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## **Philosophical Rationalism in Shia Kalam\***

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### **Abstract**

*One important question that the emergence of philosophical or rational Kalam has raised is what rationalism in the so-called Kalami (theological) schools actually means. This paper investigates the answers to the aforementioned question in Shi'a Kalam. Also, we have a comparative look at the philosophical Kalam and the rational one, concluding the identity of Shi'a Kalam with Shi'a philosophy. In this work, we have referred to three types of rationalism: personal, Vahmi (imaginal), and Hikmi (philosophical) rationalism. In short, our answer to the above question would be that, Shi'a Kalam – specially in Khaje Nasir's works – is based on Hikmah (philosophy), and so, rationalism in this school does not refer but to this approach. This type of rationalism is in contrast to the personal or Vahmi rationalism. As a matter of fact, Those Mutakalims (theologians), who use Hikmi rationalism, don't try to criticize philosophy or elicit from it; they just try to employ the principles, foundations, and results of Hikmah to explain, justify, and defend their religious beliefs.*

**Keywords:** *Hikmi; rationalism; Kalam; philosophical; Shi'a*

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### **Introduction**

In philosophical literature, the terms ‘philosophical’ and ‘rational’ were often used interchangeably, and is so often the case at the time being. However, it is a philosophical problem itself, whether these two terms convey the same meaning or not, specially, when they are used to describe two different terms, namely theology and *Kalam*. This puts their identity, more than before, under question mark.

There are actually a lot of questions about the relation of *Kalam* with philosophy, and also the relation of *Kalam* with reason. Some of these questions are as follow:

1. *What is the rational Kalam and how does it differ from philosophical Kalam?*
2. *When and by whom did Islamic Kalam obtain a philosophical structure and a rational basis?*
3. *Whether Kalam and philosophy are compatible?*

Does Islam in presenting and defending its teachings accept the rational or philosophical approaches?

In this paper, we will focus on the structure of Shi’a *Kalam*, and we investigate see to what extent this *Kalami* (theological) school has the philosophical and rational characteristics. We try to show, in this respect, how it differs from or resembles other *Kalami* schools, namely *Mu’tazila* and *Asha’ira*, and also to see when and by whom this rationalizing of *Kalam* began and ended.

To answer the aforementioned questions, the meanings of the terms Reason and Philosophical Schools should be clarified. In addition, the historical aspects of *Kalami* schools, great *Mutakalims* (theologians) and their outstanding role in creation or developing of these schools are to be considered as pre-requisites of our discussion.

### **Rational Approaches in the Beginning of *Kalam***

*Kalam*, as narrated by Al-Shahrastani, was mostly formed by the *Mu’tazila*, who were contemporaneous to Abbasid. This happened especially in the time of Ma’moun, in the form of combining philosophers’ approaches with discussions concerning beliefs. It was mainly because of the challenges they confronted through Logic introduced by philosophers (Al-Shahrastani, 1468). In contrast, Ibn Khaldun believes that, there were *Asha’ira* who formed the *Kalam*. He states: *Ashairi Kalam* has two approaches, one applied by the predecessor scientists and one that is exercised by those who came after. In the second approach, lots of discussions are elicited from philosophers’ physics, divinity, and Logic (Ibn Khaldun, 1982).

It is important to find out the philosophical approach of the precedent *Mu’tazila* and the later *Asha’ira*, in addition to what they learned from the philosophers and applied to their work. To some extent, the answer could be found in the analysis presented by Wolfson. He believes that the *Mu’tazili Kalam* has had two periods, non-philosophical period, which was from the 80 AH till the beginning of the translation movement (second century), and the

philosophical period, which lasted from the second half of the second century to the end of their intellectual life (Wolfson, 1368 AH(solar)). The philosophical *Mu'tazila*, as Wolfson narrates, would use deduction and analogical reasoning while the non-philosophical ones were just familiar with the old way of analogy, i.e. the method used in the doctrinal discussions in the early times of Islam.

