

Doctrine of Determinism and Free Will in Conjunction of Ash'ari's and St Augustine's Opinions

Mohammad Reza Abooei

Department of Theology and Philosophy, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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ABSTRACT

This article has addressed the concepts of determinism and free will, predestination, original sin, grace and their application in Christian theology. Furthermore discussion Augustine's views in determinism and priest Pelagius's opinions who opposed him, have been studied. The researcher has obtained their opinions by translating Augustine's writings against Pelagius and his followers. In following the discussion also reviews Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari's thoughts in determinism and freewill, and theory of acquisition written by him. His opponent's views; the sect Mu'tazilah, is discussed and explained in comparison in the viewpoints of the two factions in the Islamic theology and Augustine's view of determinism and free will. Augustine's doctrine of grace is the way out of the quagmire of determinism in Catholic theology. In the same vein Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari has opened the way with the idea of designing complete determinism and acquisition's theory is protected him from accusation of determinism. His critics, however, believe that these theories are do not protect the both renowned theologians from determinism. In addition to the aforementioned issues common or other distinguishing features of these two thinkers of the Islamic Christian theology have been investigated.

KEYWORDS: Augustine, Pelagius, Ash'ari, determinism and free will, grace

INTRODUCTION

The first centuries of Christianity are a time that in which Christian thought-belief system has formed. St Augustine purified this system in fifth century. He was one of prominent advocators of Catholic Church and an influential thinker in this period. He strictly has sought any thought diversion, and according to Holy Scripture he answered any blasphemous accusation by Manichaeists, and even interpretations by priests such as Pelagius which were against firm catholic beliefs.

According to Augustine's letters against Pelagius, this paper discussed about main disagreements among church's thinkers in the first half of fifth century Catholic Church was accused by Pelagius of diverting different concepts such as grace, free will, and original sin and so on, and his followers have propagated his thoughts also. Explaining Pelagius's thoughts and his followers, Augustine as Hippo's bishop in his letters to contemporary popes and other church leaders has drawn their attention to their dangers. In answering to Pelagius, Augustine referring to Holy Scripture arguing that his opinions have defamed the Catholics. Since Augustine's opinions smell of determinism, a comparative analysis between Abol-Hassan Ash'ari's views and Ash'ereh as the symbol of determinism in Islam and Augustine's views may be an innovative aspect of the present paper.

Concepts such as free will and determinism always were controversial things among religious thinkers and many paid their attentions to these subjects. Scholars and theoreticians of religious and philosophical sciences for many centuries have debated extensively and waged verbal struggles about them. These debates also were occurred rowdily between Christian and Islamic scholars from first centuries. Although some maintained that debates about determinism and voluntarism have entered Islam world after entering Islam in Christian countries and definitely by Banni Ummayah rulers to make determinist sects (Dadbeh, 2001, 524). However questioning about determinism and free will and natural interest in personal destiny and so on aren't questions that have their roots in oppressive rulers' policies. Of course it is expectable that such deceitful persons including Mo'avayah to make diversion in beliefs and to build doubt among people aiming to strengthen their powers.

According to these facts and existence of these questions from long time ago in both religions, there are produced many books and schools advocating one side of struggle. And these works are worthy to take them into consideration in theory field. About human salvation and the role of Jesus in Christianity many beliefs and ideas were propagated in which salvation by Him is occurred because of divine grace and almost without full free choice of people, and great instances of this may be Paul the apostle or Augustine himself. Such salvations lead us to

predetermination of faith. Also in Islam there are many verses and narrations about absolute power of God which have led many to dangerous cliffs of determinism and even to downfall from these cliffs.

Ash'ari's Thoughts

He introduced a new idea that resolved the conflict between rationalism and formalism in a way. Thus he was in agreement and disagreement with both sides. He was in agreement with rationalists because rational argument wasn't forbidden to prove religious beliefs but it was preferred and desirable, so he wrote "Istehsan Al-Khoz fi Elm Al-Kalam" and has devised some new ideas through rational arguing, or has consolidated some previously devised ideas. These ideas and opinions may demonstrate his viewpoints in theology.

Acquisition Theory

A controversial issue among Mo'tazilah and formalists was predetermination or creation of acts. Intending to defend the justice and the wisdom of God, Mo'tazilah came to Qadarigari (voluntarism) and maintained that human's acts are outside of the will and the ordinance God and that human is responsible of its acts; but on the other said, intending to defend the generality of God's will and singleness of creator formalists have negated any creation by human and maintained that its acts all including sins and submissions are created by God, and this idea called as "creation of acts" (Anvari, 2000, 60).

