

Kierkegaard and the Ash'arite on Reason and Theology

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Abstract: What is the contribution of the reason to Kierkegaard's and the Ash'arite theology? This is the question dealt with in this article. Neither Kierkegaard's nor the Ash'arite systems of theology is anti-rational, for Kierkegaard regards the contradiction present in the object of faith as absolute rather than logical, suggesting thereby the existential dialectics for understanding this contradiction instead of resolving it. The Ash'arite also hold that one can understand the existence of God through the absolute reason which is not commanded by shar' (religion), yet such understanding leads to no practical outcome. The anti-rationalism option is thus rejected. The other two options here are: supra-rationalism and rationalism. Kierkegaard's theology is supra-rationalism while that of the Ash'arite is rationalism. Faith, Kierkegaard says, is not rational because it will be undecided by abeyance and postponement of the philosophical reasoning, by the approximation of the historical evidences, and due to the lack of confidence in the Bible; however, it is not irrational because the contradiction presents in the understanding of faith rather than in the existence, then it is supra-rational. For the Ash'arite, however, faith can be made rational and justified through the command and guidance of shar' to find some sound reasoning. Reason has no contribution in Kierkegaard's theology neither as a sine qua non nor as a sufficient condition. For the Ash'arite, nonetheless, reason is a merely sine qua non but not a sufficient condition and it is in need of shar'. Reason in Ash'arite both fails to penetrate into all of the premises of the argument and falls short of binding man to accept its knowledge. It is shar' which comes into play to help reason both to improve its objection and to compensate the binding and obligation. [Na'imeh Pur Mohammadi. **Kierkegaard and the Ash'arite on Reason and Theology** . *Academ Arena* 2017;9(8):58-66]. ISSN 1553-992X (print); ISSN 2158-771X (online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/academia>. 7. doi:[10.7537/marsaaj090817.07](https://doi.org/10.7537/marsaaj090817.07).

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1- Kierkegaard on reason and theology

Kierkegaard is critical of producing faith through reasoning. Philosophical and historical arguments and that from Holy Book for producing faith in God are rejected by Kierkegaard.

1-1 The rejection of philosophical argument

Kierkegaard disagrees with any philosophical argument for producing faith in God for the following reasons:

a) The abeyance and postponement of argument

In the course of philosophical and theoretical investigations, there come some breaches and faults may or may not be resolved, to be reexamined in the course of the entire argumentation or in its conclusion alone; how many possible objections irreparable may be caused by philosophical argument! Viewing the fact that a sound assessment of such argument is postponed to future which is thus open to questioning, the pledge faith in God would recurrently be postponed in abeyance. Indeed, there would not come a time for religious obligation and faith. The possibility of questioning in the theoretical argument does not let for our absolute confidence and total faith in its conclusion. Principally, there will be no formative and determining argument (Climacus, 1992, P. 150).

b) The possibility of no-arguments

Were philosophical arguments to prove religious doctrines, they should be arranged in some perfect intellectual system to justify the whole world in one comprehensive intellectual system. Such a system will remain incomplete for good for theoretical investigations never come to end as perfect, and because for a system to be a system it is necessary to be all-inclusive thus an imperfect system cannot be accepted as a system as such. Generally speaking, it makes no sense to speak of or trust in an imperfect system. Were one, for example, to offer an argument from design, one is required to consider all aspects of the issue in one comprehensive theory. The answer to the problem of evil is thus to be embraced as a completion for such an argument, and this makes the argument from design open to the would-be considerations, thus imperfect (Climacus, 1992, P. 10).

c) Either faith in reason or in God

A philosopher, Kierkegaard says, may believe in Christianity either out of mere obedience or by means of intellectual research. When looked from the former perspective, one is not to be worried about one's intellectual research which proves to be some sort of misleading and seduction in one's faith. When,

however, looked from the latter perspective, one is more worried about one's efforts and research than about one's faith (Kierkegaard, 1374, PP. 64-65, 73).

d) Contradiction between intellectual reasoning and choice

An intellectual reasoning would not let for a genuine decision. He who has a decisive reason for something is not free to choose it, for such a choice is determined by that reason. Therefore, those reasons offered for religious doctrines if decisive produce a mental state in man known as passive acceptance, which is some sort of compulsion. However, decision and choice are human activities that maintain freedom. If an individual believes in a faith in terms of a decisive reason, then the honor of faith is with that reason rather than the individual himself; the faith would be the product of that reason rather than the choice of that man and we should praise the reason not him (Climacus, 1985, P. 83).