The remaining part of the answer may be found, by looking back to the history of *Ashari Kalam*. This means centuries after *Mu'tazila* i.e. beginning of the fourth century (300AH), namely the time Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (260-334AH) separated from *Mu'tazila* and declared his new doctrines – which had bases on the *Hadithi* and jurisprudential *Sunnah*. These doctrines, through which he founded the *Ashari* School, were naturally in contrast to those of *Mu'tazila*.

One of his important doctrines was opposition with the so-called *Mu'tazeli* rationalism and philosophical reasoning. Clearly, he was against deductive and analogical reasoning. After Abolhasan Alashari, we should name Abu Bakr al-Bbaqellani (430AH), Abu Hamed al-Ghazali(505AH) and Fakhr Razi (606AH) as the greatest *Ashari* thinkers whose contributions had lasting and strong effects on the evolution, development, and integrity of the *Ashari* school.

As mentioned before, *Mu'tazila* used rationalism and philosophical approaches to explain their beliefs. *Asha'ira*, in their turn, did not basically recognize these methods. This opposition to *Mu'tazili* scientists and naturally to philosophers would cost *Asha'ira* a lot, i.e. they were accused of opposing the reason. The approaches used by *Mu'tazila* and philosophers were clearly conformed to reasoning, but the question is, Whether *Asha'ira* were able to ignore reason completely in their opposition to *Mu'tazila* and philosophers? The answer to this question could be found through investigating the viewpoint of *Asha'ira* toward reason and comparing it with that of *Mu'tazila* and philosophers.

### **Individual Rationalism**

*Mu'tazila*, in their second period of existence, turned to translated philosophical books. Of course this did not mean that they accepted all the materials in those books. In fact, they even did not have a unique method of using these texts. About the new analogical methods, developed by *Mu'tazila*, Wolfson believes, technically, it was similar to the old analogical method but would differ from it in two aspects: firstly, in using philosophical data instead of data from religious texts, and secondly in its extended and varied usages (Wolfson, 1368 AH (solar)). In other words, the old form of analogy would use religious data in the form of similarity, but the new analogy to a great extent would use the philosophical findings. In addition to similarity, it would employ the equality analogy, in which the equality of both sides of the analogy is implied; and also similarity analogy in which the similarity of both sides of the analogy is implied. They used lots of philosophical ideas in their analogies and metaphors and put forth discussions about the creation of the world and the human position in it, free will, God and his attributes , religion and its

realm, resurrection and the world after death and so on. These can be seen as bases for further theological discussions among *Mu'tazila* of next generations, other *Kalami* schools like *Asha'ria* and even philosophers through introducing new philosophical issues.

Bu Emran says: The great *Mu'tazila* thinkers contemporary to Abbasid, specially Abu al-Huzail, *Nazzam*, and *Jahiz*, know Greek philosophers and if necessary would use their teachings in their arguments. But clearly, they would just pay attention to ideas that were compatible and consistent with Quranic teachings (Bu Emran, 1382 Ah (solar)). The point here is that, the consistency with Quran, is an undoubtable principle which later on *Asha'ira* also respected to, so what would be the difference between *Mu'tazila* and *Ashairi* in adhering to this rule? Somewhere else in his book, *Le Problem de la Liberte Humaine dans Pensee Musulmane: Solution Mutazilite*, he refers to a point that may be seen as an answer to the aforementioned question. Looking at the relation of reason and religion from *Mu'tazila* perspective, he introduces three methodological stages regarding this issue and states: In the first stage, they base religion upon reason in order to understand it well. In the second stage however, they recognize complete consistency between the religion and reason. Thirdly – should be a contradiction between religion and reason – reason is prioritised over religion (ibid). All these three components in *Mu'tazili* thought would reveal to us what consistency of rational or philosophical views with Qura'nic teachings by them means. Thus, *Mu'tazila* – though in different levels – would believe that, the reason is the only means of solving the religious problems and so, explanation and interpretation of the religion seem to be inevitable.