When Ash'ari has withdrawn from Mo'tazilah sec, defended the idea of act creation and wrote his opinion in a treatise and asserted there that: "acts of creatures are created by God and at the same time are proper for their abilities" (Ash'ari, 1952, 38). But for justification of free will and releasing from wrong consequences of determinism he picked up acquisition theory that was introduced before him by Hossein Najar and Zazar bin Omar. One on main aspects of Ash'ari's though was the limits of human's will and its relation to general divine creation. Choosing acquisition theory which was developed by his followers later, Ash'ari has tried to open a place for what occurred by human, while kept his belief in universal power and will of God, and to give meaning to duty and reward and punishment. He allocated a section to proving that divine will and power are absolute, which in his theological system were the most specific traits of God. "If there is something in the world that isn't His will, or He is unwilling to it and then He averted its emergence, so sins will be appeared no matter He wants or doesn't want; this demonstrated a weak and subjugated one" (Ash'ari, 1952, 25). First his principle is that all things will be happened according to God's will and it isn't so that His will to be belong only to inherent impossible things, therefore human's acts also are within His will. Then it is a dualism and paganism that bad things to be attributed to someone except God.

Ash'ari has three kinds of arguments about universality of God's will:

- 1- Will is one of traits of God's essence, so it can't accept any limits.
- 2- Every happened thing is created by God, and He will never create a thing unwillingly.
- 3- If there is thing happened in God's realm unwillingly then two consequences are realized necessarily: neglection and weakness about realization an end which both are voids.

Then Ash'ari argues with Mo'tazilah and stated that if the necessity of God's will is accepted about His acts, then we can't regard what are attributed to other than God outside of His will, since everything is His act (Ibn Forak, 72).

According to Ash'ari it is impossible that God wills against His knowledge. Therefore He is aware of evil acts of evil people, and as He is aware of evil doing by evil people, in the same way it can be said that He willed evil doing by them and for them, thus we can accept that God commands to do a thing that His will is abandoning it by doer one, as it is right for Him to command to do a thing that He knew won't be happened. Nevertheless Ibn Forak said that Ash'ari has emphasized that since will in its wide sense is related to act's meaning, then we must avoid to assert that God willed His creatures' sins, because it isn't allowed to use any word that induces a wrong meaning. Ash'ari distinguished between will and ordinance, and this is his ground of his interpretation of related Quran's verses (Ibn Forak, 72).

In other words, the true creator and doer of everything in his view is God, and he rejected the view of some theologians that have separated act and creation and believed that human is the true subject of its acts. According to his view about the created, the creator of anything is who that has created it as his will totally with all its features, but people's acts aren't in accord with their intents and their perceptions. For example a pagan thinks that his act is right and good, but the creator of paganism regarded it as a void and wrong thing, as the believers also intended their good acts without any practical difficulties in contrary to what often will be happened.

From here, Ash'ari expressed a concept of human act that while it attributes their act to themselves and justifies their choice and duty, states that these acts are created by God. He called this concept as acquisition theory and called this trier person as acquirer of his act, or a person who bring his act in his possession. Acquisition, for

him, is a work that will be happened through a created power. Thus an act is attributed to a person if with the act there is will and power to do the act for him. Therefore an act that person do according to free will has two qualities:

First, the will of human is related to the act and there a power is emerged over it in him.

Second, God produced the act through His will and power.

Ash'ari said that this double state is same as a movement that God creates in a thing, but this is the thing that is described by the movement with this difference that voluntary act is done according to human's will. He emphasized that the acquisition simultaneously is God's act, and as emergency actions of human are attributed to God's creation, same is the case about the acquisition which is similar to other actions in regard to their forms and conditions including time and place. Nevertheless, what distinguishes it from emergency action is the human understands the difference between these two actions intuitionally in him. According to this concept, the base of human's free will is his understanding of his free will (Ibn Forak, 100).

