

MOTAZILLA AND ELM-UL-KALAAM

A RESEARCH OVERIEW

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Abstract: Before we study the beginning and evolution of *elm-ul-kalaam* and the study of an important group of Islamic thought in the second century of *hijri*, *Mo'tazilla*, whose ideas and thoughts resonated in the coming centuries, it seems important to analyze the causes and reasons that initiated discussions on *kalaam* in Islamic society. Factors, motives or challenges in an Islamic society, whose response came to be a gradual evolution of *elm-ul-kalaam*, come from two ways, internal and external. The internal challenge, in fact, was revealed when *Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (RA)* asked for the *qisas* of *Hazrat Uthman (RA)*, which resulted in the battle of *siffin* between *Hazrat Ali (RA)* and *Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (RA)*. The problem emerged intensively, when a new violent group born in the form of *Khawarij*, as a result of the war of *siffin*. This was group of the rural Arabs who fought from the side of *Hazrat Ali (RA)* in the battle, but later on, upon the issue of arbitration, became rebellious against *Hazrat Ali (RA)*, and *Hazrat Ali (RA)* and *Hazrat Amir Mu'awiyah (RA)*, both of them, were declared infidels and sinners, hence expelled from Islam.(1)

Although the problem was seemingly political in nature, the *Khawarij* expressed it in the religious beliefs, and thus it was the first group of Muslims to define and interpret faith (*Iman*), and specify the relation between *Iman* and *Amal* (deed). They raised the question that whether a Muslim is still a Muslim after committing a highly sinful act (*gu'nnah.e. kabir'ah*)? Who is a Muslim? Who is a believer (Momin)? What is difference in Islam and *Iman* (Faith)? Who will be rewarded Jannah, and who will be pushed into Hell? Who should be the Calif or head of ummah? Many such questions, which later on became fundamental and basic topics of *elm-ul-kalaam*, were infact raised by *Khawarij* in a very violent way. They used to call the Muslim committer of

highly sinful act infidel and as a disbeliever and considered it to be punished with death. *Khawarij* appears in Muslims like a storm and several Muslims were killed by their naked swords. That's why, in every era of entire Islamic history, *khawarij* and their violent thinking has been criticized at all times.

In the perspective of discussions on *elm-ul-kalaam*, a storm of *khawarij* was the very first factor, which forced central leadership of Muslims to explain the issues like *Iman*, Islam and relationship of *Iman* and *Amal*. Although some of the companions of Prophet (SAW) were still present, but this was the period of *Taabi'een*. The most important issue they faced was that if the definition of *khawarij* about *Iman* and *Kufr* was accepted, then there will be no more Muslims except a small group of *khawarij* and all others will fall under the category of *kaafir* and *faasiq* and will be sentenced to death.

In such indigenous conditions, the first school of thought in Muslims called *Murji'a*, came into existence. The meaning of *irjaa'* is to postpone or expect something. The basic two-sided objective of the founders of this school was to save Muslims from falling under the category of *kaafir* and *faasiq* according to extreme thoughts of *khawarij* at one side. On the other hand, to prevent Muslims from any civil war as a result of clash among *saha'ba* and to make them stay at a moderate stand about companions of Prophet (SAW). So they define Islam and Muslim in a way that every person who recite *kalima* and declare himself a Muslim, he will be considered a person of Muslim *ummah* and his life and wealth will be forbidden for other Muslims. It is not the prerogative of a human to pass verdict about someone's *Iman*, character, and deeds; rather it is up to Allah SWT to make the judgement. In other words, one may be hopeful about forgiveness of Muslim committer of highly sinful act, on the basis of mercy of Allah SWT. We don't have any right to declare someone *kaafir*, *faasiq* or to entitle him to death.(2)

