The Problem Of Causality In The Islamic Thought

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Abstract: Causality is one of the most important problems of philosophy. The Ancient Greek philosophers focused on this issue within their studies of the Philosophy of Nature. Investigating the ultimate cause behind the changes in the cosmos, the philosophers maintained that there is a relationship between causes and effects. Major theologies dealt with this issue in line with their teachings. In Islamic tradition, both philosophers (*Falâsifah*) and theologians (*Mutakallimûn*) took this question as an ontological problem. The purpose of this study is to analyze the Ash'arite approach to the problem of causality.

Key Words: Causality, Ash'arism, the design of universe, theocentricism, the atoms, temporarily-generation, Philosophy of Nature, teleology, mechanism.

While Islamic theology or *Kalâm* deals with the issue of causality as an ontological problem, philosophy takes it as a subject of ontology and of philosophy of nature.[1] From the beginning, the philosophers tried to explain such issues as motion, generation, and corruption in the cosmos. The theory of causality that examines the change in the universe and the relationship between causes and effects is one of the basic problems of philosophy.[2] One could't argue that philosophers who speculated about the universe, could't stay aloof from the problem of causality.[3]

Discussed in Islamic Philosophy under the name of "*nazariyyah al-'illah*", the problem of causality revolves around the terms *'illah* (cause) and *ma'lûl* (effect). *'Illah* denotes cause and factor as *ma'lûl* means the effect produced by

cause and the object affected by cause*.[4] Thus, the concept of causality signifies the cause-effect relationship. This concept indicates both intellectual and actual relation of continuity among things in Nature. Muslim philosophers regarded relation between causes and effects as one of the major issues of Metaphysics. For example, Ibn Rushd (1126–1198) holds that tracing things back to the First Cause (*al-'Illah al-Ìlâ*) and to the First Principle (*al-Mabda' al-Awwal*)[5] is a metaphysical quest. Cause and effect and the relationship between the two are investigated from ontological and mechanical perspective.[6] Studying the existence/creation with respect to God who is the First Cause and First Principle and investigating how things bring about each other and how the chain of causality goes back to the First Cause demonstrate that the matter of causality is an ontological issue.[7] Ibn Sînâ (980–1037) defines the science of Metaphysics (*Ilâhiyyât*) as the study of the First and Ultimate Cause of things, the Final Cause of all other causes and the Final Principle of all other principles, who is God.[8]

The concept of causality suggests the idea of law and order. One can summarize the Greek and Islamic implications of this term as follows: Every existent thing in the universe has a cause; the same causes under the same conditions produce the same effects; every effect depends on a cause; a cause brings forth the same effect.[9] The principle of causality, being known as *'Illiyyah* in Islamic Philosophy and *Kalâm*, signifies the relationship between causes and effects.[10] In addition, this term refers to the theory that the same causes necessarily produce the same effects. In his book in which he explained metaphysical terms, Ibn Rushd used the word "*idtirâr*" in this sense. He defines the concept of *idtirâr* as "the relation of a thing with that through which it can exist." This definition approaches the issue from a material viewpoint. Indicating that there is the necessary interdependence among things, the concept of *idtirâr* depand on the principle of causality. As an example for this concept, Ibn Rushd cites the statement, "every organism with blood has to breathe."[11] Philosophers thought that there is a relation of causality; things interact with each other through their essential characteristics; certain causes produce certain effects and this is a necessary operation. The principle of causality appears in different modes in material and metaphysical realms. Some philosophers and theologians argue against the materialistic concept of causality that causality is not an independent material or metaphysical determinism but it depends on the power and will of God, and is thus *contingent*.

The experimental concept of causality limits itself to the relations among things and phenomena. Assumption that the causes of phenomena lie within the physical world not outside of it leads to determinism.[12] The intensity of causality is proportional to the way causality operates. A strict mode of causality may result with a mechanist worldview, which in turn accords causality the status of determinism. A perception of universe that acquires its rules, operation and design

from the material causality inherent in things with no transcendent reference leads to mechanism. It is common to trace materialism back to the atomism of Democritus (460–370 BC) in the Ancient Greek thought since his atomism entailed mechanism, which in turn brought forth a materialist perception of universe.[13]

Concept of causality is one of the crucial ideas of Plato teleological ontology. [Plato (428–347 BC)] Basing the order of Nature on the Idea of Good and the world of Ideas, Plato maintains that every being, living or dead, has a function by its very nature. The being that fulfills its function is successful, qualified, efficacious and virtuous. Plato's definition of virtue depends upon the principle of purposefulness. According to Plato, virtue appears with an organism's or being's fulfillment of its due function.[14] The conflict between the teleological and mechanical doctrines is one of the most-debated issues in the Ancient Age.

