



المتكلمين "عقلايو الإسلام"، بعض التأملات في العناصر اليونانية الشرقية في فكر المتكلمين المسلمين

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المستخلص: يدرك معظم مؤرخي الفكر الإسلامي، ان الدور الهام الذي لعبته فرق المعتزلة في تطور الفلسفة العربية الإسلامية شكل سمة بارزة ومستقلة في فكرهم. إن أهمية أفكارهم ومذاهبهم لا تكمن فقط في طريقتهم المستحدثة في فهم عقائد الأديان، أو في موقفهم من تقديم الحلول لبعض المشاكل الفكرية، بل بشكل أوضح في محاولاتهم الطموحة للتوفيق بين تلك العقائد وبين المعتقدات الفلسفية والقومية. والمذاهب العلمية كذلك. وقد صادف أسلوبهم والاستنتاجات التي توصلوا إليها الفهم التقليدي للفكر الإسلامي. ولهذا السبب بالذات، تم تفسير أفكارهم في مناسبات عديدة على أنها هرطقة وتهديد خطير لتلك العقائد. إن الفلسفات اليونانية واليهودية والمسيحية ظهرت في الإسلام في ضوء واضح. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الأعمال والأفكار الكبرى لهذه الفلسفات لاقت قبولاً في عقلية المسلمين، سواء كانت الأفكار التي تبناها ووجدوها صادقة ومتوافقة مع أفكارهم الخاصة، أو تلك التي تم دحضها، ليس على أساس لاعقلانيتها ولكن على أساس معتقدات الدين. الوضع مختلف مع الفلسفات الغنوصية الفارسية والهندية. وهي مرفوضة ومعارضة على كلا الأساسين، إلا في مذاهب علم الكلام الغامضة حيث اختلطت بالأساطير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفكر الإسلامي، فرق المعتزلة، الفلسفة العربية، الفلسفة اليونانية، الفلسفة اليهودية، الفلسفة المسيحية

Mutakallimin "the Rationalists of Islam", Some Reflections on the Greco-Eastern elements of the Muslim theologians' thought

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Abstract: The Mutazilites sect played a significant and independent role in the development of Islamic Arab philosophy. Their ideas aimed to reconcile religious beliefs with philosophical and nationalistic beliefs. While Greek, Jewish, and Christian philosophies influenced Islam, Persian and Indian Gnostic philosophies were rejected

Keywords: Islamic thought, Mutazilites sects, Arab philosophy, Greek philosophy, Jewish philosophy, Christian philosophy.

INTRODUCTION:

As it is well recognized by most of the historians of Islamic thought, the important role which the Mutazilites sects played in the evolution of Islamic Arab philosophy constituted an outstanding and autonomous feature of their thought.

The importance of their ideas and doctrines does not rely merely on their innovated way of understanding the religions' dogmas, or on their attitude in offering solutions for some intellectual problems, but more plainly on their ambitious attempts to reconcile those dogmas with the philosophical and the scientific doctrines as well.

Their method and the conclusions obtained by them had been encountered by the traditional understanding of Islamic thought. For this very reason, their ideas had been interpreted on many occasions as heresies and momentous threat to those dogmas.

It is true that the Quranic concepts and the Prophet's traditions along with the political and social environment gave the first impetus to the rise of their schools ,however Their assimilation of the non-Islamic thoughts animated and highly invigorated their disputes, though does not betray my conviction that the non-Islamic philosophies have had their effects on the Mutazilites only through the Quranic interpretations and the deep understanding of the prophet's traditions along with the other factors of the pure Islamic intellectual activities.

The best way to make this clear, is to follow those attempts within the evolution of the Mutazilites interaction with the non-Islamic philosophies and their approach to them.

1. The Greek Philosophy:

In the second century of the Hegira, Greek learning became attractive to the Muslim thinkers. An active movement of translation, sustained by many rules of the Islamic state, took place. One Orientalist describes this movement as "one of the first and most significant indications or the new orientation of Muslims' thought dealing with philosophical and scientific subjects, with the results that eighty years after the fall of the Umayyads, the Arabic speaking world possessed Arabic translation of the greater part of the works of Aristotle, of the leading neo-Platonism commentators of some of the works of Plato, and of the greater part of Galen (1).

Muslims inherited the three cultural centers of the Greek and the Hellenistic culture. Alexandria, Harran, and Jundiaspur (2). Contacts between the Muslims and the Greek philosophy were available. Al-Qifti says that "the Alexandrians prepared the house of knowledge and the assemblies of the medical lessons"(3).

Ibn Taymyya has talked about the translation activity of Hunain Ibn Ishaq, Thabit Ibn Qurra the haranian, and Qasta Ibn Luga the Christian and many others (4).

Within this synoptic movement "Ilm al-Kalam was the first of the Islamic sciences which benefited from it.

Greek philosophy did not have influence on the Upper Crust of "Ilm al-Kalam but on the ancient theologians during the Umayyads period. However, it seems that "Ilm al-Kalam started its approach to the Greek culture affirming the primacy of religion's dogmas.

Muslims saw the theological ideas neither difficult nor esoteric. In Pines' words "Islamic exposure to the influence of Greek philosophy was by no means self contained"(5). This point of view seems more reasonable than de Boer's opinion that the Arabs had no independent thought, a thing which was an impetus to rely completely on the Greek

knowledge"(6) , and M. Watt's allegation that "the greatness of the Mutazilities rests on the vast amount of works they did in bringing Greek ideas into Islamic theological discussions"(7) . Mr. Pines' point of view about the relationship between "Ilm al-Kalam and the non-Islamic thought that de Boer's and watt's allegations, along with Macdonald's who wrote that "the Mutazilites were so much overawed by the Greek conception of law or steady principles subsisting in the universe that this conception superseded Muhammed's conception about God as an absolute will, as the sovereign power overall"(8) , shows that they ignored that the Greek philosophy was not always welcomed by the Muslim thinkers and that it had been opposed by some Muslim's philosophical attitudes(9) .