In denial of the thoughts of *khawarij*, *Murji'a* went to another extreme and declared that just a belief by heart is enough to complete the *Iman*. Due to this difference between *Iman* and *amal*, no one has any right to criticize anyone, because according to the principle of *Murji'a* it was enough to recite the *kalima*, and decision about the deeds will be made by Allah on the day of judgement. Resultantly *murji'a* divided into two groups. One was the initial group of *murji'a*, which introduces the theory of *Irja'a* only to save Muslims from anarchy. In the history of Islamic thought, this group is known as "*Murji'a* Only" {مرجئه محض}. This group, as a party, disappeared very soon. However, its theories strongly affected the religious beliefs of Muslims and provided a very sound basis for its development in the coming era. A huge majority of jurists and *Muhadithe'en* belong to this school of thought because, according to some companions of Prophet SAW, i.e., Saad bin Abi Waqas, Abdullah bin Umer and Abu Bikra (R.A.), the verdict about the committer of a highly sinful act is up to Allah SWT, as *murji'a* believed.

Later on, *murjia'a* touches the extreme in this belief, that concept of accountability in the life hereafter became to fade. Contrary to *Khawarij*, they deny the concept of accountability for the committer of a highly sinful act in life hereafter. "*Murjia'a* was contrary to *khawarij*; they said that *Iman* is the name of belief by heart only. Other liabilities such as prayer, fasting etc. are not the part of *Iman*, and committing highly sinful act will not result in excluding a person from *Iman*. They extended the scope of *Iman* to extreme limits, while *khawarij* made this scope very narrow such that no one had space to consider himself Muslim other than them, rather according to *Araziqa'a*, they are the only Muslim, every Muslim other than them is considered *Ka'afir*. Beliefs of *Murjia'a* are also exaggerated and overstated, so *Shehristaniin Kitabul Millalwan'Nahal* stated that according to them, "sin is not harmful at all for a person having *Iman*, just like obedience will be of no use for *ka'afir*." (3) However, the majority of *Murjia'a* appears into a new school of thought, known as "*Jabaria'a*" and this is the second school in the history of schools of thought. The inventor of the "problem of *Jabr*" was "Jua'd bin Dirham" and he adopted this theory from Jews. Persians also believed in such kind of thoughts. This belief was transferred to Jaham bin Safwan from Jua'd bin Dirham and he is considered the founder of *Jabaria'a*. According to him, a human is absolutely bounded. He has no intentions nor does he have any authority upon his deeds. He is not more than a useless entity, which is blown by the wind, or a piece of wood that is fully under the authority of waves. This was the very first group in Muslims, which emphasized on destiny (*Taqdeer*). The essence of their beliefs is that a human is compelled or powerless in all his deeds, whatever he does, is already written in destiny (*Taqdeer*) and he has no authority upon his deeds. In other words, any deed may be good or bad, is not dependent at all on his intentions; he is a puppet in the hands of destiny. Similarly, if someone is a ruler, he is a ruler by the will of God, and if someone is being ruled, he is also a result of the absolute will of God. A ruler can perform his role in any form; there are no limits and bounds for him for reigning. Moreover, the ruled one is forced to obey the ruler in every condition. Because both the ruler and the ruled one are given their roles by Allah; as this is the division of Allah SWT to give authority or make someone to be ruled. *Jabariya'a* emphasizes on the absolute authority of Allah SWT to prove their theory and taken full support from all such *Aya'at* of Quran which explains the absolute authority of Allah SWT, and neglected intentionally or unintentionally all such *Aya'at*, which describe accountability of human's deeds on the basis of wisdom and intellect given to him. This sect was started by Jaham bin Safwan, that's why they also called *Jahamia'a*. Jaham bin Safwan used to say that "human is forced, he has no authority, whatever he does, is because he has been forced to do that. Allah SWT decided some deeds for him and he must have to act accordingly. Allah SWT

creates actions in humans just like he creates in non-living things. Like water flows, wind moves, stone falls, similarly human acts unintentionally. These actions are planned by God, but are attributed to human virtually.”(4)

The inevitable consequence of these ideologies of *Jabariy'a*, was that moral breakdowns and degradation began to occur among the Muslims in general. The moral values of Islam began to crumble and a large number of Muslims began to consider themselves free from all moral restrictions. It was a situation in which it was felt that the Muslim *Ummah* should be protected from moral and religious dissolution in its character and deeds. In this way, the third school of thought in Muslims named *Qadari'ya* came into existence.