Iqbal Lahuri, though he had anti-*Mutazili* thoughts, describes *Mu'tazili* rationalism as: *Mu'tazila* would regard religion as a set of Beliefs and would consider it to be a system of logical images so they failed to understand the impossibility of the complete independence of the reason from objective experience – both in scientific or religious knowledge (Iqbal, 1300 AH). As a matter of fact he means that they ignored to look at the world from experimental point of view – which was the message of the holy Quran. In other words, they did not realized the importance of real objects in thinking and their attempts for finding the truth were just limited to intellectual tools.

*Mu'tazili* rationalism and their extreme usage of philosophy were so high that, Mamu'n, the Abbasid Caliphate, who was affected by *Mu'tazili* teachings, supported them, publicized their ideas and having thought of himself as a thinker of this school, entered religious discussions and even had dreams about concerning the mentioned issues.

His philosophical dreams are recorded in various historical books and as Dimitry Gutas says: They are consistent to his support for *Mu'tazila* and using religion to justify his dictatorship ( Gutas, 1380). In one of his dreams, having seen Aristotle, Mamuon asks him about the best phrase. Aristotle replies the saying which is correct based on personal judgment. When he asks about other good issues, Aristotle answer would be the issues in which there is no fear about their consequences (Nobakht, 1964). Seeing the best thing to do as what is based on one's personal judgment and considering the best saying as what

about its consequences one has no fear, at the first place, historically speaking, justifies Mamuon's behavior himself however, to a great extent, reveals the *Mu'tazili* way of thinking in which the individual rationality is the only criterion for knowledge and judgment. The interesting point in this story is that Mamuon is going to make his words those of Aristotle, as if philosophers would believe in the same way he believed.

However, those philosophers, specially Muslim ones, who appeared after the first *Mu'tazila* and in the third century, defined rationality differently and by no means would consider one's personal idea the same as the view of reason. Muslim philosophers would think of reason as the best criterion for evaluating the sayings and the truth and also the way of understanding metaphysical concepts and getting to know trans-physical worlds. It had the same value and weight among all philosophers and its rules did not differ from one philosopher to another in contrast to the personal rationality, in which one's understanding sits in place of rationality. It should be mentioned that this type of personal rationalism which is to be considered necessary did not always contradict philosophical rationalism though it did not try to obey philosophical rules. *Mu'tazila*, as said before, would commit themselves to logical methods, however, in realizing the real objects and the meanings of religious statements, they solely would rely on their personal understanding which naturally would differ from one person to another and there was no unique criterion for it. This way of extremely relying on personal reasoning is one of the most important reasons that prevented them from building a successful philosophical system.

#### **Personal Understanding and *Vahmi* Perception in *Kalam***

From the time, When Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari withdrew himself from the *Mu'tazili* school (300AH) and declared his understanding from Islamic doctrines, it happened to appear a new type of religion understanding, which was developed later on by great scholars of *Asha'ira*. Montgomery Watt calls this method 'The subjection of reason to revelation and invalidity of rational understanding (Watt, 1370, 97).

Looking from special *Asha'ira* point of view at Islamic beliefs like *Iman bi la Kaif* (Faith with no quality), and the theory of *Kasb – kasb means to obtain* – in which belief sits higher than reason, will give us a clear image of the role of reason in *Asha'I'ra's* explanation of the religious beliefs. But as Saeed Shaikh says: it is not true to imagine that all what is found in *Ashari* school is derived from Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (Shaikh, 1369). He continues Thoughts similar to that of Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari would exist indistinctly before his time and even at his time but separately and without any connection to him in Spain (*Zaheri* school), Egypt ( *Tahavi* school) and Samarqand( *Matoridi* school). Anyway, just some time later, due to various reasons, *Ashari* school dominated all other schools, and having been able to collect and converge all similar ideas, blossomed and gained reputation (Ibid).

*Mu'tazila* when confronted an inconsistency between a religious statement and that of reason, would use interpretation (*Ta'vil*) and end up prioritizing reason over religion while *Asha'ira* would do the opposite. This is the first

and most fundamental difference and actually the root of the difference between these two schools. However this principle changed a lot from Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari's time to that of Ghazali and Fakhr Razi, namely although Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari rejected directly the use of interpretation (*Ta'vil*), Ghazali in his *Ghanoon al-Tavil* offers some rules for true *Ta'vil* and Fakhr Razi with his rational exegesis of Quran i.e. *Tafsir Kabir* went further than Ghazali in recognizing interpretation. However, the principles of Transcendence (*Tanzih*), Faith without quality (*Iman Bi la kaif*) and the opposition with philosophical rationalism was still present in their work especially in Ghazali's.