To put the question in other words, does the universe consist of the phenomena taking place in accordance with the future purpose? Or do events follow each other with no purpose or operate mechanichally in accordance with the principle of material causality? While the positive answer given to this succinctly phrased question formed the doctrine of teleology or finalism[15], the negative answer constituted the doctrine of mechanism.[16] The teleologists considered Nature as an organic whole whereas the mechanists reject such concept of wholeness. The Greek materialists have recourse to atomist theory in this context. The inter-atomic interactions initiated material motion in the universe, which in turn caused the circle of generation and corruption.[17]

The view that there is a necessary relation between causes and effects led to understanding and discussing the principle of causality as determinism. The idea that there is a causality principle in Nature and things possess a causal potential and power is adopted. However, it is impossible to demonstrate this claim by experiments. This is the base upon which the opponents of causality rely. The idea that cause generates effect is a speculation that we reach only through observations. Yet, there is no convincing evidence to demonstrate that there is a necessary causal relation between two events. Oone of which is thought to be cause and the other to be effect, is necessary. Thus, the argument that a cause creates a certain effect cannot be empirically demonstrated. Only a subjective (*i'tibârî*) and imaginal relation can be established between the event A and B.[18] Therefore, natural sciences and notably Physics can speak of the laws of Nature only in the modality of possibility, not of necessity.[19]

The proponents of causality tried to develop a loose and distant relationship between the universe and God by dismissing the perception of universe that is attached to God as with an umbilical cord. Their discussion centered on the nature of the relationship between God and the universe.[20] The question that begs for an answer is whether God governs the universe with His absolute will

in an unpredictable and causeless manner by making instantaneous and irreversible decisions or God governs the universe indirectly. By extension, is it possible to think that God governs the universe through the laws that He determined?

As is seen, the early debates over causality had a theological and metaphysical character. The answers for such fundamental questions were approached from looked for within metaphysical systems. Thus, a notion of causality belongs to the domain of metaphysics. Therefore, God willed that there be a relation of causality in the universe and arranged things in accordance with this rule. A theological debate, which, in the beginning, concerned the question how God governs and puts the universe in order, evolved into a concept of self-sufficient universe deprived of transcendental roots, especially of God. It is clear that the materialist perception of automatic Nature developed in an atheist direction by severing Nature from its metaphysical roots.[21]

The debates over the concept of empty space (known in Islamic thought as *khalâ'*) in the Ancient Greek philosophy of nature relate to the perception of automatic Nature. Anaxagoras (500–428 BC) who was the first to speak of the atoms in the Ancient Greek. He did not talk about the subject of void. However, the later atomists insistently argued that there is void among the atoms. This meant the rejection of the thesis that motion is governed by supernatural agents. Though Anaxagoras did not make the mention about void, however he explained motion with an external spiritual principle, i.e., mind or *Nous*. Defining void as an empty place where the atoms move, the atomist philosophers maintained that motion is an essential characteristic of things and explained motion in mechanist terms.[22] It is clear that no theology would accept such a mechanist design of universe. Neither will religion be happy with a perception of God who has a limited authority. The concept of Supreme God, which marks the Abrahamic Scriptures, forms a strong reaction to such an understanding of universe and God. God is active, and concerned with, and interferes in the universe which He created. In addition, God takes sides morally. This perception of God disagrees with the god of philosophers who showed his power in the beginning but then kept away from the universe. The Ancient Greek thinkers' perception of God occupies a central position in ontology. The difference between the Greek and religious conceptions of God appears in the daily usage of the word "God". In everyday Greek, the term *Theos*, i.e. God, referred to "the imposing and confirming powers." Unlike Christians and Muslims, the Greeks did not count divine predicates such as "God is good" or "God is love" by relying on the existence of God. They regarded as God the natural and social powers which impressed them profoundly. While the Christian says, "God is love", the Ancient Greek tended to say, "Love is God", intending to express that love is a supreme power which exists before and after man. The word "*Theos*" was used as an adjective and a quality in the Greek language. Any

power that is active in the universe, unborn like us and continues to live even after we die is God.[23]

While in religion God is located at the heart of ontology, epistemology and ethics, philosophy takes God only as a principle or arkhé referred to resolve basic ontological problems. Philosophical quest attaches an inferior importance to religious devotion.[24] In other words, though both religious and philosophical discourses employ the same term, they mean different senses by it. One sees as solution what the other views as problem. This explains why theological systems take ontological problems in relation with God. While theology tries to penetrate the reality of the universe by faith, philosophy endeavors to understand the being through reason.[25]