Ibn Forak maintained that God gives a part of His will and power to human and this will happen at the same time of the act. For Ash'ari ability means a state that in which person is able to do an act, and how this ability relates to the act is complementary of acquisition theory (Ash'ari, 1952, 45). So the formulation of voluntary act for Ash'ari is that God after human's will to do which itself is created by Him gives the power to do an act to person and at the same time He creates the act in his body. According to what Ibn Forak said from some Ash'ari's lost works, the relation of ability to act for him was a causal relation, and he use this perception to explain the concurrency of ability with act and negation of time antecedence of ability. It must be mentioned also that this relation same as any other causal relation is empty of inherent necessity in Ash'ari's thought. Thus God creates His will, power and act in all human acts in an innovatory way. (Ash'ari, 1952, 76-110). Although acquisition theory is one of his main achievements, but his prominent followers, Ghazi Abobakr Baghleani and Abolma'ali Joveni gave other formulations to this concept.

According to Ash'ari predetermination includes anything and acquisition kinds of acts also are created by God, and He is aware of them. Therefore if divine predetermination used in the sense of creation, then it includes creatures' obediences and also their sins. But creation of badness and sin isn't as His failure, since according to Ash'ari as God is the subject of will and passion and action in the creature and He never described by these, so He also is creator and doer of evil generally, of course for the creature not for Him. So Ash'ari rejected this view that says predetermination about voluntary acts means only command and divine legislation. Therefore, the question of description of God by ability to cruelty that was a controversial thing among theologians, for Ash'ari takes another form. For him, if our intent of cruelty is an act that God realizes it and then He will be a cruel, it is impossible that His power is towards cruelty, but we can consider Him as able to cruelty, and this means that cruelty of His creatures are produced from His power, and since He created cruelty for others then never he will be described by it.

The result from Ash'ari's interpretation of ability is definition of an unbearable duty by God for human, because pagans were commanded by Him to be faithful, but if there was ability for them to be faithful, faith was a requirement for their ability. Nevertheless, if our intent of unbearable duty is a work that person can't do it, so allocation of it by God is impossible. Ash'ari explains that the antonym concept of ability isn't inability; rather it is about a person that doesn't do an act and goes to do its opposite, and according to his analyses this person hasn't ability to do the considered act but meanwhile it can be said that he is unable.

Commentator and researchers of Ash'ari's thoughts have different opinions about the truth of "acquisition" which according to the most well-known opinion in this regard acquisition is: concurrency of act and person's power and will, without any effect of person's power and will on the realization of act, as Ghoshchi said: "what means from acquisition is concurrency of person's act and his power and will, without any effect from him unless that he is vessel of act's emergence (Ghooshchi, 1985, 445).

The theory of acquisition not only was criticized by followers of Ash'ari, but also was considered as a wrong and vague theory by some researchers of Ash'ari's thoughts.

Scholars such as Sheikh Mohammad Abdoh and Sheikh Shaloot also didn't accept this theory and Ahmad Amin regarded it as a new interpretation of determinism and stated that: "this theory as you see made no change in determinism, but it is a new interpretation of it (Amin, 1933, 3:57). To reject acquisition theory it is said that it can't bring person out from the limits of compulsion to do his acts, and presence of such power has no effect on act and can't justify its reward or punishment. Therefore none of both groups couldn't choose a proper way for correction of duty and reward and punishment, because followers of Ash'ari didn't think that person's power is effective on act occurrence, and Mo'tazilah believed that God hasn't power over any human's act. So Imamiyah has an intermediate opinion which didn't confirmed none of above two viewpoints, rather they believed that human's acts are out of him

*"والمراد بكسبه اياه مقارنته لقدرته و ارادته من غير ان يكون هناك منه تأثير او مدخل في وجوده سوى كونه محلا له."
†"و هو كماترى لايقتم في الموضوع و لا يوخز، فهو شكل جديد في التعبير عن الجبر»

and God gave him will to do or not do them. Human may do the bad or the good upon its will, because he is able to do them or not, and the power that is given to human doesn't belong only to one of two sides. It is God's will to command to good and to forbid bad in legislation part, and occurrence of voluntary act in reality part.

Mo'tazilah's Viewpoint

There is no disagreement between theologians and wisdoms in this regard that God has will and makes will, but there is no agreement about its interpretation. The view of Mo'tazilah which is different from Ash'ari's view of the will of God will be introduced as following:

Mo'tazilah's thinkers have different opinions about God's will. For example the followers of Bashar bin Al-Omar maintained that there are two kinds of will: a will which is a verb among other verbs and other one is a will which is in His essence. Inherent will of God has no relation to His creatures' sin (Ash'ari, 1983, 98).

