

FREEDOM-DETERMINISM CONTROVERSY IN CLASSICAL ISLAMIC THEOLOGY

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FREEDOM-DETERMINISM CONTROVERSY
IN CLASSICAL ISLAMIC THEOLOGY

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate
Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University.

August, 1967.

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Title: Some Considerations on the Freedom-Determinism Controversy in
Classical Islamic Theology.

Department: Institute of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Degree: M.A.

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to show that the freedom-determinism controversy in classical Islamic theology manifested itself through radical determinism, indeterminism and attempts to make compatible Divine Omnipotence and human responsibility. The first two approaches (represented by the Ḥadīth material of Bukhārī and Muslim, and the treatise of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī) were closely connected to the first century political-religious upheavals, but the formulations of these two approaches were based upon two different interpretations of the Qur'ān. The third approach (represented by al-Ash'arī and Ibn Ḥazm, among others) sought to preserve Divine Omnipotence while at the same time allowing for some notion of human responsibility so that taḳlīf would remain a meaningful concept.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Adams, Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, for his encouragement, understanding, but particularly for his patience during the long period of this thesis-writing endeavor. Also, I am most appreciative for his criticism of certain parts of the paper.

I would like to thank Professor Toshihiko Izutsu, my professor, who has not only encouraged me along the way, but has given to me knowledge of and insights into Islamic thought which are beyond calculation. I am simply indebted to him.

I especially want to thank him for the great amount of help he has given to me concerning the translation of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's Treatise, and the Section on Kasb from the writing of Abū 'Udhbah. Without his help, these translations would not have been possible.

The transliteration system follows that of the Institute of Islamic Studies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concern of this paper is to view the so-called problem of Determinism and Freedom within the context of early Islamic thought. Our method will be a descriptive one: We will examine the Qur'ān in order to show that it is the fundamental starting point of the problem and that it is responsible for instigating the controversies which raged on during the early development of Islamic theological thought. Then we shall turn to two diametrically opposed positions -- one accepting a thoroughgoing, radical determinism (pre-destination), the other viewing man as truly responsible for his actions, thus necessitating some notion of human ability to choose options. Our final concern will be to look at the attempted compatibility-theory of Divine Omnipotency and Human Freedom.

Before we turn to our special problem, it is well that we attempt a clarification of some of the complex issues involved in the determinism-freedom controversy. Today, the problem is dealt with at great

length by philosophical analysts, moral philosophers, existentialists and psychiatrists. The philosophical analysts most often attempt to prove, by precise analysis of the meanings of common expressions, e.g. "I can do it; I cannot do it" that such expressions, which imply at the first level of meaning that one has the power to "will" options, are not at all incompatible with determinism.¹ Analyst Alan Ryan² discusses "freedom" set in its many linguistic usages, e.g. "free from", "freely", "free to", and decides that the free will problem has been misnamed; it has not to do with freedom -- rather, it is a problem about ability.³

A. J. Ayer discusses the problem, and after a "clarification of terms" (a phrase which is found in nearly every opening paragraph of the current articles dealing with the subject) and an analysis of what it means "to choose", and then a more precise definition of determinism, comes to the view that moral responsibility not only is not incompatible with determinism; it presupposes it.⁴ This view was previously stated, more courageously, by R. E. Hobart, who holds that freedom implies causality.⁵ He goes He goes further and states:

There has never been any ground for the controversy between the doctrine of free will and determinism, that it is based upon a misapprehension, that the two assertions are

entirely consistent, that one of them strictly implies the other, that they have been opposed only because of our natural want of the analytical imagination.⁶

P. H. Nowel-Smith is another who holds that the notion of freedom implies causality.⁷ Optimistically, he asserts that "the traditional problem has been solved".⁸ and this feat has been accomplished by analysis, whose purpose it is to show that there really exists no incompatibility between freedom and determinism.

Now most of the analysts, like Nowel-Smith, Ayer and Hobart, have set out to prove the compatibility of free will and determinism because there is at stake one crucial difficulty; the problem of moral responsibility. Logically, it is inescapable that moral responsibility presupposes freedom; in the absence of some viable notion of freedom, a whole set of other questions is raised: If there is no "real" freedom so that the choosing one does is not really one's own, then, who is responsible for acts, and how can one be punished or rewarded for acts which appear to, but do not really come from him?

It is not surprising to find others who reject the attempt of the analyst to rephrase and make more precise ordinary-spoken sentences which would then indicate that freedom is compatible with determinism.

There are those who hold that even after rigorous sentence-analysis, the problem is still the same as it was before. C. Arthur Campbell, far from accepting that the traditional problem has been solved, states bluntly, "the present state of philosophical opinion on free will is . . . profoundly unsatisfactory."⁹ He rejects the notion of free-will as refined by the analyst to fit his deterministic psychology and determinist metaphysics. He holds to the "vulgar" meaning of free-will, i.e., that it does, in fact, really exist, and that it is in its real sense, incompatible with determinism. In another study, after having tried to refute the view that free will implies only "translating our desires into action,"¹⁰ Campbell contends that in spite of these new analytical innovations, "the simple time-honoured argument still holds from the nature of the moral ought to the conclusion that moral responsibility implies a contra-causal type of freedom."¹¹ For Campbell, the crux of the argument is found at the point where one gets at the meaning of moral responsibility, and it is precisely here that a proper understanding of freedom is necessary. But in the actual event of willing and doing, what is at work? What is that "thing" which brings about a contra-causal freedom in the midst of varied causal

sequences? For Campbell, it is the "creatively active self"¹² which cannot be identified with one's character, which is formed by a number of causal relations. Thus, to analyze the proposition "A could have acted otherwise", as is often done by analysts, is to scrutinize a hypothetical statement. Nowell-Smith takes this statement and asserts that it means 'A' could have acted otherwise if he did not happen to be what he in fact was, or if he were placed in circumstances other than those in which he was in fact placed.¹³ This kind of analysis, which studies hypothetical propositions which are found to be compatible with an unbroken causal continuity break down when brought into the context of actual moral thinking.¹⁴ Campbell rejects the current analyses of moral sentences as "an almost infallible method for reaching wrong results in the moral field."¹⁵

Others also have their misgivings about those who reject the proposition that Freedom implies a contra-causality. Richard Griffith does not attack the arguments of the determinist position but argues that "whether we are or are not really 'free', one thing is certain; much of the time we experience ourselves as free."¹⁶ Philippa Foot tries to disprove the theory that free will requires a deterministic causality for

it to be valid.¹⁷

B. Blanshard views the problem as one having been misunderstood and implies that causality is not always the same kind, thus leaving open a place for some notion of freedom necessary for a viable concept of moral responsibility.

It is assumed that causality is all of one type and that this type is the sort exemplified in the pulling about of puppets in a Punch-and-Judy show. Any self-respecting person would be humiliated at the discovery that his conclusions and moral choice were the product of nothing but mechanical clockwork. But these are levels of causality; and there is no reason whatever to suppose that conclusions and moral choices are mechanically determined.¹⁸

In Science and the Modern World, Whitehead quotes Tennyson, who said: "The stars," she whispers, "blindly run!" This line, Whitehead argues, sums up the mechanistic theory of the 18th Century, and he speaks against the philosophers who appropriated the classical scheme of physics and fit it into the sphere of human activity.¹⁹ Rejecting the implications of classical physics for a view of determinism set within the sphere of human activity, Whitehead put forward a notion of organic mechanism²⁰ in which both determinism and freedom have relevance.

Now the kind of approach about which we have been speaking, with the possible exception of Campbell,

is the one that attempts some kind of compromise between determinism and freedom. The analysts scrutinize sentences with moral implications in order to show that, although the first glance meanings might imply real contra-causal freedom which allows one to choose from real possibilities a particular option that really is one's own doing, the genuinely precise meanings of these sentences imply a deterministic background; thus determinism and freedom are compatible.²¹ B. Blanshard²² and Max Black²³ inquire into the meaning of the concept "cause" to find there is no universal law of causation; Black holds to a deterministic framework in which one is perfectly free to speak of someone "acting freely".²⁴

Those who do argue the compatibility of determinism and freedom apply specially qualified definitions of determinism or freedom to fit their basic view, which is: That there is a place for "freedom" in a world view which is based fundamentally on a deterministic order. But these people who seek an end to the controversy, or argue that there really is no controversy, if the proper definitions have been made (e.g. Hobart, Ayer, Nowell-Smith),²⁵ continue to come into conflict with each other and those others who take issue with "the basic definitions". One obvious reason the compatibility-theory is so confused and

muddled stems from the fact that there is no set of generally acceptable definitions. David Hume was partly right when he stated about the "long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity . . . that a few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy."²⁶ And recently, M. Zimmerman, with a little more caution, expressed the same plea for more precise definitions.²⁷ It is certain, then, that the problem has been, at least, partly one of getting to the business of "making proper definitions". But since some of the best minds in philosophy, science and theology have continuously been making clarifications of the basic ideas involved in the controversy, we are left with at least one inescapable and uneasy question: Do the two notions of freedom and determinism have no real point of contact, and do the efforts to make them compatible only lead to a distortion of some basic, essential meaning each one has? Are we not, in short, dealing with an antinomy?

P. H. Nowell-Smith²⁸ and A. J. Ayer,²⁹ for example, maintain that the freedom-determinism controversy is a misleading approach to the matter. The correct contrast is between freedom and compulsion, not freedom and determinism. Ayer takes the "ordinary" usage of freedom and sets it over against different

instances of being compelled and shows that situations of constraint represent a special kind of causality, and in these circumstances of being compelled and constrained, one is not free.³⁰ In cases of no constraint, one may be acting freely, but this "acting freely" is set within the context of a different kind of causality. For Ayer, all that is required by the postulate of determinism is that one's actions have an explanation.³¹ Determination suggests only a factual relationship of events, not that one is in the power of the other. Our distorted picture of determinism is that of "an unhappy effect trying vainly to escape from the clutches of an overmastering cause."³² It is because we have not understood that determinism implies only the relationship between one type of event and another event -- as a temporal or spatio-temporal relationship -- that we get mixed up and view causality and freedom as an antinomy.

But left unanswered and unexamined is the question of the meaning of moral responsibility set within the deterministic framework. This question is what leads Campbell³³ to react against the attempts to deny that there do exist genuine open possibilities from which to choose; and if such open possibilities exist, and if one can make options, there must be some contra-

causal force operative in the individual which allows for real choosing and thus gives basis to moral responsibility. No one denies that responsibility implies freedom; the problem lies in how one defines freedom; Ayer, the California Associates in Philosophy,³⁴ and Nowell-Smith assert that no one is responsible for acts which are forced to be performed. Not only does freedom imply determinism; it is impossible with indeterminism, and there is no meaning to moral responsibility unless determinism is presupposed. The California Associates ask: How can one be punished if one's voluntary actions are not determined? If voluntary actions are not determined, one's future actions are simply unpredictable; and punishment for a crime committed has no logical basis, since the object of punishment is to deter and correct the criminal and his acts.

It can be seen, then, that there are a number of complicated aspects which must be reckoned with if an attempt is to be made to work out a compatibility theory. The "proper definitions" and "clarification of terms" become themselves the very arguments leading to a solution of the controversy. And the refinement of what the basic concepts really mean leads, if not to distortion, at least to confusion and unclear thinking.

William James was aware of this problem when he made his distinction between "hard" and "soft" determinism.³⁵ The Hard determinists were the "old fashioned ones who did not shrink from such words as fatality, bondage of the will, necessitation and the like."³⁶ For the "soft" determinists, i.e. those who work out a compatibility between freedom and determinism, James had no kind words. These people repudiate the harsh deterministic words and say that the real name of concepts like necessity and fatality, etc., is freedom;³⁷ soft determinism, James states, is a "quagmire of evasion".

The soft determinists, like Ayer and Nowell-Smith, admit that desires, motives, choices, and voluntary acts are compatible with their understanding of determinism, and in their thinking they preserve the idea of man as morally responsible. But what of the question from where do these motives, choices, and voluntary acts come -- what determines motives, desires and choices? If one speaks of levels of causality, what criteria are used to determine which particular "level" of causality is less deterministic, thereby allowing free choice, and thus preserving the notion of moral responsibility? Ayer states that determinism is not one event trying vainly to escape from the

grasp of another,³⁸ but in spite of affirmation to the contrary, there are those who see some truth in his imaginative metaphor. John Hospers, who does not shy away from a radical determinism, concludes that everything is so determined in the sphere of human activity that moral responsibility is simply a meaningless notion at any significant level of meaning.³⁹ Basic to his radical determinism is the view that any present event is shaped totally by an antecedent event.

Historian Pieter Geyl states this position clearly: Determinism is the doctrine "according to which we are helplessly caught in the grip of a movement proceeding from all that has gone before."⁴⁰ More starkly put is Schopenhauer's view:

Every man, being what he is and placed in the circumstances which for the moment obtain, but which on their part also arise by strict necessity, can absolutely never do anything else than just what at that moment he does do. Accordingly, the whole course of a man's life, in all its incidents great and small, is as necessarily predetermined as the course of a clock.⁴¹

With this kind of radical determinism implied, John Hospers raises the question: Is there any sense in which we can be held responsible for our actions? In examining unconscious motivation, he concludes that "frequently persons we think responsible are not properly to be called so."⁴² After dealing with some

suggested criteria for responsibility,⁴³ he asks, in the final analysis, can one be responsible for one's actions at all.

How can anyone be responsible for his actions, since they grow out of his character, which is shaped and molded and made what it is by influences -- some hereditary, but most of them stemming from early parental environment -- that were not of his own making or choosing?⁴⁴

He answers this question by suggesting that there should be two levels of moral discourse: one belonging to actions, the other to the deeper level of, or springs, or origins of actions. To the first one can apply words like "can" and "can't", "should" and "would", "freedom", "choice", "ability", etc. It is here that the question of moral responsibility has some meaning, empty though it may be. At the deeper level, responsibility is meaningless because the issue at stake is that of the origins of actions. At this level responsibility is meaningless because it is the problem of being responsible for the way we are ("character"), and the "way we are" is shaped by factors for which we cannot be held responsible.

Hosper's argument is important for us because it simply carries through to the logical end the implications of determinism. His view is forceful, because it is set within the psychoanalytic context,

and this, at least at the present time, is the most persuasive context of arguments for radical determinism. More than at any time before, we are conscious of the ambiguity of the source or causes of human actions. The deterministic presuppositions of psychiatry have practical consequences, particularly in the judgments of the courts in helping to decide who or what is responsible for criminal acts and to what degree punishment is warranted.⁴⁵

But whether the context is psychoanalytical, historical, jurisprudential or theological, the basic issue is the same, namely, how can one be held responsible for actions if these actions result from some causal nexus or source of power outside one's own control? Can anything really be effected in the world by human "activity"? Are the changes viewed in the historical process due to the unfolding of some inscrutable law of destiny which belies human effort as a force capable of altering the course of human events?

Isaiah Berlin's attack against historical inevitability is an historian's attempt to deal with deterministic interpretations of history.⁴⁶ Early in his inquiry, he points up the central question of "who or what was or is (or will be, or could be) responsible

for a war, a revolution, an economic collapse, a renaissance of arts and letters, a discovery or an invention or a spiritual transformation altering the lives of men?"⁴⁷ In answering this question, Berlin focuses upon the vexing problem which all who enter into the freedom-determinism controversy must confront: moral responsibility implies freedom. And basic to whatever form of determinism one employs in one's view of history is the elimination of the notion of individual responsibility.⁴⁸ It is interesting that Berlin, speaking to the problem of the theory of historical inevitability, spends so much time addressing himself to the question of moral, individual responsibility set within the context of the Freedom-Determinism controversy as such.⁴⁹

We have been viewing the Freedom-Determinism controversy solely from the perspective of current discussions. In the Ayer, Nowell-Smith, Hobart school, the attempt is made to re-define or re-state the basic concepts in such a way that freedom and determinism are compatible; this effort involves the task of giving viability to the notion of moral responsibility within a deterministic framework (not only does moral responsibility imply freedom; freedom implies determinism). Campbell and Berlin are of the view that a deterministic

framework raises problems for a concept of individual moral responsibility and hold out for a real area of human freedom. For Campbell freedom must be a kind which implies that a man is the sole cause or author of his chosen act; this condition is necessary in order to justify moral responsibility.⁵⁰ Berlin insists upon a real area of human freedom so as to prevent the coming into being of theories of history which do violence to basic notions of morality and end by misrepresenting the past. And this is where the crux of the traditional problem of freedom and determinism lies: There must be preserved the logical basis for moral responsibility, which is freedom. John Hospers attempts no compatibility theory; being a radical determinist, moral responsibility is a vacuous notion because there is no freedom to make options from a set of real possibilities.

Another approach to the problem is the phenomenological or existential approach. John Wild attacks the soft determinist position of Ernest Nagel⁵¹ by introducing another set of presuppositions; namely, "a phenomenological position quite distinct from any traditional form of idealism or subjectivism."⁵²

The traditional view of freedom, as understood by the determinist, was always restricted to

objective specific acts. Nagel, he asserts, sets the issue of freedom and determinism only within the context of instances of deliberative choices where men do make options among alternatives. Wild rejects this classical restriction which employs phrases like "freedom of the will", or "freedom of choice."⁵³ Rather, freedom belongs to a world of its own, "the Lebenswelt of our daily life, which lies beyond the objective perspectives of science and of objective thought in general. . . ."⁵⁴ He accuses the determinist of having tried to absorb "the wider and richer horizon of the Lebenswelt, the world of freedom, into the more abstract and derived horizon of objective determinism."⁵⁵ As each animal species has its own life-field, i.e., the mutual interdependence of a living animal and its environment, so has the human his habitat.⁵⁶ The striking difference, according to Wild, is that the human has freedom of awareness; he can gain distance from his field, thus making it possible for there to be "a freedom of world formation".⁵⁷ Because man can say no to others and himself, he is free. Man's very ability to reason is founded upon freedom which stems from the constant struggle to negate the ever present "pragmatic attitudes" and win distance from them.⁵⁸ The determinist position tries to discredit the world

of "our lived existence" as confused and subjective; Wild's fundamental objection is the attempted absorption of this lived existence into the abstract perspectives of reason and science. There must be a clear distinction between the objective world of science and the subjective world of human experience and a precise understanding that the former cannot swallow the latter and order it. Rather, the subjective, irrational world of lived-experience is the world out of which the efforts at objectifying phenomena occur. Science deals with aspects of the Lebenswelt but only under certain conditions which eliminate the vast assortment of interferences impinging upon every experiment. There is a conflict between the two worlds; the lesser world of science and the wider, richer world of freedom. Hume, who said at one place that a few intelligible definitions of the concepts involved in the Freedom-Determinism controversy would have put an end to it⁵⁹ expressed elsewhere the confounding nature of the problematic clash between the two worlds of life-experience and science.

Where am I and what? From what causes
do I derive my existence and to what
condition shall I return? Whose favour shall
I court, and whose anger must I dread? What
beings surround me? And on whom have I any
influence or who have any influence on me?

I am confounded with all these questions and I begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environ'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty.⁶⁰

This description of the experience Hume had in passing from the abstract objective rational world to the world of "lived-existence", where things are indeterminant, raises starkly the enigmatic nature of this problem of determinism and free will. Wild, as a phenomenologist lays emphasis upon the subjective indeterminate world of everyday experience, and gives an existentialist view of man as the sole object to which responsibility can be attributed. His theory of human freedom has nothing whatever to do with any kind of determinism.⁶¹ To be responsible is to respond with ability and this ability to give creative response within the strict limits of a situation is the meaning of human freedom.⁶² Wild is not denying that there exists no causal relations in the world. The important point is that freedom (i.e., the ability to respond to a situation by gaining distance from it) allows one to take over a whole "situation" intact with its causal relations, and stand back, making a meaningful evaluation, and then act. This is responsibility; in its activity, the "responsible act" itself is uncaused. It operates out of the lebenswelt, "taking over"

situations and giving them new meaning.⁶³ But to the determinist, this happening appears simply as uninterrupted causal sequences of which the "responsible act" is itself caused.

We have, then, quite another kind of approach to the Freedom-Determinism controversy as reflected by phenomenologist Wild. Rather than fit freedom into a deterministic framework, the Lebenswelt is the fundamental framework out of which the lesser observations of reason and science may be abstracted.

We have dealt at some length with various approaches to the problem of Freedom and Determinism which are alive in contemporary discussions. We have done this not only to indicate that the problem is living and full of almost unsolvable difficulties, but to also reveal something of the crux of the issue itself. By examining briefly the problem as manifested in some current discussions, we become more aware that mighty issues turn on this controversy. It is no theoretical, abstract philosophical matter when questions of who is morally responsible for actions and to what extent one is responsible are raised in light of the advances in psychiatry and medicine. The implications of determinism on views of history are no small matter also; these implications can have practical

consequences in the concrete decisions of policy-making for world powers. Particular deterministic psychological theories influence programs for social reform.⁶⁴

The problem of freedom and determinism set in the theological context has raised equally crucial and profound questions for those participating in a world view which presupposed an Omnipotent, Omniscient Being as sustainer and controller of the Universe.⁶⁵ However, for us today, the theological problem of Free Will and Determinism is remote and irrelevant; it is easy to dismiss it as nonconsequential theological debate which might have had its place before the age of science, but now concerns only a few interested in historical theology or the logical problems stemming from the controversy.⁶⁶ We must not be misled by the appearance of the problem when set in a theological context and conclude that the issue is just so much old theology having no connection with the basic issues of the modern, scientific discussions. We disagree with Montgomery Watt⁶⁷ who sees no relationship between the theological discussion of determinism and freedom and the modern formulation of it. The difficulty in the current discussions rests in finding a place, within a presupposed framework of causality, for a

viable notion of moral responsibility; since moral responsibility implies freedom, and freedom conflicts with determinism, the problem is obviously complicated.

A. J. Ayer states the issue concisely:

Now it is commonly assumed both that men are capable of acting freely, in the sense that is required to make them wholly responsible, and that human behavior is entirely governed by causal laws: and it is the apparent conflict between these two assumptions that gives rise to the philosophical problem of the freedom of the will.⁶⁸

This formulation holds true if we substitute a world view which presupposes God as the Omnipotent, Omniscient sustainer of the world. This theological assertion is not a universal law of causality, but it does imply the determination of every event and activity by some antecedent cause, namely God. Freedom is necessary for man to be held responsible for his obedience and disobedience, thereby justifying reward and punishment. But how is this possible if God is Omnipotent and Omniscient? God, as Omnipotent has in His power either to create man a free agent (capable of choosing by himself acts of obedience or disobedience) or not to create him as a free agent. If man is free, then God's Omniscience is questioned, for the foreknowledge of future events presupposes the determination

of events by antecedent events. If God's foreknowledge is affirmed, man's ability to make real choices is denied, since foreknowledge presupposes determinism.

If God did not create man a free agent, then the justice and Goodness of God are questioned because reward and punishment are just only when man acts freely. God, then, is responsible for Good and Bad acts, because He determined them, and He ought to be praised or blamed. However, if God is indeed Good, then man must be a free agent; but then we return to the questions posed by omnipotence and omniscience.

We can state the problem as the following set of propositions:

- (1) If God is Good, then man is free agent;
- (2) If man is a free agent, God is not Omniscient or fully Omnipotent;
- (3) If God is Omnipotent and Omniscient, man cannot be a free agent;
- (4) If man is not a free agent, then God cannot be Good and is responsible for evil.

This is the dilemma of determinism and freedom in its theological context. Reflected here are two essential difficulties: (1) To whom or to what must responsibility be attributed? If man is a free agent, he is responsible, and the good and evil he does are his

own. If he is not a free agent, either because of a law of causality or Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience, good and evil are attributable to some impersonal movement e.g. The Class Struggle, Social Reform and Political Revolution -- or to God. (2) The second difficulty arises only in the theological context, namely, the problem of the Justice of God.

We would be foolish to maintain that a mere translation of the contemporary discussion into the older, theological framework is all that is necessary. The first of the two above mentioned difficulties is basic to the controversy itself. In the Islamic case, we shall examine three approaches to the Freedom-Determinism controversy which do have a commonality with the radical determinist, the indeterminist and moderate, or "soft" determinist positions of the modern discussion. The point of contact is found in the common logical problems which stem from the antinomy of freedom and determinism. It would be misleading to substitute for the causal theories basic to the modern discussions a Divine Causality. Islamic theology tried early in its development to reject the notion of a causal nexus operative within the contingent world. The world is phenomenal (ḥādīth) and was preceded by non-existence ('adam). There is

no system of causality operating by "natural law" within this contingent world. We shall see that the original and unique theory of Islamic atomism allows for no possibility of a system of causation operative within the phenomenal world. This metaphysics of atoms and accidents, which came to be a very important aspect of "orthodox" theological formulation, called for a continuous re-creation theory of the universe at every new moment of time. Nothing endures, except by the power (qudrah) of God, which manifests itself in an always new and continual re-creation process. God's existence cannot be postulated as the First Cause in a chain of causation, but from the phenomenal world which evidences divine creative power as its source.⁶⁹ Al-Ghazzālī,⁷⁰ in denying the philosopher's claim that the world is eternal, admitted that every contingent thing requires a cause (sabab) but denied an infinite regression of the cause-effect series, since this would imply that because God is eternal, so also is the world. The cause (murajjih) is simply the preponderating or determining principle which allows for the possibility of something existing (mawjūd) or not existing ('adam). The murajjih is operative as a result of God's power (qudrah) and His will (Irādah). Each separate contingent thing is the direct result of the murajjih,

which is realized divine qudrah.

This affirmation of God's eternity and the world's finitude, when coupled with the atomistic assumption that nothing remains for two units of time, might lead us to ask whether the problem is really related to the philosophical issue of Freedom and Determinism. We have seen in our brief examination of some basic issues involved in the modern discussions that determinism does not simply imply causality; it is causality. In the Modern discussions, the determinism position is the most widely held, because in whatever realm of scientific endeavor man is involved, a law of causality is basic. Prediction, whether of personality behaviour, or of trends in political affairs, or in solving scientific problems, is based on the scrutiny of the causal relationships of present events to antecedent ones. Those who take issue with determinism must reckon with the overwhelming evidence of the scientific disciplines that a good deal of our understanding of the world is based on a "doctrine" of causality.

Is not, then, the theological case, which presupposes doctrines of God as Creator, Omnipotent and Omniscient that deny a causal nexus operative in the world, much different from the case where a law of

causality is presupposed? We would answer no, by saying that the difference is not essential. The doctrines, which stem from religious assertions about God as Sovereign Lord of the worlds, do raise theological/philosophical questions of what kind of relationship He shares with man and what are the implications for the life and destiny of man. The real distinction between the problem of Determinism and Freedom in the modern context and the classical theological context is that, most often, the former presupposes a law of causality, while the latter presupposes a personal God who has ordained everything which comes to pass. While a law of causality is impersonal, it nonetheless can be thought of as something over which man is powerless; therefore, questions of freedom and responsibility follow. The same questions arise from the notion of a powerful God who "fixes" everything.⁷¹ This distinction between an impersonal law of causality and a personal God who ordains, determines, decides, or fixes leaves us with similar questions of a logical nature following from these assumptions.⁷² The parallel is not exact at every detail, but it is sound in its essential formulation. In early Islamic theology we find three kinds of theological attempts to deal with the vexing questions arising from intellectual reflection about

Divine Omnipotence and human freedom.

The first stage of theological reflection emphasized radical determinism. The happenings of the past, present and future are totally the result of God's activity. The ~~aḥādīth~~ ^{aḥādīth} of Bukhārī and Muslim consistently hold to the logical implications of the doctrine that God is absolutely omnipotent. Man is not a free agent, and in no sense is he the author of his deeds. The most that can be said is that he acts "metaphorically".

The second stage was partly a response to the radical determinism of the kind reflected in the aḥādīth which denied human responsibility. It would be an exaggeration to term ^{al-}Ḥasan al-Baṣrī an existentialist, but he had at least this much in common with existentialism; the responsibility for what man does rests essentially with man. Life is precarious in the present because it holds the key to Paradise or Hell; each individual is himself responsible for the kind of life he leads. In early Islamic theological literature nowhere else do we find such a compelling and straight forward argument for freedom and responsibility as there is in the document we shall consider. ^{al-}Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's practice of muḥāsaba (self-examination) is an agonizing introspection in the immediate present situation which guards the believer from falling into

the terrible error of the munāfiq (hypocrite).

The third stage represents the attempt to reconcile Divine Omnipotence and human freedom. As we shall see, no compatibility-theory was really worked out because the emphasis was always upon Divine Omnipotence. Yet it was necessary to allow man a modicum of freedom in order to preserve some logical basis for taklīf, i.e., the obligation laid upon man by God to follow His commands.

Footnotes to Chapter I

¹A. M. Honoré, "Can and Can't", Mind, N.S., LXXIII (1964), pp. 463-480. The author analyzes other ordinary expressions which might at first glance indicate some viability to the notion of Free Will. For example (p. 479) "making up our minds" and "reaching a decision" simply mean "becoming conscious of our intention". This clarification of ordinary free-will sounding phrases makes them compatible with his definition of determinism, i.e., "when we think and say we have a choice or are free to decide, it is always the case that we are prevented from choosing or deciding on any course of action except one; and the course to be chosen is as predictable as any other given sufficient information." (p. 478) For another analytic discussion of "can", see John Canfield, "The Compatibility of Free Will and Determinism", Philosophical Review, LXXI (1962), pp. 352-368.

²Alan Ryan, "Freedom", Philosophy, XL (1965), 93-112.

³Ibid., 106.

⁴A. J. Ayer, Philosophical Essays (London, 1963), 276.

⁵R. E. Hobart, "Free Will as involving Determinism and Inconceivable without it", Mind, XLIII (1934), 1-27.

⁶Ibid., 1.

⁷P. H. Nowell-Smith, "Freewill and Moral Responsibility", A Modern Introduction to Ethics, ed. by Milton Munitz (Glencoe, 1958), pp. 387-399. Reprinted from Mind, N.S., LVII (1948).

⁸Ibid., p. 387.

⁹C. Arthur Campbell, "In Defence of Free Will", A Modern Introduction to Ethics, ed. by Milton Munitz, pp. 375-386.

¹⁰Campbell, "Is 'Freewill' a pseudo-problem?", Mind, N.S., LX (1951), p. 443.

¹¹Ibid., p. 457.

¹²Ibid., p. 464.

¹³Ibid., p. 443. See also P. H. Nowell-Smith, op. cit., p. 390 ff.

¹⁴Campbell, op. cit., p. 457.

¹⁵Campbell, On Selfhood and Godhood (London, 1957), pp. 159-160.

¹⁶Richard M. Griffith, "The Reality of an 'Illusion' -- a Psychology of 'as-if' Free Will", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXIII (1962-63), p. 232. The view that we have an immediate awareness that there is a "will" and that it is free is not often offered as an argument against determinism now. Griffith is cautious; he argues that this feeling or awareness of the experience of freedom to choose from among real possibilities must be stated conditionally. We operate 'as-if' we are free. John McTaggart, Some Dogmas of Religion (London, 1906), accepted, with qualifications, the feeling of freedom as a justifiable indication that the will is in fact free and not determined (pp. 146-149). But A. J. Ayer "Freedom and Necessity", Philosophical Essays (London, 1963). p. 271 ff.) decides that because a man is unaware of the causes of his actions it does not necessarily follow that no such causes exist; thus, the feeling that people have that they act freely tells us nothing except that people have the feeling they act freely.

¹⁷Philippa Foot, "Free Will as Involving Determinism", Philosophical Review, LXVI (1957), pp. 439-450. The author considers certain motives, e.g., kindness, ambition, meanness as not involving determinism and argues that undetermined actions can be attributed to rational agents and do not rule out moral responsibility.

¹⁸Brand Blanshard, Reason and Analysis (London, 1962), pp. 492-493. For a full discussion of Blanshard's notion of levels of causality, see his "The Case for Determinism", Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, ed. by Sidney Hook (New York: Collier Books, 1961), pp. 19-30. After arguing that determinism does not conflict with moral responsibility, the feeling that we are in fact free, or the indeterminist trend in modern science, he concludes: "and so far as causality in reflection, art, and moral choice involves control by immanent ideal, mechanism has passed over into that rational

determinism that is the best kind of freedom", p. 30. (This, no doubt, represents the kind of "soft" determinism William James would scoff at; see above, p. 11.

¹⁹Alfred N. Whitehead, "Science and the Modern World", Alfred North Whitehead: an Anthology, ed. by F. S. C. Northrop, et. al. (Cambridge, 1953), p. 433. About Tennyson's line of poetry, he states: "This line states starkly the whole philosophic problem implicit in the poem. Each molecule blindly runs. The human body is a collection of molecules. Therefore, the human body blindly runs, and therefore there can be no individual responsibility for the actions of the body."

²⁰Ibid., p. 435.

²¹For example: "He did it voluntarily", "He could have helped doing it", "He could have done otherwise", "He acted of his own free will".

²²Max Black, "Making Something Happen", Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Science, pp. 31-45. The author concludes: "Many of the traditional problems of causation disappear when we become sufficiently clear about what we mean by 'cause' and remind ourselves once more of what a peculiar, unsystematic and erratic notion it is." p. 45.

²³Blanshard, op. cit., pp. 19 ff.

²⁴Ibid., p. 36.

²⁵Marvin Zimmerman, "Is Free Will incompatible with Determinism", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXVI (1966), pp. 415-420.

²⁶David Hume, Enquires Concerning Human Understanding, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 1902), p. 81.

²⁷Zimmerman, op. cit., p. 415. "It is important at the beginning to state as clearly as possible what people mean when they use the term 'freedom of the will' and 'determinism', for it seems that much of the difficulty with this problem is a result of the lack of keeping clearly in mind exactly what is meant by these phrases."

²⁸P. H. Nowell-Smith, op. cit.

²⁹A. J. Ayer, op. cit.

³⁰Ibid., p. 271 ff.

³¹Ibid., pp. 282-283.

³²Ibid., p. 283.

³³Campbell, "In Defense of Free Will", p. 375.

³⁴California Associates in Philosophy, "The Freedom of the Will", A Modern Introduction to Ethics, p. 371.

³⁵William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism", The Will to Believe and other Essays in Popular Philosophy (London, 1899), pp. 145-183.

³⁶Ibid., p. 149.

³⁷Ibid., p. 149.

³⁸A. J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity", p. 283.

³⁹John Hospers, "What means this freedom", Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, pp. 126-142; "Meaning and Free Will", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, X (1949-1950), pp. 307-330.

⁴⁰Pieter Geyl, Debates With Historians (N.Y., 1956), p. 236. We quote this definition from Ernest Nagel, "Determinism in History", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XX (1960), p. 293.

⁴¹Quoted by Paul Edwards, "Hard and Soft Determinism", Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, p. 120.

⁴²John Hospers, "What means this Freedom", p. 127.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 127-131; e.g. responsibility is determined by premeditation, being free from compulsion, able to be defended by reason, etc.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 131. Hospers quotes Clarence Darrow, who defended criminals by pleading that they cannot be held responsible if their "machines" were imperfect: "I do not believe that people are in jails because they deserve to be . . . I know what causes the emotional life . . . I know it is practically left

out of some. Without it they cannot act with the rest. They cannot feel the moral shocks which safeguard others. Is (this man) to blame that his machine is imperfect? Who is to blame? I do not know. I have never in my life been interested so much in fixing blame as I have in relieving people from blame. I am not wise enough to fix it." (p. 138).

⁴⁵See particularly H. A. L. Hart, "Legal Responsibility and Excuses", Determinism and Freedom (New York, 1961) and "The Ascription of Responsibility and Rights", Logic and Language (Oxford, 1952). Although the author distinguishes legal and moral responsibility and abstracts his discussion from the free will-determinism debate, basic to his discussion is the connection between theories of punishment and reward and attempts to elucidate criteria employed in assigning responsibility for actions. Hart's position is drastically different from Darrow's. Darrow would be Hosper's direct counterpart in the legal field; Hart, however, must wrestle with implications of Hosper's question, i.e., In what sense can one be morally responsible?