The crux of the teaching of *Qadari'ya* is that a human is independent in his all deeds. He does good deeds with his intentions and in the same way, bad deeds are also done by his intentions, so he is accountable to his all acts, but this scenario did not affect the sovereignty of Allah SWT. The founder of this group was “Mo'bad Al Juhaini”.

It is said that Mo'bad Al Juhaini and Ghailan (from Damascus) were the first ones to discuss the issue of destiny (*Taqdeer*). Imam Zahabi stated about Mo'bad in Meezan al E'tidaal that, although he is a Tabi'ee (a companion of *Sahaba*) and, in general, rightful in his sayings, he was the person to initiate for the very first time a bad practice of arguing on the issue of *Taqdeer*.(5)

Mo'bad Al Juhaini was hanged to death in the order of Abdul malik bin Marwan due to some political reasons in 80 *hijri*. After Mo'bad, “Ghailan (from Damascus)” took over the leadership of *Qadari'ya* and put further the teachings of Mo'bad and emphasizes the importance of *amar bilmaroof and nahi an almunkir*. According to Ghailan, Muslims have a religious duty to teach goodness and prevent evil and protect Muslims from moral and religious misconduct and collapse. Ghailan (from Damascus) was also hanged to death, same as al Juhaini on the order of Hisham bin Abdul Malik successor of Abdulmalik bin Marwan, in 105 *hijri*. However, teachings of *Qadari'ya* were expended far beyond Syria through the reckless and courageous sermons of Hazrat Hasan Basri in the coastal city of Basra and interpreted the role of Islam in that period. It would not be wrong to say that the reputation and popularity of *Qadariy'a* school was due to Hazrat Hasan Basri's intellectual and spiritual personality, although it is true that Hasan Basri was not considered as a *Qadari*. *Qaradi'ya* had great importance in the history of Islamic thoughts due to several reasons. This was the first school of thought, which has dealt, at the level of Islamic beliefs and thoughts in the light of Quran, with the issue of oppression (*Jabr* and *Qadr*), the most important and complex issue in the history of religions, philosophies and human consciousness. Creating harmony among human's responsibility to his deeds and complete *Quadrat* of Allah SWT and the fact that He is the Creator of everything, was a most difficult issue for religion and philosophy. If human-made responsible for his all deeds,

then complete *Qudrat* of Allah SWT becomes under question, and if we believe that Allah SWT is the creator of everything and every deed, then a human will be no more responsible to any of his act. *Jabari'yahad* liberated the ruling regimes and a class of Muslims from human and moral obligations, by putting them behind the shield of the absolute autonomy of Allah SWT, in response to which, for the first time, *Qadari'ya* tried to make a person responsible for his deed without affecting the absolute autonomy of Allah SWT. The narrative of *Qadaria'ya*' was purely religious and moral, and it did not have philosophical, conciliatory, or rational implications. However, in discussing this fundamental issue, they paved the way for or became the predecessor of the most important rationalist school of thought named *Mo'tazilla*. Consequently, the school of *Mo'tazilla* originated with the question of compulsion and the responsibility of the human being and this school i.e. *Mo'tazilla* is the subject of our discussion here, which is reviewed in the following pages.

Till now, only those factors of Islamic thought are briefly discussed, which are said to be internal and caused the existence of *Murji'aa*, *Jabari'ya*, and *Qadari'ya* schools of thought in the first century, but even before the end of this most important century, Islam also faced external factors as well.

As far as external factors are concerned, they came from different directions and of different strengths and became the most serious threat to the beliefs and religious culture of Muslims. Islam was no longer the religion of a small Arab community or a particular nation, country or geographical area, but rather the religion of a large number of the civilized world at that time. At the same time, Muslims established their sovereignty over Andalusia to the west and Iran to the east, Central Asia, and the Indus Valley. As a civilization and culture, it was influenced by ancient civilizations such as Iran and Rome. Islam's political power was not as dangerous to the conquered nations as it was to its religious and cultural power. The reaction was a natural necessity, so the ancient civilizations, religions, and beliefs aroused to counter Islam.