Abol-Hassan Basri who belongs to Mo'tazilah sect maintained that will is God's knowledge of things in act and turns it into a quality of a science called "Da'i" (intender). Ka'bi maintained that divine will is His awareness of acts. Abo-Hashem and Abo-Ali believed that God's will is created thing but not in place. For Nezam, God's will is His act or command or rule. In answer to the question that is God can do injustice and cruelty or not? Abol-Hazil stated that it is impossible, since injustice is a sign of imperfect and mayn't that God be imperfect (Ash'ari, 1983, 104). In summary it can be said that although Mo'tazilah adherents are in accord that with each other that God has will. But there is disagreement among them about the meaning of will. But about human's will, almost all of them accepted that human is able to do acts whether good or evil. And they are doer of all of their acts, good or evil (Molla Sadra, 1974, 2). But Ghazi Abdol-Jabar Mo'tazeli maintained that a few of Mo'tazilah adherents don't think so (Ghazi Abdol-Jabar, 1956, 8:3).

Background of Original Sin Theory

The term of original sin, in Christianity, is a theological term like trinity and isn't occurred in bible explicitly. However a main part of holy bible is about sin and its consequences. Therefore Christian theologians tried to find the origin of original sin in Holy Scriptures (Pfandl, 1954, 57). The formation of original sin doctrine started with the descent of Adam and Eve in third chapter of the genesis. When they disobeyed God's command to not eat forbidden fruit, God punished them to hardship and burdens, pain and death. So that now such things are a part of their legacy for us. But the story doesn't say that these are punishments for our acts and also doesn't refer that we inherited Adam's sin. Paul the apostle refers to this in his letters. Paul the apostle interpreted Hebrew holy book as exact anticipations of events that will be realized only in Jesus's life. His narration of Adam's and Jesus's position in creation is a remembrance of a contrast and starts in this way: "as sin entered the world through a man, death entered it because of sin, thus death came over all, since all sinned" (Romans, 5:12). The he concluded that: just as because of disobedience by a man, many became sinful, also because of obedience by a man many will be righteous" (Romans, 5:19). Parallel contrasts in second part of these verses indicated that all are sinner because of disobedience by Adam. Obedience or good act by a man (Jesus) is that through which all men will be just.

The concept of original sin has formed in second century for some Greek fathers of Church including Irnaus, Origen, and also Latin fathers including Tertullian and Ambrose, but Augustine as the most important theoretician of original sin made it as a prominent doctrine through turning it to a historical, psychological, and passionate issue. For Augustine, arrogance is starting point of original sin, also this arrogance -as the origin of sin- has corrupted devil, and then devil has corrupted Adam through jealousy in the same way. In other words, devil turned to arrogance. Therefore arrogance is the source of any sin.

Augustine's view was criticized by Pelagius and others including Teodorus and Selestious. Teodorus rejected that Adam's sin is the cause and source of death. Selestious, as friend and student of Pelagius, was propagating Pelagius's ideas, stated that human was to die whether perpetrating sin or not. The sine of Adam damaged himself only not human kind, then opponents of Augustine or Pelagiusians accepted that death can be transferred to children easily through inheritance. Nevertheless they didn't accept that sin is transferred from Adam to other generations. Pelagiusians in their third opinions said that Adam has caused sin in human kind, but not in an inheritance way, rather because he has become an example for others. After conviction of Pelagius school's adherents in Ephesus council another school was established entitled semi-Pelagianism that its followers, despite considering Pelagius school as blasphemy, hadn't full agreement with Augustine salvation way. They rejected Augustine's predetermination and grace theory. Since, these two theories, for them, have negated human's will and responsibility. Augustine didn't encounter them as heretics, but as Christian brothers who were mistaken.

Trent council was one of most important ones in the history of catholic church. This council through five decrees has addressed the question of original sin in detail, and convicted both schools of Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism.

Divine Grace and Blessing in Holy Scripture

One of the firmest pillars of Christianity belief, especially in Catholicism, is that through God the Father's grace, He sent the Son to all people for redemption of their sins and their salvation. So through personal blessing of the Son who is the Master of Christian believers they may be saved. Of course the belief in God's grace in religions for salvation and guidance of human returns to long time ago.

This also is true about Islam in different ways. The rule of grace among Muslim theologians especially Shi'as stated that because of God's favor, Muslim leaders and scholars are secure from great deviance and mistakes in drawing the right way, and innocent Imam is a divine ground for grace rule.

Definitely grace word in its specific sense that is God's favor isn't exclusive to Christianity; rather it is available also in the Old Testament.