e) That reason remains neutral as to theism and atheism both

For a theist, Kierkegaard argues, no critical argument may influence on his faith pro or con. For an atheist, arguments pro religious doctrines are not useful, either (Climacus, 1992, P. 26-29). It is taken for granted, in Kierkegaard's view, that no theist has acquired belief in his faith through reason, nor has an atheist become faithless through reason (Climacus, 1992, P. 150).

f) Reason is peculiar to science rather than faith

Religion provides us with the eternal happiness the concern of which demands for one's heartfelt interest and mental attention. Scientific knowledge is peculiar to sciences which demand for reason and objectivity. However, as to the faith, one is expected to deal with it subjectively and spiritually, for it is a matter of subjectivity and spirituality (Climacus, 1992, P. 14, 17, 32).

g) The collective reason but the individual faith

Faith requires one's personal concern and belief, that is to say, one is to personally come to know the truth of a faith in order to have a mental and heartfelt concern for it. The only approach to a truth which is true for an individual alone is the way of subjectivity, because such a truth can only be true and valuable for him and influential on him. Nevertheless, an intellectual reason might not be a truth for an individual, yet can be a truth for the collective reason (Bretall, 1946, P. 5; Climacus, 1992, P. 57).

h) *Petitio principii*

Kierkegaard denies the arguments for God through His works arguing that such an argument is begging the question, i.e. the existence of God which is to be proved has already been presupposed for His works. Wisdom, good, providence may not directly be observed in the things themselves, but it is the case

that we project our ideals onto things. If there are wisdom, good and design in the things, they are no more than the projection of some attributes we considered them for the ideal God (Climacus, 1992, P. 42). Kierkegaard has thus gone to the conclusion that proving God through His works is *petitio principii*.

i) The importance of the ardor of faith

Affection and deep feeling are the most significant aspects of man's faith, that is to say, a man who is devoted to his faith is ready to outlay and risk everything with an absolute concern for it. A faithful individual insists on his religious doctrines ready to sacrifice his life, money, and honor for the sake of them (Climacus, 1985, P. 54, 59, 61; Hannay, 1998, P. 224). This essential qualification of a faithful individual, Kierkegaard argues, is irreconcilable with a theoretical or philosophical certainty. Wherever there is a decisive reason of certainty for believing there is no room left for a faithful to risk nor there is a motive for him to outlay his valuable things for the sake of his faith. A man of intellectual scrutiny fails to see any amount of zeal for making decision or a need in religious obligation. What he has in front of him is totally clear and lucid, and what he does is some kind of bargaining which lets for no enthusiasm and ardor. The significance of the emotive side of religion requires there to be no intellectual or philosophical certainty (Adams, 1374, PP.92-95; Bretall, 1946, P. 229).

1-2 The rejection of historical reasoning

Historical reports are one kind of reasons. History proves that "God-man" used to be there, came into being, and lived for some time. Kierkegaard holds that history fails to work for the authenticity of Christianity giving the following reasons:

a) The estimation and approximation of history

The foremost and firmest certitude that can be derived from historical evidences is no more than mere estimation and approximation; needless to say that there is always a possibility of error and mistake as to something suggested with estimation (Evans, (2006), P. 160; Adams, 1374, P.83). He thus thinks that we cannot believe in God in terms of some approximate reasoning (Climacus, (1985), PP. 26, 106; Climacus, 1992, P. 502; Evans, (2006), 154).

Kierkegaard, in this regards, give the example of a researcher in the history of Christianity who is interested in history establishing his faith on the historical Christ and the Bible. He has conducted significant and documented investigations with which he is satisfied; however, about fourteen days before his death, he comes across a very imperative document in history that may inflict a flaw on his previous investigations. What is this old historian, Kierkegaard asks, to do with his faith? He is either to desist from his faith during his last days of life, or live

his last days hoping vainly that somehow he will resolve the problem. In both cases, he is not certain about his faith (Kierkegaard, 1374, P. 65).