In his book, Saeed Shaikh declares: Ghazali shows clearly that even in the cases the philosophers reached a correct result which was consistent with the deterministic religious beliefs, their arguments had been insufficient, unorganized and unsatisfying (Shaikh, 1369).

He refers to issues like in-corporeality and causality of God, the dependency of the world in its creation and its survival to God, the incorporeality of the soul and its survival, but he does not mention what other better solid reasons Al-Ghazali – having rejected those of philosophers – for these issues and other religious beliefs has offered. The truth, however, is that Al-Ghazali apparently did not have any stronger arguments for the aforementioned issues than the philosophers. Even in some of his works, he has been obliged to repeat the very philosophical arguments – of course with a weaker explanation.

As Henry Corbin says:

*Al-Ghazali's self-contradiction is especially visible when he believes in inability of reason in reaching certainty, in spite of the fact that, he is sure, he can at least ruin philosophers certainties through rational polemics. He even tried extensively to refute philosophers' certainties for the existence of incorporeal substances while he himself somewhere else needed to prove the incorporeality and survival of the soul (Corbin, 1380).*

We see the same thing in Fakhr Razi's dealing with ideas of philosophers though he had deeper reflections in their work and offered more accurate reviews. He, however, was not as successful in establishing new ideas to replace those of philosophers as Al-Ghazali was.

Clearly, such commitment to reason may not be called rationalism, and considering early *Ashari* scholars as rationalists, seems not to be true. How about *Mutakalims* like Al-Ghazali and Fakhr Razi, knowing that they both have taken pride in being rationalists? Al-Ghazali in his *Makatib* says: 'In rational issues I employ rational arguments and in religious issues I have Quran and I don't necessarily accept the opinions of the great scholars (Al-Ghazali, 1362).

Fakhr al-Razi in the introduction of his *Almabahith Almashreghia* basically refers to his method as rational investigation of the former scientists' ideas and their critiques (Fakhr al-Razi, 1209). In this regard, it is possible to compare both methods by distinguishing the evaluation, acceptance and

creation phases of rationalism in each scholar's work and determining the weight of each of the three above mentioned characteristics in their views. If one asks about the cornerstone of this kind of rationalism, the answer would be personal rationalism and not at all, a philosophical or logical system. In this aspect, as in *Mu'tazila*, we face a personal understanding with the difference that in *Mu'tazila* case, in an inconsistency occurred between religion and reason, they would take the side of reason and would interpret (*Ta'vil*) the religion. *Asha'ira* in turn would take the side of religion and limit the role of reason with ideas like Faith without quality (*Iman bi la Keif*).

If we want(ed) to discuss about function of reason, it would be a wide issue, however, the certain thing is that the three mentioned roles i.e. evaluation, acceptance, and creation shall by no means be denied though in different so-called rational groups different levels of them can be observed. Also, it should be noticed that in every rational framework, the presence of each of the three characteristics in addition to a harmonious and logical system that could organize them is necessary. So if in a so-called rational movement there is just one or two of these characteristics or exist all three but without a compatible and logical structure among them, it should not be considered a completely rational system. The truth is, in the former and latter *Asha'ira's* approach toward reason, is the fact that we just see the first characteristic of rationalism, i.e. evaluation and *Asha'ira* actually ignored many subjects in which rational acceptance or creation i.e. introducing new ideas was expected. Even Al-Ghazali and Fakhr al-Razi who were the most rationalists of *Asha'ira* lacked the aforementioned qualities and the very issue i.e. lack of the second and third characteristics may explain why they failed to establish an independent school of Kalam, philosophy or mysticism despite their considerable works e.g. their thoughts and writings, concerning them.