The Ash'arite theologians developed a critique of the *Mashshâî* (Muslim Peripatetic) philosophy and ontology.[26] Placing the contingency of beings against the necessity and absoluteness of God, the Ash'arite system cast a shadow upon the status of beings and the nature and activity of things.[27] This led to deny any possibility of rationality in the universe. Thus, accepting a rational essence and a fixed rational relation in the cosmos was thought to be detrimental to the perfection of God. The ontological contrast between God and the world that dominates the Ash'arite theology is manifest in atomism. too. The dichotomy of God who possesses an infinite power and will and the universe with a limited, finite and created nature of universe constitutes the main characteristics of the Ash'arite theology.[28] Pitting God against the universe which He created and gave a measure of independence is a metaphysical provocation which has predictable results. Therefore, one may define the Ash'arite system as the doctrine of divine will or *voluntarism*.[29]

The concept of divine will and wisdom is a key to solve any ontological and epistemological problems within the Ash'arite School. As a result, there is no recognized measure for the rational causality between things. The Ash'arite theology does this by introduces into the field of philosophy the notion of God's continous intervention in the universe. God's creation and governance is a one-to-one and ceaseless relation. The Ash'arite theologians maintain that God has not only showed His power and will in the first creation and the putting in order of the universe but also exercises a continous power and authority over the universe.[30] Thus, the will of God is not limited to the creation. Neither is His power an instantenous effect that displays itself only in the act of creation. The divine creation and governance is constantly in effect. This point of view renders causality principle philosophically meaningless and theologically dangerous because of its tendency to limit the authority of the Creator.[31]

Philosophers and theologians carved out a form of causality that is moderate and consistent with religion. Unlike the Ash'arite theologians, the philosophers and theologians who adopted a reconciliatory attitude did not take the issue of

causality within the frame of the God-creature contrast. Rather, they discussed the subject on the base of the *"measure of effect's need for cause."* This approach helped re-locate the subject in its proper rational-philosophical context and detach it from the context where it was regarded as "a matter of faith."

Ibn Rushd states that one who denies the impact of causes on effects denies the reality of science, too. Science means to know things along with their causes. Philosophy or wisdom is to investigate the hidden causes. In this respect, denying causes means denying science and philosophy as a whole. The Muslim philosophers always discussed causality on a metaphysical plain. The causality that appears in the contingent world owes its existence to God just like all other contingent beings.[32] For Ibn Sînâ, the investigation of causes is included in the field of Metaphysics (*Ilâhiyyât*). He thinks that causes and related issues should be examined from the perspective of Metaphysics. The examination of causes should be continued up to the First Cause and Principle, which has no cause for Its existence. Cause is the subject matter of ontology in this respect.[33]

In contrast to the common belief, the theologians whom the Ash'arite theologians fought did not follow a pure rational-philosophical method. The view that the Mu'tazilite theologians are the unwavering followers of rationalism has become so prevailing that they are thought to take no religious text into consideration.[34] This is an erroneous belief. Reading the writings of any Mu'tazilite theologian is enough to show the falsity of this view. They relied upon the religious texts in their discussion of religious and philosophical subjects. But they did not develop such a perilous dualism "either reason or scripture", nor did they prefer reason over the Scripture.[35] Of course, they disagreed on some points with the Ash'arites, notably on giving a broader authority to reason. They also believed that God is the absolute actor in the universe and the creator of every activity, every cause and effect. However, they thought that God performs the acts of creation and governance through causes.[36] With his concept of wisdom or purpose (*hikmah*), Imâm al-Mâturidî (d. 333/944) held that God acts in accordance with a definite wisdom or purpose. The world moves towards a definite purpose along the lines of purposeful and wise actions of God.[37] However, this religious and theocentric interpretation of causality was suspected and refused by the Ash'arite School.[38]