b) That there is no symmetry between historical knowledge and eternal happiness

By his belief in religion, a man tries to establish his eternal happiness on it, feeling an intense anxiety over it. He would feel disappointed, did he realize that such a thing demanding for limitless interest is dependent on a historical matter; this is because a historical matter is too weak to be a base for his eternal happiness. man who is limitlessly interested in his eternal happiness is entitled to have a categorical answer as to such happiness; evidently, history fails to provide him with such an answer (Evans, 1983, P. 251, Afham, 1845, P.439). Accordingly, Kierkegaard says, if we felt a limitless anxiety over something in terms of estimation and approximation, yet wishing to maintain our ardor for it, that would be a ridiculous paradox and we would end in bigotry.

c) That historical evidences do not work pro or con of theism or atheism

Kierkegaard compares a man who lived all his life along with Jesus to a man who could not pay a visit to Jesus even once. The former would not perforce convert into Christianity, nor would the latter necessarily convert from it (Evans, 1983, P. 252-253). There is no relation between historical knowledge and faith in God; i.e. such knowledge is neither necessary nor sufficient for producing faith. This is because man's faith in God depends on his ardor and decision, rather than his level of historical knowledge. One may not convert into Christianity straight from some historical information. The cause that may produce faith for sure has nothing to do with historical evidences but with subjectivity that is will and ardor (Evans, 1983, P. 257; Evans, 2006, P. 159).

d) The impact of faith on historical evidence

It is not history, Kierkegaard argues, to leave an impression on producing the faith, contrarily it is faith that efface doubt producing certainty and belief. Indeed, it calls for man's commitment and faith in order for him to acknowledge any historical event, for as explained earlier, the possibility of error makes it no more than a mere approximation. In its broad sense, therefore, believing in the historical event of Christianity necessitates man's faith. Furthermore, the historical event of Christianity has characteristics beyond human understanding and it is indeed a unique phenomenon. Thus, we may conclude that not only in its broad sense but also in its narrow sense, Christianity depends on man's faith (Evans, 2006, P.266).

e) Either faith in God or in historical evidence

Were an individual's faith a product of historical evidences, the religious faith would be replaced with

them, because it is those evidences that had already changed his life. A man contemporary with Jesus, for example, believes in Jesus, but a Christian of the following generation who had only met the man can merely believe in the man who had let that Christian know of Jesus, rather than in Jesus himself. Kierkegaard has thus concluded that a student can only believe in his teacher, but not in another student. (Evans, 1983, P. 215).

1-3 The rejection of reason from the Bible

In addition to the historical criticisms and inquiries on the life of Jesus, wide scientific examinations can be and is being made as to the New Testament of the Christians. Is it possible to believe in God based on the authenticity of the Bible? There are some reasons why Kierkegaard holds a negative answer.

a) The impossibility of certitude in the authenticity the Bible

The research as to the authenticity of the Bible demands for a decisive certainty in the perfection of it, in the confidence of its authors in it, and the guaranty of divine revelation and inspiration in it. Due to its difficulties, it is a miraculous work to base one's faith in God on the authenticity of the Bible; for were even a word of it open to doubt and suspicion, there would be no room for certainty and disputes begin.

b) That trust or distrust in the Bible has no influence in theism or atheism

Kierkegaard holds the futility of those long and tiresome discussions among the historians and theologians on the Bible. He mentions the so-called "theory of Evangel", namely, "attempts in order to find a reliable foundation from the Bible for man's faith in God" (Evans, 1983, P. 245). He argues that nothing may come out of academic study to deal with man's faith, which is tied up with man's decision and ardor for it. On the other hand, man's distrust in the Bible does not destroy his faith.

c) The role of faith in the acknowledgement of the Bible

Holy books, Kierkegaard argues, fail to provide us with some objective reason for Christianity to produce a faith in God; on the contrary, it is faith in God that helps us with acceptance of the Bible. That is to say, if someone believed in God, consequently one would acknowledge the Bible; one would compensate for any amount of doubt left in it by his religious obligation. It is thus the faith that sanctifies the Bible, not the Bible bringing about man's faith (Evans, 1983, P. 255).

1-4 The incarnation paradox

Jesus claims that he is both God and human, and this is an obvious paradox. Why? God has penetrated into the existence, thus personalized as a human being; because having existence is peculiar to

mankind. This matter is an evidently intellectual contradiction (Climacus, 1985, P. 37; Climacus, 1992, P. 504). The incarnation paradox is twofold. First is that the Eternal has become temporal appearing in the chronology of history, and the second is that a temporal being became eternal i.e. through his relation with the temporal God he became eternal. The incarnation paradox has two sides: 1) God in time 2) man in eternity (Evans, 1983, P. 226; Climacus, 1985, 46).