It could be easier to prove that "Ilm al-Kalam was not a mere echo of the Greek thought, or quasi-Greek thought, by presenting concrete examples of the Greek impact on "Ilm al-Kalam. I have chosen some examples from great schools of the Greek philosophy, not only because they are great or had significant repercussions but more exclusively because "Ilm al-Kalam had benefited from them. Meanwhile it was confronted by a unique religious understanding of the task which was essential to be performed, and more importantly to be justified by both languages the philosophical and the religious.

The Ionian ideas, which spread through Aristotle's books such as *Metaphysics* and *d'Anima* had their impact on "Ilm al-Kalam.

Muslim's acquaintance with the Ionian philosophy along with the other Greek philosophies, had been mentioned in the writings of Ibn Fatik, Ibn Al-Nadim and Al-Shahristani(10) . Al-Shahristani, who was a theologian and historian, gave an impressive, though ambiguous, interpretation of Thales' water, but although his interpretation was given in religion's terms, it fulfilled the aim of Thales. He adopted an Ashahrities position towards the theory of matter and form as a principle of explanation of the existence of the material bodies(11) . He believed that matter should exist in order to presuppose the principle of infinity and multiplicity(12) . This belief led him to the conclusion that Thale's main dogma is the principle of the composites, not of the existence, from which the terrestrial bodies, sublunary plants, sprang. Meanwhile these attempts exposed oddity, because al-Shahristani attempted to give a religious paraphrasing of Thales' water, when connected with what is mentioned in the Quran "His throne was upon the water"(13) , means something similar to T. Comperz's interpretation of Thales' water, he wrote: "the primary form of matter was its only true and real shape, the rest were mere delusions"(14) .

In this way one can say that al-Shahristani's interpretation of the early Greek philosophy was given in a precocious way. Another good example of similarity between the Ionian ideas and the theologians religious is to be bound with their understanding of Anaximander and Anaximenes wherein the Apeiron of Anaximander was given in an Islamic shape, for them it reflects the image of the infinite God performed in Platonic and a neo-platonic way(15) . The Ionian philosophy gained popularity among Muslims when they got acquainted with Socrates, to whom Muslims ascribed some of these instructions to the Prophet or to the Imam Ali(16) .

Later, the Pythagorean ideas reached the Muslims through the neo-platonic sects and groups such as the Ismailities, the twelvers Shiites and the brothers of purity (Ikhwan Al-Safa), who believe that the religious concepts could be better understood through Greek philosophy, particularly through the Pythagoreans.

On the idea of purification Ikhwan al-Safa wrote "As Hermis" soul had been elevated by wisdom when it became purified Pythagoras' should be purified by numbers, geometry and music"(17) . The spiritual significance of the applicable numbers which is Pythagorean concept became a part of their philosophy.

Ikhwan Al-Safa believed that movements of celestial spheres are sounds and tones they are angles loyal to God, they hear and see(18) . But Pythagorean philosophy made little progress in the school of the Islamic thought, because it was opposed by Sunnites, the Mutazilities and the moderate Shiites, recognized it as a mystical and obscure trend in the Greek philosophy. But it still has had influence on the Sufists and the Esotericists(19) .

It is not obvious whether the Mutazilities in the adoption and evolution of their dialectical method inspired some of the sophist's notions. However, as long as the sophists were known by their main ideas, i.e. the relativity of the truth, and the changing essences(20) , it justifies al-Nashar's refutation of any relationship between them and the Mutazilities.

For the Mutazilities neither reality nor truth was relative, their aim was to defend the religion's dogmas. Muslims understood sophists from the Platonic and the Aristotelian points of view. The Mutazilities never used or grasped the sophists critical approaches concerning truth and reality. The religious motives were the factors of "Ilm al-Kalam's schools in its contact with any non-Islamic philosophy.

Empedocles and Anaxagoras were known among the circles the Batinites, like Ikhwan Al-Safa(21) and the Ismaelities(22) . De Boer believed that al-Nazzam's ideas were derived from what was considered among the Eastern as Empedocles' philosophy(23) .

And while al-Nazzam's idea on motion and stillness could be attributed to Empedocles, al-Nazzam's idea on the contradictory elements should be attributed to Anaxagoras. Nevertheless, Ahmed M. Subhi rejects this influences saying: " al-Nazzam's aim and the theological allegations and dilemma were different from what can be ascribed to Empedocles and Anaxagoras(24) .

However, as long as decisive evidences are not at hand, the possibility of this influence of Empedocles and Anaxagoras imposes itself because al-Nazzam was known for his debates with different sects in Balch which was a center of miscellaneous Greek philosophy(25) . Al-Shahristani said that the Muslims recognized the Greek Atomist's philosophies of Leucippus and Democritus through Aristotle's metaphysics, but de Boer rejected this opinion(26) .

Nevertheless what seemed to be similar in the Mutazilities' philosophy to the Atomists sprang from the Mutazilities' antagonistic attitudes towards Aristotle's notion of the eternity of the world. Their purpose was to strengthen the religion's dogmas regarding temporality of the world.

The Asharities later on continue the task for the same purpose. The atom is the most minor part of the body, al-Allaf stated and said every existence is finite and multiple, quantitatively, temporally and spatially, there is no extrinsic or intrinsic essence in the body(27) . Al-Allaf sought support for his idea by interpreting some verses from the Quran. The vacuum in which the atoms swims which is essential in Democritus theory, does not exist in al-Allaf's theory of the undivided part(28) .