There is an intellectual relationship between the Ash'arite view of substance-accident and the Ash'arite objection to the theory of causality. The causal relationship is a bond established between the things that possess a stable existence and nature. Yet the Ash'arite discourse denies this ability for things. There can be no permanence and order in a universe composed of accidents. Accidents disappear by their very nature and are created at every moment. Their existence is transitory, not continous. Therefore, accidents cannot exercise influence over each other. Thus, no permanent and self-repeating relation can be set up among the transitory beings and disappearing things. In an ontology in which there is

no room for the idea of interaction between accidents, the intellectual foundation of causality disappears. One should remember that some Ash'arite theologians rejected even the idea of individual substance (*al-jawhar al-fard*). They think that this idea is purely intellectual. In other words, the term "*jawhar-i fard*" is developed by our mind and is true only for the mind. In this context, they refer to the concepts of mental and external beings (*al-mawjûd al-dhihnî wa al-khârijî*). Mental being is that which does not exist outside of, and is created by, the mind such as numbers, universals, abstract concepts and terms.[39] External being is that which exists whether the mind thinks it or not. For example, the objects and organisms in Nature are external beings.[40] Including the concept of substance in the category of mental being[41], the Ash'arite theologians argued that this concept is valid and true only for the mind. They also claimed that matter and things are composed of the totality of accidents. If accidents are eliminated one by one, the things that we regard as substance will also disappear. Given the fact that the relation of causality can be established only among the permanent substances and there is no being with this nature in the universe, causality is bound to exist only in the mind. Therefore, argue the Ash'arites, it is not possible to speak of a real existence of causality. Just as substance is a mental and nominal being, the causal relationship thought to exist among the permanent substances has only a mental and nominal existence.[42]

This is also related to the theory of *hudûth* (the temporarily-origination of the universe) developed by the Muslim theologians. If the existence of individual substance is negated, everything in the universe is accident. The Arabic word *'arâd*, i.e., accident, denotes what disappears and changes at every moment. Everything that disappears and changes is *hâdith*, i.e., temporarily-originated and created by God. In fact, this view is close to the perspective of the theologians who accept the existence of substance. For accident is temporarily-originated, substance is also temporarily-originated. In other words, one cannot speak of substance independent from accidents. Consequently, there is need for an external cause who constantly creates accidents and beings, which are thought to be substance, and saves them from disappearance and corruption. This cause is God. The term *tafwîd*, meaning the constant creation and arrangement of the universe by God, comes from this theory.[43]

What is then the source of the concept of order that we observe in the cosmos? The Ash'arites answer is that the continous observation of the same natural phenomena creates the illusion of causality in us. In opposition to the philosophers, they maintain that there is no necessary causality in Nature, but a constant creation. That events as the effects of causes are the fantasy of imaginal faculty. In fact, God governs and puts things in order as He likes as well as creates the impression of causality in our minds out of grace. The continuity that we observe regarding accidents is the result of the constant creation of accidents.[44]

Moreover, rejecting the existence of causality in Nature, the theologians opposed[45] the philosophers' definition of God as the First Cause (*al-ʿIllah al-Ìlâ*)[46]. Instead, they preferred to refer to God as *al-Fâʿil al-Mukhtâr*, i.e., Freely-Acting. Instead of the concept of cause, which is unaware of its existence and effect on other things, they established the concept of God who is aware of everything and separate from the universe but governs it with His will. The Ash'arites denied causal power and efficiency for things and natural bond among things, but they acknowledged a supernatural connexion continously created by God. Accidents are not actors. They lack reason, sense, and perception. Therefore, we cannot attribute causal power to them. Given the fact that even man who possesses the capacity of knowing and perceiving is deprived of the ability to bring about such effects as burning, heating and nourishing, the things which do not possess these abilities do lack causal power.[47] The Ash'arite philosophy of nature, which has a heavy ontological color, leads to the notion of God as the only actual actor for the sake of man and things in the universe. The Ash'arite theology is directed towards pantheism. The Ash'arite theologians put the world in a dubious position vis-à-vis God. That position pushes our explanations of the being into agnosticism.

Skepticism in the Ash'arite sense is quite different from the methodical skepticism used to understand the real nature of things. Their skepticism necessarily results with a strict fideism. They take a fideist stand even towards the nonreligious, purely natural and philosophical matters. In discussing Ghazzâlî's (1058–1111) approach to the issue of causality, some researchers argue that he put divine causality in the place of natural and necessary causality.[48] In other words, Ghazzâlî prefers vertical causality to the horizontal[49]. A similar evaluation is done by philosophers. Classifying causality into two categories as empirical and metaphysical, the exponents of this view maintain that every event, every process and activity appears on the basis of material cause; everything is determined by the conditions that generate it. The process which flows in accordance with the law of necessity is determinism in the world of phenomena. According to the metaphysical causality, God is the cause of the world. All the activities in the universe are the outcome of His volitional acts. According to this theory, the cause is not an event, fact or activity in the world of phenomena, but an active essence and metaphysical power, which is God. The reviewers of the metaphysical causality state that empirical causality allows for no arbitrariness and freedom while metaphysical causality allows for a certain measure of freedom. In other words, a power, an essence or ultimate cause freely creates the effects.[50]