Is the incarnation paradox a logical or absolute contradiction?

Due to this contradiction, in Kierkegaard's view, a man's faith cannot be rational. Is Kierkegaard's faith anti-rational or supra-rational? The former suggests that faith is contrary to human reason, but the latter is that faith is beyond the capacity of the reason. Both views have proponents from among the commentators of Kierkegaard. Some of them are of the view that Kierkegaard is anti-rational. They say that the contradiction Kierkegaard illustrates of his faith and his so-called "leap of faith" as solution to it does perfectly go with anti-rational fideism. Other commentators hold that Kierkegaard is not really an anti-rationalist and the apparent contradiction he mentioned as to his faith is not a real and logical one, rather it is an absolute contradiction. He considers this paradox beyond the reason rather than contra-reason.

Evans is of the view that despite the challenge of reason made by Kierkegaard's faith, we are entitled to draw the conclusion that this contradiction is not a logical one (Evans, 2006, P.118). Whenever Kierkegaard applies the term "contradiction", he principally means inconsistency, rather than contradiction itself. For example, He says that it was possible for the contemporary people of Jesus to believe in him; however, if the following generations had wanted to believe in him relying on the historical reports, it would have led to a contradiction (Climacus, 1985, P. 101). Obviously, there is no logical contradiction here, it is no more than a mere inconsistency between a subjective matter (faith) and an objective reason (history) (Evans, 2006, P. 121). Somewhere else, Evans says that Kierkegaard's use of the term "contradiction" is similar to Hegel's. Hegel used to construe the opposition as contradiction that could disappear in the synthesis state (Evans, 1983, P. 215). Hence by his "contradiction of faith", Kierkegaard means no logical contradiction lest makes his faith contrary to the reason. Furthermore, Kierkegaard had thoroughly embraced the principles of formal logic. When authoring his *Ethor/or*, for example, Kierkegaard obviously acknowledges the principle of logical contradiction. The dialectic seen in *Ethor/or* is in perfect accordance with the formal

logic. We cannot regard him as a believer in the logical contradiction (Evans, 1983, P. 218).

Kierkegaard works against the rationalistic reason yet offering his rational justifications for the rejection of such reason (Amesbury, 2005, P. 13). Poyman argues that in his disagreement with the objectivity of the epistemology of faith, Kierkegaard has worked according to logic giving his syllogistic reasons:

- In order to find the truth one is to have an objective or subjective approach.

- An objective approach is inappropriate for acquiring a religious truth.

- Conclusion: in order to acquire a religious truth one is to have a subjective approach.

Or

- Historical research is merely approximation and estimation.

- Approximation and estimation are not sufficient for religious faith.

- Conclusion: Historical research is not sufficient for religious faith.

The former argument is a *modus ponendo tollens*, but the latter argument is a conjunctive syllogism. Poyman goes on to ask if somebody can call Kierkegaard a mad poet as did Mackey, despite Kierkegaard's use of intellectual reasoning here (Poyman, 1977, P. 75-93; Poyman, 1984). Evans also holds that in his rejection of Hegel who had confined truth to the scientific and intellectual truth, Kierkegaard makes use of the same argument used by Hegel himself (Hannay, 1998, P. 103).

Evans adds to Poyman's point that there are a set of reasons in Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* for proving religious doctrines through faith:

- a) A divine source for belief in Christianity.

There are some issues one cannot expect human reason to invent them. One of such issues is the belief in Christianity. Human reason fails to invent or produce a belief in Christianity. A belief in Christianity does thus require its way from the faith.

- b) Incarnation, a super-natural doctrine

It is evidently clear that the incarnation doctrine could not have come out of human mind; no man could ever occur to him that God has become human or a human being become God. This doctrine has thus some super-natural source; hence, the incarnation doctrine has its source from the faith.

- c) An evidence from the atheism of the atheists

Atheists and the faithless do not acknowledge Christianity particularly the theory of incarnation, arguing that the theory of "God-man" is a self-contradictory doctrine. This atheism and denial is an evidence for the fact that Christianity is of a divine source rather than some intellectual invention. The

belief in Christianity and particularly incarnation has its source from the faith.