Eventually, al-Allaf aimed at using the undivided part to prove that the world is finite and the matter is not eternal, and to sustain his opposition to Aristotle's concept of the eternity of the world. Al-Nazzam criticized al-Allaf's theory of the undivided part because it failed to fulfil its purpose(29) .

However, the idea of the undivided part had been accepted by the Asharities (al-Bagelani and al-Kabi). The Asharities claimed that the essences were concomitant with the contingencies. I support Ahmed M. Shubi, who states that al-Allaf's theory of the undivided

part and Atomists' theory are different. The Atomists sought to explain the world without introducing the idea of the final causes(30). However, I find myself obliged to repeat my previous argument that the possibility of this interaction is not yet clear because neither al-Allaf nor the Asharities were innocent of reducing the Atomists' allegation to the Quranic interpretation.

Stoicism reached the Arabs through the Dyaninists whose ideas were known in al-Raha(31) . Ali S. al-Nashar said that there are stoic elements in al-Basri's idea about (the psycho – essences) the anthropomorphism of Mugatil Ibn Suliman, Hesham Ibn al-Hakam's and al-Nazzam's ideas of corporeality(32) . I find it is difficult to see the course of the stoic influence, it is true that we can trace back some of the Muslim anthropomorphists' ideas, but it is hard to ascribe them to the stoics.

Stoics believed that all things are parts of one unique system called nature(33) .

This is quite obvious in their determinism and refutation of the human freedom. None of those Mutakallimin, already mentioned, agreed with the stoic's ideas(34) . Mutakallimin earnestly tried to learn many Greek ideas, although their purpose was to defend the religion's dogmas by reason. This explains why the Greek influence appeared within the religious perspective.

This way of interaction with the Greek thought was clear on the Mutakallimin's ideas in spite of the difference among them. Yet, because of the religious purpose of "Ilm al-Kalam, Plato emerged as a philosopher whose idea seemed to the Mutakallimin to be reconcilable with the religion's dogmas. Plato's philosophy spread among many Muslim philosophical ideas particularly the Sabianists, the Gnosists(35) .

Plato's philosophy had a great impact on some school of "Ilm al-Kalam. However, the Mutazilities approach to Plato's philosophy emphasized the Quranic conception of metaphysics which differs from the platonic perpetual world(36) .

The Mutazilities were considered dissidents by other sects of the Muslims because of the theological differences emerged in the problems of Ilm al-Kalam(37) . It is clear that Mutakallimin started from the same standpoint, i.e. the unsatisfactory explanations which Mutakallimin saw in the arguments of the others. The most suitable description of the Mutazilities is that they were zealous apologists who used Greek ideas arguments in defending their religious views(38).

However whatever can be said about the Greek impact on the Mutazilities they did not accept it passively. Even the other Muslim schools although they adopted the same attitudes of the Christian teachers in reckoning on philosophy as they found it actually living in their own days. Nevertheless they did not become Platonists nor Aristotelian for instance, in the same way we should understand the term(39) .

O'leary pointed out some indications of the Mutazilitie's Schools dependence on the Greek concepts and idea(40) . Ibn al-Murtada before him raised a similar argument when he stated that the Mutazilities distorted their ideas with the philosophy of their forerunners(41) . However, it is evident that they tried earnestly to Liberate their through from the Greek way of understanding and interpretation, in order to prove the capability of the Islamic original thought in obtaining an autonomous visions of any given concept of the matters concerning man and universe and that it has the propensity of assimilating what can be absorbable and reconcilable with dogmas and principles and expel what appeared to be irreconcilable with them. A similar of O'leary's opinion in lacking solidity was raised by C. E. Farah that "the aim of the Muslim thinkers was to reconcile such platonic as the creation of world, and the immortality of soul

with the more popular Aristotelian emphasis on reason(42) . He treated the argument as if the idea of the creation is not a cornerstone of the Quranic dogma, and as if the Muslim thinkers did not recognize it before Plato's ideas which spread in the Arab world long time after Islam(43) . Another reason which justifies my hesitation to accept Farah's argument is that he ascribed to Aristotle the Arab's recognition of reasoning whereas numerous Quranic verses were strong motivation for the practice of reason. One of the most obvious aspects of the Islamic theological movement was the sincere attempts to apply reason to the religious concepts. Concerning the idea of Temporality of the world al-Ghazali stated that "It has been mentioned that some of those thinkers refused the adoption of Plato's idea in the temporal world on the basis of considering it as self-temporal"(44) . I point here to the fact that many points of departure must be considered. Plato's ideas are not thought but it may be the object of a thought. It is difficult to see how God creates it since its being is timeless. He could not have decided to create a bed unless his thought when the decided bed has for its object that very platonic bed which we are told that he brought it into existence(45) . A concept like this can easily be distinguished incontestably from al-Khiat's main idea of the entity of the non-existence. Al-Baghdadi said that "the body in its non existence is supposed to be a body"(46) , possessed the substantial and casual self qualities(47) . On this basis some writers like Zuhdi Jar Alla and Macdonald considered it as an evidence of al-Khiat's belief on the eternity of the world(48). An essential element imposes itself here, that the platonic ideas as objects of thought possessed no other entity than its real one.

This ideas according the al-Khiat existed before the activity of the thought, while with Plato it is a general concept in our mind which we must believe to be absolute entities with an existence of our mind out of the reach of time or change(49) .This idea led some writers to accuse the Mutazilities of being followers of Aristotle's idea on the eternity of the world(50) . This conclusion just arrived at gives a clue to difficulties resulting from these comparisons, which previously supposed that a dualism existed in Plato's ideas between reality and appearance, ideas and the sensible objects, reason and sense – perception, and between soul and the body(51) . It indicates that the ideas has a superior existence, while with al-Allaf for instance nothing shares in God's eternity or entity. It explains why al-Allaf believes in what he called the infinity of existents where God was alone with His uniqueness.