⁴⁶Isaiah Berlin, Historical Inevitability (London, 1954). For an unpersuasive attack on Berlin's thesis, see the last section of Ernest Nagel, "Determinism in History", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XX (1960). pp. 311-317. Berlin argues forcefully that determinism as a basic presupposition to the study of history leads to a rejection of individual moral responsibility and grandiose interpretations of history which seek a "unitary pattern" (p. 68). Such questions as "Is war inevitable", "Is civilization doomed?" follow (p. 72). Momentous events, terrible catastrophic happenings, economic transformations, result from the uncontrollable and capricious play of movements and changes (the "collision of social forces", the "struggle of the classes"); no doubts are raised about the conduct of individuals involved in historical crises; no responsibility is attributed to humans for violent upheavals; ". . . like soldiers in an army drawn by forces too great to resist, we loose those neuroses which depend on the fear of having to choose among alternatives. Where there is no choice, there is no anxiety. . . . some human beings have always preferred the peace of imprisonment . . . to the painful conflicts and perplexities of the disordered freedom

of the world beyond the walls". (pp. 73-74) In short, he views the empirical generalizations of the historiographer not even remotely comparable to the "great uniformities of the natural sciences" (p. 74) and the best historical work is done by those who sift facts and make microscopic examination of evidence without deducing patterns, "and show no false fear in attributing responsibility to individuals." (p. 76) Ernest Nagel offers a critique of Berlin's view which does not speak to his devastating criticism of historical inevitability. Berlin shows clearly that historical inevitability excludes individual responsibility; Nagel, not being able to reject this conclusion, argues in general that determinism is not incompatible with "the significant imputation of moral responsibility" ("Determinism In History", p. 316) and "to abandon the deterministic principle itself, is to withdraw from the enterprise of science" (p. 317). Once again, it is made evident that the crucial issue in the Determinism-Freedom debate, when also applied to the study of history, is the issue of moral and individual responsibility.

⁴⁹See particularly p. 26 ff. In an important footnote (p. 26) Berlin refers to the current philosophical debates and takes issue with the Ayer, Nowell-Smith, Schlick school which seeks a dissolution of the problem through a compatability theory. But as Berlin points out, the "freedom" acknowledged by the "soft" determinist is really no freedom at all. "Freedom to act depends not on absence of only this or that set of fatal obstacles to action -- physical or biological, let us say -- while other obstacles, e.g. psychological ones -- character, habits, 'compulsive' motives, etc. -- are present; it requires a situation in which no sum total of such causal factors wholly determines the result -- in which there remains some area, however narrow, within which choice is not completely determined. This is the minimal sense of 'can' in the concept. We must agree with Kant that 'no can, no ought'; no responsibility-no independence-no worth-no desert, and therefore no occasion for praise or reproach: and this will be so if the 'can' however far back in the causal series is itself analysable in terms of a causal nexus." (p. 27)

⁵⁰Campbell, On Selfhood and Godhood (London, 1957), p. 164. What is interesting about Campbell's analysis is that he draws a distinction between two notions of moral responsibility. The one, the un-reflective level, where a man is not conscious of

theories of science, philosophy, affirms a man is responsible when the action performed was not coerced or constrained; but he is responsible where it appears he acted by rational desire. At the higher, or reflective level, a man will require something else to hold one responsible and will question the meaning of the statement, 'A could have acted otherwise' if there is presupposed a world view (e.g. the world is created, sustained and governed by an omniscient and omnipotent Being) which raises doubts about the statement's validity; his first intuitive assumption that there are genuinely open possibilities for him at the moment of choice will be questioned. His question will become, How can a man be morally responsible if his choices, like all things in the created order, could not be otherwise than they in fact are? Whether the world view is theological or scientific, the problem at this level is to puzzle out the implications of these world-views over against a viable notion of moral responsibility. At this point the difficulty arises; for Campbell, there must be something which "declines" identification with one's character, which is contra-causal, and which allows 'he could have chosen otherwise' to be understood in a straightforward, categorical sense. This something is the 'self'. (For an analysis of the 'self', see "Appendix B", On Selfhood and Godhood, pp. 214 ff., where Campbell also answers criticisms of Nowell-Smith). For the full discussion of these two levels of thinking, see Campbell's essay, "Is 'Free Will' a Pseudo-Problem?", Mind (1951), pp. 441-465.

⁵¹John Wild, "The Objectivist view of Human Freedom: A Criticism", Experience, Existence, and the Good (Carbondale, Ill., 1961), pp. 230-246. See also Wild, Existence and the World of Freedom (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963) where the same article is found under the chapter title, "The Traditional View of Freedom: A Criticism".

⁵²Wild, Existence and the World of Freedom, p. 108.

⁵³Ibid., p. 106.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 109.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 118.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 111-112.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 112.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 113. This is similar to Sartre who understands that the only real freedom occurs when there is a personal engagement with a resisting world. He dismisses the argument of determinism that we are impotent in the light of forces in nature and society which make us what we are. To be free does not mean to obtain particular goals, but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish"; and this means having the ability to choose. The consequence of this is an awful absolute responsibility carried by man, and this is why man is "condemned to be free" (Jean Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (trans. by Hazel E. Barnes, (New York, 1956), p. 523). Everything which happens to a man happens through him and not because of outside forces which lie beyond his control. "I am abandoned in the world, not in the sense that I might remain abandoned and passive in a hostile universe like a board floating on the water, but rather in the sense that I find myself suddenly alone and without help, engaged in a world for which I bear the whole responsibility without being able, whatever I do, to tear myself away from this responsibility for an instant. For I am responsible for my very desire of fleeing responsibilities." (Ibid., pp. 555-556).

⁵⁹David Hume, op. cit., p. 81.

⁶⁰David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. by Selby-Bigge, (Oxford, 1958), pp. 268-269. Quoted by Wild, op. cit., p. 114.

⁶¹Wild, op. cit., chapter 8, "Responsibility". The distinction between Campbell and Wild on the meaning of responsibility and freedom becomes apparent. Campbell holds to a contra-causal notion of freedom insisting that free choice is uncaused but what transpires from the moment of choice has consequences of a deterministic nature. Wild consistently holds to a concept of freedom operative within a world where causal laws are not fundamentally applicable. For Campbell, freedom must be contra-causal, but it penetrates and perhaps interferes in the larger and more vast network of cause effect relations. The Author of an act is still its cause, even though it depends on no antecedent event. Wild, on the other hand, sees abstract laws of a theoretical nature, of which causality is one, derived under a set of conditions from the larger ambiguous subjective realm of lived-experience.

⁶²Ibid., p. 148.

⁶³Ibid., p. 146.

⁶⁴For example, basic to the "Moynihan report", a controversial study which urges the U.S. Government to adopt a national policy for the reconstruction of the Negro Family, is a modern psychological insight which has deterministic implications; "There is one unmistakable lesson in American history: A community that allows large numbers of young men to grow up in broken families, dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority . . . that community asks for and gets chaos. Crime, violence, unrest, disorder . . . are not only to be expected, they are very near to inevitable." (Thomas Meehan, "Moynihan of the Moynihan Report", The New York Times Magazine, July 31, 1966, p. 5).

⁶⁵As we shall see, the determinism reflected in the ahādīth had political implications; if God pre-ordained all things, the state could nicely absolve itself from the charge of tyranny and oppression by acknowledging all happenings result solely from the Qadar of God.

⁶⁶See Nelson Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action," Philosophical Quarterly, LXXIV (1965), pp. 27-46. The author in this article is not concerned about Divine Omniscience and voluntary action as a theological problem; he is only concerned with "The implications of a certain set of assumptions." (p. 27)

⁶⁷Montgomery Watt, Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam (London, 1948), p. 1. "It will be seen in due course that this is also (the theological problem of Free Will and Predestination) far removed from the modern discussions of Free Will and scientific determinism."

⁶⁸A. J. Ayer, Philosophical Essays, p. 217.

⁶⁹Majid Fakhry, "The Classical Islamic Argument for the Existence of God", The Muslim World, XLVII (1958), p. 135, distinguishes the basic Western and Islamic arguments for God's existence: "If the argument from causality (cosmological) initiated by

Aristotle and developed by his followers is rightly regarded as the classical argument for the existence of God in the West, the Argument a novitate mundi, of which the argument a contingenti mundi is a mere variant, can be safely asserted to represent the classical argument for the existence of God in Islam."

⁷⁰Al-Ghazzālī, al-Iqtiṣād fi'l I'tiqād, (Ankara, (1962).

⁷¹We must be careful not to view the problem of evil and the Goodness of God as a separate problem. Augustine answered the dilemma ("Either God cannot abolish evil or he will not: if he cannot then He is not all-powerful; if he will not then he is not all-good") by affirming man to be responsible for evil because of his free will, in spite of the fact that his free will is not free, since it is determined by God.

⁷²We have seen that in the modern discussions many determinists offer a compatibility-theory which tries to do away with the logical problems by proving that freedom presupposes determinism or that there are different levels of causality into which one freedom may fit. Omnipotence in the theological case makes it more difficult to arrive at a compatibility of determinism and freedom because it implies that there exists no other source of power to allow for "ability" to act freely. Antony Flew, "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom", Essays in Philosophical Theology (London, 1955) and J. L. Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence", Mind, N.S. LXIV (1955), argue that Human Freedom and Omnipotence are incompatible and the problem of evil cannot be solved by holding to a view that God is wholly Good and Omnipotent.

CHAPTER II

THE STARTING POINT: THE QUR'ĀN

Any discussion of classical theological-philosophical problems, and particularly the problem of the relationship between God's Sovereignty and Human Freedom, necessitates a close look at the starting point and basic source of Islamic theology. Undoubtedly, the Qur'ān itself would offer a full length study on the issue before us. Our purpose in turning to the Qur'ān, however, is not to explore exhaustively the stance toward determinism and freedom reflected therein. Neither do we seek to "prove" that the Qur'ān presents a contradiction or that the two notions of God's Sovereignty and human freedom are complementary, nor is our concern to argue that the Qur'ān views God as a God of "Predestination" or that it makes man responsible for his acts because he has real power to choose options.

Rather, we wish to make evident the dilemma posed by the Qur'ān which led to bitter theological controversy in post-Qur'ānic disputes concerning determinism and freedom.

It is necessary, however, to qualify this statement. From one point of view it may be argued that

the Qur'ān poses no dilemmas or problems because of its special classification as prophetic, revealed literature. Louis Gardet firmly asserts that the Qur'ān poses no problems; rather it affirms the mystery of the relations between Creator and creature.¹ Von Grunebaum understands the Qur'ānic "conflict" between Sovereignty of God and human freedom as unsolved.²

The Muslim God is developed in contrast, not to say in opposition, to Man. His outstanding trait is His Omnipotence, His detached arbitrariness. The conflict between a moralistic world order where no action goes unrewarded and a world order reflecting God's unconcerned absolutism remains unsolved.

The contradictions of these relations, he maintains, are not only due to underdeveloped "logical stringency" in the Qur'ān, but they are "inherent in the religious experience as such."³ The unsolved conflicts, contradictions and unfathomable mysteries only appear when one tries to understand the relations between God and Man to which the Qur'ān calls attention. The Holy Book is a prophetic and rhetorical message which claims to be the Word of God. It is not a connected writing or discourse; separate revelations were addressed to different audiences, on different occasions, and had references to different situations. Its language is rich with ecstatic, poetic and imperative utterances which reveal to man the commands and promises of God, declare His unity, exhort men to follow His ordinances;

the Qur'ān declares God to be the Omnipotent Lord of the Worlds and asserts that man's destiny is firmly in the grasp of His power. It is important to emphasize that none of these Qur'anic assertions is developed in any systematic manner; the Qur'ān is not even conscious that theological or philosophical problems may be raised. Its affirmations about God and Man are religious, not theological or philosophical. One cannot legitimately speak about doctrines of man, God, Freewill and Predestination in the Qur'ān, because "doctrine" implies the attempt at full intellectual expression of truths manifested through the Qur'ān as the Word of God. (The Book itself, however, is the basis, the fundamental starting point and framework out of which the intellectual expressions are formulated. The beginning, the very foundation of the later theological enterprise rests within the Qur'ān).

From this point of view, and regarding our object of study as it relates to the Qur'ān, the only necessary point to state is this: The Qur'ān tells us that God holds man responsible for what he does, and He shall reward or punish him according to his deeds both now and in the hereafter.

Today (Day of Judgment) each person will be recompensed for what he had piled up.
(40:17)⁴

Now to-day no one will be wronged at all, nor will ye be recompensed except for what ye have been doing. (36:54)

But as for him who has repented and believed and acted uprightly, possibly he may be among those who prosper. (28:67)

There are many instances in the Qur'ān which make this affirmation. (Gardet⁵ reports that Blachère⁶ has indexed between two and three hundred verses promising retribution resulting from man's actions).

Also, a simple glance at the Qur'ān reveals that one aspect of Divine Sovereignty is complete control over the destiny of man.

We never sent any messenger but with the speech of his people, that he might make (things) clear to them; but God sendeth astray whomsoever He willeth, and guideth whomsoever He willeth; He is the Sublime, the Wise. (14:4)

. . . Verily, we have placed veils upon their hearts lest they should understand it, and in their ears, heaviness. (18:55)

Thus, from the point of view of the Qur'ān itself, we cannot rightfully assert that "problems" or "dilemmas" are posed. Yet, it may be argued from a different stance that problems and dilemmas are set forth in the Qur'ān precisely because it makes no attempt to solve the conflicts, contradictions and mysteries which appear when one reflects upon its contents. The Qur'ān is a special kind of religious literature; prophetic, poetic and rhetorical, but its message is expressed in human language, reflecting

thoughts about the nature of God and Man, and the kinds of relations shared, each one with the other. The Qur'ān poses no problems, but upon reflection it raises questions; it is irrational in that it transcends reason, yet it demands rational understanding. Every religious assertion about God's Sovereignty immediately begs reflection on its meaning and implication for man's destiny; every claim that man has power to choose and act falls under the shadow of statements about God's absolute power, concretized in every aspect of creation. The Qur'ān poses no problems of a theological-philosophical nature, but it is the very source and starting point of great issues which have been given theological-philosophical formulation. The Qur'ān itself may not be conscious of a conflicting opposition between Divine Sovereignty and human freedom, but its first, thoughtful and believing readers were.

It is from this second stance that we will view the dilemma of freedom and determinism posed by the Qur'ān, remaining fully aware that the Qur'ān, from its own point of view, poses no problems.

We shall attempt to show that the Qur'ān is the starting point of the freedom-determinism controversy in early Islamic theology by analyzing several key Qur'ānic terms which have their place in the pre-Islamic

literature and reflect, in that literature, deterministic signification. These terms, qadar, qaḍā', 'amr, 'ajal and kitāb, employed in certain contexts in the Qur'ān, have philosophical inferences concerning the destiny of man. Two other concepts, hudā and ḡalāl, relate to the theological side of the problem, raising the question: Who decides or chooses if one is to be a mu'min or a kāfir -- the individual man or God?

We begin by examining the words which become the components of the technical phrase (qadar wa qaḍā') for the freedom-determinism controversy in early Islam. The word qadar, which was the most used and important term is hardly employed in the Qur'ān as a term denoting determinism. Daud Rahbar attempts to prove in his analysis of the verses in which qadar and qaḍā' are found that they have no connection with the later theological meaning ascribed to them.⁷ Helmer Ringgren agrees with this position by concluding that the two terms in the Qur'ān have not assumed their later technical meaning.⁸ However, the assertion that Qaḍā' and qadar did not reflect a deterministic sense in pre-Qur'ānic language is called into question by both Ringgren and Izutsu,⁹ and Montgomery Watt is of the opinion that pre-Islamic conceptions concerning the destiny of man influenced what he calls the Islamic

doctrine of predestination.¹⁰

So before turning to a few Qur'ānic passages in which these words occur, we must look at the pre-Islamic usages of the terms and set them within the context of the Jāhilī notion of human destiny.¹¹

Ringgren finds both qadar and qaḍā' to be words signifying destiny in pre-Islamic texts. Qaḍā', in particular, has the sense of something having been decreed or decided in advance.¹² He finds only one use of the verb qaḍā in which Allāh is the subject.

Allah decided (qaḍā) when the creator created her, that the twilight should not conceal her (so fair is her complexion). (Qais ibn al-Khaṭīm)¹³

Another verse from al-A'shā indicates Allāh to be the subject:

And you know that the soul will meet her death (ḥatf) as her creator and Sovereign (malik) has ordained (qaḍā).¹⁴

Also there are instances when the verbal noun qaḍā' is used to mean decree:

The Decree (qaḍā') will once halt in the courtyard of him who is careless because he has not met misfortune; . . .¹⁵

Izutsu gives an example from the famous pre-Islamic poet Labīd in which the verbal noun qaḍā' is used:

We are not able to erase what He (i.e. Allāh) has once written down (kitāb). How can this be, when His qaḍā' is absolutely unalterable.¹⁶

Qadar in pre-Islamic texts also has the sense of decree. Ringgren refers to W. Caskel's study (Das Schicksal in der altarabischen Poesie, (Leipzig), 1926), which shows that qadar and miqdār refer partly to the decree that brings hardship and death to man.

When a trouble disturbs me, I do not say;
Woe unot me for what the Decree (qadar) has
produced ('aḥdatha). . . What was given to you
Allāh sent; what you were denied, the Decree
(qadar) did not bring. (Labīd)¹⁷

There is evidence, therefore, of a possible connection between the pre-Islamic usage of Qadar and Qaḍā' and the meanings of these terms in the Qur'ān. However, the issue is complicated because these words are not commonly used in pre-Islamic poetry to represent Destiny, Decree or Fate. Ringgren thinks that since qadar and qaḍā' (plus ḥatm) are the only "fatalistic" terms adopted by the Qur'ān, there must exist

a conscious opposition between the Koran and poetry at that point, and the most probable explanation is that the three terms mentioned were more acceptable because they were also earlier religious terms and were only rarely used by the poets, whose fatalistic attitude was disapproved by Muḥammad.¹⁸

Also, it must be remembered that the opposition between the Qur'ānic and Jāhilī world views was radical, and this opposition is particularly stark concerning the question of human destiny. Instead of

a concept of Creator-God who sustains the universe by his power and promises Paradise to believers, and Hell to the Kāfirs, pre-Islamic poetry reflects an impersonal God of Time (Dahr). Dahr is tyrannical; it catches man no matter where he may be. Izutsu gives examples describing dahr as a merciless tyrant; a wild ferocious animal that bites with sharp teeth -- a force which destroys men.¹⁹ Man is caught helplessly in the grasp of dahr from birth to death; it is the special agent of Destiny,²⁰ and is always represented as a destructive power. Death verifies this destructive power. Yet, dahr itself never ceases to be.

Is Time (dahr) anything but to-day and yesterday and to-morrow? Thus Time (zamān) goes and comes among us, giving us another night and another day. We do not remain, but Time does not disappear.²¹

Maniyyah (from manā) is also a common word for destiny; Ringgren believes it to be identical with Time or Destiny;²² Izutsu interprets maniyyah as a particular term representing the manifestation of dahr at the end of a man's existence.

Yes, indeed, Manāyā always gains the ultimate victory, and even talismans are of no use against the destructive power of Ḥimām.²³

Most important for us to remember is that the derivatives of the root MNY (manā, munā and maniyyah, pl. manāyā) are the most common terms denoting Destiny

in its activity of allotting or apportioning gloom and misfortune, and that these terms, particularly maniyyah and dahr, were rejected by Muḥammad.

The basic picture of human destiny in pre-Islamic poetry is Fatalistic pessimism. Man simply endures by resigning himself to the power of dahr and the machinations of maniyyah. There is no other recourse. Life has a beginning and an ending; the span between the two poles is set and governed by impersonal Time and Fate.

The Qur'ānic world view opposes traditional pre-Islamic nihilism by the introduction of a theism which denied the power of dahr. The Qur'ānic view offered a new possibility for man; ethical action on his part became essential if he were to be given the fruits of Paradise. This did not mean man's life was no longer destined; the radical change was that the destining power was no longer dahr, but a living creator-God whose power encompassed the Universe, and who deals justly and righteously with those who have followed the ethical imperatives set down in the Qur'ān.

Therefore two important things must be remembered in viewing the Jāhilī usage of qaḍā' and qadar: They are not the common and important terms used for Decree and Destiny in the poetry (yet, the

important terms for Destiny and Decree and Fate, e.g. Dahr, Hanīyah, Ḥammah are not found in the Qur'ān). The other point is that, since the Qur'ān rejects Jāhilī fatalism, the pre-Qur'ānic meanings of these terms, qaḍā' and qadar, might have less bearing upon their employment in the Qur'ān than would appear at first glance. However, as we shall see, complete disparity between the two does not exist.

Ḥaṣṣid Rahbar in his analysis of the derivatives of the root QDR seeks to show that they do not signify "an arbitrary decree of God that pre-determines every human action".²⁴ He finds the two basic meanings of the derivatives to be "power" and "quantity" or "measure", and he discusses the verses in which the derivatives have this meaning.

We set between them and the towns on which We have bestowed blessings towns (still to be) seen, and We measured out (easy stages in) (qaddarnā) the journey between them: "Travel in them nights and days, secure." (34:17)

To whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, who hath not taken to Himself offspring, and who hath never had any partner in the kingdom, who hath created everything and well assigned its power (qaddara taqdīr). (25:2)

Verily the Lord giveth provision freely to whomsoever He willeth, or measureth (yaqdiru) it out; Verily of His servants He is well-informed, observant. (17:32)

On the morrow those who had wished for his place the day before were saying: "Ah, how Allah maketh generous provision for whomsoever of His servants He pleaseth, or stinteth; (yaqdiru) had not Allah been gracious to us, He would have sunk (the earth) with us; ah, how unprosperous are the unbelievers." (28:82)

In verses such as these, Rahbar is of the opinion that the employment of both the first and second forms of the verb, when Allāh is the subject, does not have the meaning "decreed", "appointed", "destined", or "predestined". These meanings, he believes, "can be regarded a theological development upon some of the more basic meanings of these words. . . ." ²⁵

We have found other examples in which the basic meaning appears to be "quantity" or "measure".

Who hath sent down from the heaven water in a measure (bi-qadarin) thereby we revived land which was dead; so shall ye be caused to come forth. (43:10)

There is not a thing but with Us are its storehouses, and We send it down but in measure appointed ('illā bi-qadarin ma'lūmin).

However, all these verses cited, with the possible exception of 28:82 are Mekkañ in origin. Ringgren²⁶ reports that K. Ahrens (Muhammad als Religionsstifter, Leipzig, 1935) found only one Mekkah sūrah in which qadar could mean "omnipotent decree".

"Indeed everything have We created bi-qadarin." (54:49) Bell translated bi-qadar as "with a limit", and

Arberry²⁷ rendered it "in measure". Bayḍāwī offers two interpretations: either God created everything "determined and ordered according to wisdom", or He did it "as something decreed and written on the well preserved Tablet".²⁸

However, the verse following (54:49) may throw some light on the meaning of bi-qadar as here used.

And 'amrunā (our command, affair, decree?) is but one (flash) like a glance of the eye. (54:50)

Bell translated 'amrunā as "our affair", but it is possible 'amr has a fuller meaning. J. M. S. Baljon²⁹ discusses at length various meanings of 'amr in the Qur'ān, in particular the meaning of the 'amr of God, showing that "affair", "command", the "bidding of God" do not carry the full force of 'amr Ullāh.

For, instead of representing incidental or arbitrary actions of a divine will, amr refers usually to different stages of a carefully prepared and well thought out world-order. And instead of depicting the activity of a more or less despotic ruler of the universe, it relates to the discretion of a wise and righteous governor of the world. Consequently, it is advisable, either to leave it untranslated or to render it differently, as the context requires by "providential rule", "dispensation", guidance", "mercy", "divine judgment", "punishment", "doom(sday)", and such like.³⁰

However, regarding the specific verse in question, Baljon interprets the 'amr Ullāh as a heavenly

dispensation, which is "auspicious and sinister".³¹
'amr here, then, would refer to the Judgment Day, and represent a decree of "doom". It is possible, therefore, bi-qadar and 'amrunā imply the same basic meaning; namely, decree. "Everything We have created according to a decree, and Our decree of doom is but one (flash) like a glance of the eye." Yet, it is possible to argue that bi-qadar means limit or measure, implying that the world will end, and the 'amr is the Divine Dispensation of Judgment Day.

There is one instance in which both 'amr and qadar appear and where the meaning of qadar is definitely "decree."

There is no blame upon the prophet in the matter of what Allah has laid upon him as a duty; it is the custom of Allah (shown) in those who have passed away aforetime, -- the 'amr of Allah is a settled decree (qadar maqdūr).
 (33:38)

Taking into consideration Baljon's discussion, 'amr should not be translated simply as "command", as Bell would have it, but as "dispensation", or even "decree". 'amr in this context could be synonymous with qadar. Two verses preceding throws further light on the close relationship between 'amr and the notion of something settled or decided by God.

When God and His messenger have decided (Qaḍā) an affair ('idhā qaḍā allāhu wa rasūluhu 'amran) it is not for a believing man or a believing woman to have a choice in their affair ('amrihim); . . . (33:36)

In these verses, and particularly the last cited, qadar (or qaḍā) and 'amr Ullāh imply not only absolute divine authority, but that the affairs of men may be determined by God's 'amr and qadar. This is not to say that all human action is determined by an arbitrary decree of God. Yet, in light of the pre-Islamic usage of the term qadar, and the strong possibility that 'amr is more than "command", one cannot with assurance substitute "measure" or "allotted" for "decree", holding that the former meanings are the truly Qur'ānic ones, while the latter, and other deterministic terms like it, reflect later theological interpretation. In the verse cited (33:38) Rahbar insists upon translating qadar maqdūr as "a calculated measure".³²

Surah 97, entitled Laylat al-Qadr is another instance in which qadr means "decree"; here again, we find the keyword 'amr.

Lo, We have sent it down on the Night of Qadr.
Who has let thee know what is the Night of Qadr?
The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months;
In it the angels and the spirit let themselves
down, by the permission of their Lord with
regard to every affair (min kulli 'amrin).
It is peace until the rising of the dawn.
(Sūrah 97)

Wensinck³³ and Ringgren³⁴ translate qadr as decree; Rahbar would have Laylat al-Qadr read "the Night of Calculation" or "The Night of Apportionment".³⁵

The beginning of Sūrah 44 is similar to Sūrah 97.

Verily we have sent it down on a blessed night -- for we were giving admonitions. In it is loosened every determined (ḥakīm) 'amr as an 'amr from us. (Wensinck)³⁶

By the Book that makes clear! Verily We have sent it down on a blessed night in which is separated out each wise (ḥakīm) affair ('amr) of an affair from us. (Bell)

By the Clear Book. We have sent it down in a blessed night (We are ever warning) therein every wise bidding ('amr) determined as a bidding from us. (Arberry)³⁷

In both Sūrah 97 and 44 'amr has the meaning of divine dispensation. Wensinck has shown in his study (Arabic New Year and the Feast of Tabernacles) that the object sent down on the night of Qadr was the Qur'ān and that night fell in the month of Ramaḍān. More important for us is that according to popular tradition, the laylat al-qadr is New Year's night at which time God decrees everything for the next year. Wensinck quotes from Ṭabarī and Fakhru-l-dīn al-Rāzī:

"In this night Allah decrees (qaḍā) every term and work and all food (that will be) til the same day of the next year" and "Allah decrees (qaddara) (in this night) rain, food, life and death that shall be

during the following year till the same night of that year."³⁸

The notion of the angels taking part in celestial affairs is, according to Wensinck, an old, pre-Islamic feature whose roots are bound up with the Babylonian New-Year festival.³⁹ The implication is that the angels bring to earth every 'amr (dispensation) for the coming year.

In other instances, 'amr has the general sense of God's powerful creative word which not only decides but sustains everything.

Allah it is who hath raised up the heavens without pillars that ye can see, then sat upon the throne directing the 'amr and he subjected the sun and the moon to service, each running its course to a fixed term ('ajalin musamman). (13:2)

Indeed, your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat on the throne causing the night to cover the day, following it quickly, and the sun and the moon and the stars subjected to service by His 'amr; is it not His to create and to command? (7:52)⁴⁰

In most of the passages where 'amr occurs, the emphasis is not on an impersonal dispensation of commands, but on God's personal creative command which rules everything in the Universe. Also, the 'amr is God's alone.

The Romans have been victorious in the nearer part of the land, but they after their victory will be defeated in a few years; the 'amr belongs to Allah before and after, and on that day the believers will rejoice. (30:1-3)

In the rebuke to Muḥammad after the battle of Uhud, the Prophet is reminded he has no power regarding the 'amr of Allāh:

Thou hast nothing to do with the 'amr;
to Allah belongs what is in the heavens and
what is in the earth . . .; (3:123-124)

Both 'amr and qadar, in the examples cited, reflect the religious assertion of God's Omnipotence; the emphasis is indeed upon this aspect of His nature. Even though the deterministic implications of the terms may not be predominant, they nonetheless are there, not only because the meanings of the words in the pre-Islamic setting had a strong deterministic sense (and it is possible significant traces of that sense carried over into Qur'ānic usage),⁴¹ but also because these very strong religious assertions of God's Omnipotency, whether intentionally or not, do emphasize consequences of this omnipotency for man in his situation of living under Divine 'amr and qadar. In other words, these religious assertions about God as qādir have two aspects: They are statements of faith, poetic in form and deeply religious in meaning; yet, from the point of view of man's destiny, they carry clear indications that life is certainly determined by Divine decrees.

We see this shifting, two-fold emphasis in the Qur'ān. The formula which occurs throughout the Qur'ān,

'inna allāhā 'alā kulli shay'in qadīrun, expresses the absolute power of God over all things. In the early Mekkah passages, God is qādir viewed from His ability to effect the resurrection.

Verily, He hath power to bring him back on the day when the secrets will be tried. (86:8-9)

I swear not by the resurrection day;
I swear not by the blame-casting soul;
Does man think that We shall not (re-) assemble his bones?
Yea, (We are) able to (re-) form his very fingers. (75:1-4)

Also, the creative acts which He performs are signs of His Sovereignty.

Allah it is who sendeth the winds which stir up cloud, and He spreadeth it in the heaven as He willeth, and breaketh it up; and one sees the fine rain coming forth from the midst of it, and, when He causeth it to fall upon whom He willeth of His servants, lo, they rejoice . . . surely that One is the quickener of the dead, and He to do all things is able (wa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in qadīrun) (30:47, 49)

He it is who hath created of water mankind, and hath made them related by descent and by marriage, for thy Lord was powerful (wa kāna rabbuka qadīran)

Say: Travel about in the land and see how He originateth a creature; then Allah will cause the second growth to spring up; verily Allah over everything hath power. (29:19)

The emphasis in these passages, and others from the Mekkah period, focuses upon the creative acts of Allāh in the world, and these acts witness to His

Divine Sovereignty and Power. However, in the later Medinan sūrahs, the power of Allāh has consequence for the destiny of man.

Do you not know that to Allah belongs the sovereignty (mulk) of the heavens and the earth? He punisheth whom He willeth, and pardoneth whom He willeth; Allah over everything hath power (Allāh a 'alā kulli shay'in qadīrun) (5:44)

He is the one who is able (al-qādir) to stir up against you punishment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to bring confusion of parties among you and cause you to experience each other's violence. (6:65)

Returning to qaḍā and derivatives from the root QḌY we find essentially the same problem as with the derivatives from QDR. Qaḍā', like qadar, is a noun which most often reflects Divine creative power.

When He decides (qaḍā) upon a thing, He simply says: Be! (kun) and it is. (19:36)

This phrase, repeated often⁴² obviously refers to no decree or decision which is to be understood in a deterministic sense; it points to Divine power and sovereignty. Ringgren shows that among the many instances of the verb Qaḍā, very few imply determinism.⁴³

However, there are cases in which qaḍā and 'ajal occur in the same passage. We have seen that 'amr, which often occurs in the same context with qadar, reflects determinism in the pre-Islamic poetry, and

those passages in which these two terms occur, determinism is denoted also. The same situation holds true in instances in which 'ajal' and qaḍā occur; 'ajal' seems to call attention to the deterministic sense of qaḍā.

Allah calls in the souls at the time of their death, and those which have not died, in their sleep; those upon whom He has decreed (qaḍā) death he retains, the others He sends back until a stated term ('ajalin musamman); lo, in that are signs for a people who reflect. (39:43)

He it is who created you of clay and then fixed a term (qaḍā 'ajalan) -- and a term ('ajalun) is stated in His keeping -- yet after all ye are in doubt. (6:2)

If Allah were to hasten the evil for the people, as they show haste for wealth, their term ('ajaluhum) would have been finished (quḍiya) for them; so We leave those who do not look forward to meeting with Us in their arrogance blindly wandering. (10:12)

In discussing the term 'ajal', which appears often in the Qur'ān, we must call attention to its place and significance in the pre-Islamic setting. We have seen that dahr represents the inscrutable unfolding of Destiny, and that its destructive power was manifested at the end of a man's life, terminated by death. But the death, implemented by dahr is not death conceived only in its biological sense. The final point of man's life is in each case fixed and determined beforehand, and death in this sense is termed 'ajal'.⁴⁴ Izutsu gives several examples from pre-Islamic poetry which illustrate this meaning:⁴⁵

Anything indeed can kill you when you meet your own ajal. (al-Ḥamāsah)

When I get the arrow of Death (the allusion is to the game of chance, a kind of lottery by arrows) I shall never lose my composure, for (of what avail will it be?) Is there anybody at all who can remain alive beyond (the appointed time?) ('Urwah b. al-Ward)

Do not flee once you have gone deep into a battle, for flying before the enemy will never defer your appointed time (ajal). ('Anṭarah)

This same sense of 'ajal' carries over into the Qur'ān, with some qualification. Although the pre-Islamic concept of 'ajal' is found in the Qur'ān, it must be remembered that a fundamentally different world-order is presupposed therein. Dahr and maniyyah have been rejected; in their place is substituted Allāh, creator, and sustaining power of the Heavens and the Earth, both now and for eternity. 'ajal' is not the real terminal point of existence.⁴⁶ It is, in some cases, understood as the threshold for eternal life. But Judgment day and the resurrection are not always the focal points in the references in which 'ajal' occurs. In the Qur'ān, the whole of life, both temporal and eternal, is under the control of Allāh, and the deterministic implications of this control are most evident when attention is drawn to human existence alone.

The deterministic notion that the 'ajal' is fixed beforehand is implicit in a few passages.

"O my Lord, wouldst Thou not defer me a little while (lit. would you not defer me to a near term -- 'akhkhartanī il/ā 'ajalin qarībin'), that I may give alms, and become one of the upright"? Allah will not defer (the death of) any person when his 'ajal comes; Allah is well-informed of what ye do. (63:10-11)

O ye people, if ye are in doubt about the upraising -- lo, We have created you from dust, then from a drop, then from a clot, then from a piece (of flesh), formed or unformed, that We may make clear to you; We settle what We will in the wombs until a set term ('ajalin musamman'), then We bring you forth as infants; then (we act so) that ye may reach your maturity -- some of you die, and some of you are reduced to the most abject state of life, so that after having had knowledge they know not a thing; . . . (22:5)⁴⁷

The general context of this last verse is a discussion of Judgment Day and the power of Allāh to revive the dead. But as we shall see, the idea of one's life span being determined before the embryo has completely formed is commonly expressed in the Hadīth literature of Bukhārī and Muslim, which consistently represents a thorough-going determinism.

Also, there are instances in which 'ajal' refers to the time of punishment, which cannot be altered.