In addition to these three reasons and in his review of Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*, Evans provides us with further reasons all of which are in the course of establishing religious doctrines through the way of one's faith (Evans, 2006, P. 135-140).

Evans goes to side with those commentators who regard Kierkegaard's irrationalism as supra-rationalism. Kierkegaard considers the contradiction of faith as an absolute rather than logical one. An absolute contradiction is not a relative one, it has no limit, and having no limit means that it is not a logical contradiction; no reason can fathom or efface it. Thus, an indecipherable mystery determines the limits of reason showing there to be many things that cannot be thought about or known. Kierkegaard considers the concept of "God-man" as such a contradiction; a contradiction that is the limit of our reason and our reason is not qualified to figure it out (Evans, 1983, PP. 217-224). The phrase of "absolute contradiction" used to be used by Kierkegaard himself instead of logical, apparent, verbal, or relative contradiction (Climacus, 1985, P.46). Kierkegaard does not say that "God-man" is a contradiction, rather he says that "God-man" is an absolute or unique contradiction (Evans, 2006, P. 122; Climacus, 1992, P. 182). Jesus is both perfectly a man and perfectly a God. All attempts to remove such contradiction imply that one comes to consider it objective despite the impossibility of its objectivity. Were it considered objective, the belief in it would decline to some foolish effort. Due to its failure to understand the absolute contradiction of "God-Man", the reason is tempted to announce it senseless and absurd arrogantly debasing and abolishing it altogether (Evans, 1983, P. 238). The reason, however, is qualified to understand that it cannot understand things beyond its capacity, namely, it is able to realize its limits. At this point, where the reason realizes its limit, the faith becomes accessible (Climacus, 1992, P. 568; Climacus, 1985, P. 104; Evans, 2006, PP. 125-129).

By such an account of Kierkegaard, Evans considers his fideism supra-rational, rather than anti-rational. Unintelligible, in Kierkegaard's point of view, is different from meaningless; faith is unintelligible but not meaningless. In addition, the reason may embrace the unintelligible but not the meaningless (Climacus, 1992, P. 504; Evans, 1998, P. 153).

Is incarnation paradox a contradiction in understanding or in *being*?

Kierkegaard holds that principally one cannot say that there is a contradiction in the being of

something, rather it may happen in our understanding. The "God-man" paradox is two-folded: one is that an eternal being becomes temporal (the being of Jesus), and another side is that a temporal being becomes eternal (that man in his relation with the Eternal God becomes an eternal being); it's the case of both eternity and temporality. Eternity and temporality are in the sphere of being rather than thought (Climacus, 1992, P. 568; Evans, 1983, PP. 209-211). As a result, although we may as temporal beings come to think of the eternal being regarding it a contradiction, there is no contradiction in the position of being.

2- The Ash'arite on the reason and theology

The reason is able to understand the existence of God and His attributes. It can, for example, reach the conclusion that God exists, is the author of universe, is eternal and One through the argument of *Hudūth* (temporal creation). The reasoning from the qualifications of temporality and eternity thus inferring the existence of God can be sound and valid. It is then possible for the natural reason before the entrance of to establish the existence of God, His attributes such as might, justice, and wisdom in terms of temporal creation of universe (Ibn fūrak, 1425, P.30; Baghdadi, 1401, PP24-31; Shahristāni, 1295, V.1, P.115). This knowledge and understanding is not the faith.

2-1 The approach of the non-commanded reason

Firstly, the reason often suffers from neglect, errors, and forgetfulness. The reason of the majority of people does not seek to know God; preoccupied by the worldly transient issues many of them overlook issues such as God and the reference of reason to Him. Therefore, the reason is in an acute need of warnings of shar' to guide us to the issue of God (Juweini, 1422, P.56, Juweini,1416, P.8).

Secondly, the reason remains merely in the boundary of theoretical knowledge failing to engage in the sphere of practical obligation. It cannot make anything incumbent on us (30; Sābiq Ṣiqilli,2008, PP.142-144; Juweini,1422, PP. 184-204). Therefore, the intellectual reasoning does not issue any judgment as to the existence of God leaving us in limbo and suspension. The theoretical knowledge seemingly has no practical outcome. The reason cannot withdraw the truth acknowledged heartily, verbally or practically from men (Ibn fūrak, 1425, P. 31; Juweini,1422, P. 57; Bāqillāni, 1407, P. 35).

