (3, 80.)

"Thereby (*sc.* by His use of similes) He sendeth many astray and guideth many, but He doth not send astray any but the reprobate." (2, 24.)

"So as for him who gives and shows piety, and counts true the best (reward), We shall assist him to ease. But as for him who is niggardly, and prides himself in wealth, and counts false the best (reward), We shall assist him to difficulty." (92, 5-10.)

"We wronged them not (*sc.* those who were punished) but they wronged themselves." (11, 103.)

"But verily I am forgiving to whomsoever repents and believes and acts uprightly, and lets himself be guided." (20, 84.)

"Verily those who do not believe in the signs of God, God will not guide, and for them is (in store) a punishment painful." (16, 106.)

(d) *The Sealing, etc.* The condition of blindness or inability to comprehend the warnings of God, in which men find themselves when God has led them astray or abandoned them, is

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sometimes described by saying that God has set a seal or a lock upon their hearts, or by some similar metaphor. Sometimes this is spoken of merely as an exercise of Divine power, but at other times it is said to be the outcome of man's unbelief. The following passages illustrate this conception.

"As for those who have disbelieved, it is all one whether thou hast warned them or not; they will not believe. God hath set a seal upon their hearts, and over their hearing and their sight is a covering; for them is (in store) a punishment mighty." (2, 5-6.)

"On that day We shall set Gehenna for the unbelievers in array, whose eyes have been blindfolded from the remembrance of Me, and who were not capable of hearing." (18, 100 f.)

"We never sent a prophet to any town but there overtook the people of it bad times and dearth, that mayhap they might humble themselves. . . . Had the people of the towns believed and shown piety, We should have opened up to them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they counted (the message) false, so We seized them for what they had been piling up. . . . Has it not come home to those who inherit the land after the people thereof, that did We so will, We should smite them for their sins? But We put a seal upon their hearts so that they do not hear. These towns We recount thee the stories of; their messengers came to them with the Evidences, but they were not such as to believe, because of the disbelief they had previously been guilty of; thus does God put a seal upon the hearts of the unbelievers." (7, 92-99.)

(e) *The Term.* God, as the Lord of life and death,³ is particularly thought of as fixing the date of a man's death, or, as it is usually called, his "term" (*ajal*).

"He it is Who created you of clay and then fixed a term—and a term is stated in His keeping—yet after all ye are in doubt." (6, 2.)

"Every community has its term, and when its term comes they will not stay an hour behind nor will they go in advance." (7, 32.)

"God will not defer (the death of) any person when his time (*ajal*) comes; God is well-informed of what ye do." (63, 11.)

(f) *Sustenance.* Sustenance, or God's provision of nourishment for His creatures (*rizq*), is one of the topics commonly

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discussed by Muslim theologians in connection with predestination. So far as this conception is Qur'ānic it is mainly based on the verse :

“ There is not a beast in the earth but God is responsible for its sustenance ; He knoweth its lair and its resting-place ; everyone is in a clear book.” (II, 8.)

* * *

These, then, are the Qur'ānic conceptions of Divine omnipotence and human responsibility, along with various subordinate matters. The quotations are, of course, by no means exhaustive, but they are, I think, genuinely representative of the spirit of the Qur'ān.

2. THE TRADITIONS

A survey of even a small part of the field of the Traditions soon reveals that they contain much material and many conceptions which are foreign to the Qur'ān. The present section does not attempt an exhaustive investigation, but simply gives some illustrations, relevant to predestination, of these non-Qur'ānic elements.

(a) *The Heavenly Decrees—The Pen.* A very common idea is that everything that happens in the world was written down in the distant past. Sometimes this is said to be the direct work of God, sometimes it takes place through a Pen writing on a Preserved Table (*lawh mahfūz*).

“ God wrote down the decrees regarding the created world fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.”⁴

“ I heard the Apostle of God say (‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit is reported to have said) : The first thing God created was the Pen. He said to it : Write. It asked : Lord, what shall I write ? He answered : Write the destinies of all things till the advent of the Hour. My son, I heard the Prophet of God say : Whoso dieth with a belief differing from this, he belongeth not to me.”⁵

(b) *The Things written by the Angel.* Another common con-

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ception, but quite distinct from the above, is that while the embryo is in the womb certain things are decreed for it and written down by the angel. In what is possibly the most primitive form there are four things: its sex, its sustenance, its term (or the date of its death), and whether it is to be miserable or happy (that is, as commonly understood, its eternal destiny—Hell or Paradise).

“When the embryo has passed two and forty days in the womb, God sends an angel, who gives it a form and creates his hearing, sight, skin, flesh and bones. This having been done, the angel asks: O Lord, shall this be male or female? Then the Lord decrees what He pleaseth, and the angel writes it down. Then he asks: O Lord, what shall be his term? Then the Lord will say what He pleaseth, and the angel will write it down. Thereupon the latter will go away with the scroll in his hand, and nothing will be added to or subtracted from the decree.”⁶

“The Prophet said: Verily, one of you is gathered together in his mother’s womb forty days, then he is a clot of blood the same time, then an angel is sent to him and four things are ordained: his sustenance, his term, whether he is to be miserable or happy (and his work) . . .”⁷

(c) *The Last Acts are what matters.*

The Prophet said of so-and-so that he belonged to the people of Hell. Some of his followers disbelieved, since the man was fighting in the thickest of the battle and covered with wounds. But at length the man could bear the pain no longer, and took his spear and put an end to his own life. The Prophet said: No one enters Paradise except a believer.⁸

(The Prophet said:) “A man may perform the works of the dwellers in Paradise for a long time, yet his work may receive finally the stamp of that of the dwellers in Hell. Likewise a man may perform the works of the dwellers in Hell for a long time, yet his work may finally receive the stamp of that of the dwellers in Paradise. . . . The works are judged only by the final ones.”⁹

In line with these thoughts is a passage usually added to the tradition about the things written by the angel.

(The Prophet said:) “It may be that one of you performs the works of the people of Paradise, so that between him and

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Paradise there is only the distance of an arm's length. But then his book overtakes him and he begins to perform the works of the people of Hell, the which he will enter. Likewise one of you may perform the works of the people of Hell, so that between him and Hell there is only the distance of an arm's length. Then his book will overtake him and he will begin to perform the works of the people of Paradise, the which he will enter."¹⁰

(d) *What reaches you could not possibly have missed you.*

(Ibn al-Dailamī said :) " I visited Ubaiy b. Ka'b and said to him: Doubts concerning predestination have arisen in my heart. Possibly God will make them to vanish if you communicate to me a tradition on this subject. He answered: If God should punish the inhabitants of His heavens and His earth, He would not thereby do injustice. And if you should spend in the path of God an amount larger than mount Uhud, He would not accept it from you unless you believe in the decree and acknowledge that what reaches you could not possibly have missed you, and what misses you could not possibly have reached you. And if you should die in a different conviction, you would go to Hell. . . . Then I went to 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd and heard the same from him, and likewise from Hudhaifa b. al-Yamān. Then I went to Zaid b. Thābit, who communicated to me a similar tradition on the authority of the Prophet."¹¹

(e) *Adam and Moses.*

Moses accused Adam, as our father, of being the cause of our expulsion from Paradise. Adam replied that he had not had the favours Moses had had; would Moses blame him for what God had fore-ordained (*qaddara*) for him before he was created? So Adam prevailed.¹²

3. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN QUR'ĀN AND TRADITION

These two sets of quotations are sufficient to show that in both Qur'ān and Tradition there is something that might be labelled a "predestinarian view." Yet when they are examined a little more closely, it is clear there is a considerable difference between the predestinarian views of these two bases of Islamic thought.

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The distinction, briefly stated, is that in the Qur'ān the centre of interest is the majesty and omnipotence of God, and to a lesser extent man's subordination to this majestic being; whereas in the Traditions it is the predetermined character of man's life which is in the forefront, and little attention is given to the agency through which the predetermination takes place. The Qur'ān is through and through theistic; it is dominated by the faith that the course of the world and of human life is controlled by a righteous and compassionate Lord, even if His ways are sometimes inscrutable. The Traditions, though they mention God, at times tend to be atheistic. The outstanding fact is that human life is controlled and fixed; the controlling forces are mostly thought of as vague, mysterious and impersonal, like the Pen and the Book; and may even remain unmentioned, as in the statement that "what reaches you could not possibly have missed you."¹³

I want to suggest that the explanation of this is (1) that these impersonal and rather atheistic conceptions belong to the system of ideas current among the Arabs and the surrounding peoples before the coming of Islam, and (2) that, despite the denunciation of similar ideas in the Qur'ān, these conceptions continued to be held by Muslims, and even, imperceptibly, made their way into orthodox teaching.

A thorough-going proof of the first part of this suggestion is beyond the scope of this study; but perhaps such a proof is hardly necessary. As Wensinck puts it:

"The orthodox doctrine of the heavenly decrees . . . has a broad Semitic basis, as is proved by Babylonian and Israelitic religious tradition, which regards not only the ways of man, but the course of the world as the replica of what had been recorded long before in heavenly books or on heavenly tablets."¹⁴

A detailed examination, particularly of the views of the poets was made in 1881 by a young German student.¹⁵ He traces Arab fatalism to its root in the conception of Time. Many of the words for "time", and especially *dahr*, have the connotation of "fate". *Dahr* properly means time, he says,

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“yet almost always in such a way that it is thought of as exhibiting a certain power; rarely is it mere Time, Time in and for itself . . . but almost without exception it is personified as causing good or also bad fortune, as controlling the existence of men and doing so in such a way that it is impossible for them to escape from what is in store for them. Is not that ‘destiny’?”¹⁶

Much of this is repeated and elaborated by no less a person than Theodor Nöldeke:¹⁷

“Time in the abstract was popularly imagined to be the cause of all earthly happiness and especially of all earthly misery. . . . The poets are continually alluding to the action of Time (*dahr*, *zamān*), for which they often substitute ‘the days’ or ‘the nights’. Time is represented as bringing misfortune, causing perpetual change, as biting, wearing down, shooting arrows that never miss the mark, hurling stones and so forth. In such cases we are often obliged to render ‘time’ by ‘fate’, which is not quite correct, since time is here conceived as the determining factor, not as being itself determined by some other power, least of all by a conscious agent. But it must be admitted that the Arabs themselves do not always clearly distinguish the power of Time from that of Destiny pure and simple. . . . The fatalism of the poets, as we might expect, is neither clearly formulated nor consistently carried out. Rigid dogmas on the subject of determinism and free-will were quite out of the question.”

This conception of an impersonal Time or Fate, it must be admitted, is not exactly what we find in the Traditions, yet it is thoroughly in line with much of the Traditional material. The idea in the Traditions of a predetermined and ineluctable course of events is very near to the *dahr* of the pre-Islamic poets. The fact that the latter conception is explicitly denounced in the Qur’ān might account for the almost complete absence of the term in generally accepted Traditions:

“They say: ‘There is nothing but this present life of ours; we die and we live, and it is only Time (*dahr*) which destroys us.’” (45, 23.)

The contrast between the theistic predestinarian views of the Qur’ān and the pre-Islamic conception of an impersonal Time-

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Fate is more clearly understood when it is seen in the light of the whole range of the conflict between the religion of Muḥammad and the outlook of his contemporaries. In the opening chapter of his *Muhammedanische Studien*, Goldziher designates the opposing attitudes by the words *Muruwwa* (manliness) and *Dīn* (religion). Though they agreed in some particulars, such as sincerity and truthfulness, for the most part their conceptions of virtue were contrary to one another. The Arabs believed in retribution, in paying back evil with evil, but Muḥammad preached forgiveness; he placed limitations on their use of wine and women; he instituted prayers, which they considered unmanly. But right in the forefront of his account of *Muruwwa* Goldziher sets a description of the world-view on which it was based:

“The warrior of central Arabia glories in his high courage and the bravery of his companions; it does not occur to him to be grateful to higher powers for his successes—though he does not completely exclude the recognition of their domination. Only the thought of the necessity of death, the result of day to day experience which he cannot shut out from his mind, stirs up in him grim thoughts of the *Manāya* or *Manūna*, that is, the powers of Fate, which, operating blindly and without consciousness of their goal, yet with inevitability, are able to bring to nought all the plans of mortals; good fortune increases his egoism and heightens his self-confidence, but is not in the least suited to lead him to religion.”¹⁸

The context of the passage of the Qur’ān already quoted makes it quite clear that what is being attacked is not merely a theory about the cause of death, but the whole way of life based on the denial of the Judgment and the future life.

“Or do those who have laid evil deeds to their account reckon that We shall make them as those who have believed and wrought the works of righteousness, alike their life and their death? Bad is what they judge!

“God hath created the heavens and the earth in truth, and that each one may be recompensed for what he has piled up; and they will not be wronged.

“Has one considered him who has taken as his god his own desire and whom God hath sent astray on the basis of know-

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ledge, and upon whose hearing and heart He hath set a seal, and over whose eyes He hath placed a covering? So who will guide him after God (hath given him up)? Will ye not then be reminded?

“They say: ‘There is nothing but this present life of ours; we die and we live, and it is only Time which destroys us.’ They have no knowledge in regard to that; they only form opinions.

“And when Our signs are recited to them as evidences, their only argument is: ‘Produce our fathers, if ye speak the truth.’

“Say: ‘God giveth you life, then He causeth you to die, then He gathereth you to the day of resurrection, of which there is no doubt. But most of the people do not know.’

“To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and on the day when the hour arises, then shall lose the workers of vanity.

“And one will see each community kneeling, each community called to its Book: ‘Today ye will be recompensed for what ye have been doing.’” (45, 20-27.)

What is here denounced is the attitude, by no means restricted to Arabia, of “Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” It is to this whole practical and religious attitude that the term “fatalism” is properly applied, and not simply to the theoretical view that the course of events is predetermined.¹⁹ When a man believes that everything in his life is fixed already, or at least all the important things, he has little incentive to make any strenuous efforts for anything. He will drift along, following whichever impulse happens to be uppermost at the moment, taking the way of pleasure and of avoidance of pain; he will choose the easier path, and will not even attempt the difficult or inconvenient things, because he has no belief in their possibility. His resignation to fate will include acceptance of much that is by no means inevitable.

Whatever may be thought about the predestinarian views of the Qur’ān, there can be no doubt that it is firmly set against this attitude of fatalism, with all its excuses for evading the duties imposed by the Divine law.

“When one says to them: ‘Contribute of what God hath provided you with,’ those who have disbelieved say to those who

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have believed: 'Shall we feed him whom if God willed He would feed? You are only in manifest error.' " (36, 47.)

Then the judgment upon such wrongdoers is described. The Qur'ānic insistence on the majesty, might and inscrutability of God does indeed lead to a practical attitude, but it is one that would be best described as a sense of creatureliness, of absolute dependence on a Being far transcending oneself. He is a God with Whom one can take refuge.²⁰

"If God touch thee with harm, no one can lift it away but He, and if He intends (to give) thee good, no one can turn back His bounty; He causeth it to fall upon whomsoever of His servants He willeth. He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate." (10, 107.)

But this sense of dependence can never lead to inactivity, since God has also imposed duties upon men and has made them known to men through His prophets.

These considerations give plausibility to the suggestion made above that the impersonal and atheistic conceptions of the pre-determined nature of human life found in the Traditions belong to the system of ideas current in Arabia before Islam. For the suggestion to be true it is not necessary that the material in the Traditions should be found in exactly the same form before the time of Muḥammad. It may be—in some cases probably is, I think—an expression first given to the pre-Islamic or fatalistic attitude in an Islamic environment. We must therefore examine the Traditions to see whether they approve or disapprove of fatalism. It is perhaps not very surprising that what we actually find is a very considerable divergence.

There are many Traditions which are quite definitely fatalistic in their tendency. The story of the dispute between Adam and Moses (in section 2 (e) above) commends sheer fatalism and the denial of all human responsibility. The conception of the heavenly decrees (2 (a)) rather tends to foster fatalism, though this tendency is somewhat modified when they are regarded as the work of God Himself and not of the impersonal Pen; this is presumably a case where Islamic thought accepted and attempted to transform what it could not wholly eradicate. In view of the impersonal form of expression the statement that "what reaches you could not possibly have missed you . . ." (2 (d)) would seem

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to belong to the fatalistic system of ideas, and in some versions is not even attributed to the Prophet himself ;²¹ yet it is a statement that can easily be given an Islamic connotation, and indeed, it was incorporated into several orthodox creeds.²² There is a distinctly fatalistic background to the Traditions about a man being overtaken by his book (2 (c)), like the man who appeared to be a good Muslim warrior but who forfeited Paradise through taking his own life ; but these have probably also another purpose, which will be discussed presently.

That covers four of the divisions of section 2. In contrast, the remaining one (2 (b)) rather presents a modified fatalism. According to this, not everything that a man does is pre-determined, but only the date of his death and the outcome or general effect of his activity, namely, his happiness or misery. Such a modified fatalism probably corresponded most closely to the outlook of the average "warrior of central Arabia." He did not doubt his own power to act ; but he was aware that frequently, through no apparent failure or deficiency on his part, his schemes did not come to fruition ; and he saw how death put and end to all his schemes. He could indeed do many things, but certain highly important things were fixed, and no action of his could alter them.

A difficulty in connection with the Traditions about the things written by the angel while the child is in the womb is that they mention the future life apparently, although it was characteristic of the fatalists denounced in the Qur'ān that they held there was nothing beyond this life. It is certainly conceivable that the words "whether he is to be miserable or happy" were originally interpreted in the way in which a Muslim would naturally interpret them, as referring to Hell and Paradise ; it is no part of my brief to prove that all Traditions are fatalistic. But there is also nothing to prevent a person who did not believe in a future life from interpreting the words as referring solely to this life. That is to say, these Traditions may quite possibly contain pre-Islamic material adapted to Muslim ideas.²³ The words "and his work," which occur in some forms of the Tradition, might also be an adaptation to Muslim conceptions of the Judgement of a man's actions.

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The Traditions collected under the title "The last acts are what matters" (2 (c)) imply acceptance of the conceptions of the Judgement and of the future life, and are perhaps to be regarded as a fusion of Muslim and pre-Islamic ideas. They cling to the idea that a man's eternal destiny is irrevocably predetermined, but his assignment to Paradise or Hell is justified by the acts which he himself has performed towards the close of his life. What is predetermined is primarily the final acts of his life; the rest follows from that. The net effect is fatalistic, but lip-service is paid to the Muslim conception of human responsibility. (It is worth noting that the idea of eternal punishment for a single grave sin is in line with the doctrines of the Khawārij.)

There is another Tradition, apparently in accordance with the same line of thought as this one, in which the Qur'ānic conceptions that God guides men and leads them astray are adapted to the fatalistic outlook.

"A man said: O Prophet of God, do you know the people of Paradise from the people of Hell? The Prophet said: Yes. The man said: And why do people act? The Prophet said: Everyone acts according to what has been created for him or made easy for him."²⁵

This is still essentially fatalistic, for man is regarded as having no effective control over his acts; yet some attempt is made to find a place within the deterministic scheme for the performance of the duties imposed by God.

A somewhat similar Tradition comes nearer to the abandonment of fatalism.

"Then the Apostle of God said: There is no living soul for which God has not appointed its place in Paradise or Hell, and the decision of happy or unhappy has already been taken. Then a man said: O Apostle of God, shall we not then leave all to our book and give up works? Muḥammad answered: Whosoever belongs to the people of happiness will come to the works of the people of happiness, and whosoever belongs to the people of unhappiness will come to the works of the people of unhappiness—Then he said: Perform works, for everyone is guided, the people of happiness are guided to the works of the people of happiness, and the people of unhappiness to the works of the people of unhappiness.

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Thereupon he recited: 'So as for him who gives and shows piety, and counts true the best (reward), We shall assist him to ease; but as for him who is niggardly, and prides himself in wealth, and counts false the best (reward), We shall assist him to difficulty.'"²⁶

The first part of this is fatalistic, but the command "Perform works" attempts to steer men away from the moral consequences of deterministic theory. The motive suggested, however, which might be paraphrased as: "Since works are a sign of the lot predetermined for a man," still does not fully admit human responsibility. The verses of the Qur'ān, which are anti-fatalistic, are thus twisted and made to fit in with semi-fatalistic conceptions.

Another Tradition of the same family, however, quite definitely rejects the inactivity associated with fatalism, and does so on less suspect grounds.

"The Prophet said: There is no one whose seat in Hell or Paradise is not written. Someone said: Shall we not then resign ourselves (*sc.* and do nothing)? He said: Do not do that. Everyone is helped. And he recited: 'So as for him who gives and shows piety, and counts true the best (reward), We shall assist him to ease. . . .'"²⁷

There is doubtless a fatalistic ring about the opening sentence, though it might also be merely descriptive. But the command "do not do that, everyone is helped," implies that the future is still in some sense open, and therefore activity meaningful.

Though Wensinck's assertion²⁸ that "Tradition has not preserved a single *hadīth* in which *liberum arbitrium* is advocated" is true in the main, it is almost certainly too sweeping. Consider the saying of the Prophet reported by al-Bukhārī:

"There is no 'caliph' who does not have two courtiers, one ordering and inciting him to good, and one to bad; and the protected is he whom God protects."²⁹

The purpose of this Tradition, as of the Qur'ānic conceptions of God's favour, protection, and the like, is not theoretical but religious—to persuade men that they are not precluded from doing good works by a predetermined fate, but that on the

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contrary there are forces present in the universe assisting them, and that therefore their moral striving is not fruitless.

Al-Bukhārī's section on *Qadar* also contains two Traditions in which consolation and comfort of an anti-fatalistic sort are derived from the fact that all things are determined by God.

“There came to the Prophet the messenger of one of his daughters with word that her son was at the point of death. The Prophet sent the message: What God took is His own, and what God gave is His own; each according to His term; so let her bear patiently and endure.”

“The Prophet, on being asked about the plague, said: God sent it as a punishment to whom He would, and He made it a blessing to the believers; for any servant (*sc.* of God) in any place who remained there and was patient, reflecting that only what God has written will befall him, will receive the like reward as for martyrdom.”³⁰

The trust in an almighty and compassionate Lord, expressed especially in the second of these, is poles apart from the hopeless resignation that accompanies belief in an impersonal fate.

This examination of Muslim Traditions in respect of their approval or disapproval of fatalistic tendencies yields interesting results. The predominant tendency is to uphold not merely the view that human life is predetermined, but also the whole fatalistic outlook on life current among the Arabs of the *Jāhiliya*, but stigmatized by Muḥammad. There are also traces of attempts to harmonize the antagonistic outlooks, but the fatalistic tones remain most noticeable. Finally there are a few Traditions which support the Qur'ānic position and more or less resolutely oppose the inactivity and drift of fatalism.

When we find that Tradition provides strong advocacy for the very fatalism so vigorously attacked in the Qur'ān, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the religious thinking of many Muslims continued in its fatalistic mould long after they had with their lips confessed that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is His Prophet. What makes the problem harder, however, is that prominent Muslims of unexceptionable orthodoxy accepted these fatalistic Traditions as genuine. Yet even so the conclusion forces itself upon us.

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Perhaps as this study progresses it will throw some further light on the question. At any rate the stage is now set. In the pattern of Islamic theology, to vary the metaphor, we have to trace two interwoven sets of strands: (1) the contrast between the Qur'ānic conceptions of Divine omnipotence and human responsibility, and (2) the contrast between the religious and moral attitudes of pre-Islamic fatalism and the Qur'ānic sense of creatureliness or dependence on God.

* * *

(NOTE.—It has to be admitted that there are passages in the Qur'ān which embody conceptions very similar to those which have been held to be characteristic of Tradition—notably those in sections 1 (e) and 1 (f) about the Term and Sustenance. But these do not really contradict the thesis that has been maintained.

In the first place, these conceptions do not imply that the whole of a man's life is predetermined, and therefore do not make the fatalistic attitude necessary. They may in some cases lead to a certain degree of fatalism, but they do not necessarily do so; on the contrary they are quite compatible with a truly Islamic (or indeed Christian) sense of dependence on God and submission to His will.

Then, in the second place, just as religious truth can come to a man, only in a language that he knows, so also it can come to him only in terms of conceptions with which he is familiar. In order to impress a religious message on a man he must be addressed in terms of the world-view he already accepts—at least in respect of everything which is not the primary and essential message. If you want to convey a message about brotherhood to men who believe that the sun moves round the earth, you are careful not to entangle your message with what they would consider heresies about the earth moving round the sun. The message of the Qur'ān is that this world is created and governed by a single supreme Power which is righteous, and that therefore the righteousness or wickedness of man's conduct is of eternal import. The conceptions of *ajal* and *rizq* were part of the world-view of the Arabs whom Muḥammad addressed; they were not obviously at variance with the main message of the Qur'ān, but

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could even be interpreted so as to confirm it. Even if one considered them partly false, there is no great reason for avoiding them; and is it clear that they are any more misleading than the modern Western conception of Freedom, which makes man forget his dependence on God? Whether in the course of centuries these conceptions would weaken the truly Islamic attitude in its struggle with pre-Islamic fatalism is another question.)

NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER II

- ¹ Cp. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*², 58: "In religions where the creed and practices are derived from certain holy texts, both the legal and the dogmatic development come to light in the exegetical work upon the holy texts. In such circles the history of the religion is one with the history of the interpretation of the scriptures. This is supremely true of Islam, whose inner history is mirrored in the methods of interpreting its sacred writings."
- ² *Muslim Creed*, 50 f.; cp. Ahrens, *Muhammed als Religionsstifter*, 80 ff.; etc.
- ³ Cp. Q. 45, 25—quoted p. 23 below.
- ⁴ Muslim, *Qadar*, trad. 16, etc., quoted from *Muslim Creed*, 54.
- ⁵ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunna*, b. 16; from *Muslim Creed*, 108 f.; cp. the similar tradition in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, v, 317, quoted in *Muslim Creed*, 162, which is shortened thus: "Then He said: Write, and it wrote at that moment all that was to happen till the day of resurrection."
- ⁶ Muslim, *Qadar*, trad. 3, from *Muslim Creed*, 54.
- ⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 1, trad. 1; cp. K. 97, b. 28 = vol. IV, p. 469; al-Ash'arī, *Ibāna*, p. 66; the words "and his work" (*'amal*) occur only in the latter two; the following tradition in al-Bukhārī has "whether male or female" as first of the four things, and makes no mention of "work".
- ⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 5, summarized = IV, p. 253.
- ⁹ Muslim, *Qadar*, trad. 11, from *Muslim Creed*, 55; the last sentence is added from the similar tradition in al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 5, trad. 2.
- ¹⁰ Muslim, *Qadar*, trad. 1, from *Muslim Creed*, 55; cp. al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 1, trad. 1, and others mentioned under heading (b).
- ¹¹ Abū Dāwūd, *Sunna*, b. 16, quoted from *Muslim Creed*, 108.
- ¹² Al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 11, summarized; also K. 97, b. 37a = IV, p. 255, 485; also al-Ash'arī, *Ibāna*, tr. p. 125, twice.
- ¹³ For apparent exceptions to this, in the form of impersonal conceptions in the Qur'ān, see the note at the end of the chapter.
- ¹⁴ *Muslim Creed*, 54.
- ¹⁵ W. L. Schrameier in his "promotionsschrift" entitled *Über den Fatalismus der vorislamischen Araber*.
- ¹⁶ P. 26; the word "personified" here does not really contradict the suggestion that *Dahr* is impersonal.
- ¹⁷ Article *Arabs, Ancient* in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* I, 661 b.
- ¹⁸ P. 3.

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- 19 I have attempted to maintain this usage throughout the present study, and to speak of "determinism" where the reference was to pure theory without any practical corollaries.
- 20 Cp. Q. 19, 18; 23, 99; 40, 28; 44, 19.
- 21 For instance, that quoted above from Abū Dāwūd.
- 22 *Fiqh Akbar I*, the creed of al-Ṭahāwī and those of al-Ash'arī.
- 23 A notable instance of this assimilative tendency is a Tradition which apparently identifies God with *dahr* (al-Bukhārī, *Adab*, no. 101; *Tafsir*, referring to Q. 45, 23; Muslim, *Alfāz*, no. 1) "The Apostle of God said: God said: The son of man insults Me in blaming *dahr*; I am *dahr*; in my hands is the Command, and I cause the alternation of day and night." Evidently it was felt that this identification was objectionable, for there was a variant interpretation, which read *al-dahra* for *al-dahru*, and translated "I am eternal". The point is discussed by Goldziher, *Zahiriten*, 153. Further references to the tradition identifying God with *dahr*:—Malik b. Anas, *Muwattā*, *Kalām*, 3; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, II, 237, 259, 272, 275, 318, 934; Abū Dāwūd, *Adab*, 169; al-Bukhārī, *Tawḥīd*, 35 (= IV. 478). The other versions in al-Bukhārī are found in IV, 155 and III, 330. (From Wensinck's *Concordance*, under *khaibu* and *ādhā*.)
- 24 It is worth noting that the idea of eternal punishment for a single grave sin is in line with the doctrines of the Khawārij.
- 25 Al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 2.
- 26 Muslim, *Qadar*, trad. 6; quoted from *Muslim Creed*, 56, with Q. 92, 5-10 in Dr. Bell's version.
- 27 Al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, b. 5, trad. 5; Q. 92, 5-10 from Dr. Bell.
- 28 *Muslim Creed*, 51.
- 29 *Qadar*, b. 8.
- 30 B. 4, trad. 2, summarized; b. 15.

III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DOCTRINE OF QADAR

I. THE KHAWĀRIJ

(a) *Maimūn and Shu'aib*

ONE of the fullest and most interesting passages dealing with the early discussions is the story of Maimūn and Shu'aib :

“ The fifth sect of the 'Ajārīda is the Shu'aibīya, the disciples of Shu'aib. He was one who dissociated himself from Maimūn and his doctrine. He asserted that no one is capable of doing anything except what God wills, and that the acts of men are created by God.

The root of the separation of the Shu'aibīya and the Maimūniya was that Shu'aib had some money belonging to Maimūn, the repayment of which he demanded. Shu'aib said to him : I shall give it to you, if God will. Maimūn replied : God *has* willed that you should give it to me now. Shu'aib said : If God had willed it, I could not have done otherwise than give it to you. Maimūn said : Verily, God *has* willed what He commanded ; what He did not command, He did not will ; and what He did not will, He did not command.

Then some followed Maimūn and others Shu'aib ; and they wrote to 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Ajarrad (*sc.* the head of the 'Ajārīda), who was held in prison by Khālid b. 'Abdallāh al-Bajalī. When the dispute of Maimūn and Shu'aib was made known to him, 'Abd al-Karīm wrote : Our doctrine is that what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about; and we do not fix evil upon God. This letter reached them at the time of the death of 'Abd al-Karīm. Maimūn claimed that his view had been approved in that it was said, “ we do not fix evil upon God,” while Shu'aib claimed that 'Abd al-Karīm had rather approved of his view in so far as he had said, “ what God willed came about, and what He did not will did not come about.” Thus they both associated themselves with 'Abd al-Karīm, but dissociated themselves from one another.”¹

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With this may be compared a previous passage giving the views of Maimūn :

“ The second sect of the ‘Ajārida is the Maimūniya. Peculiar to them is their assertion of Qadar in accordance with the view of the Mu‘tazila. God, they considered, entrusts (*fawwāda*) acts to men, and gives them the capacity (*istiṭā‘a*) for performing all the duties imposed on them. They are capable both of disbelieving and of believing. God has no will (*mashī‘a*) in respect of the acts of men, and the acts of men are not created by God.”

This story of Maimūn and Shu‘aib does not sound like the account of an historical event, but might be a later attempt to explain how sects with diametrically opposite views both claimed to be the descendants of ‘Abd al-Karīm b. ‘Ajarrad. Yet the story probably contains genuine information about the early discussions on Qadar.

The account of the views of Shu‘aib is the least satisfactory part. Nothing is known about him apart from the notice of his views which precedes the story, and that contains nothing which might not be derived from the story ; there is no distinctive expression ; the account of him is couched in the terms commonly used to describe the later orthodoxy, and only signifies that some later writer regarded him as a forerunner of the orthodox view.² The part played by Shu‘aib in the story savours mainly of the old fatalism, since the impression given is that he invokes the omnipotence of God to justify his own avoidance of duty.

The letter of ‘Abd al-Karīm b. ‘Ajarrad is quite different and shows an outlook both more balanced and much nearer to the Qur‘ān. God is certainly omnipotent, but God is also righteous ; both these truths must be adhered to. The views of both Maimūn and Shu‘aib are thus one-sided.

Maimūn represents those who are primarily concerned with the righteousness or goodness of God. In the anecdote his essential assertion is that God’s will and God’s command are one ; God’s command is the standard of right action, and cannot be evil ; since God commands the repayment of debts, it is evil not to repay them ; so Shu‘aib’s contention that his non-payment of the debt is through the will of God “ fixes evil upon God.” Since

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evil does not proceed from the will of God it must be due to man ; therefore God must have entrusted to man the acts in which evil may appear. Such at least seems to be the line of argument behind the account of the views of Maimūn. The fact that Maimūn's view is said to be similar to that of the Mu'tazila shows that the notice comes from a source much later than Maimūn, but the use of the word *farwada* (entrusts), uncommon in this connection, gives ground for holding that early material has been incorporated.

The little that we know beyond this of the position of Maimūn is quite in keeping. He is possibly to be identified with the Maimūn who disputed with one Ibrāhīm over the sale of female slaves captured from one's opponents.³ In forbidding this Maimūn was perhaps standing for moral strictness against laxity, and showing greater regard for personality. On the other hand, Maimūn is reported to have permitted marriages " within the forbidden degrees " ; and al-Baghdādī is so greatly shocked at this that he excludes Maimūn from the community of Islam.⁴ The point, however, probably does not indicate laxity, but is simply a corollary of the search for women with pure doctrine, since these are most likely to be found in one's own family.⁵

The further report⁶ that Maimūn held that the children of unbelievers or polytheists are in Paradise by itself means little, but in the context of the whole development of the Khārijī position it points to another line of thought leading to the doctrine of Qadar.

(b) *The Development of Khārijī Thought*

The Khawārij were one of the " religio-political opposition parties " under the Umayyads, originally domiciled mainly in 'Irāq. They were connected with the Qur'ān reciters, a loosely-knit body of men found in Syria as well as in 'Irāq. They were of course no longer Beduins, but had sprung from the desert tribes rather than from the Quraish.⁷ It is not surprising, then, that they were very individualistic and found almost any governmental restraint irksome.

The first of the Khawārij are generally reckoned to be the

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Muḥakkima or Muḥakkimūn, who seceded from 'Alī after the battle of Şiffin. Their motto of *lā ḥukm illā li-'llāh* (the decision is God's alone) meant that all matters were to be decided by reference to the word of God, about which they seemed to think there would be no difficulty.⁸ This was idealism, but idealism that could easily degenerate into fanaticism, and idealism that opened the way to disruptive tendencies, since the practical effect of making the Qur'ān by itself the ultimate standard was to make each strong leader a law unto himself.

Yet the Khawārij were profoundly important for the whole development, for at the centre of their theological teaching was the conception of a righteous God Who demands righteousness from His subjects. Even the Imām was subject to the Divine law and liable to deposition if he disobeyed it—indeed it was a duty to thrust him out.⁹

The secession of the Muḥakkima took place in 37 A.H. During the next twenty years or so we read of various risings by Khawārij in Kūfa and Baṣra, but we are given no details of the theological views of these men. In 61, after the flight of 'Ubaidallāh, the strong governor of Baṣra under Yazid, several exiles returned thither, including Nāfi' b. Azraq, 'Abdallāh b. Şaffār, 'Abdallāh b. Ibāḍ and Hanzala b. Baihas, each of whom became the founder of a sect.¹⁰

Nāfi' b. Azraq pushed to extremes the conception of the supremacy of the Divine law. Al-Ash'arī's account¹¹ deals mainly with the discussions originating in Baṣra about this time, and he says that Nāfi' was the first to introduce novel doctrines. In particular these were: dissociation from the *qa'āda* (those who "stayed at home"), a test for those who wanted to enter his camp, and a declaration of the unbelief of those who did not come out to campaign with him.¹² In other words, it is a duty for everyone to take part in the struggle against the enemies of God. But since, in their eyes, what is not white is black, and those who disagree with them are not white, the enemies of God came to include not only the heathen, but even large numbers of the people of the Qibla. He would not countenance *taqiya* (prudent fear), which in practice meant the hiding of one's true colours from reasons of expediency; no one could be

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his follower who did not go out and share the risks of battle with him.

But though this fanatical intransigence arouses little sympathy in us, we ought to recognize that the conception of the Divine law was still central. Those who committed grave sins were unbelievers, excluded from the community and punished in Hell. But the excessive emphasis laid on the duty of fighting for the community against its enemies seems to have brought with it some relaxation of the ordinary social duties; at least we are told that the punishment of stoning was done away with in certain cases.

Some of the Baihasīya were apparently just as fierce as the Azāriqa, the followers of Nāfi' b. Azraq;¹³ they approved killing the people of the Qibla and taking their goods, and declared that killing and taking captive were lawful in all circumstances. In connection with Ibrāhīm's contention that it was lawful to sell female unbelievers as slaves, and Maimūn's denial of this, the leader of the Baihasīya (in the *Maqālāt* Abū Baihas) held (1) that Maimūn was an unbeliever because he made it unlawful and dissociated himself from those who allowed it, (2) that those who suspended judgment on the question were unbelievers since they did not admit that Ibrāhīm was right and Maimūn an unbeliever, and (3) that Ibrāhīm was an unbeliever because he did not dissociate himself from those who suspended judgment in view of their suspension of judgment and refusal to associate themselves with him and dissociate themselves from Maimūn.¹⁴ This is a lovely example of the petty and fissiparous character of Khārijī thought (though there may be more in the transaction than meets the eye); yet even so there is still the same fundamental principle of reverence for the Divine law.