During the *Khilafah* period, few military bases were established in Iraq and Egypt, depending on the military needs. Among them are *Kufa* and Basra in Iraq and *Fustas* in Egypt (later known as Cairo). Because of its location, these military bases were converted to major cities within a few years. In Iraq, *Kufa* was built for the same kind of border arrangements that soon became a big city. *Jundshapur*, near *Kufa*, has been the home of *Nestori* Christians for the past two centuries. Nestorians were great scholars of Greek wisdom, philosophy, and medicine. These are the main sources of Greek philosophy and medicine in Islam and initial translation of this Greece philosophy was done by *Nestorians* in *Suryani* language. With the help of these translations, Greek philosophy later shifted to Arabic. Therefore, with the urban development of *Kufa*, *Nestorian* Philosopher and medical experts came to

settle in. In later periods, they were also seen in the court of Damascus and Baghdad because of their scholarly background.

On the other hand, as a second military base in Iraq, Basra soon became a major city. Basra's importance in terms of location was even more than that of Kufa, as it was the center of governance over vast areas of Iraq, southern Iran and Sindh. Geographically, on the one hand, Basra was the center of a large coastline, and on the other hand was the center of trade convoys coming through the dry sides, which used to bring and take goods from there. Basra soon became an international city, and people of all faiths, religions, and civilizations began to gather here and ask various questions about the beliefs and thoughts of Muslims.

So in the first half of the second-century *Fustas*, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, and then Baghdad became synonymous with all the religions, philosophies and civilizations of the world, and thus Islam was directly influenced by Greek philosophy, *Zartashi* beliefs, *Muzdikism*, *Manism*, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Dualism and Atheism. As a result, the simple and purely practical religion of Arabic Islam turned into a philosophical, interdisciplinary and dialectical religion. "As long as Islam remained in the confined space of Arabia, no more deliberate scrutiny and debate about the beliefs were made, which was the reason that the behavior of the Arabs was not imaginative but practical."(6)

Under these circumstances, the leadership of the Muslims, on the one hand, was to protect against the external influence upon Islamic beliefs and on the other hand, to respond to attacks from different religions. These were the situations in which the fourth school of Islam, known as *Mo'tazilla*, came into being. It was the first Muslim school of rationalism, mainly due to the internal and external factors and motivations described above.

As indicated above Hazrat Hassan Basri (110 Hijri), who has a special place in Islamic discourses, was also boldly speaking in his sermons, criticizing some of the atrocities of Umayyad's government and the moral breakdown of ordinary Muslims. And taught a man to be responsible and accountable for his deeds, but Hazrat Hassan Basri's teachings were purely from religious, moral and spiritual the viewpoint, but now due to external influences, philosophical thinking was born among the Muslims themselves. It was through this philosophical approach that the faith of *Qadariy'a* paved the way for *Mo'tazilla*, influenced by the Dualism. Because of this purely philosophical and rational approach, one of the disciples of Hazrat Hasan Basri was not satisfied with his teacher's theological arguments on the issue of oppression (Jabr and Qadr) and began to insist on responses to implications. This is how the philosophical approach originated in Islam."(7)

Ibn-e-Manzoor stated in *Lisan-ul-Arab*,

زعموا انهم اعتزلوا فنتى الضلالة عندهم يعنون اهل السنة والجماعة والخوارج (8)

(That is, they believed that they had separated, according to them, from misguided sects, i.e., *Ahl-Al-Sunnah* and *Khawarij*).

This opinion is further endorsed by the fact that some of the *Mo'tazilla* have called them by this name without hesitation. Thus, a well-known scholar of *Mo'tazilla* of the third decade interprets his school as *Ehtiza'al* and has defined it in his words.