The theory of metaphysical causality attributes freedom and arbitrariness to God. Defining God as the First Cause, this theory attaches the cause-effect relation among beings and facts to God with respect to the beginning. By thinking the first forms, God determined things, qualities and their relations without being compelled to follow any principle or law except His own will. The free-

dom included in the metaphysical causality finds a room here. As a divine quality, freedom characterizes the behavior of God in determining the being. Therefore, this concept is related to God, not to the beings. After proceeding from God, the beings act as God determined and predicted. However, if God makes a new decision concerning the beings, the existential process may change. This explains why the beings and causality are contingent. It is contradictory to define God's constant creation of causes and their effects, which are accidents in Ash'arism, as a perpendicular causality. This is because the concept of causality depends upon the idea of order. The concept of causality suggests that things carry a potential of the horizontal interrelation. The attempt to establish causality as a perpendicular relation and divine activity is equal to abolishing causality.

On the other hand, theology rejects the notion of divine causality because the latter suggests that God acts according to a law and cause. However, this contradicts the concept of Freely-Acting God (*Fâ'il-i Mukhtâr*). As it is impossible to think that God acts according to cause, the theory of divine causality is inconsistent. The conception of transcendental God who does what He wishes as He wishes without needing any cause or reason in creation and governance invalidates every form of causality and determinism. Such perception of God also eliminates the concept of law which philosophers claim to exist in Nature and history. The relationship between things and God, who is above all causes, laws and order, shifts the attention radically to God and bases everything on an ontological ground. In this case, no cause and causality can be defined as the acts of God. On the contrary, one should speak of His authority over the universe.

An ontological scheme which gives an upper hand to the conception of Freely-Acting God over any sensible causality permeates the other units of epistemology. In consequence, the paradigm of traditional *Kalâm* determined all the ontological, epistemological, political and cultural systems of Muslims. The question is not simply a particular understanding of the being, Nature, and history, but a comprehensive *weltanschauung* that encompasses all social relations and institutions. The shadow of the perpendicularly-established ontological system falls onto the earth and acts as the source of horizontal systems. For example, many Muslim intellectuals and researchers rightly have suggested that the traditional *Kalamic* worldview, which has an authoritarian character, accounts for the authoritarian social practices in the Muslim world.

The problem of causality, which was somehow concluded by the traditional *Kalâm*, went far beyond being a theological-intellectual question. It had a profound impact on other important issues like the value and acts of man. The debate, which started as a subject matter of the philosophy of nature, became a metaphysical-ontological matter, and eventually evolved into a special conception of human being. In other words, the philosophy of human being and the philosophy of nature were combined into a metaphysical system.

The place of the human being in the universe, his position and power vis-à-vis God and his capacity of acting are the major topics of Metaphysics. Like the theologians of other religions, Muslim theologians, in accordance with their habits of thought and perception, understood such issues as man, Nature, the universe and God as inseparable part of the same paradigm. Therefore, it is not difficult to realize that their conception of the divine essence and attributes shaped their perception of Nature and man. Metaphysical and theological mode of thinking determined and interrelated all the elements of the system. It is an essential characteristic of metaphysical thinking to unite the conceptions of God, man and universe on the same semantic plain. Therefore, the study of any classic topic of *Kalâm* requires taking into consideration the whole system.

REFERENCES

[1] Known as "causalitas" in Latin, "kausaltat" in German, "causalité" in French and "'illiyyah" in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, the concept or theory of causality is defined as a principle or law which states that every effect has a cause. The principle of causality suggests a necessary relationship between cause and effect. Democritus is the first to assert that there is a causal relationship among events. In paralel to the advancement of natural sciences, the theory of causality gained strength, too. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) clarified and worked out this theory. David Hume (1711–1776) made a philosophical critique of the principle of causality, suggesting that associations and habits led to believing causality. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) reckoned causality as a basic criterium for any logical principle and thought. Modern physicists opposed the view that causality can be applied as a general and strict rule to all circumstances. To them, causality is a method of research. See Bedia Akarsu, *Felsefe Terimleri Sözlüğü,* İnkılâp Kitabevi, Seventh Edition, Istanbul 1998, 132.

[2] Peters Groff& Oliver Leaman, Islamic Philosophy A-Z, Edinburg, 2007, 25.