A milder tendency sets in with the Najadāt or Najdīya, the followers of Najda b. 'Āmir al-Ḥanafī, who came into prominence later than the Azāriqa, but had shot their bolt and been well-nigh exterminated by 73, whereas the Azāriqa maintained themselves in the East until 78. Najda permitted "prudent fear" at least in word, and he did not expect everyone to join with him in the fight against the unbelievers; this was a work of supererogation, praiseworthy but not incumbent on all, so that

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“staying at home” (*qu'ūd*) was not a sin. At the same time he seems to have been lenient in respect of impulsive acts of sin. Some of the 'Awfiya, a branch of the Baihasiya, also did not dissociate themselves from those who returned from the holy war to a state of “staying at home,” “because they return to a thing that is lawful.”¹⁵

With 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Ajarrad and the 'Ajārida we reach a truer conception of the supremacy of the Divine law. 'Abd al-Karīm appears to have been influenced both by Najda and by Abū Baihas.¹⁶ The insistence on upright conduct, through its implication that a man's eternal destiny in Paradise or Hell depended on that, now began to bear fruit. You associated with the “people of Paradise;” you dissociated yourself from the “people of Hell,” and possibly also fought against them. This presupposed that a man was responsible for what he did. How then were you to treat children, who on account of their immaturity were unable to act responsibly?

Nāfi' b. al-Azraq—possibly still influenced by the old conception of religion as a family and tribal matter—held that the children of believers and unbelievers went to Paradise and Hell respectively, and that therefore it was right to kill the children (and wives) of unbelievers.¹⁷ This view appears to have been adhered to by most other Khawārij—they even discussed what happened to children whose fathers changed from one group to the other after the children's death¹⁸—until the time of 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Ajarrad, who began to realize that such a view is incompatible with the supremacy of morality and its corollary of personal responsibility. He saw that children could not be said to belong to the community of the faithful till they had been summoned to Islam and had professed it for themselves, and that this could not happen till they were mature.¹⁹

The logic of this train of thought was inevitable, yet it was not easily accepted. According to al-Shahrastānī, 'Abd al-Karīm himself still clung to the view that the children of heathen parents shared their doom; one ought to take up the attitude of “dissociation” (*barā'a*) even towards the children of believers who were not yet of age to profess Islam.²⁰ An important member of the 'Ajārida, Tha'laba, held that, until children both of

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believers and of unbelievers had made a decision for themselves after being summoned to Islam, the correct attitude towards them was one of neutrality, neither "association" nor enmity nor "dissociation."²¹ It was apparently Maimūn who went farthest in this direction and argued that, since the children of unbelievers had committed no sin, and in particular had not been summoned to Islam and had then refused, they must be in Paradise.²²

Cognate with the problem of children was that of ignorance of the Divine law. A story about Najda's son and his army misappropriating booty and being pardoned on making a plea of ignorance serves to introduce a distinction between the religious knowledge which is essential and that which is not.²³ Abū Baihas and the Baihasīya were also occupied with this point. They allowed suspension of judgment in dealing with problems which no Muslim had hitherto experienced; but once a particular case had occurred, everyone who was aware of it was bound to know who had decided truly about it and who falsely.²⁴ Abū Baihas is also said to have held that in some cases knowledge of a thing by name is sufficient without knowledge of its interpretation and essence (*tafsīra-hu wa-'aina-hu*), but when a case of the thing occurs, a man must suspend judgment in absence of clear knowledge;²⁵ but he would presumably have held that, when a man did something wrong in ignorance, he was blameworthy for not taking sufficient pains to inform himself. A branch of the Baihasīya apparently received their nickname of "Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl" or "Questioners" from insisting that, though complete knowledge of all the details of the Divine law was not essential to being a Muslim, when a man came up against an action about which he was not sure, he must *ask*; after this question ignorance would no longer be permitted.²⁶

The development of Khārijī doctrine about children and about ignorance shows how the conception of the righteous God demanding righteousness from His creatures leads by an irresistible logic to the doctrine of human responsibility with its corollary the doctrine of Qadar, namely that man has power to perform the duties imposed on him. Thus the doctrine of Qadar grows naturally out of one side of the teaching of the Qur'ān.²⁷

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(c) *Other sects of the Khawārij*

It is not surprising, then, that several sects of the Khawārij are said to have held the doctrine of Qadar besides the Maimūniya; but except in the case of the latter we are given no details of their view. Al-Ash'arī contents himself with the following brief notices :—

“ The *Hamzīya* . . . affirm the doctrine of the Maimūniya about Qadar.”

“ The *Ma'lūmiya* . . . hold that the acts of men are not created, that the capacity accompanies the act, and that nothing comes about except what God has willed.”

“ The disciples of *Hārith al-Ibādī* . . . hold the doctrine of the Mu'tazila on the question of Qadar, and differ in this from the rest of the Ibādīya; they consider that the capacity precedes the act.”

“ The *Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl* . . . hold the doctrine of the Mu'tazila about Qadar.”²⁸

On the other hand it has to be admitted that many of the Khawārij opposed these views. Besides the Shu'aibīya, al-Ash'arī mentions the Khalafīya, Khāzimīya and Majhūliya as holding the anti-voluntarist view (which he calls the doctrine of Ithbāt or “ affirmation ”).²⁹

This opposition to the doctrine of Qadar does not nullify what has been said about the logical connection of this doctrine with the fundamental conceptions of the Khawārij. There is no trace of opposition from a truly Islamic motive, unless it be in 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Ajarrad's insistence on the supremacy of God. Shu'aib's outlook was seen to be somewhat fatalistic. Of the other sects mentioned, the Khāzimīya (the one of whom the fullest account is given) seems to be influenced by pre-Islamic ideas.

“ The sixth sect of the 'Ajārīda is the Khāzimīya. Peculiar to them is their assertion of the doctrine of Ithbāt in respect of the Qadar; and also that friendship and enmity are attributes of God in His essence, and that God counts men His friends in accordance with what they come to, even if in most of their circumstances they were believers.”

The somewhat vague phrases of the last clause refer quite definitely in my opinion to the doctrine found in the Traditions

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that men are judged by their last acts—a doctrine closely linked with pre-Islamic fatalism.³⁰

(d) *Dates*

So far as it is possible to estimate dates, it would seem that the Maimūniya and the Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl were the earliest of the Khawārij to hold the doctrine of Qadar. The Ḥamziya are late second century.³¹ The Ma'lūmiya are probably about the same time, for, if the text is correct, they would appear to be trying to find a compromise between the opposing views.³² There is nothing to suggest that Ḥārith al-Ibādī is early. The Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl, on the other hand, are the disciples of Shabīb al-Najrānī, who is to be identified with Shabīb b. Yazīd al-Shaibānī, drowned in 77 after the defeat of his rising.³³ And Maimūn is also early. Khālīd b. 'Abdallāh was governor of 'Irāq from 105 to 120, and since 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Ajarrad was held in prison by him when he wrote the letter referred to, the dispute between Maimūn and Shu'aib must have taken place in that period. But, if we assume that he is the same person who disputed with Ibrāhīm, then we know that his views were condemned by Abū Baihas, and the latter was put to death in the days of Walīd, 86-96, after having been active in Baṣra since 61.³⁴ Thus there is possibly no great difference of date between Maimūn and the Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl.

2. GHAILĀN AND THE MURJĪ'A

This study has first considered the Khawārij because it is easiest in their case to understand the logical relations of the doctrine of Qadar. The traditional view, however, was that the discussions about Qadar were started by Ma'bad al-Juhānī and continued by a follower of his, Ghailān al-Dimashqī (Abū Marwān). It will be convenient to deal with Ghailān first.

Perhaps the chief fact about him in this connection is that he was put to death by the Caliph Hishām (105-125) because of his Qadarī views—or at least so it is alleged. Al-Ṭabarī's account is not very illuminating, for all we are told of the debate between Ghailān and one Maimūn b. Mihrān, who had been commissioned by Hishām to refute Ghailān, is that the latter asked, "Does God

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will that sins should be committed ? ”, to which Maimūn retorted “Are they committed against His will ? ”, whereupon Ghailān was silenced.³⁵

The fullest account of his views is that of al-Ash‘arī :

“ It is not said of the acts of men that God willed them when they did not come about, but neither is it said that He did not will them ; but if they do come about it is permissible to say that He willed them. Of a human act, when it is one of obedience, it is said that God willed it in its time (*sc.* at the time of its occurrence) ; when it is one of disobedience, it is said that He did not will it. He held it permissible to say that God willed a thing which did not come about, and that something came about which He did not will. He denied that God wills that His creatures should obey Him before they obey Him, or wills that they should not disobey Him before they do disobey Him. Everything belonging to God’s activity comes about just when He wills it ; if He does not will it, it does not come about. He allowed that God does things although He did not will them.”³⁶

The distinctive feature of this is the assertion that God’s will and His action are simultaneous. Perhaps Ghailān hoped in this way to reconcile God’s omnipotence with the absence of *predetermined* acts. Apparently he held that men’s dutiful acts are not willed by God beforehand (thus making it necessary for men to do them), but only as men do them ; of sinful acts he simply said that God did not will them, presumably meaning that there was no Divine volition at all in regard to them. That would give point to the story in al-Ṭabarī—Ghailān was not prepared to admit that sin was actually contrary to the Divine volition. On the other hand, he admitted the statement “that God willed a thing which did not come about.” The last sentence might conceivably mean that God performs His share in the sinful acts of men, even though He does not will them ; but more likely it simply means that God may do things without *previously* willing them.

There can be no certainty about such details, however. What is clear is that Ghailān was trying to reconcile God’s omnipotence with his freedom from evil, and that to do so he attempted to identify His will with His activity rather than with His

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command. But he probably also held that there was a sphere exempted by God from His direct control and entrusted to men (though there are no traces of his use of the word *fawwāda*); something of this sort seems to be implied in his phrase "everything belonging to God's activity" (*kull mā kāna min fi'l Allāh*).

We must remember that hitherto there had been little in the way of analysis of human activity. According to Ghailān a man's capacity or power to act consisted simply in his physical fitness;³⁷ what had been entrusted to him therefore was fundamentally the control of his physical powers. At the same time Ghailān was certainly a thinker of some subtlety, as is shown by his distinction between primary and secondary knowledge;³⁸ the knowledge that things are originated and controlled belongs to all men by compulsion, and may be called primary, but the knowledge that their originator and controller is one and not two or more is an acquisition (*iktisāb*); it is with this secondary (we might almost say "revealed") knowledge that faith is concerned.

Such notices give us glimpses of a considerable system of thought, but not sufficient to let us see clearly the place of the doctrine of Qadar in it. To attain to this insight we must consider the outlook of the Murji'a in general, for it is to this sect, or rather group of sects, that he is commonly reckoned.³⁹

The Murji'a have probably been more misunderstood than any other of the Muslim sects. They were to a great extent the forerunners of orthodoxy, but by the time Islamic writers became interested in the history of theological doctrine they had died out, or rather been replaced by the orthodox theologians; and these, noting that a few of the views of their predecessors had come to be looked upon as heretical, did not care to defend them.⁴⁰ Consequently all the Muslim accounts we have of the Murji'a are prejudiced against them to some extent. The Western scholars of the last hundred years have not improved matters by introducing various Christian comparisons which do not quite fit. The Murji'a are *not* exponents of salvation by faith without works, nor are they worldly-minded "Laxists" who opposed the Puritanism of the Khawārij.

The thought of the community plays a much larger part in the religion of the Arabs and their subjects than the

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individualistic West can readily imagine. The question at issue between the Khawārij and the Murji'a was "What makes a man a member of the community and what terminates his membership?"—what we might call the problem of excommunication, if we remember not to let ourselves be misled by Christian parallels. The accounts of the Khawārij are full of the words *tabarra'a* and *tawallā*, which I have usually translated as "dissociated himself" and "associated" or "counted as friend." Doubtless the old tribal conceptions contributed to this; the only truly religious feelings of the pre-Islamic Arab were connected with his tribe.⁴¹

The salvation of the individual was by no means neglected, but it was closely linked up with the community. One attained to Paradise by being a member of the community of the "people of Paradise," while the rest of the world constituted the "people of Hell." The community of the Prophet in Madina formed the model,⁴² and many of the technical terms were derived from this source, such as *hijra* for going out to warfare against the heathen (even when it meant rebelling against the Commander of the Faithful or his lieutenants!). A state of war existed between the "people of Paradise" and the "people of Hell" and ideally there could be no comings and goings between them. It is clear how easily a one-sided elaboration of these ideas would lead to the fanaticism of the Khawārij.

The Khawārij were interested in the intellectual content of belief just as much as in moral conduct. The true community was community of *believers*, who had true belief or faith (*īmān*); all traces of unbelief (*kufr*) must be rigorously excluded from it. Thus the Najadāt held:

"Religion consists of two things: one of them is the knowledge of God and of His apostles, and counting forbidden the blood of Muslims and their goods and violation, and acknowledgement of what comes from the presence of God in general; this is obligatory; as regards what is more than this, the people's ignorance is pardoned until a proof is given to them about all that is lawful. . . ."⁴³

The beginning of this is reminiscent of the accounts of the various views of faith held by the Murji'a.

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At the same time, the Khawārij had often very limited views about the standard of righteous conduct. They certainly spoke much about "grave sins" (*kabā'ir*), but by these they understood not so much what a Christian understands by mortal sins (still less the serious social sins of to-day) as "acts on account of which a man must be excluded from the community." That is the meaning of their agreement (apart from the Najadāt) "that every grave sin is *kufṛ*."⁴⁴ The result of such romantic and unworldly strictness is sometimes merely the lowering of the standard which is made obligatory; thus we are told that some of the Baihasīya held that drunkenness was lawful, and that there was no punishment for faults, such as neglecting prayers, committed as a result of being drunk.⁴⁵ The alternative was to maintain one's moral standards but to discover some way of dealing with serious breaches other than exclusion from the community.

A conception that found some favour was that of suspension of judgement (*waqf*). The view of a section of the Ṣufriya about adulterers is reported to have been :

"We suspend judgment about them, and do not say that they are either believers or unbelievers."⁴⁶

Mention has been made in the previous section of those who suspended judgment in regard to the legality of the purchase of female slaves (disputed between Ibrāhīm and Maimūn). They evidently formed a fairly distinct body, and were known as "Ahl al-Wāqf" or "Wāqifa," and were opponents of the Baihasīya.⁴⁷ This principle of suspension of judgment does not carry one very far, but it is the first stage towards enabling people to live together who do not quite see eye to eye. It was applied to other matters than the one mentioned. The following quotation suggests that it may have had something to do with the origin of the Murji'a :

"There is a sect of them (*sc.* the Baihasīya) called the Shabībiya. Shabīb had suspended judgement in respect of Ṣāliḥ (*sc.* b. al-Musarriḥ) and of the Rāji'a. They declared : We do not know whether the decisions made by Ṣāliḥ are right or wrong, nor whether the witness of the Rāji'a is right or wrong. The Khawārij dissociate themselves from them, and call them the Murji'a of the Khawārij."⁴⁸

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(It is worth noting that the Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl, early exponents of the Qadarī position, were the disciples of Shabīb.)

The Murji'a, however, went a step beyond suspension of judgment. Possibly *irjā'* originally meant "the postponement of the judgment of the grave sinner till the resurrection, so that no decision is made while he is in this world whether he belongs to the people of Paradise or to the people of Hell."⁴⁹ In other words, he is to be treated as a believer, a member of the true community, with whom one has association. A technical expression of this is that "the house is the house of Faith, and the decision about its people is that they are faithful (believers), except for those clearly at variance with faith";⁵⁰ the Khawārij tended to think that the world was the House of Unbelief.⁵¹ Faith still means what is necessary to qualify a person for membership of the community of the people of Paradise; the fresh assertion is that faith does not include "all that God has made incumbent on His creatures," as the Khawārij said.⁵²

While this clearly makes it possible for opponents to say that the Murji'a held that grave sinners were believers,⁵³ it is not an indication that they belittled sin in any way. There may have been some extremists who said that it did not matter what one did so long as one had faith—"works do not help with heathenism, do not harm with faith"—but even such a statement as that "none of the people of the Qibla will enter Hell" does not mean that Muslim wrongdoers will escape all punishment.⁵⁴ In general the Murji'a were quite convinced that Muslim wrongdoers were liable to punishment, though they differed about the nature of the punishment; it might be in Hell or it might not; if it were in Hell, it might be everlasting or (as the majority thought) it might only be temporary.⁵⁵ What distinguishes the Murji'a from the Khawārij is the much more frequent occurrence of the idea of pardon or forgiveness, even though it be thought of merely as the remission of a penalty; Abū Mu'ādh al-Tūmanī, for instance, held that at the balances on the Day of Judgement, if a man's good deeds were heavier, he went to Paradise; if his evil deeds were heavier, he might either be punished or by God's grace

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excused.⁵⁶ Ghailān thought that God might pardon Muslim wrongdoers, but would treat alike all in the same position.⁵⁷ Others held that they would be removed from Hell by the intercession of the Prophet.⁵⁸

The conclusion to be derived from these somewhat lengthy discussions is that the Murji'a were imbued, no less than the Khawārij, with the thought of a righteous God demanding righteousness from His creatures. They differed in recognizing that right conduct is most likely to be promoted if men are not excluded from the community for every sort of fault. It is interesting to note how the phrase *Ahl al-Qibla*, the people who pray towards Mecca, replaces *Ahl al-Janna*, the people of Paradise—an indication of the less romantic but truer conception that the community of Islam contains others than those who will certainly go to Paradise.

Confirmation of these conclusions is found in the political position of the Murji'a. The statement of al-Nawbakhtī is consistent with the rest of our knowledge of this sect, and may therefore be accepted.

“After ‘Alī had been killed, the sect that was with him and the sect that was with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubair combined to form one sect with Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Ṣufyān, except a small number of them of his (*sc.* ‘Alī’s) Party (*shī‘a*) and those who asserted that he was Imām after the Prophet. . . . They are called altogether the Murji'a because they associate with the opponents together (*sc.* both Mu‘āwiya and ‘Alī, and both ‘Alī and his opponents). They consider that the people of the Qibla are believers by their public confession of faith, and hope (*rajā*) for pardon for them all.”⁵⁹

This means that to begin with the Murji'a were supporters of the Umayyads. Their theology, in its political application, meant that a ruler was to be accepted if he were sound in essentials, even if he did some things to which objection might be taken. They thus gave the Arab kingdom the justification without which it could not have continued.

Just because of their conception of righteousness, however, towards the close of the Umayyad period they moved into the opposition. Al-Nawbakhtī reports that the view of Ghailān and others was :

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“ Every holder of the imamate deserves it, provided he has knowledge of the Book and the Sunna, and holds the imamate by the agreement of the whole community.”⁶⁰

This is a two-edged statement, and would justify not only support of Mu'āwiya, but also rebellion against some of his successors. One account of Ghailān's martyrdom makes it pretty clear that he was not executed simply for his doctrine of Qadar; he had apparently criticized the whole fiscal policy of 'Umar II as unrighteous in that he did not use the wealth he was amassing on behalf of the poor of the land.⁶¹ In the East the Murji'a, as represented by Hārith b. Suraij and his scribe, Jahm b. Šafwān, helped to unite “ the different trends of the pious opposition ” to procure full citizens' rights for the Iranian Muslims.⁶² Thus, while there is much to be said for the suggestion that the later Umayyads tried to stamp out the doctrine of Qadar because it made people less inclined to submit to the existing order⁶³ (though actually Jahm, who has just been mentioned, was later regarded as the extreme opponent of Qadar), yet it seems more likely that what they really objected to was certain other views usually found along with the doctrine of Qadar and derived like it from the conception of righteousness.

There is much that remains obscure about the Murji'a. The distinction that Wensinck discusses⁶⁴ between *īmān* and *islām* is closely allied to that made by the Murji'a between *īmān* and membership of the people of Paradise, although the terms are used differently; and it would be reasonable to suppose that the Murji'a, since they existed from the beginning of the Umayyad period, had something to do with the drawing of the former distinction. Again, since the date of some of them is uncertain, and since some, like Muḥammad b. Šabīb, were much later than Ghailān, the scope of the discussions is probably not always the same; e.g. the connotation of faith probably altered in the latter part of the second century when the Khawārij and “ excommunication ” were no longer vital political issues.

What is clear about the Murji'a is fortunately also what is most important for our present purpose. They moved in the same circle of ideas as the Khawārij. Indeed it was probably only later that a firm line of distinction was drawn between

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the two. Al-Shahrastānī can include Ghailān and several related thinkers among the Khawārij as well as among the Murji'a ;⁶⁵ and the Wāqifa and Shabībīya of the Khawārij seem to have stood very close to the Murji'a, and even at times to have been called by that name.⁶⁶ Although the two bitterly opposed one another, they also had a great deal in common.

Consideration of the place of Ghailān in Islamic theology thus confirms the conclusion of section 1 of this chapter. The doctrine of Qadar is closely linked with the conception of human responsibility, and that in turn with that side of the Islamic revelation which is the conception of a righteous God Who demands righteousness from His creatures.

3. THE QADARĪYA

So far nothing has been said about the Qadariya, who from their name might be expected to have much to do with the origin of the doctrine under consideration ; and Ma'bad al-Juhani, the reputed originator of the discussions, has been mentioned and no more. That is because our knowledge in these respects consists mainly of fragmentary details, which by themselves do not carry us very far. Now, however, that we have formed some picture of the origin of the doctrine, and have glanced at the whole of which it is an integral part, these details help to amplify our picture.

(a) *The use of the name " Qadariya "*

In a short article on this question Nallino has noted how from quite early times it has appeared strange that the name " Qadari," which ought to mean an upholder of the Divine Qadar, does in fact mean exactly the opposite. He mentions the various explanations offered by modern scholars, and then offers a suggestion of his own which has won wide acceptance. The discussions in the first century of Islam always centred in the Qur'ān, he reminds us ; there were people who spent a lot of time discussing the Qadar, and who made it an important question ; because of this the term " Qadariya " was applied to them, without reference to the precise view they adopted about Qadar.⁶⁷

With this it is worth comparing a passage from al-Ash'arī's *Ibāna* :

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“ The Qadariya consider that *we* deserve the name of Qadar, because we say that God determines (*qaddara*) evil and unbelief, and whoever affirms (*yuthbitu*) the Qadar is a Qadari, and not those who do not affirm it. The reply to them is : The Qadari is he who affirms that the Qadar is his own and not his Lord's, and that he himself determines (*yuqaddiru*) his acts and not his Creator. This is the proper use of language. The goldsmith is the man who does goldsmith's work, and not the man who has goldsmith's work done for him. . . . Since you consider that it is you who determine your acts and perform them, and not your Lord, you must be Qadariya and not we ; for we do not ascribe the acts to ourselves and not to our Lord, and we do not say that we determine them and not He, but we say that they are determined for us.

Reply : If whoever affirms that the determination is God's (*man athbata 'l-taqdir li-'llah*) is a Qadari, then, since you hold that God determines the heavens and the earth, and determines acts of obedience, you ought to infer that you are Qadariya ; since this inference does not stand, your view is worthless and your argument self-contradictory.”⁶⁸

This passage does not necessarily refute Nallino, since al-Ash'ari may not have known the true origin of the term ; but it makes certain points clear. (1) “ Qadariya ” was apparently first used as a nickname (as, of course, many of the names of the sects were). Those to whom it was applied resented it (perhaps because it had the suggestion that they were presumptuously claiming God's Qadar for themselves) and tried to throw it back upon their opponents ; but in this, as we know, they were unsuccessful. It is noteworthy that the term is never used by Mu'tazili writers like al-Khaiyat and Ibn al-Murtaqa. (2) Al-Ash'ari appears to regard *qadar* as meaning “ determination ” (in the active sense) or “ power of determining ”—almost the equivalent of *taqdir*. This is how he appears to use the word in the *Maqalat*.⁶⁹ He also records a similar usage of it by his master al-Jubbai :

“ Creator means one from whom acts proceed in predetermined fashion (*muqaddaran*) ; everyone whose act occurs in predetermined fashion is the creator of it, whether he be eternal or originated.”

“ Creator means one who performs his acts in predetermined

fashion according to the determination he has settled for them (*muqaddaratan 'ala 'l-miqdār mā dabbara-hā 'alai-hi*). This is the meaning when we assert of God that He is creator. Similarly we assert of man that he is creator when acts proceed from him in predetermined fashion."⁷⁰

Whatever may have been the original meaning and application of the name "Qadariya," it never seems to have designated any close-knit body of people, like some of the sects of the Khawārij. As a name for a group of sects it never established itself, for it cut across more important groupings. Consequently, there is considerable vagueness about who and what the Qadariya were, apart from the fact that they held the doctrine of Qadar.⁷¹ The only evidence of value is that of early writers like Khushaish and al-Ash'arī.

(b) *The evidence of the earlier writers.*

The following are the references in the *Maqālāt* :

ḥ. 126, l. 8 : (On the future of children ; two groups have been described but not named.) "The third group of them (*sc.* of the Khawārij), the Qadariya, say that the children of both heathen and believers are in Paradise."

ḥ. 430, l. 1 : (On the question whether God can be obeyed by one who does not mean to do so ; some Mu'tazila say it is possible even for the Dahrīya—fatalists or materialists—to obey God.) "The Qadariya revile those who oppose them about Qadar, and the Ahl al-Ḥaqq (*sc.* orthodox) call them Qadariya, and they call them Mujbira ; they are more appropriately called Qadariya than the Ahl al-Ithbāt (*sc.* those who affirm God's Qadar)." Those who deny the above doctrine say : "The Mushabbiha (*sc.* Muslims of anthropomorphic views) have no knowledge of God and so do not obey Him ; but the Qadariya have a knowledge of God since they are Muwahhida (*sc.* asserters of unity),⁷² and so there is obedience to God in them."

ḥ. 477, l. 9 : Abū Shimr was a Qadārī.

ḥ. 549, l. 6 : (In connection with the view of Mu'ammār that God has power over movement, but not power to move.) "The Ahl al-Ḥaqq oppose the Ahl al-Qadar and Mu'ammār in that, and say. . . ."

ḥ. 549, l. 9 : Along with Mu'tazila, except al-Shaḥḥām, the Qadariya held that God has no power over a thing over which He has given power to men.

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These are, to the best of my knowledge, the only references in the whole of the *Maqālāt*. The first confirms what has been said above about the connection of the doctrine of Qadar with the Khawārij, the third that with the Murji'a (for Abū Shimr belonged to that group among the Murji'a related to Ghailān, who, though normally classified as Murji'a, are sometimes listed as Khawārij and even as Mu'tazila).⁷³ The connection with Mu'ammar is novel and interesting, but I have no useful comment to make about it, nor about the last passage.

In the *Ibāna* of al-Ash'arī "Qadariya" occurs nine times and "Ahl al-Qadar" once.⁷⁴ In some of these the name is closely bracketed with that of the Mu'tazila; in others it is used in connection with the doctrine of Qadar and its appendages. The most interesting passage is that where the Qadariya are said to hold the view that God cannot know a thing until it exists;⁷⁵ this was a view held by most of the Rawāfiq, who include Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and the Sakkākiya among others.⁷⁶ The curious view ascribed to the Qadariya that God creates good and Satan evil might conceivably be a libel of some sort.⁷⁷ Finally, it is puzzling but suggestive that al-Ash'arī refers to the Qadariya in the middle of arguments against the Jahmiya; the doctrines in question appear to be that God is eternally willing and powerful.⁷⁸

Thus it is clear that for al-Ash'arī the Qadariya were a definite body of people. Some of the later ones at least were Mutakallimūn or speculative theologians, but did not belong to the Mu'tazila. Whether those he mentions among the Khawārij lived in the Umayyad period or in the late second or even third century is not clear. If we suppose Abū Shimr to have been a disciple of Ghailān (who died before 125), or a disciple of a disciple, the prominence of the Qadariya would date from the closing years of the Umayyads and continue for the first fifty years or so of the 'Abbāsids until the great days of the Mu'tazila (till about 190 perhaps).

Khushaish has a long section on the Qadariya, but it mostly consists of arguments against them.⁷⁹ The descriptive passages may be quoted in full.

"The QADARIYA—their characteristics, doctrine and belief.

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The Qadariya consist of seven sects or groups.

One group holds that noble actions (*ḥasanāt*) and goodness (*khair*) are from God, but wickedness and base actions from themselves, so that they may not attribute any base action or sin to God. They discuss matters which it is not proper to repeat—may God be exalted far above what they say! . . .⁸⁰

A section of the Qadariya is called the *Mufawwiḍa*. They hold that they are entrusted (*muwakkal*) to themselves in such a way that they have power (*yaqdirūna*) for everything good through this delegation (*tafwīḍ*) they speak about, without God's help and guidance. . . .

A section of them consider that God has made (*ja'ala*) the power for action (*istiṭā'a*) in them perfect and complete, such that they do not require any increase in it, but are capable of believing and disbelieving, of eating and drinking, of standing and sitting, of sleeping and awaking, indeed of doing what they will. They hold that men are (*sc.* of themselves) capable of believing. If this were not so, they would be punished for what they are not capable of. . . .

A group of them, the *Shabībīya*, also deny that the knowledge (? God's) exists antecedently to what men are doing and what they are becoming. . . .⁸¹

A group of them deny that God creates the child of adultery or determines (*qaddara*) him or wills him or knows him (? antecedently)—may God be exalted above what they say! They deny that the man who steals throughout his whole life or eats what is forbidden receives the sustenance of God; they assert that God does not provide any sustenance except what is lawful—may God be exalted far above what they say!

. . . .
A group of them holds that God has appointed (*waqqata*) men their sustenance and their terms for a fixed time (*li-waqt ma'lūm*), so that whoever murders a man precludes him from his term and his sustenance to die at what is not his term, while of his sustenance there remains what he has not already received and fully obtained. May God be exalted far above what they say! These are all the doctrines of the Qadariya."⁸²

Most interesting is the mention of the *Mufawwiḍa*.⁸³ The word *fawwāḍa* was used by al-Ash'arī in describing the views of Maimūn; it is also used by al-Shahrastānī in connection with the Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl.⁸⁴ Thus we are confirmed in our view that there was a close connection between the Qadariya and certain sects

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of the Khawārij. It may seem strange that such a promising conception was not developed in later theology; the reason for this neglect is possibly that it lacked a Qur'ānic basis, since *fawwāda* is used only once, and then it is of a man entrusting his affair to God.⁸⁵

Interesting also is the mention of the Shabībīya as a sect of the Qadariya, since they are doubtless to be identified with the followers of Shabīb b. Yazīd al-Najrānī, who—or some of whom—are also known as the Ashāb al-Su'āl, as has already been noticed. Again we find ourselves in the same line of country on the border between the Khawārij and the Murji'a. The view here attributed to them may be the kernel out of which sprang the doctrine al-Ash'arī attributes to the Qadariya, that God does not know things until they exist.⁸⁶ The parts of the puzzle seem to be fitting together.

The principle underlying all these views is that of "not fixing evil upon God." Only the Mufawwiḍa show any trace of a desire to exalt human power, and even there it is only a slight trace. For the rest man is required to have the power to act primarily in order that God may not be unjust in punishing him. The central thought is the righteousness of God.

(c) *Ma'bad al-Juhānī.*

There remains only the problem of the man who was "the first to institute discussions about the Qadar in Baṣra." Not much is known about Ma'bad al-Juhānī. His death is placed in the year 80, and there is a report that he was put to death by order of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik. He is also said to have conversed with an 'Irāqī Christian called Sūsan, who embraced Islam but later apostatized.⁸⁷

In the books of sects, however, there is nothing at all apart from references to him as originator of the doctrine of Qadar; and there is nothing even of that in the *Maqālāt* or in al-Malaṭī's *Tanbīh*. But there is in the *Maqālāt* a sect of the Tha'ālība, who are themselves a branch of the 'Ajārida, called the Ma'badīya from their head Ma'bad.⁸⁸ They are mainly noted for their idea of taking alms from rich slaves and giving them to poor slaves; but al-Shahrastānī adds that they had views on the marriage

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of Muslim women. Now Maimūn, whose views on Qadar were studied first, belonged to the 'Ajārida; and the Tha'ālība held a mild form of the views of the 'Ajārida. So it seems in no way impossible that this Ma'bad al-Khārijī is none other than Ma'bad al-Juhanī. But, without further information, this must remain a conjecture. At least we can say that this is the sort of milieu in which we should expect to find the originator of the discussions about Qadar.

Note A. AL-ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ.

In section 7 of his study of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in *Islam*, XXI, 1-83, H. Ritter claims that al-Ḥasan was almost certainly a Qadarī, and that, if so, he has a better right to be looked on as the founder of the doctrine than an obscure person like Ma'bad. There is certainly much to be said for the view that he held the doctrine of Qadar. Though his name is not in Ibn Qutaiba's list of Qadarīya (*Ma'ārif*, 301), that might be out of respect for his dignity; his disciple Qatāda is included. Besides the report in Ibn 'Asākir (quoted by Ritter, p. 60) that he was influenced by Ma'bad, there is the following passage on p. 225 of the *Ma'ārif*:

"He (al-Ḥasan) held the doctrine of Qadar in some respects (*takallama fī shai' min al-qadar*), but later recanted of it. 'Aṭā b. Yassār, a story-teller, who held the doctrine of Qadar and made mistakes in speech, used to frequent al-Ḥasan with Ma'bad al-Juhanī and to ask: 'O Abū Sa'īd, these princes shed the blood of Muslims and seize their goods, and act and say, "Our acts occur according to God's determination (*qadar*)."' Al-Ḥasan said: "The enemies of God lie.'"

The mention of recantation may be mainly an attempt to "whitewash" al-Ḥasan. On the other hand, what he denies in this story are the immoral consequences of an extreme determinism which denies human responsibility. This is in accordance with his personal piety and uprightness of life. Similarly, the essence of a report, quoted by Ritter, that he opposed the Qadarīya, is that he asserted that man's sustenance is from God. The probability is that he held a moderate position, not altogether consistent with itself, in which emphasis was laid on righteousness in man and God.

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He can hardly by himself be the originator of the doctrine of Qadar, since it grew logically out of a whole movement of thought. Ritter's investigations, however, do confirm the connection of the doctrine with the conception of God's righteousness; it was because al-Ḥasan exhorted men to righteousness that he felt he must assert that they had been given power to achieve it (Ritter, p. 62).

Note B. QADAR AND ITHBĀT.

I have commonly used the expression "doctrine of Qadar" for what Western people would prefer to call the "doctrine of the freedom of the will." The latter is unsuitable in Muslim dogmatics, since the idea of freedom as such is quite foreign to the Muslim mind, to which the question is one of whether man has the *power* of determining his actions. A favourite phrase in Arabic was *al-qawl bi-'l-qadar*, "the doctrine of the determination" or "of the determining power." The following examples will show how al-Ash'ari apparently uses it only with a qualification such as "according to the view of the Mu'tazila." They will also show how the opposite came to be the "doctrine of the affirmation" (*ithbāt*) for al-Ash'ari, whereas al-Shahrastānī does not confine himself to the technical use of this word; by his time a distinction had been made within Ithbāt between Jabr (sheer determinism) and Iktisāb ("acquisition" or modified determinism—the orthodox view); cp. Chs. V and VI.

al-Ash'arī—Maqālāt.

- 93, 7 : The distinctive feature of the Maimūniya was the doctrine of Qadar according to the view of the Mu'tazila
(*al-qawl bi-'l-qadar 'ala madhhab al-Mu'tazila*).
- 93, 13 : The Khalafiya separated from the Maimūniya about the doctrine of Qadar and asserted the Ithbāt
(*faraqū 'l-Maimūniya fi 'l-qawl bi-'l-qadar wa-qālū bi' l-ithbāt*).
- 93, 14 : The Ḥamziya held firm the doctrine of Qadar of the Maimūniya
(*thabatū 'ala qawl al-Maimūniya bi-'l-qadar*).

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- 96, 4 : The distinctive feature of the Khāzimiya was that in respect of the Qadar they asserted the Ithbāt (*qālū fi 'l-qadar bi-'l-ithbāt*).
- 97, 2 : The Majhūliya asserted the Ithbāt of the Qadar (*qālū bi-ithbāt al-qadar*).
- 116, 2 : The Aṣḥāb al-Su'āl held the doctrine of the Mu'tazila about Qadar. (*qālū bi-qawl al-Mu'tazila fi 'l-qadar*).
- 124, 9 : As for the Qadar we have already mentioned those of the Khawārij who adopted the view of the Mu'tazila in respect of it and those of them who inclined to the Ithbāt. (*fa-amma 'l-qadar fa-qad dhakarnā man yadhabu fi-hi ila qawl al-Mu'tazila min al-Khawārij wa-dhakarnā man yamīlu ila 'l-ithbāt min-hum*).

al-Shahrastānī—Milal.

- 96 (a) : The Ḥamziya agreed with the Maimūniya in respect of Qadar (*wāfaqū 'l-Mu'tazila fi 'l-qadar*).
- 96 (b) : The Maimūniya were distinguished from the 'Ajārida by the affirmation of the Qadar, both good and bad, being from men (*tafarrada 'an-hum bi-ithbāt al-qadar khairi-hi wa-sharri-hi min al-'abd*).
- 96 (b) : The Atrāfiya were of the opinion of Ḥamza about the doctrine of Qadar (*'ala madhhab Ḥamza fi 'l-qawl bi-'l-qadar*).
- 97 (a) : The Khalafiya opposed the Ḥamziya about the doctrine of Qadar and attributed the Qadar, both good and bad, to God (*khalafū 'l-Ḥamziya fi 'l-qawl bi-'l-qadar wa-adāfū 'l-qadar khaira-hu wa-sharra-hu ila 'llāh*).
- 97 (a) : The Shu'aibiya separated from Maimūn when he proclaimed the doctrine of Qadar (*hīn aḥara 'l-qawl bi-'l-qadar*).

Note C. THE SAKKĀKIYA, ETC.

The Sakkākiya are almost certainly the followers of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Khalīl al-Sakkāk (for the many variants of his

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laqab see *Intiṣār*, 178, note). The Sakkākīya held that knowledge is an attribute of God *fī dhāti-hi*; He is '*ālim fī nafsi-hi*', but is not described as '*ālim*' so long as the thing is not (*Maq.* 219, 490). This is somewhat similar to the view of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (*Maq.* 37, etc.). Muḥammad b. Khalīl al-Sakkāk was a *shaikh* of the Rāfiḍa (*Intiṣār*, 6; cp. *Maq.* 63), who disputed with Ja'far b. Ḥarb about the knowledge of God (*Intiṣār*, 110f.), and in a debate with al-Iskāfī defended Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (*ib.* 142). (A view of his about God's movement is mentioned, *Maq.* 213). Thus this identification would seem to be justified.