### **Emergence of Philosophical Kalam**

It was Abu Yousof Ishaq Kendi (261AH) who proposed philosophy for the first time in the Islamic world. Later on Abu Nasr Farabi (339AH) shaped the foundation of philosophy. Contemporary to Farabi i.e. fourth century, Abu Ishagh Ibn NoBakht wrote his important book called *Al-Yaqut fi Ilm al-Kalam* in 340AH, as Iqbal Ashtiani says. It should be mentioned that *Al-Yaqut* is structurally totally different with the work of its contemporary and former scholars and later became a model for the books like *Almohassal* by Fakhr al-Razi and *Tajrid al-Itiqad* by Khaje Nasir Tusi.

*Alyaghut*, in the first chapter, discusses issues related to the existence: concepts like substance, accidents, motion, tranquility, incidence, eternity, cause and effect, existence, non-existence, necessary being and contingent are introduced in a way to be used as pre-requisites for getting to know God – pre-requisites through which by presenting the necessity and contingency argument, it proves God's existence. In fact, the approaches he used in *Alyaghut*, has caused doubts about the exact time in which he lived. Some knew him to be contemporary to Khaje Nasir, as his methodology in *Alyaghut* was so similar to that of Khaje Nasir or latter *Mutakallimun*. However, except

Iqbal Ashtiani, others like Henry Corbin, Fuad Sezgin and Crbur Kelman have acknowledged that he had lived in the fourth century (Dibaji, 1384).

As a matter of fact, the similarity between his method and that of Khaje Nasir can be seen as the influence he had on Khaje Nasir and not the opposite. Henry Corbin is so sure about the priority of Ibn Nubakht to Khaje Nasir and his philosophical thoughts that believes him to be the first one who organized the Islamic philosophy (Corbin, 1970).

In his book, Abu Eshagh Nobakhti discusses knowledge of God not only using usual *Kalami* methods e.g. *Shukr Mun'em*, but also through philosophical approaches e.g. through discussing issues like the need of creatures to a cause, the characteristics of this need to a cause, concepts of contingency and incidence, rejecting the incorporeality of God and its being substance or in the place, and so on. This method of argumentation to some extent has been also used to prove the rational necessity of *Imama* – the belief that the A'immah or Imâms are the true Caliphs or rightful successors of the holy prophet Muhammad.

In the second part of the book, the starting point of philosophical thinking can be therefore considered as basing the issues like justice, prophecy, *Isma* – immunity from sin and error–, *Imama* and resurrection on the true knowledge of God while the true understanding of God is in turn based on our true understanding of existence i.e. Ontology. This model of philosophizing *Kalam* in the book *Tajrid al Itiqad* by Khaje Nasir is more visible and complete.

### **Philosophical System in *Tajrid al Iteqad***

Even the name of the book *Tajrid al Itiqad* is derived from philosophy. The term *tajrid* meaning abstraction, is the highest level of human understanding i.e. developing rational concepts. Reason in *tajrid*, having sensory and imaginary perceptions on hand, extracts the universal concepts e.g. intelligibles by removing the special characteristics of these perceptions. This book is named so as if to show us the true method of thinking and to reject other methods. In this regard, Master Hassanzade Amoli says: '*Tajrid* is a book to answer the book of Fakhr al-Razi e.g. *Al-Muhassal* and it has the position of Khaje Nasir's interpretation of *Isharat* which was written to be an answer to the interpretation of Fakhr Razi of *Ishahrat*' (Hassanzade, 1380).

Here we should notice that even before Khaje Nasir, Fakhr al-Razi by writing *Al-Muhassal*, having had *alyaghut* as his model, had thought of philosophizing *kalam*. The evidence for this is the second chapter of his book in which he discusses metaphysics e.g. existence, non-existence, unity, abundance and cause and effect. Khaje Nasir in his book *Naqd al-Muhassal* calls Fakhr al-Razi's *Al-Muhassal* a mirage from which one doesn't obtain anything (ibid: Khaje Nasir, 1359).