That the understanding of reason is with error and forgetfulness and we are not obliged to accept it is one side of the issue. The other side is that the essence of faith includes the nature of command and law of shar'. Faith and atheism are obedience and disobedience of God that imply there to be God's command to be obeyed or disobeyed. Where there is no command it makes no sense there to be obedience

or disobedience thus faith or atheism. Before his beginning to practice command, the faith of a wise man may not be embraced as the faith and accordingly he does not deserve a reward from God for his faith, this is from one side. And from another side, before prophets being sent, if a man went astray doing wrong despite the signs of God in the universe, he should not be called an infidel or wrong-doer thus does not deserve Hellfire for his faithlessness. Before prophets being sent and the religious call, faith is not an obligation nor is it a prohibition (Baghdādi, 1401, P.14-25; Bāqillāni, 1407, P. 32-39), for where there is no command it make no sense to obey or disobey thus faith and atheism.

The result of the two different aspects of the issue, the non-obligatory of what is understood by the reason from one side and that the command on faith is a shar'ī one from another side, implies the difference between the approach of faith from that of non-commanded reason or the absolute reason. The outcome, however, of intellectual understanding is that it is not anti-rational thus reason gives permission to practice shar' and the obligation of people to believe in God. As a result, faith is not anti-rational, for it is not the case that theism is fully absurd or is an unintelligible illusion to be fathomed merely by faith.

2-2 The entrance of shar' and prophetic call

When prophets introduce shar', the religious call begins. Prophets perform miracles to prove the authenticity of their call. Ash'ari says: "Miracles establish the authenticity of the prophetic call, and those who withdraw their belief from the faith deserve punishment. When a prophet performs a miracle the authenticity of his call is established and his people are obliged to acknowledge and obey him." (Ash'ari, n.d., P. 43; Baghdādi, 1401, P.173) Does he mean that miracles intellectually and logically prove the authenticity of prophetic call so that the reason fails to deny it?

Ash'ari says: "miracles are in no need of intellectual argument. It is our hearts addressed by miracles to acknowledge them. Miracles apply our hearts which are thus motivated by extraordinary practices to acknowledge the authenticity of prophets." (Ash'ari, n.d., P. 32-52) Juweini (Juweini, 1416, PP.273-280; Juweini, 1422, PP. 225-226; Juweini, 1407, P. 196), Nasafi (Nasafi, 1990, V.1, PP. 31-32), and Taftāzāni (Taftāzāni, n.d., P. 208) have all tried to explain the meaning of Ash'ari: the denotation of miracles that a prophet's call is authentic is not like the denotation of intellectual reasoning as to their meanings. Miracles, in our view, do not have the perfect authority over the reason leaving for it to hesitate, as did some contemporary people of prophets who despite miracles went faithless. This shows that miracles denote otherwise. They fulfill their

denotations only for those who by some internal sense are certain that such an extraordinary action is beyond human will rather it is the product of the absolute might and will of some supra-human being who can do what he wanted. Miracles can merely prepare for the grounds of that internal certainty.

When shar' comes into play and a man has already become certain psychologically, man is invited to think about God. The first thing people are commanded to think about after the miracles is to see the signs of God in order to conclude the existence of God and have faith in Him (Ash'ari, n.d., P.46). Acquisition of knowing God does not remain in the frame of the religious call, rather it is commands us to have faith in it and withdraw from its denial. shar' admires those who go after knowing God considering their great rewards, but blame those who withdraw from it considering punishment for them. The second command given by shar' is faith and our profession that there is God (Ibn fūrak, 1425, PP.271,250,285,292-293; Baghdādi, 1401, PP.25,31; Juweini, 1360, P.120; Bāqillāni, 1407, P.22). the Ash'arite, the necessary course of theoretical knowing God comes from shar', they resort to some verses and traditions including: "نبيئت حتى معذبين كما و" "رسولا "We do not punish until we sent a prophet" (Esra', 15), "يحي كيف الله رحمة آثار الى فانظر" "موتها بعد الأرض يتفكر لم و لحييه بين لأكها لمن ويل" (Rūm,50), "ففيها "Woe to him who spoke it but did not think about it" (Fakhr Razi, 1405, V.9, P.459). They consider any body addressed by the religious call and the command of shar' to acquire the theoretical knowledge of God as soon as he comes of age (Juweini, 1416, P.25, Bāqillāni,1407, P.29).