It is only in the New Testament that the exact meaning of this word and its semantic development and expansion was explained clearly (Sell 1908, 11:148). In the New Testament, this concept is confronted with salvation system in the Old Testament that was based on its canons, thus a new salvation system was devised based on God's grace which its founder is Jesus (see John, 17:1). According to Christian tradition, on one hand, we can't be His companion without His grace, and only through God's grace it is possible to know and love God as our internal wish. Inspirations which may be occurred inside us, and also divine virtues, faith, hope and righteousness, these all are related to the grace and are originated from it; as sunlight which is originated in the sun (Ripley, 1960, 158). And, on the other hand, it is because of God's grace that the greatest gift of God, His son Jesus who is the extract of all of His favors, may be embodied (Romans, 8:32). But the grace isn't only a gift; rather it is a gift that indicates favor, generosity, greatness and great heartedness of the donor. It is through grace that God gives us its gifts, also because of it the receiver is a righteous individual for God. Grace word in Hebrew and Greek at the same refers to the origin of this gift, a God who is granter of the favor, and also to the influence of this favor on the receiver. In the Old Testament, grace is inside of God. But in the New Testament, this grace is embodied in the blessing of Jesus. Christians maintained that Jesus's task was to reveal God and to demonstrate to people the quiddity of God. Jesus coming is ultimate divine favor, grace and generosity, and this shows that His generosity is to the extent that He even sacrifices His son (Romans, 8:32). As it is mentioned in John, the gift of truthness reaches us in Jesus. We saw truthness blessing in Jesus being (John, 1:14).

Grace Doctrine in the New Testament

That was in fifth century that subjects such as grace, human nature, and the original sin were discussed strongly. In contrary to Eastern Church, in which Greek rational thinkers were interested in theoretic and metaphysical debates in theology, the thinkers in western church were considering subjects including anthropology and salvation (O'Grady, 1998, 178).

For first time, it was in controversies between Pelagius and Augustine that human nature, sin and grace were discussed. Their debate was about the question of human nature and salvation, and that whether human only may be saved through divine will or throughout salvation process there is a place for person's will and acts? Pelagius believed in the effect of human's will and his power to choose between bad and good. He maintained that any person has an independent creation; therefore he isn't under influence of Adam's sin. Universality of sin among all peoples may be justified by human's weakness not through destruction of his will by original sin, and human doesn't inherit original sin from, but old generations' sins have undermined present generation, so that human always perpetrates sin, unless their will cooperates with God in salvation process. Human with free will can cooperates with God to reaches holiness, and enjoys possibilities such as holy book, reason, Jesus example for obtaining grace (Kerner, 1994, 111). Pelagius maintained that grace is human's abilities. For him these abilities aren't corrupted and deficient, rather these are given to human by God and this is upon him to use them. Pelagius stated that human can avoid sin by his will and reason which are from his abilities (McGrath, 2006, 474).

But according to Augustine, the New Testament doesn't mean this sense of grace at all. He said: Pelagius's beliefs are in contradiction with many fundamental teachings of Christ. And Pelagius's teachings have ignored original sin and that Christ is a savior, and this idea has no place in Pelagius' thought in no way that says human inclines towards sin inherently. But for Augustine, Adam's offspring have no control over their bodies and couldn't avoid sin. He said: our body was under our supervision but now it makes us troubles through its disobedience. This was because of our opposing that we have perpetrated not God, since he doesn't need us, but we need to serve our body. Therefore what we obtain is punishment about ourselves, not about what we did.

Augustine believed that we human beings, for our salvation, are dependent on God from the beginning to the end of life. He precisely distinguished between natural abilities as natural granted gifts to human and grace's gifts. The gifts from grace, as God-granted gifts, are extra gifts for human. For Augustine, human's nature is weak,

unable, and deviant; and for its renewal we need God's attendance and help. For him, grace is immeasurable attendance of God on human, while he isn't merit in this regard (Lewis, 111).

But Pelagius believed that grace helps us to understand our moral duties, but not about doing them. Grace for Pelagius is an external and passive thing outside of us. But Augustine has regarded grace as real and saving presence of God inside Jesus and us which leads to transformation. He regards grace as an internal, active and dynamic thing (McGrath, 2006, 475).