"No person can be entitled to the same deed until he accepts these five principles. *Tawheed*, Justice (*Adel*), Promise, Destiny (*Taqdeer*), Inter-Destination (*Manzilaba'in Almanzilatain*), *Amrbilma'roof and nahi an almunkir*. When these five qualities are found, then he is truly entitled to be called *Mo'tazilli*. The reason is that none of these justifications about penance can be called final. Of course, it is true that the title they preferred for themselves was the *Ahlal'Adel* and *Tow'heed*, but the fact is that they became enlightened in the academic world as *Mo'tazilla*." (9)

One opinion about the reasoning of this name is that this name was used in the initial era as well. This name was called upon those who did not engage and participate in the war of *Camel* and *Siffin*.

"These issues, which circulated on the axis of war, were purely political issues. The word *Mo'tazilla* was uttered in the early era of Islam, which in fact represented a political thought which was given the color of religion." (10)

However, what helped *Mo'tazilla* more in shaping their ideas was that some elements of Islamic society were often mixed with non-Islamic cultures. Among them were Manichaeism and *Majus*, who were convinced of Dualism, Christians who were convinced of the Trinity and were also atheists and *Zidiques* who, in the meantime, used to mock and ridicule Islamic beliefs, after which it was natural for Muslims to have anxiety about their beliefs.

These conditions paved the way for a mental attitude that led to the radicalization of *Mo'tazilla* thoughts, and later these ideologies formed a passionate religious movement that, on one hand was intended, developing a rational stand against the doubts of that period, on the other hand, was to defend Islam in the light of that stance. In the light of rational arguments, the objections of atheists and Manichaeists must be answered and stated that only Islamic beliefs are in accordance with the principles of the intellect. It was *Mo'tazilla* who defended Islam against atheists and infidels, thus saving Islam from the attacks of extremists. At the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, the existence of a *Mo'tazilla* was indispensable for maintaining the tide of atheism. Therefore, the First Abbasid Caliphate encouraged *Mo'tazilla*. There is no doubt that these people were utopian sermons and experts in dialogues; in their dialogues where they addressed the common Muslims, simultaneously atheists, *Zidiques*, Christian, and *Majus* were also specifically targeted and they could not resist the power of their arguments. *Mo'tazilla*, have top of the line author and speakers like Wa'asil bin Ata'a, considered authority in

arguments, like Huza'il Al'allaf, experts in Greek sciences such as Naz'zam, high-ranking writers (who painted dry subjects of philosophy into literal portrait) like Ja'hiz, and Rhetoric expert like Bashir bin Mu'tamir, and eminent intellectuals like Jaba'i.

Mo'tazilla targeted many aspects of scholarly research, but the issues that came forward proved to be of great interest to the scholars and jurists, which led to differences in Islamic society, and the rigors of examination and accountability, were (1) The nature of the attributes of Allah (2) The issue of the Creation of the Qur'an (3) The independence of intention. The scholars of *Ahl.e.Sun'nah* had a straightforward belief in Allah that He is related to all the attributes mentioned in the Qur'an. For them, since this list of names and attributes is descriptive, no discussion can be allowed on them. This is why the ancestors left behind speculative ideas about it and decided to establish the essence of Allah, as the center and source of knowledge, wisdom, power, and compassion.

Regarding the faith, the ancestors emphasized affirmation and fulfilled the requirements of negation by saying that we are opposed to every kind of polytheism and refuse to believe in any of the duality and frequency, which leads to believe in any element other than Allah. But what is the nature of the relationship between Allah and His attributes? They did not (rightly) recognize this aspect of the problem. On the contrary, *Mo'tazilla* emphasized the same point. Their view was that since the belief in the attributes of the affirmative requires that all attributes be ancient and associated with the essence of the original, it means that the essence of God has some other ancient and eternal truths. And that is precisely polytheism because it reinforces the theory of frequency and eventually proves the frequency of ancients. Because of this formulation, *Mo'tazilla* led the treacherous path of *Tanze'eh* that attributes do not exist at all. The *Shehristani* writes in the *MillalWan'nahal* about beliefs of *Mo'tazilla*,