Further, the idea of the world temporality is a general concept which gave satisfaction to the Mutazilities' Five principles. They asserted in the First principle (Monotheism) that nothing co-exists with God who preceded existence by the Self and time. From the principles of (the divine justice, divine promise, and (al manzila bin al manzilat) they derived the inferiority of the world by the self and time. Thus, the world's temporality of its creation in time were essential dogmas which the Mutazilities did not waste efforts in sustaining it, not through Aristotle's way of reasoning as has stated by Farah or those who accused them of following Aristotle's idea on the eternity, but through their understanding and reasoning of the religion's dogmas. This can strengthen the rejection of de Boer's allegation in which he stated that al-Allaf considered those words which expresses the God's will as (mid-entities) which looks like Plato's ideas(52) . The distinction which has been drawn by al-Allaf between (The order in place) and (The order in no-place) as it is described by al-Shahristani(53) does not help de Boer's argument, nor does it betray al-Allaf's belief on the infinity of the existents. These orders in no-place, from which de Boer has derived his argument, do not exist as separate entities.

For Plato, an ideal world contains eternal prototypes of the natural world. This means that the essences of the natural world are possessed by these ideas which are liable to be considered as mid-entities between God or the intelligible' world and the natural one. The matter is completely different with al-Allaf who thought that God's very essence contains God's

qualities an idea which differ from the Platonic ideas as intermediary and the Platonic natural world as a transient mirror of the ideas. In pursuance of my aim, it is convenient to take the Mutakallimin proofs (whether with al-Jubai, al-Bagelani, al-Baghdadi, al-Junini, or even with al-Ashari) as clear examples of the aforesaid discussion. The Aharities, as Ibn Rushd said "had the method of taking insensible existents in order to prove the existence of sensible existence"(54) . Their proofs are built either on religious dogmas, or on general facts obtained by reason. Al-Ghazali's opposition to the philosophers and their ideas of the world's eternity rest on general reason not derived from any other ideas than what should be said if a man aimed at verifying such an idea. The philosopher's pleas given for the eternity of the world are associated with the Aristotelian metaphysics.

The world's temporality seemed to them as lacking the preponderant which decides creation at a definite instant, the impossibility of temporal existent's occurrence out of the eternal – every temporal is preceded by temporal. There are proofs given by the philosophers to sustain the impossibility of the world's temporality(55) . On the other hand, al-Ghazali tried to reject it by opposing what the philosophers mentioned in the first plea. His idea does not pertain to creation. But what is the basis through which we can say is that the creation would not occur at a definite instant. Concerning the second plea, al-Ghazali considers God's will as eternal. It preceded the will of any preponderant, the idea of the possibility of being here is a mental supposition. Then we can speak of the matter or the need of the temporal to be preceded by another temporal. His arguments, thus, appeared as general principles which imposed on the dilemma and escape from being described as Platonic or non-Platonic.

The body is the source of an endless trouble for us; it is a hindrance towards obtaining knowledge. True existence, if revealed to the soul at all, is revealed to the thought(56) . It means that the derivatives of the natural world or, in a more accurate sense, the activities of the body are purposeless. Their usage is exceeded only by thought or by the activity of the intelligible if we aim at being closed to Plato's terms.

However, an unbridgeable gap will appear between this idea and the idea of the Mutazilities. Al-Nazzam thought that the natural bodies or the natural phenomena have also an important role which decides motion and time. The idea of its "natural intervention", its upsurge and its latency are terrestrial and material contingencies or abilities which belong to the bodies and indicates that the elements are overlapped. Through these activities, they gain separation or intervention and emergence as well.

It seems difficult to find in the Mutazilities or even their forerunners a concept which bears an obvious Platonic influence. However, it was certain that, in comparison with Aristotle's ideas, they discovered in Plato a reasonable explanation which seemed reconcilable with the ideas they believed in. There was one respect in which their teaching bore platonic features, that was the doctrine of using a language emancipated from the traditional way and admitted by the thought of their times.

Quite apart from any objective or impartial pursuance, which can be established in the comparison between the Platonic ideas and the Muslim theological concepts, spiritual or religious criterion seems inevitable. It is the concept of Deity as it was envisaged by Mutakallimin. Plato's God appears to be obscure and indefinable. In Stevenson's words: "although Plato mentioned God or the Gods in various places, it is not clear how seriously he took them, whether in singular or plural. When he was using God as singular, it was pretty clear that he did not mean anything like the personal God of Christianity, and even the impersonal notion of God did not play much of a role in the argument of the Republic"(57) and as a. Ali says' "he lifted himself up to God by his own thoughts"(58) , while the concept of God imagined by Mutakallimin has common countenances. It is also held that their assessment is

displayed within a specific religious vision.

His qualities are not other than Himself. Those who believe in an eternal quality besides God affirm two Gods. A logical conclusion asserted by the Mutazilites by which we can say that Plato's ideas are reminiscent of that polytheistic conception of Deity which had been rejected by the Mutazilites.

The theory of meaning, as it appears in Mu'ammār Ibn Ubad al-Sulmī confirms the theories posited by his forerunners, the Mutazilites of al-Basra, particularly al-Allaf and al-Nazzam, who aimed at abolishing the distinction between concept and meaning, he confirmed in this respect al-Allaf's and al-Nazzam's notion of destroying these distinctions between meanings in order, as al-Khiat says "to prove God's pure monistic and unique existence". While with Plato, there are various ideas(59). Al-Ashari considered that one of the most important exigencies of God's quality is its uniqueness(60). The idea seems irreconcilable with the Platonic conception of God, who coexisted with forms. While essences in the Platonic conception of the ideas are universal, eternal and lasting forms existed in the world of the ideas(61). The essence with the Mutazilites is limited to existence "its mortality and existence belong to itself not to the superfluous qualities(62).