Aref Tamir, believes that Fakhr al-Razi tried to separate religion, namely *Kalam* from philosophy, however he admits that Fakhr al-Razi founded the philosophical *Kalam* though it was Khaje Nasir who played the most important role in combining *Kalam* and philosophy (Tamir, 1412). Interestingly enough, M.M. Sharif – who is a historian of Islamic philosophy



– without comparing *Tajrid* and *Al-Muhassal*, considers *Al-Muhassal* as the base of philosophical *Kalam* (Sharif, 1365).

Undoubtedly, if Arif Tamir and M.M. Sharif knew *Al-Yaqut*, they would have never named Fakhr al-Razi's book as the base of philosophical *Kalam*; in reality *Al-Muhassal* is somehow an incomplete copy of *Al-Yaqut* by Abu Ishaq Nubakhti. On the other hand, Soliman Donya believes that 'Fakhr al-Razi was the enemy of philosophers' (Solaiman Donya, 1413). Also Khaje Nasir does not recognize the mentioned book as a solution to ignorance and imitation in *Kalam* (Khaje Nasir, 1359). All these in addition to the fact that *Al-Muhassal*'s ontology has never become the base for gaining knowledge of God and never led to other principles, the belief of Tamir and Sharif seems to be unjustified. The philosophical system in *Tajrid* can be investigated based on two important properties of it, namely philosophization and rationalism – of course with their universal and necessary attributes.

### **Philosophization in Kalam**

The distinction between Islamic philosophy and that of Greek and Neo-platonists can be considered as the deep attention of Muslim philosophers-like Farabi and Ibn Sina- to the issue of Existence, not only in the subject of the philosophy but also in every pillar of it. This is why it is preferable to use the term *Hikma* instead of Philosophy which from Al-Suhrawardi's (1191AH) time on gained a lot more usage than the term Philosophy. As a matter of fact, in *Hikma*, existence is the most important element of knowledge in contrast to Greek and Neo-platonists philosophy in which the concentration is to a great extent on the essence.

Farabi paid attention to this distinction in his philosophy and after him, Ibn Sina further developed the idea but it was Khaje Nasir who in his book *Tajrid* clarified, organized and publicized it, the idea upon which he later based the *Kalam*. Actually Khaje had the plan of Abu Ishaq in his mind though his giving rise to the improvement of ontological issues to seventy four-in chapter one from section one – expanded the ontology impressively. In fact, his distinguishing the existence from essence, the existence in mind and its quality, unity and abundance and the level of poverty and richness in the existence are the most important issues in Khaje Nasir's ontology.

Due to some justified reasons such as those discussed in (Izotsu,1368), talking about the Islamic philosophy, especially in the times of Al-Suhrawardi and after him, the term '*Hikma*' would be a better representative of the original philosophical thoughts of Muslims than the term "philosophy". Therefore the meaning of the attribute "philosophical" is the same as *Hikmi* and what is intended from practicing *Hikma* is the very act of philosophizing in the Islamic philosophical realm of thought.

This practicing *Hikma* can be in fact interpreted as deep reflections of a philosopher on knowing the being and the origins of existence and finally basing all other knowledge on ontology. This knowledge however could not be reached without the help of the holistic and necessity sighted reason which is to be considered as the lower version of the absolute reason and that is why this type of rationalism should be called *Hikmi* i.e. philosophical rationalism.

### **Hikmi Rationalism**

The emphasis in this type of rationalism is on the desired usage of the findings of the philosophical reason in contrast to personal reason i.e. one's idea, to prove one's position. In *Tajrid al-Itiqad* our *Mutakallim* i.e. Khaje Nasir, does not begin his words like *Mu'tazila*, who would directly begin with the basic Islamic doctrines such as faith or free will and would occasionally discuss philosophical issues. He neither acts like *Ashairi* who having been affected by critiques of *Ahl al-Hadith* and having tried to keep their distance from *Mu'tazili* rationalism chose a way in between; solved their theological problems with believing in *Iman bila Keif* and because of their *Istihسانی* explanation of the Quran verses, just accepted few philosophical views. His work is dissimilar to that of Al-Ghazali or Fakhr al-Razi, who on one hand unfairly condemned both philosophy and philosophers and on the other hand in a sense, philosophized as much as they could. They even used pseudo-philosophical argumentation to support their ideas in a way one gets confused understanding their position regarding philosophy (Dibaji, 1384). Khaje Nasir in his turn, having used the *Hikmi* foundations of Ibn Sina and firm theological doctrines, reached a special methodology with which clear explanations of Islamic beliefs and also more appropriate defenses against the critiques were possible.