"If these attributes become partners (of Allah) in ancientness, then these (attributes) will also be partners in the Godhead."(10)

The same belief was termed as monotheism and called upon the requisite justice by *Mo'tazilla*. In adopting this *Tanze'eh*-based approach, *Mo'tazilla* was forced to confront *Maj'us* rulers who believed in the separation of good and bad God, and when it was said that God was one and He is free from dualism, they would say that is Islam not convinced of the frequency of attributes and is it not ancient? Then when there is a difference between God and attributes of God in Islam itself and these attributes are present with God, then why should we have questioned? Nearly the same answer was given by Christian scholars when their doctrine of Trinity was objected, and it was said that believing in three *Iqane'em* meant that there should be three Gods instead of one God.

In the pretext of *Tanze'eh* and by adopting the ideology of negating attributes, *Mo'tazillah* had forgotten the fact that their concept regarding Almighty Allah is fundamentally contrary to the concept that was preached by the Prophets, i.e., God is Almighty, the All-Knowing, the wise and attributed with all the attributes of perfection. The philosophical concept that inspired *Mo'tazillah* describes God as the entity with exemption from all the attributes. This philosophical concept not only negates the attributes, but it also negates God Himself. This philosophical concept eventually reaches a stage of ultimate reasoning, which consequently assumes the status of Godhead.

The most prominent belief of *Mo'tazillah* is considering the Qur'an as a creature. *Shehristani* writes,

“In the light of (this issue), it is agreed amongst *Mo'tazillah* that the word of Allah is not ancient and is a creation in his place.”(12)

This is a turbulent issue that has kept the Islamic world in the spotlight for more than a century. In the Caliphate of Aaron al-Rashid, Bashar al-Murai'si regularly propagated this for almost 40 years. Haroon-ul-Rashid was not his supporter, but Mam'un not only supported him but also declared it a public faith, and several great scholars, who opposed that concept, were declared punishable.

According to *Mo'tazilla*, the Christians could benefit from the Qur'anic statement that Christ was the “Word of God”. Probably for that reason, a whispering crooked in the minds of *Mo'tazilla*, that conservatism or the belief that Quran is a creation, which is a step towards the ancientness of Qur'an is product of Christian mind and this is one of the ideas that were broadcast among the Muslims and the majority of Muslims accepted it from the Holy viewpoint of Qur'an. *Mo'tazillah* were alarmed that if this belief was spread among the people, it would eventually come at a time when people would worship the Qur'an just like Jesus. Further threatening was *Mo'tazilla's* feeling that the masses were vulnerable to jurists and were accustomed to trusting their words.

Abu-Zohra writes,

"According to *Mo'tazilla's* the belief that Qur'an is not the creation is consistent with the Christian view that Christ is not the creation of God, but the Word of God."(13)

The debate on this issue and the continuation of punishment continued from the time of Mamun to the time of Wasiq, during which hundreds of scholars, judges, and jurists faced the shameful imprisonment, even *mo'azins*, *Imam* and the *Khateeb* of mosques also could not be protected from punishment. Things started to get better at the end of the era of Wasiq. Abu-Zahra writes in reference to *Allama Dameri*,

“Caliph Wasiq eventually stopped blaming the disbelievers of the creation of the Quran. In those days, an old man appeared to Wasiq, who had also

suffered in this regard. He addressed the narrator and said: The belief which neither invoked by Prophet SAW nor invited by Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, you are calling people to him. In this scenario, there can be two things; they did not know or did not believe. If you adopt the clause that they were aware of the creation of Qur'an, but remain silent, then I would tell you that what they could remain silent on is the possibility of silence for you, and me if you say that they were unfamiliar with it and only you are aware of it, so it is strange how it is possible that the Prophet SAW and the *Khulafa.e.Rashidin* did not know what you claim to know. He jumped from the seat repeatedly repeating these words and forgiving the old man. Wasiq's son MehndiBillah narrates that after that my father abandoned the former method".(14)

In 234AH, Muta'wakil, who was although known for his strictness, ended this series of punishments. Imam Ahmad ibnHanbal had to go through most of the trials and tribulations in this issue.