Further, because of the many variants of the name, it would seem that the Sakaniya of *Intiṣār*, 126 are the same people. They held a view of God's knowledge similar to Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.

The sect of Shakkākīya, mentioned in the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, are probably different. They held that works are a part of faith (p. 10), and also apparently that when a man says he is a believer he must add "if God will" (p. 14). This would rather support the identification of them with the Shukkāk (also known as Butriya and Ḥashwiya), who were the fourth sect of the Murji'a according to al-Nawbakhtī (*Firaq al-Shi'a*, 7), and included men like al-Shāfi'i and Mālik b. Anas; cp. pp. 9, 12, 14f.

NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER III

- ¹ *Maq.* 94 f.; the following passage is from p. 93.
- ² Al-Shahrastānī, 97, carries this tendency further; cp. the passage translated in 1, 2, a above (p. 4). Al-Baghdādī repeats al-Ash'arī with little variation, *Farq*, 84 f. The story is probably connected with later discussions about "reservation" (*istiṭhnā*), that is the use of this phrase; cp. *Ibāna*, 75, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, 14 f.; Abu 'Udhba, *Al-Rawḍat al-Baḥiyya*, 6, states that no *istiṭhnā* was permitted in confirming or annulling contracts.
- ³ *Maq.* 110; Haarbrücker has mistranslated *Milal*, 93 through reading *ama* as *umma*; the plural *imā* in *Maq.* shows that the reading must be *ama*.
- ⁴ *Farq*, 264; it is suggested that this is derived from the religion of the Magians.
- ⁵ A small group of to-day, the Ahl al-Sunna or Subkiya, have similar theological conditions for marriage—Prof. Jeffrey in *Moslem World*, XXXIII (1943), p. 172.

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- ⁶ *Milal*, 96; *Farq*, 264.
- ⁷ Cp. Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionen parteien im alten Islam*, Part I, esp. sect. 3. Many of the historical details in the following pages are from this source.
- ⁸ *Milal*, 86-89; cp. *Q.* 12, 40. The name means "Those who say *lā ḥukma illā li-llāh*". The verbal noun *taḥkīm* is used in much the same way as *taḥkīr* of "Allāh akbar". Some of the sources interpret the judgment of God as battle; cp. G. Levi della Vida, art. *Kharidjites* in *EI*.
- ⁹ Cp. *Milal*, 87.
- ¹⁰ Wellhausen, *op. cit.* sect. 8; presumably he means the sects of the Azāriqa, Ṣufriya, Ibādīya and Baihasiya, though the names of the founders of the three last are given differently elsewhere.
- ¹¹ *Maq.* 86-131; he mentions the Muḥakkima only at the end.
- ¹² *Maq.* 86. ¹³ *Maq.* 116.
- ¹⁴ *Maq.* 113. ¹⁵ *Maq.* 115.
- ¹⁶ *Maq.* 93; 95, l. 11. The influence of Najda was through 'Aṭīya.
- ¹⁷ *Maq.* 89, l. 10 ff. ¹⁸ *Maq.* 126.
- ¹⁹ *Maq.* 93; *Milal*, 95; cp. the similar view held by his follower 'Uthmān b. Abi 'l-Ṣalt, *Maq.* 97; *Milal*, 96. ²¹ *Maq.* 97, etc.
- ²⁰ *Maq.* 93. ²² *Maq.* 90.
- ²² *Milal*, 96; *Farq*, 264. ²³ *Maq.* 114.
- ²⁴ *Maq.* 113.
- ²⁶ *Maq.* 115.
- ²⁷ If this view is correct, then Becker's contention that the doctrine of Qadar is due to Christian influence is beside the point (*Christliche Polemik*, sect. 3). For one thing, John of Damascus, if he died in 133/749, was probably writing twenty or thirty years after the discussions started (about 80). Again, the whole formulation of the problem in Islam is different, since there is nothing exactly equivalent to the *autoexousios* of the Greek. What Becker does prove is that Christians like John of Damascus and Theodore Abū Qurra had an extensive knowledge of Islam, and that certainly makes some interaction a possibility at a later time. In the main, however, "the sequence of ideas is not of foreign origin, but is indigenous" (Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 52, discussing the views of Becker and others).
- ²⁸ *Maq.* 93; 96; 104; 116. The account of al-Shahrastānī is similar, except that he adds a branch of the Ḥamziya, the Aṭrāfiya, and omits the followers of Ḥārith.
- ²⁹ *Maq.* 93; 96; 97. For the use of "Ithbāt" see Note B at the end of the chapter. The Ibādīya also seem to have tended towards some such view (*Maq.* 107 f.), but we must speak about them with care since those mentioned by name, like Yaḥya b. (Abī) Kāmil, belong to the third century (cp. *Munya*, 41, 45).
- ³⁰ Cp. above, II, 2, c; p. 18.
- ³¹ According to al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, 77, Ḥamza seceded in 179.
- ³² The view that the capacity or power accompanied the act was one later taken by opponents of Qadar, like al-Najjār (V. 4 below).
- ³³ *Maq.* 115; Wellhausen, *op. cit.* sect. 11; the identification is made in *Maq.* Index.
- ³⁴ *Maq.* 113; *Milal*, 93; Wellhausen, sect. 8.
- ³⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, II, 1733 (quoted in *Intiṣār*, 213 f.). Al-Baghdādī (*Farq*, 194) and al-Shahrastānī (*Milal*, 107 f.) merely remark that Ghailān held the Qadarī doctrine and then pass on to give his views about faith.
- ³⁶ *Maq.* 513; this is actually stated to be the view of Faḍl al-Riqāshī, while a note at the end mentions that Ghailān's view was similar; but we can accept it with some confidence, noting only that it may contain developments from a later time than that of Ghailān.
- ³⁷ *Maq.* 229. ³⁸ *Maq.* 136.
- ³⁹ *Farq*, 190, 194; *Milal*, 105-8.

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- 40 Admittedly sound men like Abū Ḥanifa had to be "white-washed"—cp. *Farq*, 191, and Dr. Halkin's note, *Moslem Schisms*, p. 4.
- 41 Goldziber, *Muhammedanische Studien*, I, p. 4.
- 42 Cp. *Maq.* 88, l. 15.
- 43 *Maq.* 90; the second thing is presumably what is not obligatory.
- 44 *Maq.* 86. ⁴⁵ *Maq.* 117.
- 46 *Maq.* 116. ⁴⁷ *Maq.* 110-115.
- 48 *Maq.* 122. ⁴⁹ *Milal*, 104 top.
- 50 *Maq.* 144.
- 51 *Maq.* 111; 463, l. 14; cp. 116, Dār Shirk.
- 52 Cp. *Maq.* 110.
- 53 *Maq.* 299, l. 14; cp. *Intiṣār*, 164 f. ⁵⁴ *Maq.* 147, etc.
- 55 *Maq.* 149 f. ⁵⁶ *Maq.* 151; cp. 152.
- 57 *Maq.* 150. The thought of Ghailān in particular is close to Q. 9, 107 from which the name of Murji'a is probably derived: "Others are deferred (*murjūn*) for the command of God whether He will punish them or relent towards them." Cp. art. *Murji'a* by Wensinck, in EI.
- 58 *Maq.* 150. ⁵⁹ *Firaq al-Shi'a*, 6.
- 60 *Firaq al-Shi'a*, 9. ⁶¹ Ibn al-Murtadā, *Munya*, 15 ff.
- 62 Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 464 f. ⁶² Goldziber, *Vorlesungen*², 91 f.
- 64 *Muslim Creed*, 22-24, 34, 37, etc.
- 65 *Milal*, 103. ⁶⁶ See above.
- 67 *Rivisti degli Studi Orientali*, VII (1916-8), 461-6, "Sul Nome di 'Qadariti'". For the use of Qadar, see note B at end of ch.
- 68 P. 73 f., tr. 113—apparently the basis of *Milal*, 29.
- 69 Cp. Note B below.
- 70 *Maq.* 228, 539; for the attribution of the former cp. 195, l. 4-6.
- 71 By the time of al-Baghdādī (d. 429) and al-Shahrastānī (d. 548) they have been assimilated to the Mu'tazila (*Farq*, 18, 93 f.; *Milal*, 29; cp. *Milal*, 5 where they are said to be one of the four chief sects of Islam.
- 72 *Muwahhida* here is a conjecture of my own instead of *mawjūda* in the printed text. Cp. *Intiṣār*, Index, s.v. *Muwahhid*.
- 73 *Milal*, 103—Khawārij. Ghailān is a Mu'tazilī in *Intiṣār*, 127, *Munya*, 15, etc.; Abū Shimr, as a follower of al-Nazzām, in *Milal*, 41; see also Dr. Nyberg's note, *Intiṣār*, 211-3.
- 74 Pp. 5 (Ahl al-Qadar), 6, 7, 32, 56, 67, 72, 73 f., 85, 87; = tr. 46, 47, 49, 74, 96, 107, 111, 113, 125, 128.
- 75 85, tr. 125.
- 76 *Maq.* 489, l. 9; 37; 490, l. 10; etc. For Sakkākiya see Note C, p. 56.
- 77 *Ibāna*, 6; tr. 47. It might be an attribution to them of Christian ideas; John of Damascus held that "evil is due to our weakness and the wiles of the devil" (cp. Becker, *Christliche Polemik*, p. 184). Or it might be based on an idea current among the Khawārij that wrongdoing is unbelief, and unbelief the worship of Satan; cp. *Maq.* 118.
- 78 *Ibāna*, 32, 56; tr. 74, 96. ⁷⁹ In al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh*, 126-135.
- 80 P. 126. ⁸¹ P. 133.
- 82 P. 134.
- 83 These cannot be the same as the Mufawwiḍa among the sects of the Shi'a (*Maq.* 16; al-Nawbakhtī, 71), since the *tafwīḍ* the latter were concerned with was political; cp. Fyzee, *A Shi'ite Creed*, p. 100.
- 84 *Maq.* 93 f.; cp. Fyzee, *op. cit.*, p. 32. ⁸⁵ Q. 40, 47.
- 86 *Ibāna*, 85; tr. 125. Cp. ch. V, sect. 5.
- 87 Ibn Qutaiba, *Ma'ārif*, 301, places him at the head of the list of Qadariya. The story of Sūsan is from Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 53, quoting from Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, X, 225 f. H. Ritter (*Islam*, XXI (1933), p. 58 f.) quotes Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh Dimashqī* as saying: "The first to discuss Qadar was an 'Irāqī called Sūsan, a Christian who became Muslim, then returned to Christianity; Ma'bad al-Juhānī derived

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from him, and Ghailān from Ma'bad."

- ⁸⁸ *Maq.* 98; in *Milal*, 98 he is called "Ma'bad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān"; cp. *Farg*, 80. Ritter says that the information about Ma'bad al-Juhani in Ibn 'Asākir, *op. cit.*, is to be found under the heading "Ma'bad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Uwaimir" or "Ma'bad b. Khālid". The volume with these articles is unfortunately not accessible to me.

IV

THE MU'TAZILA

I. THEIR HISTORICAL POSITION

THE Mu'tazila early attracted the attention of Western scholars because of the similarity of many of the views they held with those of the "liberal" thought of the nineteenth century. Where so much was alike, there was a tendency to assume complete identity, and to forget that the Mu'tazila remained essentially Muslims. Doubtless there were wistful dreams of Islam and Christendom walking together like brothers, if only Islam had followed in the way of the Mu'tazila and had not been turned aside by that supposed reactionary, al-Ash'arī; little was it realized how soon the West itself was to a great extent to turn its back on everything "liberal."

The work of scholars during the last two decades, and notably that of Dr. H. S. Nyberg, has done much to rid us of these delusions. What I have to say about the historical position of the Mu'tazila is based mainly on his article in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*.¹

In order to understand the position of the Mu'tazila it is best to start with Abu 'l-Hudhail, who was the true founder of its dogmatic system.² He died in 227 or shortly after,³ but he was a very old man when he died—the common account is that he was one hundred years old, but even the figure of 150 is mentioned.⁴ Now even if we suppose that he was not born till 140, that would still make him 53 in 193 on the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd; and therefore we must suppose that most of his best work was done in the reign of that caliph, though he probably continued to be active throughout the first part of the reign of al-Ma'mūn—say till about 210.⁵ Activity in the caliphate of Hārūn would also be in accordance with what we know of his relations with Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir. They appear

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to have been contemporaries,⁶ except that Abu 'l-Hudhail seems to have criticized Bishr more than he was criticized by him, which suggests that Bishr may have been slightly earlier. Now Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir is said to have spent a considerable time in prison under Hārūn, which implies that he was an influential man as early as 180 or so ; thus it seems likely that Abu 'l-Hudhail had also attained a position of some prominence before the end of the reign.⁷

One of the great differences between the Mu'tazila and the sects previously considered was that politics were coming to play a smaller part. The Mu'tazila certainly had political views, and those of Baghdād were in close touch with the men at the head of affairs between the years 200 and 235. Yet the men whose views we are about to consider were not the revolutionary leaders who have occupied us so far, but something much more like the theologian of the modern world. Possibly their nearest to political propaganda was their defence of Islam against Manichaeism and Indian materialism—a defence of the caliphate and its underlying principles. They wrote what seemed to the people of that time enormous numbers of books,⁸ and this helps to explain how we have such full accounts of their views.

Because there were the beginnings of a University at Baṣra—it was called an assembly, *majlis*—Abu 'l-Hudhail was open to a good many influences. Before his time the *majlis* and the *kalām* were in the hands of Ḍirār b. 'Amr;⁹ and a connection can be traced, both by way of development of Ḍirār's views and of reaction against them. There were also the mysterious Jahmiya, constituting some or all of the Muwaḥḥida, who influenced Abu 'l-Hudhail, especially in his views on *tawḥīd*.¹⁰ And the "learned Murji'a" doubtless contributed too.¹¹ The Khawārij were largely anti-Umayyad, and apparently ceased to be prominent after the political realignments which took place on the advent of the 'Abbāsids in 132;¹² but with the principle of *'adl* (justice) the Mu'tazila had taken over all that was best in the thought of the Khawārij.

Non-Muslim influences must also be reckoned with. That of Greek philosophy is exemplified in the report that Abu 'l-Hudhail made use of Aristotle.¹³ Recent researches have shown that many

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of the Mu'tazilī conceptions were elaborated in the course of the struggle with Manichaeism.¹⁴ The probability of Christian influence is indicated by the *Apology* of the Patriarch Timothy, which we still possess, and which reports discussions held at the court of al-Mahdī in 165, at which time Abu 'l-Hudhail would be about 30. And early Muslim atomic theories have some kinship with Indian ones.¹⁵

All these influences seem to have affected Abu 'l-Hudhail in one way or another; some ideas he borrowed and modified, some he reacted against. It was out of this intellectual ferment that there appeared the extensive speculations of the Mu'tazila, which eventually produced, or played a large part in producing, Muslim scholasticism. Yet so far no mention has been made of what Muslim writers counted the primary influence, his predecessors in the Mu'tazila, Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' and 'Amr b. 'Ubaid.

Reliable information about these men is scanty. It would seem that, while in some sense they may be claimed as forerunners of the Mu'tazila, the great intellectual expansion which has interested scholars did not commence till about the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, some fifty years after the death of Wāṣil. The attribution of the foundation of the Mu'tazila to Wāṣil was doubtless made in order to enhance the dignity of the body, for Muslims tend to equate soundness with antiquity;¹⁶ rivalry with the Jahmīya, whose founder was killed in 128, may also have had something to do with it. It is probably true, however, that the general political and religious orientation of the Mu'tazila was derived from that of Wāṣil. He appears to have been the author of what they regarded as their distinctive mark, the doctrine of the Intermediate Condition, *al-manzila bain al-manzilatain*, or the doctrine that those who commit grave sins are neither unbelievers (as the Khawārij say) nor believers (as the Murji'a say), but are in an intermediate condition. This doctrine was important mainly for its political implications, which were, as Dr. Nyberg has shown, the support of the 'Abbāsids against the Umayyads. But again, like other two of the five basic principles of the Mu'tazila, *al-wa'd wa-'l-wa'id* (the promise and the threat) and *al-amr bi-'l-ma'rūf wa-'l-nahy 'an al-munkar* (the command about what is approved and the prohibition of

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what is disapproved), it played hardly any part in the theological discussions.

What we know of the views of Wāṣil and 'Amr shows that they were far removed from the sort of discussion that interested the Mu'tazila, as reported in the *Maqālāt*. The only mention there of Wāṣil is in connection with the ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān.¹⁷ A report, probably derived from al-Jāhiz,¹⁸ makes him interested in subjects such as the general or particular reference of *akhbār*. On the other hand, we are informed that Wāṣil had arguments with dualists and gnostics from the extreme Shī'a, in the course of which he doubtless entered into more philosophical questions, and may thus have paved the way for later developments ; but no details of these seem to be available.¹⁹

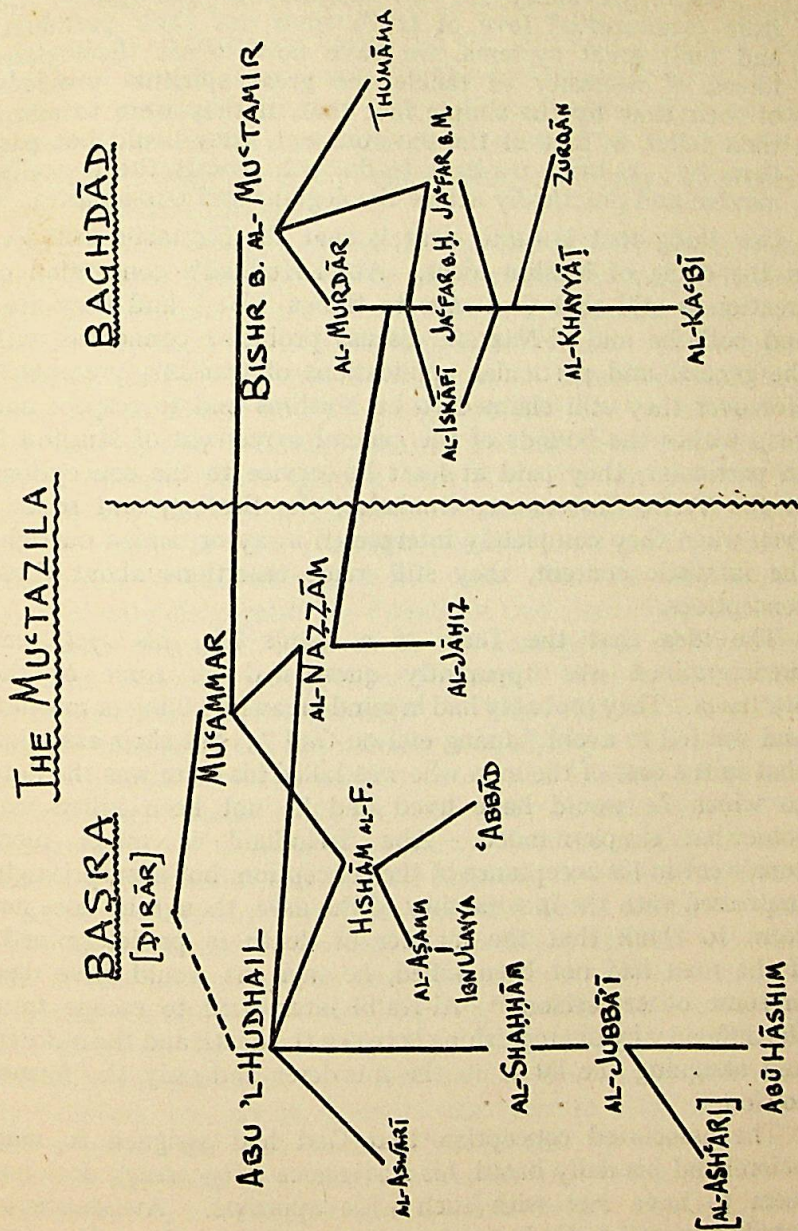
Thus the intellectual stirrings which made their appearance about the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd were very largely something new, to which all the influences mentioned above had contributed something, even though the chief exponents of the new thought had roots in a religio-political group that went back to the time of the Umayyads.²⁰

While Abu 'l-Hudhail may with good grounds be regarded as the real founder of the Mu'tazila, he was by no means alone. In Baṣra, besides himself, there was Mu'ammār, possibly somewhat older, and of independent views ;²¹ and before long there were also his pupils, al-Nazzām and Hishām b. 'Amr al-Fuwaṭī, who argued vehemently against him.²² In Baghdād there was Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir and his pupils, of whom Abū Mūsā al-Murdār was the oldest and probably contemporary with Abu 'l-Hudhail. The accompanying diagram gives an idea of the relationships between the main figures. Something of their distinctive standpoints, and especially of the divergences between the schools of Baṣra and Baghdād, will become clear as we proceed.

2. THE RATIONALISM OF THE MU'TAZILA

In contrast to the nineteenth century scholars, Dr. Nyberg has perhaps overstressed the view that the Mu'tazila were not rationalists ; yet it has to be admitted that the truth is not very far from the new conception of them he has advocated.

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“ Where previously one saw enlightened philosophers, who from disinterested love of truth spun out their paradoxes and built great systems, we have now to set theologians, forced of necessity to tackle the great spiritual problems of their time by the simple fact that, if they were to affirm their Islam in face of the environment, they could not pass them by ; in brief, we have to do with strictly theologically-minded and practically active theologians and missionaries.”²³

One thing that is quite clear is that the Mu'tazila still live in the circle of Muslim ideas. Abu'l-Hudhail's conception of creation is still that God says to things “ Be ” and they are ; and both he and al-Nazzām discuss problems connected with the general and particular applications of Qur'ānic precepts.²⁴ Moreover they still claimed to be Muslims and to respect and keep within the bounds of the general agreement of Muslims.²⁵ In particular, they paid at least lip-service to the conceptions of the Term, Sustenance, Guidance, the Sealing, and so on ; even when they completely interpreted away or denied outright the fatalistic content, they still made assertions about these conceptions.

The idea that the Term of a man's life, his *ajal*, was predetermined was apparently questioned by some of the Mu'tazila. They probably had in mind unlawful killing or murder, and wanted to avoid “ fixing evil on God ” ; but their assertion that in the case of the man who was killed his term was the date to which he would have lived had he not been killed was somewhat simple-minded. Abu 'l-Hudhail is much more consistent in his acceptance of the conception, but is surprisingly impressed with the inevitability of the date, though he does not seem to think that the manner of death is predetermined ; if the man had not been killed, he says, he would have died in some other fashion.²⁶ Al-Ka'bi later tried to escape from the difficulty by distinguishing between the death and the murder, and assigning the latter to the murderer and only the former to God.²⁷

The associated conception that God had assigned to man beforehand his daily bread, his sustenance (*rizq*, *arzāq*), does not seem to have met with such wide approval. Avoidance of attributing evil to God was the primary consideration. If a man

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lives on stolen goods, it is difficult to understand how a righteous God can have provided them. So the Mu'tazila generally held that God creates for a man only the sustenance to which he is lawfully entitled; what a man obtains unlawfully was not appointed to be his sustenance by God.²⁸ This has not been thought out very fully, and shows only an uneasy compromise with the established belief.

In the case of such conceptions as those of the Sealing and Imprinting of the hearts of the unbelievers, anything objectionable in the conceptions is removed by interpreting them in a special way, namely, as something which follows upon a man's unbelief, but is in no way the cause of it. Some held that they were the testimony and the judgment that the unbelievers do not believe, and that they do not prevent them from having faith; others, while agreeing that they did not prevent the unbelievers from doing what they were commanded, said more picturesquely that the Imprinting is the black mark placed on the heart of the unbeliever in order that the angels may conveniently distinguish the Friends of God from His Enemies.²⁹

Similar treatment is given to the conceptions of Guidance, Succour, Leading Astray, Abandonment.³⁰ The following lines of thought can be distinguished. (1) Some of these acts of God may be interpreted as His naming and judging. This is particularly applicable to the negative ones like leading astray and abandoning. *Aḍalla* (with its noun *iḍlāl*) normally means "he led astray" or "he made to go astray," but the analogy of other words gives grounds of a sort for claiming that the word means "he counted astray" or "he made out to be astray." Thus God merely declares, according to this interpretation, that they are in fact astray, and thereby does no evil. (2) God may be said to guide and protect men by giving them His religion through His prophets, by summoning them to Islam, by promises of Paradise and warnings about Hell and the like. (3) God's favours to believers, by way of strengthening them to obey or believe, are a reward for their faith. There is also the view that He bestows His help and protection on the man whom He knows will benefit by it—a sort of reward before the act. (4) God is said to give His protection to everyone alike, but it has a different

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effect on different people; the voluntary believer is helped, and the unbeliever has his unbelief increased.

In these interpretations of conceptions from Qur'ān and Tradition there are—besides the strength of the allegiance of the Mu'tazila to Islam—two points to be noticed. The first of these is the extent to which the background presupposed is fatalistic. The Mu'tazila appear to have in mind rival interpretations that are thoroughly in the spirit of the pre-Islamic age. Even their own discussions of "the man God knows will not believe" rather savour of the fatalistic idea that a person's final happiness or misery is decided while he is in the womb or even earlier.³¹ The expression "God knows" is certainly theistic in form, but in effect it refers to a knowledge whose Subject is not clearly conceived, and which, moreover, is only descriptive and in no way determinative of events. As an antidote to the fatalistic element in the hearts of Muslims such views as those of the Mu'tazila would appear to be far less effective than those of the Qur'ān. They had simply asserted man's ability to determine his fate, but the basis of fatalism was left untouched, for in regard to man's destiny they had stripped God of every role except that of observer and recorder. Man, conscious of his own weakness in face of the destructive forces of Time, was likely to find little to inspire him in their theorizings.

The other point of note is that these interpretations of current conceptions are made in accordance with the principle of *'adl*, the justice or righteousness of God; in this they were the successors of the Khawārij. It is precisely here that their rationalism begins to appear. In the instances considered they are not explicitly regarding Reason as a source of religious truth, but they *are* assuming the complete validity of their human, rational ideas of justice when applied to God and the complete ability of their finite minds to apprehend eternal Being. When they held that no evil or injustice might be ascribed to God they were thinking of Him as a superior kind of magistrate or administrator. The punishment of evildoers is certainly just, but only where the wrong is the man's own doing. Thus ideas of sublunary justice led them to deny God's supreme control of human affairs.

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This belief in Reason was also to some extent given explicit acknowledgement. There were some who held that it could be known by Reason apart from Revelation that grave sins were punished and that the punishment was eternal.³² Others introduced various restrictions ; for some it was only knowledge of God, not of His commands, that Reason gave, and consequently only the punishment of unbelief that could be known apart from Revelation. Al-Nazzām made a distinction of this sort between those acts which were good and evil in themselves and those that were only so as a result of positive prescription.³³ It is difficult to know just how important this belief in Reason was for the systems of the Mu'tazila in general, for it is not frequently mentioned and there is much of a contrary nature ; but sometimes at least it was quite openly and explicitly professed.

3. ABU'L-HUDHAIL AND HIS IMMEDIATE PUPILS

It has been seen that one of the implications of the principle of Justice is that, since man is punished for his sins, he must be a responsible agent. Though the terms in which Muslims think about this whole question of " freedom " are often very different from ours, on this particular point they come close to the Kantian formula that " Ought implies Can." The statement, " they all deny that God imposes a duty on (*yukallifu*) man which he is not able (or has not power) for " (*yaqdiru*)³⁴ could almost be reduced to " *taklīf* implies *qudra*." Even " the man God knows will not believe " is commanded to have faith and is able for it ; while paralytics and those permanently lacking in power have no duties imposed on them.³⁵

This formulation of the doctrine of human responsibility in terms of power led to difficulties of its own. The opponents of the Mu'tazila took over the conception of power and used it to express their own view. They supposed that for each act commonly ascribed to a man God created the requisite power in the man, but it was merely power for this one act and not for anything else ; the man had no power for any other act or even for leaving this one undone.³⁶ Consequently the Mu'tazili view had to be made more precise : man has power over both

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the act and the opposite of it, and this power does not oblige him to the doing of it.³⁷

This view was common to all the Mu'tazila, and is not specially connected with Abu 'l-Hudhail, but it seems to be not unrelated to his analysis of human power and activity, and in particular to his conception of "moments" or "times," which was widely accepted by the Mu'tazila. The conception is briefly stated thus:

"Man is able to act in the first, and he acts in the first, and the act occurs in the second; for the first moment is the moment of *yaf'alu*, and the second moment is the moment of *fa'ala*."

"The moment is the division (*farq*) between acts and it extends through the interval from act to act, and with every moment there originates an act."³⁸

In some ways this may seem obscure and confused. The point is, however, that Abu 'l-Hudhail is not thinking so much of time as measured by the clock, but rather of time as experienced, in a somewhat Bergsonian sense. The two parts of the verb "act" in the first quotation have not been translated because much of their point lies in their untranslatable associations. The normal translations would be "he will act" (or "he acts") and "he acted," but, as is well known, while they correspond roughly to our tenses, the distinction between them is rather that between incomplete and completed action—a distinction very difficult for the Western mind to grasp. There is about the imperfect *yaf'alu* (and still more about *yaf'ala*, the subjunctive of it, which might just as well be the reading of the text) the suggestion of an act thought about but not carried out—either still in progress, or not yet started. This seems to be the point of the distinction drawn by Abu 'l-Hudhail. The first moment or time is that in which the internal or mental aspect of the act takes place, the decision to do X rather than Y, and the issue of commands to the body; the second moment or time is that of the execution of the act in the external or physical sphere. Al-Shahrastānī describes this as a distinction between "acts of the heart" and "acts of the members."³⁹

Al-Nazzām added a slight refinement to the conception, and this was generally accepted.

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“ Man is able in the first moment to act in the second moment. Before the existence of the second moment it is said that the act will be performed (*yaf'alu*) in the second moment ; when the second moment has existed, it is said that the act has been performed (*fu'ila*). That of which “ will be performed in the second ” is predicated before the existence of the second is the same as that of which “ has been performed in the second ” is predicated when the second moment has come into being.”⁴⁰

When Abu 'l-Hudhail said “ the man acts in the first,” the imperfect *yaf'alu* suggested that the action had already started (though the act was also said to be in the second). Al-Nazzām admits that the imperfect (in the passive) may properly be applied to the act in the first moment, but by adding “ in the second ” he shows that the action has not yet commenced, strictly speaking. Apparently he wants to make it quite clear that the essential action is the outward action. At the same time he does preserve the important distinction, drawn by Abu 'l-Hudhail, between the mental and physical aspects.

The connection between these two aspects is the subject-matter of the doctrine of the will as necessitating (*mūjiba*), which was accepted and rejected by those who accepted and rejected the conception of moments respectively. This doctrine states that, where what is willed is immediately after the volition, the volition (or will) necessitates the object willed. In other words, the mental and physical aspects are inseparably joined in a single whole.⁴¹

Further discussions of these topics appear to be due to a confusion of the two aspects. So long as one is thinking of the power as a power of willing, rather than as the physical power of executing what is willed, it is not necessary to suppose that the power remains after the volition ; therefore when the physical act occurs the agent may be wholly without the power. Abu 'l-Hudhail held that a man may actually be impotent in the second time when the act occurs—a little speech may accompany dumbness, action (movement) may accompany death.⁴² The discussion whether the power of speaking with the tongue and the power of walking with the foot are the same or different, and whether their “ place ” (*maḥall*) is the same or different,

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shows a similar confusion. If the power is mental (or volitional), the two are the same ; if it is physical, they are different.⁴³

What became the standard formula of those who held the doctrine of Qadar, namely, that the power is before the act, is also connected with the conception of moments or times.⁴⁴ The power is the "internal" or "mental" power of willing, of deciding between the act and its opposite ; this belongs to the first moment, and must therefore be prior to the act, which belongs to the second moment.

Apart from this fruitful conception of times or moments Abu 'l-Hudhail has little to say about the subjects considered in the present study. His interests were very largely in physics or at least in the physical side of metaphysics, and not in the practical religious life, unless indeed our sources have enlarged this aspect of him unduly.

The Mu'tazila in general professed belief in God as all-powerful and the source of all power, but in matters of detail they had to acknowledge limitations. There was the question of evil, for instance. Abu 'l-Hudhail, with many others, held that God had power to do evil, but that He did not actually do it because of His wisdom and compassion. Alternatively he argued that evil proceeds only from deficiency, that there is no deficiency in God, and that therefore it is impossible to suppose Him doing evil.⁴⁵

Apart from evil, and apart from the sphere which He has entrusted to men, Abu 'l-Hudhail spoke of a limitation of God's power, or at least of His objects of power (*maqḍūrāt*) ; these, he held, possess an end and a sum, that is, are not infinite.⁴⁶ In this he was under the influence of the Jahmīya, who interpreted the verse " He is the First and the Last " as denying to creatures a share in God's eternity, and consequently implying the disappearance of all that is not God.⁴⁷ This view lies behind some of the criticisms Abu 'l-Hudhail makes of the theories of other theologians.⁴⁸

The immediate pupils of Abu 'l-Hudhail seem to have been even less interested than their master in questions concerning practical religion. Nothing is reported about Hishām b. 'Amr al-Fuwaṭī in the subjects here considered, apart from his rejection

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of the conception of times or moments, although in other fields he bitterly opposed his teacher.

Ibrāhīm b. Saiyār al-Nazzām had various special metaphysical interests which led him along original lines. In some matters, however, such as the conception of moments, he accepted Abu 'l-Hudhail's views with criticisms and amendments. His denial that God has power over evil, where others had held that He had the power but could not use it, is possibly due to a metaphysical objection to the affirmation of an unrealizable potentiality.⁴⁹

It is clear, however, that al-Nazzām was one of the more rationalistic of the Mu'tazila. He attributed to his rational ideas of value such absoluteness that God Himself must bow before them. God must do what is best for men ; God must not assign men to Paradise or Hell except in accordance with just principles.⁵⁰ Thus Reason is really made supreme in the universe, but the problem of the relation of Reason and God is not tackled.

Al-Nazzām also appears to have been the first to make the point that for a proper choice the man must have before his mind two "suggestions," one telling him to go forward, the other to desist.⁵¹ It is an indication of the difference between early Islam and the modern West that this foreign seedling never really developed in Muslim soil.⁵²

4. BISHR B. AL-MU'TAMIR

While in Baṣra Abu 'l-Hudhail and al-Nazzām were thus working at some of the philosophical preliminaries of the problems of evil, predestination and the like, Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, the reputed founder of the school of Baghdād, together with his followers there, were dealing with some of the more strictly religious and moral aspects of these problems. Bishr was rather more naive, or at least more primitive. There is no mention of any belief in Reason on his part. On the contrary, it is clear that he clung to the traditional belief that God is the Lord of life and death, so that, however much power over things He might ascribe to man, He always excepted this.⁵³ Yet his mind was sufficiently subtle to grasp the distinction between temporal and

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logical priority, even if he lacked the terminology to express this adequately ;⁵⁴ and in calling attention to the two aspects of the will of God, as part of His essence and as part of His activity, he was possibly preparing for the later distinctions between God's active and essential attributes.⁵⁵

The analysis of human activity occupied Bishr and led to his well-known doctrine of *tawallud* or *al-fi'l al-mutawallad*, the doctrine of "generated or secondary effects," which states that what is generated from a man's act is also his act.⁵⁶ It seems possible that this may be a correction of the view of Mu'ammār, who had taught Bishr.⁵⁷ Mu'ammār, under the influence of foreign philosophers, probably Greek, had held that the accidents which inhere in a substance are the "acts" of the substance by reason of its nature or constitution. That would mean that, when A flings a stone and hits B and the part hit swells, the flight of the stone is the "act" of the stone, and the pain and swelling are the "act" of B's body.⁵⁸ In opposition to this Bishr holds that all these generated effects are the act of A.

Bishr perhaps went to excessive lengths in the application of this conception. The list of examples he used includes : the taste of *falūdhaj* (a sweetmeat) after the ingredients are mixed together, the pleasure from eating something, perception upon opening the eyes, the breaking of a hand or foot upon a fall and its sound condition upon the proper setting of the bones. Moreover, B's knowledge that A has struck him is A's act, B's perception of things after A has opened his eyes is A's act, B's blindness when he has been blinded by A is A's act. While this conception of generated effects was widely accepted by the Mu'tazila they tried to avoid asserting or implying that man was able to make such things as colours, pleasure and soundness of body.⁵⁹

These criticisms should not blind us to the fact that this is essentially an assertion of man's power to control and determine, events, not merely in his own body, but also in the external world. Indeed, apart from a possible confusion between creating and causing (which is perhaps no more than looseness of statement), this is for the Western mind an obvious and eminently common-sense view. What is surprising is the opposition it provoked among Muslims.