[3] Approaching to the issue of causality from the viewpoint of purposefulness, Aristotle (384–322 BC) lists four kinds of causes: Material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, final cause. He thinks that to explain a phenomenon or thing is to grasp its purpose. The explanation done on the grounds of purposefulness provides the true definiton of things because everything moves towards a particular goal. See, Aristotle, *Metafizik*, Turkish translation by Ahmet Arslan, Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, Izmir 1993, vol. II, 152.

[*] The words "sabab" and "'illah" are used synonymously by Muslim thinkers in the sense of cause. Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs mâ bâida at-Tabiiyyah,* Istanbul, 2004, 27.

[4] The words "sabab" and "'illah" are used synonymously by Muslim thinkers in the sense of cause. Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs mâ bâida at-Tabiiyyah,* Istanbul, 2004, 27.

[5] Sayyed Hossein Nasr& Oliver Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, New York, 1996, I, 111.

[6] Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs,* 103.

[7] *Ibid*, 4.

[8] Ibn Sînâ, *al-Shifâ fî al-Ilâhiyyât,* Istanbul, 2004, 2.

[9] Paul Edwards (ed.), *The Ecyclopedia of Philosophy*, London, 1967, II, 56, 57; G. Galloway, 193; S. Blacburn, 59; Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "İlliyet", *DİA*, vol. XXII, 121; Meydan Larousse, "Nedensellik", XVI, 8578.

[10] George Galloway, *The Philosophy, of Religion*, Edinburg, 1914, 217, 218.

[11] Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs*, 29.

[12] Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, New York, 1994, 102, 103.

[13] Stating that the Atomists in the Ancient Greek are strict determinists who believe that everything occurs in accordance with the definite laws of nature, Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stresses that

Democritus, who is believed to be the founder of of atomism, posits that nothing happens by chance. In consistence with their conception of universe, the early Atomists asked mechanist questions and gave mechanist answers. Bertrand Russell, *Batı Felsefesi Tarihi,* translated by Muammer Sencer, Istanbul, 1983, pp. 76– 78.

[14] Ahmet Cevizci, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Tarihi*, Istanbul, 2000, 152.

[15] The teleological conception of universe persisted in the Medieval Islamic philosophy, too. For example, Fârâbî (870–950) and Ibn Sînâ acknowledged the final cause. In the West, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) also adopted this view. The teleologists maintain that there is a purpose in the generation of the universe, and every living and conscious being is created by God for a particular purpose. As a purpose was assigned to the universe on the macrocosmic level, a purpose was assigned to the life on the ethical level, which is virtue and felicity. Likewise, the discussions of the Ideal City are an outcome of teleological perception as to politics. Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Genel Felsefe Dersleri*, Ankara, 1972, 102. Finalism is a theory which asserts that everything is determined by a purpose and moves towards a purpose and every event takes place in accordance with the law of finalism. Bedia Akarsu, *Felsefe Terimleri Sözlüğü*, Istanbul, 7. Edition, 1998, 71.

[16] Mechanism has been defined from physical, biological and metaphysical perspectives. In Physics, the term mechanism denotes the theory, which explains all physical events on spatial and mechanic bases. In Biology, it is the name of the theory that explains organisms and their acts in accordance with mechanic laws. In Metaphysics, it denotes the mechanist theory of nature grounded in the atomism of Democritus. It is defined as a worldview which regards the mechanics of dead bodies' movements and effects as the true example of actuality and examines spiritual phenomena on a pure causal-mechanical ground. Akarsu, *Ibid*, 128.

[17] Ülken, *Ibid*, 102.

[18] After his semantic analysis of the word "i'tibârî", Toshihiko Izutsu points out that this term signifies the subjectivity of the knowledge that one has about a thing. The *i'tibârî* knowledge is that which is subjectively conceived of a thing or fact but accepted as the real feature of that thing or fact. See Toshihiko Izutsu, *İslâm'da Varlık Düşüncesi,* translated by Selahattin Ayaz, Istanbul, 1981, 145.

[19] Doğan Özlem, *Felsefe ve Doğa Bilimleri,* İnkılâp Kitapevi, Second Edition, Istanbul 1996, pp. 28–29. Spinoza (1632–1677) opposed the teaching of finalism. His criticism of finalism stems from his own theological system. Therefore, one can view his criticism as a religious criticism performed from within. For him, it is absurd to speak of God who is the single and infinite substance and of a final cause at the same time. Such attitude contradicts the concept of God because God is a perfect being. To act in accordance with a purpose means to have inclination. But having an inclination can be attributed only to man and other creatures. Thus, no final cause can be talked about God and no final cause can exist in His *Natura Naturata*. The similarity between these remarks of Spinoza and the statements of the Ash'arites about the God-universe relation is quite interesting.