No community anticipates its term, nor do they fall behind it. (15:5)

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

We also find the idea of the postponement of the Judgment. This is probably a result of Muḥammad's own experience. He had expected the day to be close, and when it did not arrive, he had to face criticism from his compatriots.⁴⁸

Verily in that is a sign for whoever fears the punishment of the Hereafter; that is a day to which the people are to be gathered; that is a day attested, and we only postpone it to a term defined ('ajalin ma'dūdin) (11:105-106)

And He will forgive you your sins, and defer you to a stated time ('ajalin musamman); verily, the time of Allah, when it comes, is not to be deferred, if ye only knew. (71:4)

If Allah were to take the people to task for their wrong-doing He would not leave upon it (the earth?) a single animal; but He is postponing them to an appointed term ('ajalin musamman), and when their term comes they will not get a postponement by an hour nor an advance. (16:63)

In some cases, 'ajal signifies the idea that God has subjected everything in the universe to run its course to a fixed end.

Has not one seen that Allah causeth the night to interpenetrate the day, and the day to interpenetrate the night, and hath subdued the sun and the moon to service, each running to a fixed term ('ajalin musamman), and that Allah of what ye do is well aware? (31:28)

Allah it is who hath raised up the heavens without pillars that ye can see; then sat firm upon the throne managing the affair ('amr); and hath subjected the sun and the moon to service, each running its course to a fixed term ('ajalin musamman). (13:2)

In these citations, 'ajal, whether referring to a time of punishment, judgment, the resurrection, or death, indicates absolute Divine power in the governing of all the affairs of the world. His 'ājāl are set according to His power, and nothing can delay or set them in motion before the appointed time.

There are contexts in which another term bearing deterministic connotations, kitāb, occurs along with 'ajal. Kitāb also had its place in the literature prior to the time of Muḥammad. We recall to mind a verse of poetry from Labīd, cited earlier, in which the concept of ordaining events before hand is signified by the term kitāb.⁴⁹

We men are not able to erase what He (i.e. Allāh) has once written (kitāb) down. How can this be when His qaḍā' is absolutely unalterable.

We have sent messengers before thee, and have given them wives and a posterity, but it was not for any messenger to produce a sign except by Allah's permission; for every term ('ajal) there is a book (kitāb). (13:38)

But it is not given to anyone to die except by permission of Allah written and dated (a writing which is fixed -- kitāban mu'ajjalan). (3:139)

Rahbar lists more than fifty citations in which derivatives of KTB may reflect deterministic ideas.⁵⁰ Yet, he claims in his analysis of some of the verses that the use of kitāb is metaphorical, attesting

largely to God's knowledge of all things. He argues against the view that the contents of the heavenly books were pre-written,⁵¹ and categorically states: "The Qur'ān, we have seen, does not contain the idea that human action is written in heavenly books far in advance or from eternity."⁵²

However, this claim calls for qualification. Indeed, very many passages in which derivatives of KTB occur refer to books of revelation,⁵³ and to written ordinances of God.⁵⁴ In other passages, it is impossible to ascertain if the contents of the books were pre-written.⁵⁵

Yet there is one important reference in which Kitāb clearly indicates the notion of pre-determined happenings written before they actually occurred.

No misfortune has befallen either the land or yourselves, but it was in a book before We brought it to be; that for Allah is easy. (57:22)

In trying to "absolve" this verse from deterministic implications, Rahbar states: "But there are two questions left unanswered; (a) how long in advance is the accident written down (i.e. the misfortune?) (b) Is it written down arbitrarily or with a righteous purpose?"⁵⁶ It is true that the passage does not answer these questions, but they, in fact, have no bearing on the clear assertion that kitāb and

its contents of misfortune precede the coming-into-existence of the misfortune. The religious assertion about God is clear: He has foreknowledge of happenings, and both good and bad occur through His activity. From the point of view of human existence, the deterministic inference is self-evident.

Two other verses challenge Rahbar's general conclusion.

Then after the distress, He sent down upon you security -- a languor which came over part of you, but a part of you were concerned about themselves, thinking about Allah what is not true -- the thoughts of Paganism, saying: "Have we any say in the affair ('amr) at all?" Say: "The affair belongs to Allah entirely." They conceal within themselves what they do not reveal to thee saying: "If ye had been in your houses, those who were written down (kutiba) as to be killed, would have sallied out to the places where they lie." (3:148)

Say: "There will nothing befall us but what Allah hath written (kataba) down for us; He is our patron and in Allah let the believers put their trust. (9:51)

We have given our attention to several key Qur'ānic terms -- qadar, qadā', 'amr, 'ajal and kitāb -- which, before Muḥammad, had their place in Arabic literature. In each case, the term bears a deterministic signification. Kitāb represents "foreordination"; 'ajal is death appointed aforehand; 'amr carries the sense of decree or dispensation

implemented through some agency of Divine Providence; qadar and qaḍā', although not the common terms for decreeing in advance happenings which are brought to completion by the machinations of some inscrutable power of Destiny (dahr), nonetheless do stand for Destiny and Decree. We have said that the thought-world of the Qur'ān rejects the Pre-Islamic fatalism; Allāh in the Qur'ān is Personal and Compassionate whereas Dahr represents impersonal Time and Fate. Also, we have seen that each of these key-words, when employed in the Qur'ān, may reflect both the religious claim that God is the Omnipotent and Sovereign Lord of the Worlds, and at the same time draw attention to the consequences of this claim for man in his human situation of living out his life. It is precisely at this point that the deterministic signification of these terms, employed in the Qur'ān, is revealed. These two aspects of so many Qur'ānic utterances is what poses the dilemma or problem of determinism in the Qur'ān.

Two other concepts, which are related as opposites and occur very often in the Qur'ān, are important for our study. The concepts which we have previously examined emphasize the philosophical side of the determinism-freedom controversy; i.e. the implications of Foreordination of inscrutable decrees and limits on

man's human situation. If Divine Power, Knowledge and Will completely pervade man's existence, the question inevitably is raised: Does man have any control over his destiny and does he have, in any real sense, freedom to act?

The two concepts "Guidance" (Hudā) and "Going Astray" (ḍalāl) laid emphasis on the theological side of the controversy during the post-Qur'ānic discussions, where they, in fact, became polarized. The problem here is the problem of determinism regarding Imān and Kufr; does God destine some to be believers, who thereby inherit Paradise (jannah) while others He condemns to Hell (jahannam) because He led them astray? Is there any point in trying to be a "good" Muslim if being a mu'min or a kāfir is determined solely through Divine Will (mashī'ah)? And if this last statement is true, what meaning is there to the Qur'ānic claim that God is the God of Justice ('adl)?

The Qur'ān, however, does not explicitly raise these questions; it is, in fact, unaware that it implies them. It approaches the concepts of Hudā and ḍalāl in two ways. The first implies that man has the freedom to choose whether he wants guidance or to be led astray; i.e. he himself chooses Imān or kufr. The second approach emphasizes God's absolute will.

However much one may wish to respond to īmān or kufr, one's response is not one's own, but brought about through His Will.

Allah leadeth astray (yudillu) whom He willeth, and guideth (yahdī) whom He willeth. (35:9)⁵⁷

The first approach indicates that man is somehow responsible for what befalls him.

And say to those to whom the Book has been given, and to the common folk: "Have ye surrendered yourselves?" If they surrender themselves, they have let themselves be guided (ihṭadā), but if they turn away -- thou art only responsible for the proclamation, and Allah is observant of (His) servants. (3:19)

Here is stated a condition for receiving guidance. If Islām is accepted, guidance is forthcoming, and the condition implies that man may himself choose Islām.

Wrong-doers cannot expect guidance.

Nay, but those who have done wrong have followed their own desires without (revealed) knowledge, so who will guide (yahdī) those whom Allah hath sent astray ('adalla) (2:24)

Also, God's guidance is subsequent to the activity of man.

O People of the Book, there has come to you from Allah a light and a Book which makes clear, whereby Allah guideth those who ensue His goodwill in the ways of peace, bringing them forth out of the darkneses into the light by His permission, and guiding (yahdī) them to a straight path (ṣirāṭ mustaqīm) (5:18)

Ye were on the brink of a pit of the Fire and He rescued you from it. Thus doth Allah make His signs clear for you, mayhap ye will let yourselves be guided. (3:99)

Those who have disbelieved say: "Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Verily Allah sendeth astray whomsoever He willeth, and guideth to Himself whomsoever turns devoutly (to Him) (13:27)

But those who have striven for Us We shall surely guide Our way, and verily Allah is with those who do well. (29:69)

There are a few cases in which neither God nor man are responsible for Ḍalāl; it comes from the Evil One (Shayṭān).

Hast thou not seen those who say that they have believed in what has been sent down to thee and in what has been sent down before thy time, desiring to carry their disputes to Tāghūt⁵⁸ though they have been commanded to disbelieve in it? Satan (shayṭān) desires to lead them far astray. (4:63)

Say: "My Lord hath commanded justice." And set yourselves in order at every place of worship, and call upon Him, making Him the exclusive object of religion. As He began you, ye will come again, He having guided (ḥadā) a part and a part having justly incurred the penalty of going astray (dalālah); They have taken the satans (shayāṭīn) as patrons apart from Allah, and they think that they are guided. (7:28)

I have found her (i.e. Sabā') and her people doing obeisance to the sun rather than to Allah; Satan (shayṭān) has made their works seem fair to them and has turned them aside from the way, and they are not (rightly) guided. (27:24)

The other approach infers that all has been decided solely through the Divine mashī'ah. Man is led astray by God who leads him astray. It is from this view that these two concepts of Hudā and ḡalāl emerge as basic opposites,⁵⁹ and become important for the later controversy.

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

Whom Allah sendeth astray for him there is no guide, (yudlil)⁶⁰ and He leaveth them in their arrogance blindly wandering. (7:185)

For him whom Allah sends astray (yudlil) there is no guide, but him whom Allah guideth, (yahdī) no one can send astray. (39:37-38)

This is Allah's guidance (hudā) wherewith He guideth whomsoever He willeth; but for him whom Allah sendeth astray there is no guide. (hādīn) (39:25)

What we have been attempting to show is that the Qur'ān in its forceful and firm assertions about Allāh as the Supreme Lord of the Worlds, and through its employment of terms relevant to aspects of the thought-world of the Jāhilī poetry, posed these fundamental questions for the later theological-philosophical controversy of determinism and freedom.

1. Is the qadar of God so inclusive and pervading that it denies man possibility of participation

in the working out of his human destiny as well as his future in the after life, whether it be Paradise or Hell?

2. If the answer is Yes, How can God be just, and if the answer is No, how can He be al-Qādir?

There is no doubt that the problem of Determinism and Freedom in classical Islamic thought is a theological-philosophical one and as such, does not appear until post-Qur'ānic times. The technical phrase for the controversy, qaḍā' wa qadar, does not occur in the Qur'ān, nor do these two words, which are Qur'ānic, have the full theological sense in the Qur'ān they acquired later in the developing controversy.

It is necessary, however, to emphasize the important and intimate connection between foundational conceptions in the Qur'ān which deal with the relation between God and man and the later developing theology. As Toshihiko Izutsu points out,⁶¹ post-Qur'ānic theological development is the most dependent and faithful systemization of Qur'ānic assertions about the nature of God and man's place and purpose in the created order. Since theology can be broadly defined as "intellectual reflection on the faith of a particular religious community", its connection with the starting point of the religious community (here the Qur'ān,

revealed through the prophet Muḥammad) naturally is intimate and necessary. Or, as stated by Izutsu, theology is "the result of the effort of the human intellect and reason to grasp this very teaching (the message of the Qur'ān) more systematically and theoretically".⁶²

The awareness of the purpose and aim of theology must not only involve consciousness of the intimate connection between theologizing and the basic source of this effort, but also involve the realization that there is essential difference between the two. One may "discover" in the Qur'ān anything one desires, whether it be justification for political, economic and social theories as well as proofs for theological positions.⁶³ Theodor Nöldeke states that "The Koran, generally speaking, teaches a rather crass determinism."⁶⁴ We agree with Daud Rahbar⁶⁵ who rejects this kind of all inclusive dogmatic generalization and states: "The task of interpreting the Qur'ān is therefore, one of excavation, of viewing its unsophisticated thought in true historical perspective by reconstructing that primitive atmosphere in which it was revealed."⁶⁶ However, the context of Nöldeke's statement is a survey discussion of the early theological disputes, of which a major one was the determinism-freedom controversy.

Rahbar rejects the idea that the Qur'ān teaches a "crass determinism", not only because he believes it not true, but because his purpose is to establish that "the Qur'ān very consistently upholds the doctrine of the stern justice of God, and that the phrases of the Qur'ān which are believed to signify a capricious will of God, do so only when plucked from their contexts."⁶⁷ His lengthy study seeks to refute the notion that God predestines human action and that this idea is incompatible with the true theme of the Qur'ān; namely, the justice of God in light of Final Judgment.

However, the same question which he asks rhetorically about the early Muslim sects, i.e., "Is it not possible that the sects were reading their own meanings into Qur'anic phrases?"⁶⁸ must also be directed to his own work as well as any other exegetical study of the Qur'ān. He is attempting to get at the question, "What are the right presuppositions for exegesis?" Rahbar implies that many Muslims, from earliest times to the present, have operated with the wrong presuppositions by "reading their own meanings into the Qur'ān." A part of his task is to correct misinterpretations concerning the problem of determinism reflected in the Qur'ān by proving that the real issue is God as the God of Justice. The notion of God as the

God of predestination he finds incompatible with this central theme of the Qur'ān⁶⁹ and he accuses Muslim theology of obscuring true "Qur'anic thought".⁷⁰

We are not prepared to offer a critique of his effort to show the central theme of the Qur'ān is God's Justice in light of Final Judgment; indeed, he puts forth a convincing argument that this is the "central theme". Nor are we prepared to argue that Islamic theology has not obscured true Qur'ānic thought. For us, the question of finding and proving a central theme, and of condemning Islamic theology as obscuring the "essence" of the Qur'ān, is totally futile and beside the point. For to find the central theme, that is, to search out the essence of the Qur'ān is, indeed, to be involved in the task of "making" or "doing" theology, and to condemn most previous attempts at theological reflection on the Qur'ān as obscuring this essence demands, at the same moment, the asking of the question previously directed to the sects: Is this attempt not in fact the reading of one's own meanings into the Qur'ān?

As we have indicated, the best evidence that the Qur'ān itself poses the dilemma of determinism and freedom comes from the rigorous controversies which raged on during the first centuries of Islām; early

Muslim thinkers did in fact interpret the Qur'ān as expounding a thoroughgoing determinism. Their reflection about the heavy Qur'ānic emphasis upon Divine Sovereignty led them to wonder about the implications of this emphasis on the problem of human destiny. For some, the theme of God's 'adl was incidental, if not irrelevant all together; God's Qadar was so Absolute it left man totally devoid of any capacity to act or be responsible. For others, God's 'adl and the necessity of giving logical basis to taklīf implied a limitation of God's qadar because these two attitudes presupposed that man does indeed have the capacity (istiṭā'ah) to act, and therefore he himself is responsible for his acts.

It remains for us now to see how the theological-philosophical controversy developed in the post-Qur'ānic period.

Footnotes to Chapter II

¹Louis Gardet, "Allāh", Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, Vol. I, p. 408. He states: The Qur'ān poses neither the theological problem of predestination (it does not pose any problem), nor the philosophical problem of the nature of human freedom: it evokes the mystery of the relations between creature and Creator."

²G. E. Von Grunebaum, Islam, 2nd ed. (London, 1961), p. 82.

³Ibid., p. 82.

⁴All Qur'anic citations, unless otherwise stated are from The Qur'ān, trans. by Richard Bell, Vol. I and II (Edinburgh, 1937, 1939).

⁵Gardet, op. cit., p. 408.

⁶R. Blachere, Le Coran, Traduction nouvelle, Vols. I and II (Paris, 1949-50).

⁷Daud Rahbar, God of Justice (Leiden, 1960), pp. 97-119.

⁸Helmer Ringgren, Studies in Arabian Fatalism (Uppsala, 1955), p. 103.

⁹Ibid., p. 9 ff; Izutsu, op. cit., pp. 131-32.

¹⁰Montgomery Watt, Freewill and Predestination in Early Islam (London, 1949), pp. 21-22.

¹¹For a full discussion on the contrasts between the Jāhili and Qur'anic world-views, see: T. Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān (Montreal, 1966), and God and Man in the Koran (Tokyo, 1964); Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford, 1953); R. A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs (Cambridge, 1962); Helmer Ringgren, op. cit.; Niyazi Berkes, "Ethics and Social Practice in Islam", Philosophy East and West (Hawaii, 1962).

¹²H. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 9.

¹³Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 11-12.

- ¹⁶Izutsu, God and Man, p. 132.
- ¹⁷Ringgren, op. cit., p. 10. For the first verse, Izutsu's translation differs slightly: "Even in deep distress I never say 'Woe is me!' for what qadar has brought about", God and Man, p. 132.
- ¹⁸Ringgren, op. cit., p. 14.
- ¹⁹Izutsu, God and Man, p. 125.
- ²⁰Ringgren, op. cit., p. 30.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 33.
- ²²Ibid., p. 15.
- ²³Izutsu, God and Man, p. 127.
- ²⁴Rahbar, op. cit., p. 108.
- ²⁵Ibid., pp. 109-110.
- ²⁶Ringgren, op. cit., p. 98.
- ²⁷A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, Vols. I and II (London, 1955).
- ²⁸Ringgren, op. cit., p. 98.
- ²⁹J. M. S. Baljon, "The 'Amr of God' in the Koran", Acta Orientalia, Vol. 23 (1959), pp. 7-18.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 16.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 10.
- ³²Rahbar, op. cit., p. 118.
- ³³A. J. Wensinck, Arabic New-Year and the Feast of Tabernacles (Amsterdam, 1925), p. 5.
- ³⁴Ringgren, op. cit., p. 13.
- ³⁵Rahbar, op. cit., p. 119.
- ³⁶Wensinck, op. cit., p. 1.
- ³⁷A. J. Arberry, op. cit.

³⁸Wensinck, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁹Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁰Also: 36:82, 10:32, 30:24.

⁴¹This is an extremely delicate point. Baljon (op. cit., pp. 12-14), acknowledges that poetry's relation to the Qur'ān poses many unsettled questions; yet he argues that parallels (in this case the usage of 'amr) no doubt did exert a significant influence on the idiom and thought of the Qur'ān. His discussion of selected passages from religious poetry, both from before and at the time of the Prophet clearly shows 'amr to have the sense of Decree and dispensation of the heavenly council-hall designs, which, in their execution, bring both good and evil to mankind.

⁴²2:111; 3:42; 40:70.

⁴³Ringgren, op. cit., p. 103.

⁴⁴Izutsu, God and Man, pp. 127-28.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 128. The quotations are Izutsu's translation.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 130.

⁴⁷Also 40:69.

⁴⁸Ringgren, op. cit., p. 91. He cites this passage as evidence: "They urge thee to hasten the punishment, and were it not that there is a stated term, the punishment would (already) have come upon them; and it will surely come upon them suddenly when they are not aware." (29:53)

⁴⁹Izutsu, God and Man, pp. 131-32.

⁵⁰Rahbar, op. cit., pp. 388-397.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 129-137.

⁵²Ibid., p. 137.

⁵³For example: 2:1; 42:52; 27:1; 41:1-2.

⁵⁴2:173; 2:176; 2:212; 4:126.

⁵⁵11:8; 6:59; 9:51.

⁵⁶Rahbar, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁷See also: 74:32-34; 14:4; 16:93.

⁵⁸Tāghūt, from ṭaghā, "to be excessive". Here Tāghūt means a false god or the devil.

⁵⁹For a discussion of the semantic relationship of these terms, see Izutsu, God and Man, pp. 139-147; also his Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, pp. 133-139; 193-195.

⁶⁰The form is the fourth, and is causative. Goldziher tries to argue that 'aḍalla should be understood not as "to cause to go astray" but "to allow to go astray". He seems to want to remove the deterministic flavor of the fourth form. I. Goldziher, Le Dogme et La Loi De L'Islam, Trans. by F. Arin (Paris, 1920), pp. 72-73.

⁶¹Izutsu, God and Man, p. 46.

⁶²Ibid., p. 47.

⁶³In particular see: Abul Ala Maudoodi, "Economic and Political Teachings of the Qur'ān", A History of Muslim Philosophy, Vol. I (Wiesbaden, 1963), p. 178 ff.

⁶⁴Theodore Noldeke, Sketches from Eastern History, trans. by J. Sutherland Black (Beirut, 1963), p. 90.

⁶⁵Rahbar, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 8. This statement, however, is not completely true of Rahbar's own study. His analysis is about the contextual significance of important phrases which have been thought to signify "Predestination of human action" or "Caprice in Divine Nature". (p. 22) No attempt has been made to view many of the important key words under his consideration in light of their pre-Qur'anic signification. To study the Qur'ān's "unsophisticated thought in true historical perspective" by reconstructing "the primitive atmosphere in which it was revealed" necessitates, it would seem, an examination of those Qur'anic terms which had deterministic signification in the Pre-Qur'anic literature.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 226.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 223.

CHAPTER III

RADICAL DETERMINISM AS EXPRESSED IN THE CHAPTERS ON QADAR IN THE HADITH COLLECTIONS OF BUKHARI AND MUSLIM

Montgomery Watt is of the opinion that the ḥadīth material reflects an atheistic fatalism over against the theism of the Qur'ān.¹ The atheistic conceptions, he argues, belong to the system of ideas current among the pre-Islamic Arabs, and, in spite of the rejection of the Jāhili world-view by the Qur'ān, these fatalistic ideas continued to be held by Muslims, and even found their place in orthodox teaching.² Because the overwhelming emphasis is upon radical determinism in the ḥadīth material, Watt finds "it 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."³ Since the Qur'ān has as its center of interest the majesty and omnipotence of God, and "is through and through theistic",⁴ it may not be the fundamental source of the deterministic attitude reflected in the ḥadīth literature; (or, if it is the

basic source, the determinist position represents a very serious distortion of the Qur'ān). Instead, what we find in that literature is a regression to the Jāhili thought-world regarding the problem of determinism and freedom.

We disagree with this analysis, and interpret the theological discussions embodied in the deterministic ḥadīth as an attempt to formulate dogmatic assertions about the implications of Divine Omnipotency for the destiny of man. We do not deny the fatalistic character of the ḥadīth, but cannot accept that the ground of this "fatalism" is anything other than a radical yet consistent interpretation of certain aspects of God's nature found in the Qur'ān.⁵

In examining the ḥadīth material, we shall limit our study to the special chapters devoted to the problem of qadar in Bukhārī and Muslim.⁶ The over-all point of view expressed in these chapters is one of radical determinism. A. Wensinck states categorically that the ḥadīth literature has not preserved a single tradition which advocated freedom of the will.⁷ Watt criticizes this assumption as "too sweeping", and cites the following tradition from Bukhārī which indicates an anti-deterministic trend.

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.⁸

The purpose of this tradition, Watt states, is to persuade men that they "are not precluded from doing good works by a predetermined fate, but that on the contrary, there are forces present in the universe assisting them, and therefore their moral striving is not fruitless."⁹

However, we interpret this ḥadīth to the contrary. There is cited at the beginning of this ḥadīth an exegetical note on the Qur'ānic verse which serves as the basis of the ḥadīth. The chapter heading "The one protected (ma'sūm) is he whom God protects" is based on Sūrah 11:45: "He said (Noah's son): 'I shall betake myself to a mountain which will defend me from the water.' Noah said; 'There is no defender ('āsim) today from the command ('amr) of God except (for) him upon whom He has mercy.'" The ḥadīth interprets 'āsim to mean māni' (forbidding or prevention). Every khalīfah has two kinds of advisors (biṭānatān), one advising Good and other advising Evil. The one who is protected, i.e. the one who is prevented from following the inducements of the Evil-inciting confidant, is

protected by God, i.e., the One who prevents the following of evil advice. The protection meant here is not "protection" in the general sense of the word, as Qasṭallānī states, but specifically means being prohibited, or prevented from engagement with Evil.¹⁰ We would summarize the ḥadīth this way: Although there are forces which lead men to choose between the good and the bad, God ultimately determines for whom evil-doing shall be excluded. The implication is clearly that God determines the conduct of men.¹¹

The first tradition recorded in Bukhārī's Kitāb al-Qadar is also recorded in Muslim's opening chapter. It concerns the writing of man's destiny while the embryo is in the process of developing.

The Prophet said: "Anyone of you is made up in the womb of his mother in the course of forty days. Then he is a clot of blood for the same time, then a mass of flesh (mudghah) for the same time; then God sends an angel who is commanded (or charged -- yu'maru) with four things; his sustenance (rizq), his term ('ajal), and (whether he is to be) miserable (shaqīy) or happy (sa'id)."¹²

A variation of this ḥadīth is given by Bukhārī.

The Prophet said: "God gives power to (wakkal) an angel concerning the womb. The angel says, 'Oh Lord, a sperm (nuṭfah)! Oh Lord, a clot ('alaqah)! Oh Lord, a mass of flesh (mudghah)!' When God wills ('arāda) to determine (yaqdiya) its creation, he (the angel) says; 'Oh Lord, is it (to be) male or female, miserable or happy? What is the sustenance (rizq) and the term ('ajal)?' And so it is written in the womb of his mother."¹³

Three consecutive traditions in Muslim offer an elaboration and slight variation on the one just cited; we render two of them.¹⁴

The angel enters the sperm (nutfah) after it has remained in the womb forty or forty-five nights, and he says: "Oh Lord, miserable or happy?" And either one is written. And he says: "Oh Lord, male or female?" And one or the other is written (yuktabān). And his work ('amal) (i.e. how he shall conduct himself in terms of ethical action), his career ('athar), his term ('ajal) and his sustenance (rizq) are written down. Then the leaves are rolled up (so that) nothing is added to it or taken away from it.

Ibn Mas'ūd said: "The miserable one is he who is made miserable in the womb of his mother, and the happy one is whoever is left without it."¹⁵

This tradition was then told to one of the Companions of the prophet, who answered;

"How can a man be (made) miserable without work ('amal)?"¹⁶ And he (the reporter) replied: "Do you wonder about that? I heard the prophet say; 'When the sperm has remained for forty-two nights, God sends an angel to it, and he forms it (sawwara) and creates its hearing and sight, its skin, flesh and bones. Then he says; "Oh Lord, male or female?" And your Lord decrees what He wills (yaqḍī rabbuka mā shā'a), and the angel writes it down. Then he says, 'Oh Lord, his sustenance?' And the Lord decrees what He wills, and the angel writes it down. Then the angel goes forth with the written paper (ṣaḥīfah) in his hand and nothing is added to what He commanded ('umīnu) or taken away."¹⁷

These ḥadīth give theological expression to several Qur'ānic passages which speak about God's

creative activity regarding life. We see in these examples the ḥadīth as Qur'ānic commentary and theological reflection moving in the direction of a defined theological position. The theological reflection naturally follows from the description given in the Qur'ān of the creating process.

Recite in the name of thy Lord who created, created man from clotted blood. (96:1-2)

And let man look -- from what was he created? He was created from water dripping. (86:5-6)

Has not man considered that We have created him from a drop of seed (nuṭfah)? (36:77)

From a drop (nuṭfah) He created him and assigned his power (qaddara) (80:18-19)

Said his friend, in discussion with him: 'Hast thou disbelieved in Him who created thee from dust, and then from semen (nuṭfah), and then gave thee form as a man?' (18:35)

We have created man of as extract of clay;
Then We made him a drop (nuṭfah) in a receptacle sure;
Then We created the clot a morsel
Then We created the morsel bones
And We clothed the bones with flesh
And We produced him, another creature;
Blessed be Allah, the best of creators. (23:14)

The final development of this thought in the Qur'ān can be seen in Sūrah 22:5, which we quoted in the previous chapter under the discussion of 'ajal.

O ye people, if ye are in doubt about the upraising -- lo, We have created you from dust, then from a drop, then from a clot, then from a piece (of flesh), formed or unformed, that We may make clear to you; We settle what We will in the wombs (nuqirru fi'l 'arḥāmi mā nashā'u) until a set term ('ajalin musamman), then We bring you forth as infants; then (we act so) that ye may reach your maturity -- some of you die, and some of you are reduced to the most abject state of life, so that after having had knowledge they know not a thing; . . .

It can be seen now just how faithfully the ḥadīth we have cited adheres to the Qur'ānic passages which underlie the theological position advanced by the ḥadīth. The literary form of the ḥadīth and many of the important key words employed in the ḥadīth follow the form and key expressions of the Qur'ān.

The theological reflection represented here is produced in attempting to answer this question (which is implicit in the Qur'ānic declarations about God's creative activity): To what extent does God's power pervade the shaping of man's destiny regarding all aspects of his existence? What is it that God "settles" according to what He wills in the wombs? The answer is rigorously consistent. God not only determines one's sex, sustenance and life-span; he also determines his conduct ('amal)¹⁹ and ultimate destiny in the hereafter. In other words, God's determining power is total, encompassing both man's human and ultimate destiny.

Montgomery Watt, while admitting the phrase "miserable or happy" most probably refers to Paradise and Hell, speculates that "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."²⁰ Watt's speculation is understandable in light of his main contention that the ḥadīth concerning the problem of determinism portray to a large extent, the pre-Qur'ānic outlook. We take issue with his essential argument, which runs as follows. The Qur'ān focuses attention upon God's majesty and omnipotency, and in the Qur'ān are found the complementary ideas of Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility.²¹ The ḥadīth material depicts life as fixed and controlled by forces often characterized as impersonal (e.g. the Pen and The Book); this deterministic outlook, which he terms atheistic fatalism, is repudiated by the Qur'ān. Therefore, the Qur'ān cannot be the fundamental basis for the intellectual formulation of the determinist position articulated in the ḥadīth, because this material does not conform to the central message of the Qur'ān. Thus, the fundamental source of the ḥadīth material regarding its radical determinist stance can only be

found in the Jāhili thought-world. "The predominant tendency", he states, "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 Muhammad."²²

There are two fundamental problems reflected in this argument. That the Qur'ān may be thought to focus attention upon the two complementary notions of Sovereignty and human responsibility does not prevent the possibility of deriving from the Qur'ān the necessary "building blocks" essential for developing the theological position of radical determinism. The issue raised here is extremely important and similar to the problem we raised in the second chapter concerning the difficulty of getting at the right presuppositions for exegesis. Here, the struggle is to free oneself from a particular theological point of view about the Qur'ān which might hinder the task of interpreting a quite different theological point of view about the Qur'ān.

Secondly, the similarity between the atheistic fatalism of Jāhiliya times and radical determinism of the ḥadīth material need not imply that the latter has as its fundamental source the former. The point of contact may have nothing to do with common sources; it

may rather be found in the problem of determinism itself. It may be possible to say, then, that the ḥadīth portray the fatalistic pre-Islamic outlook, not in that they reflect a return to or a revival of pre-Islamic fatalism, but because theoretically, a radical determinism derived from religious assertions about God's Sovereignty or a fatalism based on an impersonal Time-Fate force is one and the same philosophical problem. Whether the control of all things is in the hands of a personal God or an impersonal Time-Fate, many of the philosophical issues pertaining to the implications of these powers for the destiny of man are similar.

We are certain, however, that the ḥadīth put forward a theological position based fundamentally on and intimately connected to Qur'ānic assertions about God's Omnipotency and Sovereignty.

Returning to the ḥadīth of Bukhārī and Muslim we find an elaboration of the significance of God's predetermining the 'amal of man.²³

By God! If any of you, or a man, does the works (ya'malu bi-'amal) of the people of Hell so that between him and it there is nothing but a fathom or a cubit,²⁴ and then the Book shall surpass him (yasbiqū 'alayhi'l-kitāb)²⁵ and he will do the works of the people of paradise, and he will enter it. And indeed, a man may do the works of the people of paradise so much so that between him and it there exists only a fathom or a cubit -- and

then the Book will overcome him, and he will do the works of the people of Hell, and shall enter it.

We have previously seen that God determines, before a man is born, the kind of life he will lead. The ḥadīth just cited places particular emphasis on the meaning of the acts of man and their relation to the activity of God as the pre-determiner of all things. The ḥadīth answers the questions: Who is the author of man's acts, and what significance do these acts have for the eternal destiny of man?²⁶

Also, stress is placed on the importance of the final acts. Other ḥadīth illustrate this idea more forcefully.

Abū Hurayra said: "We were with the Prophet at Khaybar, and He said about one who was with him who professed Islam. 'This is one of the people of Hell'. When the combat began, the man fought with great struggle, so much so that he was wounded very much, and disabled. One of the Companions of the Prophet approached and said: 'Oh Prophet, do you see that the man whom you said was of the people of Hell fought in the way of God (i.e. performed the jihād) with great struggle and is wounded very much?' The Prophet said: 'Nevertheless, he is one of the people of Hell'. Some of the Muslims were almost doubting when the man, on account of his suffering of his wounds, put his hand to his quiver, took out from it an arrow, and committed suicide. Some of the Muslims ran to the Prophet and said: 'Oh prophet, God has verified your story. So and so cut his throat and killed himself.' The Prophet said: Oh Bilāl, rise

and proclaim: No one will enter Paradise except the Mu'min. Indeed! God supports this religion with an impudent (fājir) man."²⁷

In the same chapter, the same story is related about a man who was serving God by fighting in the jihād. He fought courageously, but the prophet numbered him among the people of Hell. After he killed himself, the Prophet said:

Indeed! A servant may do the works of the people of Hell but he is in fact one of the people of Paradise. He may do the works of the people of Paradise when he is in fact one of the people of Hell. Works must be judged from concluding acts ('a'māl bi-l-khawātīm)²⁸

It is evident that man's ultimate destiny is clearly predetermined before his last acts are put into effect; yet these last acts have special significance regarding his eternal fate. Watt believes what is determined is primarily the last acts, but at the same time, lip service is somehow paid to the Muslim conception of human responsibility.²⁹ Wensinck thinks that these traditions emphasizing last acts indicate human action has a relation to man's eternal fate, but the precise nature of the relationship is unclear.³⁰

It is also possible that this emphasis on the importance of last acts simply calls attention to the total lack of human power concerning man's activity. The stress is not on the "acts" but on the fact that as

last acts, they are the criterion for the Judgment Day decision. All preceding activity has no relevance. These last acts, when they occur, reveal the actualization of activity predetermined; in a certain sense they verify or implement those Divine predetermined decrees which decide if one is to be judged a mu'min or a kāfir.

Also, it is indicated in these ḥadīth that the prophet has knowledge of things to come. Bukhārī records a ḥadīth which implies that the whole course of history was revealed to the prophet by God.

The prophet preached to us a sermon in which he did not leave out anything (that would happen) until Resurrection Day but that he mentioned it. "He who knows it, knows it and he who is ignorant of it is ignorant of it. If I were to see something I had forgotten, I would know it just as a man knows the face of his absent (friend); when he sees him, he recognizes him."³¹

Muslim records two traditions which tell us that the creation of people for Hell and Paradise occurs while they are still in the loins of their fathers.

The Prophet was called to the funeral of a young boy who was of the Followers of the Prophet ('anṣār). I said: ('ā'ishah) "Oh prophet, Happiness (ṭūba) to this youth! A sparrow among the sparrows of Paradise! He did no evil, and no evil will reach him." The prophet said; "Or the opposite of that. Oh 'ā'ishah, Indeed God creates for Paradise (some) people. He creates for them that (Paradise) (while they are) in the loins of their fathers. He creates for Hell (some) people. He creates it for them (while they are) in the loins of their fathers."³²

In both Bukhārī and Muslim, we find ḥadīth where someone raises the question: Why bother about 'amal if man's ultimate destiny is predetermined?

We were sitting with the Prophet who had a stick with which he was scratching the ground. He said: "There is not one of you whose place in Hell or Paradise has not been written." Then a man said: "Shall we not abandon our trust?" The Prophet said: "No! Do works, for all is easy (kullun muyassarun)."³² And he read (from Sūrah 92:5ff.)

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. (Bell's Translation).³³

In several traditions of Muslim, the same problem is addressed.³⁴ In one, a man seeks clarification concerning "our religion" (dīnanā) by asking if our character or disposition results from that which was pre-written and pre-determined. The prophet answered yes, and then the man asked what is the use of 'amal. The prophet answered: "Work, for everything is easy."³⁵ In another ḥadīth, the prophet answers the same question with: "Everything is easy according to what was created for him". (Kullun muyassarun limā khuliqa lahu).³⁶

The question is given further elaboration in the following ḥadīth from Muslim.