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It has to be admitted, however, that the general conception of human activity underlying the theory is not so satisfactory. Although Bishr held that man consists of flesh and spirit,⁶⁰ only one plane is considered in dealing with men's actions, the plane of the physical. Man's power to act, in his view, consisted in health and soundness of the limbs and freedom from infirmities.⁶¹ The physical or external aspect likewise appears to be the basis of the distinction between what is "generated" and what is not, for the "generated" act is one which physically goes beyond the agent's body. In keeping with this attitude Bishr rejected Abu 'l-Hudhail's distinction between the physical and mental aspects of activity, as expressed in his conception of "moments" and the doctrine that the will necessitates.⁶³

The omnipotence of God was taken more seriously by Bishr than by most of the Mu'tazila. He even seems to have used it in a curious way to deal with the problem of evil, arguing that because God is omnipotent there must always be something better that He can do. Since His goodness is infinite and without limit, it is absurd to expect that any actual manifestation of it is the best; all that men may fairly expect of God is that He will do what is best for them in their religion, namely, remove all disabilities which prevent them from fulfilling His requirements. In general God is not obliged to do what is best for men.⁶⁴ Bishr was almost certainly thinking here of the concrete problem of those who die as unbelievers and go to Hell for eternity; God cannot be said to do what is best for these men, for some of them might have believed had they lived longer; and there are children who would have professed Islam had they lived longer.⁶⁵

Part of his argument for this position is the assertion that God has in store a gift or favour (*'inda 'llāh lutf*), such that, if He bestowed it on a man He knows will not (? does not) believe, that man will believe and will merit the reward of faith.⁶⁶ There does not seem to be anything technical about the term *lutf*, and it should certainly not be identified with the Christian conception of grace; doubtless Bishr used it to cover God's succour and guidance (and his followers may have restricted it to this), but there seems to be no reason why he should not also have included

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as one type of favour the prolongation of a man's life to give him a chance to believe.⁶⁷

5. THE LATER SCHOOL OF BAGHDĀD

While Bishr still moved very largely among the conceptions of the Qur'ān, and his immediate successor, Abū Mūsā al-Murdār had a similar outlook, there was a great change with the following generation of the Mu'tazila of Baghdād. Of "the two Ja'fars" and al-Iskāfī, pupils of al-Murdār, Ja'far b. Mubashshir shows least trace of the influence of Baṣra. The other two were clearly much influenced both by Abu 'l-Hudhail and al-Nazzām, and are said to have been pupils of the latter.⁶⁸

(a) *Ja'far b. Ḥarb*

Ja'far b. Ḥarb (d. 236) was probably slightly older than al-Iskāfī (d. 240 or 241), and was certainly closer to the outlook of Bishr. He alone of the Mu'tazila accepted Bishr's ideas of the favours God is able to bestow on man, and he accepted it only with an important modification. With God's favour the unbeliever comes to believe, but his faith does not have the same merit that it would have had without God's favour, and he does not receive the same reward.⁶⁹ For Ja'far the favour took the form of assistance or succour, which left far less for the man himself to do in order to have faith; and he implicitly acknowledged that what counts is not simply what a man does, but what he does by his own effort. Between Bishr and Ja'far the difference between voluntary action and involuntary action (or action under compulsion) had become more clearly understood, and it was in the light of this fuller understanding that Ja'far made this modification.⁷⁰

This is indeed the beginning of what might be regarded as the romantic period of the school of Baghdād—the period when they were attempting to square the facts of life with aprioristic conceptions of what ought to be. Ja'far had really given up Bishr's solution of the problem of evil for that of al-Nazzām, or at least one based on his rationalism; eventually he became aware that the doctrine of God's favour was inconsistent with

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his other views and abandoned it. Goodness was no longer regarded as having infinite degrees ; al-Nazzām had taught that there was something of the nature of a limit about goodness ; of a certain thing you could assert absolutely that it was " best " ; the infinitude of God's goodness lay in His being able to do an infinite number of things which were equally good.⁷¹ Ja'far likewise held that God does what is best ; he sets man in the best and highest mansion, which is the " mansion of reward," where he is the subject of duties.⁷² It is better for man to have duties imposed on him and be given the power to perform them and then, if he does perform them, be rewarded with Paradise, than to be created at once in Paradise by the special unmerited grace of God (*tafaḍḍul*). Evil is presumably explained on this view as due to man's misuse of the power committed to him ; and, as in the case of similar views in the Christian West, too much emphasis is placed on man's ability to earn Paradise for himself.

Abu 'l-Hudhail's influence is seen in Ja'far's acceptance of the conception of " moments " and its corollary, the doctrine of the necessitating will ; but when he says that the power is required when the acts exists, not for the act, but to prevent the absurdity of an act being performed by an impotent person, one cannot but suspect that he is not fully emancipated from Bishr's physical conception of activity, and has not fully grasped the distinction between the physical and mental aspects.⁷³

Besides the minor question of " suggestions " in which he followed al-Nazzām,⁷⁴ the latter's influence is seen in the question of unrealizable potentialities, though Ja'far apparently reacted against it.⁷⁵ He avoided saying that God is able to do evil, however, and merely stated (in line with the Mu'tazilī account of human power) that He is able to do both justice and its opposite and truth and its opposite. The logical puzzles about whether God could be said to have the power of doing evil when it was proved that He did not do it may be the result of criticisms of al-Nazzām (though Ja'far also argued personally with dualists) ;⁷⁶ at any rate Ja'far found a satisfactory solution. The discussions about the " man who is hindered " (*al-mamnū'*) are perhaps connected with this point ; Ja'far maintained that a faculty or potentiality existed even when it was prevented from functioning

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or being realized, just as a man continued to have sight although he was blindfolded.⁷⁷

(b) *Al-Iskāfī*

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Iskāfī was probably slightly younger than Ja'far b. Ḥarb, and, while agreeing with him in many things, was farther from Bishr and more under the influence of al-Nazzām.

He apparently tried to reinterpret the doctrine of generated effects in accordance with the views of Abu 'l-Hudhail. He had accepted the conception of "moments," though he shared the confused view of Ja'far about it being absurd if there was no power when the act occurred.⁷⁸ The further step which he took was to define the generated effect, not as that which was external to the agent's body, but as what lay outside his intention, that is to say, what is not connected with the internal or mental aspect of man's activity.⁷⁹ His reflections on these matters also led him to a refinement in the doctrine of the will as necessitating, for he saw that some of the effects which a man wills and intends are confined to his own body whereas others go beyond it, and that the latter are not necessitated in the same way as the former.⁸⁰

The question of evil was evidently becoming more insistent, perhaps owing to the attacks of dualists. Unnamed critics of the Mu'tazila objected to Ja'far b. Ḥarb's assertion that God willed unbelief different from belief and base, because it suggested that God willed unbelief.⁸¹ It is quite likely that al-Iskāfī first made this objection, for he himself avoided relating God to evil in this way by holding that things were good and bad in themselves, and not because God willed them so.⁸² He presumably concurred in Ja'far's explanation of evil as due to man's misuse of the power God had given him, but, even when this had been granted, illness and the sufferings of children and animals remained to be accounted for. (Some of the views on these matters are reported anonymously, but they were almost certainly worked out in the school of Baghdād about or just after this time.)

The problem of the sufferings of children was probably the

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first to arise, since it had already occupied the Khawārij. Bishr, or someone who adopted his position, had admitted that for the children to suffer and then receive an indemnity (such as admission to Paradise) was not so good as the experience of pleasure without pain ; but God was not obliged to do what was best.⁸³ When one held, however, that God did what was best, the matter became more difficult. The suggestion, attributed to Bishr, that the sufferings of children were a sort of anticipatory punishment of the sins they would have done when they grew up likewise did not help very much.⁸⁴ The common view in later times was that God allowed the children to suffer in order to warn adults, and then, since it would be unjust if He simply harmed them in this way, He indemnified them by giving them pleasure. This raised further problems, however, for if the indemnity was entry into Paradise and was everlasting, and if Paradise was the reward merited by responsible acts of obedience, then they could not merit such an indemnity ; it could only be given to them by God's grace.⁸⁵ The divergencies on these matters make it evident that the ideas of human reason are beginning to show their inadequacy. And deeper questions lurk just round the corner ; for, if children who have never received the call to Islam are in the same ultimate position as devout Muslims, is there any reason why God should not have created the inhabitants of Paradise actually in Paradise and not submitted them to the trials of earthly existence ?

The question of the sufferings of brute beasts is mainly a theological curiosity, though it also further illustrates some of the points considered. The general view was that in fairness they ought to receive some sort of indemnity for their sufferings ; certainly they could not be sent to Hell or to everlasting punishment, since they had had no duties imposed on them. Some theologians held we could only know they were indemnified, but not how it was done, nor whether here or elsewhere ; others ventured on suggestions. For grazing animals it was easy to imagine them being given everlasting enjoyment in Paradise in the best of pastures ; but beasts of prey were a little more difficult. In this connection mention is made of the Stopping-place (*mawqif*), and one suggestion is that they there retaliate

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upon one another. Most ingenious of all is the idea of Ja'far b. Ḥarb and al-Iskāfī that the beasts of prey, after receiving their indemnity (which may be either on earth or in the Stopping-place) are sent to Hell for the punishment of unbelievers and evildoers, but do not themselves suffer anything there; doubtless this was to explain the mention of animals in Hell, which would be unjust if it were intended as punishment.⁸⁶

Although from the standpoint of the evildoer his punishment in Hell could be satisfactorily accounted for by principles of justice, from God's standpoint there were difficulties. If, as the Mu'tazila held,⁸⁷ God may not harm anyone in reality, and if the punishment in Hell really harms them (as one would naturally suppose), there is a contradiction. Al-Iskāfī apparently felt this difficulty for he put forward the view that the punishment of Hell is really good and profitable and sound and compassionate; God is kind to His servants in that while they are being punished in Hell they are being withheld from unbelief.⁸⁸ Another similar passage suggests that what was in his mind was that the punishment of some sinners in the next world warns and scares unbelievers in this world.⁸⁹ According to this view those who are used as a warning appear to be unfairly treated compared with those who are warned, and the implication is that the whole world is created for those who eventually enter Paradise. Such a view is by no means indefensible, but it presages the failure of the attempt to propound a rational theodicy.

(c) *Al-Ka'bī*

Apart from reports of the views of "the Baghdādīs" or "some of the Baghdādīs" in general (certain of which will be dealt with in the next section), little more is heard of any discussions at Baghdād of the subjects with which this study is concerned. Al-Khaiyāṭ, the head of the school towards the close of the third century was mainly occupied in quite different matters. His successor, Abū Qāsim al-Balkhī, known as al-Ka'bī (d. 317 or 319), one of whose chief original features was an attempt to reduce all the Divine attributes to knowledge and power, is reported to have had an atomistic conception of human power.⁹⁰

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No human power endures for two "moments" but each is created separately in its moment. Since a fresh power was created in the second moment when the act took place, al-Ka'bi avoided combining action and impotence in much the same way as his predecessors, Ja'far b. Ḥarb and al-Iskāfi.

These atomistic conceptions are not new, but it is noteworthy that they should be gaining a foothold in the citadel of *tawallud*—for the doctrine of generated effects emanating from Baghdād is probably the furthest that early Muslim theologians went in acknowledging causal connection in the world. About a century before al-Ka'bi, for instance, al-Nazzām had held that every body is created in every moment of its existence.⁹¹ At a slightly later date some of the Mu'tazila (according to the report of an opponent) said that the power for each act is originated before it and then disappears; indeed, before each act there are originated powers for this act and for every possible alternative, then, when this moment has passed, powers for another act and its alternatives.⁹² An extreme statement of this sort of position is that of Ṣāliḥ Qubba.⁹³ He completely rejected the conception of generated effects; the flight of the stone when thrown, for instance, is in no way the act of the person who threw it, but is the act of God, and it is quite possible that God may not create it in any particular case; likewise, if God so wills, He can combine perception with blindness, or knowledge with death. By the time of al-Baghdādi (early fifth century) the orthodox view was that God creates all accidents, and that accidents do not endure.⁹⁴

The reasons for this denial of causation in nature are important for our knowledge of Islam, but are hardly within the province of the present study. It is sufficient here to note how the affirmation of human power is gradually undermined.⁹⁵

6. THE LATER SCHOOL OF BASRA

(a) 'Abbād

The discussions at Baghdād which have just been considered were taken up in Baṣra by 'Abbād b. Sulaimān, who died probably about the middle of the third century. 'Abbād was a pupil of Hishām b. 'Amr al-Fuwaṭi, who led the opposition in Baṣra

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against his master Abu 'l-Hudhail. His penchant seems to have been for subtle logical puzzles, which mostly did not carry him far towards the real solution of problems.

One of the points which concern us here was his attempt to explain the relation of God to evil by using a distinction apparently derived from an earlier Baṣrī, Mu'ammār.⁹⁶ Just as a man has power over his wife's conception of a child, although he himself does not have power to conceive a child, so (thought Mu'ammār) God may have power over movement (that is, can cause men to move) although He Himself does not have power to move, and likewise may have power over evil (*sc.* the evil-doing of men) but not power to do evil. This distinction was also used by al-Shaḥḥām, leader of the main body of the Mu'tazila in Baṣra after Abu 'l-Hudhail, and by others who discussed the doctrine of "acquisition."⁹⁷ By use of the distinction 'Abbād was enabled to maintain the doctrine on which he laid so much stress, that God does no evil in any respect, while adhering to the view that God is all-powerful.⁹⁸ He does not seem, however, to have developed the underlying idea that creation is different in kind from any human activity.

His insistence that God did no evil went to such lengths that he is alleged to have denied that God made the unbeliever, since "unbeliever" is a combination of "man" and "unbelief," and God did not create the "unbelief."⁹⁹ He likewise denied that God made unbelief base.¹⁰⁰ Further, contrary to the rest of the Mu'tazila, he maintained that illness and disease, and even punishment in Hell, were not really evil; those who said they were ought to call God an evildoer (*sharīr*).¹⁰¹

Apart from these extreme statements (or possibly in accordance with them) 'Abbād reacted against the sentimental and all-too-human conceptions of God's ways current in Baghdād and inclined to a more realistic outlook. There was no motive, he held, in God's creation of the world (though it is not clear whether this means that the universe is not for the benefit of men, or that no motive at all is to be discerned).¹⁰² Likewise, there is no purpose in the sufferings God causes to children, and He does not indemnify them.¹⁰³ As for animals, far from being indemnified, they are simply collected and destroyed.¹⁰⁴ The turn of expression

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in his view of whether God does what is best is quite in character ; "everything He does is permissible, and there may not be any good thing which He does not do."¹⁰⁵ There is still a touch of romanticism about the second half of that ; but it would also bear the realistic interpretation : God is good, but His ways are inscrutable.

(b) *Al-Jubbā'ī*

Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303), pupil of al-Shahḥām and his successor in the "chair" of Abu 'l-Hudhail, and teacher of al-Ash'arī, restored the Mu'tazila of Baṣra to a position of eminence. As is only natural his views are quite fully given in the *Maqālāt*.

Very noticeable is his reaction against some of the doctrines which tended to separate the spheres of Divine and human activity. Al-Shahḥām had apparently accepted the doctrine of "acquisition," for he repeated Ḍirār's formula of "one act, two agents" in more technical language ; a single movement, he said, may be the object of power (*maqḍūra*) for both God and man, one creating it and the other acquiring it.¹⁰⁶ If this is interpreted as meaning one and the same act, it is the formula of later orthodoxy, and it is possible that al-Shahḥām took it in this way.¹⁰⁷ This was contrary to Mu'tazilī principles, however, and those of the school of Baghdād who took up the conception of "acquisition" made the formula of al-Shahḥām apply to an act of the same sort.¹⁰⁸ They further held that, when God gave men power over acts of a certain sort, He removed all acts of that sort from His own power.¹⁰⁹ This was in accordance with the distinction between voluntary acts and those done under compulsion, since it is impossible for God to be the agent of a voluntary human act.

Al-Jubbā'ī would have nothing to do with all this. He maintained that God continues to have power over a class of acts over which He has given men power.¹¹⁰ He denied the distinction of 'Abbād between "power over evil" and "power to do evil," whereby God might be the creator of something and yet not have it ascribed to Him as its agent ; if God brought about

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conception in a woman, he said, then He was "one causing conception" (*muhbil*), although this was the word which would normally be applied to her husband.¹¹¹ His motive in this was presumably to assert that it is in one and the same world that the powers of God and man are operative, for the disjunction of spheres suggested by the opposing theories is in the long run tantamount to disbelief in God. The same motive is seemingly also behind his rejection of the conception of "acquisition,"¹¹² and he defines "creator" (*khāliq*) in such a way—"one who acts, or from whom acts proceed, according to a (previous) determination"—that the definition can be applied to man.¹¹³ This is quite contrary to the trend of contemporary discussion, which had been towards restricting "creating" to God and permitting even "acting" to be used of man only in the sense of "acquiring."¹¹⁴

Al-Jubbā'ī makes it quite clear, however, that he retains the distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts, even though he says that God can compel men to do acts that are usually in the class of voluntary acts. God may compel men to carry out acts of justice and injustice, of faith and unbelief, of speech, and the like; but if He does so, the men may not be described as "just," "faithful," "speaking," for "speaking" means "making speech" and similarly for the rest; and if God creates the act, then man does not make it.¹¹⁵ He admitted that God had "favours," such as His succour (*tawfiq*), which He could bestow on men, and by whose aid they might believe and do their duty; but these apparently did not destroy the voluntary character of the action.¹¹⁶

There is also a reaction in al-Jubbā'ī against the extreme views of 'Abbād and others in denying that God had any relation to evil. Thus 'Abbād's view that illness and disease are not evil is considerably modified; these *are* evil, al-Jubbā'ī admits, but only metaphorically.¹¹⁷ Perhaps he meant by this that, although they might be unpleasant, that did not prevent them from being beneficial, which was the true meaning of "good" (they might be beneficial by affording an opportunity for practising resignation or simply by being involved in the restoration of the body to health).¹¹⁸ Similarly he held that punishment in Hell, though

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it does hurt people, is really justice and wisdom on God's part.¹¹⁸ Thus what is at first sight evil may be attributed to God.

Much more significant of the change of outlook is the view that it is not obligatory for God in all things to do what is best for men. God must indeed give men what is best for them in respect of religion, since otherwise He would stultify His command to them to have faith and, along with that, the whole system of duties with rewards and punishments attached. But apart from His imposition of duties on men, He would have had no obligations towards them, and, even as things are, His sphere of obligation is limited ; thus, although He is able to do something that will enable them to give Him fuller obedience and so to merit a greater reward, He is not obliged to do it.¹¹⁹

What he has to say about God's "favour" or "favours" points in the same direction (*luṭf, alṭāf*). He denied that God was able to bestow a favour that would make the man He knew would not believe into a believer ; presumably this was because in order to be a believer a man must believe voluntarily, and God had already done what was best for men in respect of their religion. But apart from this God did have favours to bestow.¹²⁰ A somewhat obscure passage deals with this point.¹²¹ First the case is considered of a man who is able to believe without any favour, and whose reward would be reduced with the bestowal of favour in virtue of the reduction of effort on his part ; in this case it is only what will lead to the lesser reward that is incumbent on God, namely, to impose duties along with the bestowal of favour. Then al-Jubbā'ī contrasts with this the case of a man God knows will not obey Him at all without favour, and says that, if God imposes duties on him in the absence of favour, then it is necessary that some advantage should be derived (presumably by God), not that the man's disability should be removed. Such a man has doubtless already received the favours common to all of instruction in religion and the like, and, since that has been done, there is nothing contradictory about God's purpose ; beyond that, it is not to be expected that the man will be shoved or hustled into Paradise. In other words, the universe is constructed not for the greatest bliss of men but for the fulfilment of what God in His wisdom desires.

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The whole legalistic scheme of rewards and punishments was showing its inadequacy and falling into discredit. Where for his predecessors the crown of all existence had been the attainment of Paradise through one's own efforts in obeying God's law, to al-Jubbā'ī it seemed quite permissible for God to have created men straight off in Paradise, had He so willed.¹²² This would have been an act of "uncovenanted grace" (*tafaḍḍul*) on God's part, and that implied that it was no longer regarded as obvious that the "mansion of reward" was the highest. Both this notion of *tafaḍḍul* (which seems to make its first appearance here) and that of indemnity (*'iwāḍ*) for unmerited suffering were much discussed by al-Jubbā'ī.¹²³ Clearly he was realizing that God's operations cannot be fully accounted for by legal conceptions. He even admitted an element of inscrutability. God may pardon one man, he said, and yet not pardon another who has committed exactly the same offence.¹²⁴

Through all these varied doctrines two main tendencies can be traced. One is towards the correction of the over-emphasis on man's power and self-sufficiency. To perform one's duty and earn the reward of Paradise by one's own striving is no longer the supreme ideal of human life. There is, on the contrary, some recognition of man's weakness; he is a creature who requires God's succour and God's pardon. The second tendency, which is complementary, is towards the recovery of something of the primitive realization of God's omnipotence. To some extent God's ways may be beyond man's comprehension. He is not bound by the conceptions of human reason—of justice and injustice—but only by what is involved in His own wisdom namely, that His operations shall not be self-stultifying.

(c) *The succession to al-Jubbā'ī*

With al-Jubbā'ī the Mu'tazila reach a parting of the ways. They were not pure rationalists, for they had practical religious interests; they were even in a sense missionaries of Islam. But they had certainly been trying to assimilate Islam to ideas of Reason; despite the tendencies just described al-Jubbā'ī still professed a firm belief in the authority of Reason.¹²⁵ The

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rationalistic movement was most evident in al-Nazzām and in those influenced by him like Ja'far b. Ḥarb and al-Iskāfī. But the simple rational scheme of these men began to break down as it was confronted more and more with the complexity of actual life. Symptoms of this are already apparent in 'Abbād. Fresh ideas must therefore be introduced by way of addition or modification, or else the whole scheme must be given up. With al-Jubbā'ī the additions and modifications have become so extensive that the main scheme is in danger of destruction; it is almost impossible to form a single coherent system (even in respect of the main problems only) out of the congeries of views he seems to have held.

It is my contention that from this situation there are two possible lines of development—retrenchment and advance—and that of the pupils of al-Jubbā'ī his son Abū Hāshim chose the former and al-Ash'arī the latter. The little we know of Abū Hāshim's views on these matters indicates that he had moved backwards to a stricter interpretation of the rational scheme, with more insistence on man's ability to earn his salvation and on God's obligation to act according to the ideas of Reason; presumably this was done only at the cost of glossing over some of the facts for which his father tried to make allowance. Al-Ash'arī, as will be seen in Chapter VI, abandoned Reason as his supreme guide and took instead Divine Revelation, thus working out to its logical conclusion the movement away from human self-sufficiency and towards recognition of God's omnipotence already manifest in al-Jubbā'ī.

Note A. ATOMISTIC TENDENCIES

It is not within the province of this study to discuss fully the reasons for the growth and dominance of the atomistic or "occasionalist" view of nature, but three relevant lines of thought may be noticed. (There are some resemblances to the occasionalism of Malebranche, but of course nothing of his theory of "occasional causes.")

(1) The Muslim writers of the early centuries were more interested in logic and grammatical science than in natural science,

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that is to say, more interested in the relations of things to words than in causal relations between things. Consequently they tended to assume that what has a separate name, or can be given one, is a separate thing—that two things which can be distinguished in thought must be distinct in reality. This might be described by saying that their perception of difference was more developed than their perception of relatedness.

(2) Divine omnipotence must, of course, be conceived in terms of human analogies. Unfortunately there is a view, predominant in the East, but also widespread in the West, that the height of human character is reached when a man, who changes his mind according to the whim of the moment, has full power to accomplish his wishes. This seems to lie behind the Mu'tazili discussions of whether God has power to go back on what He has already decided. He is thought of as acting from moment to moment and not according to any fixed plan. They have failed to realize that the strongest and best character is that which is most stable. The West, perhaps unjustly, suggests that this is connected with the irresponsible practices attributed by tradition to the great sultans of the East.

(3) God's control of the world is thought of as immediate. He has no vice-gerents; He delegates authority to none; He does not even allow bodies to produce their own accidents. It has been seen that the conception of *tafwīd*, the delegation of authority to man in entrusting him with his own acts, did not find much favour as an account of human responsibility. Undoubtedly there is important truth in this conception of God's immediate control of every event, but it must be balanced by the complementary truths of the stability of His purposes and the delegation of authority to secondary agents or causes which have a comparative independence.

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NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER IV

- 1 III. 787 B—793 A; his Introduction and notes to the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* are also valuable.
- 2 Cp. EI, art. *Mu'tazila*.
- 3 There are various reports of the date of his death (cp. *Munya*, 28); the choice is mainly between 227 and 235 (*Maq.* Index), and I have little hesitation in choosing the former of these; the statement of al-Malaṭī (*Tanbih*, 31) that three caliphs honoured him, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq, presumably means that they gave him a stipend, and as there was no reason why al-Mutawakkil should alter his attitude towards a very old man between 232 and 235, it would seem that he must have been dead before 232.
- 4 *Munya*, 28.
- 5 Al-Malaṭī says he gave an oral refutation of Hishām al-Fuwaṭī when he was old and infirm—*Tanbih*, 31.
- 6 They were both pupils of Bishr b. Sa'id and Abū 'Uthmān al-Za'farānī, according to al-Malaṭī, *Tanbih*, 30 f.
- 7 *Munya*, 30; al-Malaṭī, *Tanbih*, 30. Bishr was presumably imprisoned on political grounds, since he had strong 'Alid sympathies; there was not the same reason for imprisoning Abu 'l-Hudhail.
- 8 Cp. *Munya* and al-Malaṭī's *Tanbih passim*.
- 9 Al-Malaṭī, *Tanbih*, 31.
- 10 Cp. Dr. Pines, *Atomenlehre*, 124—133; also chapter V below.
- 11 They are given this epithet by Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir in a poem in *Munya*, 30. The group associated with Ghailān seems to have continued to exist, and Abū Shimr is reckoned a contemporary of Abu 'l-Hudhail by Ibn al-Murtadā (*Munya*, 33), while Muḥammad b. Shabīb and Muwais are assigned to the following generation.
- 12 There is an occasional mention of Khārijī risings both about the time of Hārūn and later (cp. Muir, *Caliphate*, 470, 515, etc.); the Mutakallimūn of the Khawārij (*Maq.* 120) were active about this time, but do not seem to have been very influential except perhaps in spreading Mu'tazilī views among the Ibādīya of North Africa (cp. Nallino, *Rivista*, VII, 455—460). Burghūth, even if reckoned among the Khawārij (cp. ch. V, note A), was later.
- 13 *Maq.* 485.
- 14 Professor Guidi, *La Lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo*; and the discussion of this by Dr. Nyberg (OLZ. XXXII, 425—41) entitled *Zum Kampf zwischen Islam und Manichäismus*.
- 15 This is the argument of Dr. Pines in his *Atomenlehre*.
- 16 Ibn al-Murtadā in his *Munya* carries the process right back to the age of the Companions.
- 17 222 f.
- 18 See Pines, *Atomenlehre*, 125 ff.; cp. *Maq.* 276 f., Abu'l-Hudhail.
- 19 Cp. Nyberg, art. on *Mu'tazila* in EI; also *Munya*, etc.
- 20 Perhaps we should speak of Mutakallimūn (? = speculative theologians) rather than of the Mu'tazila (as al-Ash'arī sometimes does in the *Maqālāt*), for there were prominent thinkers who did not belong to the latter. Our sources are, if anything, weighted in favour of the Mu'tazila, owing to such factors as al-Ash'arī's connection with them and the extent of their literary output. The very name "Mu'tazila" does not seem to have been stabilized till well on in the third century, since the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* is still occupied with discussions about who was and who was not a Mu'tazilī.

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- ²¹ He taught Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, *Munya*, 31.
- ²² Dirār, too, seems to have lived long enough to criticize al-Nazzām—*Maq.* 328.
- ²³ *Zum Kampf zwischen Islam und Manichäismus*, OLZ. XXXII, p. 427.
- ²⁴ *Maq.* 363; 277.
- ²⁵ Cp. *Maq.* 266, Al-Khaiyāt rebuts the charges that various members of the Mu'tazila had gone beyond the *ijmā'*, *Intiṣār*, 170.
- ²⁶ *Maq.* 256.
- ²⁷ Al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 143.
- ²⁸ *Maq.* 257.
- ²⁹ *Maq.* 259; cp. ch. II. 1, d (p. 15 f.) above.
- ³⁰ See esp. *Maq.* 260-66; most of the views are given anonymously.
- ³¹ *Maq.* 243 f.; cp. 204.
- ³² *Maq.* 274 f.; according to *Milal*, 36 Abu 'l-Hudhail held some such view as this.
- ³³ *Maq.* 356; cp. *Milal*, 37, 40 f. (first and twelfth points).
- ³⁴ *Maq.* 230, l. 13.
- ³⁵ 243, 15; 267, 7.
- ³⁶ Cp. the use of the phrases *qūwat al-īmān* and *qūwat al-huṣf* in connection with the views of the Ahl al-Ithbāt in *Maq.* 259, 9; 262, 6; 263, 6; 265, 6.
- ³⁷ 230, l. 12. This passage actually contains two words *istiṭā'a* and *qudra*, which might be distinguished in translation as "capacity" and "power". So far as I am able to make out, however, these words, and likewise *qū'va*, are used without any difference of meaning; an examination of *Maq.* 230-33 (or of *Ibāna*, 69) will bear this out; thus, on p. 232, l. 14 f. both *qūwa* and *qudra* are used in a passage where the heading and previous passages have *istiṭā'a*. I have therefore mostly translated all of them by "power". There is certainly a difference of usage, however, in that *istiṭā'a* is al-Ash'ari's own word, doubtless favoured by him and by the upholders of the Divine Qadar for its suggestion of submission (as the root ṬW' means "obey"), whereas *qūwa* and *qudra* were used to describe the omnipotence of God and so could not fittingly be applied to the creaturely operations of man.
- ³⁸ *Maq.* 233; 443.
- ³⁹ *Milal*, 35. This interpretation seems to fit the various uses in *Maq.* 232-42. A confirmation is found in the more elaborate analysis of "moments", made presumably by later thinkers of similar views, but never of much importance. One form (p. 238) has four moments; the first is, as before, the moment of power (for "power", *qudra*, corresponds to "able", *qādir*); the second is that of will, *irāda*; the third of imagination (in the sense of forming an image—*tamthīl*); and in the fourth the movement or outward act comes into being.
- ⁴⁰ *Maq.* 234.
- ⁴¹ 415-8. Al-Iskāfī adds that where the volition does not necessitate the object, the object occurs "in the third"; presumably he is thinking of an end which requires means; the means, the immediate object of volition (confined to the agent's body, probably), occur necessarily in the second moment, but the end may not follow the means with absolute necessity. Cp. p. 78.
- ⁴² 232. The statement on p. 230 that he held that the power endures probably only means that he did not hold the atomism of al-Ka'bī (see p. 81 below). Cp. also p. 232 where he is said to have held that knowledge and willing could not accompany death.
- ⁴³ 237.
- ⁴⁴ Cp. 230.
- ⁴⁵ 555; 200; cp. 577; the same argument is used by al-Nazzām (576) and with a slight variation by Muḥammad b. Shabīb (201).
- ⁴⁶ 249, 576.
- ⁴⁷ Q. 57, 3; *Maq.* 542; cp. 148 f., 163 f., 474; also Pines, *Atomlehre*, 124.

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- ⁴⁸ Cp. *Maq.* 576 f.
- ⁴⁹ *Milal*, 37; cp. *Maq.* 555.
- ⁵⁰ *Milal*, 37; cp. *Maq.* 555, 576.
- ⁵¹ *Khawātir*, pl. of *khātir*, something occurring to the mind; 427 foot, 239, etc. (I am not quite certain about this interpretation, as there is more than this in some of the views which mention it.) Cp. tradition quoted above, p. 31: "There is no caliph who does not have two courtiers . . ." (al-Bukhārī, *Qadar*, 8).
- ⁵² Cp. *Maq.* 428 f.; al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 26 ff., 154 f.—here the point is said to be derived from the Indian Barāhima.
- ⁵³ *Maq.* 378.
- ⁵⁴ 389; he said one thing was after another without interval (*bi-lā faṣl*).
- ⁵⁵ *Maq.* 190; *Milal*, 45.
- ⁵⁶ *Maq.* 401.
- ⁵⁷ *Munya*, 31.
- ⁵⁸ *Maq.* 331 f., 405 f.; *Milal*, 46.
- ⁵⁹ *Maq.* 401-15. Dr. Nyberg suggests that Bishr did not mean so much as he is commonly said to have meant, *Intiṣūr*, 194 f.
- ⁶⁰ *Maq.* 329.
- ⁶¹ 229; apparently derived from Ghailān.
- ⁶² *Maq.* 233; 415.
- ⁶³ 246.
- ⁶⁴ 250, l. II.
- ⁶⁵ 246; cp. 573-7; also the views of al-Najjār (V. 4, b below, p. 106), which are very like those of Bishr.
- ⁶⁶ Cp. *Maq.* 262 where Ja'far b. Ḥarb speaks of *tawfiq* and *tasdīd* as *luṭfān min al-luṭf Allāh*.
- ⁶⁷ *Milal*, 41; Ja'far b. Mubashshir is said to have been a pupil too, but shows less trace of it.
- ⁶⁸ 246 f., 573 f.
- ⁶⁹ Ja'far uses the distinction *ikhtiyār* (*iḍtirār* (40 f., cp. 246 f., 262), which may be derived from Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, whose view he reports in the first passage. The parallel passages 246 f. and 573 f. have *ikhtiyāran* and *ṭaw'an* respectively; *ṭaw'an* was used by Burghūth (cp. pp. 111, 129 below).
- ⁷⁰ *Maq.* 576, etc. The point is perhaps clearer when the word "perfect" is used, since strictly speaking when a thing is perfect of its kind there is nothing beyond, more perfect, to which it can aspire; on the other hand, there may be other things which are likewise perfect, and these may be infinite in number.
- ⁷¹ *Maq.* 247; the anonymous passage, 248, l. 11-15, expresses the same view, and may indeed be Ja'far's own, since it uses his phrase *a'la 'l-manāzil*.
- ⁷² *Maq.* 232, 415.
- ⁷³ *Maq.* 429.
- ⁷⁴ 201 f.
- ⁷⁵ *Munya*, 42.
- ⁷⁶ *Maq.* 240.
- ⁷⁷ 232; cp. a view on p. 231.
- ⁷⁸ 409.
- ⁷⁹ 415; cp. 419, where he suggests another refinement.
- ⁸⁰ 513 f.; cp. 191. On p. 227 this view of Ja'far's is said to be that of the Mu'tazila in general apart from 'Abbād; but on p. 513 all the Mu'tazila are said to oppose Ja'far.
- ⁸¹ 356.
- ⁸² 253, l. 11 f.
- ⁸³ 201, l. 7.
- ⁸⁴ 253 f.
- ⁸⁵ 254 f.

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- 87 538.
 88 537.
 89 249; cp. note 41 above.
 90 230, 232.
 91 404.
 92 238; the report is from Burghūth (cp. V. 4, c below) and can hardly be later than 250 A.H.
 93 406 f. He was one of those, probably influenced by Ghailān, who combined some doctrines of the Murji'a with those of the Mu'tazila.
 94 *Uṣūl*, 50, etc.
 95 Some suggestions are made in Note A (p. 87).
 96 *Maq.* 554; cp. 548 f. Cp. also p. 111 below.
 97 This is an inference from *Maq.* 199 and 549 f. which is perhaps not altogether justified. Yet the distinction was used by those of the school of Baghdād who criticized al-Shaḥḥām. Cp. my article on *Acquisition*, par. 3.
 98 201.
 99 *Milal*, 51; *Farq*, 147.
 100 *Maq.* 227 f.; cp. note 82 above.
 101 537 f.; cp. 246.
 102 253, l. 5.
 103 253, l. 7f.—presumably 'Abbād's in view of the phrase *lā li-'illatin*.
 104 255.
 105 250, l. 3.
 106 *Maq.* 199, 549 f.; for Dirār see below, V. 4, a.
 107 Al-Baghdādī, (*Farq*, 163) is horrified at the suggestion, and explains it in the second sense. But the very fact that he does so tends to suggest that al-Shaḥḥām meant the opposite.
 108 Al-Ka'bi, according to *Farq*, 163.
 109 *Maq.* 549 f.
 110 199 f., 551.
 111 194, 531.
 112 *Maq.* 542—completely rejects the technical use of *muktasib*, etc.; he also rejects the similar theory of the "use" (*isti'māl*) of powers, 235.
 113 195, 539; cp. p. 49 f. above.
 114 539-41—mostly among Ahl al-Ithbāt; cp. p. 110 below.
 115 551.
 116 263.
 117 537.
 118 Cp. *Milal*, 55 foot.
 119 *Maq.* 247 f., 575; *Milal*, 58 foot.
 120 *Maq.* 247, 575; *alṭāf* are recognized, *Maq.* 261, 263; a list is given, *Milal*, 55 foot.
 121 *Milal*, 57 foot.
 122 *Maq.* 249.
 123 *Milal*, 58.
 124 *Maq.* 276.
 125 *Maq.* 480 f.; *Milal*, 55; but he also admitted the strength of revealed truth, *Maq.* 206, 245.

V

THE UPHOLDERS OF THE DIVINE QADAR

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

APART from our information about the Mu'tazila we have only a fragmentary knowledge of the movements of Muslim thought from the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd to that of al-Ash'arī. It would hardly be unfair to the common views to describe them thus: "There were the Mu'tazila; there were the orthodox, who mostly just quoted Qur'ān and Tradition and made very little use of reasoned argument; and there were a number of large and small, but not very intelligent sects."

The primary reason for this absence not merely of a general picture, but even of many important details, seems to be the unhistorical mentality of Islam. The Muslim theologians' interest in the truth of a doctrine, though an excellent thing in itself, excludes interest in the stages of the process by which men attained to this truth. Change and development they regarded as the accompaniments of falsehood; views only formulated in the second or third century were alleged to have been explicitly held since the days of the Prophet himself.¹ The chief importance of the great theologians of the past was the support they gave to doctrines now considered orthodox; whatever slight heterodoxies were to be found in them—and how could such fail to be present when doctrine was still largely fluid and undeveloped?—were tactfully left unmentioned,² since these deviations would detract from the value of their support. Sectarian views, on the other hand, were of interest mainly as a sort of Aunt Sally, which later theologians might try their hand at knocking down. It would not be greatly exaggerating the case to say that the consequence of this was that we are told only the unorthodox views of the sectaries and only the orthodox views of the "sound" men.