Another aspect, which I call spiritual and religious criteria, deals with the concept of "love" where al-Nashar asserts that some Orientalists and Arab thinkers like M. Kutairi, imputed Mutakallim's and Mutazilites infatuation with Plato to his eastern leanings(63). The idea of love in its Platonic context reaches Muslims through Timaeus. Watt ascribed to al-Allaf, al-Nazzam and Bishr Ibn al-Mutamir a symposium in the Socrates' style held in Yahya al-Barmki's house(64). Some other writers attributed it to the Jurists like Ibn Hanbel, Dawūd al-Zahri and Ibn Hazm. However, it seems that a distinction is inevitable, for love in its authentic Platonic sense seems to appear as a cosmic link, it is neither mortal nor immortal(65). Love is not only the oldest and most known quality, of God, but it is also the most powerful help for man in the acquaintance of merit(66). The idea of love with Plato, thus, seems to be connected with his core idea of the forms whereby love was a universal concept, while the ideas of the previously mentioned Muslims betrays this meaning.

We may conclude Plato's spiritual views has a separate reality while it appears with the Muslim thinkers as if it possessed values which animate the body and prepare it elevation to the level of a divine purity. The very task can easily be attributed to the Muslim's concept of the relation of soul and body. Plato was really a dualist in this respect, the soul appeared to him belonging in essence to the eternal world, not to the transitory. It is true that this idea has its influence on Ikhwan al-Safa's concept of the universal soul. But the matter is different with the Islamic rational theology which follows no other influence than the Islamic revealed concept of the soul. They used an allegorical idea which is derived originally from the Quran. But accommodated other language appealing thereby to the alleged arguments of a Platonic love's influence on them.

It is important to indicate here that their response to Platonism is clearer than non-Platonism which had been denied by Mutakallim except in some sects of the Ismaelites through Gnosis, or Aristotelianism. Aristotle's works, in particular his logic, had been conveyed by his disciples to the Arabs' world. It is well known to the historians of the Islamic philosophy that Aristotle did not occupy Mutakallim's minds; actually his ideas, particularly "the eternity", had been rejected by them. What de Boer considers in Mutakallim to be influenced by Aristotle's ideas on the particular souls(67), is by no means unsustained by a conceivable piece of evidence by which we can say some mutual elements exist between the two ideas. The philosophers as Anawati says, "may have the same rational basis as that of the Hellenistic philosophy, Aristotelian logic and belief in logic"(68), but the matter is different with

Mutakallimin. It would be gone too far when we speak about the problems discussed by Mutakallimin and their forerunners, whose dilemma was so simple, that was reachable by Islam's own method. Even during the days of the advanced rational theology, the known dissatisfaction beyond considering Aristotle's logic as helpful except in a narrow way whereby religious, and metaphysical dogmas could not be affected. Al-Ghazali, for instance, considered Aristotle's ideas as impious and deviant from the righteous way of religion(69) . I agree that the Aristotelian influence was confined and specified within the language through which Mutakallimin expressed their view but not in that acute way which have been pointed out by Watt when he stated that the Asha'rites fully reduced the language of the Quran to something more factual and influential. It was then possible for them to link up the theological notions with a form of philosophy mainly the Aristotelian cosmology(70) . The fundamental point in this discussion seems to be that as long as the Mutakallimin's religious dogmas are unaffected, hence their disagreements whether with those who rejected the notion or accepted it like al-Nazzam, al-Jubai, Husham Ibn al-Hakam and al-Allaf, or al-Ghazali who was very interested in logic particularly in the Aristotelian syllogism, sprang from their different understanding of the religious dogmas themselves. The Aristotelian rational theology had no chance among the Mutakallimin, like the eternity of the world which was once the core of their criticism. Actually, it was not the misunderstanding on the part of al-Nazzam of the Aristotelian definition of the soul as a form of a body, that al-Nazzam as O'leary says, "misdefined it as the same shape as the body"(71) .

Al-Nazzam considered both the soul and body as controlled by the intervention. The world according to Aristotle, as Ross says "That is given to us in experience is a world of concrete, individual things and reacting on each other"(72) . Certainly, this is not the Mutakallimin's definition of the world, or one of its aspects, nor is it in accordance with the concept of God as a living being of highest kind and eternal live and continuous eternal duration belong to God(73) . God, according to the Mutazilities, has no body, no shape and no form. He is not a person or substance nor has a colour, taste or smell. Al-Allaf stated that: He is "unmultitudinous contrary to the existents.

Their way of manipulation with the metaphysical notions is in contrast with that of Aristotle. Time and nothingness are entities which are created by God. According to Aristotle's metaphysics, they do not co-exist with God". It is more virtuous for man not to ask about those areas wherein God was alone with nothingness and timelessness(74) .

Hence O'leary's argument that "Mumar Ibn Ubad al-Sulmi following the Neo-Platonic commentators on Aristotle, treats the attributes of God as purely negative so that God is unknowable by man(75) , seems to be loosely based, Firstly because Mu'mar denied that God is eternal but lasting, and by saying so means, as al-Shahristani says that "His existence is temporally precedes existence"(76) . God's attributes, according to Mu'mar, are knowable to man, a thing which has nothing to do with the Aristotelian concept of Deity.

The system with which Mutakallimin were preoccupied, by positing the religious dogmas, and trying continuously to sustain it by reasonable explanation, seems to be distorted. Aristotle's explanation starts from a given postulate about the real as such. For instance, to Aristotle, we cannot imagine time unless we put motion forwards by which time occurs(77) . Wasil Ibn'tta, for instance, thought that it is not necessary to say that there is motion before motion or temporal event before any temporal one. In this theory of the infinite ability of the existent, God alone is the condition through which phenomena must be imagined and presupposed, God alone is characterized with infinity. While to Aristotle, we posit a separate world of universals. From the same principle, Mutakallimin rely on the idea of the undivided

part to prove this infinity on one hand, and to oppose Aristotle's idea of the eternity of the world on the other hand.