[20] All the traditional cosmologies define Nature as a living, active and ethical being that senses and responds to human behavior. In these dominantly geocentric cosmological systems, God is the final cause and sufficient power not only behind Nature but also behind all the happenings in the cosmos. Naturally, the laws of Nature are not other than the reflection of His will. Tuncay Önder, *Ekoloji, Toplum ve Siyaset,* Ankara, 2003, 20.

[21] Aristotle defines Nature as the world of things that move by itself. What distinguishes the Aristotalian conception of Nature from the modern perception of Nature is the former's organic character. As Nature moves by itself, it would be in vain to search for a nonnatural efficient cause to explain what takes place within it. Sharing the same fate with the Materialists to this point, Aristotle however mentions God in Metaphysics. The confusion stems from the preoccupation with the modern implications of the idea of law. The term "laws of nature" does not suggest to the modern mind the Law-Giver. However, law signified a different meaning in the Ancient Grek and conveyed an existentialist connotation. Robin George Collingwood, *Doğa Tasarımı,* Turkish translation by Kurtuluş Dinçer, Ankara, 1999, pp. 97–100.

[22] Ahmet Cevizci, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Tarihi,* 65, 66.

[23] W. K. C. Guthire, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Tarihi,* 17, 18.

[24] The conflict between the religious perception of God, who both appears and disappears, and the abstract and faint image of God that is acquired through reason is dealt with by theologians, too. For an in-depth discussion of the difference between the god of philosophers and the god of Abraham. See Georges Gusdorf, *İnsan ve Tanrı,* taranslated by Zeki Özcan, Bursa, 2000, pp. 16–23.

[25] This point is most emphasized in the Aristotelian metaphysics. Aristotle confirms the existence of God on rational-philosophical bases. For instance, when grounding the issue of cosmic change in a metaphysical base, he stresses that everything in the universe tries to become a pure form, which accepts no change any more. In attempt to provide a base for the change, he concludes that a Perfect Being, i.e., God, who is the foundation of change, should exist because of the ultimate and highest purpose.

[26] Peter s. Groff & Oliver Leaman, *Ibid,* 16.

[27] This question appears in the form of matter-spirit duality in the Ancient Greek. Placing matter in a negative and lower category vis-à-vis abstract essences is an obvious Platonic attitude. From the concept of Idea, Plato did understand the ideal essence. The Ideas are perfect beings and essences while matter is a negative and even a nonexistent being for it has no essence. Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Genel Felsefe Dersleri*, 97.

[28] For an independent study that analyzes this question from ethical and metaphysical standpoint, see İlhami Güler, *Allah'ın Ahlâkîliği Sorunu-Ehl-i Sünnet'in Allah Tasavvuruna Ahlâkî Açıdan Eleştirel Bir Yaklaşım-*, Ankara 1998.

[29] Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *İslâm Düşüncesi-Türk Düşüncesi Tarihi Araştırmalarına Giriş,* Ülken Yayınları, Istanbul 1995, 41.

[30] The Ash'arite substance-accident metaphysics, which is developed and officialized by Baqillânî (d. 403/1013), largely determined the later trajectory of causality. The Ash'arites are interested in the substance-accident metaphysics to protect the conception of absolute divine power and the need of things for divine intervention not only in their first creature but also in sustaining their constantly vanishing existence. Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy,* second edition, New York, 1983, 49.

[31] In expressing this concern, some contemporary scholars argue that if causes are ascribed to God and effects to causes, this will lead to the fragmentation of the whole creation among the causes and to God's being the creator of only some particular things. One can summarize this concern in the following question: "Given the fact that every activity goes on according to a necessary causality, what is to be attributed to God?" Demirci, *Bilimin Öteki Yüzü*, 83.

[32] Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf 'an Manâhij al-Adillah*, Turkish translation by Süleyman Uludağ, Dergâh Yayınları, Istanbul 1985, 337; He repeats the same words when answering to the attacks of the Ash'arites, notably to those of Ghazzâlî. See Ibn Rushd, *Tahâfut al-Falâsifah,* Turkish translation by Kemal Işık and Mehmet Dağ, Samsun 1986, 292.

[33] Ibn Sînâ, *al-Shifâ*, pp. 6–7.

[34] C. A. Kadir, *Philosophy and Science In The Islamic World*, London, 1991, 50.

[35] For the misunderstanding of the Mu'tazilite rationalism and for the Mu'tazilite approach to reason and the reason-revelation relation, see İlyas Çelebi, *İslâm İnanç Sisteminde Akılcılık ve Kâdı Abdulcabbâr,* Istanbul, 2002, 40.