Because all of us are subject to the command of acquiring knowing God, there will be no room for following others as to faith (Ibn fūrak, 1425, PP.5,251-252; Ash'ari, 1400, P.2; Baghdadi, 1401, PP.255). The shar' law as to those who have their faith through mere imitation is that because of their belief in the truth, they are not *mushrik* (polytheist) or *kafir* (infidel), because infidelity and truth are irreconcilable. However, they do not deserve to be called believers. We can only ask forgiveness for them from God because they are not *mushrik* or *kafir* (Baghdadi, 1401, PP.255,248-249). Accordingly, we have no term of "the faithful imitator", for such a person has violated the first necessary command as to knowing God.

2-3 The approach of commanded reason

It is well explained by Abdurrahmān Badawi that the Ash'arite argument for the existence of God differs drastically from that of the Mu'tazelite. There is not a vestige of Hellenic thought, intellectual line of

reasoning, or natural theology in it, rather it is non-abstract and dependant on common sense. In addition to all these, one may see many phrases of the Qur'an and traditions from the premises to the conclusions (Badawi,1374, PP.571-581). Despite his elucidation, Badawi does not explain why it is so.

The commanded confirmer and awakening reason is with shar' borrowing its course of reasoning from shar'. Hence, verses of the Qur'an from the premises to the conclusion and the arguments are non-philosophical and non-abstract (Ash'ari, n. d., PP.33-38; Bāqillāni, 1407, PP.33-37). Ash'ari has well explained the course of this guidance and awakening of the reason to find the reasoning by shar'. Having performed a miracle thus the authenticity of his call established, a prophet invites people to think over the temporal creation of man and the world, that they are to find out the created nature of themselves and the world thus offering reasons for the existence of the author of things. A report from the Prophet suggests that this world including all its parts were they not existed in the first place, then they came into being. Therefore, they have an author and maker who has already been there from eternity needing not to come into being. As a result in Ash'ari's point of view, the argument of temporal creation of man and the world which proves there to be a creator, is regarded by shar' as an effort of the reason (Ash'ari, n. d., PP.51-62,87-88). It is at this point that Ash'ari raise a severe criticism of the way of the philosophers and Qadarites (free-willers and libertarians) supposedly considering them innovators and perverted. They prove the existence of God through substances and their accidents; they also necessitate the recognition of many things that are too difficult to be known thus invalidating the argument for the existence of God. Having been provided with substances, accidents, that accidents cannot stand on their own by themselves, that substances are not free from accidents, that infinite regress is impossible for the accidents, and the like, the philosophers are in no need of prophets and by their own natural reason they can reach the whole knowledge. Such an approach will surely annul shar'. Ash'ari goes on to say that, reports from prophets have clearer simpler and more evident suggestion that there is a God demanding not any of those complicated unreachable premises. This is why our pious preceding masters were strongly determined to collect the traditions of holy Prophet. They used to make lots of hard efforts longing even to acquire a small word of holy Prophet. We believe that traditions of holy Prophet show us the way to knowing God, and this is why God Almighty told holy Prophet "Now you have fulfilled your mission, or he himself said: "I am leaving you while I am certain that you have already acquired knowledge as you can distinguish

day from night." If we were to know the existence of God through some philosophical reasons that necessitate many issues known, neither God nor holy Prophet could be sure about the acquisition of such knowledge. (Ash'ari, n. d., PP. 51-61)

2-4 The argument from the temporal creation of the world (*Hudūth*)

As it was said earlier, the Ash'arite hold that shar' teaches us the way of establishing the author of the world through temporal creation of the world, thus the commanded reason is to go after ways which prove the existence of the creator.