The third major issue is the independence of intention. *Shehristani* writes, "They agree that human is the creator of all his good and bad deeds, and in the Hereafter, he deserves reward or punishment for what he does. Allah is away and pure from that the acts of evil, oppression, and infidelity should be attributed to Him, becauseHe will be considered Tyrant, if He is the creator of the atrocity, as he will be the just if he was the creator of justice."(15)

Mo'tazilla has the distinction of being the first to confess that man is free in his deeds. In addition to the rational arguments, in this discussion, all the verses of the Qur'an were in their consideration, which were indicating the deservedness of humans to reward and punishment upon its accountability and the choice of good and bad. IbnHazm also openly endorsed this position despite great differences with *Mo'tazilla*. He said that if the correctness of the belief in authority and independence of intention is not recognized, then it implies the termination of all the ways which not only make the man a lover of good but also make him responsible for the adoption of good and bad.

"However, *Mo'tazilla's* opinion about the independence of intention was particularly weighty, but they used the term "creativity of actions" to express this, which itself contradicts their schools of thought. Because if a human being is the creator of his deeds, as *Mo'tazilla* used to say, it means that they believed in a creator other than Allah, that is, they considered man a creator. It is surprising that these gentlemen who could not recognize attributes of Allah as on the basis of the object of the polytheism and were forced to refuse the ancientness of word of Allah so that no aspect of dualism can appear. How did they make the man a creator of his actions? "(16)

While researching the ideologies of the *Mo'tazilla*, it is important to keep in mind the situation that the *Mo'tazilla* faced. The fact is, at that time, there was no formal knowledge of *Elm-ul-Kalaam* in Islam and if it were not challenged

by other religions, it would still not be needed. Ahmad Amin Misri writes in *Fajr-ul-Islam*.

"The truth is that *Mo'tazillais* the only group who gave birth to the *Elm-ul-Kalaam* in Islam and they are the first of the Muslims who armed themselves with the enemies of their religion. The point was that in the early second century of *Hijri*, the influence of those who had converted to Islam from among the Jews, Christians, *Majus*, and Atheists began to appear. Most of them were Muslims, but their heads were still filled with their ex religion."(17)

For the first time, *Mo'tazillanot* only laid the foundations of *Elm-ul-Kalaam* on rational and philosophical grounds to protect the beliefs of Muslims from external influences and attacks, but in a very short time they took it to the peak and Islamic faith started to be developed with all its implications. *Tawheed*, authority, beauty, and ugliness of things, good and bad, attributes of God, attribute of justice and its relation to the divine, reward and punishment, the creation of the Qur'an, infact, all the issues that are necessary for a religious belief, were started to be developed by *Mo'tazilla* on a wide basis. *Maulana Hanif Nadevi* has written in the abstract of *Maqalaat al-Islamie'en*.

"We are deeply grateful for the religious and intellectual services of formers *Mo'tazilla*. The warmth and competence, by which they defended Islam atheists and *Zindique* thoughts, deserved high admiration in its place. Similarly, the tactics that they used in facing the conspiracies of *Zanadikah* cannot be denied."(18)

Thus, *Mo'tazillais* the first school of Islam that protected the faith of Muslims from external attacks and provided answers to their objections. It is evident that the validity of the *Qur'anic* theory was unacceptable to non-Muslims, either from the *Qur'anic* arguments or by the greatness of the Prophet Himself. *Mo'tazilla* proved the facts of Islam on the basis of Greek philosophy and its philosophical style of reasoning and thinking, and thus made a profound impact on the aftermath of Islam.