Certain particular aspects thus inevitably regarded in the thought of Mutakallimin and still more perhaps the method, attracted Mutakallimin to Aristotle's metaphysics. However, the idea of religion as a task to bring about theological revolution in Islamic rational theology was not alien to Aristotle's ends. Their convictions based on other worldly purposes mitigated by, and tempered with divine monotheism, surpassed Aristotle's measures of the world which presents itself as hierarchy.

2. The Persian, Gnostic, Sabian and Indian Sources

Due to the mutual features of these philosophies and their impact on the Islamic thought, i.e. the concept of Deity, of existence envisaged by them, and the obscured ideas, wherein the application of reason to the doctrinal questions was absent, along with the relatively weak influence they brought to 'Ilm al-Kalam, due to all these reasons, I group them into a single topic or as a one source around which Mutakallimin disputes were found.

The theological polemics between Mutakallimin and the people of the book (Ahl al-Kitab) was related with the Deity, the unification of the divine self, God's Qualities etc ... while among the Muslim thinkers the discussions with these trends took another shape broadly concentrated on the ethical aspects. Its apparent approach was dogmatic concerning the unification and monotheism. However, its intrinsic significance and working were definitely ethical. The problem of (good and evil) occupied an outstanding place in these debates and intellectual conflicts. The theological explanation of the Persian dogmas and creeds was born out of this problem. It was unimaginable according to their religions that evil can be performed by the benevolent God: it was impossible as it seemed to them that two temporal existents could be derived from one eternal self. That is why they were called the "dualistic" and the "pagans" in the Islamic intellectual environment. Yea when the souls came together at the first to make life(78) .

During the Umayyads and the Abbassids periods, Muslims came in touch with many Persian sects and doctrines. Many posts were occupied by the Persians particularly those of the translation and the writers such as Ya'qub Ibn Daud. The first Persian notion which had been promulgated among the Arabs was the legend of kumerth, of Adam according to the Persian mythology. It was the first precursor of the doctrine of Yzdma and Ahrman, or the light and the darkness. The kumerthian sect discussed the idea of good and evil and how the world of light strengthened the spirit of the people in order to overcome the darkness. Among these legends also was the legend of Zarfanism which coexisted with Suliman the Prophet. It was in accordance with Kumerthianism with a slight difference in its conception of the existence.

Although these sects had no mentioned impact upon the Islamic attitudes of thought, they constituted a prelude to the latter Persian schools such as Zoroastrianism which Muslim thinkers organized many disputations with its schools.

The Mutazilities argued with the Perians and opposed those who had been influenced by them, particularly "the refusers" al-Rafida. Wasil Ibn 'tta wrote a book entitled with "Thousand Pleas Against the Manicheans"(79), al-Nazzam was also in contact with the Manicheanists and considered his idea of (latency) al-Kmoun and (impetuouity) al-Taфра as an argument against the dualism of the Persian religious belief in the dualistic interpretation of the existence. In this theory, Al-Nazzam declares that God subdues the dualistic natures of the heterogeneous elements. The same opposition had been set out by al-Jahiz. Through their discussions the Mutazilities asserted that bad could not be derived from God(80) . They

distinguished between the "useful and the harmful", between it and "good and evil" in order to find a non-Persian criterion for the moral acts. Abdul Jabar, the last in the Mutazilites hierarchy, opposed the Shiites ideas in which they had been influenced by the dualistic philosophy. Al-Mahdi, during his rule, ordered Mutakallimin to dispute the dualists Islamic apologetic literature was directed against the Manichaeans, perhaps in certain cases Zoroastrianism. However, al-Ash'ari and al-Shahristani asserted that Al-Nazzam adopted the idea, which holds that the performer of the justice do not do the injustice(81) . Along with Ibn al-Rawandi, who was Mutazilite, considered as a defender of the Persian dualistic idea in Islam. Even the Mutazilites are often considered by some of their enemies as dualists because they distinguished between the act of God and the acts of the doers whether the devil or the man. Notwithstanding, this seems to be unrecognized by the Mutazilites, because they denied two eternal doers. Besides their idea of the negation of the divine qualities dispel this accusation. Al-Nazzam, for instance, denies any existence of qualities in God, and al-Allaf attributes it to the negation. The Mutazilites rejected the irrational apocalyptic attitudes, as al-Hujri said "they denied miracles, which constitute the essence of the saintship "(82) , and refuted those ideas promulgated by those who brought into heart of Islam something of their previous beliefs and convictions. They had to know how they stood with regard to these ideas manifested in forms of the dualistic religion. The reason for which the general doctrine of the Shiite sects is often used as a proof of the Persian character is built on the Gnostic nature of the Shiite. "the Ismailites, the Batinites", with their famous name "Armia" the Persian name used earlier to indicate Mazdakism" were the first among the Shiite sects who adopted Persian ideas. As a historical facts we know that the ancient Muslims considered Zarathustra as a apocalyptic prophet. Quran told them that there are apostles who are not mentioned, and some of them said that the Madaists had an Islamic name, which means that the Persian paganists are people of the books. Zoroastrianism as they saw it, was one of the monotheistic religions, Ahurmazda is an eternal Creator. "Therefore do we worship Ahurmazda who made the skin, the embodied righteousness, the waters, the wholesome plants, the star and the earth"(83) . Zoroastrianism converted the Persians from the worship of polytheistic creeds like those of Mitra, Anahita, and Huma to the religion of Ahurmazda the one(84) al-Biruni said "the Beshdadites and the Kisanities were revering the plants and the elements till the rise of Zoroaster . Ahurmazda as Dhalla said, "has a supreme and isolated existence, holding the ideas of both the spiritual and material world"(85) . The Muslims found in Zoroastrianism common elements with Islam in monotheism, the creation of the world, and the concept of good and evil" I celebrate my praise for good thoughts good words good deeds"(86) . "In the same way the religion of Ahuramazda purifies the faithful from every evil"(87) . "If I have offended thee whether by thought or words of deeds whether by acts of will or without intent or wish I earnestly make up the deficiency of this in praise to Thee"(88) .