I was addressed by 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn:
 "Do you believe what people do today and exert effort in is something determined (quḍiya) for them and (something) accomplished by them from a pre-ordained decree? (min qadari mā sabaqa) -- or are their actions assumed by them according to what is brought to them by their prophet, and the obligation established for them?" I said: "(The actions of men) are something decreed (quḍiya) for them and pre-determined for them (maḍā)."
 The other said: "Is there no wrong doing (zulm)?" I said: "All things are of God and under the sovereignty of His hand; therefore, what He does is not (to be) questioned -- (rather), they are to be questioned."³⁷ Then He said to me: "God have mercy! I intended nothing by questioning you except to appraise your understanding ('aql)."
 Then two men of Muzaynah came to the Prophet and said: "Oh Prophet, do you think what people do today and exert effort in is something decreed for them and accomplished by them from a pre-ordained decree? -- or are their actions assumed by them according to what is brought to them by their prophet and the obligation established for them?" He said: "No. Rather, (their actions) are decreed and determined (qadā and maḍā) for them. The truth of this is in the Book of God: By a soul and what formed it, and implanted in it its wickedness and its piety!" (Bell's translation - 91:7,8)³⁸

In these ḥadīth the basic question is: What is the point of making effort to act ethically if one's moral conduct has been predetermined? The answers given vary, but all are based on passages from the Qur'ān. The first Qur'ānic references appear to contradict the basic presupposition that all 'a'māl are pre-determined (92:5ff).³⁹ However, in the last ḥadīth cited, the Qur'ānic verses (91:7,8) are interpreted from

the deterministic point of view; God fashions and completes the soul and inspires it with either piety or wickedness.

In the ḥadīth just quoted we have expressed the basic religious-theological position underlying all of the ḥadīth described so far. When the question was asked: "Is there no zulm?", the answer came in the form of a religious-theological statement describing the meaning of God's Omnipotency. "All things are of God and under the control of His Hand."⁴⁰

We have seen that both ^{the} human and ultimate destiny of mankind have been pre-determined by Divine Decrees, but just how far in advance? Muslim and Bukhārī record ḥadīth which emphasize the fact that all things were decided from eternity.

The Prophet said: "God wrote the decrees (maqādir) of the created world fifty-thousand years before he created the heavens and the earth." And he said: "The throne of God is on the water."⁴¹

Muslim records several versions of the story of the dispute between Adam and Moses⁴² where Adam absolves himself from Moses' chastisement by claiming he could not possibly be responsible for his acts since they were predetermined before his existence.

Adam and Mūsā disputed before their Lord, and Adam confuted Mūsā. Mūsā said: "You are the Adam whom God created with His hand, and in you He breathed His spirit (rūḥ),

and made His angels bow down to you, and caused you to live in Paradise. Then you caused mankind to descend to earth by your blunder (khatf'ah). Adam said: "You are Mūsā whom God chose, and with His word (kalām) and gave you tablets upon which is the explanation (tibyān) of all things, and brought you close (to Him) as a confidant. Then, how long was the Torah (tawrā) written before I was created?" Mūsā answered: "Forty years." Adam said: "Do you find in it (the words); 'And Adam disobeyed His Lord and went astray?' (See Qur'ān, 20: 121) Mūsā said, 'Yes'. Adam said: "And do you blame me for doing an act ('amal) which God wrote that I (should) do forty years before He created me?" And the Prophet said: "Adam confuted Mūsā."⁴³

Qasṭallānī states that the forty year period began at the moment God said: "I will create on the earth a Messenger.", and terminated at the moment God breathed into Adam His spirit of life.⁴⁴ It signifies a period before the creation of the world at which time decrees were set down.

What is most interesting about this story is the fact that Adam refuted the argument of Moses that he was responsible for the Fall of mankind from Paradise. He proved to Moses that his act of disobedience did not come from himself, but was imposed upon him by God's Divine Will.

Qasṭallānī gives an interesting interpretation of Adam's argument which is influenced by Sunnī Kalām. What Adam wanted to say is this:

Why do we forget the eternal foreknowledge and remember only the act of man, which is a secondary cause, but neglect the primary cause which is the decree. You, Oh Moses, whom God favored above the other prophets; you, one of the excellent men who has contemplated the mysteries of God -- you must know the decree! This dispute does not exist in the world of secondary causes in which the ability and the part man plays in the act must never be neglected. The eternal foreknowledge exists in the transcendent world where the spirits intermingle. Regarding the fault, it does not strike man under moral obligation as long as he lives in this world where all are responsible. It is God, says Adam, who predestined me and my error. Especially, it must not be forgotten that this dispute existed after God had pardoned Adam; this is why his appeal to the pre-existent decree justified him, since sin does not admit anymore blame for him who has been pardoned . . .⁴⁵

The ḥadīth itself, however, implies not only that God pre-determined the Fall of mankind from Paradise, but also that the responsibility for evil acts performed does not rest with man. It is this attitude which ^{al-}Ḥasan al-Baṣrī attempts to refute in his treatise.

In another ḥadīth recorded by Muslim we find murder justified on the grounds that the one slain, if he had lived, would have caused much trouble.

The Prophet said: "Indeed! The boy whom Khaḍir killed was marked (ṭubi'a) a kāfir. If he had lived he would have caused his parents to suffer ('arhaqa) oppression (ṭughyān) and unbelief (kufr)."⁴⁶

This ḥadīth is interesting because it is a paraphrase of two verses from the story of Moses and al-Khaḍīr found in the Qur'ān

So the two (i.e. Moses - as a legendary figure - and the Mysterious Man commonly known as Khaḍīr) journeyed on until, when they met a boy, he (Khaḍīr) slew him. Moses said, "What, hast thou slain a pure (i.e. innocent) soul guilty of no murder? Verily thou has done a hideous (nukr) thing." (18:73)

As for the boy (killed), his parents were believers and we feared lest he should impose on them tughyān and kufr. (18:79)⁴⁷

We shall encounter this story again when we deal with the treatise of Ḥasan al-Baḡrī in the next chapter.

The peculiar expression, "The Pen is Dry", is found in one tradition of Bukhārī.

The Pen is dry (jaffa al-qalamu) (that wrote) according to the knowledge of God and His saying; "God leads him astray ('aḍalla) according to (His) knowledge." (45:22) And Abū Hurayra said: "The Prophet said to me, 'The Pen is dry (that wrote) of what will happen to you'." ⁴⁸

Ringgren gives two variations, one from Abū Dā'ūd and the other from Tirmidhī.

The first thing God created was the Pen. He said: "Write!" It asked; "What shall I write?" He answered: "Write the destinies (maqādir) of all things." ⁴⁹

The first thing God created was the Pen. He said: "Write!" It asked: "What shall I write?" He answered: "Write the decree (qadar) what has been and what shall be in eternity." ⁵⁰

The obvious meaning is that the act of making the decrees has been completed, and the destinies of all people have been fixed. In the tradition from Bukhārī, fixed, written decrees refer specifically to pre-destination for Paradise or Hell.

Although we did not find the expression "Lawḥ mahfūz" (Preserved Tablet) in the Books of Qadar in Bukhārī and Muslim, Guillaume believes what is meant by the many references to writing is the preserved tablet.⁵¹

In the Qur'ān, al-lawḥ signifies the Tablet which is kept in heaven and is called Lawḥ mahfūz. "Nay, it is a glorious Qur'ān, in a tablet preserved." (85: 21-22) Wensinck states⁵² that two different conceptions must be distinguished concerning al-lawḥ. Firstly, the tablet is referred to as the original copy of the Qur'ān. Secondly, the tablet is the record of the decisions of the Divine Will. It is obviously the second meaning of al-lawḥ which is reflected in the ḥadīth literature. All that has been and will be have been written on the lawḥ mahfūz.

The immutability of the pre-ordained decree and its effect upon the lives of people are expressed often.

The Prophet said to Ibn Sayyād: "I have something hidden from you." He (Ibn Sayyād) said: "The Smoke (ad-dukhkh)."⁵³ The Prophet said: "Depart! For you are not able to exceed

your decree (qadr).” Then ‘Umar said: “Give me permission to cut off his head!” The Prophet said: “Let him be. If it is he (the antichrist -- ad-dajjāl) you are not able, and if he is not the one, there would be no good for you in killing him.”⁵⁴

Qasṭallānī states this about the ḥadīth:⁵⁵

If the Lord predetermined that he will go out and do his work, he will not permit you to kill the one whom according to the decree must live in order to accomplish this. If God permitted you to kill him, he would be prevented from realizing the decree, which is impossible. If, on the other hand, Ibn Ṣayyād is not the Anti-Christ, there is no advantage in killing him.

Bukhārī records two ḥadīth in which the prophet condemns the making of vows.

The Prophet forbade vows. He said: “The vow (nadhṛ) does not prevent (or change) anything, even though something is forced out of the greedy (bakhīl) because of it.”⁵⁶

Abū Hurayra said: “The vow brings nothing to the son of Adam which has not been decreed (quddira) for him; rather, the vow throws him on the decree (qadar).”⁵⁷

Qasṭallānī explains that the prophet forbade making vows because people might get the idea they could guarantee their faith and be distracted from the certainty that all is decreed. The only benefit in vow-making comes when the greedy are involved; they must give up something.⁵⁸

We have seen that in many of the ḥadīth from Bukhārī and Muslim the intimate connection between them

and their foundational concepts, which are found in passages from the Qur'ān. We noted one instance (the slaying of the boy by Khaḍir) where the ḥadīth was nothing more than a paraphrase of two passages from the Qur'ān. The following example is built upon three separate sets of verses. We shall cite them first, then give the ḥadīth.

Say: "There will nothing befall us but what Allah hath written (kataba) down for us." (9:51)

Not one to rebellion against Him will you tempt, but him who is (destined) to roast in the Blaze. (mā 'intum 'alayhi bi-fātinīn 'illā man Huwa ṣali-'l' jahīm) (37:162-163)

Glorify the name of thy Lord the most high,
Who created and formed
Who assigned power and guided (wa-'l ladhī qaddara fa hadā). (87:1-3)

The Ḥadīth reads as follows:

Say: "Nothing happens except by what God has written (kataba), (and) for us kataba is qaḍā." Mujāhid said: "(You are not able to) 'to tempt' (bi-fātinīm) means 'lead astray' (bi-mudillīn), except whomever God has written that he is to roast in the fire ('illā man kataba allāhu 'annahu yaṣlā-'l' jahīm). He decreed (qaddara) and He guided (hadā) means He decreed misery and happiness, and He guided the sheep to their pastures."⁵⁹

These three verses which, from solely the religious perspective, might be interpreted as affirmations of Divine Sovereignty, are given a thoroughly deterministic formulation. Again, the emphasis is upon the predetermination of man's ultimate destiny.

In the light of the Divine decrees,
resignation and patience are the only alternatives for
man in the face of misfortune which may come upon him.

'Ā'shah reported that she asked the Prophet about the plague (tā'ūn). He said: "It is a punishment ('adhāb) which God sends against whomever He wills. And God makes it a mercy (rahmah) for the believers. No servant, in a country where the plague is, who remains in the midst of it, and does not go out of the country, (remaining) patiently and forbearingly (ṣābiran muhtasiban), knowing that nothing will happen to him except what God has written down for him -- he will have the same reward as a martyr (shahīd)."⁶⁰

Qasṭallānī refers us to an ḥadīth from Bukhārī's book of Medicine which explains further that resignation and patience are the only options when natural calamities strike.⁶¹

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was to set out for an expedition to Syria when he was informed that the plague had broken out there, and upon mature consideration he decided not to go. Then Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ asked him: "Will you flee from the decree (qadar) of God?" 'Umar answered . . . "Yes, we flee from the qadar of God to (another) qadar of God. If you had some camels sent to a valley, one side of which was fertile and the other barren, and if you made them graze the fertile side, you would do that through the decree of God, and if you made them graze the barren side, you would do that through the decree of God." Then the question was settled by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Auf who related the following saying of the Prophet: "When you hear of the plague in a country, do not go there; but if it breaks out in the country where you are, do not leave it."

By fleeing from one decree to another decree,
a man, in thinking he is escaping his destiny might very
well encounter his true decree.

Footnotes to Chapter III

¹Watt, op. cit., p. 20.

²Ibid., pp. 20-29.

³Ibid., p. 28. He is bothered by the fact that "prominent Muslims of unexceptional orthodoxy accepted these fatalistic traditions as genuine." p. 28.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁵The ḥadīth material, as we shall see, gives us many traditions which are obviously and intimately connected to specific Qur'ānic passages. To imply that the interpretation given to these passages is primarily from the pre-Islamic fatalistic view is to do a grave injustice to those early Muslims who sought to understand more systematically the difficult issues expressed in the Qur'ān. They, more than later followers of Islām, must have been keenly aware of the opposition of the Qur'ān to the Jāhili outlook.

⁶Bukhārī, Jāmi' as-Ṣaḥīḥ, M. L. Krehl, ed., Vol. IV (Leiden, 1908) and Muslim, as-Ṣaḥīḥ, Vol. IV (Cairo, 1955/1375). There are few studies by Western scholars that deal specifically with the problem of Determinism in the ḥadīth literature; the following works have been useful to us.

A. Guillaume, "Some Remarks on Free Will and Predestination in Islam Together with a translation of the Kitāb al-Qadar from the Saḥīḥ of al-Bukhari", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1924). pp. 43-63; E. E. Salisbury, "Muhammadan Predestination and Free Will", Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 8 (1866), pp. 122-147; A. de Vlieger, Kitāb al-Qadr (Leiden, 1903), pp. 39-81; Ringgren, op. cit., pp. 116-126; M. Watt, Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam (London, 1948), pp. 17-31. Guillaume has translated Bukhārī's Kitāb al-Qadar, and Salisbury has attempted to render into English many of the ḥadīth from both Bukhārī and Muslim concerning the problem of qadar. We have freely referred to these translations, but in the main, the translations we cite are our own. Vleiger's study has been useful, largely because he has translated into French Bukhārī's book on Qadar along with Qasṭallānī's commentary. Ringgren and Watt have included short

chapters on the traditions in their studies. We might also mention A. Wensinck, Muslim Creed (London, 1965), where a few of the more well known deterministic ḥadīth are quoted.

⁷Wensinck, op. cit., p. 51.

⁸Watt, op. cit., p. 27: Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 8.

⁹Watt, Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁰Vlieger, op. cit., p. 63.

¹¹Fazl Rahman, Islamic Methodology in History (Karachi, 1965), pp. 64-65, also finds ḥadīth from the canonical collections which he thinks are not "deterministic in the sense of utter predestination." For example: "Every child is born in a natural state (i.e., a good state) but its parents make either a Jew or a Christian or a Magian of it. . . ." (This ḥadīth is recorded once in Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 3, but several times in Muslim; Qadar, no. 22, 23, 24, 25). The other two ḥadīth he cites puzzle us regarding his claim. One deals with the taking of medicines while the other questions the possibility of fleeing the plague. We shall later refer in detail to the plague ḥadīth.

"Do you think that amulets and medicines we use and precautionary measures (against illness, etc.) we take repel (radda) the qadar of God?" The Prophet answered: "(No) they are themselves the qadar of God." (al-Tirmidhī)

¹²Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 1; Muslim, Qadar, no. 1.

¹³Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 1.

¹⁴Muslim, Qadar, no. 2, 3, 4.

¹⁵ash-shaqīyu man shaqiya fī baṭni 'ummahi wa as-sa'īdu man wu'iza bi-ghayrihi.

¹⁶The question implies that human conduct, i.e. ethical behaviour (in this case the lack of it) is the criterion for one being made miserable (or happy).

¹⁷Muslim, Qadar, no. 3. In Muslim, Qadar, no. 4, the only addition is that the angel asks the Lord: Oh Lord, straight or not straight? ('asawīyun 'aw ghayru sawīyan). Qasṭallānī mentions that sometimes the angel

writes "on his forehead or on his head", and he compares this to the proverb: "What is written on the forehead, the eyes will see (its realization)." Vleiger, op. cit., p. 45; Ringgren, op. cit., p. 120. Ringgren states that this idea, that destiny is written on the foreheads, was a very widespread one. It is found in the Arabian Nights, a Bektashi catechism (man's forehead is said to be the lawh mahfūz on which his destiny is written), and others. Goldziher, says Ringgren, thinks that it is an Indian idea. Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁸Also pertinent are the passages cited in the previous chapter in which 'ajal and kitāb occur together: 13:38; 3:139; also 57:22.

¹⁹'amal, "work", refers to man's actions in terms of moral conduct, or ethical action. Watt views the term 'amal as possibly being "an adaptation to Muslim conceptions of the Judgment of a man's actions," Watt, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁰Watt, ibid., p. 25. He gives an example of what he calls the assimilative tendency within the ḥadīth where "pre-Islamic material is adapted to Muslim ideas."

"The prophet 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." (Bukhārī, adab, no. 101). Ibid., p. 31. However, one may view this ḥadīth as an example which indicates the outright rejection of pre-Islamic fatalism. Impersonal time is replaced by the Personal God, Allāh. God is not identified with Dahr; He is Dahr, i.e., Impersonal Time-Fate does not exist.

²¹Watt, op. cit., p. 12.

²²Ibid., p. 28.

²³Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 1; Muslim, Qadar, no. 1. These ḥadīth are continuations of the creation-ḥadīth just cited.

²⁴The length of outstretched hands and the length of an arm. Qasṭallānī comments that a cubit signifies that moment immediately preceding the death of a person. In that moment, God decides, by His grace and mercy whether or not a man's life will be ended after he has performed a good act. Vlieger, op. cit., p. 44.

²⁵The meaning is: What was decreed beforehand shall overcome him.

²⁶See Wensinck, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁷Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 5.

²⁸Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 5. The last sentence is Wensinck's translation, op. cit., p. 56. Wensinck quotes a shorter tradition from Muslim, Qadar, no. 11 emphasizing last acts. "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." Wensinck, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁹Watt, op. cit., p. 26.

³⁰Wensinck, op. cit., p. 55.

³¹Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 4.

³²Muslim, Qadar, no. 31.

³³Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 4.

³⁴Muslim, Qadar, no. 6, 7, 8, 9.

³⁵Muslim, Qadar, no. 8. The expression "The pens are dried" (jaffat al-'aqlām) is used to express the idea that the decrees were written beforehand. We shall encounter this metonym again.

³⁶Muslim, Qadar, no. 9. Yet another ḥadīth (Muslim, Qadar, no. 8) gives this variation: Kullu 'āmilin muyassarun li-'amalihi. Each worker (moral agent) is made easy (or prepared) on account of his 'amal.

³⁷"He will not be questioned about what He doeth, but they will be questioned." (21:23)

³⁸Muslim, Qadar, no. 10. See the risālah of Ḥasan for a different interpretation of 91:7-8.

³⁹However, the expression "Everything is made easy" applies to believers only.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Muslim, Qadar, no. 16. (This ḥadīth occurs once in Muslim but not at all in Bukhārī). The significance of God's throne on the water is that it existed before the creation of the heaven and the earth.

⁴²Muslim, Qadar, No. 13, 14, 15; Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 11.

⁴³Muslim, Qadar, no. 15.

⁴⁴Vlieger, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 73, where Qasṭallānī comments on Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 11.

⁴⁶Muslim, Qadar, no. 11. See Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, pp. 149 and 216, where these verses are cited in the word-studies of Ṭaghā and munkar. See also Vlieger, op. cit., pp. 50-51; Khaḍir is described as 'a strange mythical figure who guided sailors and people travelling in the desert.' See also Wensinck, "al-Khaḍir", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam.

⁴⁷Translation from Izutsu, ibid.

⁴⁸Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 2.

⁴⁹Ringgren, op. cit., p. 117. (Tirmidhī, Qadar, no. 17).

⁵⁰Ibid. (Abū Dā'ūd, Sunnah, no. 16).

⁵¹Guillaume, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵²A. J. Wensinck, "Lawḥ", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden, 1953), pp. 287-288.

⁵³Guillaume, op. cit., p. 60, states that Qasṭallānī explains that Ibn Ṣayyād wished to say dakhān (smoke) instead of dukhkh, but was unable to utter it because of the "custom of soothsayers who would snatch at their words."

⁵⁴Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 14.

⁵⁵Vlieger, op. cit., pp. 78-79; also cited by Ringgren, op. cit., p. 122.

⁵⁶Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 6.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Vlieger, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

⁵⁹Bukhārī, Qadar, no. 15. There are several instances where various ḥadīth give explanation to well known verses from the Qur'ān. Bukhārī cites five ḥadīth (Qadar, no. 4) which are based on the verse: "God's command is a determined decree" (or absolute decree) (wa kāna 'amru allāhi qadaran maqdūran). (33:38). Muslim records one based on Sūrah 54:49: "We have created everything bi-qadar". Bi-qadar is interpreted as "according to a fixed decree".

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Vlieger, op. cit., p. 80. We quote the ḥadīth (Bukhārī, Tibb, no. 20) from Ringgren, op. cit., p. 124.

CHAPTER IV

AL-ḤASAN AL-BAṢRĪ: HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

A. Historical-Theological Background

Ḥasan of Baṣra (21/643-110/728) is no doubt one of the most significant figures in early Islām. He is considered the "father" of Ṣūfism,¹ is respected and venerated by the 'ahl al-sunnah, and numbered among the Mu'tazilah. His name is to be found throughout the Thousand and One Nights as a legendary character of extreme wisdom and cleverness.

But more controversial is the view of Ḥasan as a "Qadarī", who occupied the central place in the important, "pre-rationalistic" theological debate on determinism and freedom. This is the Ḥasan to whom we wish to give our attention. Our final concern will be to examine a very early theological treatise, written during the reign of 'abd al-Malik (65-86/685-705), which is in the form of a letter written by Ḥasan to the khalīfah 'abd al-Malik. It is an extremely important document, not only because it is the earliest extant theological treatise in Islām, but also, it may be taken to represent the kind of theological

discussions which existed before the beginnings of speculative theology. As we shall see, the attempt of Ḥasan to arrive at the theological position representing the indeterminist view was mainly an exegetical effort. In the preceding chapter, we indicated that the close connection between certain key Qurānic concepts about God's Omnipotence and the radical determinist position reflected in the ḥadīth material of Bukhārī and Muslim largely resulted from systematic exegetical effort, too. Although only a few of the ḥadīth which we discussed are debated in the treatise, the radical determinism of the ḥadīth material is the position attacked by Ḥasan.

However, before discussing the treatise, we must speak about that confused, tumultuous and uncertain period in which Ḥasan lived. Our basic concern in these next few pages will be to show that the theological thought of the first century is intimately connected to the political and social upheavals of the period, and (contrary to the impression given by the heresiographers that the thinking was systematic, and developed among various "sects") what we may call the theological endeavor of the time is an attempt to give theological-religious expression to the difficult issues facing the newly emerging Islamic community. It is beyond the

scope of this paper, and the ability of its writer to do anything more than hint at the necessity, for future theological studies, to work out more precisely the relationship between the material classified by the heresiographers and the historical situations from which that material arose.

Hasan's life spans the period in Islamic history which witnessed the beginning and early development of theological thought. He was fourteen when 'Uthmān was murdered, and this event led to constant strife concerning the problem of choosing the khalīfah. 'Alī's election to the khilāfah was problematical² and discontent spread. In 36/656 'Alī defeated the rebel forces of 'A'isha, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr at the battle of the Camel.³ After his victory, 'Alī hoped to regain the allegiance of Mu'āwiyah, but Mu'āwiyah demanded the surrender of the murderers of 'Uthmān. This conflict led to a show-down between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah, and, in 37/657, they fought at Ṣiffīn, where 'Alī was tricked into arbitrating the dispute by Mu'āwiyah. The task of the arbitrators

was to determine whether the acts of which 'Uthmān was accused were or were not ahdāth, arbitrary actions at odds with the divine law. If the caliph were guilty, his murder

could be regarded as an act of justice; but if he had committed no errors, the conclusion must be that he had been killed unjustly, and in consequence Mu'āwiyah was justified in claiming the right of vengeance. But this was not all, for a decision in favor of Mu'āwiyah would inevitably involve, for 'Alī, the loss of the caliphate.⁴

During the period of arbitration, disputes arose in 'Alī's ranks. At this time a group of 'Alī's supporters broke with him, protesting arbitration with the cry "no decision save God's" (lā ḥukm illā li'llāh). These dissidents, the first of the Khawārij, accused 'Alī of sinning against God by arbitrating. Meanwhile, the arbitrators decided 'Uthmān had not committed wrong, and 'Alī was forced to march against Mu'āwiyah once again. He sought to re-enlist the dissidents, but they refused, and he attacked them, and massacred them at the battle of al-Naḥrawān (38/658). His force weakened, 'Alī had no choice but to return to Kūfa where, in 40/660, he was murdered.⁵

For the next twenty years, covering the reign of Mu'āwiyah, rebellion was continually breaking out in Iraq, particularly around Baṣra. 'Ubaydallāh ibn Ziyād, governor of Baṣra (76-85/675-684) kept things manageable until the death of Yazīd (84/683).⁶ It must be remembered that only in Syria and Palestine did the Umayyad's have firm control, and expeditions were

continually sent to put an end to revolts in Iraq.⁷ When 'Abd al-Malik first came to power, Iraq had to be abandoned. For five years it remained under the control of Mus'ab b. al-Zubayr: The brother of the anti-Khalīfah 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr.

In 72/691 Mus'ab was destroyed. At the same time, Ḥajjāj was sent to Mecca, where Ibn al-Zubayr was destroyed (73/692). After the recovery of Iraq, 'Abd al-Malik organized his efforts against the Khawārij. In 73/692-3 the Najdiyyah were defeated; in 74/694 'Abd al-Malik transferred al-Ḥajjāj to Kūfa, who was successful in defeating the Azāriqah three years later.⁸ Also, at the same time, a fresh Khārijī uprising broke out in Mesopotamia. After calling for more Syrian troops, Ḥajjāj was able to defeat this new outbreak. Then in 83/702 Ḥajjāj built the garrison city of Wāsiṭ, which became an outpost permanently occupied by the Syrian army.⁹ Thus for more than forty years, Khārijī insurrections and revolts racked Iraq.

From one year before the battle at Ṣiffīn until his death, Ḥasan resided in Baṣra, a camp town just fifty miles west of the Persian Gulf. As a young man he took part in the campaigns of conquest in Eastern Iraq. His criticism of Ḥajjāj for building the garrison city of Wāsiṭ resulted in Ḥasan having to hide

out until the death of Ḥajjāj.¹⁰ Ḥasan was antagonistic towards the political elite, but probably did not give support to the activists. The question often directed to him was: Should one revolt or be patient (i.e., practice ṣabr)?

They (i.e. those who had been fighting al-Ḥajjāj) went to see Ḥasan, and said to him: "Oh Abū Sa'īd! What do you say of fighting this tyrant (Ḥajjāj) who has shed sacred blood, seized sacred property, abandoned his prayers, and done this and that?" And they mentioned some of the wicked deeds of al-Ḥajjāj. Ḥasan said: "I think you should not fight him because if he is a punishment from God, you will not be able to avert it by your swords, and if it is a trial, exercise patience (ṣabr) until God Judges -- and He is the best of judges." And they went away from him saying: "Shall we listen to this uncouth liar ('ilj)? And they were Arabs; they rebelled and they were all killed.¹¹

Ḥasan was not inclined to support any side -- neither the rebels nor the "Commander of the Faithful".

A man from Syria asked al-Ḥasan: What have you to say about the insurrections (fitan) of Yazīd b. Muḥallab and Ibn al-Ash'ath?" He said: "Support neither one." One of the Syrians said: "Not even the Commander of the Faithful ('Amīr al-Mu'minīn)?" Ḥasan was angry and said (with his hand): "Not even the Commander of the Faithful!"¹²

Ḥasan was prudent, though, and practical minded.

It was said to Ḥasan: "Why don't you go to the rulers ('amārā) and command them to do good and forbid them to do evil." Ḥasan said: "A mu'min should not humiliate himself, since

their swords are faster than our tongues.
When we speak, they reply with their swords
like this -- (and he described to us in the
manner of striking).¹³

In another story, he is described as being very brave.

Muṭarrif, when there was an uprising
(fitnah) would forbid (fighting) and would
run away. Al-Ḥasan would forbid it, but did
not run away. Muṭarrif said: Al-Ḥasan is
like a man who warns people from a flood and
he stands in its way.¹⁴

It is clear from the above passages that
Ḥasan himself was involved in the upheavals which
centred around Baṣra. It seems most likely that he was
closely associated with the Khawārij from Baṣra. The
story in which he refused to support Ibn Ash'ath, who
fought Ḥajjāj "because of his cruelty" refers (according
to Massignon) most probable to 81-82 A.H. 15. His
associations and discussions with the Khawārij must
have been with those who espoused what Watt calls the
moderate Khārijī point of view. These groups, he says,
lived in Baṣra during the last two decades of the
eighth century (80 and after), and the discussions which
took place at the time, in which these "moderate"
Khawārij played an important role, "were the foundation
of most later theological developments in Islam."¹⁶

What kind of discussions were these, out of
which most later theologizing ensued? What was the

~~the~~ nature of this early, pre-kalām theological effort? Were these schools of thought, sects, or did theology develop haphazardly, reflecting different tendencies criss-crossing one another at the same time? Was there even a "development" of thought?

It would be impossible for us to deal exhaustively with these questions in this thesis, but something must be said so that we may understand more clearly the importance of Ḥasan in early theological thinking.

What is most important to understand is that there were no schools of theological thought in the first century. There were no "sects" in the proper sense of the word in that period, except for the Khawārij. The Shī'ah were not a sect, they were partisans of 'Alī. (The proper question to ask about the Shī'ah is the question asked by M. Hodgson: "How did the early Shī'ah become sectarian").¹⁷ At the time of Ḥasan, the Murji'ah did not exist, even as a school of thought; there were those who practiced irjā' (suspension of judgment, or postponement of decision) concerning whether or not 'Alī and 'Uthmān were mu'minīn. This principle, or presupposition which was basic to several different positions taken concerning the meaning of īmān and Islām, was also the basis of the

political stance of quietism, or passivity and even outright support of the Umayyads. As we shall see, the concept irjā' was important in the determinism-freedom debate.

In the past, scholars who dealt with the early theological development misrepresented that "development".¹⁸ They tried to extract from different "sects" and "schools" e.g. the Khawārij, Murji'ah, Shī'ah, Qadariyyah and Jabriyyah a system of thought belonging to each. For example, A. Tritton (Muslim Theology) discusses first the "Early Sects", which are comprised of the Shī'ah, Khawārij, and Murji'ah, the last two being diametrically opposed to each other.¹⁹ Then he discusses "Beginnings of Theology", starting with the Qadariyyah, then moving on to the early Mu'tazilah. This scheme may serve the purpose of giving a bird's eye view of some of the "problems" of early Islamic theology, but is not helpful for understanding how that theology actually came into being, and how it really did develop. The inadequacy of this method is revealed most clearly when the attempt is made to discover the part played by certain individuals in the theological development. Abū Marwān Ghaylān, according to Tritton, "is said to have been a ḡadariī, a murjī', and a khārijī; but this is a rhetorical flourish."²⁰

However, this is not so. Ghaylān was a murjī',²¹ was condemned to death for being a Qadarī,²² and held views very much like the moderate Khawārij.²³

But the misrepresentation cannot be attributed only to Tritton, and others. The basic sources, from which most of our knowledge of classical Islamic theological thought is derived, are the heresiographies (covering the period from about 80 to 330 A.H.). Al-Ash'arī's Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn, Shahrastānī's Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Nihāl, Ibn Ḥazm's Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Nihāl and Baghdādī's al-Farq bayn al-Firaq all set before us a highly structured and systematic classification of all the "schools" of thought which comprise the classical period of Islamic theology, and these heresiographers had their own criteria for making judgements about groups considered to be heretical by Sunni orthodoxy.

Two very recent attempts have been made to re-evaluate early theological thinking by bringing together the abstract, theoretical material of the heresiographers and the historical situations to which that material belongs. T. Izutsu's study of the concept of īmān in Islamic theology²⁴ offers a detailed description of the historical process of Islamic theology concerning the crucial problem of īmān

as well as a conceptual analysis of the key ideas. This work, and the recent studies by M. Watt²⁵ give us a much different understanding of first century theology than has hitherto been possible. As a prelude to our discussion of Ḥasan himself, and the theological treatise, we shall briefly outline how early theological tendencies grew out of the tumultuous situation around Baṣra. For this sketch, we are dependent largely upon Izutsu and Watt.

The Khawārij formulated their political ideas in theological terms. The problems of who should be the khalīfah, who were the legitimate members of the new community of believers, and what were the qualifications for membership in that community were given formulation based on the Qur'ān, the sunnah of the prophet, and the historical situation itself.

The secession of the Muḥakkima (the first of the Khawārij) from the forces of 'Alī at the time he and Mu'āwiyah were arbitrating (37/657) marked the beginnings of the Khārijī movement. In its early stages, it was radical and fanatic. It was directed against 'Alī and 'Uthmān, those who fought at the Battle of the Camel against 'Alī, and Mu'awiyah; it was against Ibn Zubayr as well as the governor of Iraq. The first groups were anarchist and were completely

dissatisfied with all those who claimed the right to political authority. In the first stages, the movement was also directed against others who called themselves mu'minīn. The Azāriqah, the extremists (followers of Nāfi b. al-Azraq d. 65/686), were in fact asking the negative question: Who are the kāfirs (kuffār)?²⁶ They answered by saying: The Mushriks (mushrikīn). Mushrik is a powerful concept in the Qur'ān, standing for the one who practices idolatry, or more generally, the one who associates anything with God. Shirk is the greatest sin according to the Qur'ān.²⁷ But the basic Qur'ānic meaning was modified: mushrik was used by the Khawārij as an extremely pejorative term denoting a person who did not fulfill the conditions for membership in the community (that is, the community as defined by them). Izutsu gives three characteristics of the Mushrik, recorded by Baghdādī:²⁸

First, all Muslims who do not share their opinion (Azāriqah) in every detail are Mushriks. Secondly, all those, even if they agree with the Azraqites in theory, who do not make the 'sacred migration' to their camp are Mushriks. In the third place, the wives and children of these Mushriks are also Mushriks.

The idea of the kāfir as mushrik had serious consequences for Muslims. They were vulnerable, not only in that their lives were endangered, but also because this question was indirectly put forward: If a

Muslim is a mu'min today, what assurances are these that he will be one tomorrow? If one becomes a kāfir, because he committed a grave sin (that is, went against the accepted rules or regulations which defined a mu'min), he was excluded from the community. It was clearly understood that recitation of the shahādah was insufficient for membership in the community. The Qur'ānic distinction between mu'min and kāfir (non-Muslims) was modified drastically in that the concept of kāfir (mushrik) was applied to all Muslims. The kāfir, was, according to Izutsu, the heretic for early Khawārij.²⁹

The Najdiyyah (followers of Najdah, d. 72/693) regarded those who did not make the hijrah to their camp munāfiqūn rather than mushrikūn.³⁰ The definition of what constitutes kufr which emerges from this group³¹ was qualified. Whoever committed a sin, whether great or small, and persisted in it, was a mushrik, but whoever committed sins occasionally was still considered a Muslim. The practice of excluding (takfir) the pseudo-Muslims became more complicated. There were fundamental errors and non-fundamental errors. Grave sins (kabā'ir) presupposed small sins, but what in fact constituted a grave or small sin? Was drinking wine a big sin, or not?³² Was the grave

sin only one, namely, shirk?³³ In other words, the difficult question with which these Khawārij were struggling was: What constitutes the disobedience of God's commands, and how should this disobedience be handled?