In *Tajrid al Itiqad*, rationality is the center of understanding the beliefs and defending them however, this rationality is universal and necessary and it is not personal or *Istihسانی*. Personal rationality does not recognize the universal and necessary rules and more than anything else, deals with partial concepts.

This level of perception may not be considered reasoning rather something that Ibn Sina has called *Vahm* i.e. the boundary between imagination and reasoning. *Vahmi* perceptions like imaginary perceptions are certain denotations which are formed at the beginning of reasoning and are generally concerned with the relations between objects and the hidden meanings in them. The most important characteristic of these denotations are their being partial while in other ways they are just like rational concepts causing the *Vahmi* concepts to be mistaken for rational ones. *Istihسانی*, dogmatism, dialects and verbal arguments are the results of *vahmi* perceptions. These so-called actions of mind have a rational appearance but intrinsically are *vahmi* and are the subject of investigation in most rational *kalami* views. It should be noticed that *vahmi* perceptions are prone to a lot of errors, those that could be reviewed through the necessity-sighted reason and logic.

### **Are Kalam and philosophy the same in Shia thought?**

One basic question in *Ilm al-Kalam* is actually about its subject, namely what is the very thing which is going to talk about? The simple answer would be all Islamic beliefs however when we see its problems it is as if all human sciences have something to say about the mentioned problems. The reason is that most of sciences have to in a way deal with existing God, its power, knowledge and his other attributes. Furthermore, most of sciences are related to human beings' destiny, his salvation and his resurrection. Therefore, it is not unpredictable to see some issues discussed in *Ilm al-Kalam* be the very

problems of some other fields such as sociology, psychology, medical science, astronomy and so on. Specifically a *Mutakalim* should have answers to questions like:

- 1- Is it permissible to stop or even fight the social events that seem to weaken people's faith or their religious commitments?
- 2- Which Beliefs in human beings are of the psychological origins and which of them are related to the real world?
- 3- Are human beings created from evolution of unicellular organisms or they have had their own separate creation?
- 4- How could the compatibility of entropy in asteroids with the maintained harmony in the world be explained?

Obviously, different sciences have answers to the above questions which the *Mutakalim* should accept or reject i.e. there is no third way. Therefore these questions and lots of others that are discussed in the sciences, from one side, demand opinions of *Mutakalims* and their answers to them, and from the other side, they extend *Mutakalims'* views regarding new issues. Interestingly, this extension also includes philosophical issues and it is just the right point to begin to investigate the so-called unity of Shia Kalam and philosophy.

The truth is when the philosophical issues interfere with those of *Kalam*, in a sense they automatically considered to be issues of *Kalam*. The result is that the growing empirical sciences and humanities would increase the issues of *Kalam* and consequently philosophical discussions about God, human beings and the world also enter in the realm of *Kalam*. The reason is that the *Mutakalim* has accepted to practice *Hikmi* method and as the hakim i.e. philosopher uses the same method, the *Mutakilm* approves of his results or even he practice it himself instead of a Hakim. This critical point might cause an outside observer to conclude the unity between *Kalam* and philosophy which in fact is not true.

The saying of those who believe in the unity of Shia *Kalam* with philosophy or *Hikma* after Khaje Nasir and especially in work of Molla Sadra should be understood in the context explained above, otherwise there seems no acceptable meaning for it. Actually this is not a real unity however –as said before- issues of philosophy which are directly related to Islamic beliefs are considered to be issues of *Kalam* and a *Mutakalim* –who is not necessarily non-philosopher –uses them in his *Kalam*. As a matter of fact, if these discussions are in a philosophical context, they have all their real philosophical role, however when used in *Kalami* context, it seems as if they are issues of *Kalam* and parts of it. Therefore, we may not consider Mulla Sadra's *Kalam* and philosophy to be the same, on the contrary, we shall say Shia *Kalam* has approved and used lots of Mulla Sadra's philosophical ideas. In other words, Sadra's employing the same methods in *Kalam* and philosophy i.e. practicing *Hikma*, and the very near relation between the subjects concerning God, universe and human beings may lead to the wrong conclusion of the unity of *Kalam* and Philosophy in his work. It is worth noticing that a *Mutakalim* may borrow philosophical approaches e.g. methods of argumentation, however he does not invent them. When borrowed, these philosophical approaches seem to be part of *Kalam's* structure. What