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One of the corollaries of this is that it is not correct to think that there was a large uniform body of opinion during the second and third centuries which might be labelled "orthodox." There was certainly a wide field of agreement, and even the Mu'tazila claimed that their views were in accordance with those of the *ijmā'* or consensus of Muslims. But this left much scope for deep divergences of opinion among those who were later accepted as orthodox.³

In distinguishing between the main strands in Muslim theology during these centuries, the question of whether a man used *kalām* (reasoned argument) is probably of minor importance. *Kalām* had to do with the method rather than the subject-matter of theology, and as Islam came of age this method spread among many different groups of Muslims.⁴ If, however, *kalām* is taken to mean not simply "reasoned argument" in general, but "argument from premisses derived from Reason (and not from Revelation)," this is an important difference; but the evidence suggests that there was little *kalām* of this sort at an early date; and that even the Mu'tazila made the Qur'ān the basis of their arguments.⁵ Again, the very opponents of *kalām*, who are presumably free from it, have definite views and defend these views in some way or another, and so may be said to have a theological position.

Thus to give an adequate account of the various trends in Muslim theology, the net must be cast more widely than Islamic writers are in the habit of doing. It is clear that among the upholders of the Divine Qadar, as of other orthodox doctrines, we may expect to find both sectarians and also "orthodox" of different brands.

2. ABŪ ḤANĪFA AND FĪQH AKBAR I

Fiqh Akbar I may be taken as illustrative of the beliefs of many devout and faithful Muslims about the middle of the second century.⁶ Of its ten articles it is the third which chiefly concerns the present study:

"What reaches you could not possibly have missed you; and what misses you could not possibly have reached you."

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It is evident that this article belongs to the thought-world of Tradition rather than to that of the Qur'ān. Taken by itself it represents sheer atheistic fatalism ; its non-Islamic provenance would seem to be proved by the fact that the Traditions containing it do not attribute it to Muhammad himself.⁷ On the other hand, the proposition is quite capable of being interpreted theistically, namely, when it is God Who is regarded as determining the course of events ; and from what we know of Abū Ḥanīfa's position in Islam, we can hardly doubt that he did in fact interpret it in this way.

The real truth of the matter probably is that, while Abū Ḥanīfa and other like-minded men of his time adopted the Qur'ānic attitude to fatalism and encouraged men to righteousness in conduct,⁸ it had not occurred to them that it was needful or desirable or even possible to distinguish between atheistic and theistic determinism ; that is to say, they probably had not noticed the difference between the conception of a course of events determined by impersonal Time or Fate and the conception of the course of events determined by God Who is righteous ; and therefore they had not considered the possible effect of the first view in discouraging men from acting righteously. Perhaps the Muslim theologians never got this distinction quite clear ; some certainly avoided this proposition, but others were content to retain it.⁹ It is of interest that the commentary on this creed neglects the actual wording of the article and discusses definitely theistic questions.¹⁰

There is a report that Ḍirār derived the whole conception of the *mahīya* or essence of God from Abū Ḥanīfa.¹¹ Now this conception is linked up with an attempt to solve the problem of the existence of evil in this world where God is supreme by emphasizing the limitations of the human intellect.¹² It would therefore follow, if such an interpretation of the doctrine is correct, that Abū Ḥanīfa himself had tried to deal with the problem of evil in this way. Thus, besides his many other services to Islam, and despite the allegations of heresy levelled against him, he would have played an important part in the development of Muslim theology.

It is not surprising to find in Abū Ḥanīfa these beginnings

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of rational speculation in matters of theology, for his name is associated with the movement for the extended use of reason in legal questions.¹³ At the same time, however, it has to be recorded that he—and many others along with him—held a conservative and somewhat confused position in respect of predestination.

3. THE JAHMĪYA AND THE DOCTRINE OF JABR

(a) *Jabarīya and Muǰbira*

The view expressed by al-Shahraṣṭānī may be said to be the standard one on the subject.¹⁵

“Compulsion (*jabr*) is the denial that actions really come from man, and the attribution of them to God. The Jabariya consist of several groups. The pure Jabariya are those who do not assert any act at all to be man's or any power for action. The moderate Jabariya assert that man has a power which does not have any influence at all. As for those who assert that originated power has an influence in acting and who call this ‘acquisition’ (*kasb*), they are not Jabaris, although the Mu‘tazila apply the term ‘Jabari’ to one who does not assert that originated power *in isolation* (*istiqlālan*) has an influence in production and origination.”

The idea that the orthodox doctrine is a mean between Jabr and Qadar is stated in al-Baghdādī's well-known remark that true justice lies apart from both Jabr and Qadar.¹⁶ The example of the pure Jabari is Jahm b. Ṣafwān because of his statement that man does not really act; it is only metaphorically that he is said to act, in the same way as the sun is said to shine and the mill-wheel to turn.

On the other hand, this threefold classification of Qadar, Kasb and Jabr is not found in any early documents, like the *Fiqh Akbar I* and *II*, the *Waṣīya* of Abī Ḥanīfa, and al-Ash'arī's creeds in the *Maqālāt* and the *Ibāna*.¹⁷ There is much in the *Maqālāt* about Qadar, but practically nothing about Jabr; the only use of the word in the technical sense of which I am aware is in the account of an anonymous sect of the Rāfiḍa who held that there is no *jabr* as the Jahmī says and no *tafwīḍ* as the Mu‘tazila

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say, but the authorities leave it undecided whether man's acts are created or not. Similarly the name Jabariya is absent from the *Maqālāt*, the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, the *Tanbīh* of al-Malaṭī, the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* ascribed to al-Māturidī, and similar works.¹⁸ Al-Baghdādī does not mention any sect of Jabariya, though he can speak of an individual as a Jabarī.¹⁹ In each of the works mentioned, however, there is at least one reference to a sect of Mujbira, though in the first three the application of the term does not fit al-Shahrastānī's account of the Jabariya. There is thus quite a little nest of problems here—who were the Mujbira and who were the Jabariya, how did the change come about, where do the Jahmiya come in, and so on?

Much light is thrown on these points by the solitary reference to the Mujbira in the *Maqālāt* :

“ The Qadariya revile those who disagree with them about the Qadar ; the Ahl al-Ḥaqq call them Qadariya, and they call them (*sc.* the Ahl al-Ḥaqq) Mujbira, and they are fitter to be called ‘Qadariya’ than the Ahl al-Ithbāt.”²⁰

With this may be compared what appears to be the only mention in al-Malaṭī's *Tanbīh* :

“ If you hear someone call a certain person a *mujbir* and discuss ‘*adl* (justice) and *ijbār* (compelling), then he is a Qadari.”²¹

There seems to be no reason to doubt the truth of the essential point in both these statements, namely, that *mujbir* (which might be translated “ compeller ”) was originally a nickname given to their adversaries by those who held the doctrine of Qadar, in much the same way as they themselves received the nickname of Qadariya. It is in keeping with this that there are something like a dozen references to the Mujbira in the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, a Mu'tazilī work ; their doctrine is also spoken of as *jabr*.²²

The implications of this assertion are noteworthy. Since the designation of Mujbira was applied by the Qadarīs to all their opponents, then the Mujbira must have included not merely the pure and moderate Jabariya of al-Shahrastānī's classification, but also those who held the doctrine of acquisition ; in other words the Mujbira must have included those who were afterwards regarded as orthodox. Al-Shahrastānī notes that the Mu'tazila

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use "Jabarī" in this way. Thus the doctrine of Jabr was originally a doctrine held by the orthodox (though they did not give it that name themselves), and only at a later date did it become heresy.

An examination of what can be learnt about the Mujbira from the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār* tends to confirm these inferences. No names are mentioned, however, so that we have to rely on what is said about their views. In opposition to Abu 'l-Hudhail they maintained that man has power over a single act only, and not over two opposite acts—for example, only over unbelief, and not over both unbelief and faith.²³ Further, they denied that God has power over evil or wickedness,²⁴ they think that God has created the world for the good and benefit of His friends and the harm and suffering of His enemies,²⁵ and the view that an act may proceed from two agents is apparently attributed to them.²⁶ Now all these views are held by some or all of the group of men round Ḍirār, al-Najjār and Burghūth, who are collectively referred to by al-Ash'arī as Ahl al-Ithbāt.²⁷ This was the group which invented and developed the conception of *kasb*, and which would be reckoned among the Mutakallimūn. But since the Mujbira comprised several sects at variance with one another,²⁸ it is reasonable to suppose that the writer included under this term those who adhered to the old views but avoided speculative theology.

It is impossible to give an exact proof of the stages of the transition by which the doctrine of Jabr passed from being orthodox to being heretical—from being a description of those who held the conception of acquisition to being a description of their opponents "on the extreme right." By making use, however, of some points that will receive a detailed demonstration later in this chapter and in the following one, I think I am able to give an account which has the air of verisimilitude.

Until about the second half of the second century there were no important distinctions among the opponents of the doctrine of Qadar with regard to this particular point, though of course different men would express themselves differently. The introduction of the doctrine of acquisition by Ḍirār marked a new departure. Gradually as a result of the discussions between his

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followers and the Mu'tazila an important new point became clear, namely, that there was a difference between acting under compulsion and acting voluntarily; if God *compelled* a man to do some act He had commanded, then the man had not really fulfilled the command, for what was commanded was to do the act *voluntarily*.²⁹ Apparently there were a few (perhaps merely conservatives, or perhaps men influenced by Indian mysticism) who did not accept the conception of acquisition or the distinction between acting voluntarily and acting under compulsion; and in respect of these men those who did accept the conception and the distinction came in the course of time to speak of the doctrine of Jabr—not at once, it would seem, but only after the lapse of about a hundred years, that is, about 300 A.H. The anonymous sect of the Rāfiḍa mentioned above apparently avoided Jabr but without adopting Kasb. Some of the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa were the foremost defenders of the doctrine of acquisition in the fourth century, and it is not surprising that in the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* they already criticize the Mujbira (with views similar to the Jahmiya or pure Jabariya of al-Shahra-stānī) and regard themselves as taking a middle way between them and the Qadariya or Mu'tazila. It is significant, and likewise confirmatory of what has been said, that al-Ash'ari himself, who did not set much store by the concept of acquisition and came very near to Jabr, did not apply this term of opprobrium to anyone, but instead used phrases with the word *ihbāt*, and referred to the Mujbira (or some of them) as Ahl al-Ithbāt.

(b) *The Jahmiya*

In al-Ash'ari's general account of the views of Jahm nearly half consists of his explanation of the acts of men.

"No one acts in reality except God alone. He is the agent, and men have the acts ascribed to them only by way of metaphor. Thus it is said that the stone moves, the sphere revolves, the sun sets; and yet it is God Who does that with the stone, the sphere and the sun. God has, however, created for man a power (*qūwa*) by which the act takes place, and the will for it and the choice of it, whereby he wills it, just in the same way as He has created for man height by which he is tall and colour by which he is coloured."³⁰

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Now Jahm b. Şafwān, the person whose views these are reputed to be, has a firmer position in general history than most of the theologians discussed in this study. He was the secretary of al-Ḥārith b. Suraij, who led a revolt in Persia against the Umayyads in the closing years of that dynasty. Jahm himself was killed in 128/746, while the revolt was still in progress. But the very fact of having Jahm's early date so well established raises problems.

It seems clear that the Jahmīya about whom we hear so much belong to the later second century, the third century and even the fourth century. Al-Baghdādī, who died in 429, says that in his day Jahm's followers were in Tirmidh, and that some of them were converted to the views of the Ash'ariya.³¹ By that time they were evidently rather obscure, but up to the time of al-Ash'arī's *Ibāna* they were apparently very prominent, for in the *Ibāna* he treats them as a major sect, roughly equal to the Mu'tazila or Ḥarūriya (=Khawārij). In the 71 pages from Khushaish reproduced in al-Malaṭī's *Tanbīh*, 35 or almost exactly half are devoted to the Jahmīya (mostly of course to their refutation), and there are said to be eight sects of them.³² In contrast with this the Murji'a receive 7 pages, the Rāfiḍa 8, the Qadariya 9, and the Ḥarūriya or Khawārij 7. A list is given by Ibn Taimīya of theologians who wrote a "Refutation of the Jahmīya" or some similar work.³³ We actually possess the *Radd 'ala 'l-Jahmīya* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the *Ikhtilāf fi 'l-Lafz* of Ibn Qutaiba, and parts of the arguments of Muḥammad b. Aslam, a friend of Aḥmad's.³⁴

No mention is made of the name of any member of the sect, but we are told that Bishr b. Ghaiyāth al-Marīsī (d. 218 or 228) and his generation spread a *Maqāla Jahmīya*.³⁵ As the majority of those who wrote refuting the Jahmīya belong to the first half of the third century, it seems likely that the spate of polemics may be due to the propagation of views attributed to the "Jahmīya" by men like Bishr. But there are also traces of the importance of the Jahmīya before this time. They are the only sect mentioned by name in the *Fiqh Akbar I*, which dates from about 150; and Ḍirār b. 'Amr, who is said to have had Jahm for his Imām, must have reached maturity by about 180.³⁶

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Muqātil b. Sulaimān, who died in 150, is also said to have opposed Jahm.³⁷

Thus there seems to have been a group of followers of Jahm from the time of his death onward. For the most part they remained rather obscure, and we do not know who they were or how they came to prominence or where they lived. They seem to have influenced Ḍirār and al-Najjār, especially in their view that our knowledge of God is mainly negative, but these men cannot be reckoned among the Jahmiya; nor can Bishr al-Marīsī, if his views were similar to those of al-Najjār.³⁸ As there must also have been some development of views between say 120 and 220, we cannot be certain which of the views ascribed to him were actually held in explicit form by Jahm himself, and which were first formulated by his followers; thus, the remarks about power, will and choice in the passage translated above would seem to be later than the debates of the Mu'tazila and their opponents on these questions in the early third century. It seems necessary, therefore, to regard the views commonly ascribed to Jahm as those held by the Jahmiya who were contemporaries of Abu 'l-Hudhail and his immediate followers, and to leave it an open question how much was explicitly held by Jahm who died in 128.

At first sight it may seem strange that the Jahmiya, who are reckoned among the Murji'a, should hold the doctrine of Jabr, whereas Ghailān and his associates, who are also among the Murji'a, were the protagonists of the doctrine of Qadar. In Chapter III it was argued that, in the case of both the Murji'a and the Khawārij, the doctrine of Qadar was bound up with their insistence on the righteousness of God. It was noticed that some sects of the Khawārij opposed the doctrine of Qadar and held orthodox views; but, to judge from the case of the Khāzimiya, of whom there is the fullest account,³⁹ their "orthodoxy" was little more than a conservative defence of pre-Islamic fatalism. Are the views of the Jahmiya, then, simply conservatism, or can we trace a truly Islamic motive behind them?

From the standard accounts of the Jahmiya in al-Baghdādi, al-Shahrastānī and the *Maqālāt*, it would seem that the answer

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to this question is certainly that we can trace an Islamic motive. This motive would be found in the conception of the absolute and unique supremacy of God, or, as Wensinck phrases it, "the overwhelming individuality" of God.⁴⁰ The uniqueness and transcendence of God is emphasized in the doctrine that God cannot be properly called a "thing," for a thing is created and has its like, but that is not true of God.⁴¹ Al-Baghdādī adds that Jahm refused to permit God to be called Living, Knowing, Willing, because these attributes belong to other than He; God may only be described by attributes uniquely His, such as Powerful, Bringer-into-existence, Agent, Creator, Giver of Life or Death.⁴² Thus there is an unbridgeable gulf between God and man.

The somewhat strange doctrine that the punishments of Hell come to an end is also connected with the thought of the absoluteness of God, and is not due to any "rationalistic" objection to traditional eschatology (analogous to nineteenth century rationalism). It proceeds from religious feeling, and was commonly defended as an interpretation of a verse of the Qur'ān: "He is the First and the Last."⁴³ According to the Jahmīya this meant that God continues to be "existent being" (*kā'in mawjūd*) even when there is nothing else; just as there was a "time," before God created anything, when He alone was, so there will be a "time," after He has ceased to preserve what He has created, when He alone is; further, if God alone is, then both Paradise and Hell and the people in them must have ceased to exist. Apparently the suggestion that any created being shared the eternity of God, even if only in one direction, was felt to be an infringement of His unique majesty. The doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, which is sometimes said to have been originated by Jahm,⁴⁴ and the doctrine that God's knowledge is originated, may proceed from the same conception of God.

All this fits in very well with what is said about the doctrine of Jabr in the reports of the views of the Jahmīya. It follows from this that the doctrine of Jabr as they express it has no connection at all with the atheistic fatalism of the Arabs before Muḥammad, but on the contrary is derived from an intense

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realization of the majesty of God. Their determinism did not come from disbelief in God combined with belief in Fate, but from an excessive and unbalanced belief in God.

This is confirmed by the description of Jahm as *muwahhid*.⁴⁵ Now a *muwahhid* (or "asserter of unity") was one who was included among the Ahl al-Tawhīd (or People of Unity), and we are further informed that such a person might be either a *mujbir* or an *'adlī*.⁴⁶ It seems certain that the latter group constituted the Ahl al-'Adl wa-'l-Tawhīd (people of Unity and Justice), and this was a name given to themselves by the Mu'tazila; Abu 'l-Hudhail is said to belong to the Ahl al-Tawhīd,⁴⁷ and there are many resemblances between his views and those of the Jahmiya. Thus the Jahmiya have an established place among the "unitarians" of the Islamic community, and their doctrine of Jabr is linked up with their thoroughly Islamic conception of the unity and uniqueness of God.

Such at least is the conclusion at which we arrive when we consider merely what have been termed the standard accounts of the Jahmiya. But some of the facts brought to light by the long extract from Khushaish in al-Malaṭī's *Tanbīh* require some modification of our account of the Jahmiya.⁴⁸ The same themes occur, but in rather heightened form—the assertion that God is not a thing or at least is dissimilar from all creatures, God's omnipresence in an almost pantheistic sense (which is bound up with the denial that He is in heaven and seated on the throne), the impossibility of knowing God or of making any positive assertions about Him, the denial of various eschatological conceptions. Now it was previously known that Jahm's speculations were said to have started from the attempt to refute the Indian sect of the Sumanīya or Samaniya.⁴⁹ According to the version of Khushaish,⁵⁰ Jahm was so seriously troubled that he did not say his prayers for forty days, on the ground that he could not pray to One he did not know. The impression given by this account is that the Jahmiya, or at least some of them, had been deeply influenced by the religions they were combating. The Sumanīya mostly denied the resurrection after death and believed in some form of transmigration of souls; and some such basis of metempsychosis, together with final absorption

into the Deity, would be a ground from which many of the tenets of the Jahmīya could easily be comprehended.

It would be out of place in this study to try to discover the exact provenance of these doctrines of the Jahmīya. But even if, as seems likely, they grew up under non-Islamic influence, it nevertheless remains true that the majority of the Jahmīya were essentially within the fold of Islam, nourished from its initial impulse, and developing in their own way one side of its teaching. The reply to the over-emphasis of God's righteousness is the over-emphasis of His majestic and almighty unity. The opponents of the Jahmīya may justly have thought that they were fighting something foreign threatening Islam, but, because of the truly Muslim element in the Jahmīya, this debate helped the community to a more adequate expression of its own essential beliefs.

4. ḌIRĀR AND THE AHL AL-ĪTHBĀT

(a) *Dirār*

The statement of al-Malaṭī⁵¹ that before Abu 'l-Hudhail it was Dirār b. 'Amr who had the *majlis* and *kalām* in Baṣra throws light on the mystery that had hitherto surrounded Ḍirār and helps us to understand something of his importance. He was the leading teacher or lecturer in the field of speculative theology and metaphysics in that intellectual centre of the Muslim world. He stood sufficiently close to the Jahmīya for Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir to say that his "Imām is Jahm", while Ibn al-Rāwandī assigned him to the Mu'tazila;⁵² but the accounts of his views in the various books of sects show that there was considerable independence in his attitude.

Ḍirār is almost certainly the first exponent of the conception of "acquisition" or "appropriation" (*kasb, iktisāb*) which eventually became the orthodox account of man's voluntary activity. Al-Ash'ari reports:

"The ground of the separation of Dirār b. 'Amr from the Mu'tazila was his view that the acts of men are created, and that one act comes from two agents (*fā'ilān*), one of whom creates it, namely God, while the other acquires it (*iktasaba*).

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namely man ; and that God is the agent of the acts of men in reality, and that men are the agents of them in reality."⁵³ The point of this conception was probably to make plain the difference between voluntary human acts and the "acts" of inanimate objects. Human acts certainly proceeded from the agent and could be attributed to him in much the same way as falling is attributed to the stone and setting to the sun. But in the case of human agents there was also a more active or positive relation ; to describe this it might be said that the man "acquired" the act, or "appropriated" it, or made it his own (*kasaba, iktasaba*). It was thought that in this way human responsibility was sufficiently safeguarded, while the parallel statement that God created the acts of men fully admitted His omnipotence.

The selection of the word *kasaba* to describe this special relation of man to his acts is probably influenced by its use in the Qur'an, especially the verse :

"God will not burden (*lā yukallifu*) any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it has acquired, and shall bear the evil for the acquirement of which it laboured (*la-hā mā kasabat wa-'alai-hā mā 'ktasabat*)."⁵⁴

Despite the fragmentary character of our records we are able to get glimpses of much reflection and speculation on questions like that of the nature of substance. In this connection Ḍirār held that accidents which are other than bodies do not exist for two times (*zamānān*) ; this is perhaps a beginning of atomism, but, since he held that man's power (*istiṭā'a*) was both before and accompanying his act, he cannot have been a consistent atomist.⁵⁵ In respect of "generated effects" his view—in accordance with his doctrine of acquisition—was that they are the act of both God and man ; those effects of his act that a man could have prevented had he so willed belong to his act.⁵⁶ Another reference shows that Ḍirār, or at least his followers, were involved in the discussions about God's "making unbelief wicked" ; they also held that God made the unbelief.⁵⁷

From the standpoint of the present study the most important feature of his teaching is his doctrine of God's essence (*mahīya*).⁵⁸ The point of this doctrine, which is said to have been handed

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down from Abū Ḥanīfa⁵⁹—the point to which the Mu'tazila objected—was that man could not know God's essence or "what He is" (*mā huwa*), or, as we might perhaps say, know Him as He is.⁶⁰ God knows Himself immediately, by looking at Himself "face to face" as it were (*shahāda*), whereas we can only know Him by proof and information about Him (*khabar*—referring to what we learn through revelation).⁶¹ In Paradise men will receive a sixth sense whereby they will be able to "see" God's essence, that is, to know Him as He knows Himself.

With this doctrine of God's essence is connected his view that God's names only convey to us negative knowledge about Him; to say that He has power only means that He is not ignorant, and so on.⁶² This is important because it is a recognition of the limitations of the human intellect in attempting to know and understand God. In this Ḍirār stands in complete contrast to the Mu'tazila of Baghdād (who were later than he), but perhaps his influence helped to bring about the reaction of al-Jubbā'i against the buoyant self-confidence of Baghdād.

(b) *Al-Najjār*

The views of al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Najjār are very similar to those of Ḍirār. Despite the order of al-Baghdādī and al-Shahrastānī, however, al-Najjār is certainly the younger, and was probably a pupil of Ḍirār's.⁶³ The general account of his views given by al-Ash'arī contains much that is valuable for our present purpose:

"Al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Najjār and his followers, the Ḥusainiyya, held:

(1) The acts of men are created by God; men are the doers of them.

(2) There is nothing in the sphere of God's sovereignty except what He wills; He is ceaselessly willing that what He knows will be in its time will be in its time, and willing that what He knows will not be will not be.

(3) The power (*istitā'a*) may not precede the act; the help (*'awn*) from God is originated in the time (*hāl*) of the act along with the act, and this is the power.

(4) One power is not sufficient for the performance of two acts, but for each act a power is originated along with the

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origination of the act; the power does not endure; the existence or non-existence of the act depends on the existence or non-existence of the power.

(5) The power of faith is succour, right direction, grace, kindness, benefit, guidance (*tawfiq, tasdīd, faḍl, ni'ma, ihsān, hudā*); the power of unbelief is confusion, abandonment, affliction, evil (*ḍalāl, khidhlān, balā', sharr*).

(6) An act of obedience may exist in the time of the sin which is the not doing of it, provided it is not the sin which consists in not doing the act *at that particular moment*, or provided that the moment is not a moment for the sin which consists in not doing the act.

(7) The believer is a believer, one following the true religion (*muhtadin*), whom God succours and guides; the unbeliever is abandoned, one whom God abandons and leads astray, on whose heart He makes an imprint (or "sets a seal"—*ṭaba'a*), whom He does not guide nor regard; God creates his unbelief, and does not do what is good for him; if God regarded him and did what was good for him, he would be sound.

(8) God may cause suffering to children in the future life, or He may show unmerited favour (*yatafaḍḍalu*) to them and not cause any suffering.

(9) If God in His kindness wanted all the unbelievers to believe, He is able to perform such favours or gifts (*alṭāf*) for them that they would believe.

(10) God has imposed duties on the unbelievers which they are not able to perform, not because of any inborn impotence or accidental infirmity, but because they do not do them (*li-tarki-him la-hu*).

(11) Man does not act in another, but only performs acts in himself, such as movements, rest, volitions, cognitions, unbelief, faith; man does not make pain, nor perception, nor vision; he makes nothing at all by way of "generation" (*tawallud*) . . . (here Burghūth is mentioned) . . .

(12) God is ceaselessly generous in that avarice is denied of Him, ceaselessly speaking in the sense that He is ceaselessly not impotent for speech (*kalām*); the speech or word of God is originated and created.

(13) In respect of the assertion of the unity of God al-Najjār held the doctrine of the Mu'tazila, except with regard to His will and generosity; he opposed them in respect of Qadar; and he held the doctrine of postponement (*irjā'*—the distinguishing mark of the Murji'a).

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(14) God may change the eye into the heart, and give the eye the power of the heart, so that man sees God with his eye, that is, knows Him with it; God cannot be seen by the eyes except in this way.

(15) The man who dies dies at his term, and the man who is killed is killed at his term.

(16) God gives man sustenance both of what is lawful and of what is unlawful; sustenance is of two kinds, sustenance of food and sustenance of property."⁶⁴

Much of this speaks for itself, and a few brief remarks about it will suffice. Al-Najjār has taken over Ḍirār's view of the negative character of our knowledge of God's attributes.⁶⁵ He avoids the innovation of Ḍirār's "sixth sense" by suggesting that the eye may be given the power of knowing,⁶⁶ but still maintains the doctrine of *mahīya*.⁶⁷ He also accepted Ḍirār's conception of acquisition;⁶⁸ he appears to have emphasized the difference between the operations of God and those of man.⁶⁹

Several of the articles are in marked contrast to the doctrines of the Mu'tazila which were considered in the previous chapter. The omnipotence and supremacy of God are upheld even at the cost of His justice. God has absolute control of the course of events, so that man can do nothing contrary to what God wills.⁷⁰ Whether a man is a believer or an unbeliever depends on whether God has helped or abandoned him.⁷¹ God could, if He so willed, give such a gift to all the unbelievers that they would become believers.⁷² God's succour and abandonment are thought of as effective, and not as subordinate to the man's decision (which was the view of the Mu'tazila); but Article 10 shows that there was nothing simple-minded about al-Najjār's view. He rejected the contention of the Mu'tazila that the imposition of duties implies the power to perform them; but in so doing he made the distinction (even more clearly perhaps than Abu 'l-Hudhail himself) between physical power and volitional power; it is not through impotence or infirmity that the man is unable to obey God, but simply through the act of not obeying Him. He apparently was more atomistic than the early Mu'tazila, and denied that a man's act can have any generated effects in another person or thing.⁷³ He held the strict predestinarian interpretations of the Term, Sustenance, and the Divine operations

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of succouring, abandoning, and the like,⁷⁴ and thought God could not be said to be tied by human conceptions of right and wrong in dealing with children.⁷⁵ There is no record of how he would have answered the obvious objection of the Mu'tazila that he was "fixing evil upon God."

The passages about man's power are very interesting, and probably mark the beginning of the orthodox doctrine on these points.⁷⁶ Dirār had held that man's power is both prior to and accompanying his act, so it is said; but this probably only means that it had not occurred to him to make the distinction. Al-Najjār introduced a new atomistic conception of human power; it is power for only one act, and every other act requires a fresh power; it is thus originated—created by God, of course—along with each act, accompanying the act and not prior to it. From what he says in Article 10 it would seem that he thought of this as volitional power as distinct from physical power. Abu 'l-Hudhail's conception of times or moments, which tries to equate the distinction between the volition proper and the physical act with what comes earlier and later in time, may fit those experiences where for a considerable period a man weighs up alternatives before deciding between them. In the major part of human activity, however, this weighing of alternatives is less prominent, and here al-Najjār's theory of the simultaneity of volition and physical act is closer to the facts. What seems to Western eyes to be the ultimate difference between the two views, the fact that in the one case the power is over only one act and in the other it is over the act and its opposite or opposites, evoked little discussion; the whole way of looking at the matter was different. Doubtless al-Najjār had some way of describing how men choose between two alternatives, but we are not told what it was; this is where his theory is weak, however.

It is not necessary here to study in detail how his new theory of human power affected his conceptions of the body and its parts (substance and accidents), in which apart from this he followed Dirār.⁷⁷ Clearly we are dealing with a most important thinker, who influenced the Mu'tazila in their formative period by his opposition to their views, and who was a pioneer in the defence of orthodox doctrines by reasoned argument.

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(c) *Burghūth*

Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Burghūth is commonly said to be a follower of al-Najjār,⁷⁸ and his reports of the discussions of the Mu'tazila about man's power appear to come from a later, but only slightly later, period.⁷⁹

One of the distinctive views of Burghūth is that generated effects, like the flight of the stone when it is thrown, are the act of God through the necessitation of the nature (*sc.* of the thing in question—*ṭab'*); it is God Who impresses on the stone such a nature that it flies when it is thrown.⁸⁰ Al-Najjār had merely said that a man does not produce any effect in another person or thing; Burghūth accepted this point, but went further and attributed the effects to God, not directly, however, but indirectly, through the fact that God was the creator of that nature of the thing from which the effect was produced. This conception of the effects or "acts" of a thing proceeding from the nature of the thing is doubtless derived from Mu'ammār,⁸¹ but, in opposition to Mu'ammār, the effects are said to be the work of God and not of the thing in question. The view was not a very happy one, however, and found little support. It nominally preserved God's supreme control of events, and in particular of what happens to a man (which was presumably why al-Najjār denied that one man's actions can affect another), but this was not a control from moment to moment, since God left the nature of things as He originally fixed them; that is to say, the nature of men and of inanimate objects were given some measure of autonomy.

Burghūth thus apparently had a considerable degree of belief in the omnipotence of God (certainly more than the Mu'tazila), but was unable completely to reconcile this with other conceptions that he held. He even seems to have gone to extremes in emphasizing the difference between God and man. He refused to apply to God terms which could be used in an insulting way of men, for instance "agent" (*fā'il*).⁸² His opponents pointed out that *create* (*khalaqa*) is used insultingly of man in the Qur'ān,⁸³ and of course one could not be prohibited from using this of God, so that his attempt to make a complete gulf between God

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and man broke down to this extent. Al-Baghdādī's report that Burghūth refused to apply the term "agent" to man belongs to the same circle of ideas, and, with the previous point, marks an early stage of the discussion whether man really acts.⁸⁴

Yet, whatever Burghūth may have thought about the propriety of various uses of words, he seems to have grasped the unique quality of man's voluntary activity. God, he held, cannot compel (*alja'a*) a man to be believing, unbelieving, just and so on, for the man is commanded to have faith and to avoid unbelief voluntarily (*taw'an*), and if he does so against his will (*karhan*), he does not fulfil the command.⁸⁵ In other words the very conception of a command presupposes a spontaneous power of obeying in the person to whom it is addressed. There is here something of the autonomy already noticed with regard to the conception of "nature"; the act must in some sense proceed from the man himself. But there is no mention of Burghūth having criticized the view of his master al-Najjār that God could perform such favours for the unbelievers that they would believe; it would therefore seem that this giving of favours was regarded as something quite different from compelling.

Burghūth also went beyond al-Najjār in attempting to supply an answer to the problem of reconciling God's omnipotence with the evil in the world. Once again he seems to have made use of ideas derived from Mu'ammār.⁸⁶ He distinguished between "having power over evil" and "having power to do evil." It was easy to show that when God created knowledge or desire it was not He Himself but the man in question who was the subject of the knowledge or desire and properly to be described as "knowing" or "desiring."⁸⁷ In the case of evil, however, God did not create it for man—just as He did not create faith or unbelief—so that the explanation of evil is little more than a restatement of the opposites to be reconciled.

Burghūth presents above all a picture of a man trying to intertwine two separate strands of ideas, but not making very much progress. The metaphysical conceptions derived from Mu'ammār were too greatly out of harmony with the religious ideas of Islam.

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(d) *The identity of the Ahl al-Ithbāt*

There are over twenty references in the *Maqālāt* to a mysterious group of people called Ahl al-Ithbāt or Muthbita.⁸⁹ A survey of these passages makes it clear that the "affirmationists" were indeed those who affirmed God's Qadar.⁹⁰ They are reported as holding various other views besides that from which they derived their name, and with regard to these they sometimes differed on points of detail.⁹¹ Thus al-Ash'arī must have used the term of a definite theological school (or schools).

Close examination of the material enables us to recover some of the names of the members of the group, though al-Ash'arī is not so helpful as he might have been. He includes Ḍirār among them, however, by speaking of "all the Ahl al-Ithbāt apart from Ḍirār."⁹² The only other person explicitly stated to belong to them is al-Kushānī;⁹³ as this person, Aḥmad b. Salma al-Kushānī, is also said to be a follower of al-Najjār, there is a strong presumption that al-Najjār was included in the Ahl al-Ithbāt.⁹⁴ Finally, since it is clear that there was a close connection between Muḥammad b. Ḥarb and al-Najjār, al-Ash'arī's statement that a certain view was "the view of Muḥammad b. Ḥarb and many of the Ahl al-Ithbāt" doubtless implies that he was one of them (though by itself the phrase could not be said to make this conclusion necessary).⁹⁵

None of the other notices specify particular men, but a study of the views themselves confirms and expands the results already obtained. Many of the views about Sealing, Guidance, Leading Astray and so forth are similar to those of al-Najjār, and attribute man's condition of faith or unbelief to God's initiative.⁹⁶ All the Ahl al-Ithbāt except Ḍirār are said to hold the view that no act of a man is in any person or thing other than himself;⁹⁷ and this was the view of al-Najjār. He likewise held that God's attributes are to be interpreted negatively, like the "generality of the Muthbita."⁹⁸ Furthermore, even if the identification of Muḥammad b. Ḥarb with Burghūth be not accepted, there are indications that Burghūth was one of the Ahl al-Ithbāt, quite apart from the presumption on general grounds that this would be so. His view of generated effects was closely akin to that

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of "Muḥammad b. Ḥarb and many of the Ahl al-Ithbāt."⁹⁹ His special views are also reflected in the statements that "most of the Ahl al-Ithbāt" held that God is not able to compel men to a faith by which they are believers, and so on, and that, although God has a power over the evil of others, He does not have power to do evil.¹⁰⁰

Something of the connotation of the term "Ahl al-Ithbāt" is thus made clear. Dirār was one of the prominent early members of the group, but it was rather the teaching of al-Najjār that constituted the norm. His followers, like Burghūth and al-Kushānī, belonged to it, and also, it would seem, the group of Khawārij around Muḥammad b. Ḥarb (if he be different from Burghūth) and Yaḥya b. Abī Kāmil. Despite the light that is shed by this result, there is still much that is mysterious. Why is the term used only by al-Ash'arī? What happened to the group between the time of al-Najjār and Burghūth at the beginning of the third century and the youth of al-Ash'arī at the end?¹⁰¹

(e) *Estimate of the Ahl al-Ithbāt*

It is now possible to form some sort of estimate of the Ahl al-Ithbāt as a whole. Clearly they are of the highest importance as adversaries who, at a comparatively early period—close of the second century and beginning of the third—were able to meet the Mu'tazila on their own ground. An examination of the topics dealt with by the Mu'tazila will show that many of these were topics made prominent by the Ahl al-Ithbāt; indeed it would not be too much to say that in this section and in the preceding chapter we have been dealing with two sides of the same discussion.

It is noticeable, too, that the driving power behind the Ahl al-Ithbāt came from a truly Qur'ānic outlook and not from pre-Islamic fatalism. Certainly they had a very definite belief in the omnipotence of God. Al-Najjār had insisted that everything in the sphere of God's sovereignty was in accordance with His will, and the group in general held, in more technical language, that there was no object of power (*maqḍūr*) over which God did

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not have power.¹⁰² Whereas the Mu'tazila had held that man's power is such that he can bring about events independently of God and indeed contrary to His foreknowledge, the Ahl al-Ithbāt firmly denied that man had power to do anything except what God knew would be and willed to be.¹⁰³ It was doubtless because of the apparent infringement of God's omnipotence that al-Najjār and others of them denied that man has any power to produce effects in another person or thing;¹⁰⁴ if all that men do is willed by God at least permissively, it hardly seems necessary to deny that they produce effects in others, but evidently the religious conviction that God is constantly watching over the believer was satisfied with nothing less than this denial.

Growing out of the belief in God's omnipotence was the acknowledgment that faith and unbelief are to a great extent dependent on God's initiative. This is the thought that underlies most of their views about Guidance and kindred topics;¹⁰⁵ in opposition to the insistence of the Mu'tazila that God treats all men exactly alike and gives all an equal chance, they were ready to admit that God was mainly responsible for making one man a believer and another an unbeliever (and admittedly there are many cases where human understanding can discover no rational grounds for the differences between men in this respect). They held that God was able to create faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, by which men are believers or unbelievers, obedient or disobedient.¹⁰⁶

At the same time they were quite clear about the unique character of human voluntary activity. God did not force or compel men to have faith or unbelief, or to act justly or unjustly.¹⁰⁷ Though God creates the faith, it is not truly faith until man has made it his own—in technical language, until he has appropriated or acquired it. Perhaps it is with this idea in mind that they prefer to speak of God's gift or favour to man (*lutf, laṭīfa*), in the presence of which man believes,¹⁰⁸ rather than to say that God makes the man believe, since that might mean that He forced him to believe. At any rate they all maintained the difference between voluntary and compulsory actions, and used the term *iktisāb* (or *kash*) to describe man's relationship to his voluntary acts.