"The real field of *Mo'tazillain* which they demonstrated the rituals of contemplation was *Elm-ul-Kalaam*, a discourse, in which solution to certain problems on the basis of Greek rationalist, emphasized specifically. *Mo'tazilla* was greatly influenced by Greek philosophy and greatly benefited from its ideas. Thus, the evidence of Greek philosophy is significant in their arguments and litigation. *Mo'tazilla* used to quench their intellectual thirst with Greek philosophy. On the basis of philosophy, their arguments were developed and emphasized."(19)

The frightening aspect of the Islamic history of all these services is that the familiarity of the new sciences, the popularity in the dialogues, and the patronage of the government made *Mo'tazilla* exceedingly self-reliant. Under the influence of Greek philosophy, only in the light of intellectual constitution

did they become more dependent on philosophy and rationality in their attempt to resolve the beliefs and problems and bring the intellect to the point of revelation, but to the greater extent made revelation dependent upon the intellect. According to them, what intellect verifies the revelation confirms it, and that there is no contradiction in the intellect and revelation, rather they are consistent. According to *Mo'tazilla*, truth is not good only because the revelation has declared it good, but by virtue of it, truth is good, which the revelation confirms, and a lie is not evil because the revelation has called it evil, but by virtue of it, lie is evil, and revelation confirms it. In this way the intellect and revelation are auxiliary and verifiable to each other. The logical consequence of this was that the intellect was made not only equal to the revelation but also superior to it.

The *Mo'tazilla's* rationalism was sharply reacted by the traditional class of Muslims, thus leading to the fifth school of Muslims in the name of "*Asha'ira*". The founder of the *Asha'ira* Abul Hasan Al-Ash'ari was the most important and active representative of the school of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, also known as Ahl al-Hadith. The stance of the Ahl al-Hadith was based on tradition and textualism, and they were generally convinced to take the Qur'an and Hadith in their literal and figurative sense. Therefore, Abul Hassan al-Ash'ari strongly opposed the influence of *Mo'tazilla's* rationalism and Greek philosophy and putting rationality of the intellect and revelation in equal places. It is very important in studying the fall of *Mo'tazilla*, that two groups of *Ahl al-Sunnah-Wal-Jama'ah*, *Asha'ira* and *Maturia'dia'a*, came out on the field armed with Greek teachings to defend their school, among them people like Imam Ghazali, Imam Razi and Imam Ibn Taymiyyah were born who pursued their intellectual pursuits in the language and style of *Mo'tazilla*, and clarified their intellectual weaknesses in the light of the strong arguments and principles of the Qur'an and the Sunna'h, which gradually ended the school of *Mo'tazilla*. The main reason for his downfall was that he relied solely on the intellect in affirming beliefs. In the cognizance doctrines, *Mo'tazilla* used to be perfectly rational, not relying on the *Nass* (نص) except if the subject word was an order or a rule. In other issues, they were accustomed to relying on intellect. Therefore, due to the same rationalism, some of the *Mo'tazilla* strayed away from the path of truth. They could not maintain a moderate degree of intellect and imitation due to a high degree of philosophy and rationalism.

One of the reasons for the disrespect of *Mo'tazilla* from the Hadith was that they did not know much about Hadith, because they did not bring reasoning of beliefs from the Hadiths, nor did they argue with it, while their rivals were jurists and were far superior to the understanding of hadith and character than them. Although *Mo'tazilla* had access to and influence in the court of the government, the *Muhaddithin* had the privilege of comparing them with the

fact that they lived in the hearts of the people and trusted by the majority. *Mo'tazillas* sought to persuade their school, which was rational and controversial, by mean of force, and put the opposition, which included the great imams of hadith and jurisprudence, through criticism and accountability, and targeted them for punishment by force of state power. This disagreement was merely a contradiction of interpretation, but they considered it a disagreement between Islam and Kufr. Rationality or reasoning in logical issues was given more importance than texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Their arguments were such that only the specific intellectuals were able to be discussing them, but they tried unsuccessfully to bring them into the public circles. They not only criticized the *Muhaddithin* and the jurists but also denied the authenticity of the Hadiths and Jurisprudence. They expressed their views on sensitive religious beliefs and issues that were not only out of the way of sanity but also against the accepted faith of the Ahl-us-Sunnah.

References & Notes

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