There were also Khawārij who stayed in Baṣra during the last two decades of the first century and probably did not involve themselves so actively in the political-religious disputes. These Khawārij are the ones whom Watt thinks played a prominent role in establishing the foundations of most of the later theological developments.³⁴ Two groups, the Ṣufriyyah and the Ibāḍiyyah, differed from the Azāriqah and the Najdiyyah in that they were prepared to live under a khalīfah, or governor (e.g. Ḥajjāj) who did not share their views.³⁵ These parties modified further the definition of kufr.³⁶

The Ṣufriyyah, according to Ibn Ḥazm, held that a sin is a grave sin if the man is a mushrik, but if it is a light sin, he is not even a kāfir. The Ibāḍiyyah were of the opinion that even if the sin were a grave one, the man who committed it should be thought of as a kāfir 'of favor'; he was neither a pure mu'min nor a pure kāfir.³⁷

The Ibāḍiyyah introduced a refinement into the discussion of whether the criminal was a kāfir and a mushrik by distinguishing between these terms and insisting that the latter could only be applied where there was ignorance or denial of God. Some of them apparently attempted to make much of the same distinction by saying the criminal was a munāfiq or 'hypocrite', not a mushrik -- a view which was held by Ḥasan al-Baṣri.³⁸

Watt introduces another group (Wāqifiyyah) which was important in preparing the way for the development of those ideas which were held by people who were called Murji'ah. For most of the early Khawārij, belonging to the "People of Paradise" was made difficult because the conditions for being a mu'min were stringent. Gradually, when the moderate parties decided to live amongst the mass of so-called "Muslims", whom they did not consider to be pure mu'minīn, the radical requirements for membership in the community relaxed. The context for living changed from the 'sphere of war', to the 'sphere of prudent fear', then to the 'sphere of mixing', and finally to the 'sphere of suspending judgment'.³⁹

From this modification-process which was being hammered out amongst various parties of the Khawārij, there emerged the principle of 'suspending judgment' (irjā') which was to become the basic presupposition of

later, more complicated, theories about īmān and Islām. Izutsu states:⁴⁰

The later Khārijites were forced to admit willy-nilly that it was a better policy to act more moderately in accordance with the demands of the actual political situation in which they were living. Murji'ism, in its origin, was but a development and actualization of this spirit of moderation.

Among the "Murji'ah" (i.e. those who practiced irjā') there may be detected two distinct motives. Izutsu states that irjā' meant postponing or suspending judgment on the question of whether a particular person was a mu'min or a kāfir. However, the practice was not simply the result of theological reflection on the problem of what constitutes īmān.

When they declared that one should 'suspend judgment' on this matter, they had in mind concretely the Umayyad rulers who were notoriously irreligious in their way of life. In other terms, irjā' meant at this stage taking up the attitude of non-commitment, or refusing to condemn as kāfirs the rulers whose injustice was so obvious to every pious Muslim . . . the Murji'ites in the eyes of their opponents.⁴¹ were political and religious opportunists.

We have seen that the various parties of the Khawārij got at the definition of Muslim, mu'min and the community (ummah) negatively; i.e. they sought to understand the meaning of kufr and then applied their ideas about this concept to their notion of the

community and who ought to be excluded from it. The practice of irjā' was basic, regarding the theological problems of who is a Muslim, what constitutes īmān, who has the right to judge one a kāfir, and what are the objects of īmān. These questions and others were given a theological formulation that stood in opposition to the theological ideas which grew out of the many khārijī parties. The original irjā' (postponement or suspension of judgment regarding one's situation as either a kāfir or mu'min) came to mean postponement of 'amal; that is, 'amal was regarded as having secondary significance. Inner faith became the essential factor in determining whether one was a Muslim or a Kāfir. For the Khawārij, it was the opposite. One's 'amal indicated kufr or īmān. The term Murji'ah, as designating a school of thought, refers to the employment of irjā' in this second sense, where it became the fundamental presupposition for the concept of īmān in Sunnī "orthodox" theology.

But what are important for us are the deterministic implications of the concept irjā'. If inner faith is the essential condition for one to be a true mu'min, what is the significance of 'amal? In some cases, it had no relevance; in others, only secondary significance, but never primary importance.⁴²

Imān is verbal confession, knowledge of God, intellectual assent (taṣdīq); and fundamentally, God determines who has imān and who is devoid of it. The basic "Murji'ah" position at the time of Ḥasan was: "Sin does not do any injury where there is imān, just as acts of obedience are of no use where there is kufr".⁴³ The sharp distinction made by certain parties among the Khawārij between the People of Paradise and the People of Hell broke down in the thought of those who implemented the principle of irjā'. Life held less terror because one's acts were not the crucial key to Paradise, or Hell. God is the judge; He determines one's destiny on the basis of inner faith, which He gives or withholds.

These, then, are the essential theological concerns which were being debated in Baṣra at the time of Ḥasan. What is kufr, who is not a true Muslim (kāfir), what is the ummah, and what is essential to imān -- these questions and others were given a variety of answers in the last years of the first century and throughout the next two hundred and fifty years.

We must stress that at the time of Ḥasan's treatise, all of these questions were being debated. He lived among those who fought openly against 'Abd al-Malik and Ḥajjāj, who believed that one's acts

('amal) were of primary significance if one were to be a true Muslim. He also had contact and participated in fierce debates with the political opportunists, who also, in their practice of irjā', thought quite differently from him concerning the importance of 'amal regarding one's ultimate destiny. It is interesting that in many of the stories about Ḥasan, we often find him contrasted to Ibn Sīrīn, who was called the most Murjī' of men.⁴⁴ What must be remembered, as we turn our attention to Ḥasan, is that he lived and participated in the theological endeavor at the time when all of these ideas we have outlined were very close to him. "Khārijī" thought had not yet given way to "Murjī'ah" thought, and "Murjī'ah" thought was not on the threshold of giving way to "Mu'tazilah" thought, as the impression often has been given. He was in the very center of it all, and his treatise tells us a good deal about the primary theological issues which were raised during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik,⁴⁵ and before the advent of Kalām.

Before we turn to the actual treatise, we shall try to give a general impression of Ḥasan's theological position. For this, we are dependent upon H. Ritter's comprehensive study of Ḥasan, which takes the form of numerous quotations of stories about Ḥasan,

and selections from Ḥasan's own pen. We have chosen several of these quotations which are pertinent to our study, and have translated them from the Arabic.⁴⁶

One of the most important characteristics of Ḥasan and his contemporaries was an all pervading anxiety regarding this world brought about by the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of one's ultimate destiny in the hereafter.

When we came to Ḥasan, we were not asked about (any) information nor were we informed about anything, but it was concerning the matter of the afterlife (al-'akhirah); and we went to Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, and he asked about information ('akhbār) and poetry.⁴⁷

From Ibn Khallikān we have reported this statement from Ḥasan:

I never saw a certainty of which there is no doubt, bear a greater resemblance to a doubtful thing of which there is no certainty, than death does.⁴⁸

al-Mughīra b. Mukhādīsh stood one day before Ḥasan and said: 'What can we do with the people who frighten us to the point where our hearts nearly fly away?' Ḥasan said: 'By God, to be in the company with a people who frighten you until security reaches you is better for you than to be in company with a people who declare you secure until frightening things overtake you.'⁴⁹

It is most likely that the 'people who frighten' are the Khawārij and those who 'make secure' represent the "Murji'ah." As we shall see, Ḥasan was clearly opposed to the many implications of ijrā'.

The believing servant continues to do sin but never ceases being depressed (ka'ib) about it.⁵⁰

This negative and fearful view of human existence results in the experience of sadness for the believer.

Oh son of Adam -- if you read the Qur'ān, then you are secure in it. Your anxiety (ḥuzn) in the world is indeed long, and your fear in the world is indeed strong, and your weeping in the world is indeed great.⁵¹

I heard al-Ḥasan swear by God that the mu'min is not allowed anything in his dīn except sadness (ḥuzn).⁵²

The inevitability of death calls to mind the certainty of final judgment, at which time Paradise or Hell will be assigned.

When I saw Ḥasan at a funeral procession, he was saying: "Praise God who did not make me the dead man." And he said: "Nothing will be discussed on that Day."⁵³

Man wakes up between two mounts (matiyatayn) which do not change with you in the midst of night and day, until the Last Day comes, and either to Heaven or to Hell. Who is in greater danger than you?⁵⁴

The world (dunyā) itself is to be rejected and guarded against; it is transitory, full of corruptable things and a place where evil lurks at every hand.

When we came to Ḥasan, we went out not considering anything of the world.⁵⁵

When we mentioned the man of the world (ṣāhib al-dunyā) he (Hasan) said: "By God, the world is not lasting for him nor he for it, and he is not safe from its bad effects nor its evil and its reckoning -- and he goes out from it in rags."⁵⁶

When Ḥasan read this verse: "Do not let this worldly life mislead you and do not let the Great Deceiver (gharūr) mislead you in respect to God" (31:33), he said: "He who said this, said it as the one who created it and who is the best Knower of it."⁵⁷

Ritter states that Ḥasan blames the world with pictures and images that became classic in the much later Ṣūfī literature.⁵⁸

Worldly goods are looked upon with suspicion:

There are two wretched companions; the dīnār and the dirham. They are of no benefit to you until they go away from you.⁵⁹

God refuses to give anything of the world to one of his servants except (that) he offers peril and the likes of calamity -- both in this world and the next.⁶⁰

In another instance, Ḥasan shows his antipathy to the accumulation of personal wealth.

Ḥumayd aṭ-Ṭawīl said: "A man asked for the hand of Ḥasan's daughter and I was the mediator between them. Ḥasan was pleased with the suitor, and I went one day making praises about the man in the presence of Ḥasan. I said: 'I will give you more information about him. He has 50,000 dirhams.' Ḥasan said: '50,000 dirhams is not collected by lawful means.' I said: 'But he is a pious Muslim.' Ḥasan said: 'If it were gathered by lawful means, he is miserly with it concerning his duty. By God, no! He will never become my son-in-law!'"⁶¹

This abhor^erence of the world and the possession of wealth is interesting when contrasted to his views on poverty. There is no virtue in poverty itself. The pious acts of wearing wool, keeping free from material temptations had their pitfalls, too.

Hasan was invited to a feast and he saw Farqad, who had on a garment of wool. Hasan said: "Oh Farqad, when you witness on the last day, you will tear off your clothes because of what you see of God's forgiveness." 62

When the young man becomes an ascetic (nāsik), we do not know him through his speech, but we know him through his deeds, and that is the useful thing. 63

Hasan attacked false piety, which for him was piety grounded only in the pious act itself.

I was with Hasan when Farqad entered, and Hasan was eating sweets. Hasan said: "Come and eat!" Farqad said: "I fear that I will be unable to give thanks." Hasan said: "Woe to you and you (even) give thanks for cold water." 64

Hasan and Farqad were invited to a banquet where all kinds of food was offered. And Farqad withdrew and did not eat. Hasan said: "What is the matter with you? Do you think that you are better than your brothers because of this garment (kiswa) (of piety)? I have heard that the people of Hell are the people of garments" (aksiya) 65

I heard Hasan say when it was mentioned to him about those who wore wool: "What is the matter with them"? (repeated three times). They hide pride (kibr) in their hearts and show humility (tawāḍūf) in their dress. By God! There are those amongst them who admire their garments far greater than the one who possesses (fancy) shawls (miṭraf). 66

The description of how Ḥasan himself dressed is interesting. It seems to indicate his negative reaction to the ascetic minded who wore wool as an outward symbol of inner piety. Ibn Sa'd records descriptions of his dress like a sulṭān; he wore a ring on his finger, a black turban on his head, fancy shawls and full sleeved shirts made out of fine linen.⁶⁷

We have indicated that for Ḥasan, one's sojourn in this world is anxiety-filled because the world offers great temptation, is transitory, and, depending upon how one conducts oneself in the world, Paradise or Hell loom ahead as one's ultimate destiny. Ḥasan classified people as kāfir, mu'min or munāfiq. Concerning the fāsiq (sinner), Ḥasan assigned to him the category of munāfiq (hypocrite), which was different from the extreme Khārijī classification of the fāsiq as kāfir-mushrik. His concept of munāfiq as representing the sinner -- the man who claimed to be muslim outwardly but concealed his kufr⁶⁸ -- also may be interpreted to be a repudiation of the practice of irtjā', first reflected in very moderate Khawārij tendencies (particularly the Wāqifiyah), but later employed as the fundamental presupposition for early concepts of īmān and Islām. As we mentioned before, the Murji'ah developed a concept of īmān which placed emphasis upon

intellectual assent (taṣdīq) to the objects of faith, thereby lessening the importance of 'a'māl. Following this view, a man found himself in a much more relaxed situation regarding the demands placed upon him as a mu'min. The easy-going attitude of him who professed Islām but was not anxious about watching his every move, were the essential factors in Ḥasan's concept of nifāq (hypocrisy).

The mu'min is he who knows that what God says is just and He said it. The mu'min is the best of people concerning (doing good) works and the strongest in Fear. If he spends a mountain of money he does not feel safe until the time of examining. The more he increases in goodness, piety (birr) and worship, the more he fears, and he exclaims; "I am not saved!" (But) the munāfiq says: "The mass of people is great (i.e. those who are doing the same thing as the munāfiq⁶⁹) and God will forgive men -- there is nothing to worry about." He is the one who commits evil deeds but vainly hopes for God (to forgive him).⁷⁰

In another passage, Ḥasan defines the mu'min, kāfir and munāfiq:

Surely the people are divided into three groups; the mu'min, kāfir, and munāfiq. As for the mu'min, God deals with him through his acts of obedience; as for the kāfir, God has debased him just as you see; as for the munāfiq, he is here with us in the rooms and streets and markets. God save us! They do not know their Lord.⁷¹

In another exhortation, Ḥasan attacks those who take comfort from the verse found in the Qur'ān:

"Who has forbidden the adornment which Allah hath produced for His servants, and the good things provided?" (7:30) by accusing them of interpreting it wrongly. They claim that God forbids adornment for the "friends of the devil ('awliyā' ash-shayṭān). But Ḥasan reminds them of the preceding verse: ". . . and eat and drink but do not be extravagant, verily He loveth not the extravagant." (7:29)⁷²

The greatest transgressor (fāsiq) is the one who commits every grave sin (kabīrah) and sweeps it under his clothing and says: "it wont do you any harm". (But) he will know that God will perhaps hasten his punishment in the world or perhaps delay it to the day of reckoning.⁷³

Izutsu shows that although the Ibāḍiyyah group of the Khawārij placed emphasis upon the munāfiq as one who constantly fluctuates between kufr and īmān, they did not discuss the concept of nifāq in terms of fisq (sinfulness) and grave sins. "The thesis that the grave sinner is a munāfiq (ṣāhib al-kabīrah munāfiq) is represented by . . . Ḥasan of Baṣra."⁷⁴ But it is possible that Ḥasan and the Ibāḍiyyah shared the same ideas concerning nifāq. The most probable source for the concept of nifāq in Ḥasan and the Ibāḍiyyah was the Qur'ān.⁷⁵ Since nifāq is so closely related to the meaning of fisq in the Qur'ān, this relationship surely

could not have been overlooked by the Ibāḍiyyah.⁷⁶

The munāfiqūn, i.e. the "men of the world" are criticized so strongly by Ḥasan because they have lost the urgency of the eschatological idea of preparing for the hereafter. Life is eschatological existence; living in the present but anticipating the future necessitates constant scrutiny of one's self in order to prevent falling into the habit of the munāfiq.

Ḥasan's practice of muḥāsaba (self-examination) means self-introspection at every moment, the purpose being to ward off nifāq. One must always ask the question: "Is what I am doing the best thing to insure that I will be among the people of Paradise?"

The mu'min, when something comes suddenly to him in which he delights, says: "By God! I covet you; you are among my needs. But, by God, you are far beyond my reach for there is a barrier between me and you". And when something escapes him, he returns to himself and says: "I do not desire this. Why should I be bothered. By God, I have no excuse for it. I will never return to this (kind of thinking) -- God willing." The mu'min is a captive in the world, exerting himself in the world, striving to untie the rope around his neck; he does not feel secure in anything until he meets God, knowing that he will be asked to give an account of everything.⁷⁷

The immediate concern of muḥāsaba is to avoid corruption (fisq) and hypocrisy (nifāq). The driving motive behind the concept of muḥāsaba is the fear of

Hell, which will be the fate of the munāfiq on the day of Judgment. Those who practice self-examination will find that day to be easy.

The mu'min is responsible for himself and he himself makes account to God. The accounting (ḥisāb) is light (khaffa) on the Day of Resurrection for the people only when they examine themselves in (this) world. The reckoning is unbearable (shaqqa) on the Day of Resurrection for the people only when they take this matter (i.e. the world) without examination (muhāsaba).⁷⁸

Muhāsaba is not passive reflection; it demands activity.

Know that contemplation (tafakkur) calls for doing good acts and repentance calls for the abandonment of evil.⁷⁹

To do the good and abandon evil is to know what is the obedient act from the disobedient. This knowledge is found in the Qur'ān.

The believers are witnesses of God in the world ('ard), who set forth the works ('a'māl) of Mañ according to the Book of God. What is agreeable to the Book of God, they (thereby) praise God, and what differs from the Book, they acknowledge that it is inconsistent with God's Book, and they know by the Qur'ān the error (ḍalālah) of those who stray from the right way.⁸⁰

Ḥasan's disdain for the munāfiq, who displays a false piety and cares nothing about the threat to his ultimate destiny which comes from 'easy living' in the world, and Ḥasan's practice of Muhāsaba, characterize his

personal religious attitude. These two attitudes are the basis, no doubt, of his theological position of Human Responsibility which he formulated systematically in the Risālah.

However, before discussing the letter, we must consider the "Qadariyyah" and the problem of the authenticity of the treatise.

B. The Qadariyyah and the problem of the authenticity of the Treatise.

Many confusing things have been said about the Qadariyyah. Some have thought they were a sect, fitting nicely in between the Murji'ah and the Mu'tazilah.⁸¹

D. Macdonald calls them the second theological sect in Islam, after the Murji'ah, and the origination of the Qadariyyah was the result of a "philosophical necessity of the human mind."⁸² He mentions Ma'bad al-Juhani as one of the first of them who "paid for his heresy with his life in A.H. 80."⁸³ Tritton states that "all agree that Ma'bad al-Juhani was a qadari and though he lived in Basra it may have been in Damascus that he was executed in 80/699."⁸⁴ Watt reports the traditional view that Ma'bad began discussions about al-Qadar which were carried on by his follower, Ghaylan.⁸⁵ Ritter⁸⁶ mentions C. H. Becker's view ("Christliche Polemik und

islamische Dogmenbildung", Islamstudien I, 432 ff), which compares the Qadariyyah to John of Damascus, who emphasized (1) that man does evil, and (2) God is not responsible for the creation of the embryo of the child of a prostitute in the womb. Also, Ritter and Wensinck⁸⁷ refer to sources which mention a certain Susan (an Irāqī, who converted to Islām, then back to Christianity), as the originator of discussions on Qadar. Ritter quotes from Ibn 'Asākīr, History of Damascus: "The first to put forward the qadar theory was an 'Irāqī named Sūsan . . . Ma'bad al-Juhanī derived (his ideas) from him, and Ghaylān from Ma'bad."⁸⁸ Watt states that apart from the mere mention of Ma'bad as the originator of the doctrine of al-qadar, the heresiographies tell us nothing about the man.⁸⁹

Concerning the so called Qadariyyah, two problems must be clarified.

(1) The term "Qadariyyah" is a misnomer. It came to be applied to both the determinists and indeterminists by each other. A "Qadari" originally, was most likely one who discussed the problem of al-qadar.⁹⁰ Nillino's view is that since the first theological discussions in the first century always centered in the Qur'ān, and people no doubt spent much time discussing the qadar of God, the term "Qadariyyah" was applied to

them without reference to the precise view they adopted about al-qadar.⁹¹

We would consider another possibility concerning the early application of the term and its continued use. If we accept the authenticity of the treatise, we find that Ḥasan was responsible for initiating "discussions on al-qadar," and his position was clearly indeterminist. The question is: did the fact that Ḥasan wrote the document, plus the fact that it is so passionately indeterminist, have bearing on the significance of the designation: "People of al-Qadar", i.e. the Qadariyyah? In other words, from the beginning, the term most likely referred to those who took the indeterminist position. Later, the term became a term of abuse, totally unacceptable to both sides, and applied by the Mu'tazilah and the 'ahl al-Sunnah' to each other. One of the reasons for this, no doubt, was the circulation of an ḥadīth of the prophet which accused the Qadariyyah of heresy of dualism. Thus, in the beginning, the term designated a precise position, but later, was applied to both sides in the dispute.

There is little description in the heresiographers about the ideas of the Qadariyyah. In Baghdādī and Shahrastānī, the Mu'tazilah and the Qadariyyah are the same. In al-Ash'arī, (Maqālāt al-

Islamiyyīn, Ibāna) according to Watt,⁹² some views about the Qadariyyah are mentioned, but often the term "Qadariyyah" means Mu'tazilah. In the Ibāna, there is one interesting passage for our consideration.

They (Qadariyyah) assert and are convinced that human beings create evil; thereby approximating the belief of the Magians, who assert that there are two creators, one of them creating good and the other creating evil (for the Qadariyyah think that God creates good and that Satan creates evil.⁹³

Watt thinks that "The curious view ascribed to the Qadariyyah that God creates good and Satan evil might conceivably be a libel of some sort."⁹⁴ But in light of the treatise, it is clear Ḥasan held precisely this view. We think it is likely that the ḥadīth, which we shall cite in a moment, quite possibly originated as a reaction to the ideas of the people of al-qadar, if not from Ḥasan himself.

(2) We have already alluded to the second issue. "Qadariyyah" became a term representing those who held to the heresy of dualism. After the indeterminist ideas were absorbed into Mu'tazilah theology, "Qadariyyah" became the appellation most scorned by the Mu'tazilah as well as the Ahl al-sunnah. The reason for the vehement rejection of the label is found in the canonical collection of Abū Dā'ūd:

The Qadariyyah are the Majūs of this community. Do not visit them when they are ailing, nor accompany their biers when they are dead.⁹⁵

Al-Juwaynī cites two traditions against the Qadariyyah.

The Prophet said: "On the Last Day the herald (munādin) will cry out to the people of gathering: 'Where are the enemies of Gāḍ?' And the Qadariyyah will stand up."

The Qadariyyah are cursed by the tongues of seventy prophets.⁹⁶

Al-Juwaynī also indicates that this term of abuse was ascribed by each (Ash'ariyyah and Mu'tazilah) one to the other. He states: "They (Mu'tazilah) say: 'You are the Qadariyyah since you believe in ascribing qudrah to God.' But this is an ugly lie."⁹⁷ Juwaynī then tries to prove that the canonical ḥadīth about the Qadariyyah is most properly applied to the Mu'tazilah.

The Mu'tazalī 'Abd al-Jabbār clarifies precisely the problem of the application of the term. "Know that the Qadariyyah in our opinion are only the mujbirah (determinist) and the mushbihah (anthropomorphist); and in their opinion (The Qadariyyah) are the Mu'tazilah."⁹⁸

The problem of the Qadariyyah, who they were, what were their ideas, did they in fact constitute a group or were they simply the people who, in the course of theological debate, held to the indeterminist

position -- these questions are further complicated by the later misapplication of the term itself.

In light of our general discussion about theology in the first century, and Ḥasan's treatise itself, the Term "Qadariyyah", in the last decades of the first century, if in existence at all, clearly applied to those who talked about al-qadar, and most probably, as Ḥasan talked about it.⁹⁹

It is not surprising, then, that Muslim sources have been so reluctant to even hint that Ḥasan might have written the treatise which has been ascribed to him. Although both Ritter and J. Obermann¹⁰⁰ have examined references in Muslim sources that might indicate a possible connection between the treatise and Ḥasan, they found no positive affirmation that Ḥasan actually wrote the letter to 'Abd al-Malik. Recently, however, J. W. Fück found the missing chapter from Ibn Nadīm's Kitāb al-Fihrist (written about 277/988) which gives brief biographical sketches of many of the Mu'tazilah. The first sketch is about Ḥasan, and under the listing of his works we find: kitābun illā 'abd al-Malik b. Marwān fī'l-raddi 'alā'l-qadariyyah -- "A book to 'abd al-Malik b. Marwān concerning the refutation of the Qadariyyah."¹⁰¹ Our previous quotation from 'Abd al-Jabbār clarifies the significance of the form:

fi'l-raddi 'alā'l-qadariyyah.

This is indeed a significant reference, and perhaps the only one, which acknowledges Ḥasan as the author of the treatise.

al-Shahrastānī mentions the letter, but would rather think it came from Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā'.

I saw a letter which is attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī which he (supposedly) wrote to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, and he ('Abd al-Malik) had asked Ḥasan about the idea of al-Qadar and al-Jabr, and Ḥasan answered him concurring with the views of the qadariyyah. And in it he proved by verses from the Qur'ān and proofs of reason -- But perhaps it belongs to Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā'.¹⁰²

al-Shahrastānī must have had both Ḥasan's and 'Abd al-Malik's letters before him.

J. Obermann has found two statements from Ṭabarī and Ibn Qutayba¹⁰³ which he thinks hint at the risālah.

wa-kāna yaqūlu bi-qawli 'l- qadariyyah:
He (Ḥasan) used to profess the doctrine of the Qadariyyah. (Ṭabarī)

wa-kāna takallama fī shay'in min al-qadarī:
He used to speak about things pertaining to the qadari. (Ibn Qutayba)

Obermann finds it curious that both Ibn Sa'd and Ṭabarī report stories about Ḥasan, who, while on his death bed, ordered that all his books must be burnt.¹⁰⁴

Ibn Sa'd records two stories which seem to "bend over backward" in the effort to clear Ḥasan from

having had long term connections with the people of al-qadar.

The people of al-qadar ascribed their views as coming from Ḥasan, but his views were different.¹⁰⁵

I argued with Ḥasan concerning (the problem) of al-qadar for a long time until I became afraid for him (regarding) the sultān. Ḥasan said: "I will not return to it after today."¹⁰⁶

Obermann thinks that the second story is a clear instance of the "whitewashing" of Ḥasan's reputation in terms of Sunnī piety.¹⁰⁷ Also, the account does not jibe with the generally accepted view that Ḥasan was an extremely brave man who had no fear of anyone, not even the 'Commander of the Faithful'.

In light of this evidence, and especially the positive affirmation of authorship in Ibn Nadīm's Kitāb al-Fihrist, we may safely assume that the document before us is genuine. If we accept Ḥasan as the author, which we are most inclined to do, the document not only is the earliest extant theological treatise -- its author was the first to discuss the problem of al-qadar (in the sense that man has power to act, and thereby is held responsible for his acts), and thus the first of the "Qadariyyah", who were later so much scorned by the people who loved Ḥasan so dearly.

However, from the point of view of the first century, it is irrelevant and misleading to fix a label on Ḥasan (or theological positions in general) which indicates a sect or school of thought. As we have tried to point out, the theological discussions were conducted in an extremely fluid situation, where so many crucial theological issues were being debated at the same time.

C. The Risālah of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

Our translation is based upon Ritter's critical edition of the text, which is appended to his lengthy study on Ḥasan.¹⁰⁸ We have inserted the pagination of the Ritter text in our translation and will refer to that pagination in our comments.

Concerning the dating of the risālah, we can definitely say that it was written between 65-86 A.H. ('Abd al-Malik's reign), and speculate that it was written around 75-85. It is more likely the issue came up after 'Abd al-Malik had re-taken Iraq, and after al-Ḥajjāj had been appointed governor of that province. Obermann has gone to considerable length to show that the letter of 'Abd al-Malik to Ḥasan was probably written by Ḥajjāj at 'Abd al-Malik's request; Ḥasan's reply was then forwarded by Ḥajjāj to the Khalīfah.¹⁰⁹

We shall not attempt to write a commentary on the treatise since the theological position which emerges from it is so clearly expressed. There are a few things, however, to which we would like to draw attention.

The letter addressed to Ḥasan tells us that his position on al-qadar must have been very recent in respect to the current theological controversies. 'Abd al-Malik admits alarm, shock, and calls upon Ḥasan, famous for his piety, to explain his views more fully.

Ḥasan's reply, then, is a defense of his position, and his argument is based upon the irrefutable authority of the Qur'ān. His method is exegetical; he formulates his own position, states the reason which led him to finally arrive at this position, then attacks his opponents by turning their proof texts against them. It is particularly in the second part of the treatise where we see Ḥasan's mastery of the Qur'ān. He must not only explain his position to the khalfah; he must also prove invalid the position of his opponents. He does this by trying to establish that their interpretation of the Qur'ān represents a distortion of it.

The risālah may be conveniently divided into two parts: (1) pp. 68-72, where he sets forth aspects

of his own view, and gives the reason why he initiated discussion along those lines; (2) pp. 72-82 where he systematically attacks his opponents by arguing that they have misinterpreted the Qur'ān.

Hasan admits (68) originating the discussion (kalām) pertaining to his point of view, but denies he is an innovator. He warns the khalīfah to beware of those who do not know the real meaning of God's qadā' (69). He denies that kufr, tyranny (jawr) and injustice (ẓulm) are decreed by God; rather, He commands Justice ('adl) and forbids evil action (munkar). Hasan often pleads with the khalīfah to interpret the Qur'ān soundly (70); if the case were as the ignorant ones say, then God would have said such and such. His method of exegesis presupposes that the Qur'ān is a "homogeneous Book", and as such, it cannot contradict itself (71). It is on this basis that he accuses his opponents of giving false interpretation to their proof texts.

We have said that both the radical determinism of the ḥadīth material of Bukhārī and Muslim, and the indeterminist position of Hasan's treatise are based upon different approaches to the Qur'ān. We believe that the material in the ḥadīth reflecting the determinist position began to emerge in the first century, and that this theological position of determinism

is precisely the one represented by the opponents of Hasan. We cannot delve into the extremely difficult question of dating ḥadīth, but must mention the thesis of J. Schacht put forward in his article: "A Revaluation of Islamic Tradition", JRAS (1948-1949), pp. 143-154. His argument is that in the field of law, the "sunnah of the prophet" developed out of what he terms the "living tradition" of each of the ancient schools of law. Some of the features of the sunna of the prophet might go back to an early period, but "it acquired its superstructure of formal traditions from the Prophet with proper isnads only about the middle of the second century A.H., as a result of the activity of the traditionists."¹¹⁰ This contention he has "proved in detail with regard to legal traditions".¹¹¹ He has shown in his detailed study of the origins of Islamic Law,¹¹² and states in his article that the concept of the sunnah of the prophet was early Iraqi and not Medinese; he refers to al-Shāfi'ī's Kitāb al-Umm where the author discusses the doctrines of his predecessors, who, as representatives of the ancient schools of law, did not accept the later view that traditions from the Prophet had "an overriding authority."¹¹³ Al-Shāfi'ī persists, says Schacht, in arguing the doctrine ~~What~~ ~~when~~ there exists a tradition from the Prophet, no other

argument is valid.¹¹⁴

What interests us is that Schacht proposes to carry over his findings about traditions in the legal field to other subjects. He singles out traditions in the theological field, and argues against Wensinck's conclusion that ḥadīth reflect the development of dogma only as far as the end of the Umayyad period.

The main explanation of this is that the large mass of materials contained in the canonical collections, though it received its final form in the middle of the third century A.H., covers a period reaching no farther than the beginning of the second century.¹¹⁵

Schacht states that this generalization goes beyond the facts, and "Wensinck's assumption that the same applies to traditions concerning the question of law, is contradicted by the whole evidence of the ancient texts."¹¹⁶ He admits the case is different with theological tradition, but not that much different. He then turns to Ḥasan's letter and states:

The dogmatic treatise ascribed to Hasan Basri, whether or not it is genuinely his, cannot be later than the very early years of the second century, and it shows that dogmatic traditions on the important problem of free will and human responsibility hardly existed at the time of its composition. There is no trace of traditions from the Prophet, and the author states explicitly: "Every opinion which is not based on the Koran is erroneous." Two important dogmatic traditions in particular (they occur in the classical collections) cannot yet have existed when the treatise was written. The reasoning of one

"the writing of the recording pens has dried, and on every forehead is written Blessed or Damned," is decried by the author as an excuse of his opponents for breaking Allah's commands, and the argument of the other, that one should hobble one's camel but put one's trust in Allah, is used by the author against what became later the orthodox doctrine.¹¹⁷

And in The origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence

he asserts:

The earliest evidence for the Iraqi term "sunnah of the Prophet" occurs in a dogmatic treatise ascribed to Hasan Basri. Whether or not it is genuinely his it cannot be later than the very early years of the second century. The author shows himself bound, in a general way, by the examples of the forebears (salaf) and refers explicitly to the sunna of the Prophet. But his actual reasoning is based exclusively on the Qur'an, and he does not mention any tradition from the Prophet or even from the Companions. It is only his adversaries who refer in general terms to the opinions of the companions, and these they oppose to the unguided opinion (ra'y) of the individual. But the author also charges his opponents with ra'y, that is, arbitrary interpretation.¹¹⁸

Schacht appears to be disturbed by Hasan's treatise because it clearly indicates that theological ḥadīth existed in the first century, and were authoritative for Hasan's opponents. The Ḥadīth which Hasan cites in his treatise could not possibly have been in existence at the time the letter was written, he asserts. And since Hasan argues his position solely on Qur'ānic grounds, dogmatic ḥadīth on the question of

freedom and determinism could hardly have existed. We call to mind his discussion of al-Shāfi'ī's argument against the ancient schools of law; which held that traditions from the prophet had no "overriding authority". Ḥasan bases his argument upon the Qur'ān because it had "overriding authority"; Ḥasan was probably arguing for his life -- his treatise certainly was no academic statement about his intellectual position concerning a theological doctrine. He would naturally choose the most authoritative source on problems of a religious-political nature. But there is also another reason for using only the Qur'ān. We mentioned before that Ḥasan denied he was an innovator; he states explicitly that his position is in harmony with those who preceded (the Companions of the Prophet), and followed the sunnah of the prophet. There are no ḥadīth of the prophet which advocate Ḥasan's notion of human responsibility, but the truth that the Companions (Salaf) and the Prophet are in agreement with Ḥasan is found in the fact that they never contradicted God's teachings. F. Rahman states, in reference to Ḥasan's claim that his teaching is at one with the teachings of the Companions, that "what this obviously means is that the Prophet (and his Companions) have shown by their behaviour that the doctrine of predetermination

contradicts the Prophet's implicit teaching."¹¹⁹

Now, immediately after claiming that his position is in harmony with the sunnah of the prophet, and stating why he originated the argument defending human responsibility, he states: "Every idea which is not based on the proof of the Book of God is wrong". (68) This statement does not deny the possibility that ḥadīth existed; it affirms the "overriding authority" of the Qur'ān, and rejects anything else as having authority.

Ḥasan's opponents base their position on the Qur'ān (a distorted view, according to Ḥasan) and opinions from the Companions. Ḥasan, by accepting only the Qur'ān as authoritative, indirectly rejects those opinions as spurious. Schacht states that there are only two traditions mentioned by Ḥasan. However, there are several Qur'ānic passages used by Ḥasan's opponents, which are the basis of several of the ḥadīth we cited in the preceding chapter.

For example:

1. (71) "By a soul and by Him who perfected in and inspired it with what is wrong and right for itself" (91:7-8) Ḥasan interprets this to mean that God put in man inspiration to know the wickedness from what is pious. See Chapter III, p. 96 for the ḥadīth which is based upon this verse.
2. (73) (Argument no 3) "And another point about which they argue; . . . For whosoever of you would go straight but will, you shall not, unless God wills -- the Lord of the Worlds!" (81:28-29) See Chapter III, footnote No. 17.

3. (74) (Argument no.5) "No affliction befalls in the earth or in yourselves but (that) it is in the Book before we created it" (57:22) See Chapter III, p. 95.
4. (74) (Argument no. 6) "And they argue about His saying: 'And some of them will be unhappy and happy'" (11:105) Chapter III, p. 85-86.
5. (70) "And the command of God is a decree made absolute" Chapter III, footnote 59.
6. (72) The reference to Adam's disobedience, and his asking for forgiveness may be stated against the position (and the ḥadīth) of the determinists, Chapter III, p. 97-98.