*Mutakalim* has from his self is the art of explanation, he uses his method of explanation to put everything he has gathered as if they are those of *Kalam*'s.

Terms without Diacritics	Terms in Arabic	Terms with Diacritics
Hikmi	حكيمى	hikmī
Kalam	كلام	kalām
Iqtidaie	اقتضايى	iqtizāi
Vahm	وهم	vahm
Ima'n bi la' Kaif	ايمان بلا كيف	imān bi lā kaif
Mutakalim	متكلم	mutakalim
Tanzih	تنزيه	tanzih
Shukr Mun'em	شكر منعم	shukr mun'em
Imama	إمامة	imāma
Isma	عصمة	isma'
Hadith	حديث	hadith
Sonna	سنة	sonna
Istihسانی	استحسانى	istihsanī

### Conclusion

In order to find out when *Ilm al-Kalam* turned to rational method and whether the rational method is the very philosophical method, it is necessary to know the rational approaches in the three *Kalami* schools of Mu'tazila, Asha'ira and Shi'a. Rationalism in Mu'tazila school began with the translation and effects of philosophical books in the translation movement but as a result of some self-sufficiency, it distanced itself from philosophical approach. This type of rationalism, which could be considered as personal, does not necessarily opposes the philosophical rationalism though it is not committed to it.

However, the second type of rationalism, originating from anti-philosophical front of Asha'ira, is exactly in opposite direction to the first one.

Asha'ira's rationalism, especially among its great thinkers like Al-Ghazali and Fakhr al-Razi, opposes the logical and philosophical rationalism – where with Mu'tazila it was not the case – and therefore it turns to another function of reason which is called *Vahm*. *Vahm* is of a nature that from one side it is considered as the substitution for reason as it like reason deals with the notions and, from the other side, it could be used in religious arguments – not as deductive reasoning rather than inductive and analogical reasoning. To recognize it as rationalism, we must call it *Vahmi* rationalism. *Vahmi* rationalism, pays attention to partial notions and uses non-deductive reasoning. Furthermore, it ignores the reasoning beliefs and denies the universality, necessity and causality.

Parallel to the emergence of Ash'ari rationalism, another type of rationalism emerged which rather than denying or eliciting from philosophy, accepted the ratio-philosophical foundation. This tendency in Shi'a *Kalami*

School come to existence from the time of Abu Ishagh Nobakhti and established by Khaje Nasir Tousi. This type of rationalism could be known as *Hikmi* (philosophical) rationalism simply because it employs not only the strongest type of argument i.e. deductive reasoning to explain and defend the religious beliefs but also the best achievements of human reason i.e. *Hikmi* and philosophical foundations.

The way sciences and their results are employed in *Kalam*, as it is mostly paid attention to in Shi'a *Kalam*, is to be considered as a fundamental principle in defining philosophical and rational *Kalam*. As a matter of fact, the identity of *Kalam* and philosophy in the Khaje Nasir's thought should be understood in this sense. *Kalam* is a science with a vast subject matter and as a result of this, it needs to employ other sciences and their results and philosophy is one of those sciences which can provide this need and so the results of philosophical problems are used by *Kalam*.

At this point, since the *Mutakalim* wants to explain the religious beliefs using philosophers' methods, he not only uses the philosophical results, but also employs their philosophical foundations and principles. That is the reason some have thought of the identity of Philosophy and *Kalam* in the work of Khaje Nasir or Molla Sadra, even though, in reality, it is not the case and the level and degree of employment of the aforementioned elements are deepened.

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