a) The temporal creation of man and his states

When considering the process of his creation, man realizes that he has passed through different phases beginning from the state of embryo to adulthood, constantly changing from a state to another. It is evident that he himself could not create himself doing all this. As a result, he would find out that the Almighty Omniscient Creator created him. (Ash'ari,1408, PP.18-19; Shahristāni,1295, V.1, PP.120-122)

b) The creation of substances and their accidents

This world is composed of substances and accidents. Substances are not free from accidents. The latter are created hence the former are so created, as a result, the whole world is created. Therefore, there must be a creator called God Who is eternal. Bāqillāni and Juweini have both studied this argument in details from the premises to the conclusion. (Ash'ari, n. d., P.33, Ibn fūrak, 1425, PP.36-37, Bāqillāni, 1407, P.29; Bāqillāni, n. d., P.34; Juweini, 1416, PP.39-51; Juweini,1407, PP.90-91, Juweini, 1360, PP.32-150; Juweini,1422, PP.127-129)

c) That each substance has its peculiar accidents is something created

Each substance has its peculiar accidents and to assign some accidents to a substance is something created which is in need of a being to create it and to assign those accidents to it; such a being is God. (Bāqillāni, PP.45)

d) That some things are created before some other things itself is temporally created

It is the case that some of the things were created prior to the creation of other things which may come into being afterwards. Such priority and posteriority are themselves temporally created in need of a being to create them making some of them prior but others posterior. Such a being is God. (Bāqillāni, 1407, P.21; Bāqillāni, n. d., P.45; Juweini, 1360, P.363)

All these reasons are offered by the Ash'arite under the title of the temporal creation of the world and the argument from creation. (Ash'ari, n. d., P.25; Baghdādi, 1401, PP.14, 33-72). The approach of commanded reason is no more than one reason for the

establishment of the existence of God from creating of the world. Shar‘ itself shows us how to accomplish this argument. It can be said that the approach and the method of the argument comes from shar‘ but the achievement are provided by the reason.

3- Comparison and assessment

3-1 The rejection of the Ash‘arite and Kierkegaard’s anti-rationalism.

Faith, in the Ash‘arite and Kierkegaard’s view, is not anti-rational. Kierkegaard holds that the contradiction in the object of faith can at best be absolute, not logical, suggesting the existential dialectic for understanding it rather than its removal. The Ash‘arite also hold that the absolute or non-commanded reason is able to understand the existence of God, though such understanding has not some practical outcomes.

3-2 Kierkegaard’s supra-rationalism and the Ash‘arite rationalism

Due to the abeyance and postponement of philosophical reasons, and the estimation and approximation of historical evidences and the lack of authenticity of the Bible, Kierkegaard’s faith is not rational, i.e. because of its absolute contradiction, it is supra-rational. The Ash‘arite faith, however, can be made logical and justified through the command and guidance of shar‘, i.e. it can be made rational. It can thus be concluded that rationality in Kierkegaard’s faith is neither possible nor desirable, however in the Ash‘arite’s it is both possible and commanded.

3-3 The Ash‘arite and Kierkegaard’s theology and reason

The reason plays no part in Kierkegaard’s theology, neither as sine qua non nor as a sufficient condition. In the Ash‘arite’s, however, it is a sine qua non but not sufficient for it necessitates shar‘. Kierkegaard holds that the reason does not stand against the human existential issues that require existential relations, nor does it contradict spiritual issues such as Christology. He considers them beyond reason leaving them with the existential understanding that can be practical through existential dialectic. In its encounter with the absolute contradiction of “God-man”, Kierkegaard’s reason recognizes its boundaries, cuts its coat according to its cloth, and does not stand against his faith as a logical paradox. However, the reason for the Ash‘arite has meaning in theology, though one is not obliged to acknowledge it. The reason is able to understand the existence of God, nonetheless it is not qualified to give us assent from one side, and the nature of theological issues, the Ash‘arites say, is of the command category and verdict, from another side. Surely, that which is unable to provide assent cannot work for something whose essence is command and verdict. As a result,

the Ash‘arite would conclude that despite its meaning in theology, the reason still requires shar‘ which in its turn makes up for the deficiency of our reason. Shar‘ plays the role of a guide for the reason as to the premises and compensate the command and verdict.

Therefore, Kierkegaard’s view differs from the Ash‘arites as to the intellectual theology. Kierkegaard argues that did the reason come into play in scene of the theology, it could eliminate the apparent contradiction therein; it will change the subject matter of theology thus no more unintelligible. The reason hence denies its meaning in theology arguing for a supra-rational or revealed theology. The Ash‘arite, nonetheless, do agree with the intellectual theology regarding the role of the reason positive for theology, yet they say that the inadequacies of our reason both in creation and legislation are to be made up for by the traditional theology.

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