[36] Abû Rashîd Nîsâbûrî, *al-Usûl fî al-Tawhîd,* Egypt 1968, 88; Qâdî 'Abd al-Jabbâr, *al-Muhît bi al-Taklîf,* 387.

[37] Mâturidî, Abu Mansour, *Kitâb al-Tawhîd*, Istanbul, 1979, 21.

[38] The Mu'tazilite theologians defended a possible substance-accident metaphysics, which some modern philosophers tend to call "occasionalism." Essentially, this metaphysics suggests that there are two forms of being in the cosmos except God. Fakhry, *İslâm Felsefesi Tarihi,* p. 48.

[39] The Muslim philosophers see intelligible universals as mental beings. To them, the characteristic of the universal is its being discrete substance. They refer to the concept of mental existence with the word "*khârij al-nafs*." The universals are abstract intelligible qualities. See Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs,* 49.

[40] These concepts were firstly put forward by the Greek philosophers. They determined four modes of existence as external, mental, verbal and scriptural existence. By external existence, they meant the essence, reality and actuality of something while, by mental existence, they meant its correspondent form in the mind. Thus, as the former signifies the external and real existence of a thing, the latter indicates its shadow-existence. The fact that the philosophers accepted for beings a mental existence distinct from their external existence stems from our ability to conceive of "things" which have no actual existence. They stated, "We can imagine and think the things which have no existence in actuality." In other words, these things are existent and fixed in the mind. Then these philosophers discuss the question of *mâhiyyat*, i.e., quiddity. Derived from the question "Mâ hiya (What is it)?", the concept of *mâhiyat* denotes the essential and permanent features of a thing. Şemsettin Günaltay, "Mütelellimûn ve Atom Nazariyesi", AÜİFD, Ankara, 1925, I, 15, 16.

[41] Ibn Sînâ accepts three forms of existence: Absolute, mental and external existence. The word "mankind" in the sense abstracted from individual human beings is an example for absolute existence. Concepts and meanings are example for mental existence. The real beings that are objectified in the external world are example for external existence. Hüseyin Atay, *Fârâbî ve İbn Sinâ'ya Göre Yaratma*, Ankara 2001, pp. 8-10.

[42] Ghazzâlî, *Tahâfut,* 239.

[43] Ülken, *ibid,* 41, 51.

[44] Bâqillânî rejects the doctrine of *tawallud* which he ascribes to the Mu'tazilites. In refuting this doctrine, he states that the power of acting attributed to man or things in fact goes back to God. He also argues that there is only one real acting power in the universe and this power is God. Bâqillânî, *Tamhîd al-Âvâil va Talhîs el-Delâil,* Baırut, 1987, pp. 334-341. We know that causality principle has been criticized in the Modern Western thought. Investigating the source of the thought of causality, David Hume argues that we have no impression corresponding to the Idea of causality. For him, the Ideas and thoughts are the pale copies of our impressions. In this case, one should raise the following question: "How does causality principle arise in our minds?" Hume denies the possibility that we may find a thing whose existence requires the existence of another thing. He argues that our repeated observations of event A after event B create the impression of causality in our minds. In other words, we attribute our impression to the necessary relation which we assume to exist between A and B. By doing so, we objectify something subjective. Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü,* 497.

[45] Ibn Rushd applies the term "*al-Mabda' al-Awwal* (the First Principle" to God as He is the cause of everything and not effect of anything. He is the most perfect being from whom other beings receive perfection. See Ibn Rushd, *Talkhîs,* 4, 25. Ibn Sînâ also calls God "the Cause of Causes" and "the Principle of Principles." He adds that this is the topic of Metaphysics. Ibn Sînâ, *al-Shifâ fî al-Ilâhiyyât,* 2

[46] Fârâbî refers to God as "the Ultimate Principle of the existence of all beings." Fârâbî, *Tahsîl al-Sa'âdah*, Turkish translation by Hüseyin Atay, AÜİFD, 8. In his critique of the theory of causality, Ghazzâlî argues that we have no proof for causality except observing the simultaneity of cause and effect, and concludes, "In reality, there is no efficient cause except God." *Tahâfut*, 240.

[47] Bâqillânî, *Tamhîd*, 56.

[48] C. A. Kadir, 97.

[49] Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Aristo Metafiziği İle Gazzâlî Metafiziğinin Karşılaştırılması,* Ankara, 1983, 193.

[50] Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Sözlüğü,* Second Edition, Ankara 1997, 496.