The traditions to which Schacht alludes (75) appear in the context where Ḥasan points out to the Khalīfah that his opponents are not consistent because they never would think of applying their determinism to the concrete realities of every day living.

In Chapter III, we quoted the ḥadīth which is simply a paraphrase of the story of al-Khaḍir found in the Qur'ān. Ḥasan also paraphrases this story under the argument about the Knowledge of God. He states beforehand that God has knowledge that kufr comes from people because they choose it. Then he cites the al-Khaḍir narrative, and faithfully describes it as it occurs in the Qur'ān. He adds nothing to the story, and at first glance, it appears he accepts the deterministic implications therein. However, in light of the preceding comments about kufr, he seems to be inferring that God knew that the boy would never choose

anything other than kufṛ, and not that he was predestined to be a kāfir.

These are examples, then, which indicate that there might well have been several traditions behind the arguments of Ḥasan's opponents. We do not claim that all the ḥadīth which we examined in the preceding chapter, and others like them, were in existence at the time of Ḥasan. But there certainly were some in circulation. By accepting the Qur'ān as the sole authority, and by attempting to prove that his interpretation of it is the only correct one, he undercut the authoritative claims of his opponents -- i.e. their proof texts and traditions (which they claim came from the Companions).

Thus, the reason why Ḥasan insists that the Qur'ān is the only authority and anything else is wrong, becomes clear. Through his interpretation of the Qur'ān he shows that the traditions used by his opponents as authoritative, are spurious.

We argue, then, that there were traditions in existence during the last two decades of the first century, and that the ḥadīth material which we examined reflects the radical determinism of Ḥasan's opponents.

One of the central themes of the treatise is that God guides but misguidance is from His servants,

e.g. Pharoah, Sāmīrī,¹²⁰ and the 'transgressors'. (72) However, he goes further, and states that evil comes from Shayṭān (72, 82). The ḥadīth, "The Qadariyyah are the Majūs of this community" no doubt was coined to combat this 'heresy', probably articulated for the first time by Ḥasan.

What becomes evident, when we compare the ḥadīth material and Ḥasan's treatise, is that they both represent theological positions derived from the Qur'ān, yet they are diametrically opposed to each other. Each one is developed logically and compromises nothing. For the one, God's Omnipotency implies man's destiny is absolutely determined; for the other, the duties and obligations incumbent upon man imply that he is responsible for his acts, and thus he determines his own destiny.

The treatise, then, reveals more than the religious attitude of a pious Muslim, who was deeply disturbed by the moral laxity of the mass of people, i.e. the munāfiqūn. We sense and feel his personal involvement in the issues he puts before the Khalīfah, which are direct and uncompromising, and which have obvious political implications. But beyond this, the treatise tells us a good deal about main theological controversy of the day, which embodied the essential

dilemmas and intricate questions of the newly emerging community, which lived in the anticipation of its ultimate destiny. Also, very many of the most fundamental technical terms of Islamic Theology (īmān, kufr, fisq, qaḍā' wa qadar, taḥlīf, 'amal, ṣifāt, sunnah, Taqwā, 'ilm ullāh, Istiṭā'ah, 'adl, Quḍrah and perhaps even kalām) emerge from Ḥasan's discussion, and the meanings and difficult questions which they imply persist throughout Islamic theological thought.

The Freedom-Determinist controversy in the first century reflected more than the problem of Omnipotency and human responsibility; it was the focal point for all the key theological issues of the day, and those same issues persisted, stated in many forms, throughout classical-Medieval Islamic theology.

D. Translation

[67] From 'Abd al-Malik B. Marwān, the Commander of the Faithful to al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī:

Peace upon you and I praise God in your presence -- besides whom there is no God but He.

It has reached the Commander of the Faithful about you, concerning the description of al-Qadar, the likes of which has never reached him from any of those

who have passed on. The Commander of the Faithful does not know any of the companions with whom he was acquainted during his lifetime who talked about it and was concerned with it (qadar) -- like the theories which you expound and which have reached the Commander of the Faithful. In the past he knew from you what is righteous in your way of living (ḥāl) and excellent in your religion and in knowledge of Fiqh and the seeking and hankering after it. Then the Commander of the Faithful found shocking, to say the least, this theory from you. So write to him concerning your ideas about that and the position which you take -- whether it is a tradition (riwāyah) from one of the companions of the prophet or from an opinion which you hold or from a matter which is known to be truthful in the Qur'ān. We never heard one argue or dispute concerning this matter before you [came along]. So present to the Commander of the Faithful your opinion (in that) and clarify it. Peace upon you and the Mercy of God and His blessing.

From Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to the servant of God,
 'Abd al Malik:

Peace upon you, Oh Commander of the Faithful
 -- and the mercy of God -- and peace of God to you of

whom there is no God but He. The blessing of God be upon the Commander of the Faithful; may He make him one of His friends, who do works of His obedience and wish His good pleasure and hasten to follow what He commanded them. [68] The Commander of the Faithful -- God's blessing upon Him -- became one of the few, among the many of those who have passed on -- and one of the few of the people of goodness who are looked up to and are depended upon, and whose actions are imitated and whom we knew in our lifetime -- Oh Commander of the Faithful, upon you God's peace. Those among the companions who accomplished the command of God and related His wisdom and followed the way of the Sunnah of the Prophet, never denied a truth nor justified a wrong nor attached to the Lord anything except what the Lord attached to Himself. And they did not attach anything except what God Himself laid upon His creatures -- in His book -- "I have not created Jinn and Mankind except to serve Me - I do not desire from them any sustenance; neither do I desire to be fed." (51:56-57) God commanded them to worship Him which is why He created them. God would not create them for a purpose ('amr) and then come in between them and it, because He is no tyrant (ẓallām) over his servants. And none of those who passed on of the ancestors denied this saying

nor disputed it because they were in agreement over the matter. And we have originated the discussion (kalām) about it when people who made opposition began talking about it. And they followed the misleading desires and grave sins (al-dh^unūb al-mūbiqa) and they distorted the book of God. The religion of God is not vain desires, as He said: "It is not your vain desires nor the vain desires of the people of the Book. Whosoever does evil shall be recompensed for it." (4:123) And every idea which is not based on the proof of the Book of God is wrong, for God said: "Bring your Proof if you are truthful" (2:111) which means -- concerning your lie about me and concerning what you invent from your desires: "Bring your proof and then you will know that the truth is God's and that which they forge will fail them." (28:75) And understand, Oh Commander of the Faithful, what has been made incumbent upon you by the Book, [69] and abandon the desires of those who do not know the qaḍā' of God and His Judgment. For God says that He does not change a favor which He bestowed upon people until they themselves change -- and so, the beginning of the favor was from God -- and the change was from the servants because they differed from what He commanded them, just as God said: "Do you not see those who change God's favor for disbelief and cause their

people to alight in the house of Perdition." (14:28)

The favor was from God and the change from the servants because they departed from what He commanded them. And they did what He forbade them. He said: "Do not approach any indecency outward or inward." (6:151) And what God forbade is not from Him because He is not pleased with what He is angry about and He is not angry with what He is pleased about; because God says: "If you are ungrateful, then surely God is above need of you and He does not like Kufr from His servants; and if you are thankful, He is pleased with it for you." (39:7) And if Kufr were of the qaḍā' of God and his qadar then it would please Him from whoever did it. And it is inconceivable that God would decree a decree then not be pleased with His decree (qaḍā'). The tyranny and injustice is not of the qaḍā' of God but His decree (qaḍā') is His command ('amr) concerning goodness, justice and kindness and giving to one's relatives. And he forbids foul deeds (fahshā') and evil action (munkar) and iniquity (baghī). He said: "And your Lord has decreed (qaḍā') that you serve none but Him and do good to parents." (17:23) And this, Oh Commander of the Faithful is the Book of God in which He makes pronouncements and who is better than God to discuss it? "He decreed (qaddara) then guides." (87:3) And it does not say,

"He decreed then misguides."

God certainly explained clearly to His servants and He did not leave them in confusion about their religion, and there is no doubt in their affairs so much so that He declared guidance coming from Himself and misguidance from His prophet. And He said: "Say, if I err I err only by myself, and if I go aright, it is because of what my Lord reveals to me." (34:50) Do you accept for Muhammad, Blessing and peace be upon him and his people, that the misguidance is from him when he is misguided and you are against that for yourself? And He said: "Indeed upon us it is to guide." (92:12) And He does not say: "Indeed upon us it is to misguide." Place the Book Oh Commander of the Faithful in its right place and do not distort it nor interpret it other than its [right] interpretation. And God would not openly forbid His servants something -- then secretly decree (qaddara) it to them -- as the ignorant and stupid say. Were that the case He would not have said: "Do what you wish," (41:40) [70] But He would have said, "Do what I decreed upon you" and He would not have said: "And he who wills -- believe, and he who wills, disbelieve." (18:29) Rather, He would have said: "He whom I willed, let him believe, and he whom I willed, let him disbelieve," but He said: "And the

command of God is a decree made absolute (qadaran maqdūran)." (33:38) And His command is His decree (qadar) and His decree is His command. And He does not command foul deeds and evil actions. Some people said that, and God reproached them with His saying: "And when they commit an indecency they say, we found our fathers doing it. And God has commanded concerning it. Say: Indeed God does not command indecency. Do you say of God what you do not know?" (7:28) And the Book of God is Light in darkness and Life in death. God did not leave for His servants any possibility of argument after the Book and the Prophets: "That He who perished on that day might perish by a clear proof, and he who survived might survive by a clear proof." (8:42) And think, O Commander of the Faithful, about His saying: "He who willed from among you to go forward or remain behind." (74:37) That is because God created in them enough power through which they go ahead and remain behind in order that the good ones merit Heaven and the bad merit Hell. If the matter were as is interpreted by the liars -- then it would not be in them to go ahead nor remain behind. Then there would be for the one who goes ahead no praise (and there would be) no blame for the one who remains behind in what he does, since according to what they claim, that qudrah) does not

come from them, nor should it be attributed to them. Rather it is a thing that works through them. But (if that were the case) God would have said, in regard to what He mentioned of their rewards, "In reward for what He worked in them -- and in reward for what I have written (decreed) for them." He would not have said: "A reward for what they did." (32:17) And the people opposed, Oh Commander of the Faithful, the Book, and they distorted it. God's saying would not give the lie to other parts of it (Book), [71] as God Himself described in the best of speech -- a homogeneous Book, one part similar to the other. And one part does not contradict the other, for it is: "A revelation from the Wise, the Praised one." (41:42) Then think, Oh Commander of the Faithful on His saying: "By a soul and by Him who perfected it and inspired it with (a conscience of) what is wrong (i.e. what is wicked -- fujūr) and right (i.e. what is godly or pious -- taqwā) for itself." (91:7-8) And He put in man inspiration to know the wickedness from piety. Then He said: "He is indeed safe from Hell who purifies it, and he indeed fails who makes it impure." (91:9-10) And if He were one who corrupted it, He would not fail himself. Then think, Oh Commander of the Faithful, on His saying: "And they say -- Our Lord, whoever prepared

this for us, give him a double portion of Fire." (38:61)

If He were the one who put before them that . . . But God made clear to us the one who put that before them and the one who lead them astray. He said: "And they say, our Lord, we have obeyed our leaders and our great men, and they led us astray from the path." (33:67)

The leaders and great men are those who prepared (qaddama) for them the Kufr -- and they led them astray from the path after they were on it. Then think, Oh Commander of the Faithful, on the saying: "[And those who disbelieve will say] Our Lord, show us those who lead us astray from among the Jinn and the people so that we may trample them under our feet in order that they may be of the lowest." (41:29) And the one who is lifted up said: "We have shown him the way; He may be thankful or unthankful." (76:3) Meaning thereby: "We made Him know the way; either he will be grateful so that we might reward him, or he will disbelieve so we might punish him for his disbelief. And whoever is thankful, is thankful for his own soul, and he who denies -- then God is self-sufficient, praised." (31:12) Likewise God said: "And Pharoah led his people astray and he did not guide them rightly." (20:79) Say, Oh Commander of the Faithful, just as God said it was Pharoah who misguided his people and not God -- do not

contradict God in His saying nor regard as coming from God except what is pleasing to Him as He said: "Indeed -- upon us is to show the way and indeed ours is the hereafter and the first." (92:12-13) So Guidance is from God and misguidance is from the servants. Then think, Oh Commander of the Faithful, on the saying of God: [72] "And no one led us astray except the transgressors." (26:99) And He says: "And al-Sāmirī led us astray." (20:85) And he says: "Indeed -- the Devil (shayṭān) is to man clearly an enemy." (17:53) And He said: "And as for Thamūd. We showed them the right way, but they preferred blindness to guidance, so the scourge of an abasing chastisement overtook them for what they had earned." (41:17) And the beginning of the guidance was from God -- and the beginning of punishment was their preferring blindness by their misleading desires. Oh Commander of the Faithful, do not consider my Treatise (kitāb) and discussion (kalām) too long because in them there are clear proofs against him who absolved himself and attributed tyranny (ẓulm) to his Lord.

I start with our father Adam who is more deserving to be followed, when he said when he disobeyed his Lord: "We have wronged ourselves; and if you do not forgive us, and do not have mercy upon us, we will be of

the losers." (7:23) And He did not say -- This is your qaḍā' and your qadar. Likewise Moses said, when he killed the man: "This is from the work of the Devil: He is an enemy, openly leading astray. He said: My Lord, I wronged myself -- forgive me and He forgave him."

(28:15-16) And Moses said: "This is from Satan (Shayṭān). The ignorant say: This is from the act of God. There is none from among those (prophets) whom God told stories about in His Book but that he acknowledged it." But He said: "Then his mind enticed to him the slaying of his brother, so he killed him.

And he became one of the losers." (5:30) There is no one among the people were it said to him: "You are a wrong-doer (ẓulm) and from you is its beginning," without him being displeased by that. And yet they attribute to God what they are not pleased with and they attribute to themselves what they desire, and no one perished because of this, except the people in whose hearts there is error. They follow what is ambiguous in it [Qur'ān] seeking dissension (fitnah). They argue saying that God the Most High said: "[Say: Surely God] cause him who wills to go astray, and guides [to Himself those who turn (to Him)]." (13:27) And they do not look to what is before that and what is after it.

And if they reflect upon what is before the verses and

what is after them, that is, the verses which indicate the true meaning -- they would not go astray. God said: "God confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world and in the hereafter, and God causes to go astray the unjust (ẓālimīn). And God does what He wishes." (14:27) [73] And whomever He wishes, He confirms (guides) those who believed by their faith and their goodness and He misguides the wrong doers by driving them away (nafā) and by turning them away (ʿudwān). And He said: "When they turned aside, God made their hearts turn aside." (61:5) He made their hearts turn aside when they turned aside. And He said: "Surely God is not ashamed to set forth any parable -- (that of) a gnat or anything above that. Then as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, and as for those who disbelieve, they say: What is it that God means by this parable? He causes many to go astray by it and many He leads rightly by it; but He does not cause to go astray by it except the transgressors who break the covenant of God after its confirmation and cut asunder what God commanded to be joined, and make mischief in the land -- these are the ones who are the losers." (2:26-27)

[Further Arguments of the Opposition]

1. And another point about which they dispute is the saying: "He against whom the word of chastisement is realized -- will you deliver him out of the Fire?"

(39:19) He made clear to the people as to whom deserves the sentence of punishment, by His saying: "Thus, the word of your Lord is proved true against those who transgressed; they are the possessors of Hell."

(40:6) But the sentence of punishment became reality upon them after what they did because of wrong (fisq).

2. And another point about which they argue is His saying: "And it is not for a soul to believe except by God's permission ('idhn)." (10:100) And 'idhn means making free. He left the soul free to do whatever it likes with Imān and He gave it power over it (Imān) and He said: "And we did not send any apostle but that He should be obeyed by God's permission." (4:63) And God would not have sent the Messenger to be obeyed, and then would come in between His creatures and in between His obedience. How far this is from the description of God and His justice and His wisdom!

3. And another point about which they argue; His saying: "To him among you who wishes to go forward or remain behind," (74:37) [And His saying] "For

whosoever of you would go straight but will, you shall not, unless God wills -- the Lord of the Worlds!"

(81:28-29) God is truthful in that we do not will the good unless He wills it for us. And as part of His willing the Good for us, before we will -- is that He indicated it to us and made clear to us, by His saying: "God wishes for you ease and He does not desire for you difficulty." (2:185) And He said: "God desires to explain to you, and to guide you on the way of those before you and He forgives you. And God is knowing, wise, and God desires that He should forgive you."

(4:26-27) And God would not have wished to forgive us, and then prevent us from repenting unless we ourselves had prevented it.

4. [74] And they argue about His creation of the children of adultery and other children. God does not punish the adulterer because of the child, but He punishes him for differing from His command -- and that is his adultery, which is other than the child. But similarly, the adulterer who puts his sperm in (a place) other than its rightful place, is like a cultivator who sows his seed in (a land) other than his. Then he grows what he wishes from them (seeds), and what he does not wish, he does not grow.

5. And they argue about His saying: "No affliction befalls in the earth or in yourselves but (that) it is in the Book before we create it." (57:22) They interpret this by their opinion in light of their particular theory of Kufr and Imān and obedience and disobedience. But it is not so. These are the disasters in property and lives and produce. He told us about that, that He would inflict (upon) us in this world with (times of) difficulty and (times of) plenty, and poverty and wealth, so that we may not mourn what we missed and will not be happy with worldly materials -- like the happiness of him who becomes insolent because of worldly goods.

Then He made clear to him who is patient. "Give good news to the patient ones who, when a misfortune befalls them say: surely, we are God's and to Him we will return. These are they upon whom the blessings from their Lord -- and mercy: And these are they who are the rightly guided." (2:156-157) Were this in Imān and Kufr, He would not have said: "That you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you." (57:23) But He would have said: "so that you may not mourn for the Imān which has escaped you nor would you be happy with the Imān that comes to you." Over what does man grieve then, if he

does not grieve over what he missed of his religion? God says: "Say: In the grace of God and through His mercy, therein they should rejoice: it is better than that which they gather" (refers to the wealth they gather), (10:58) The truth is clear to him who is attentive. But most of them are ignorant. Know, Oh Commander of the Faithful, that God is more just and righteous than to make blind a servant, then say to him, "See! or I will punish you"; or He makes him deaf, then says to him, "Hear! or I will punish you"; or He makes him dumb and He says to him, "Speak! or I will punish you". This, Oh Commander of the Faithful, is more clear than hidden from him who has intelligence.

6. And they argue about His saying: "And some of them will be unhappy and happy [on Judgment Day]"

(11:105) They interpret that God created the servants in their mothers' wombs -- miserable or happy -- and there is no way for him whom He has made miserable to be happy nor a way for him whom He has made happy to be miserable. If the matter were according to what they interpret, then God's Book and His messengers have no meaning.

[75] And the Messengers' call of them to piety (taqwā) and encouraging them to goodness would have meant nothing and there would have been no

benefit in it. But the interpretation is other than what they interpret; God said: "This is the day of gathering of the people and this is the day which will be witnessed," (10:102-) meaning the day of resurrection. Then He said: "On the day it comes no one will speak except with His permission, and from them some are unhappy and happy" (11:105) The happy that day is the one holding today the command of God, and acting by it; and the miserable that day is the one who lost the command of God, who takes his religion lightly. Know, Oh Commander of the Faithful, that from those who differ from God's command and His Book and His justice, are the people who transgress in the matter of their religion and transfer by their ignorance [everything] upon al-qadar. Then they are not pleased with that concerning the affairs of their world until they take a firm stand and protect (their wealth) at any cost, for Truth is heavy upon them, and wrong doing is light.

a. If you order any of them with anything concerning the matter of his religion, he says, "The pens are dry and it is written on the foreheads -- happy or miserable." If you say to one of them, "Do not weary yourself in seeking the world, and (do not) go forth in the morning in the heat and cold, and do not endanger your life in the journeys, for your sustenance

has been decided concerning it." [If you said all this to him] he would have found fault with you.

b. If you said to him, "Don't weary yourself in giving water to your crops and weeding them and paying attention to them, and looking after them in heat and cold. For what has been decreed for you from God shall grow on your land," he would have found fault with that.

c. If you said to him, "Do not seek a shepherd for your sheep, for what has been decreed (qudira) is that the wolves shall eat them and the thieves shall take them away and [some] shall die and [others shall] get lost, and you are not able to preserve them. What God has already decreed will be preserved -- and nothing would be lost from them." For this he would have found fault with that.

d. And if you said, "Do not tie your horse nor tie it tightly nor tether your camel in fear that they will go away; for nothing like that will happen -- except (of course) that which has been decreed upon you. It is all the same to you whether you tie or leave them without the tether." For this, too, he would have found fault with you.

e. And if you say, "Do not lock your shop nor the door of the house to protect your goods and

your property and your saddle, and you will not benefit by locking the door which God has provided (the house) with." And he would have (also) found that faulty. Thus he does not accept in regard to his mundane affairs (fī 'amri dunyāhi)(anything) unless through caution and precaution. [76] If someone forbids him from that, he thinks him an ignorant man. Then he finds fault with him, and leaves the matter of his religion to al-qadar -- and all this because of the heaviness of truth and the lightness of wrong.

7. They argue about his saying "and if God wished He would have gathered them all to guidance; therefore do not be of the ignorant ones." (6:35) But that is an admonition from God to this prophet when sadness overcame him regarding the polytheists, because they were not Muslims. God said "Perhaps you will kill yourself following after them, in sorrow, if they do not believe in this announcement." (18:6) God informed His prophet about His power (qudrah) and that if He wished to compel them (jabara) to obedience, He would have been able. That was not beyond His ability, but He wanted to test them in order to reward each one according to his work ('amal). He said, "And if your Lord willed -- indeed all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them, all together. Would you then

force men until they become believers?" (10:99)

8. They also argue concerning His saying "and we have created for hell many jinn and men; and they have hearts but do not understand with them; they have eyes, but do not perceive with them; they have ears but they do not hear with them. They are like cattle; nay, rather they are further astray - those - they are the heedless ones." (7:179) They interpret that God began His creation and He made for Hell a people who have no power over the obedience for which He asked them; and He made for Heaven a people who have no power over the disobedience which He has forbidden them, (just as He created a short man who has no power to be a tall man, and the black man has no power to be a white man); then He punished them because they are not believers. They ascribed to God the ugliest of attributes (ṣifāṭ) but He informed them that they will be in Hell by their evil deeds and He likened them by His saying, "They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see." He said: "So Pharoah's people took him up that he (Moses) might be an enemy and a grief (for them)." (28:8)

He only picked Moses so that he might be pleasing for them, such as His saying, "We grant them

respite in order that they may increase in sin." (3:178)

He only informed about them that they increase in sin by their abandoning of obedience, (by the fact of the respite).

God only spoke to the Arabs in the manner of what they know of their speech. One of the wise men of the Arabs said: (in poetry)

For death, mothers feed their babies,
Just as for the destruction of time (al-Dahr)
houses are built.

[77] He (poet) informed that the ultimate end (maṣīr) of children is death and the ultimate end of buildings is ruination. But surely children are fed to live and not to die; and houses are built to stand. The Qur'ān, Oh Commander of the Faithful, is (in) Arabic. God sent it down to Arab people addressing them through their speech, of which they know the meaning.

9. They argue about the 'ilm of God and they say, "God knew that Kufr would arise from a certain people. They have no ability over īmān, for the 'ilm of God is the barrier (māni').\" Their idea is that God has imposed on His servants to take what they have no power to take, and to leave what they have no power to leave. God is exalted, giving them the lie by saying, "God does not impose (kallafa) upon any soul (a duty taklīf) except to the extent of its ability." (2:286)

But surely God has knowledge that Kufr comes from them by their choice for it, and their following after their desires. And they liken this to what God knows of what they will end up with; from height and shortness and exterior appearances and colors [in which there is] no way of going beyond them. It is not so, for height and shortness, exterior appearances and colors, are God's act upon them. They have no previous choice over it nor power to change them. As for Kufr, God knows that they will choose it by their desires and He knows that if they hate it they would leave it; and they were able, through what He placed in them of ability (istiṭā'ah) (so that he might test them over īmān and Justice).

So was the ship in which al-Khaḍir made a hole. God knew that if it passed by the King soundly, he would have taken it by force. God knew that if al-Khaḍir made a hole in it, the King would not seize it. Also the boy, whom al-Khaḍir killed: God knew that if he remained [alive] he would have instigated his parents into rebellion and Kufr; if he were killed, his parents would be secure from his rebellion and his Kufr. Also, the wall which al-Khaḍir erected: God knew that if He did not make it stand up, the treasure which was beneath it would be lost. He knew that if al-Khaḍir made it stand up, the treasure would remain

beneath it until the two children would reach the age of maturity and extract their treasure - a mercy from God. Al-Khaḍir said to Moses: "And I did not do it on my own command" (18:83), because God has informed me of it, and it is His saying "[then they found one of our servants to whom we had given mercy from us] and we taught him knowledge proceeding from us." (18:25)

Also - the munāfiqūn who remained behind the Messenger of God; he knew that they stayed behind because of the far journey upon them and he knew that "were it an advantage near at hand and an easy journey they certainly would have followed him but the journey upon them was too far, and they swear (still) by God - 'Had we been able we would have gone out with you' - so destroying their souls; and God knows that they are truly liars." (9:42) [78] For they were able to go out if they wished.

10. And they argue about the saying:

"Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from God and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from you (Muhammad)." (4:79) "Say: all is from God and (what is the matter with) these people who do not reach the point of understanding what is told (them)?" (4:78)

They interpret that according to their opinion concerning obedience and disobedience, and they claim that the Kufr

and the transgression and disobedience and oppression (ẓulm) and tyranny (jawr) and telling lies and all the abominations are all from God. This is not so!

And the munāfiqūn - if God obtains for them something of what they like of easy, plentiful living, healthy bodies and such likes, - they say, "This is from God." If He inflicts something upon them they dislike of narrow living and unhealthy bodies and barrenness of land or shortage in land prepared for sowing, and in offspring, they say, "This is from Muhammad." But God said: "Say it is all from God," (4:78) i.e., all is the doing of God.

11. They argue in the story of Noah and in His saying: "And if I intend to give you good advice, my advice will not profit you if God wished that He should lead you astray. He is your Lord and to Him you shall return." (11:34) They interpret that by their ignorance that Noah stayed among his people 950 years, calling them to God the exalted, and advising them and not knowing if their response to him and their acceptance of his advice was beneficial to them or not. Moreover, he does not know whether God has made a way for them to his acceptance or if He has not made for them a way to him. That is not as they interpreted it; but Noah argued with his people until they were forced

with his argument, and they said: "Oh Noah! Indeed you have argued with us and made frequent argument with us; therefore, bring to us that with which you threaten us, if you are of the truthful ones." (11:32) And Noah said to them: "But God (only) will bring it to you, if He wills, and you will not escape", (11:33) - meaning, you will not be saved from His punishment when it comes to you, nor are you protected from it. "And my advice will not benefit you"; then, "Even if I (would) wish to advise you." (11:34) [79] At the time of the arrival of His punishment upon you). Noah knew (upon him peace) that punishment when it descends upon them and when they see it, the īmān will be of no benefit to them at that [time]. And God has made clear concerning the nations which He had destroyed with His saying: "But their belief was not going to profit them when they had seen our punishment; (this is) God's way which has indeed been that way in the matter of His servants, and these, the unbelievers, are lost." (40:85) This is God's sunnah: He does not accept repentance at the time of seeing the punishment. But His saying: "If God wished that He should cause you to be punished; He is your Lord and to Him you shall return." (11:34) He means here by al-Ghayyan "punishment". It is His saying: "But there came after them a generation who

wasted prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will meet perdition" (shayyan). (19:59), i.e., painful punishment. The Arab might say, "So and so met today Ghayyan, i.e. the amīr beat him very hard or punished him painfully."

12. And they argue concerning His saying: "Therefore of whomever God wishes that He should guide rightly, He expands his breast for Islam, and whomever He wishes that He should cause him to err, He makes his breast narrow and straight as though he were ascending heavenwards; thus does God lay uncleanness on those who do not believe." (6:125) They interpret this by their ignorance that God specified the enlarging of the breast [opening the Heart] of certain people without the offering in advance of good deeds and He specified the making of chests narrow - meaning hearts - of a certain people, without Kufr or transgression or going astray coming from them. There is no way for them to go to obedience which He has imposed upon them, and they shall be eternally in Hell - for the length of time. And it is not, Oh Commander of the Faithful, like what the ignorant and mistaken interpret.

Our Lord is more merciful and more just and more generous than to do that with His servants. How [would He do that] when He says "God does not impose

on a soul except what it can bear - the soul is responsible for what it does." (2:186) He only created the Jinn and the people for His worship. He made for them ears, eyes, and hearts by which they are able to bear the double of what God has imposed upon them of His wroship. He who obeys what he has been commanded, God has kept open his chest [heart] for Islām; a reward for him for his obedience in the transitory world. [80] And He lightens for him the good deeds and makes heavy for him the kufr and the transgressions and the disobedience. And if he is in that state he is able to bear all what He commanded and forbade. Also, God gave judgment concerning everyone who reached the [required] limit of obedience whether he be a high ranking person or a low ranking person. [And He judged] him who abandoned what God commanded him concerning obedience and who persevered in his Kufr and his misguidance in the transitory world; being, in spite of that, able to return and repent. Such a man "God made his chest narrow and straight as though he were ascending heavenwards"; a punishment from Him for him by his Kufr and his misguidance in the transitory world because repentance is commanded and called for. Also God gave judgment concerning him who has reached the limit of Kufr and transgressions. God

has mentioned, Oh Commander of the Faithful, the openness and closedness [of hearts] in His book - a mercy from Him for His servants, and an encouragement from Him for them concerning the actions ('a'māl) through which they merit the opening of their chests, by His wisdom; and a discouragement from Him for them concerning the works through which they merit the closing of the chests, by His wisdom.

God did not mention that to them in order to cut off their hope nor to make them despair from His mercy and His grace, nor to deprive them from His forgiveness and pardon and His generosity if they are good; and God made clear in His book, and He says: "With it (Book) God guides him who will follow His pleasure in the ways of peace and brings them from darkness to the light by His permission, and guides them on the right path." (5:16) [81] Reflect and try to comprehend, Oh Commander of the Faithful, for God says: "Therefore, give good news to My servants; those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom God has guided, and those are the men of understanding." (39:18) And listen to God's saying, where He says: "And if the people of the Book believed and feared God, we would have covered their evil deeds and we would have made them enter the

gardens of bliss, and if they had kept the torah and the gospel and that which was revealed from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet." (5:65) God said: "And if the people of the villages had believed and feared God, we would have opened for them blessings from heaven and from earth, but they rejected so we overtook them for what they had acquired." (7:96) Know, Oh Commander of the Faithful - God did not make matters inevitable (ḥatman) for the servants, but He said: "If you do such and such I will do with you such and such, and if you do such and such, I will do with you such and such." He only rewards them according to their deeds. He commanded them to worship Him, and pray to Him asking Him to save them. Indeed, they desired what He brings into being for them, i.e. additional help, and that He brings success, through which He makes easy for them the adhering to the good and the abandoning of evil. Such is God's judgment, whomever obeys Him and asks for what He has; and it is by this saying [above]. Have a conversation with yourself, Oh Commander of the Faithful; do not say that God has decreed (qaddara) for his servants what He has forbidden them and that He made a barrier (ḥāl) between them and between what He commanded them; that He sent them messengers to call

them to the opposite of what He has decreed (qadā) for them, and then punishes them for the length of time - if they do not respond to that which He did not make as a way for them. God exalts himself greatly above what the wrong doers say. [82] Do these ignorant ones know against whom they are arguing? But they argue against God, for God the Exalted said: "Wherefore Believe - it is good to you" (4:170). The ignorant say - "They have no way to īmān." He said, "Respond to the Messenger of God," the ignorant say, "He made a barrier between them and the response." God said: "Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord." (57:21) The ignorant ones say: "How could they hasten when He compelled them decidedly?" He said: "Why do they not believe?" (84:20) They said; "Because God stopped them from īmān and made them fall in Kufr. He says: "Oh People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve the signs of God while you witness?" (3:70) The ignorant ones say: "Because God has decreed (qaddara) kufr upon them and made it inevitable". This is the argument against God and the bad thought about Him. But God said "Desist - it is better for you." (4:171); the ignorant think that He says, "Desist from what I decreed upon you, for it is good for you." He also said: "Do not forge lies upon God" (20:61); "Do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best

manner" (6:152; 17:34); "And do not kill anyone whom God forbade, except in a right cause" (17:33); "Do not sell my signs for a small price." (2:41).

All that is in the Qur'ān, the like of that, the ignorant think that He forbids them from His qadar and qaḍā'. They also say that God decreed upon His prophet the forbidding of what He has [previously] made allowable, then blamed him for putting into practice His qaḍā'. He said: "Oh Prophet, why do you forbid (yourself) that which God has made?" (66:1) They said: "God decreed (qaḍā') upon His prophet at first then gave him permission, and then blamed him for that." He said: "God forgive you! Why did you give them leave (?) [till it was clear to thee which of them spoke the truth, and thou knowest the lies?]" (9:43)

Whenever any of the prophets erred, he would attribute the error to himself and would not attribute it to his Lord. And al-Hudhud, whom God made to speak, said: "I found her (Sheba) and her people bowing down to the sun instead of God and the devil has made their deeds seem beautiful to them and thus turned them from the way." (27:24) There is much of that in the Qur'ān. This is the answer to what you asked me about; I have explained it, and made it clear. Reflect on it and

think deeply about it, for it is a cure (shifā') for
what is in the heart.

The letter ends.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

¹Thābit Ibn Qurrah (d. 288) supposedly said: "I envy in the Arab nation three men: 'Umar, the head of the state; Ḥasan, the ascetic, and Jāḥiz, the philosopher." Quoted by L. Massignon, Essai sur les Origines du Lexique Technique de la mystique musulmane (Paris, 1914-1922), p. 157.

²E. L. Peterson, "'Alī and Mu'āwiyah", Acta Orientalia, Vol. 23 (1958). p. 160.

³See L. Veccia Vaglieri, "al-Djamal" and "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib", Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed. (Leiden).

⁴Veccia Vaglieri, "'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib".

⁵Ibid.

⁶M. Watt, "Khārijite Thought in the Umayyad Period", Der Islam, Vol. 36 (1961), p. 218. It was from Baṣra that a considerable number of Khawārij were recruited; S. Longrigg, "al-Baṣra", E.I., new ed.

⁷J. Wellhausen, The Arab Kingdom and its Fall (Beirut, 1963), p. 59.

⁸See Izutsu, The Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 10-16; M. Watt, "Khārijite Thought", pp. 218, where the authors make distinctions (theological and historical) between the Azāriqah and the Najdiyyah.

⁹H. A. R. Gibb, "'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān", E.I., new ed.

¹⁰H. Ritter, "Ḥasan al-Baṣrī", E.I., new ed.; Massignon, op. cit., p. 154, (Leiden, 1915).

¹¹Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabaqāt, ed. by B. Meissner, Vol. VII, Book I (Leiden, 1915), p. 119.

¹²Ibid., p. 119.

¹³Ibid., p. 128.

- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 103.
- ¹⁵Massignon, op. cit., pp. 153-154.
- ¹⁶M. Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 222.
- ¹⁷Marshall Hodgson, "How did the Shi'a become sectarian", Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 75 (1955), pp. 1-13.
- ¹⁸See particularly: A. S. Tritton, Muslim Theology (London, 1947); A. J. Wensinck, Muslim Creed; D. B. Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory (London, 1903).
- ¹⁹Tritton, op. cit., p. 43. "A Khārijī was sure that his sect was right and all the others damned; The Murji'a took the opposite view, held that there was hope for all."
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 59.
- ²¹See Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 95; Watt, Free Will and Predestination, p. 40.
- ²²C. Pellat, "Ghaylan", E.I., new. ed.; Watt, Free Will and Predestination, p. 40.
- ²³Watt, "Khārijite Thought", p. 229.
- ²⁴Izutsu, Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology.
- ²⁵Watt, Khārijite Thought in the Umayyad Period; "Shi'ism under the Umayyads", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1960), pp. 158-72; Islam and the Integration of Society (London, 1961); Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam.
- ²⁶Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 4. Izutsu shows how the concept kāfir changed from the Qur'ānic idea of non-Muslim to the Khārijī notion of heretic, ibid., pp. 6-10.
- ²⁷For an analysis of the Qur'ānic meaning of mushrik, see Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an, pp. 130-133.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 12; see also Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 219.

²⁹Izutsu, op. cit., p. 9.

³⁰Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 220.

³¹For the elaborated definition in the thought of the Najdiyyah, see Izutsu, Concept of Belief, pp. 14-15.

³²Ibid., p. 35. Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 221, states: "Since Najdah is said to have been strict in punishing wine drinking, we may infer that these discussions of the status of sinners did not arise out of moral laxity but out of difficulties with the conception of the community."

³³In the Qur'anic sense, 4:116.

³⁴Watt, "Khārijite Thought", p. 222.

³⁵Ibid., p. 223.

³⁶Izutsu, Concept of Belief, pp. 14-15.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 41-42.

³⁸Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 225. Ḥasan's idea of the munāfiq will be discussed later.

³⁹Ibid., p. 227 and Watt, Islam and the Integration of Society, pp. 215-216. "'Suspending judgment' means suspending judgment on the ultimate fate of a wrong doer while at the same time holding he must be punished for his crime." Watt, "Kharijite Thought", p. 227.

⁴⁰Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 44. Compare this to Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 38; "From the latter sources we know that the extreme opponents of the Kharijites were the Murdjites". Wensinck's entire discussion of these "two sects" is based upon the notion that they were diametrically opposed to each other.

⁴¹Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 44. We must stress, however, that the Murji'ah as conceived by the heresiographers, did not exist at the time of Ḥasan's Risālah. As W. Thompson points out, The heresiographers'

conception of the rise of theological "sects" was devoid of political motives. He states: "Muslim history does not distinguish the early Murji'ites as a party from the general run of Umayyad supporters, from the masses, the rabble, partisans of kings and followers of conquerors, as al-Naubakhtī calls them, who were, he adds, named Murji'ites in general." W. Thompson, "The Character of Early Islamic Sects", Goldziher Memorial Volume, Part I (Budapest, 1948), p. 95.

⁴²For a translation of the groups representing Murji'ah thought as classified by al-Ash'arī, see Izutsu, Concept of Belief, pp. 84-82.

⁴³Ibid., p. 45. For a detailed analysis of all aspects of Murji'ah thought, see Chapters 4-10.

⁴⁴Tritton, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴⁵We have not discussed the early origins of the Mu'tazilah (to which Ḥasan was connected, as the traditional story goes,) because the Mu'tazilah post-date the treatise of Ḥasan. On the origins of this movement, see: Izutsu, Concept of Belief, pp. 47-50; Watt, "The Political Attitudes of the Mu'tazilah", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1963), pp. 38-57; H. S. Nyberg, "Mu'tazilah", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden).

⁴⁶H. Ritter, "Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit", Der Islam, Vol. 21 (1933), pp. 1-83. The two arabic sources from which we have drawn are Abū Nu'aym, Ḥilyat 'l-'Awliyā', Vol. II (Cairo, 1933/1351), and Ibn Sa'd, op. cit. Ritter has given the Arabic text from the Ḥilyat 'l-'Awliyā' which we have used, but has cited only the references to Ibn Sa'd. We shall first refer to Ritter, then the Arabic source.

⁴⁷Ritter, p. 14; Ibn Sa'd, p. 121.

⁴⁸Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A'yān, trans. by De Slane, Vol. I (London, 1843), p. 370.

⁴⁹Ritter, p. 16; Ḥilya.

⁵⁰Ritter, p. 16; Ḥilya.

- ⁵¹Ritter, p. 17; Hilya.
- ⁵²Ritter, p. 19; Ibn Sa'd, p. 129.
- ⁵³Ritter, p. 20; Hilya.
- ⁵⁴Ritter, p. 20; Hilya.
- ⁵⁵Ritter, p. 21; Hilya.
- ⁵⁶Ritter, p. 24; Hilya.
- ⁵⁷Ritter, p. 21; Hilya.
- ⁵⁸Ritter, p. 21; Hilya.
- ⁵⁹Ritter, p. 24; Hilya.
- ⁶⁰Ritter, p. 24; Hilya.
- ⁶¹Ritter, p. 25; Hilya.
- ⁶²Ritter, p. 39; Hilya.
- ⁶³Ritter, p. 39; Ibn Sa'd, p. 128.
- ⁶⁴Ritter, p. 39; Ibn Sa'd, p. 128.
- ⁶⁵Ritter, p. 39; Hilya.
- ⁶⁶Ritter, p. 39; Ibn Sa'd, p. 123.
- ⁶⁷Ritter, p. 40; Ibn Sa'd, pp. 116, 117, 126, 128, 125.
- ⁶⁸Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 52.
- ⁶⁹Ritter, p. 43; Hilya: see also Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 52.
- ⁷⁰Ritter, p. 44; Hilya.
- ⁷¹Ritter, p. 45; Hilya.
- ⁷²Ritter, p. 45; Hilya. The good things that God gave His creatures have been turned into playthings merely for the satisfaction of sensual desires.
- ⁷³Ritter, p. 30; Hilya.

⁷⁴Izutsu, Concept of Belief, p. 51. The elaboration of the idea of the munāfiq as the one who manifests imān but conceals kufr in his soul, as it appears in later theology, is discussed on p. 53.

⁷⁵See Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, pp. 178-183 for a discussion of nifāq and munāfiq in the Qur'ān.

⁷⁶Izutsu's contention that the Ibāḍiyyah did not discuss munāfiq in terms of fisq and grave sins rests on al-Ash'arī's description of three different views developed by the Ibāḍiyyah. (Concepts of Belief, p. 50). It must be remembered, however, that al-Ash'arī's classification is concise and abstract. Even so, the second view mentioned by al-Ash'arī can only refer to the Qur'anic view of munāfiq: "Munāfiq is a name, or a fixed label which God Himself attached to certain definite persons." (Ibid., p. 51). This would indicate that nifāq and munāfiq, as understood by the Ibāḍiyyah, have relation to the problem of fisq and grave sins. In other words, Ḥasan and the Ibāḍiyyah quite possibly shared the same views regarding the concepts nifāq and munāfiq.

⁷⁷Ritter, p. 35; Ḥilya.

⁷⁸Ritter, p. 35; Ḥilya.

⁷⁹Ritter, p. 36; Ḥilya.

⁸⁰Ritter, p. 30; Ḥilya.

⁸¹D. B. MacDonald, Development of Muslim Theology, pp. 127-129; also his articles "Kadar", "Kadariyyah", Shorter E.I.; Tritton, op. cit., pp. 54-61.

⁸²Macdonald, Development, p. 127.

⁸³Ibid., p. 128. That Ma'bad was killed for being a "Qadarī" is unlikely; more probable is that his execution resulted from his associations with the rebel leader Ibn al-Ash'ath, who led an insurrection against Ḥajjāj. Ḥasan refused to take part in the rebellion; Massignon, op. cit., p. 153.

⁸⁴Tritton, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸⁵Watt, Free Will, p. 40.

⁸⁶Ritter, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁸⁷Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 53. ". . . it is reported that Ma'bad conversed with a Christian from Mesopotamia named Susan, who embraced Islām, but later returned to Christianity". (al-'Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb) Wensinck also cites the ḥadīth from Muslim which is the source of the traditional view concerning the originator of the "Qadariyyah"; "The first who instituted discussions on the qadar at Baṣra was Ma'bad al-Juhanī, ibid., p. 53.

⁸⁸Ritter, op. cit., p. 58; Watt, Free Will, p. 59, also refers to Ritter on this point.

⁸⁹Watt, Free Will, p. 53.

⁹⁰See 'Abd al-Malik's letter to Ḥasan.

⁹¹Rivisti degli Studi Orientali, VII (1916-8), pp. 461-6; reported by Watt, Free Will, p. 48.

⁹²Watt, Free Will, pp. 49-50.

⁹³Al-Ash'ari, al-Idārah, trans. by W. C. Klein (New Haven, 1960), p. 47; quoted in part by Watt, Free Will, p. 51.

⁹⁴Watt, Free Will, p. 51.

⁹⁵Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 57; Abu Dā'ūd, Sunnah, no. 16.

⁹⁶Al-Juwaynī, Kitāb al-Irshād (Cairo, 1369/1950). p. 256. "Seventy Prophets" signifies the spokesmen for all the religions.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ al-'Usūl al-Khamsah (Cairo, 1384/1965), p. 772. In the lengthy discussion which follows, 'Abd al-Jabbār tries to prove that the Majūs can only be the jabriyyah.

⁹⁹We have not mentioned the jabriyyah; suffice it to say the term designated those who held the determinist position, as expressed in various forms.

See Watt, Free Will, pp. 96-99 for a discussion on the "doctrine of Jabr"; particularly note the description of jabr given by al-Shahrastānī.

¹⁰⁰J. Obermann, "Political Theology in Early Islam", Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 55 (1935), pp. 138-162. Here Obermann discusses the treatise and argues for its authenticity.

¹⁰¹J. W. Fück, "Some Hitherto Unpublished Texts on the Mu'tazilite Movement from Ibn al-Nadīm's Kitāb al-Fihrist", Professor Muhammad Shafi Presentation Volume (Lahore, 1955), p. 54.

¹⁰²al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Nihal, Cureton ed. (London, 1862), p. 32.

¹⁰³Obermann, op. cit., p. 140; Ṭabarī, Ta'rīkh, ed. by M. de Goeji, III, 4, pp. 2489; Ibn Qutayba, Ma'ārif, ed. Wustenfeld, p. 225 ff. (cited by Obermann) Obermann finds it noteworthy that the two men who head Ibn Qutaybah's list of Qadariyyah are 'Amr b. 'Ubayd, who was known to be one of Ḥasan's pupils, and, as the traditional story goes, disputed with Ḥasan and left his circle along with Wāṣil b. Aṭā'. According to Massignon, op. cit., p. 153, Ḥasan had close associations with 'Aṭā' b. Yasār and Ma'bad, probably around 70-80 A.H.

¹⁰⁴Obermann, op. cit., p. 150.

¹⁰⁵Ibn Sa'd, op. cit., p. 127.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁰⁷Obermann, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁰⁸Ritter, op. cit., pp. 67-82.

¹⁰⁹Obermann, op. cit., pp. 139-142. See particularly footnote 10, p. 141, where Obermann argues that the appended note to the second manuscript (an abridgment of the first, containing only a summary of the main manuscript), which was a plea to the khalifāh on Ḥasan's behalf, was written by Ḥajjāj himself, and not one of Ḥajjāj's scribes, as Ritter supposed.

¹¹⁰J. Schacht, "A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions", JRAS (1948-49), p. 153.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 148.

¹¹²J. Schacht, Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence (Oxford, 1950).

¹¹³Schacht, "A Revaluation", p. 145.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 145.

¹¹⁵Wensinck, Muslim Creed, p. 59; Schacht, "A Revaluation", p. 149.

¹¹⁶Schacht, Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 149-150.

¹¹⁸Schacht, Muhammadan Jurisprudence, p. 74.

¹¹⁹F. Rahman, op. cit., p. 12.

¹²⁰The "Samaritan"; he is the Qur'anic figure (22:85,87,95) who tempted the Israelites to worship the golden calf; see B. Heller, "Sāmari" Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam.

CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS TO MAKE COMPATIBLE DIVINE OMNIPOTENCY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY: AL-ASHARI AND IBN HAZAM

In our first chapter we examined in general terms some of the problems of the freedom-determinism controversy in the modern discussions. We saw that there are three basic approaches to the issue: Radical determinism, indeterminism, and the attempt to work out a compatibility-theory. We tried to argue that these three approaches may be applied to the classical Islamic context where the thought-world is theological, not scientific. If we compare the argument of J. Hospers to that of J. Wild, we see that each one, starting with differing presuppositions, develops his argument to its logical end. Hospers rejects the notion of "moral responsibility" as a meaningless concept; this follows from his assumptions about determinism and its implication for all aspects of human existence. J. Wild denies that the scientific world of cause-effect relations is the real world. The real world is the world of "lived-experience" out of which man may, under a certain set of conditions, establish that there

are certain causal relations. He rejects determinism, which follows from his definition of man as the creature distinguishable from other creatures by the fact that he lives in the "freedom world"; his freedom defines him as having the ability to respond to his world of lived-experience. To be logically consistent, the concept of human responsibility excludes determinism.

We have seen that both the radical determinism of the ḥadīth material and the indeterminism of ^{al-}Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's treatise are based upon two different interpretations of the Qur'ān, and both have a logical development all their own. For the first, Divine qadar implies total determination of human existence; for the second, man's ultimate destiny depends upon his 'amal, implying that God has given man real ability to choose acts of obedience and disobedience as his very own.

These two positions, which represent attempts to deal with assertions about God and His relation to man as expressed in the Qur'ān, formed the basis of the later disputes. But the later disputes of the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah added to this foundation important and different philosophical issues which were untouched by the previous controversy. For Ḥasan, God is Good, and this implies man is a free agent, equipped with

ability (istiṭā'ah) to choose kufr or īmān; Evil issues from man, and Shayṭān, but not from God. The Ḥadīth material on the other hand, affirms Divine Omnipotency, and the logical implication of this affirmation is that man is not a free agent. Neither position attempts to grapple with the combined difficulties of the following two questions: (1) If man is a free agent, How can God be omnipotent? (2) If man is not a free agent, How can God be Good and not be held responsible for Evil?

The later efforts did recognize the need to face these issues, and what resulted was an attempted compatibility-theory, taking into account the necessity of affirming Divine Omnipotency and at the same time admitting that somehow man must be held responsible for his actions so that there may be preserved some logical basis for taklīf.

What we shall do in this chapter is to view the positions of two great theologians, Al-Ash'arī and Ibn Ḥazm. We cannot trace the important and complex development of this controversy which preceded the effort of these two theologians, who tried to make compatible Divine Omnipotency and Human Responsibility. We realize that for a proper understanding of the controversy, after Greek philosophical methods of

argumentation were appropriated, attention first should be given to the theories of various representatives of the Mu'tazilah. By jumping from ^{al-}Hasan al-Baṣrī to Al-Ash'arī and Ibn Ḥazm, we are neglecting the immediate and essential background to Al-Ash'arī's formulation of the problem.¹

However, it is possible to understand the crucial problem of trying to allow some kind of responsibility for man so that taklīf might remain a meaningful concept and still preserve God's Omnipotence, by examining the attempt of Al-Ash'arī (873-935) and Ibn Ḥazm (993-1064) to work out a compatibility-theory. The most important concept in the debates, after the argument assumed its philosophical form, was qudrah. The question into which both these theologians delved was: To what extent does Divine qudrah bear on man in his situation of having to fulfill duties and obligations incumbent upon him as a result of Divine commands? Does man, in fact, have any effective power so that he may truly be held responsible for what he does?

For Al-Ash'arī, and His followers, the problem of working out a compatibility theory was complicated because they were influenced by a metaphysics of atoms and accidents. This theory, was first ~~elaborated~~ by

the Mu'tazilī Abū 'l-Hudhayl; later, among the Ash'ariyyah, it was modified by Al-Bāqillānī, who held that no accident can exist for more than an instant of time. We cannot discuss the complicated theory of Islamic atomism, but we must stress that it had tremendous impact on the Freedom-Determinism controversy. If God creates a new creation at every new instant in time, the notion of human capacity (an accident) is emptied of any real meaning. It is not a developed theory in Al-Ash'arī, but his doctrine of kasb or iktisāb, and his formulation of the concept istiṭā'ah (qudrah) seems to be based upon a primitive theory of atomism.

Difficulties were apparent even for the Mu'tazilah, who could not escape the implications of atomism either. The two basic motivating principles of the Mu'tazilah (namely to assert God's oneness over against the Ṣifātiyyah and the dualists, and to preserve His justice by ascribing evil to man) clashed. Majid Fakhry states:

For whereas the vindication of God's uniqueness was bound to lead inevitably to the vindication of His unlimited sovereignty in the world, the assertion 'that man was the creator of his deeds' was conceived precisely with a view to limiting this sovereignty in a manner which would safeguard His justice. It is not surprising then, to find that their profession of human freedom was no more than a verbal avowal of man's right to exercise an ineffective freedom in the domain of consciousness and will only.²

The clever theory of an-Nazzām in appropriating the pre-Socratic theory (Anaxagoras?) of Kumūn and applying it to the "natural order" sought to relieve God of continually having to intervene in the course of ordinary events, and yet still preserve His direct sovereignty in the world. But this was rejected by both the Ash'ariyyah and Mu'tazilah.³ The futility of this predicament is expressed by Thumana b. Ashrār, who said generated effects have no author at all -- neither God, man or nature.⁴ The Mu'tazilah, argues Fakhry, were unable to support a thorough-going view of human freedom because they were bound to the metaphysics of atomism. Man was free to make the choice to act, but had no power to carry through this act.⁵

Starting from the theological notion of Divine Justice, they (Mu'tazilah) sought to rationalize the problem of human action in a manner which would safeguard the reality of that notion. To do this it was sufficient to postulate a man capable to self-determination; of action in the inward world of will. But when they proceeded to rationalize the parallel problem of action in the outward world of nature, they found themselves faced with a metaphysics of atoms and accidents, which they could not reject because of the prospects of safeguarding the omnipotence and uniqueness of God it afforded.⁶

Thus it is that both Al-Ash'arī and the Mu'tazilah were fundamentally concerned with preserving the omnipotence of God and atomism gave the

philosophical basis out of which theological formulations issued. There is, however, yet another attitude which was important to Al-Ash'arī, and we shall see how this notion is basic to his treatment of the problem when we examine his ideas on kasb and istiṭā'ah in the Kitāb al-Luma'.

The idea is commonly referred to as "theistic subjectivism".⁷ The meaning is that God simply determines things to be good or bad, necessary or superfluous solely by His decision that they be so. There is no end to possibilities: If God commands murder, it is right for one to kill. The question of justice, as humanly defined, is not a pertinent question. God wills evil, He wills kufr; He does what He wills and nothing else can really be said. Ibn Ḥazm, as we shall see, explicitly holds to this view. When his opponents imply that God cannot do such and such, He replies that God does what He wills, when He wills and the whole created order is as it is simply because God wanted it that way. But for Ibn Ḥazm, this is a religious affirmation of God's sovereignty not to be argued or justified; for al-Ash'arī, it is a foundation upon which many of his arguments stand.

Al-Ash'arī resolves the quandry^{or} in which the Mu'tazilah found themselves by throwing out the question

of Justice almost completely. When the charge against him is raised that if God wills evil, then He Himself is evil and unjust, al-Ash'arī asserts that He creates injustice and evil not as His own, but as the creatures'.⁸

There is no standard by which to challenge the seeming arbitrariness of God's actions. George Hourani states:

By defining 'justice' as obedience to the commands of a law he (al-Ash'arī) set God free from the ethical limits that confine man, for, "the Lord of the worlds . . . is not under a sharī'ah."⁹

The question: "From Whence Evil?" does not have to be answered on the basis of a human understanding of justice. God wills Evil because He wills everything. It is irrelevant to question the morality of Divine activity.

Al-Ash'arī and the problem of kasb and istiṭā'ah

The term most used to describe al-Ash'arī's attempt to make compatible Divine determinism and human responsibility is kasb, or iktisāb. Watt has shown that the term pre-dates Al-Ash'arī.¹⁰ J. Schacht believes that the meaning of the term as applied to the theological discussions about determinism and freedom stems from the Qur'ānic understanding of the

verb kasaba employed as a commercial term: "to engage", "to pledge one's credit", "to be held responsible". "God imposes (kallafa) on each person only that of which he is capable; to his credit (kasaba) that which has been credited to him, and to his debit that which has been debited to him." (2:286) The meaning here is that man is responsible for that which he has been given the capacity to be responsible for.

In the Kitāb al-Luma' the term signifies the connection between man and his act. Man "acquires" or is given responsibility over an act through the creation, by God, of the ability to acquire that act and make it one's own. The problematical point is whether or not man really 'acquires' it as his own.

There is little mention of iktisāb in the Ibānah.¹² It is dealt with briefly in connection with Divine Irādah, where al-Ash'arī claims that it is willed by God alone, since no act can occur without His knowing and willing it; otherwise, there is established a fault in God.¹³

The theory is set forth fully in the fifth chapter of the Kitāb al-Luma'.¹⁴ The chapter deals with the problem of iktisāb and the question of decreeing acts of disobedience; our concern will be primarily with 'iktisāb.

Al-Ash'arī's task is to prove that God is the creator of the acquisitions ('aksāb) of men. He does this by (1) establishing the necessity of a producer (muhdith) of the acts and (2) proving that the muhdith produces motion, which is necessary for the act to exist. These two notions constitute the rational proofs; he also has recourse to Qur'ānic evidence for securing his argument (37:96; 46:14)

The proof for a necessary muhdith for acts is more like a categorical statement than a proof: It is impossible that an act come into existence without a Muhdith. He explains this by saying, "For if it (the act) could come to be as it really is without a producer who produces it as such, then a thing could come to be an act without a producer who would have produced it as an act."¹⁵ This is an obtuse way of saying, "if an act could be produced without a producer, then it could be produced without a producer". As examples, he uses kufr and īmān which are acts that need a producer. Also, it is impossible to transform kufr into something good, no matter how much one seeks to make it other than kufr. Kufr must have a muhdith who "intentionally produces it as unbelief, vain and bad."¹⁶ The Muhdith cannot be the kāfir so it must therefore be God. This is because ". . . no body can produce them

(acts) since bodies can effect nothing in things distinct from themselves."¹⁷ Standing behind this assertion is the religious assertion that God is the sole cause of everything. (It is interesting that so little effort is expended in rigorous establishment of this claim. One perceives that in spite of the outward appearance of logical argument, much of what is said could be termed "faith-statements"; e.g. "Acts must have an agent who makes them as they really are, because an act cannot do without an agent. So if the agent who makes it as it really is be not the body, God must be the agent who makes it as it really is".¹⁸ This may be reduced to: Since God is the creator of the world and everything in it and man is weak and totally under the power of God, God Himself must be the only real force that can direct man, including his every action. Thus, what passes for objective philosophical arguments are often pious religious assertions.)

It is not necessary, however, that as Agent (fā'il), God is also acquirer (muktasib).¹⁹ Frank²⁰ thinks that al-Ash'arī makes a real distinction between fā'il and muk⁺asib; McCarthy²¹ believes the distinction is merely a terminological one. We tend to agree with McCarthy, in light of what follows, where al-Ash'arī

discusses motion as a proof that God can be the Agent of the act but not the acquirer of the act.

In the analysis of motion, al-Ash'arī tries to distinguish between necessary and acquired motion and prove that acquired motion necessarily follows necessary motion, both being the creation of God. "Necessary motion" is motion which is forced or compelled, like one shaking from palsy; "acquired motion" is as in the case of one who "freely" comes and goes.²² The man who freely comes and goes has an "acquired" power in his motion, allowing him to do just that; this distinguishes him from the man shaking with palsy. However, in terms of the actual distinction between necessary motion and acquired motion, as far as origination is concerned, there is none.

. . . -- because the true meaning of acquisition is that the thing proceeds from its acquirer in virtue of a created power. Now since the two states differ, in the two motions, and since one of them fulfills the notion of necessity, this one must be necessary motion; and since the other fulfills the notion of acquisition, it must be an acquisition. But the proof of creation is the same with respect both to necessary and to acquired motion. Therefore, if one of the two motions be a creation, the other must also be a creation.²³

Al-Ash'arī also defends his idea that God is the creator of both motions by asserting that if one thing were the object of power of someone other than

God, what is to prevent one from saying many things are the objects of power of someone other than God and thus deny the necessity of God being the creator of things?²⁴

This argument is clarified when it is realized there is no such thing as generation (tawallud) or real secondary causation for al-Ash'arī. Motion, whether "necessary" or "acquired" is still bound to be the direct creation of God. There would perhaps be some sense to man "acquiring" if God merely created the conditions for acquired motion, i.e. sound bodily health.

In the treatise of Ḥasan (p. 77) the same issue is dealt with, even though there are no technical terms for necessary and acquired motion. (al-ḍarūrah, and al-iktisāb) In the Treatise al-ḥarakah al-ḍarūrah, necessary (involuntary) motion, is defined by such examples as height, shortness, colors and weight. al-ḥarakah al-iktisāb, acquired (voluntary) motion is something which originates from man, in that God gives him the capacity (istiṭā'ah) to choose kufr or īmān. It is possible Al-Ash'arī is trying to say the same thing; however, what complicates Al-Ash'arī's view of voluntary and involuntary action (motion) is his insistence that istiṭā'ah occurs only with the act. Thus it appears that his distinction is merely a terminological one.

Istiṭā'ah (Capacity)

Whereas the iktisāb theory, as outlined by al-Ash'arī, presupposes what Houranī terms "theistic subjectivism", the concept of istiṭā'ah has as its ground the not fully developed metaphysics of atoms and accidents. (We do not mean to imply that al-Ash'arī's discussion of iktisāb and istiṭā'ah indicates that they are two theories; the concept iktisāb (kasb) refers to the nature of the connection between man and his act. The question raised by istiṭā'ah is not who creates the acts, but rather the question of power to receive the acts and make them one's own. There is no question or doubt raised about the source of qudrah; the question is, when does it occur? When is a man truly capable of doing something? Al-Ash'arī's problem is to prove that the qudrah which brings about the possibility of istiṭā'ah is concomitant with the act itself. His view stands over against that of the Mu'tazilah, who held that istiṭā'ah exists before the act, and that it is the power to do the act or not do it. For al-Ash'arī, to say that the istiṭā'ah to act exists before the act is to posit that capacity endures, and this is false, since istiṭā'ah is an accident. What is anticipated here is the al-Bāqillānī definition of accident; "That which cannot endure . . . but perishes in the second

instant of its coming-to-be."²⁵ He argues that (given this atomistic definition of accident) an act could begin to exist in spite of a non-existent power, since the istiṭā'ah which existed before the act had passed away.

. . . if a man could act, at a time when he was impotent, in virtue of an inexistent power, then he could act a hundred years after the power had begun to be, even though he would have been impotent during all those hundred years, and that in virtue of a power which has been inexistent for a hundred years . . .²⁶

Istiṭā'ah (qudrah) also cannot endure because that would entail the accident of duration subsisting in it or it would endure by itself. If it endured by itself, then it would have to endure continually from the moment it came into existence. If it endured because of a duration subsisting in it, this would entail an accident subsisting in another accident, and this is rejected. This view of the non-durability of accidents is further detailed by al-Baghdādī, who said that the enduring of accidents leads to the impossibility of their being destroyed. If an accident endures in itself, then it could continue to be until the emergence of an accident of destruction, and there is no certainty this would occur.²⁷

So, at the beginning of the argument, having istiṭā'ah to act before the act occurs is denied because of the theory that accidents are perishable.

Another basic Mu'tazilah assumption that al-Ash'arī must reject is the notion that man has power to do a thing, or not do it. God's power al-qudrah al-qadīm and man's power al-qudrah al-muḥdathah are contrasted. Human power is always conditioned to include the existence of the object of power. In other words, the power and the act must occur concomitantly. Again, atomism is basic; if there could be the difference of one unit of time between istiṭā'ah to act and the act itself, there might as well be hundreds of units of time between the two. If this were so, man could have the capacity to act, without acting. For God, there is no condition to limit His power. He has it in spite of the nonexistence of an act. Man, since he cannot act until the act is existent, cannot "not act" because that would mean the power to "not act" and to "act" would occur simultaneously. This is impossible since at the moment one power is created, it ceases to be; it is also impossible because two contraries cannot occur simultaneously (e.g. motion and rest).²⁸

Another proof that the act and the capacity to act occur together is that if God does not create the

istiṭā'ah, man cannot acquire anything.²⁹ Thus, acquisition exists only when capacity exists (here he presupposes the previous argument of accidents not enduring).

He dismisses the Mu'tazilah view that sound health necessitates capacity to act. He agrees that without limbs, God does not command a man to do a thing because this would be commanding a thing in the absence of power. But the acquisition is not impossible because of the nonexistence of the sound limbs. It is because of the nonexistence of power that acquisition is impossible. "If the limb were inexistent, and the power existed, the acquisition would take place."³⁰ He argues this point because of the fact that an incapable man ('ājiz) often does have sound limbs; thus, acquisition cannot be conditioned by the soundness of limbs. Acquisition is conditioned solely by the existence of the capacity to act, and this is only from God. This reasoning applies to the question, "does the nonexistence of life entail the nonexistence of the acquisition"? Al-Ash'arī answers yes because capacity does not exist when life is nonexistent. However, this does not mean it is impossible for impotence ('ajz) to exist when life exists. "Do you not see that life can exist along with impotence, so that a man does not acquire?"³¹

Again, his answer calls attention to the fact that qudrah is under the sole possession of God (and "acquisition" is emptied of any real human connection). It could be argued that he does not even speak to the question of the Mu'tazilah. They seem to be saying: Is there not something within the very nature of sound limbs that necessitates capacity? The man who has sound limbs, if we take the expression literally, can move them. He can stand, sit, walk, and these things he can do because he has sound limbs. Al-Ash'arī fails to answer how a man can have sound limbs and still be impotent. Both sides would agree that acquisition is conditioned solely by the existence of the capacity to act; but al-Ash'arī puts the basis for the capacity to act in something wholly other than the locus in which the acts occur. Thus, there is no indication of man's role in acquiring acts that would leave him responsible for obedience and disobedience. When the question is asked, "does God charge the unbelievers with duty to believe?"³² the answer is yes. The opponents reply that then the unbeliever is capable of believing. The reply is given; "If he were capable of believing, he would believe."³³

Al-Ash'arī tries to make a distinction between taklif and istiṭā'ah and prove that a man can

be incapable of īmān and still remain responsible for the consequences of not believing. This is the contradiction that appeared to the Mu'tazilah and one which does not seem to be resolved by al-Ash'ari. It is at this point that the logical basis for Taklīf breaks down. He states:

If you mean by your words (that God enjoins on man a duty he cannot fulfil) that he is incapable of believing because of his impotence to do so -- no. But if you mean that he is incapable of believing because he omits (tark) to do so and is preoccupied with the contrary of belief -- yes.³⁴

This is rather contradictory to the trend of the argument so far, at least at first glance. Unless there is a tricky and subtle distinction between "having no istiṭā'ah" and "being 'ajz," he simply contradicts his statement that the kāfir is incapable of īmān. And if there is no distinction between "having no istiṭā'ah and 'ajz", the significance of his statement, in light of the preceding is: "It is not your 'ajz which renders you incapable of believing; it is rather that God does not make you capable or give you istiṭā'ah to believe.

Then the question is asked by the opponents, "Why do you deny that God enjoins on the believer an obligation which he is unable to fulfil because he omits to do it?" Al-Ash'arī answers this by

distinguishing between "inability" ('ajz) to do something and "omitting" (tark) to do something. Inability denies the condition necessary to allow one "to be able", which is the existence of istiṭā'ah to fulfill the act. He implies that omitting[↑] something necessitates the condition necessary for fulfilling the act, i.e., istiṭā'ah. Thus, in the case of the unbeliever, he must have the power to be capable of believing, otherwise there is no meaning to "omitting the duty" to believe. Also, he contradicts the notion of the impossibility of doing two contraries at the same time. He has just stated that man, if he is an unbeliever, has no capacity to believe. Thus, he has "inability". At the same time he is required, or it is incumbent upon him to believe, and he has the power to "abandon" īmān, even though he is unable to believe.

THUS:

POWER TO ACT plus OBJECT OF POWER = Istiṭā'ah
 NO POWER TO ACT plus NO OBJECT OF POWER = 'ajz
 HAS POWER TO BELIEVE plus 'IMAN = Mu'min
 HAS NO POWER TO BELIEVE plus no IMAN = Kāfir

THEN:

HAS NO POWER TO BELIEVE PLUS NO IMAN PLUS OMITTING
 TO BELIEVE = "KAFIR" CHARGED WITH THE DUTY (TAKLIF)
 OF BEING "MU'MIN".

If our scheme is correct, there is no logical basis for taklīf; God simply commands it. This is the precise point where al-Ash'arī's theistic subjectivism is open to the greatest criticism. It is one thing to affirm as a matter of faith that God is all powerful and that His power penetrates every aspect of the created order at all times; it is something else to maintain this position and try to logically affirm that man is really responsible for his acts. In a sense his position is more open to attack than the position of the Jabriyyah, who were not concerned about any logical problems arising from their insistence that man's "act" is really only God's act. The absurdity of imposing the duty to believe upon the unbeliever who cannot believe becomes more apparent when al-Ash'arī tries to prove that God is Just. One would have expected him to dismiss the question entirely and simply state God cannot be judged in terms of human justice. (It is true, however, that he does admit this, but only after being drawn into discussion with his opponents, who base their arguments on a concept of human justice).

In the Ibānah the question is given a clearer answer:

We are told in the khavar that He will place in the loins of the hypocrites as it were slabs of stone, and they will not be able to worship, and this is proof of what we believe, namely, that it is not necessary for God, if He commands them, to enable them to fulfil His commandment; . . .³⁵

We have discussed aspects of al-Ash'arī's attempt to deal with the problem of human action in the face of Divine Omnipotence. The concepts Kasb and Istiṭā'ah, as developed by al-Ash'arī emphasize and affirm the sovereignty of God rather than speak to the necessity of giving man some modicum of capacity to act in order that taklīf might remain a meaningful concept. God is the only real Agent; human capacity presupposes Divine power, so much so that to say man "acts" is to say that he acts "metaphorically".

However, it must be remembered that al-Ash'arī's primary concern (so evident throughout the Kitāb al-Luma' and al-Ibānah) is to preserve the religious claim that God is Lord of the Worlds; this claim cannot be compromised. He has tried to allow for a concept of limited human capacity which would put the responsibility for man's acts on man himself; yet this attempt is overshadowed by the dominating theological principle of Divine Sovereignty and its implications for man in his human situation.

Al-Ash'arī's ideas of kasb and istiṭā'ah (qudrah) were appropriated by his followers, and some modification was attempted. But the modification, as reflected in an eighteenth century study by Abū 'Udhbah (Al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah fīmā bayna al-Ash'ariyyah wa 'l-Māturīdiyyah) was one of emphasis only. The pre-dominating factor in Abū 'Udhbah's description of the doctrine of kasb is not the "problem" of Sovereignty, but the "problem" of taklīf.

The Shaykh (al-Ash'arī) even if he did not affirm that the phenomenal qudrah had any positive effect, yet he affirmed it as potential and a sure thing which man perceives by himself -- that stems from the soundness of the bodily structure and the acceptance of the occurrence of movement by virtue of God's direction in the habitual order of things. Man, whenever he is about to do an act, God creates for him qudrah and istiṭā'ah which is concomitant with that action which He produces in him. Man is qualified by the act and he is qualified by all the particularities pertaining to that action -- and that is the beginning point of taklīf. Getting in direct touch with the action is by the aforementioned way; i.e., being conscious of it in himself in the state of being powerful through the soundness of bodily structure. . . that is designated kasb. According to this view, the affirmation of a certain qudrah which has no effect is not equal to saying there is no qudrah (in man).³⁶

Kasb is even expressed as "the freedom of action in phenomenal things",³⁷ but this does not mean phenomenal (ḥadīth) qudrah is able to really produce the action.