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When we survey the movement as a whole we can see some traces of a solution of the problem of evil. They seem to have admitted that God was the author of harm or physical evil, and of such an evil as the punishment of Hell; He was also capable of doing much better things than any He had done, or alternatively of doing what was less good.¹⁰⁹ But for the most part they seem to have denied that He was the author of injustice or moral evil in such a way that He could be called unjust or wicked. The report that groups of them held that God was able to compel men to moral evil, and that therefore there was no moral evil in the world of which God was not agent—probably an inference from Dirār's view that an act has two agents, God and man—may be verbally accurate, and yet not a true expression of their convictions.¹¹⁰ In other words, their belief in the omnipotence of God led them to statements of this sort, although at the same time they were quite convinced that God the Merciful and Compassionate, Whom they served, was not unjust or wicked.

In due course the formula was worked out by Burghūth and others that God has power over evil but not power to do evil, that is, that what God creates is not to be ascribed to Him in the same way as an act is ascribed to an agent and characterizes the agent. But from the very start there was also another line of thought, the recognition of the inscrutability of God and that His ways are not altogether within man's comprehension. This would seem to be the deep underlying ground of the doctrine of *mahīya*, the incomprehensible essence of God, known to Himself, but not to be apprehended by man until the day of resurrection. Along with this doctrine went the negative interpretation of God's attributes—for instance, to say He is "knowing" only means that ignorance is to be denied of Him. It would follow from this—though our sources appear to be silent on the point—that man can know that God is not wicked or unjust even though he can form no positive conception of His goodness and justice. The intellectual difficulties caused by the existence of evil are thus largely due to the limitations of the human mind.

If this account of the thought of the Ahl al-Ithbāt is sound, then in many respects they anticipated the essentials of the

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orthodox position ; it will be seen in the next chapter, however, that the school of Abū Ḥanīfa stands closer to them than al-Ash'arī.¹¹¹

5. HISHĀM B. AL-ḤAKAM

Another prominent Mutakallim who opposed the Mu'tazila and upheld the Divine Qadar was Hishām b. al-Ḥakam. From the fairly full information about him in the books of sects, and especially the *Maqālāt*, it is clear that he was well versed in all the subjects discussed by the Mu'tazila. He belonged to the Rāfiḍa (or Imāmīya), a subdivision of the Shī'a, and much of his activity seems to have been in Kūfa. Abu 'l-Hudhail talked with him, and his report of his views suggests that Hishām was slightly older.¹¹²

There are two passages in the *Maqālat* which are specially relevant to the present study.

"Hishām b. al-Ḥakam held that human acts are created by God. Ja'far b. Harb relates that Hishām b. al-Ḥakam said that the acts of man are his choice (*ikhtiyār la-hu*) in one respect and compulsion (*iḍtirār*) in another respect ; they are his choice in that he wills them (*arāda*) and acquires them (*iktasaba*), and they are compulsion in that they do not proceed from him except when there is originated the cause (*sabab*) raised up for them."

The associates of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam held that power (*istitā'a*) is five things : (1) soundness (*ṣiḥha*) ; (2) freedom of circumstances (*takhlīyat al-shu'ūn*) ; (3) space of time (*al mudda fi 'l-waqt*) ; (4) the instrument through which the act comes about, such as the hand through which the slap comes about, the axe through which the chips of wood are made, the needle through which the needlework is produced, and so on ; (5) the cause (*sabab*) which makes its appearance and is raised up, by reason (*ajl*) of which the act takes place. When these things are all present, the act occurs. Some of this power exists before the act, and some of it only in the time of the act ; the latter is the cause. He held that the act does not come about except through the originating cause, but whenever the cause exists and has been originated by God the act takes place inevitably ; what makes the act necessary (*al-mūjib li-'l-fi'l*) is the cause ; the other elements of human power do not make the act necessary."¹¹³

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These are accounts of a line of thought essentially different from that of *Ḍirār*, but possessing some similarities, such as the use of "acquire" in the technical sense. It is impossible, however, with the material at our disposal to determine the extent to which *Hishām* and *Ḍirār* may have influenced one another, or even whether *Hishām* himself used the word *ikhtasaba*. It would seem most likely that *ikhtiyār* and *idtirār* (choice, compulsion) were the words he selected to express his own views. His general idea appears to have been that human activity is the result of a causal chain, but that man's volition is one of the links in this chain.

Hishām's views on these matters do not seem to have found many adherents—perhaps they were too naturalistic for the religious mentality of Islam—but his interest in the analysis of human activity may indirectly have influenced the discussions among the *Mu'tazila*.¹¹⁴ What is important, however, is just the fact that he tried to frame a theory that would have a place for both human responsibility and Divine omnipotence.

A consideration of the views of some of the other members of the *Rāfiḍa* suggests that *Hishām* was perhaps much closer to the *Qadarī* position than the opening assertion that "human acts are created by God" would imply. A group of them, who are not mentioned by name, held the following views:

"God knows what will be before it is, except the acts of men; He knows them only in the time of their existence, since if He knew (distinguished) who will sin from who will obey, He would intervene (*hāla*) between the sinner and his sin."¹¹⁵

Now a similar phrase is found in accounts of the early *Mu'tazilī* thinker of Baghdād, *Abū Mūsā 'l-Murdār*.¹¹⁶ He is reported to have held that God might be said to will sin in that He placed nothing, or left a gap (*khallā*), between a man and sin. From this verb *khallā* comes the noun *takhliya*, by which *Hishām b. al-Ḥakam* describes the second of the conditions of human action.¹¹⁷ *Takhliya* is probably the nearest word in Arabic, etymologically, to "freedom." It is therefore conceivable that in making *takhliyat shu'ūn* a prerequisite of human action *Hishām* had in mind man's independence of God, roughly in the sense adopted by those who held the doctrine of *Qadar*.

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Hishām's views about God's knowledge also point to an affinity with the Qadariya. According to al-Ash'arī the Qadariya held that God cannot know a thing until it exists ; and a subdivision of them, the Shabībīya, held a similar view with special reference to human acts.¹¹⁸ The great majority of the Rāfiḍa likewise held that God does not know what will be before it actually is ;¹¹⁹ and this idea was at the basis of Hishām's quite subtle doctrine of God's knowledge ; he held that one could only properly speak of a knower where the object of knowledge was in existence, and consequently, " If God were knower of what men will do, there would not properly be any test (*miḥna*) or choice."¹²⁰

With regard to this point, therefore, it might seem that the Rāfiḍa were to be regarded as allies rather than as opponents of the Mu'tazila. But, though they thus emphasized the independence of man, they seem also to have had some awareness of the other aspects of the question and to have worked towards a balanced view. Though only the beginnings of this are to be found in Hishām b. al-Ḥakam himself, it is yet noteworthy that before the time of al-Ash'arī a group of the Rāfiḍa should have formulated the doctrine of the middle way between " free will " (*tafwīd*) and absolute determinism (*jabr*).¹²¹ Up to a certain point, therefore, it would appear that these Mutakallimūn of the Rāfiḍa may be reckoned among the defenders of the Divine Qadar.

6. THE WAṢĪYAT ABĪ ḤANĪFA

It would fill a great gap in our knowledge of the more orthodox theologians of early Islam if we could determine the man or group of men who drew up this " Testament of Abū Ḥanīfa," or whose views are presented in it.¹²² Unfortunately, owing to the dearth of material, I have to confess failure in this, although I think I can give some more precise indications than Wensinck has done. Wensinck did not attempt to distinguish between the different groups which might claim to be orthodox or at least were the forerunners of the later orthodoxy, and tends to speak of a homogeneous " community."¹²³ This neglect falsifies some of his arguments ; for instance, when he says that the articles of the *Waṣīya* " do not yet contain the term *kasb*," he overlooks

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the possibility that the term may have been already in use in the technical sense, and yet may have been avoided by the group responsible for this creed.¹²⁴

The first five articles of the *Waṣīya*, dealing with faith, are in many ways close to the views of the Murji'a. It seems to have been the Murji'a first and foremost who made faith a subject of discussion. Article 4, to the effect that sinners of the community of Muḥammad are all believers and not infidels, was a distinctive belief of the Murji'a; and Article 2, denying the increase and decrease of faith, is based on the impossibility of one person being a believer and an unbeliever at the same time, which is very close to the view of all the Murji'a that there is no faith in any unbeliever.¹²⁵

At the same time, however, there are a few points of detail where the *Waṣīya* differs from the view of the Murji'a as commonly reported. Most of the Murji'a held that faith *could* increase and decrease. Again, in Articles 1, 10 and 14, the *Waṣīya* speaks about the *munāfiqūn* or hypocrites. Now this term was the one used by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī¹²⁶ in opposing the view of the Khawārij that the man who commits a great sin is an infidel, whereas the Murji'a simply said he was a believer; and in the accounts of the Murji'a in the *Maqālāt*, though there is much discussion of the *fāsiq* or evildoer, there is no mention of the *munāfiq*, except in the views of Muḥammad b. Karrām and his followers.¹²⁷

Article 15, asserting that the power is along with the act, is proof of some connection with al-Najjār. On the whole it is much more likely that the author of the *Waṣīya* derived this doctrine from al-Najjār than vice versa; the latter is not impossible, but it would necessitate an earlier date for the *Waṣīya* than the one suggested by general considerations. The fact that al-Najjār is sometimes reckoned among the Murji'a is confirmatory of this connection, but it is strange that there is no mention of the doctrine of "acquisition."¹²⁸

There are indications of very definite opposition to the Jahmiya; for instance, the assertion of the uncreatedness of the Qur'an, the strong assertion of the reality of the punishment of the tomb, and the denial that Paradise and Hell will vanish.¹²⁹ Abu

'l-Hudhail's view was similar to that of the Jahmiya on the latter point, but apart from this there is really nothing in the *Waṣīya* to show that the author had the Mu'tazila specially in mind. This may be due, however, to his lack of interest in the questions discussed, rather than to the composition of the creed before the discussions took place; yet even this lack of interest would suggest that the Mu'tazila had not yet attained a position of prominence.

The allegiance of the author of the *Waṣīya* to the doctrine that the Qur'ān was uncreated argues a certain affinity to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. On the question of the breaking of the fast while travelling his position is most akin to that of Aḥmad and the Zāhiriya, though neither in this nor in other legal matters does it conform exactly to any of the established schools.¹³⁰ The division of acts into three classes only, instead of the five which became recognized later, involving the omission of the Permitted and the Disapproved, is likewise akin to the tendency of the Zāhiriya to make everything either obligatory or forbidden.¹³¹ The phrases of Article 24 about the meeting of God with the people of Paradise being "without description, comparison or modality" (*bi-lā kaifīya . . . tashbīh . . . jiha*) are reminiscent of Mālik b. Anas perhaps rather than Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.¹³²

On the other hand, he does not confine himself to the Qur'ān and the Sunna as foundations, as did the extreme followers of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Many of the brief proofs attached to the articles in the *Waṣīya* are indeed based upon Qur'ān and Tradition, but some appear to use rational arguments; thus the unvarying character of faith is proved by the impossibility of a man being both a believer and an unbeliever at the same time, and the doctrine that God has seated Himself on the throne *without any necessity* is proved by a *reductio ad absurdum*.¹³³ At the same time, however, it is to be noted that there is no trace of the principle of *ijmā'*, the agreement of the community, which had a prominent place in the teaching of al-Shāfi'i and his followers.

Thus we have some indications of the general position of the author of the *Waṣīya*. In view of the title he was presumably a follower of Abū Ḥanīfa. He has some resemblance to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, but he was more favourable to *kalām*. A Ḥanafī

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pupil of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaibānī, of about the time of Aḥmad (d. 241 /855) might be suggested.¹³⁴

The author of the *Waṣīya*, whoever he may have been, was certainly an upholder of the Divine Qadar. He maintained that the determination (*taqdīr*) of good and evil is wholly from God, and that both man and all his works are created by God.¹³⁵ The mention of God's command to the Pen to write is reminiscent of the traditions about the writing down before the beginning of the world of all that was to happen till the Day of Resurrection,¹³⁶ and Wensinck has interpreted the article in this way. But the quotation from the Qur'ān refers definitely to records of what men have done, made after they have done it, and not to a determination of their acts beforehand; and the Arabic words *mā huwa kā'in*, which Wensinck has translated, "Write what shall happen till the day of resurrection," would be correctly rendered, "Write what is happening (sc. and go on writing) till . . ."; and the article would then mean that a record is made and kept of all that men do. Otherwise we should have to suppose that the author had twisted the quotation into a proof of this idea of predetermination. From the fact that his position in general is thoroughly theistic, it seems much more likely that he would try to interpret the fatalistic conception in a theistic sense. On the other hand, the mention of the Preserved Table at the end of Article 7 suggests that he held that there was a "pre-writing" of human acts.¹³⁷

The chief interest of Article 7 is that it distinguishes between God's command, desire, good pleasure, and the like, on the one hand (*amr*, *maḥabba*, *riḍā*), and on the other, His will, decision, determination, creation (or formation), and knowledge (*mashī'a*, *qaḍā'*, *taqdīr*, *takhlīq*, *'ilm*). Sins and acts of obedience are both in accordance with the latter group; only acts of obedience are in accordance with the former group.¹³⁸ This appears to straighten out the confusion that had caused trouble as early as the time of the dispute between Maimūn and Shu'aib,¹³⁹ but it introduces a division within the being of God which leads to theoretical difficulties. This article also says that acts of obedience occur with God's help (*tawfiq*), and sins with His abandoning (*khidhlān*)—the only mention of these or the other similar qualities in the

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Waṣīya; this suggests that these points did not bulk large in the author's religious experience, a fact which would indicate his remoteness from the circle of ideas of men like al-Najjār and even Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir.

Perhaps too much should not be made, however, of these omissions, for the argument to show that human power (*istitā'a*) is along with the act is based on a truly religious sense of dependence on God.

“ If it (*sc.* man's power) were before the act, then men would be independent of God in time of need, and this is contrary to the definite judgement of Scripture (47, 40): ‘ God is the Rich, and ye are the poor ’.”

The author of the *Waṣīya* is thus seen to belong to a fairly conservative school of thought, yet he is not unaware of the distinctions that have come to light, and of the need for making decisions about these. Despite his allegiance to Tradition, which might have made him sympathetic to fatalism, his determinism is theistic and not fatalistic. It is God Who determines everything both good and bad, for anything else would be an infringement of His unity; it is God Who creates and gives sustenance and strength to puny, impotent man. The confusions are not completely removed but much progress has been made.

7. KHUSHAISH

Abū 'Āṣim Khushaish b. Asram al-Nasā'ī is a little-known traditionist, who died in 253. His importance for us is that a large part of his *Kitāb al-Istiqāma fī 'l-Sunna wa-'l-Radd fī Ahl al-Bidā' wa-'l-Ahwā'* is contained in the *Tanbīh* of al-Malaṭī; so that Khushaish is one of the earliest writers accessible to us at first hand.¹⁴⁰

In keeping with Massignon's remark that Khushaish was close to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, we find that the arguments which he produces against the various sectaries in his work are almost entirely from the Qur'ān and Tradition. The main exception to this is that he sometimes quotes sayings of great Muslims of the past of acknowledged reputation; for example, Ibn 'Abbās

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is reported to have said that "impotence and intelligence are predetermined (*bi-'l-qadar*)."¹⁴¹ There is no reference, so far as I have observed, to the "agreement" (*ijmā'*) of al-Shāfi'ī and his followers as a source of truth in dogmatics to which appeal can be made; so that Khushaish must have stood quite apart from that side of orthodox thought. The nearest to this is a passage where the "orthodox party" (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) are reported to have forbidden a man making the supposition that he had done something other than he actually did.¹⁴²

It is hardly correct to speak of "arguments" at all in dealing with Khushaish, for his "method of argument" was simply to set down a string of verses from the Qur'ān and then Traditions of the Prophet and anecdotes about notable men, and to leave the reader to discover for himself how they all applied to the theme in question. The bareness of this method of supporting one's views is well illustrated by the story of Ghailān's audience with the caliph 'Umar II (99-101 A.H.). The caliph challenged Ghailān about his views, and when Ghailān had received permission to state his case, he simply quoted:

"Has there come upon man a period of time when he was nothing worth mentioning? Verily We created man from a drop, a mixture, testing him, and We made him able to hear and to see; We guided him as to the way, whether grateful or ungrateful."

The caliph's reply was little more than the assertion that Ghailān was mistaken, and the quotation of other verses:

"(Recall) when thy Lord said to the angels: 'Lo, I am going to place a vice-gerent in the earth.' They said: 'Wilt Thou place in it one who will work corruption and shed blood? We sing hymns in Thy praise and ascribe holiness to Thee.' He replied: 'I know what ye know not.' He taught Adam all the names; then He mustered them before the angels, and said: 'Tell me the names of these, if ye speak the truth.' They said: 'Glory be to Thee! we have no knowledge but what Thou hast taught us; Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.' He said: 'O Adam, tell them their names.' Then when he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not say to you, that I know the secret (things) of the heavens and the earth; I know what ye reveal and what ye have been concealing.'"

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This reply evidently greatly impressed Ghailān, and he promised to keep quiet on the matter. There is no indication at all how the one quotation is supposed to counter the other, and the reader is left to puzzle this out for himself. Presumably the point is that the words "whether grateful or ungrateful" appear to leave open a choice to man, whereas what is said about God's knowledge of hidden things in the second passage includes knowledge of what men will do.¹⁴³

In fairness to Khushaish it must be noted that there are a few occasions when he does something more than this. In the last part of the section on the Qadariya some elucidations are given of the Qur'ānic quotations, though perhaps these belong rather to the Tradition.¹⁴⁴ The view of *al-ṣāliḥūn* about making suppositions, already referred to, suggests that Khushaish and those who thought like him were aware of the discussions among the Mutakallimūn even if they rejected *kalām*, for this was a much-debated topic.¹⁴⁵ The closing phrase of the section on the Qadariya :

"(God) commanded Iblīs to show reverence, and intervened (*hāla*) between him and that ;"

is reminiscent of phrases used by al-Murdār and others.¹⁴⁶ Thus Khushaish may not really have been so remote from the "advanced" theological circles of his time as the form of his book might lead us to think.

With regard to the content of his teaching, a prominent place is given to the righteousness of God. This is best seen in his arguments against the Jahmiya, whose monistic and pantheistic ideas placed morality at a discount ; in defending traditional eschatology against them, Khushaish was defending the doctrine that a man's conduct has eternal significance. On the other hand, when it came to the question of God's omnipotence, he apparently noticed no difference or inconsistency between the truly theistic view and what I have called the atheistic or fatalistic view. After quoting a number of verses of the Qur'ān which exalt the majesty and might of God, he passes on to Traditions and anecdotes which reflect the spirit of fatalism. Explicitly, of course, the fatalism is always covered over by a veneer of theism, for it

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is always God Who is looked upon as the ultimate source of the predetermination of man's life ; and, in view of their attachment to the Qur'ān, it seems probable that the theism was the dominant factor in the thought of men like Khushaish. But they are still able to hold without a qualm that a man's ultimate place in Paradise or Hell is predetermined, with the further suggestion that nothing he can do can alter that. God's supremacy is thus asserted in a way that unduly restricts human power.

Khushaish is interesting to us not simply for himself, but because on this matter he is the representative to us of a large body of moderate or conservative opinion. Doubtless many of those who differed from him in that they accepted the principle of *ijmā'* would have agreed with him in what he had to say in defence of the Divine Qadar, and would likewise have failed to see any inconsistency between theistic and fatalistic determinism. Each of the great traditionists presumably had his "tendency,"¹⁴⁷ but, since al-Bukhārī (d. 256) and Muslim (d. 261) are roughly contemporaries of Khushaish, on this question of predestination one would expect them simply to reflect the moderate thought of the middle of the third century with all its confusion. So far as I have been able to observe from a very brief survey, this is actually the case.

8. AL-KHARRĀZ

Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad b. 'Īsā 'l-Kharrāz, who died probably in 286, differs from the other figures concerned in that he was a mystic rather than a theologian, concerned with the practice of religion rather than its theory. His *Book of Truthfulness*, which we possess, deals with the practice of virtues quite as much as with the specifically mystical states.¹⁴⁸ What he has to say about predestination, therefore, is probably characteristic of the attitude towards it of many devout Muslims of his time.

Mysticism, and indeed all religion, has its dangers, and one of these is that the soul may come to prefer the selfish enjoyment of states of religious exaltation to the exercise of virtues which involve it in the storm and stress of active life. The fatalistic

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current within Islam seems at times to have swept al-Kharrāz on to the shoals of excessive passivity or quiescence. He quotes this story with approval :

“A certain man said : ‘And I have no blessings, save the workings of destiny in me, whatever may befall.’ The same man drank poison. When they said to him, ‘Take an antidote,’ he replied, ‘If I knew that my cure could be accomplished by touching my nose or my ear, I would not do it’.”¹⁴⁹

When considering whether trust in God (*tawakkul*) is consistent with reliance upon secondary or natural causes (*asbāb* simply), he exhorts his readers to sever connection with the majority of such causes. He does not absolutely forbid the use of medical treatment, for Muḥammad had commanded the use of drugs; but he suggests that this is only in certain cases, and that the “higher vocation” is that of the man who has nothing to do with such things; many examples show that God can defend one from any evil, whereas drugs are frequently ineffective.¹⁵⁰

In much of his book there is a note of despair and rejection of the world, doubtless connected in some way with his predestinarian views, though whether contributing to them or derived from them would be difficult to say. “God has abused the present world,” he says, and quotes the verse : “Know that this present life is play and sport and show . . .”; and a little later he speaks of “God’s condemnation of this world and how He has belittled its worth, and does not approve of it as an abode for His saints.”¹⁵¹ Another passage is reminiscent of St. Paul’s “desire to depart and to be with Christ”; but it lacks St. Paul’s perception of a positive purpose to be attained by remaining in the world.

“The man who longs after God is disgusted with this world, and with remaining therein; he desires death and the ending of his span and lot. It is peculiar to him, that he seeks to be estranged from created things, and keeps himself alone in solitude and isolation.”¹⁵²

There is a better side, however, to the teaching of al-Kharrāz. He reaches a lofty conception of trust in God even “in the

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valley of the shadow " and of acquiescence in all the circumstances of one's life. This is the solution *in practice* of the problem of evil, which remains insoluble at the theoretical level. He realizes that even the devout servant of God is not always preserved by God from misfortune ; nevertheless, he maintains, his trust is in no way impaired. Such a man, too, will not say, "My need will be fulfilled," for he knows that God is fulfilling His own purpose.¹⁵³

"The trustful man knows that he is moving towards what is known (*sc.* in God's foreknowledge), and he is well-pleased with God, being aware that he cannot through trust obtain the hastening of what God has postponed, or the postponement of what God has hastened. He has succeeded in expelling impatience and trepidation, and has found rest from the torment of covetousness ; having trained his soul in knowledge both intellectual and spiritual, he says, 'What is destined will be, and what will be is surely coming' (*mā quddira sayakūnu wa-mā yakūnu fa-huwa ātī*). One of the Companions said : 'I entered the house of the Prophet, and there was in the house a dried date ; and the Prophet said, Take it ; if thou hadst not come to it, it would have come to thee'."

Acquiescence (*riḍā 'an Allāh*) is a still higher stage.

"I said : 'What is the sign of acquiescence in the heart, and what is its manifestation?' He replied : 'It is the heart's joy in the course of destiny. A certain man has said : 'Acquiescence is meeting calamities with hope and cheerfulness.' It is related that Anas b. Mālik said : 'I was a servant of the Prophet. He never said to me with regard to any matter, Why didst thou do that? or, Why didst thou not do that? He would only say, So it was destined, and so it was decreed (*quḍī . . . quddira*).' . . . This saying of 'Umar is an indication of acquiescence because one is patient only with regard to something disagreeable, and grateful only with regard to something agreeable ; and he said, 'I care not which of the twain has fallen to my lot.' This was because the two states were equal in his sight'."¹⁵⁴

The note of joy which was touched on at the beginning of that passage is found more fully in the section on "Truthfulness in the knowledge of God's benefits and in gratitude to Him."

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“As for His former blessings, these are : that He remembered thee before thou wast anything at all, and privileged thee with a belief in His unity, faith in Him, and the knowledge of Him ; He also caused the Pen to inscribe thy name on the Preserved Tablet as a Muslim.”¹⁵⁵

The modern Western reader is struck with the strange juxtapositions of deep religious insight with crude fatalistic anecdote. It seems that Islam, for all its spiritual strength, could not shake itself free from the dead hand of old Arab ideas of *dahr*. The confusion—wheat and tares growing side by side—remained. Yet even out of the thought of the predetermination of events al-Kharrāz can draw spiritual nourishment—awareness of the prevenience of God—as when he writes of a man being given to “realize through pure faith what was already in eternity laid up for thee with Him—when He desired thee, before ever thou didst desire Him.”¹⁵⁶

9. CONCLUDING REMARK

Perhaps one of the main results of this chapter has been to show the many-sidedness of the intellectual life of Islam in the second and third centuries, quite apart from the Mu'tazila who have occupied so much of the limelight. With it all, however, it is strange that so many theologians should have remained unaware of the clash between theistic and fatalistic attitudes. Certain aspects—notably the different schools and trends among the more orthodox—have been touched upon very lightly, since they were not specially relevant to the subject in hand. Enough has been said, however, to show that there was a very great degree of preparation for the work of al-Ash'arī. In all this the contribution of the Ahl al-Ithbāt is seen to be of the highest importance.

Note A. MUHAMMAD B. ḤARB AL-ŞAIRĀFĪ

It seems to me probable that this person is none other than Burghūth, who is also Muḥammad b. 'Isā 'l-Sairāfī (spelt with *sin*). He is usually referred to as “Muḥammad b. Ḥarb”; “al-Şairāfī” (spelt with *şad*) is added only in *Maqālāt*, 383.

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Al-Shahrastānī (*Milal*, 103) and al-Ash'arī (*Maq.* 120) include his name in lists of theologians belonging to the Khawārij. Along with many of the Ahl al-Ithbāt he is reported (*Maq.* 383) to have held that perception is to be ascribed to God since He originates in the senses the nature (*ṭabī'a*) which generates it; this is almost identical with Burghūth's view about generated effects. Finally there is a long passage (*Maq.* 107, l. 14-108, l. 13) describing the views of "many of the Ibādiya" (a sect of the Khawārij) and in particular those of Yaḥya b. (Abī) Kāmil, Muḥammad b. Ḥarb and Idrīs al-Ibādī. On examination these views prove to be almost identical with Articles 4, 10, 5, 9, 7, 1, 2, of the views of al-Najjār, together with the report on p. 514. One of the more noticeable deviations is the addition of *ṭaw'an* in Article 9; God is said to be able to do a favour for the unbelievers so that they would believe *voluntarily*—the very point that Burghūth had emphasized. (The description of man's power to act as a *ma'nā*, "form" or "concept," is a further example of the influence of Mu'ammār; the technical use of the term is also found in a report about al-Najjār—*Maq.* 528).

Thus Muḥammad b. Ḥarb agreed in general with al-Najjār, but differed from him about generated effects; and that is exactly how the views of Burghūth are described. He even uses the word *ṭaw'an*, which seemed to be characteristic of Burghūth. The only ground for objection to his identification with Burghūth would seem to be his connection with the Khawārij. There is admittedly a puzzle in this to which I can offer no solution, but it need prove no stumbling-block to identifying the two men. Burghūth also was connected with the Khawārij, for his name is included in the same list in *Milal*, 103—evidently the confusion had occurred before the time of al-Shahrastānī. The identification of Muḥammad b. Ḥarb with Burghūth may therefore be regarded as highly probable; at the very least we must be dealing with two closely related men.

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NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER V

- 1 Even the Mu'tazila found support for its views from the time of the Companions; cp. *Munya*, first three *ṭabaqāt*.
- 2 Or even denied—as al-Baghdādī denied the connection (which certainly existed) between the views of Abū Ḥanīfa and Ghassān, the heretic of the Murji'a (*Farq*, 191).
- 3 Close study of biographical notices, etc., and comparisons with views on *fiqh*, may yet lead to greater clarity on these matters. Indeed all the theologians probably belonged to some sect, though those later considered "sound" doubtless avoided the sects with extreme views. Al-Nawbakhtī, writing from the point of view of the Shi'a (*Firaq al-Shi'a*, 7), includes Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn Abī Lailī, Mālīk b. Anas and al-Shāfi'i, all pillars of orthodoxy among the fourth sect of the Murji'a, the Shukkāk, which is also known as the Hashwiya.
- 4 E.g. a group of the Rawāfiq, whose principal figure was Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (*Maq.* 30-64, etc.); the Zaidīya (*Maq.* 65-75); the *mutakallimūn* of the Khawārij (*Maq.* 120); the group of Murji'a under Abū Shīr and Muḥammad b. Shabīb, who stood very close to the Mu'tazila; the Jahmiya (see sect. 2); Ḍirār, al-Najjār, Burghūth and all the Ahl al-Ithbāt (sect. 3). Al-Baghdādī gives a list of the *mutakallimūn* of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth (*Uṣul*, 254) which comprises: 'Abdallāh b. Sa'id (sc. al-Kullābī), 'al-Ḥārith (b. Asad) al-Muhāsibī, 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Makkī, al-Ḥusain b. al-Faḍl al-Bajālī, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Karābīsi, Abu 'l-'Abbās al-Qalānisi; some of these are also mentioned in *Milal*, 65. In the sphere of *fiqh* the chief exponents of the use of reason were the Aṣḥāb al-Ra'y, associated mainly with Abū Ḥanīfa.

The prominence of the Mu'tazila in our sources is probably due to a combination of causes: (1) the continued existence of their school, while others disappeared or were swallowed up in orthodoxy; (2) al-Ash'ari's connection with them, reflected in the *Maqālāt*, and the fact that several other early writers on sects, like Zurqān and al-Ka'bi, belonged to them—cp. Ritter's list of "Muhammedanische Häresiographien"; (3) the numbers of books they wrote.

- 5 Cp. the arguments for the createdness of the Qur'ān from al-Ṭabari's *History* in Patton's *Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Miḥna*, 57 ff. and 65 ff.
- 6 See ch. I, 2, c, "Sources for the Ḥanafīya".
- 7 Cp. *Muslim Creed*, 108; and above p. 19.
- 8 Cp. *Fiqh Akbar I*, article 2.
- 9 It is not found in the *Waṣīyat Abi Ḥanīfa* or the *Fiqh Akbar II*; it occurs in the creed of al-Ṭahāwī and in those of al-Ash'ari in the *Maqālāt* and the *Ibāna*.
- 10 *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, 4 f.
- 11 *Milal*, 63.
- 12 Cp. sect. 4, e below.
- 13 Cp. Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 5-17.
- 14 *Milal*, 59.
- 15 *Farq*, 328.
- 16 The one exception is the creed of al-Ṭahāwī (ch. VI, sect. 4, below), and the instance from *Maq.* 41 mentioned in the next sentence.

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- ¹⁸ The mention of "Dschabriten" in the translation of al-Ash'ari's *K. al-Luma'* (Hell: *Von Mohammed zu Ghazali*, 57) was apparently erroneous, since it was altered in the second edition. The Jabariya are mentioned in the closing sentence of the creed of al-Ṭahāwī; as he also mentions the Jahmiya, he is probably using Jabariya in much the same way as Mujbira is used in the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*.
- ¹⁹ *Farq*, 328.
- ²⁰ 430, l. 2.
- ²¹ 144, l. 11—not in the index; it is in the creed ascribed to 'Abdallāh b. al-Mubārak.
- ²² 67.
- ²³ 11.
- ²⁴ 18; 26; 49.
- ²⁵ 24.
- ²⁶ 67.
- ²⁷ See next section; the first point (from p. 11) is specially connected with al-Najjār (as is noted in *Intiṣār*, Index under "Mujbira"), and the last with Ḍirār.
- ²⁸ 69.
- ²⁹ This point was formulated especially by Burghūth.
- ³⁰ *Maq.* 279, accepting Ritter's conjecture in line 8.
- ³¹ *Farq*, 200.
- ³² Only one of them is given any semblance of a name—the first is said to belong to the Mu aḥṭila, who are also a sect of the Zanādiqa (p. 75).
- ³³ *Al-'Aqīda al-Ḥamawīya*, in Schreiner, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der theologischen Bewegungen im Islam*, Separatdruck, 120 ff.
- ³⁴ Reprinted from a work of Abū Nu'aim in Patton, *Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Mihna*, 40 ff. See also note 49 below.
- ³⁵ Ibn Taimīya, *ap.* Schreiner, p. 121.
- ³⁶ *Intiṣār*, 134. Bishr al-Marīsi is similar in outlook to al-Najjār, who is even said to have derived his views from him (Ibn Abi 'l-Wafā', *Al-Jawāhir al-Muḍī'a*, I, 164; cp. note in *Intiṣār*, 180), and al-Najjār is directly or indirectly a follower of Ḍirār.
- ³⁷ Massignon, *Recueil de Textes*, p. 194.
- ³⁸ *Milal*, 63.
- ³⁹ Above, ch. III, sect. 1, c.
- ⁴⁰ *Muslim Creed*, 120.
- ⁴¹ *Maq.* 181, 280.
- ⁴² *Farq*, 199.
- ⁴³ *Q.* 57, 3; cp. *Maq.* 542.
- ⁴⁴ *Intiṣār*, 202 (note by ed.).
- ⁴⁵ *Intiṣār*, 126.
- ⁴⁶ *Intiṣār*, 24 f.
- ⁴⁷ *Maq.* 326, l. 5; cp. 571, l. 8. Sometimes the Muwahḥidūn seem to include all who believe in the unity of God, that is, all Muslims or even all monotheists; cp. *Maq.* 151, l. 7 f. (and 146, l. 5.); sometimes they seem to be one particular theological school; cp. *Intiṣār*, 75 f., 122, in addition to above references. It is such considerations that justify the conjecture of *muwahḥida* in *Maq.* 430, l. 6. (above ch. III, note 72).
- ⁴⁸ 75-110, esp. 75-77.
- ⁴⁹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Radd 'ala 'l-Jahmiya*, 314 f., quoted by Dr. Pines. This is also published in "Darul-funun Ilahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuasi" V-VI (1927), 314 ff.; but I have not been able to consult a copy.
- ⁵⁰ *Tanbih*, 77. In the account of Ibn al-Murtadā, *Munya*, 19-21, it is from the Mu'tazila that Jahm is supposed to get help.
- ⁵¹ *Tanbih*, 30.
- ⁵² *Intiṣār*, 133.

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- ⁵³ *Maq.* 281. In this section I assume, or give only a brief proof of, points for which I have argued more fully in *The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition*.
- ⁵⁴ Q. 2, 286, as translated by Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 213. The word *iktisāb* had also been used in theology by Ghailān and his followers to express the distinction between knowledge which is of necessity (*ḍarūra, idṭivār*), like the knowledge that things are originated and controlled, and knowledge of acquisition, like the knowledge that the originator and controller of the universe is not two or more (*Maq.* 136).
- ⁵⁵ *Maq.* 359 f.; 281, etc.
- ⁵⁶ 281; 407 f.
- ⁵⁷ *Intiṣār*, 29.
- ⁵⁸ *Maq.* 216, 339; *Intiṣār*, 133.
- ⁵⁹ *Milal*, 63.
- ⁶⁰ *Maq.* 206.
- ⁶¹ *Milal*, 63.
- ⁶² *Maq.* 166, 281, 487; an anonymous view on p. 174 is probably also his.
- ⁶³ In many respects his views show a stage of development beyond those of Dirār; and in *Maq.* 415 he is given as the source of reports about Abu 'l-Hudhail, al-Nazzām and later theologians (though not all the names in the list were necessarily mentioned in his report); he is said to have had disputes with al-Nazzām, and even to have been his disciple (*Fihrist*, 179; al-Maqrizī, 350; quoted from Dr. Halkin's note to *Farq*, 195).
- ⁶⁴ *Maq.* 283-5.
- ⁶⁵ Art. 12; cp. *Maq.* 514—willing; repetitions in 182, 507.
- ⁶⁶ Art. 14; cp. *Maq.* 216.
- ⁶⁷ *Intiṣār*, 133. Some observations of his about the different ways of knowing a thing (*Maq.* 392) have a bearing on this question, and also seem to link up with the Ma'lūmiya and the Majhūliya of the Khawārij (*Maq.* 96; cp. 391). The lengthening of life is mentioned by al-Jubbā'i (*Maq.* 575).
- ⁶⁸ This may be surmised from art. 1; the word *kasb* is used in dealing with his views on p. 566.
- ⁶⁹ Cp. *Maq.* 353.
- ⁷⁰ Implied in art. 2.
- ⁷¹ Arts. 5, 7.
- ⁷² Art. 9; a view parallel to that of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir.
- ⁷³ Art. 11.
- ⁷⁴ Arts. 15, 16, 5.
- ⁷⁵ Art. 8.
- ⁷⁶ Arts. 3, 4 (*istiṭā'a*); *Maq.* 330 (*qūwa*).
- ⁷⁷ *Maq.* 359 f., 330; 305 f., 317, etc.
- ⁷⁸ Al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, 197; *Milal*, 63; cp. *Maq.* 284. I here assume that Burghūth is to be identified with Muḥammad b. 'Isa al-Sairāfi al-Nazzāmi (who reports Mu'ammar's view of knowledge—*Maq.* 168, 488), Muḥammad b. 'Isa al-Nazzām (who reports a story about Abu 'l-Hudhail—*Munya*, 27, l. 15), and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Sairāfi (a pupil of Mu'ammar, maligned like his master for a view about God's knowledge—*Intiṣār*, 53, l. 10); Burghūth's use of the conception of a thing's nature (*ṭab'*) argues a connection with Mu'ammar. See also the note on Muḥammad b. Ḥarb al-Ṣairāfi (at end of the chapter).
- ⁷⁹ *Maq.* 235, 238.
- ⁸⁰ *Maq.* 284.
- ⁸¹ *Maq.* 405, etc. The statement means: God willed that unbelief should be different from belief and should be base.
- ⁸² *Maq.* 540 f.
- ⁸³ Q. 29, 16.
- ⁸⁴ *Farq*, 197; cp. p. 82 above.
- ⁸⁵ *Maq.* 552.