Zoroastrianism's apothegms stimulated the Mutazilites' researches; regarding the origin of the evil and its nature which seems obvious for their second principle (the justice), and their notions on Diety, within which, they tried to offer an Islamic solution to the ethical dilemmas raised by Zoroastrianism. Various disputes had occurred between Zoroastrian sects and the Mutazilites, particularly al-Allaf. However, the characteristics of the two blocks seemed to amplify more the dissidence than the positive influence. This why I do not agree with A. Amin's opinion that "the Mutazilites" idea of freedom and predestination is derived from Zoroastrianism.

The distinction between good and evil was clear with Manicheanism, which derived various Features from Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The opposition raised by Mutakallimin was more acute because of the dualistic nature of Manicheanism, which contradicts their beliefs on monotheism.

The same opposition was raised by Mutakallimin against Mazdkism, because of its social ideas, as a powerful doctrine to their Islamic convictions. Meanwhile, these Persian notions took new Gnostic forms to which a solid impact ought to be imputed, particularly among the Batinites. The same heritage of Gnosticism invaded the Christian environment, usually engendered by the collapse and absence of the philosophical activities. Gnosticism produced very strong movements among the Batinites, and the mystics. Particularly during the Abbassids, it made a great impact on the groups of the Islamic thinkers called Zindigtes (heretics), and Shu'bites (nationalists), like Abu Nawas, Bashar In Burd, Ibn al-Muqf' against whom Mutakallimin were in strong opposition . The first example of these Gnostic dualistic movements were the Dyssanyds; followers of Dissan who appeared even before mani, had their obvious influence on Husham Ibn al-Hakam and his school. The Meinaeites were spread in the south of Iraq and al Kufa. It is a historical fact, attested by the historians, that Gnosticism had been recognized by the Arabs before Islam during the pre-Islamic period of Jahilia. But their repercussion started after Islam in Kharsan and Iraq. Some of the Mutakallimin appeared falsely as Muslims, but in their real characters they believed in the Gnostic notions, like Ibn Talouot, Ibn Abu shaker. Al-Ghazali himself wrongly accused of having used Gnotic expression particularly in his works (Mushkat al-Anwar, Meraj al-Quds and risalat al madnon bhi 'Ila ghir ahlihi).

The first Quderites opposed Gnostic Islamic sects. The task later was taken up by the Mutazilities with Wasil Ibn 'tta, al-Allaf, Mu'mar Ibn Ubad, al-Jahiz, al-Khiat and Abdul Jabar. In al-Ghazali's book "The Batinites Disgrace" were well presented in their opposition against Gnosticism, as it is mentioned also in al-Bagelani's book (al-Tamhid). Al-JuodIbn Derham was considered by Ibn al-Nadim to be a Manichean(89) . However, I found in al-Nashar's refutation of this argument(90) an objective and clear plea, for al-Juod was one of those thinkers who opposed the Persian dualistic sects. It seems that the enemies of Mutakallimin used to invest the general disagreement with the Persian doctrines and accused Mutakallimin of being influenced by their ideas. It will be more appropriate to accept Ibn al-Ndim's next argument that Maimun al-Jadah and his son, the founders of the Ismaelites sect, had been affected by the Dyssanyds notions(91) .

The influence of the Persian Gnosticism appeared obviously with Imamites kissanyds, Abu Hashemites and Muktarities as well, particularly in the apocalyptic science, the apotheosis of the Imam and the idea of transmigration adopted by Abu Mansur al-Ujali the Kaiatite. The idea of Muhammedan light in Jafar al-Sadiq, the Muktarites and the later schools of the Shiites obviously amplified Gnostic notions, which were manifested in their occult works and brought their consequences to the political and religious life of the Muslims. On the other hand an opposing movement of Zudites opposed Gnosticism because of their contacts with the Mutazilities particularly Wasil Ibn'tta.

Within the Arabs heritage there is an immense predisposition to receive the messages of Gnosticism. i.e. the existence of Sabianism with its outstanding transcendental and presumptuous notions. The Sabians believed in the spiritual intermediaries. They bestowed on the plants a divine form and apotheosized it. God for them is inaccessible, thus, the only way to know Him is through these intermediaries. The Arabs first contact with this sect was in the Arab peninsula and the north of Iran that is why they are called the Haranites, who came to be known to the Muslims as Sabians. They believed in the existence of the five eternal (God, the soul, the primary matter, the era and the vacuum) while the other existents were temporal. This belief had been taken as an argument for an alleged impact upon the Mutazilities' conviction of the temporality of the world. However, a wide difference seems to be existed between the

Mutazilities' idea which is based on a pure religious dogma set by the Mutazilities in the domain of philosophy solely to vindicate it by a philosophical argument and the Sabianist idea which was obviously built on a pagan basis. Their main ideas, the denial of the prophetic missions and the divinity of the plants, has been opposed by Mutakallimin. Ibn Taymiyya accused al-Jud Ibn Dirham of being a Sabian(92) .

However, this can be ascribed to Ibn Taymiyya's opposing attitude towards the first Qadirites and the Mutakallimin, for the environment of al-Jud and John Ibn Safwan was fully prepared to oppose those Trends.