It is clear from Abū 'Udhbah's discussion that the later Ash'ariyyah interpreted kasb as a mediating position between the Jabriyyah and the Mu'tazilah. However, it is questionable if the distinction between phenomenal qudrah and Divine qudrah is anything other than a terminological distinction. (See "Appendix" for the translation of Abū 'Udhbah's elucidation of the Ash'ariyyah theory of kasb).

Ibn Ḥazm attempted to work out a compatibility-theory, which is distinguishable from the position of al-Ash'arī and his followers (and the Mu'tazilah) at two instances: (1) He rejects atomism, which opens up the possibility to argue that (2) Istiṭā'ah occurs before the act, as well as with the act. His twofold distinction of istiṭā'ah allows for a less complicated attempt to solve the dilemma of freedom and determinism. His central concern, as we shall see, is to make a real distinction between Divine qudrah and human qudrah.

Ibn Ḥazm and the problem of Qudrah³⁸

In the first chapter, "Discussion concerning qudrah", Ibn Ḥazm describes briefly the positions of three major groups: (1) The Jahmiyyah; (2) Ash'ariyyah; (3) Mu'tazilah.

(1) Jahm b. Ṣufwān held: "Man is compelled to do his acts and he has no capacity at all."

(2) Al-Ash'arī and the rest of the people of kalām hold: Istiṭā'ah, through which the act occurs, does not occur except simultaneously with the act and most definitely not before it".

(3) The Mu'tazilah (and some of the Murji'ah, Khawārij and Shī'ah) held: Istiṭā'ah through which the act occurs, is before the act, existing in man." (p. 23)

a. Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir and Ḍirār b. 'Amr held that istiṭā'ah occurs before the act, with the act and it can be used to realize the act or to abandon it.

b. Abū 'l-Hudhayl said: Istiṭā'ah does not occur with the act at all; it only occurs before it. Also, istiṭā'ah passes away at the moment of the coming into existence of the act." (p. 22)

c. An-Nazzām said: Istiṭā'ah is nothing but the mustaṭī' himself, and 'ajz is nothing but a malady which enters the mustaṭī'". (p. 22)

These represent the opinions to which Ibn Ḥazm addresses himself in attempting to arrive at his own position concerning the problem of istiṭā'ah (qudrah).

He first attacks the Jahmiyyah. They hold, since God is the only effective agent and there is nothing like Him in creation, that one cannot properly

speak of man acting. It can be said that Zayd died; but his dying only occurred because God caused it. Thus, man acts only metaphorically. (p. 23)

This view is rejected on the basis of (1) the Qur'ān; (2) Sense Perception; (3) Proper use of language.

The Qur'ān: Three partial verses are given: ". . . It is recompense of what you have been doing . . . why do you say what you do not do . . . and they have done good works . . ."

Ibn Ḥazm says this clearly indicates that man does things, acts and makes things. (p. 23)

This is characteristic of Ibn Ḥazm as an exegete and is understandable in light of his having been a convert to the Zāhirī school of law. But Ibn Ḥazm, as we shall see, did not fit into the general pattern of the al-Zāhiriyyah as described by R. Strothmann:

In general it (the Zāhiriyyah) maintained an attitude of cautious neutrality and aloofness in theological disputes and in keeping with its respect for the literal sacred text accepted the utterances about God without going into any exegesis.³⁹

Sense perception: He states that it is absolutely clear by necessity that there is a great deal of difference between the man with sound limbs and the man with unsound limbs, because the one with a

healthy body sits and stands and does the rest of motions freely (mukhtār), while this is impossible for the cripple.

Language: The Mujbar (the one who is compelled) in language is the one from whom the act occurs without his free choice or any inclination. The saying, "There is no might or power except through God" negates the idea of "Mujbar" because we have might and power, even though it occurs only through God. Ibn Ḥazm's argument is that the Jahmiyyah negate this generally held assertion if they view man as having no power at all. This view is against the 'ijmā'' of the community.

There is further elucidation from the perspective of language. 'ijbār', 'ikrāh' and 'idṭrār', are all synonyms and when applied to acts, they describe the person who has absolutely no effect or free choice over his actions. Whoever effects what results from him of "motions or beliefs" cannot have the term 'ijbār' applied to him.

The terms al-ṭāqah, al-istiṭā'ah, al-qudrah, and quwwah are also synonyms in Arabic. These terms imply that one can freely choose or abandon the act. Ibn Ḥazm quotes the verse where people pray to God saying, "We cannot bear what we have no ability over".

Now those who call to God through this prayer are imposed upon by God something of obedient acts, works, and the avoidance of sin. If they have no ability (al-tāqah), beforehand, then their prayer is stupid, he says. His point is that the very asking for being relieved from heavy burdens presupposes some ability to bear them; thus, there must be an existent ability for actions. (p. 24)

Those who hold God to be the only effective Agent (al-Ash'ariyyah and Jahmiyyah) are wrong for other reasons. The Qur'ān indicates man does things: "They did not abandon evil which they did, because of the evil which they used to do." And "Fruits from which they choose". Thus, Ibn Ḥazm holds, on the basis of the Qur'ān, that man has ikhtiyār (free choice) because God created him that way. However, He also created his actions. "God creates what He wills, and He chooses for them (their choice". The exegesis of this verse is interesting and questions the assumption that Ibn Ḥazm was a literalist.⁴⁰

1. The ikhtiyār which is the act of God is not the ikhtiyār which He ascribed to His creatures. We know this, he says, because the ikhtiyār by which God is One is that He does "what He wills, How He wills, and when He wills". (p. 25) (ikhtiyār here is equal to qudrah).

2. The ikhtiyār which He ascribes to the creatures "is what he creates in them of inclination to something and preference for it". He explains further the equivocation implied in the term ikhtiyār: We can say God is living and so is man. God is wise, generous and knowing and likewise, man. And this can be stated without affirming that man resembles God. So, it can be said that both man and God have ikhtiyār.

As to the role of man and God in the creation and acquiring of acts; God creates the act and makes it a jism (body), and 'arad (accident); motion, rest, or knowledge. This is all done without any effort on His part. The act is an act for man in the sense that He creates it as free choice in him and produces it in him as an attribute so that he may acquire benefit and push away what is harmful. (p. 25) This is necessary in order that taklīf be meaningful.

The closing lines of the chapter set out in clear terms Ibn Ḥazm's position:

As for the one who holds the view that istiṭā'ah occurs before the act . . . they say: (Ibn Ḥazm is among these)

'The kāfir is not free on one of two things; either he is commanded to īmān or he is not commanded to it. If you say he is not commanded to īmān, this is pure kufr and contrary to the Qur'ān and Ijmā'. If you say he is commanded to faith (and this is what you say), he is still not free of two things:

1. Either he is commanded and he is able to do what he is commanded (This is our view, and not yours)

2. or, he is commanded and he is not able to do what he is commanded (and you ascribe to God the imposing of a duty that he cannot bear).

It is then consequent upon you that you allow the taklīf of the Blind man to see and the cripple to run or raise up to the heavens. All of this is outrage and injustice.

(Also) they say: (Ibn Ḥazm)

Since man does not do anything except through istiṭā'ah, which is granted from God, that istiṭā'ah, is either:

1. That man is given it and the act already exists;

2. Or he is given it and the act does not exist.

If he is given it, and the act already exists, there is no need for it, since the act exists which requires the istiṭā'ah. If he were given it while the act does not exist -- this is our view, that istiṭā'ah is before the act. (pp. 25, 26)

The chapter ends with Qur'ānic references which indicate man has ability before the act occurs.

"Incumbent upon the people is the pilgrimage to the house for whomever is able to find a way" (3:97);

"It is incumbent upon those who can bear it (yufṭiqūnahu) a ransom which is the feeding of a poor man" (2:184);

"Whoever is unable (to go on the pilgrimage) should feed 60 poor people" (58:4); and they swear by God, if we were able we would have gone out with you" (9:42).

It is clear from the general context of Ibn Ḥazm's argument that he is identifying himself with

those who hold that istiṭā'ah is before the act. He will later qualify this assertion, but he makes it here over against the views of the Jahmiyyah and the Ash'ariyyah. His little aside -- "this is our view, not yours" can only be directed against them. The statement, "he is commanded and he is not able to do what he is commanded" (and you ascribe to God the imposing of a duty that he cannot bear)" which is rejected by Ibn Ḥazm, is affirmed by Al-Ash'arī in the al-Ibānah.⁴¹ Also, by claiming that istiṭā'ah exists before the act, Ibn Ḥazm clearly sets himself against the Ash'ariyyah.

In the main chapter on istiṭā'ah (pp. 26-43) Ibn Ḥazm sets out to do two things:

1. Prove that istiṭā'ah occurs before the act. Here his effort is linguistic, philosophical, and exegetical, and it is clear from this argument that his opponents are the Ash'ariyyah.
2. He discusses what he terms the completion of istiṭā'ah. This occurs with the act, and results from the quwwah of God. His opponents here are the Mu'tazilah. We shall try to structure the arguments of these two points by examining them separately.

I istiṭā'ah as occurring before the act.

a. Before his conceptual analysis, Ibn Ḥazm clarifies the meaning of istiṭā'ah in language. It is only a verbal noun which describes a quality residing in the capable one (mustaṭī'). Any attempt to say istiṭā'ah and mustaṭī' are the same is totally against the Arabic language (contra an-Naẓām) (p. 27). istiṭā'ah is clearly a quality other than the thing described because it can describe one who stands, sits, walks, or does any number of "capable" things. Anyone who denies that istiṭā'ah is not a verbal noun and does not accept the meaning of "verbal noun", creates a new language.

Also, by looking at man, we see that he is capable sometimes and not mustaṭī' at other times. Thus, his being mustaṭī' results from the ṣifah of istiṭā'ah. Istiṭā'ah is an accident and can be weak or strong because it has an opposite quality, which is 'ajz. (But it is impossible for the two or occur simultaneously). The mustaṭī' is of necessity a jawhar (substance) and as such, has no opposite. (p. 28) Istiṭā'ah cannot be the mustaṭī'; if it were, then 'ajz (incapacity) is also the 'ājiz (incapable one). This implies that the man who is incapable ('ājiz) today, could have been mustaṭī' yesterday, and this would

necessitate 'ajz (incapacity) being mustaṭī'. (He seems to be accusing his opponents of getting substance and accidents mixed up. The capable one can only become incapable if the ṣifah of 'ajz enters him. It is false to say, as did an-Naẓẓām, that 'ajz is a malady which enters the mustaṭī'. When this happens, he is not mustaṭī' but 'ājiz. The capable one and the incapable one are two bodies which are qualified by the quality or accident of capacity and incapacity. And since they are accidents, and contraries, they cannot occur together).

b. The occurrence of the act: The will and bodily health. Here Ibn Ḥazm states the basic condition for the act to occur; namely, sound bodily health and freedom from obstacles. (p. 29) This view is necessitated by observation. Behind bodily health is the will of the healthy man, which is the mover for istiṭā'ah. However, the irādah (will) is not the same as istiṭā'ah because the incapable man may have the will to move, but cannot (since he has no istiṭā'ah). (p. 29)

Ibn Ḥazm gives a great deal of attention to Qur'ānic evidence as support for his basic assumption that istiṭā'ah occurs before the act and depends upon bodily health and freedom from obstacles. It is

precisely at this point his concern is most felt; he wants to establish that capacity exists before the act so that taklīf has real significance. He rejects the Jahmiyyah position, not because it so strongly affirms the Sovereignty of God, but because by claiming that man has no ability whatever over his actions, the ground for taklīf is taken away.

The exegesis of the verse, ". . . Pilgrimage to the house is due to God from the people, whoever is able to make his way to it" (3:97) clarifies the point. He states:

If there is no istiṭā'ah before man does the Hajj, then the Hajj is only incumbent upon him who has already performed it -- and no one is disobedient by abandoning the Hajj because he is not able to do the Hajj -- until he performs it. Thus, the Hajj is not incumbent upon him. (p. 31)

He states about the ḥadīth, "When I command you to do a thing, do it according to your ability" (p. 31): If there exists no istiṭā'ah before actually doing the command, there is no obligation. "We are not disobedient by abandoning (not doing the act) because there is no taklīf upon us". (p. 31) In several other examples the same point is made; Istiṭā'ah is essential, before the act, if taklīf is to be preserved.

The Ash'ariyyah-atomistic objection is raised, i.e., "sound limbs is an accident, and an accident does not remain for two times". (p. 32) Ibn Ḥazm simply answers: "This claim has no proof", thereby removing himself from the problems raised by atomism *vis à vis* man's acts.

II Istiṭā'ah occurring with the act: "The completion of istiṭā'ah"

Up to this point, Ibn Ḥazm's opponents have been the Jahmiyyah and the Ash'ariyyah. Next, he turns against the Mu'tazilah. He has claimed that istiṭā'ah occurs before the act, but not wholly; this is the claim of certain Mu'tazilah. Sound limbs and capacity prior to the coming-into-existence of the act are only conditions for its realization. Something else is necessary to allow the completion of istiṭā'ah and thereby, the completion of the act. It is here that his concern is to uphold Divine Sovereignty. Just as the Qur'ān indicates that man "does" things, it also affirms the universality of Divine qudrah.

The "second Istiṭā'ah" occurs at the moment the act takes place and is the quwwah (power) from God.

The quwwah which comes from God to man by which he does good acts is called tawfīq (assistance), 'iṣmah

(protection) and ta'yīd (support).

The quwwah which comes from God and by which man does bad acts is called khithlān (self-conscious withholding of Tawfiq).⁴²

The quwwah which comes from God by which man does something which is neither obedience or disobedience is called 'awn (help) or quwwah (strength) or ḥawl (power). (p. 30)

Ibn Ḥazm's "second istiṭā'ah" is in harmony with the formula accepted by the 'ijmā' of the community: "There is no power or might except through God."

Throughout the discussion concerning the objections raised by the Mu'tazilah, Ibn Ḥazm never neglects to affirm the two-fold nature of istiṭā'ah; both sound health, i.e., the capacity to act before the act and the power of God are necessary. This is why the blind man is free from any obligation to see colors. When Ibn Ḥazm is accused of holding that God imposes duty upon one who is "unable", he quotes this passage; "(God) has not laid upon you any hardship in religion." (22:78)

However, looking at the situation from God's perspective, all things are totally under His qudrah. Ibn Ḥazm holds to what we have earlier referred to as theistic subjectivism.

But God punishes whom He wills without imposing it and He forgives whom He wills without imposing it. (He gives) a portion of reason to whom He wills and forbids it to inorganic matter, stones, and the rest of the animals. He made Jesus a prophet . . . and He hardened Pharoah's heart . . . 'Do not ask about what He does; and they ask' (Qur'an) There is nothing (in this world) understood to be beautiful or ugly in itself. (pp. 33-34)

Here we have a classic statement of theistic subjectivism. George Hourani points out Ibn Rushd discovered that this subjectivism has an underlying relation with that of the Greek Sophists, who put forth a social subjectivism, e.g. justice is only determined by the opinions of particular rulers at a particular time.⁴³ Hourani also mentions al-Ash'arī, al-Ghazzālī and Ibn Ḥazm as individuals who did not shrink from accepting the consequences of this theistic subjectivism.

We would qualify this slightly. It is true that for al-Ash'arī, theistic subjectivism is an underlying principle in his theologizing. This concept of radical theism is also important for Ibn Ḥazm, but he separates it from his main argument and offers it as a statement of faith rather than a theological principle. For al-Ash'arī, the concept is employed as an all pervading theological presupposition. For Ibn Ḥazm it is an affirmation of faith in a sovereign God; if it were a theological principle for him he would have difficulty in holding to the one aspect of istiṭā'ah

as being prior to the act, and he would certainly let it affect his methods of exegesis of those verses which indicate man really acts and has ability. It is a tricky problem because for him theistic subjectivism is also basic; but there is a difference between affirming it as an object of faith and building a theological system upon it.

Ibn Ḥazm, in rejecting the arguments of the Mu'tazilah, might not have understood precisely their position. They accepted that the istiṭā'ah comes before the act, but not with the act. He answers by giving his two-fold formula, insisting that it is both before and with the act. Then he states:

If istiṭā'ah occurred only before the act, it is inevitable that it cannot occur with the act at all, just as Abū Hudhayl claimed. (The agent, when he does the act, istiṭā'ah no longer exists and the acting agent has no istiṭā'ah over his act at the time he does it). Since he has no istiṭā'ah over it, he is an agent who is incapable for what he does. (p. 34)

It is possible that two notions of time are presupposed here. Ibn Ḥazm is obviously thinking in terms of the sequence of moments. That is what permits him to say that the agent is unable at the time he is supposedly acting if his istiṭā'ah only existed prior to the act. Montgomery Watt quotes from the Maqālāt al-Islamīyīn giving Abū 'l-Hudhayl's view:

Man is able to act in the first (moment) 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.⁴⁴

Watt interprets this as "experienced time" rather than time as measured by the clock. The first moment of time is the inclination or decision to act; this is mental and internal. The second moment is the fulfillment of the act being carried out externally or physically. We might apply abū 'l-Hudhayl's distinction between first and second moments in the following way: If a man decides to pick up an object his inclination to do so registers in his brain and it commands his hand to reach out for the object. Now, in spite of the infinitesimal lag in time between his inclination to pick up the object and the act of picking it up, there is a time unit difference which constitutes the difference between willing and doing. Abu 'l-Hudhayl would say the istiṭā'ah to act occurred when he made his inclination; the act of picking up the object is the consequence of istiṭā'ah, but not istiṭā'ah itself. Ibn Ḥazm would insist that the inclination itself indicates the existence of istiṭā'ah, but not completed istiṭā'ah. It is actualized or realized at the very moment the man is in the process of actually picking up the object.

In light of his general theory of istiṭā'ah, the issue Ibn Ḥazm attempts to elucidate is that it is not fully, actualized istiṭā'ah until it is combined with the act, and this is possible only by the power of God. This becomes clear in his long discussion of actualized istiṭā'ah. (pp. 35-43) He addresses those who hold that it occurs wholly before the act. He asks several rhetorical questions, e.g. "Is the one who is at rest, when he is commanded to move, able to move while in the state of rest? Can the believer who is denying something; can he affirm it while denying it?" (p. 35) If the answer is yes, this allows the impossible, for one could then stand and sit, move and rest, affirm and deny simultaneously.

Ibn Ḥazm tries to get his opponents to admit that there really exists no total capability until a man actually does something. Then, when he actually moves, after having been in a state of rest, he is not doing two contrary things at the same time. He refers to the Mu'tazilah al-Ka'bī whose position Ibn Ḥazm employs as a support for his view: "God cannot be described as having power to do the impossible." (p. 36)

It is in the realm of īmān and kufr, obedience and disobedience, that we find the true religious significance of "actualized" istiṭā'ah as an

an acknowledgement of Divine Sovereignty. We described that the quwwah of God, which permits the realization of the act can be tawfiq, khithlān, and 'awn. In a lengthy discussion based on Qur'ānic passages (e.g. the story of Moses and al-Khaḍir, 18:100; 25:8; 10:100; 12:33,34; 6:77; 16:37; 2:7; 4:83; 4:88; 6:125) which deal with God leading men astray, giving guidance and mercy, sealing the heart, and enlarging the breast for Islām, Ibn Ḥazm reveals the significance of these different powers. A man becomes a kāfir the moment God creates the power of khithlān in him. The mu'min becomes a mu'min when tawfiq is created. His purpose in this discussion is to show that man has no ability to be a kāfir or mu'min until the two respective powers are granted. Khithlān, it must be remembered, is not simply the absence of tawfiq; it is a positive and definite act of withholding tawfiq). Even in the case of the Prophet, he was able to do good and not be inclined to evil only because of God's tawfiq. (p. 42)

Even though he tries to make a real distinction between Divine and human qudrah, Ibn Ḥazm, in the first analysis, cannot escape the all pervading implications of Divine Omnipotence. He preserves the logical basis for taklīf by insisting that capacity exists prior to the act; yet the actualization or

perfection of the ability to see it through to the completion of the act, is dependent upon Divine qudrah.

Whereas al-Ash'arī sets out to preserve a limited kind of phenomenal qudrah within the larger framework of Divine qudrah, Ibn Ḥazm, more straightforwardly, sets his discussion within the context of the Qur'ānic polarity of Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility. Basic to his discussion seems to be the question: How can the two notions of God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility be most properly understood? His effort is not expended in the direction of establishing a "true" compatibility theory; rather he sets out, employing some of his opponents philosophical arguments, to show that in the Qur'ān, there exists the above mentioned polarity, which he expresses through his "double-istiṭā'ah" theory.

Behind every attempt in Islamic theology to construct a compatibility-theory which would be intellectually satisfying, and preserve the integrity of the essential meanings of "determinism" and "freedom", stands rigorous and creative theological-philosophical endeavor. Each effort approached the dilemma of freedom and determinism from a slightly different angle, but there was never worked out an

acceptable computability-theory. The logical problems were never solved, even though the greatest possible energy was expended in the effort to reach adequate solutions.

Freedom and Determinism remain to this day incompatible concepts, whether set within the theological context or the modern, scientific context. The "problem" of freedom and determinism is still a dilemma.

Footnotes to Chapter V

¹See Watt, Free Will and Predestination, for a discussion of the post-Hasan al Baṣri development of the controversy.

²Majid Fakhry. "Some Paradoxical Implications of the Mu'tazilite View of Free Will." Muslim World, Vol. 43 (1953), p. 96.

³Ibid., p. 101.

⁴Ibid., p. 104.

⁵Ibid., p. 105.

⁶Ibid., p. 105.

⁷G. Hourani. "Two Theories of Value in Medieval Islam". Muslim World, Vol. 50 (1960). p. 270.

⁸Al-Ashari. Kitāb al-Luma', Trans. and ed. by R. J. McCarthy (Beruit, 1953), p. 63, section 97.

⁹Hourani, op. cit., p. 277.

¹⁰Watt, Free Will and Predestination, pp. 96-99; see also Watt, "The Origins of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1943), pp. 234-247.

¹¹Schacht, "New Sources for the History of Muhammadan Theology", Studia Islamica, I (1953), pp. 29-30.

¹²Al-Ash'arī, Al-Ibānah (Hyderabad, 1327/1948; English translation by W. C. Klein (New Haven), 1940).

¹³Al-Ash'arī, Al-Ibānah, p. 51/101. The first no. refers to the Arabic text; the second to Klein's translation.

¹⁴Al-Ash'arī, Kitāb al-Luma', pp. 53-75. For an extensive and extremely detailed analysis of chapters five and six, see R. M. Frank, "The Structure of Created Causality according to al-Ash'ari", Studia Islamica, Vol. 25 (1966), pp. 13-77, where he tries to

prove that al-Ash'arī succeeds in formulating a view of human causality "which would leave God as the sole and unique creator of all Being without at the same time vitiating the reality of human causation." (p. 24) Frank discusses al-Ash'arī's formulation from the standpoint of its basic philosophical structure, and finds it to be sound. Our purpose in examining these two chapters is to show that although al-Ash'arī intended to allow for some kind of real human ability (so that taklīf would remain a meaningful concept), his overwhelming emphasis on Divine Sovereignty empties kasb and istiṭā'ah of their intended significance.

¹⁵Al-Ash'arī, Kitāb al Luma', p. 55, sec. 85.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 56, sec. 86.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 57, sec. 88.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57, sec. 88.

²⁰Frank, op. cit., p. 37.

²¹Al-Ash'arī, Kitāb al Luma', p. 57, n. 11.

²²Ibid., p. 59, sec. 92.

²³Ibid., p. 60, sec. 92.

²⁴Ibid., p. 61, sec. 93.

²⁵Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism (London, 1958), p. 40.

²⁶Al-Ash'arī, Kitāb al Luma', p. 77, sec. 123.

²⁷Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism, p. 41.

²⁸al-Ash'arī, Kitāb al Luma', pp. 78, 79, sec. 126, 127.

²⁹Ibid., p. 79, sec. 128.

³⁰Ibid., p. 80, sec. 130.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 82, sec. 135.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 83, sec. 135.

³⁵al-Ash'arī, al-Ibānah, p. 60/111.

³⁶Abū 'Udhbah, Al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah (Hyderabad, 1904), pp. 31-32.

³⁷Ibid., p. 28.

³⁸All quotations and references are from Ibn Ḥazm, Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal, Vol. 3 (Cairo, 1920). We shall cite in the text the page references.

³⁹R. Strothmann, "Zāhiriyyah", E.I.

⁴⁰Tritton, Muslim Theology, p. 196.

⁴¹Al-Ash'arī, Al-Ibānah, p. 60/111.

⁴²For a brief discussion of the term, see Wensinck, "Khithlān," E.I.

⁴³Hourani, op. cit., p. 270.

⁴⁴Watt, Free Will and Predestination, p. 70.

APPENDIX

Translation: Abū 'Udhbah on the problem of Kasb.

Abū Udhbah. ar-Rawdah al-Bahiyyah fīma bayna al-Ash'ariyyah wa al-Maturīdiyyah (Hyderabad, 1940).

"Question seven, the question of kasb", pp. 26-32.

Now, the followers of al-Ash'arī expounded the theory of kasb in this manner.

When man makes his decision to act, God creates the action in him, and also the decision to act -- as an action which occurs (in existence) through the qudrah of God. Concerning the action, man does not participate in the way of producing an effect (Ta'thīr), even if he participates in the way of kasb. The truth is that kasb, in the opinion of the Ash'arites, is that the phenomenal qudrah exists concomitantly with the object of qudrah in the locus of the phenomenal qudrah, without any influence in producing an effect (Ta'thīr). This is the basis for understanding the word kasb. Nothing else is sound since it is according to rational bases, the sunnah and the 'ijmā' of the ancients. Because of the difficulty of this position,

the ancients disapproved of those who dealt with the problem as a speculative one. It was handed down in ḥadīth, "When the discussion on qadar was reached, 'Desist!'"

The Māturīdī position on kasb is as Nasafī said (in al-i'timād and al-itīqād): It is the turning (ṣarf) of the qudrah to one of the two objects of qudrah; it is uncreated because that by which the actions of the limbs are conditioned -- whether motion or the cessation of motion; and likewise the actions of the soul, whether inclination, impulse, and free choice -- (all of these) pertain to the creation of God, in which the qudrah of man has no effectual power (Ta'thīr). However, the locus of his qudrah is his decision which is subsequent to the creation of God of these matters in his inner self -- as resolved decision -- which has no hesitation but has sincere direction to the action and seeks the action positively.

When man discovers that decision, God creates for him the action and it is attributed to Him in so far as it is a motion and it is attributed to man in so far as it is fornication, and all other similar examples through which the action is disobedience. The same is true of obedience, such as prayer. The action itself is attributable to God, in so far as it is motion. It

is attributable to man in so far as it is "prayer" because it is an attribute by means of which the firm decision was taken.

This is according to the school of the Qāḍī al-Bāqillānī: The qudrah of God is connected with the source of action, and the qudrah of man is connected with the qualification of the action, i.e., its being disobedience or obedience. The way these two qudrah effect their object differ -- just as in the slapping of the orphan for the purpose of education. The slapping itself occurs with the qudrah of God and is His effect; the being of it as obedience or disobedience occurs through the qudrah of man and through its effect, for it is connected with his determined decision -- to the achievement of his object with which there is no hesitation.

The theory of kasb is difficult because of what you know, but it stands upon and is established by apodictic proof, i.e., irrefutable proof; namely -- we discover a necessary distinction between the actions, of which we are immediately aware, and the inanimate objects, which we perceive. It is obvious that we have, concerning our actions, a certain freedom. And yet the standing evidence drives us back from attributing action to man's freedom. It is necessary

that we make a connection between the two matters and say that the actions occur with the qudrah of God and the kasb of man. God creates the action and the qudrah over it through His own direction of the habitual course of things. Therefore, it is possible the attribution of the action is to man -- and also the soundness of taklif, and glorifying and dispraise, promise and threat.

And we, if we do not adopt the theory of kasb, then one of two things necessarily follows: Either it is a purposeful inclination toward the Mu'tazilite position, or to the theory of Jabr, and both of these are false. The explanation of this necessary consequence is that the appearance of the action cannot go beyond either (1) that it is through the qudrah of man and his will or (2) it is not.

According to the first, the Mu'tazilites; according to the second, the Jabriyyah.

The right way is the middle way between the two poles of going too far and not going far enough. It is the theory that the actions are created by God and acquired by man. Just as the actions are not attributed to man regarding origination and creation -- so they are not attributed to God regarding kasb. God said, "And God created you and what you do." The

creation is attributed to God Himself. He said, "To them will be that which they earned, and to you, that which you earn." (2:134)

Kasb is established for man and if you wish you may say it is a way between the people who go too far and the people who don't go far enough. The words "the ones who go too far", mean the Jabriyyah, who exceed the boundaries of the middle way to the point of excess; they render possible the existence of all actions only through the pre-existent qudrah, without the accompaniment of the phenomenal qudrah. By the words "the people who do not go far enough" we mean the Qadariyyah who exceed the middle way to the point of neglect. They render possible the existence of voluntary action only by means of the phenomenal qudrah -- whether immediate or of secondary generation.

However, the question pertains to a verbal expression because Imām Abū Hanīfah and Shaykh b. Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, upon them God's blessing, both hold the existence of mediation between involuntary motion and voluntary motion; and that there is neither only Jabr nor only Qadar because al-Ash'arī did not signify that as a real action of man, but rather as a metaphor. The Imām designated it as a real action but not as a metaphor. The Jabriyyah assert there is no action on

the part of man -- neither in reality nor metaphorically.

To this we may reply: That brings about the elimination of hope and fear for man, and he becomes just like the animals.

We say: This difference rests upon the interpretation of action and the distinction between it and kasb. The opinion of the Imām Abū Hanīfah is that the action is the turning of the contingent from the state of contingency to actuality (wujūd) and this turning is, on the part of God, without instrument; it is on the part of man through the mediation of instrument. In Abū Hanīfah's opinion, the action comprises both the act of creation and kasb. In the view of al-Ash'arī, the action is what comes from the agent, and the agent has an eternal qudrah upon the action because the action is something whose essence is produced temporarily and all temporal phenomena depend upon the Eternal in the first place. Kasb is what comes from a capable one (qādir) who has phenomenal qudrah over the thing (object). Thus, we designate this middle way as kasb and we do not designate it as Fi'l, because kash is the freedom of action in phenomenal things, and Fi'l is the freedom of action in objects of knowledge. The text (Qur'an) does not at all establish for phenomenal qudrah an active influence in existence nor in any of

its properties; for God says, "Is there any creator than God? Did they make associates of God who created, just as He created? Show me what they created from the earth -- did they have participation concerning the heavens and the earth? God is the creator of everything." Also, because the pre-existent qudrah is connected with all phenomenal things, and the fact that God makes man capable does not cause God to go out from His original state. There is strong proof that the contingent, by its essence, needs something which brings it into actuality in view of the fact it is contingent. And by this, i.e. bringing into existence, means the providing of existence, and every existent thing depends upon activity of the Creator, as regards existence, and the means prepare, but do not create. Also, if the phenomenal qudrah is capable of producing the action, then the phenomenal qudrah would be able to produce every existent thing -- either substance or accidents, and the falsity of this is apparent.

Also: The creation calls for knowledge concerning objects of the creation. God said, "Does not the one who created know . . ." If man created his action, then he has knowledge concerning its every detail. The falsity of this is also apparent. If you say: If the phenomenon qudrah has no effect, then it

has no sensible connection with the object of phenomenal things; besides, the assertion that qudrah has no effect at all is tantamount to say there is no qudrah.

Also: Kasb which you affirm, either exists or does not exist. If it exists, that means then you admit the producing of an effect in existence; if it is not an existent thing then it is incapable of being the middle way between voluntary action and involuntary action.

I say: This difficulty is very simple; but because of the exaggeration of it, Imām Haramayn (al-Juwāynī) went too far when he asserted that human qudrah has a positive effect on existence -- not of course independently but by secondary cause, and the chain of causes leads ultimately to God; and that God created in man qudrah and will, and man, through them creates the action.

It is the school of the Mu'tazilah and also Abū al-Ḥasan's view which he took from the Mu'tazilites. The Master Abū Ishaq al-Isfarā'īnī said, "The effective element is the combination of the qudrah of God and the qudrah of man. Qāḍī Abū Bakr said in accordance with the aforementioned distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions: "The connection of the qudrah with

its object is not the same as the connection of knowledge with its object because there is no effective influence (in the latter case)." Otherwise there would be no meaning in the distinction. But, ta'thīr cannot effect existence itself, so it necessarily concerns some of its qualities, e.g. its being obedience or disobedience. Whether the movement of the hand for man is "writing" or "goldsmithing", this distinction comes only after the participation in the movement itself. This movement is attributed to man as kasb from which is derived a special action, e.g. standing or sitting or writing. Then when the command be joined with it, it is termed worship and when forbidden, it is termed disobedience.

The reality of kasb is the actual happening of the action through the qudrah of the one who acquires with the impossibility of being independent in doing that. His theory is similar to the philosophers (who say) that substance is something which occupies a portion of space or as the locus for an accident in which the qudrah has nothing to do with it.

If you perceive that, then understand the idea of the one who says, "If the phenomenal qudrah has no effect, it has no sensible connection with the phenomenal things." This is absurd because knowledge

has a connection with the object of knowledge and the will (has a connection) with the object of the will. This connection with the object of knowledge and the object of the will does not pertain to phenomenal things. Besides, it is not impossible that the knowledge of ideas may have some effect on the process of perfecting its object of knowledge, and it is not impossible that the will of the one who wills may have an effect in granting some particular possibilities aside from others to come into being, and (it may also exercise a possible effect) on making the object of knowledge either command, prohibition or promise.

If the knowledge of the Agent and His will are connected with the object of knowledge and the object of the will, without exercising an effect upon it (Knowledge), and yet it is not impossible that our qudrah and the Eternal qudrah be connected with the same object of qudrah and that the qudrah of God alone effects while our qudrah has no effect on knowledge. The Shaykh, even if he did not affirm that the phenomenal qudrah had any positive effect, yet he affirmed it as potential and a sure thing which man perceives by himself: That stems from the soundness of the bodily structure and the acceptance of the occurrence of movement by virtue of God's direction in

the habitual order of things. Man, whenever he is about to do an act, God creates for him qudrah and capacity which is concomitant with that action which He produces in him. Man is qualified by the act and he is qualified by all the particularities pertaining to that action -- and that is the beginning point of taklif. Getting in direct touch with the action is by the aforementioned way, i.e. being conscious of it in himself in the state of being powerful through the soundness of bodily structure and acceptance according to the movement of the natural order of things. That is designated as kasb. According to this view, the affirmation of a certain qudrah which has no effect is not equal to saying there is no qudrah (in man), as the opponents absurdly suppose.

Since this direct contact is the creation of God for the action in man in concomitance with the capacity-outwardly-through the mediation of man -- it does not necessarily follow that there be for the qudrah of man an effect in existence, as the opposition absurdly think.

Know that man is subservient under the Qaḍā' of God and His Qadar. That fact is not inconsistent with man's qudrah and his free choice because the subservient one is of two kinds: either compelled or

free. The one who is compelled is comparable to the knife and the pen in the hand of the writer and the one who is free is comparable to the writer; yet his heart being between the two fingers of God. Just as one who is compelled is only subjugated through fitness which in the last analysis concerns the attainment of desire of the writer; likewise, the one who is free is only fit to be subservient to God in the attainment of his object of the will. And that is free action through the mediation of his qudrah and his free choice, just as the mount of the rider; the mount, when it is suitable, is subservient to the rider because of the fitness which in the last analysis concerns the attainment of the object of his will -- if he has for that free choice and qudrah. But his qudrah is an acquisition through incapacity and his choice is mixed with compulsion. This is the furthest limit which we can go in the explanation of the thought of the Shaykh . . . There is no Jabr nor Qadar but the matter is between the two. That makes clear that taklif, in the real sense, as it came down in scripture says, "Do it, yet do not do it", and "Be upright" as in His saying: "Lead us on the right path and do not cause our hearts to deviate after you have guided us." If man were independent, he would manage without this "right way".

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