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⁸⁶ Cp. p. 82 above.

⁸⁷ *Maq.* 553.

⁸⁹ The latter only on p. 488, l. 2.

⁹⁰ Cp. al-Ash'ari's use of *ithbāt*—ch. III, Note B at end.

⁹¹ E.g. in connection with "leading astray" (*iqlāl*) three subdivisions are mentioned (*Maq.* 262).

⁹² 408; cp. p. 488 where he says that Dirār's view of the negative import of the Divine attributes is the view of the "generality of the Muthbita".

⁹³ 540; or al-Kusāni, 262.

⁹⁴ 541.

⁹⁵ 383; see Note A at end.

⁹⁶ 259-265.

⁹⁷ 408.

⁹⁸ 488.

⁹⁹ 383.

¹⁰⁰ 552, 554.

¹⁰¹ A further small point is the connotation of the term "Ahl al-Ḥaqq" ("the people of truth"). Besides the single reference given in *Maq. Index*, namely, p. 472, l. 9, the term occurs p. 430, l. 2, p. 539, l. 3 and p. 549, l. 5, while on pp. 550 f. mention is made of views held by "Ahl al-Ḥaqq wa'l-Ithbāt". It may be that Ahl al-Ḥaqq is simply another name for Ahl al-Ithbāt; on p. 430 they appear to be interchangeable. If there is any difference, the distinction between *khāliq* and *mukhtasib* on p. 539 suggests that the Ahl al-Ḥaqq are the successors of the Ahl al-Ithbāt.

¹⁰² Art. I; *Maq.* 550.

¹⁰³ 561.

¹⁰⁴ 408, etc.

¹⁰⁵ 259-265, etc.

¹⁰⁶ 551.

¹⁰⁷ 552.

¹⁰⁸ 573, etc.

¹⁰⁹ 537 f.; 577.

¹¹⁰ 554.

¹¹¹ They themselves may have been mainly Ḥanafīs; Bishr al-Marīsi, said to have been the teacher of al-Najjār, is given a notice in Ibn Abi 'l-Wafā', *Al-Jawāhir al-Mūdi'a* (I, 164), a biographical dictionary of Ḥanafīs.

¹¹² *Maq.* 32; in view of the fact that Dirār had the *majlis* in Baṣra before Abu 'l-Hudhail, he and Hishām were possibly about the same age; at least it is unlikely that Dirār was younger (as I suggested in *The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition*).

¹¹³ 40 f., 42 f. *Sabab* is perhaps rather the "motive" or "purpose" for the sake of which the act is done.

¹¹⁴ Both Abu 'l-Hudhail and Ja'far b. Ḥarb wrote about him; Ja'far uses the word *ikhtiyār* (*Maq.* 246).

¹¹⁵ 38, l. 15; 221, l. 8; 492, l. 8.

¹¹⁶ *Maq.* 228, 512.

¹¹⁷ *Takhtiyā* was said to constitute man's power by some of the Ibādiya who were criticized by Yaḥya b. Abī Kāmil and Muḥammad b. Ḥarb (*Maq.* 107).

¹¹⁸ *Ibāna*, 85; Khushaish in al-Malaṭi, *Tanbih*, 133; cp. ch. III, 3, b.

¹¹⁹ *Maq.* 489, l. 9.

¹²⁰ *Maq.* 494, l. 4.

¹²¹ *Maq.* 41, l. 4.

¹²² Translation in Wensinck's *Muslim Creed*, 125-131.

¹²³ P. 187.

¹²⁴ P. 186.

¹²⁵ *Maq.* 140.

¹²⁶ *Inṣār*, 164 ff.

¹²⁷ 141.

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- ¹²⁸ In view of the variations of the text of art. 13, and its proximity to other articles about human activity, it is just conceivable that it was originally about "acquisition" in the technical sense (perhaps rejecting it), since the first word is *kasb* (Wensinck here translates this "gain", and uses "acquiring" for a completely different word).
- ¹²⁹ Arts. 9, 18, 20; cp. 27.
- ¹³⁰ *Muslim Creed*, 161.
- ¹³¹ Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, p. 70.
- ¹³² *Milal*, 65.
- ¹³³ Arts, 2, 8.
- ¹³⁴ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaibānī (d. 187 or 189) was a pupil of both Abū Ḥanifa and Mālik b. Anas; he edited the latter's *Muwatta'*. The Ḥanafīya regarded him as their third great imām after Abū Ḥanifa and Abū Yūsuf. See Ibn Abi 'l-Wafā', I, p. 42 (no. 139) and Ibn Qutlūbughā, p. 40 (no. 159).
- ¹³⁵ Arts. 6, 11.
- ¹³⁶ Cp. II, 2, a, above; Q. 54, 52.
- ¹³⁷ The translation of the concluding words should read: "not in accordance with His intimate awareness, but in accordance with His writing on the preserved table."
- ¹³⁸ This distinction was said to be a point of difference between al-Ash'arī and the Ḥanafīya.
- ¹³⁹ Cp. III, 117, above.
- ¹⁴⁰ Cp. Massignon, *Recueil de Textes*, 211 f.; Sven Dederer, Introduction to the *Tanbih*, esp. p. x.
- ¹⁴¹ 127 foot.
- ¹⁴² 128.
- ¹⁴³ Q. 76, 1-3; 2, 28-31; *Tanbih*, 128.
- ¹⁴⁴ 135.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Maq.* 244 f.
- ¹⁴⁶ 135; cp. also p. 134 above.
- ¹⁴⁷ Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 117 ff. notes how al-Bukhārī departed from strict objectivity by introducing titles and headings which tended to belittle *ra'y* and *qiyās*.
- ¹⁴⁸ Edited and translated by Prof. A. J. Arberry; cp. Bibliography.
- ¹⁴⁹ 42.
- ¹⁵⁰ 30 f.
- ¹⁵¹ 22 and Q. 57, 19; 26.
- ¹⁵² 45; cp. *Philippians*, I, 23 f.
- ¹⁵³ 31 f.; quotation below from p. 33; tradition is non-canonical.
- ¹⁵⁴ 42.
- ¹⁵⁵ 37.
- ¹⁵⁶ 59.

VI

AL-ASH'ARĪ AND HIS CRITICS

THE theology of al-Ash'arī is generally regarded as marking a turning-point, or the completion of a stage, in the history of Islam, and the present chapter will show that there are good grounds for such a view. On the other hands, modern scholars have found it difficult to understand the exact nature of the achievement of al-Ash'arī, and the more of his writings became available to them, the less did the new picture of the man they thus acquired tally with the preconceptions they had formed from the description of his followers. The surprise and dismay of the Western scholar is reflected in the words of Wensinck, after summarizing al-Ash'arī's arguments to prove that God may be seen in Paradise and quoting his profession of allegiance to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal: "Is this the al-Ash'arī whose spiritual descendants were cursed by the Ḥanbalites and who is detested by Ibn Ḥazm? Or is al-Ash'arī a man with two faces?"¹

The trouble is that the Western scholar of the last century has tended to be out of sympathy with al-Ash'arī from the very first. From the standpoint of the liberalism with which he has nearly always been infected the conflict between the Mu'tazila and their orthodox opponents has nearly always appeared to him as a conflict between freedom of thought and the tyranny of absolute dogmas; and, since the superiority of reason in its free exercise was his own dogma (probably unacknowledged as such), he viewed with extreme disfavour the man who was primarily responsible for the overthrow of the (supposedly) pure rationalism of the Mu'tazila. This attitude is found at least as early as von Kremer's *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams*, published in 1868,² and has continued with modifications until the present time, though Dr. Nyberg's work on the Mu'tazila marks the beginning of a change.

The present study is based on quite a different attitude.

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Islam is undoubtedly, whatever the ultimate judgment about it may be, one of the great religious forces of the world, and for that reason he who would understand it must approach it with a considerable measure of humility and reverence. The theology of al-Ash'arī and his school was widely accepted among Muslims as an adequate intellectual expression of their religion, whereas that of the Mu'tazila was rejected; therefore—the conclusion forces itself upon us—it is to al-Ash'arī and his like that we must turn if we would understand something of the inmost essence of Islam and the source of its strength. The very fact of his conversion from Mu'tazila doctrines to more traditional views probably helps to this end.

I. THE CONVERSION OF AL-ASH'ARĪ

Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Ismā'il al-Ash'arī was born at Baṣra in 260/873. He was one of the more promising pupils of the head of the Mu'tazila in Baṣra, al-Jubbā'ī, on occasion even taking the place of the master, and might have become his successor, but when he was forty he was converted from Mu'tazilī doctrines to those of the party of the Book and the Sunna, and devoted himself to the intellectual defence of this position. Towards the end of his life he moved to Baghdād, and there he died in 324/935³

More is to be learned from the stories of his conversion than is usually supposed, even if they are perhaps partly symbolic in character. Thus his dissatisfaction with the views of al-Jubbā'ī is crystallized in the story of the three brothers, which occurs in various forms. It concerns the ultimate fate of three brothers, one of whom was pious, the second wicked, while the third died as a child. Now, if Paradise is reserved for those who have merited it by their good conduct, then the child has no part there. If to avoid the unfairness of the child's exclusion from Paradise (seeing it has had no opportunity to do good works), one says that God knew that the child would have been wicked, had it survived, then one is open to the retort that in fairness God ought to have cut off the second brother before he fell into sin. This story is commonly given in the form of a dialogue

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between al-Ash'arī and al-Jubbā'ī,⁴ but, when the views which lead to this impasse are carefully compared with those described in the *Maqālāt*, it is clear that they are rather those of the Mu'tazila of Baghdād whom al-Jubbā'ī criticized.⁵ Al-Jubbā'ī had given up the attempt to show that all the dealings of God with men could be explained as the reward of merit, the punishment of disobedience, or the indemnity of unmerited suffering; he saw that the destinies of men could not be explained fully in terms of the rational concepts of justice and fairness, and was ready to admit that the idea of *tafaḍḍul* or undeserved grace and favour towards man on God's part.⁶

In any event, the conclusion towards which the story points is that these human conceptions are inadequate for the facts of human life. One cannot give a rational explanation of the differences between the fate of different men; one must simply accept. It seems to me very likely that al-Jubbā'ī was beginning to be aware of the limitations of reason, and that his pupil was in this respect only carrying his thoughts a stage further. Certainly, al-Ash'arī's position is to be regarded as the logical development of the whole movement of the Mu'tazila. They had attempted to account for the complex facts of existence according to a certain system of ideas, but, despite their efforts, there remained glaring contradictions between the system and the facts; it then becomes natural to turn aside to see whether some other system will be more satisfactory.

Again and again in the *Ibāna* it will be found that al-Ash'arī's method of argument consists in confronting the *a priori* ideas of his adversaries with hard fact; he is a realist arguing with romantics. Thus in the section dealing with God's will⁷ he argues from the facts of the excess of infidels over believers, of the existence of things which God forbids, of the existence of human acts which God does not will.

As this insufficiency of human reason was borne in upon him, al-Ash'arī was led to take decisions. The story of his dreams, which likewise occurs in various forms, doubtless has its basis in fact, and may very well be largely accurate, for modern psychology leads us to expect dreams at the crises of life.^{7a} During the month of Ramaḍān the Prophet appeared three times

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to al-Ash'arī in dreams, evidently marking three stages in the change of heart and mind which took place in him. At the first stage he was clearly dissatisfied with rationalistic Kalām, and decided to turn to the Traditions and the Qur'an; he did not yet trust himself completely to these, however, but busied himself rather with the interpretation of them according to the methods of Kalām. On his second appearance some days later the Prophet asked al-Ash'arī how he had obeyed the injunction to support what was related from himself, the Prophet, and, when he had been informed, simply repeated the injunction. According to another version al-Ash'arī had first studied the Traditions about seeing Muḥammad in dreams (as he doubted the reality of his experience), about intercession and about the vision of God. It is also said that, at the appearance of Muḥammad, al-Ash'arī said he doubted about the vision of God with the eyes because it was contrary to the conclusions of reason, and received the reply that it was not the Traditions that were doubtful but the arguments of Reason. All the versions agree that after this dream he completely gave up Kalām, and confined himself to a study of Traditions and of commentaries on the Qur'an.

The final stage was reached after the third dream. The Prophet again asked for an account of his doings, but was not altogether pleased with what he was told: "I did not tell you to give up Kalām, but to support the true Traditions." Thus Reason, expelled from a throne, is reinstated as the handmaid of Revelation. The insufficiency of rational ideas has probably something to do with the selection of the subjects studied in the Traditions, for the intercession of the Prophet for sinners was a corrective of strict justice, and the vision of God with the eyes in the next world was complementary to the inadequacy of our rational conceptions of Him in this. The story of the dreams is thus thoroughly in accordance with the conclusion of the problem of the three brothers. Together they point to what is probably the best description of the position of al-Ash'arī—"the subordination of Reason to Revelation."

There is therefore from one point of view considerable justification for Wensinck's assertion that "his *Ibāna* shows him through-

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out as the stern adherent of Qur'ān and *sunna*, whose arguments consist chiefly of quotations from these two sources";⁸ but the latter part of the remark is one-sided. There is all the difference in the world between the arguments of al-Ash'arī and those of Khushaish, and we need only compare the two to learn something of al-Ash'arī's intellectual stature and of his retention of the use of Reason.

Actually it will be found that the bases of al-Ash'arī's arguments fall under four heads. The first two of these are the ones Wensinck mentions, namely, the Qur'ān and the Traditions, but even in the chapter which he analyses (on the visibility of God in the next life) these sources account for only five of the eight arguments, and in some of the other chapters the proportion is even smaller.⁹ Moreover, while revealed truth is the basis of the proof, there is, by contrast with Khushaish, a very considerable structure of rational argument built upon it. He does not simply quote verses; he shows how those on which he relies support his doctrines, and how those quoted by his adversaries do not prove what they want them to prove. Thus in regard to the point mentioned, the objection from the verse, "Sight reacheth not to Him," is not valid; this may mean "Sight reacheth not to Him in this world," or "The sight of the infidels reacheth not to Him," and we must adopt one of these interpretations, since otherwise we should make the Qur'ān contradict itself, which we know it does not do.¹⁰ This doctrine that the Qur'ān is not self-contradictory is reminiscent of the statement in one form of the story of the dreams that, when he examined the sound Traditions, he found that they constituted a rational system.

The third source of the premisses of his arguments is *ijmā'* or the agreement of Muslims. The final argument for the vision of God to the faithful in Paradise is that the life of Paradise is "as Muslims are agreed" one of perfect delight, and the highest of all delights, greater even than that of seeing the Prophet, is that of beholding the countenance of God. Similarly in the discussion of God's will, views are rejected because they contradict the principle, "on which the Muslims are agreed," that what God wills to be, is, and what He does not will, is not.¹¹ The

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acknowledgment of *ijmā'* as one of the bases of law had first been made by al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204), and appears to have been applied to dogmatic theology not long afterwards by the Mu'tazila.¹²

Finally, there are a number of purely rational arguments. Of those about the visibility of God, the sixth and seventh in Wensinck's analysis belong to this category. The former of these is based on the principle that whatever exists is capable of being shown to man by God, and of course God exists; the latter starts from the proposition that perception of oneself is a necessary condition of the perception of things, and this proposition is supported by the analogous one that self-knowledge is a necessary condition of the knowledge of objects. Again, in arguing against some of the Mu'tazila who denied that God makes unbelief base, he asserted that "an act is not really an act, except when the agent knows it according to the reality on which it is based."¹³ These examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It should be added, however, that there is no clear-cut distinction between rational premisses and those derived from the agreement of Muslims. It may be a matter of common observation that Muslims pray to God for the power of faith and shun the power of unbelief, but it is also a matter on which Muslims might be said to agree.¹⁴ The truth is that al-Ash'arī's arguments practically all appear to have been directed against specific people, and, if his opponents admitted his assertions, it was not necessary for him to label the source "reason" or "agreement." Anything that infringes the dignity of God and suggests weakness, ineffectiveness or carelessness is certainly false, and this was a point the Mu'tazila, for instance, could not but admit since they made use of it themselves.

The study of the *Ibāna* thus shows that, while al'Ash'arī quite definitely gave the first place to Revelation, he nevertheless assigned a very important part to Reason.

In view of this it may seem strange that he gave his allegiance to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's formula of *bi-lā kaifa* (literally, "without how"), which is sometimes looked upon as the mark of obscurantism.¹⁵ This is not really strange when one remembers that there had been a prominent body which had attempted to deny the possibility of all knowledge of God apart from negative

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knowledge (or knowledge of what He is not) ; the Jahmiya had been among the prime adherents of this doctrine of *ta'ḥīl*, and in a moderate form it had been continued by some of the Ahl al-Ithbāt.¹⁶ Such a view is sound from al-Ash'arī's standpoint in so far as it means that Reason by itself is not capable of apprehending the nature of God. But he had gone on to the further position that the knowledge from which we are precluded by the limitations of our reason is available to us through revelation. It follows that reason cannot even be allowed to sit in judgement on the phrases and conceptions in which the revelation is contained ; man must simply accept them. The allegorical interpretations of anthropomorphic expressions, which al-Ash'arī declaimed against,¹⁷ such as the suggestions that God's hands signify " grace " or " power," were probably associated with the assertion of the competency of reason apart from revelation, and this would necessitate the rejection of them. On the other hand, when the relation of reason to revelation was clearly understood, it was no longer necessary for his followers to set their faces absolutely against all allegorizing.

Likewise al-Ash'arī's apparently irrational acceptance of the traditional eschatology, is to be understood in the light of the contemporary alternatives. To a great extent those who, like the Jahmiya, denied the various picturesque events of the Day of Judgement were trying to deny the eternal significance of righteous conduct and, in effect, to maintain that it did not matter what a man did. Even where this was not the motive of those who rejected the traditional conceptions, there was still the danger of amoralism—the obliteration of the distinction between right and wrong.

2. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD IN AL-ASH'ARĪ'S THOUGHT

A superficial reading of the creeds in the *Ibāna* and the *Maqālāt* or of the body of the *Ibāna* is enough to show that al-Ash'arī strongly emphasized the omnipotence of God, and even adopted many of the conceptions that I have maintained are pre-Islamic rather than Qur'anic.

The fifth article of the creed runs as follows :

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“ They affirm that there is on earth nothing either good or bad except what God wills, and that things exist by the will of God. Thus it is written: ‘ But ye will not so will, except it be that God willeth; and thus the Muslims say: ‘ What God wills is, and what He does not will is not ’.”¹⁸

The last remark is perhaps meant to be a proof of the doctrine from *ijmā'*, parallel to the proof from the Qur'ān. Certainly the common belief of Muslims that “ what God wills is, and what He does not will is not ” is prominent in the chapter of the *Ibāna* about God's will. The old fatalistic principle that “ what misses one could not have attained to one, and *vice versa* ” is mentioned in both the forms of the creed, though in different places.¹⁹ There are also traces of the Tradition about the Pen in the phrase that “ God knows what men do, and has written that these things will be.”²⁰

A cognate point, which is insisted on almost *ad nauseam* in the *Ibāna*, is that the difference between the faithful and the unbelievers is the result of God's differential treatment of them, and not the result of their own independent act. This thought underlies all that al-Ash'arī has to say about Guidance, Error, the Sealing and similar matters. It is the corollary of God's omnipotence that He must will all that occurs in the earth. If a man's unbelief and sin are his own work and are not what God willed, that would imply weakness or carelessness in God; and such a state of things is unthinkable. So al-Ash'arī is driven inevitably to the conclusion that God creates the unbelief and sin of men.

The account he gives of human activity is thoroughly in line with this insistence on the omnipotence and all-comprehending activity of God. He adopts the view already held by al-Najjār, the author of the *Waṣīyat Abī Hanīfa* and others that man's power to act only accompanies the act and does not exist before it, and that it is power for only one act and not for alternatives.²¹ In other words, when God gives a man the power to believe, the only act open to the man is to believe; he has no power either to disbelieve, or even merely to refrain from believing. Thus in a sense the act is the man's act since it comes about through a power which has been created in him; but it never

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in any way passes out of the control of God. There remains only the shadow of man's responsibility for his actions. It is not surprising, then, that al-Ash'arī appears to reject Burghūth's contention that an act is not a voluntary act when man is compelled by God to do it, and asserts that God, besides being able to create acquisition for man, is able to compel him to do evil.²²

Al-Ash'arī's acceptance of the conception of acquisition (*iktisāb*) is little more than lip-service. Perhaps he retained al-Jubbā'ī's aversion from the idea. Besides the passage just referred to, there are, so far as I can discover, only two occasions in the *Maqālāt* and the *Ibāna* where he uses the word in connection with his own views. In one of these he states that "the meaning of *iktisāb* is that the thing comes about through an originated power and is an acquisition (*kasb*) for the person through whose power it comes about"—that is, he points to its created character; in the other he is primarily concerned to insist that whatever man does by way of acquisition is still within God's control—"there cannot be within the sphere of God's authority any *iktisāb* of men which He does not will."²³

Before we condemn al-Ash'arī out of hand for his belittling of man's responsibility for his acts it is worth looking at his attempts to solve the "problem of evil" with which he was now confronted. He is quite clear that the absolute supremacy of God's will implies that He has willed all the evil in the world; otherwise God would be weak or negligent. But he is also quite certain that God is good and righteous. One of the arguments he uses depends on the contrast between God and Iblīs, whom he regards as willing evil; since there is more evil in the world than good, then, if the evil is contrary to God's will, Iblīs must be more effective than God (*anfadhū*), and likewise worthier of the attributes of omnipotence (*iqtidār*), authority (*sulṭān*) and divinity.²⁴

One line of solution depends on the doctrine that righteousness or goodness has no intrinsic existence but is derived from the prescriptions of a lawgiver; as there is no lawgiver above God to determine what is right and wrong for Him, there is no law for Him to transgress.²⁵ This is not very satisfactory,

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and it is hardly to be wondered at that it receives only brief mention.

His main solution, however, occurring in different places of the *Ibāna*, is along the line first explored by men like Burghūth. This is that the relation of God to what He creates is quite different from the relation of man to his acts, and that consequently God is not necessarily to be described by the terms applicable to a human agent. If a man performs a movement, he is described as "moving"; but when God creates a movement in one of His creatures, He is not to be described as "moving." This, al-Ash'arī holds, applies to God's creation of evil.

"If they ask: 'Which is better, the good or the person from whom the good proceeds?', the reply is: 'The person from whom the good proceeds by way of (unmerited) favour is better than the good.' If they then say: 'Then which is worse, the evil or the person from whom the evil proceeds?', the reply is: 'The person from whom the evil proceeds by way of wrongdoing is worse than the evil. From God, however, the evil proceeds by way of creation, and He is dealing justly thereby. . . .'"²⁶

One of the most interesting parts of al-Ash'arī's argument is where he uses human parallels (based on passages from the *Qur'ān*)²⁷ to show how it is possible for a person to will folly without being foolish. It would seem that the Mu'tazila or some similar group had raised the objection against those who maintained that God could create evil without being an evildoer that "whoever wills folly (*safah*) is necessarily foolish."²⁸

The first example is that of the sons of Adam. When the offering of the one was accepted and not that of the other, the latter threatened to kill his brother. The brother, however, made no defensive or protective attacks on the assailant; "Even if you try to kill me," he said, "I am not going to try to kill you, for I fear God; I will that you should take the blame and be an inmate of Hell." In other words, the brother whose offering was accepted deliberately willed a course of action which included his brother's killing him (unless the mention of God restrained him), because he considered the alternative to be sinful. Yet though he thus willed his own murder, he could not be called

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a murderer; without his willing of the murder it would presumably not have occurred, so that his will had an effective share in bringing about the event, and yet the murder could not be ascribed to him as its agent.

The second illustration is similar. Joseph, after repeatedly refusing the solicitations of his master's wife, met her threats of imprisonment with the words: "My Lord, I prefer the prison to that to which they invite me." Thus Joseph, fearing God and desiring above all things to avoid sin, willed his own imprisonment, which was a sin on account of its injustice. As in the previous case, his volition was effective in bringing about the imprisonment, since, had Joseph complied with the woman's requests, he would not have been imprisoned. But, though Joseph willed the sin in this sense, it obviously could not be ascribed to him in such a way that he was in the least degree sinful on account of it. Al-Ash'arī therefore concludes that, although God wills folly, He is not necessarily foolish.

This is an exceedingly interesting argument, and promises to take us farther towards the solution of these difficulties than any other. The relation of the human will to the Divine is more likely to be understood by the analogy of the relation of human wills to one another than by the analogy of the relation of physical forces (which tends to underly the discussion of human and Divine powers). The examples show how an event can be willed by different persons in different ways, and yet truly willed by both; and it would seem possible along these lines to explain how the will of God can be supreme in the world, and yet not destroy the genuine responsibility of the human wills.

While the form of the argument and its particular application are doubtless al-Ash'arī's own, it seems to be not impossible that he may have received a hint from the *Apology* of Timothy, the Patriarch of the East Syrian Church (dating from about 165/781);²⁹ it is known that al-Ash'arī had studied Christianity, for he wrote two books about it.³⁰ Timothy is replying to the objection of the Caliph al-Mahdī that either Christ was unable to prevent His crucifixion, and so was weak, or else He willed it and therefore the Jews are not to blame. He makes comparisons with the fall of Satan from heaven and the expulsion of Adam

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from Paradise, and later with infidels who kill Muslims fighting for the sake of God, and argues that "the fact that God had willed Satan to fall from heaven and Adam to go out of Paradise does not absolve Satan and Adam from blame and censure" and that the slayers of those who fight for the sake of God are blameworthy, even though they simply fulfil the wish of the victims, for they did not kill them to facilitate their entrance into heaven.

When we return from this consideration of the actual arguments used to the question of al-Ash'arī's belittling of human responsibility and his disregard of the distinctive character of voluntary activity, our judgment must be modified somewhat. Al-Ash'arī is not driven to these positions by any logical necessity. Human responsibility and voluntary action could easily have been found a place within his theology, and indeed might almost be said to be there already by implication. The point is rather that he is simply not interested in them; his preoccupation is to convince men of the overwhelming majesty of God. Even if he has borrowed nothing from Timothy, the contrast in the two men's use of similar arguments is instructive.

It is not surprising, then, that al-Ash'arī raises no objection to the fatalistic conceptions that had become traditional. It has already been noted that he repeats the formula, "Whatever misses you could not have attained to you . . ." and has something suggestive of the writing on the Preserved Table. In connection with the appointed term (*ajal*) and sustenance (*rizq*), his views were those of al-Najjār and of orthodoxy in general.³¹ In defence of the proposition that God provides unlawful sustenance as well as lawful, he argued that it was possible for God to provide a thing without giving the ownership of it, since infants and cattle were provided with milk and hay respectively without being given the ownership of these things.³²

Yet despite all these intrusions of fatalistic views, the outlook of al-Ash'arī is very much a God-centred one. He quotes several of these un-Qur'ānic traditions,³³ but, when he draws conclusions from them, these have reference not to human life as determined but rather to God as determining it; "God knew that what

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will be will be, and wrote it down, and has written the people of Paradise and the people of Hell."³⁴ From the somewhat fatalistic story of the dispute between Adam and Moses he draws the inference that God has a foreknowledge of events.³⁵ It is always towards God that his thoughts move. God is all in all; everything is in His hand; and since He is the Merciful and Compassionate, the proper attitude towards Him is patience (*sabr*) in the face of His judgments and loyal obedience to His commands.³⁶ It is clear that al-Ash'arī is a determinist, but it is just as clear that his determinism is throughout pervaded with the thought of God.

3. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AL-ASH'ARĪ

Of all the nineteenth century scholars Wilhelm Spitta does most justice to al-Ash'arī. Though he shows traces of the contemporary admiration of the Mu'tazila, yet al-Ash'arī remains his hero—"a man, who through his conception of religion has for centuries had a determining influence on many millions of people."³⁷ The conclusion to which his studies led him was that "the whole reactionary movement of the fourth century," in which, of course, al-Ash'arī had the leading part, was a regeneration of the Arab religion which had been permeated by inorganic *foreign* elements."³⁸ These foreign elements, he held, were the Greek and other influences in the thoughts of the Mu'tazila, who had never been popular, and indeed were said to have claimed that they had only cultured persons in their number.³⁹ The way in which this view is expressed has been affected by German racial ideas, but nevertheless there is much truth in Spitta's contentions, and they are a suitable starting-point for considering the achievement of al-Ash'arī.

It is probable that the Mu'tazila were never very popular. The accounts of the Miḥna or Inquisition (from about 218-31) seem to show that the favour of the people was almost entirely given to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in his opposition to the official Mu'tazilī doctrines; but too much weight should not be laid on this fact since the attitude of the caliphs was probably determined by political rather than by purely theological considera-

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tions. Even assuming, however, that the Mu'tazila had failed to catch the popular ear, we could not conclude that this was due to the foreign character of their attitude. Certainly acquaintance with translations of the Greek philosophers and contacts with the thought of India had opened up new vistas to the Arabs and other Muslims of the Middle East, but an answering chord was struck in themselves and they gave themselves wholeheartedly to the new studies. It was in their own way that they set to work on the fresh material, and the products, such as their Kalām, bore their own distinctive mark. The Mu'tazila represented one side of the Muslim spirit, and because of that they were able to constitute a bulwark of Islam against intellectual invasion by Manichaeism and similar creeds. But, though they were not foreign in any obvious way, in the course of this work of defence they had become cut off from or lost touch with some of the deepest layers of the popular mind, above all the sense of creatureliness, the consciousness that the circumstances of one's life are determined for one by powers beyond and above humanity. In this deeper sense the views of the Mu'tazila *were* foreign.

Spitta makes much of the theologian's descent from a pillar of the Arab religion in earlier days, Abū Mūsā 'l-Ash'arī, one of the two arbitrators after the battle of Şiffin in 36/657. Al-Ash'arī's respect for his illustrious ancestors may indeed have made it easier for him to return to the traditional creeds, but the primary emphasis must be laid on his own profoundly religious nature. His writings attest him a truly spiritual man, who has drunk deep of life, and who is speaking in deadly earnest about the beliefs by which he himself lives. Conversion does not come to the academic trifler who looks on life from afar without testing his theories in practice. There are many points of comparison with St. Augustine of Hippo, not the least of them being the tendency to determinism as a result of the experiences of conversion. It seems very likely that al-Ash'arī was convinced that this change of heart (and the joy that we may suppose accompanied it) had come about in him through no effort of his own—God had done something for him that He had not done for other men. Thus through his own personal experience

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al-Ash'arī would come back to the doctrine that faith and unbelief are created in men's hearts by God.

It is my opinion—and in a matter of this sort it is hardly possible to give more than an opinion—that the essential basis of the great influence of al-Ash'arī was his own spirituality. He recovered something of the early fervour of Islam because he attained to something of the same awareness of the majesty and might of God. This alone, however, would not have raised him to the eminence on which he stands. Devout and saintly men had not been wanting in the previous century with many of the qualities of al-Ash'arī—men like al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī (about whom we are now well informed through the labours of Dr. Margaret Smith). But evidently the time was not quite ripe; the Mu'tazila had not shot their bolt; the barrenness of Reason by itself was not yet manifest. Perhaps, too, these men were not so fully gifted as al-Ash'arī in some necessary way. Besides the suitability of the time two factors combined with al-Ash'arī's piety to make him outstandingly influential.

Firstly, his spirituality was along lines which came very close to the deep layers of the popular soul. Everywhere in the Middle East there seems to have been this strong sense of having one's life determined by superior powers. The Mu'tazila had tried to eradicate it, but they had been unable to go sufficiently deep. Largely because of the experiences of his conversion al-Ash'arī could retain this implicit and explicit awareness of being controlled by something or other, and interpret it as a truly religious sense of creatureliness, that is, of dependence on God Who is righteous and merciful. What might have been and often was the ground of fear and dismay thus became the source of confidence and strength, and a deep religious need of the ordinary man was satisfied. In this way al-Ash'arī may be said to have regenerated the Arab religion.

Secondly, he was able to provide an adequate intellectual basis. Al-Ash'arī came to the defence of the traditional faith versed in all the subtlety of the Mu'tazila. He saw that his own experiences and, beyond them, the whole vast movement of the human spirit which we refer to as "Islam," were primarily derived from and

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mediated by the historic events connected with Muḥammad. Reason spoke uncertainly, he realized, whereas the one thing of which one could be certain was that God had spoken there in history. For him, therefore, God's words as set down in the Qur'ān, and whatever else the chosen messenger had understood of Divine truth, were the supreme certainty. Reason might certainly be given a large place, but where Revelation and Reason were in conflict, Revelation must come first.

While al-Ash'arī's prominence is first and foremost due to his leadership in this regeneration of the religion of the Prophet, he also enabled Islam to reach a new level, since now for the first time it was a religion with the elements of a solid substructure of theology.

4. THE CRITICISM OF AL-ASH'ARĪ BY THE ḤANAFĪYA

We are fortunate in possessing three roughly contemporary documents of the school of Abū Ḥanīfa, the so-called *Bayān al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a* or creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī, the *Fiqh Akbar II*, and the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* ascribed to al-Māturīdī.⁴⁰ The last of these contains some explicit and incisive criticisms of the "Ash'ariya"; I am here proceeding on the assumption that, though probably not by al-Māturīdī himself, it reflects his views with a fair degree of accuracy. The uniqueness of his position will best be understood if we first consider briefly these two creeds with which he agrees in so many fundamental doctrines.

(a) *Al-Ṭaḥāwī*

Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥāwī died in 321, only three years before al-Ash'arī, but as he was born in 230, he really belongs to the previous generation. In his *Bayān* he claims to be expounding orthodox Muslim doctrine according to Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaibānī.

On the question of Qadar al-Ṭaḥāwī takes up the traditional positions. God has power over everything, and everything has need of Him; everything takes place according to His power and His will; men have no will except what God wills for them; what He wills for them is, and what He does not will is not.⁴¹

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When God created the creatures by His knowledge, "He predetermined their fates (*qaddara . . . aqdār*) and fixed their terms."⁴² Later in the creed al-Ṭaḥāwī approves of the Pen, the Preserved Table, and what is written on it, and asserts that even if all mankind were to join together, they would be unable to reverse one iota of what is written.⁴³ This deterministic view pervades his account of human activity.

"God created Paradise and Hell before the creatures, and created a people for them—for Paradise those whom He willed, out of His grace (*faḍl*), and for Hell those whom He willed, from His justice. Everyone does what was intended of him and becomes what he was created to be. Good and evil are both predetermined for men. The power (*istiṭā'a*) by which the act comes into existence is partly like a succour (*taṣfīq*), which may not be an attribute of any created being, and in that case it accompanies the act, and partly of the nature of sound health, physical ability and strength, and good condition of the instruments, and in this case it is before the act. . . .

The acts of men are God's creation and man's acquisition. God does not impose on man any duties which he is unable to perform, and men have ability to perform the duties imposed. This is the interpretation of the saying 'There is no might and no power save through God.' We say: No one has any device, any move, any shift to escape from sin except by the help of God; and no one has any power to achieve obedience to God and to persevere in it except by the assistance of God.

Everything happens by God's will and knowledge, by His decision and determination (*qaḍā', qadar*). His will is supreme over every evil; His volition is supreme over all volitions; His decision overcomes all devices. Nothing exists except what He wills. God does what He wills, and He is never unjust. He is holy above every evil and misfortune, and separated from every blemish and ugliness. He is not questioned about His acts, but they (*sc.* His creatures) are questioned."⁴⁴

Only one point here need be commented upon, the assertion that "God does not impose on man any duties which he is unable to perform," for this is contrary to what was held by al-Ash'arī^{44a}. There is no indication of how al-Ṭaḥāwī would have answered the objection that God has commanded the

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unbelievers to believe, and yet they have in fact—and in accordance with His will—disbelieved.

(b) *Fiqh Akbar II*

The *Fiqh Akbar II*⁴⁵ comes from the same school as the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī at a slightly later date, and is consequently very similar, though the order—or lack of order—is different. Besides slight developments in the doctrine of God's attributes and of His changelessness, there is a distinct move away from the determinism of al-Ṭaḥāwī.

There is no mention of the Pen, and though the Preserved Table is alluded to, it is expressly stated that "His writing is of a descriptive, not of a decisive nature" (*bi-'l-waṣf lā bi-'l-ḥukm*).⁴⁶ Man is throughout spoken of as a responsible being; this is something that goes beyond the acceptance of such conceptions as that of the balance on the Day of Resurrection to weigh a man's good and bad deeds, for this traditional idea had been accepted also by al-Ṭaḥāwī.⁴⁷ The *Fiqh Akbar II* maintains that God "created the creatures free (*salīm*) from unbelief and from belief," and that He "did not compel (*jabara*) any of His creatures to be infidels or faithful, but He created them as individuals (*ashkhāṣ*), and faith and unbelief are the acts of men."⁴⁸ A few lines later *kasb* is used to describe this aspect of man's activity. Further, man's loss of faith may not be ascribed to any evil spirit; these, it is allowed, play a certain part, but it is the man's own act that is primary; that is to say, it is only after the man himself has given up his faith that Satan takes it away from him.⁴⁹

On the other hand, the omnipotence of God is fully maintained. Although a man is responsible for his own acts, in so far as he acquires them, yet "God creates them, and it is by His will, knowledge, decision and determination that they all exist" (*mashī'a*, '*ilm*, *qaḍā'*, *qadar*, or, in parallel passages, *taqḍīr*).⁵⁰ Similarly, after God had created men,

"... He addressed them and gave them commands and prohibitions. Thereupon some turned to unbelief; and their denial and disavowal of the truth was caused by God's abandoning them. And some of them believed . . . through the guidance and help of God."⁵¹

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To ascribe man's faith and unbelief to God's guidance and abandonment respectively in this way, however, at once raises the question: Is God not acting unjustly in treating men thus unequally?—the question that was said to have led to al-Ash'ari's rupture with al-Jubbā'i. There is a trace in al-Ṭahāwī of the doctrine that God's action is to be explained partly as grace and partly as justice;⁵² and this is now taken up and developed.