Obviously the merit of the Gnostic philosophy depends on its ability to satisfy many different mentalities. It helped the collapse of every system of thought and penetrated its dogmas as happened with the Shiite Islamic sects.

With the Indian Gnostic philosophies the encounter took less acute form, due to their different approaches to reality and Deity. However, we find the same principle of a spontaneous interaction with the diacritical Gnosticism. Indian Gnostic ideas penetrated the intellectual Islamic environment slowly, and in an attenuated way in comparison with the Persian Gnosticism.

Arabs came into contact with the Indians during the Jahilia through the trade. This contact was increased after Islam, through the direct recognition of the Indian cultures, and partially through the Persian translations.

The mystery of the Indian beliefs confused this interaction. If we have a quick glance over their dogmas we will recognize to what extent was its irremediable disagreement with the Arab and Islamic thought, i.e. the embodied soul passed this body from boyhood to youth and to old age the soul similarly passed into another body at death. "For the soul there is never birth nor having been once dogs, he never cease to be, he is unborn, eternal ever existing undying and primeval". As a person puts on new garments up old ones, similarly the soul accepts new material bodies(93) . The ideas as it were professed by the saints of the Indian sects, stood as a stumbling block against this interaction, particularly the intellectual Trends of Mutakallimin who tried to dispute with it like the Mutazilitie Mu'mar Ibn "Ubad who travelled to India and arranged discussions with the Indian monks and philosophers.

Al-Shahristani accused Ahmed Ibn Haet of being a believer in the Indian Transmigration. Al-Asfhani mentioned that "al-Azdi has some leaning towards the Indian Samnites(94).

Pines, on the other hand, believed that an undeniable similarity existed between various important points of 'Ilm al-Kalam's notion and the Indian (Nya ta, Vaisheshiska and the Buddhist atomistic doctrines). It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Mutakallimin may have adopted some Indian concepts which may have been transmitted to the Muslims directly from the Indian sources or through some Iranian intermediaries(95) . However, it seems that any postulation of the Indian influence upon Mutakallimin is based on hypothetical premises, because as I pointed out before, the Indian philosophies immersed in the esoteric Gnostic context could not allow this interaction and impact upon the theological life of Ilm al-Kalam which undertook the task of explaining dogmas not to bestow an ambiguous over-view as the Indian notions aimed at. However the Shiites sects seemed to have an appropriate share of positive interaction with the Indian notions. The Kissanites, the Sabaeites, the Bianites, and the Karanites, adopted many Indian ideas on transmigration, rebirth, the incarnation of the divine part on Ali, and the Indian notion of the incarnation. Thus the points of departure between the Muslim thinkers and the Indian notions were the notion of transmigration and the denial of the prophethood, although some historians attributed these ideas to Ahmed Ibn Haet, Abu Muslim

al-Horsani and al Fadl al-Hadthi⁽⁹⁶⁾ .

Mutakallimin strongly opposed the Indian denial of the prophethood. They asserted that man needs a prophet and this became an important part of their researches. The disputes extended to cover a wide discussion in the social sphere about the Brahma's caste system, which, as it seems had a great influence on the Shiite sects particularly the Nasiritis who believed that the doer of the sin will be reborn as a non-Muslims as a kind a divine punishment⁽⁹⁷⁾ .

The same antagonistic position was held by Mutakallimin towards Buddhism on two points the agnostic attitude towards the notion of deity-and the denial of the other world.

Conclusion:

In order to restate my argument, I would like to say that the Greek, Jewish and Christian philosophies appeared into Islam in a clear light. In addition, major works and ideas of these philosophies met acceptance in Muslim's Mentality whether the ideas they adopted and found to be genuine and assimilative with their own ideas, or those which were refuted, not on the basis of their irrationality but on the basis of the religion's beliefs.

The situation is different with the Persian Gnostic and Indian philosophies. These were rejected and opposed on both bases, except among the ambiguous doctrines of 'Ilm al-Kalam where it were intermixed with legends.

It remains to draw a few conclusions from that exposition.

Firstly, the Mutazilities' approach to the non-Islamic philosophies sprang from an autonomous and critical standing. Within this standing they succeeded to promote, not only the relation between dogmas and reason, but also to establish an adequate and an obvious method of constructing a rational view towards these dogmas. Dogmas were the motive which inspire throughout the Mutazilities' ideas, and played an important role which brought about the Mutazilities' participations, and laid down influential consequences on the whole evolution of the Arab-Islamic attitudes of thought.

Secondly, the Mutazilities earnestly tried to emancipate the religious thought from those ideas which seemed to be irreconcilable with reason, and to bridge the wide gap between reason and faith. Nevertheless, the Orientalists like de Boer, MacDonald, de Lacy O'leary accused them of having failed in performing any modifications on philosophy. According to their arguments, they were mere echo of the non-Islamic philosophies mainly the Greek. I devote this article to refute such arguments, because I think that the Mutazilities philosophies in their broadest sense were mainly based on faith, anticipating to find a latent rational aspect on it, not to create a new one. Thus, their ideas differ from the non-Islamic doctrines. And if we presumably admit any elements between their philosophies and the non-Islamic philosophies, this easily can be justified by a sheer plea of the spontaneous influence that can be discovered in the human cultural experience. I believe that they surpassed the Greek, the Christians, the Persians and the Indians conceptions. In spite of the reciprocal elements and ideas that can be found between their philosophies and the non-Islamic philosophies, they still have their own peculiarity of thought which distinguishes their participations. This can be attributed to their own method of discussion and argumentation. Finally, a brief account of the Mutazilities thought leads us to an inevitable conclusion that they performed a unique inquiry into the nature of philosophy where they selected what seemed accessible and justifiable by faith, and refuted what seemed as an abolition of the spiritual aspects of thought.

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