“In His dealings with men God shows grace and justice (*mutafaddil*, *'ādil*). He gives a reward twice as large as a man has deserved, by grace (*tafaddul*), and He punishes for sin, by justice. He forgives, by grace (*fadl*).”⁵³

“God guides whom He wills, by grace (*fadl*), and leads astray whom He wills, by justice. His leading astray is His abandonment, and the explanation of “abandonment” is that He does not assist man to do what pleases Him. This is justice on His part, and so is His punishment of those who are abandoned on account of sin.”⁵⁴

This doctrine has the great advantage that it avoids “fixing evil upon God.” Not all of His acts, it is admitted, are in accordance with strict justice, but those which are not are better than justice requires. What remains mysterious in God's operations now is His apparent failure to do good in certain cases. In order further to uphold the justice of God's treatment of unbelievers—presumably it was those who had never been summoned to Islam who were chiefly in mind here—the theory of a primeval contract was put forward. This was elaborated from a verse of the Qur'ān, and had already been mentioned by al-Ṭahāwī.⁵⁵

“God took the posterity of Adam from his loins and endowed them with intellect. Thereupon He addressed them and commanded them to believe and to abstain from unbelief. Thereupon they recognized His lordship, and this was faith on their part. And in this religion (*fitra*) they are born. And whosoever became an unbeliever afterwards, deviated from this and changed, and whosoever believed and counted it true, persevered in it and adhered to it.”⁵⁶

There is much in these doctrines that is not satisfactory. What is said suggests to us questions that are not answered.

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But perhaps this was inevitable from the brevity characteristic of a creed—al-Ash'arī's creeds are by no means full statements of his position. The disorder of some parts of the creed would seem to indicate that it is not a unitary composition, but has been chopped and changed by various hands. Perhaps this may explain the omission of all reference to human power (*istitā'a*). Despite all such criticisms, however, the *Fiqh Akbar II* is clear evidence of the growth and development of the thought of the Ḥanafī schools of theologians, and as such is of considerable importance.

(c) *The Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*

With this short work from the school of al-Māturīdī, which is probably only slightly later than the *Fiqh Akbar II*, we reach explicit criticism of the school of al-Ash'arī. The general position is very similar to that of the two creeds which have just been considered, but in certain points it goes far beyond them. It is curious to note how the writer speaks of himself and his friends as the orthodox party—Ahl al-Sunna wa-'l-Jamā'a—and of the Ash'arīya as if they were one heretical sect among the many others.

One of the errors of the Ash'arīya was the determinism which was found so pronouncedly in al-Ash'arī himself. Their view is said to be "close to Jabr, indeed to be the essence of Jabr" principally because of the account they give of human power. If, as the Ash'arīya hold, the power which is able to effect evil is not able to effect good, then in doing evil man is determined (*majbūr*).⁵⁷ The corollary of this, which is likewise held by the Ash'arīya, is that God imposes duties on man, which man is not able to perform; and this was denied even by a deterministic member of the Ḥanafīya like al-Ṭaḥāwī.

The alternative account of human activity has already been given a page or two earlier. The question of reward and punishment in view of God's creation of men's acts raises the issue, and leads to the enunciation of "al-Māturīdī's" own doctrine, namely, that "reward and punishment are according to the use (*isti'māl*) of the created act, not according to the

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principle of creation."⁵⁸ With this is connected the doctrine which he ascribes to Abū Ḥanīfa himself that "the power by which man performs the sinful act is essentially able to effect the act of obedience." This means that God creates a power in man (apparently psychical or mental rather than merely physical), which man is commanded to use in a certain way, but which he may use either in obeying or in disobeying the command. The power in this sense is along with the act, and neither before nor after it, "since each part of the power is conjoined with each part of the act."⁵⁹ The view of the school is summed up as follows :

"The creating is the act of God and consists in the originating of the power in man, but the use of the originated power is the act of man, really and not metaphorically."⁶⁰

This affirmation of human responsibility is practical as well as theoretical, for "al-Māturīdī" is clearly aware of the serious effects al-Ash'arī's determinism is liable to have in producing a fatalistic attitude to life and a disregard for morality. He replies to the view of the Mujbira that man acts only metaphorically, and not really, as follows :

"Your doctrine amounts to depriving men of hope and fear ; they will not fear on account of the evil in their acts, nor hope on account of the good in them. This is unbelief, for the loss of hope is despair. God has said : 'Do not despair of the mercy of God' ; and in another verse : 'None despair of the comfort of God but the unbelieving people.' Likewise the loss of fear is the destruction of the spirit of service towards God and the source of disregard of His majesty."⁶¹

"Al-Māturīdī" a little later goes on to maintain that there is no such thing as a fixed and ineluctable destiny for the individual. In commenting on some statement or tradition that has somehow been omitted from the text as we have it, he says that the meaning of this is "the misery written on the Preserved Table is exchanged for happiness by the works of the happy people (presumably by doing good deeds), and the happiness written there is exchanged for misery by the works of the miserable people."⁶² The exact opposite of this was maintained by the Ash'arīya, and therefore, in order to be

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consistent, they had to admit that men like Abū Bakr and 'Umar, who had quite definitely once been idol-worshippers, but were quite as definitely recognized as having become true believers and as being in Paradise, must really have been believers even at the time when they worshipped idols. "Al-Māturīdī" refutes this by quoting a verse from the Qur'ān: "Say to those who have disbelieved: 'If they desist, what is past will be forgiven them',"⁶³ and arguing that forgiveness becomes pointless if they are already believers; "if the unbelievers were believers before they believed, then the advantage of forgiveness would disappear, the word of the Merciful would be made void."⁶⁴

Evidently the Ash'ariya (or some similar group) had raised the objection that, in thus affirming that it was possible for a man's destiny to be reversed, the Ḥanafī school were countenancing change in respect of God, since this reversal of destiny apparently involved a change in His decision about man. This was an *argumentum ad hominem*, for the immutability of God was a characteristic tenet of the Ḥanafīya, finding expression in their doctrine that the active attributes of God are eternal. "Al-Māturīdī's" reply commences by pointing out that, while the decision belongs to God, what is decided and written down is an attribute of man—it is the man who is happy or miserable—and that therefore change is being ascribed only to man and not to God. In further defence of his position he puts forward a fourfold classification of mankind: (1) those whose happiness is determined or decided from beginning to end; (2) those whose misery is determined from beginning to end; (3) those whose final happiness is determined; and (presumably—for it is not mentioned, perhaps owing to a faulty text); (4) those whose final misery is determined. Abū Bakr and 'Umar belong to the third class.

The late writer, Abū 'Udhba, discussing the differences between the Ash'ariya and the Māturīdiya in *Al-Rawḍa al-Bahīya* (1125/1713), has some quite acute remarks about this point. After an exposition of the opposing views (which is almost certainly based on the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*), he concludes that the difference is at bottom a merely verbal one, depending on the interpretation of happiness. For al-Ash'arī it means what

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has been written down and known by God from all eternity—in other words, a man's ultimate fate; and this clearly does not change. On the other hand, Abū Ḥanīfa (really his school means by happiness or misery the actual state of the man which is his accident at the present moment; and clearly this may change before his death.⁶⁵

Despite this well-meaning attempt of Abū 'Udhba to effect a reconciliation, however, it would seem that there really is a deep difference between the two positions. The difference is perhaps best realized by asking the question: Does it matter what a man does at any given moment? "Al-Māturīdī" answered with an unhesitating "Yes." Al-Ash'arī would probably not have answered with a direct "No"; for the most part he simply avoided the question, but at the same time discouraged men from attaching any importance to their striving by repeating "You cannot do anything except what God wills."

On the other hand, "al-Māturīdī" differentiated his position from that of the Mu'tazila and Qadariya just as definitely as from that of the Mujbira and Ash'ariya. In the particular question just considered it has to be remembered that he also held that what a man does has been known to God and written down from all eternity; presumably he held, like the author of *Fiqh Akbar II*, that this knowledge and writing is not decisive, but merely descriptive.

His opposition to the doctrine of Qadar appears again in his discussion of Article 3 of *Fiqh Akbar I*, "that what reaches you could not possibly have missed you. . . ." This, he says, is a question "between us and the Qadariya and Mu'tazila"; they deny that God wills the act of man when it is sin, for they hold that sin is from the sinner and unbelief from the unbeliever, and further maintain that, if God willed sin and unbelief and then punished men for them, He would be acting unjustly. Such a view, he considers, is folly, since God's will is supreme and His volition effective; yet the sin of the sinner does not come about through God's will in that He allows or permits it (*jā'izan*)—He quite definitely disapproves of it, and it is contrary to His good pleasure.⁶⁶

It has to be admitted that this part of "al-Māturīdī's" views,

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if I have interpreted them correctly, is not very satisfactory. Of course, in a subject where no completely satisfactory solution has been given too much cannot be made of this. Yet the conclusion of this passage is one of the weakest parts of the whole book. He sets out to show that evil may not be ascribed to God in particular (or in isolation), and the proof is that it can stand neither in a "real relation" to Him, nor yet in an "honorific relation" (*idāfat taḥqīq*, *idāfat takrīm*); one can only ascribe evil to God "in general," that is, as parts of a greater whole, as when one says "everything is from God"; anything else is improper and irreverent (*murā'ā li-'l-adab*), just as, although God is creator of everything, it is irreverent to say "O Creator of pigs."⁶⁷

This distinction between God's will and His approval or good pleasure is a vital one for those who would maintain the righteousness of an omnipotent God (against the attacks of the Mu'tazila, primarily), and "al-Māturīdī" returns to it later.⁶⁸ In connection with the discussion about the relation between God's will and his command, he supposes his opponent asking whether God's will is approved or disapproved by Him. He admits that it is always approved, but further maintains that sin and unbelief are disapproved. When the supposed opponent asks, "Are you not holding both that sin and unbelief are by God's will, and God's will is always approved by Him?", he replies, "God's will, decision, and so forth, are all approved by Him, but the act proceeding from the man by His will may be either approved, as in the case of obedience, or disapproved, as in the case of sin."

The conclusion of the matter would appear to be that "al-Māturīdī" saw both sides of the argument—God's omnipotence and His righteousness—and clung to both of them, but was not able really to reconcile the two. The point is a tricky one, as a study of what Abū 'Udhba and modern scholars have to say about it will show. The point made by Abū 'Udhba⁶⁹ is that, while al-Ash'arī emphasized that will and approval were two separate things, the school of Abū Ḥanīfa regarded them as two coalescing things (*muttaḥidān*). But much depends on the particular portion of their writings which is under consideration.

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In the *Ibāna* and the *Kitāb al-Luma'* al-Ash'arī argues, it would seem, from the principle that what God does not will He disapproves;⁷⁰ but in the creed in the *Maqālāt* he says that God does not approve of evil even though He wills it.⁷¹

The emphasis on unity is in line with what "al-Māturīdī" has to say about the distinction within God's will drawn by the 'Adliya (who are probably closely related to the Mu'tazila); on the one hand there is the will by which He creates the heavens and the earth,⁷² and on the other hand there is a "will of delegation" (*mashī'at tafwīd*) by which He entrusts men with their acts and leaves them to themselves. "Al-Māturīdī" considers it gross presumption to make a division within the will of God in this way. His own view retains only the bare minimum of responsibility for man; the power which the doctrine of Qadar ascribes to man is far in excess of this minimum and places man to this extent on a level with God—which is unthinkable.

There is thus considerable justification for "al-Māturīdī's" claim that the school of Abū Ḥanīfa occupies a middle position between the Qadariya and the Mujbira and is uninfected by either Qadar or Jabr.⁷³ This is by no means an innovation of "al-Māturīdī's," but has its roots in the doctrines of the school. Al-Ṭahāwī asserts that the true Islam is between Jabr and Qadar, though without elaborating,⁷⁴ and the verb *jabara* is used for "compel" in *Fiqh Akbar II*.⁷⁵ There was also the mysterious group of the Rāfiḍa mentioned in the *Maqālāt* which rejected both *jabr* and *tafwīd*; the similarity of the school of Abū Ḥanīfa, but I have no clue as to what it is. Thus, while there are these roots in the past, "al-Māturīdī's" is the first clear statement of the conception of a middle position. In view of the later adoption of this claim to be the *via media* by the Ash'ariya, it is noteworthy that "al-Māturīdī" should immediately pass to accusing them of holding one of the extremes.⁷⁶

At the same time it must be noted that there is no instance of the technical use of *kasb* or *iktisāb* in the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. In view of the fact that it occurs (though without being given any prominence) in both the other Ḥanafī creeds that have been considered, it cannot be argued that "al-Māturīdī" disapproved

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of it altogether; but clearly it did not quite fit in with his conception of the "use of originated powers."

What can be maintained is that the identification of the doctrine of acquisition with the middle position must have been made by some later thinker—possibly al-Bāqillānī.⁷⁷

In the long run, however, what matters is not so much terminology as ideas, and especially distinctions. The great contribution of the Ḥanafiya to Islamic thought in the questions covered by the present study was their continued insistence on the distinction between responsible human action and *jabr* or Divine compulsion. In this they were carrying on a piece of work that had been started earlier among the Ahl al-Ithbāt, and the final result of their labours was the recognition and adoption of the distinction by the Ash'ariya when they became predominant. Yet there is an element of weakness seemingly inseparable from the views of the school of al-Māturīdī. Their position is essentially one of balance, a mediating position, and suffers from the defects inherent in that. Their insistence on human responsibility and their opposition to fatalism are both connected with the truly Islamic conception of God's righteousness. But in balancing His righteousness and His omnipotence there is a loss of religious fervour. That at least is the impression left when one reads the *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* after al-Ash'arī's *Ibāna*. And the consequence is that there is no enthusiastic proclamation of God's righteousness as a counterblast to al-Ash'arī's fervid declaration of His majesty and omnipotence.

This is a suitable point at which to end this study. Certainly a vista of further debates is opening up through the opposition of these two great schools. But there is this important difference. Previous discussions were mainly with sectaries who were, or came to be, regarded as outside the fold of Islam. From this time on, however, the arguments are largely against admitted Muslims and within the framework of a considerable number of accepted dogmas.

Note A. THE INTERPRETATION OF *Ibāna*, p. 66

The Translation of the passage beginning p. 66, l. 4 should run roughly as follows :

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“Another Question⁸ It may be said to them: God said, “If We willed, We should give to every soul its guidance; but true is the saying of Mine, ‘Assuredly I shall fill Gehenna, with jinn and men together.’” (Q. 32, 13). Now, since that saying is true, it follows that He did not will to give every soul its guidance (for His not giving each its guidance is dependent on the truth of the saying about the punishment of the infidels); and since He did not will their guidance, He did will their going astray.

If they say: The meaning of that verse is, “If We willed, We should force guidance upon them and compel them to have it;” the reply is: If He forced guidance upon them, and compelled them to have it, would they be truly guided? If they say, Yes; the reply is: Then if, when He is the author of their guidance, they are truly guided, why do you deny that, if He were the author of the unbelief of the unbelievers, they would be unbelievers? This demolishes their argument, for they hold that the unbeliever is the sole author of his unbelief.

Again, it may be said to them: In what manner would guidance be present in men, if God were to give it to them and to will it for them? If they say: By compulsion; the reply is: And when God compels them to be guided, are they benefited (*sc.* in respect of the future life) by what they do under compulsion? To those who say, Yes, the reply is: Then, since God has announced that, if He willed, He would give them guidance (if it were not for the truth of the saying that He will fill Gehenna), and since, if He compelled them, He would not benefit them nor avert punishment from them (just as what Pharaoh said under compulsion when drowning did not benefit him), it follows that there is no sense in your view; for, if it were not for the truth of His saying (*sc.* about filling Gehenna), every soul would be given its guidance, and yet according to your interpretation the giving of guidance does not avert punishment.”

This passage occurs after several where al-Ash'arī has been showing that God wills man's folly, disobedience and unbelief. The kernel of the argument is the connection between the two parts of the verse, expressed by the words *innamā . . . lam mā*, which I have translated by “dependent” (though a phrase with “condition” or “reason” might be better); it is precisely because it is true that God has said He will fill Gehenna, that He has not guided all, but has in fact led some astray.

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The opponents with whom he is arguing in the second and third paragraphs presumably held that *every* soul had been guided by way of precept and admonition, and then tried to evade the difficulty caused by this verse by interpreting the guidance which has not been given to every soul as "compulsory guidance." In so doing they have really abandoned their own conception of guidance as monitory and adopted al-Ash'arī's of guidance as effective for salvation, and he proceeds to exploit this inconsistency in their view. The point of the second paragraph is that, if man can go to Paradise through God's operation, there is no reason why he should not go to Hell in similar fashion.

The third paragraph is rather tricky. The opponents admit that this compulsory guidance is beneficial (if they did not do so, the whole interpretation of the verse becomes unsatisfactory). Presumably they had some confused notion of compulsory monitory guidance. But they apparently also held the view (first propounded by Burghūth) that what a man does under compulsion is not effective (either for salvation or condemnation). So al-Ash'arī's argument might be paraphrased thus: The verse shows that guidance is effective; but compulsory guidance is not effective; therefore your interpretation does not make sense.

This is primarily an *argumentum ad hominem*, but it is interesting that al-Ash'arī apparently accepts the distinction between voluntary action and what is done under compulsion.

NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER VI

¹ *Muslim Creed*, 91.

² Cp. pp. xvi, 35 ff. and esp. 249 f., where he regards it as almost the depth of intellectual degradation that Muslims should openly admit that the basis of Islam is "Revelation stands higher than Reason." Steiner's *Mu'taziliten* is earlier—1865—but the writer has not the scholarly grasp of von Kremer, has little interest in religion, and is apt to be contemptuous of Islam and Muslims.

³ See Spitta, *Zur Geschichte Abu 'l-Hasan al-As'ari's*; von Mehren, *Exposé de la Réforme de l'Islamisme*; Klein, Introduction to the translation of the *Ibāna*, pp. 25-38.

⁴ Cp. version translated by Klein, *l.c.*, p. 27; the best is that from Ibn Khallikān (no. 618), which Spitta gives along with several others (*l.c.*, p. 42).

⁵ Cp. ch. IV, sect. 4 and 5 above.

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- 6 *Maq.* 249; and ch. IV. 6, b above.
- 7 Pp. 60 ff., tr. 100 ff.
- 7a Beside the sources in note 3, cp. Macdonald, *Religious Attitude*, 88-91.
- 8 *Muslim Creed*, 91.
- 9 *ib.* 88 f.
- 10 Q. 6, 103; *Ibāna*, tr. 60.
- 11 *ib.* 61, tr. 109.
- 12 *Maq.* 267, l. 2, Abu 'l-Hudhail; 277, l. 1, al-Nazzām; these are still on the borderline of law and theology.
- 13 89, tr. 130.
- 14 69, tr. 109.
- 15 Cp. 8, tr. 50; also the corresponding passage, *Maq.* 290, l. 11.
- 16 Cp. ch. V. sect. 4 above.
- 17 47-54; tr. 88-94.
- 18 *Maq.* 291. The creeds are to be found in *Maq.* 290-7 and *Ibāna*, 7-13, tr. 49-55, and are very similar. I have adopted the numbering of the articles in the convenient translation by Dr. Klein in the Introduction to the translation of the *Ibāna*, pp. 31-35; this follows the paragraphing in Ritter's edition of the *Maqālāt*. The differences between the two creeds are so small that there is no difficulty in regarding al-Ash'arī as author of both. That in the *Maqālāt* is probably the later. If there is any difference in standpoint, the *Maqālāt* is slightly more deterministic; it alone mentions that men's acts are written down beforehand (Art. XXIX), and it omits the article of the *Ibāna* which made the fate of the children of the heathen dependent on their own act, and instead has one which commits the fate of children absolutely to God (XXVIII); there is a slight difference in VI. On the other hand, the *Maqālāt* adds art. XIV, distinguishing between God's will and good pleasure, so that the differences are perhaps not significant. It is noteworthy, however, that the *Maqālāt* omits the mention of *ijmā'* in art. XVI and adds an article declaring that the Qur'ān does not abrogate the Sunna (XXVII), which suggests that Tradition was coming to have more of a hold on al-Ash'arī.
- 19 *Maq.* X; *Ibāna*, in what corresponds to art. VII of *Maq.*
- 20 *Maq.* XXIX; not in *Ibāna*.
- 21 *Maq.* art. VI.
- 22 *Maq.* 552.
- 23 *Maq.* 542; *Ibāna*, 63, tr. 103.
- 24 *Ibāna*, 61 f., tr. 101 f.
- 25 *ib.* 65, tr. 104 f.
- 26 *ib.* 78, tr. 118.
- 27 Q. 5, 31 f.; 12, 33; cp. *Ibāna*, 64 f., tr. 104.
- 28 Cp. *K. al-Luma'*, tr. Hell, p. 57.
- 29 Translated by Mingana in *Woodbrooke Studies*, vol. II. The main passage in question is pp. 43-46.
- 30 Spitta, *al-Aš'arī*, 64, 74.
- 31 Arts. XXIV, XXV of creed in *Maq.*, and similar position in *Ibāna*; arguments in support in *Ibāna*, 76-8, tr. 115-8. For emendation to text of p. 76 see Prof. Thomson's review in *The Moslem World*, XXXII, p. 259.
- 32 *Ibāna*, 77, tr. 117.
- 33 *Ibāna*, 84 ff., tr. 124 ff.
- 34 *Ibāna*, 87, tr. 127.
- 35 *Ibāna*, 85, tr. 125.
- 36 *Maq.* 296, art. XXIX of creed.
- 37 *Zur Geschichte . . . al-Aš'arī's* (1876), p. vi.
- 38 *ib.* p. 7—"eine regeneration der von unorganischen ausländischen elementen durchgesetzten arabischen religion."
- 39 *ib.* p. 8.
- 40 Cp. ch. I, sect. 2, c, pp. 6-10.

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- ⁴¹ *Bayān*, p. 3.
⁴² *ib.*
⁴³ P. 6.
⁴⁴ P. 9 foot—11.
^{44a} *Ibāna*, 71; tr. III.
⁴⁵ Translated by Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 188-97; I refer to articles by his numbering.
⁴⁶ Art. 5.
⁴⁷ Art. 21; cp. al-Ṭahāwī, *Bayān*, 9.
⁴⁸ Art. 6.
⁴⁹ Art. 22.
⁵⁰ Art. 6.
⁵¹ Art. 6.
⁵² *Bayān*, p. 3, l. 9 f.
⁵³ Art. 19.
⁵⁴ Art. 22.
⁵⁵ Q. 7, 171; *Bayān*, p. 5, l. 10; cp. *Muslim Creed*, 215.
⁵⁶ Art. 6.
⁵⁷ *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-A.*, 12.
⁵⁸ *Ib.* 10.
⁵⁹ *Ib.*
⁶⁰ *Ib.* 11 foot.
⁶¹ *Ib.* 11; Q. 39, 54; 12, 87.
⁶² *Ib.* 12.
⁶³ Q. 8, 39.
⁶⁴ P. 12.
⁶⁵ *Rawḍa*, p. 10.
⁶⁶ *Sharḥ al-F. al-A.*, 4.
⁶⁷ *Ib.* 5.
⁶⁸ *Ib.* 24.
⁶⁹ *Rawḍa*, 17-9.
⁷⁰ *Ibāna*, 62, tr. 102 (word is *karaha*); *K. al-Luma'*, tr. Hell, 56.
⁷¹ *Maq.* (art. XIV).
⁷² This is called *mashī'at khabar* (p. 10 f.), but I cannot translate or explain this, and am inclined to conjecture *mashī'at jabr*, in view of contrasts between *tafwīḍ* and *jabr* elsewhere.
⁷³ 11 foot—12.
⁷⁴ *Bayān*, p. 13, l. 7; he also speaks of the Jabariya lower.
⁷⁵ Art. 6 (p. 20).
⁷⁶ This claim is found in al-Baghdādī, *Farq.* 328 (cp. p. 96 above). A later writer (quoted by Spitta, 105-110, with text 140-3) extends the claim to twelve different points in al-Ash'arī's theology.
⁷⁷ Cp. al-Shahrastānī, *K. Nihāyat al-Iqdām*, 73.

VII

CONCLUDING SURVEY

IT remains now to summarize and call attention to some of the more notable results of the preceding investigations.

(1) In all the earliest instances studied *the doctrine of Qadar was linked with the conception of God's righteousness*. There was no question of a mere academic pursuit of truth, for most of those who held the doctrine were of a fanatical and puritanical outlook. Nor was there any real interest in political freedom, although the doctrine of Qadar was in fact held by many who opposed the Umayyad tyranny. It was through the idea of righteousness that the doctrine became connected with politics, for it was not the authoritarian character of the Umayyad regime that was attacked but its injustice. The general line of thought was that punishment by God or by man is unjust where a man has no power of himself to act and is not responsible for his act. By way of exception the motive of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was perhaps rather ethical and religious—to show men that they had power to attain righteousness of life. In every case, however, there is a logical and natural development of one aspect of Qur'anic teaching, namely, the justice and righteousness of God. Extraneous ideas might have been, at most, a stimulus of the development, hardly its source; and it is worth noting in this connection that the effective idea was not that of man's freedom simply, but that of the injustice of punishing one who is not free and responsible.

(2) At a later time among the Mu'tazila *the doctrine of Qadar became associated with a rather humanistic outlook*. This manifested itself as belief in man's self-sufficiency, in his power to control his life and earn Paradise for himself, and it was coupled with a belief in the complete competence of human reason. The Qur'ān opposed the attitude of fatalism which resigned itself

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to things as they were and disdained every effort to improve them. But the over-emphasis of man's power to carry out God's commands and to change circumstances led to a denial of the Qur'ān in other ways—notably of its insistence that man was dependent upon God and upon the Divine initiative. When man is thus made the source and originator of evil actions, the "problem of evil" is simplified. But all the attempts of the Mu'tazila to show that evil could in no way be attributed to God only served to make clear the inadequacy of human conceptions of justice to explain every particular of the operations of God's righteousness. A move away from extreme humanism is to be traced in the later Mu'tazila of the 3rd century, especially al-Jubbā'ī, and the conversion of al-Ash'arī is the culmination of this process rather than a fresh departure.

(3) *Among the opponents of the doctrine of Qadar are to be found motives which are just as truly Qur'ānic as the zeal of the Qadariya for the assertion of God's righteousness.* To a great extent, it has to be admitted, deterministic views proceed from sheer conservatism and from the pre-Islamic material which seems to have found its way into the Traditions; and even devout and upright Muslims frequently seem to have felt no contradiction between the Qur'ānic and non-Qur'ānic conceptions. But on the other hand the Jahmīya, for instance, were primarily interested in the assertion of God's unity (though this in turn may be bound up with a desire for mystical unity with Him). They did not deny God's righteousness, of course; they merely passed lightly over it and emphasized other aspects. In the case of al-Ash'arī, again, the experience of conversion as something which had been done in him, and not which he had done for himself, led him to look upon God as the orderer of man's life and to emphasize those aspects of Islam as a religion which had been denied or neglected by the Mu'tazila. Such were: God's supreme control of all events; men's need for His help in all their acts, and so their dependence on Him; the inscrutability of God's ways. In the latter point there is a recognition of the limitations of human reason and its inability to prescribe what God may and may not do; reason must rather study what God has in fact done. Thus al-Ash'arī's opposition to the doctrine

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of Qadar is essentially religious and theistic in reaction to the humanism of the Mu'tazila.

(4) There is, then, some truth with both sides, but both overstated their claims to begin with. In the course of discussion both came to admit some of the truth in the other's views. Gradually certain points became clear.

(a) *The distinction between voluntary acts and those done under compulsion had to be recognised even by the opponents of Qadar.* The monistic Jahmiya in the early second century had attempted to deny this distinction, but by the time of al-Bāqillānī in the fourth it had become the starting-point of orthodoxy. Consequently, despite the widespread conception of Islam in the West, which appears to be supported by popular Muslim views, the great orthodox theologians of Islam were never sheerly deterministic. On the contrary they were trying to hold the balance between two sides, even if to the humanistic West they appear to have overweighted the scales in favour of determinism.

(b) *The term kasb or iktisāb became generally used to describe man's relation to his voluntary acts.* It is a common word used in a special technical sense, and may be rendered "acquire," "appropriate" or "make one's own." There was no question about man's being responsible for his acts both before earthly tribunals and on the Day of Judgment. Their metaphysical position, however, was not clearly defined, except that it had to be such as was compatible with man's complete dependence on God. The word *kasb* was probably first used in this technical way by Ḍirār. Although it really did not explain anything, it won a place for itself, since it was useful and suggestive, and maintained the distinction between voluntary and compulsory. No solution of the difficulty is possible so long as one's thinking is in terms (metaphorically) of physical forces; al-Ash'arī's analogies from the relation of human wills were more promising but received little attention.

(c) *The relations of God and of man to human acts were thus different.* God created and man "acquired." The giving of names, however, did not imply that there was any precise account of the difference or of the relationship. The two truths had simply to be held both at once without being reconciled. But

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al-Ash'arī at least realized that when God creates a human act it is not necessarily to be ascribed to Him as its doer, as in the case of a human agent.

(d) *In the course of the discussions man's power to act was more fully analysed*, but there were no clear and generally accepted results by the time of al-Ash'arī, though there was some advance towards a recognition of the distinction between the mental and physical aspects of acts. There was also a movement towards an atomistic account of human activity, but this was due to general considerations rather than to specific analysis.

(5) *There are seen to be some curious misconceptions about al-Ash'arī*. He is often spoken of as the originator of the doctrine of *kasb*, and his position is described as a *via media* on this point and on others, but there is in fact no confirmation of these views in his writings, rather a definite disproof. The technical conception of *kasb* was much employed in the century before al-Ash'arī; he himself seems to have had little use for it. And the *via media* on this question (which consists in asserting that *kasb* is the mean between *qadar* and *jabr*, or absolute determinism) was mainly claimed for themselves by the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa. Not till some time after al-Ash'arī's death was a claim of this sort made by his disciples.

* * * * *

These, then, are the main positions which have been argued for in the course of the investigations; but there is a further matter which requires some consideration.

Underlying nearly all the lucubrations of the early Muslim theologians is one fundamental thought, like a deep steady bass, on which the whole superstructure of the harmony rests. It is the thought of the powerlessness of man in the face of circumstances, of the nature of his life as determined for him by something other than himself, and of his dependence on that other, whatever it may be. It is not by chance that Ghailān, when distinguishing between primary or compulsory knowledge and secondary or acquired knowledge, asserted that the primary knowledge, which no man can avoid having, is the knowledge that the world and the lives of the human beings in it are "originated," the product not of themselves but of something

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else.¹ Nor is it by chance that this same thought of the "originatedness" of the world is the premiss of most later Muslim arguments for the existence of God; starting from this they seek to prove that there is one Originator and only one. This sense of being determined, then, this feeling of being passive in the hands of some Other, was a thought deep in the consciousness and, more than that, in the unconscious of those peoples of the Middle East to whom Islam came. Man in this modern industrial age is liable to a similar sense of being a cog in a great machine, of himself powerless; but it would take generations, perhaps millennia, before the feeling of determinedness permeated his inmost being as it had that of Muḥammad's Arabs and their neighbours.

In pre-Islamic times this deep underlying feeling found its expression in the view that everything is controlled by *dahr*, which is, as it were, a combination of Time and Fate. So far as one can tell, the general attitude was what might be called a modified fatalism, rather than an absolute fatalism. In the ordinary affairs of life from day to day man might do as seemed good to him, but what he did was incapable of influencing the final outcome. The hour of his death, and his happiness or misery, were already written, and, strive as he might, he could not deflect ineluctable destiny a hairsbreadth from its path.

This vaguely defined fatalistic philosophy was not itself the all-pervading feeling, but was the rational form in which that feeling found expression at a particular time. In the fatalistic attitude is included the further thought that on the whole *dahr* is quite regardless of human prosperity or misfortune, and that, while for some lucky individuals its workings may be advantageous, for the most part they are rather the opposite. From one point of view, then, the achievement of Muḥammad may be regarded as a restoration of confidence in the powers that control human life. The Qur'an does not question, rather it accepts wholeheartedly, the conception of man's life as determined but it makes a new and revolutionary addition. It is not by impersonal, unfeeling Time that man's life is determined, but by God. God is austere; He is hard towards His enemies and those who disobey Him; but He is essentially just and

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righteous. By sending His prophets and apostles, above all Muḥammad, He has given man a chance of attaining to eternal bliss ; He is ready to help on with His succour and guidance those who are well-disposed ; He is the Merciful and Compassionate. Therefore, if one is prepared to submit oneself altogether to God, one can look forward with confidence to the outcome of one's life.

The results of the impact of the Qur'ānic attitude to life upon the fatalistic one are complex. The former did not simply oust the latter. To a great extent Muḥammad did succeed in transmuting the old sense of dependence. Outwardly, indeed, the transformation was complete, and God was acknowledged by the lips of all. But fatalism was too deep-seated (and, we might perhaps add, was too good a rationalization of the laziness induced by the climate) for it to be wholly eradicated. It persisted, at first underground, later by producing new and hybrid flowers in the Traditions. It was strange how few Muslims felt the contradiction between the fatalistic teaching of many Traditions and the anti-fatalistic teaching of the Qur'ān. For long it was apparently the pre-Islamic rather than the Islamic element that was foremost in leading men to defend determinism ; and in course of time the views of Muslims seem to have become more deterministic than was logically necessary. Traces of fatalism even remained in the practice of Muslims, as in the refusal of some to take medicines.

At this point it seems appropriate to ask whether the doctrine of *ijmā'*, the consensus or agreement of Muslims, did not contribute to the persistence of fatalistic thoughts and practices. Though at different times there were various ideas about *whose* opinions were to be counted, in the case of the theologians under review it was taken to be the agreement of all Muslims.² Now this, it might be held, at once opens the flood-gates to the seething ocean of the Muslim world, with all its fatalistic undercurrents—that world where, we may conjecture, even among the well-educated the number of really devout Muslims was small, while that of half-converted ones, still clinging to the old pre-Islamic superstitions, was large. Is not this sanctioning of *ijmā'* the betrayal of true religion and its reduction from the level of the

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saints to that of the average sinner? Or did the rot perhaps set in with the acceptance of the so-called "sound" Traditions and their promotion to the rank of inspired truth?*

Such speculations are, of course, futile, unless they help us to understand historical reality more clearly. These two questions are similar, and are bound up with one another in that, since sound Tradition is universally accepted, it is confirmed by *ijmā'*. The truth of the matter, however, is that these things are not so much causes as symptoms. The doctrine of *ijmā'* certainly cannot be blamed for what has happened. Its formulation served rather to make explicit existing realities, such as the domination of the Muslim mind by the thought of man's powerlessness. Deep thoughts of this character, uprising it may be from what has been called the racial unconscious rather than from that of the individual, have a tremendous power of inertia. They cannot be eradicated; they persist, for they have more than a grain of truth in them; they can only be transformed or sublimated. In the long run religious progress is the progress of a whole community; individuals only count according to the measure of their impact on the community, either in their own or in succeeding generations. In the phase of Islam here studied these laws are exemplified. Muḥammad did indeed achieve a remarkable transformation of this feeling of being determined. Those who had believed they were the playthings of Time now believed (or at least professed to believe) that they were the slaves of God the Merciful and Compassionate. The stimulus of Arab imperial expansion doubtless helped to overcome ingrained passivity. But there were many residual factors which were only gradually eliminated. Muḥammad himself was still to some extent under the sway of the old conceptions; how much more those who did not have his experiences of communion with the Divine? The thought of God's righteousness was certainly present in the Qur'ān; but it did not touch sufficiently deep and primordial sources of power and was not potent enough to shift the deadweight of predestinarian feeling. Had al-Ash'arī or some other great figure been a preacher of righteousness things might have been different. But in the wisdom of God that was not to be. The

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witness of Islam was and is to the majesty and omnipotence of God ; and this is a testimony of which the man-made, self-sufficient civilization of the West stands greatly in need.

* * * * *

This study was directed through and beyond the immediate subject-matter to the essence of Islam. There is some ambiguity, however, as to what is to be understood by this phrase. It might be claimed that Islam is essentially the total historical phenomenon—all that has been said and thought and done by Muslims, and especially what they say, think and do in the present. In this sense the essential Islam consists in the general features of that existing configuration of life and thought with which the politician or religious statesman has to deal. On the other hand, such an understanding of Islam is superficial in certain respects, and fails to distinguish between the form, the driving power or spiritual energy which has brought about all these phenomena in the lives of men, and the matter, the nature and circumstances of the races who received the impact of that spiritual energy. It seems more fruitful to take as the essence of Islam the apostolic proclamation of Muḥammad and the spiritual power which flowed from that.

There is much fatalism among those who are Muslims. But in the essential Islam of the Qur'ān fatalism is strenuously opposed, even though frequent expression is given to the truly religious sense of dependence on God for power to act and for protection from evil. Strictly speaking, determinism, or the belief that man's life is determined for him from without, is not part of the "gospel" of Muḥammad but rather a strong and imposing feature of the background, not part of his prophetic assertion about God but something built into the foundation of culture and civilization upon which Islam arose. Yet because this determinism was presupposed by the fresh religious message and taken up into it, it has, as it were, become canonized by close association, so that the two are probably now inseparable. Let us not, however, confuse the difference between the civilizations of the Muslim world and the humanistic, only partly Christian, West with the difference between the religions of Islam and Christianity.

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NOTES

(For abbreviations see Bibliography)

CHAPTER VII

¹ *Maq.* 136.

² Above p. 157; cp. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen* 2, 53.

³ Some even placed Sunna above Qur'an (*Maq.* 608, l. 12).

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<i>Ibāna</i>	- - - - -		al-Ash'arī
<i>Intiṣār</i>	- - - - -		al-Khaiyāṭ
<i>Maq.</i> or <i>Maqālāt</i>	- - - - -		al-Ash'arī
<i>Milal</i>	- - - - -		al-Shahrastānī
<i>Munya</i>	- - - - -		Ibn al-Murtaḍā
<i>Sharḥ</i> or <i>Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar</i>			al-Māturīdī
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Q. is used as an abbreviation for Qur'ān.)

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