Augustine was conceived through his experiences that human can't reach any good achievement without God's help. In fact, God's grace not only is needed for supporting person's good decisions, but also is needed to induce good motives which led to those achievements, so an eternal grace must be present for this. He states this in this prayer: grants what you command, and command what you want. But his acute perception of human weakness and his severe reaction to excessive self-confidence of Pelagius gradually led him to position in which grace is the unique determining element about our acts. Therefore he came to this idea that not only God gives us grace, but also He grants us a power to use it, or withdraws it from us. Definite result here is that all responsibility of selected ones salvation, and also total responsibility of losers and damned persons is on God. Their salvation has been possible for God, but He avoids granting the power to use grace.

And Pelagius maintained that sin by human doesn't condemn human kind to certain sinfulness, and human kind doesn't die because of Adam's sin, nor he become alive because of Christ (O'Grady, 1998, 184).

So he denied original sin doctrine and interpreted grace in a way that doesn't damage to human's will. He said: if I must try, then I can. Divine grace helps all to be saved, but person must make his attempt worthy of grace.

Consequences of Grace in Holy Scripture

There are various and multiple interpretations of grace's fruits in Christian texts. Holy book also considered this, for example: God's grace isn't fruitless; it makes apparent faith actually and brings forth fruits (Thessalonians 1, 1:3). Grace is a new birth that brings a new life (John 1, 3: 3-5). Christ's grace is life's gift (John 1, 5: 26, 33). In Christianity, truly Christian believers through grace are considered as God's children and can call God as father; this is why we consider grace as pure justice (Romans, 3: 23-24). Or in another place in holy book stated that: "through grace, we can be precisely as what He expects and as children before father" (John 1, 3: 1-2).

Aiming to guide people towards Himself and salvation, God provided us many devices including: holy book that through it one can reach saving knowledge of Christ; and prayer for insistent demanding God's favors; and holy ceremonies of Christianity including baptism, Eucharist that are accepted by most of protestants, and God's attendance and favor through them will come to the participators.

Also there other holy ceremonies in Catholic Church including marriage, last anointing, repentance, and so on. According to catholic theology, any holy ceremony engenders consecrating grace or increases it. This called as consecrating grace because this grants to them divine aid which is needed for realization of the aim of holy ceremony.

Pelagians's Argument for Free Will

Pelagius has rejected the original sin idea totally; he has claimed and insisted that original sin is voluntary and individual merely and isn't transferable. The descent of Adam has no effect on spirits and bodies of his offspring (Walker, 1954, 57). The beliefs of Pelagius and his followers in advocating human's absolute free will were appeared in Augustine's letter and were criticized by him. One of Pelagius's ideas is that human isn't compelled to do sin. He only maintained that devil's temptations are influencing on human's free will to do sin: "we say that humans are created by God and no one can without his/her choice and because of God's power isn't compelled to do good or evil act, but individual undertakes good or evil by his/her will, and divine grace supports doer in doing good, but in doing an evil act it is devil's temptations that incites one to do it (Schaff, 1998, 1:654).

To answer this Augustine says: human, to the extent that is human, is created by God, but when they are sinners, so they are under influence of devil unless to be saved by Christ only because it is impossible so along as there is a sinner to be a mediator between God and human. As nobody is compelled to do right or wrong act unintentionally because of God's will, but if God leaves someone, he will go to sin as he deserves to it, and if God helps then one inclines to goodness while he isn't merit about it. Since a bad person isn't interested in good act, but even he is supported by divine grace to the extent that he is willing to do good, so it isn't written in vain that "since God wanted that through his grace to produce both will and power to do any work" (Philippians, 2: 13). And "will shall be provided by God" (Proverb, 8:35).

Comparison of Augustine's and Ash'ari's Opinions of Determinism and Free Will

Above debates lead us to a conclusion, a comparison between the views of Augustine and Ash'ari about free will and determinism. This comparison between the two thinkers according to texts is as follows:

1- Their thoughts are formed in reaction to the contemporary thought currents and extensively under influence of their thought contexts. And this is worthy to say that after conversion to manichaeism and leaving it after understanding its teachings on one hand, also confronting the nontraditional interpretations of Pelagius on the other hand, Augustine has prepared a collection included catholic beliefs and critiques of manichaeism and Pelagius's school, and has introduced his specific interpretations to defend Christianity thought, a thought system which was appeared through Paul's interpretations of Holy Scripture and was consolidated by the fathers of church. Manichaeism also had its interpretation of Holy Scripture (Second Letter to Boniface, Schaff, 1998, 654).

On the other hand, Pelagius believed in absolute free will and advocated personal responsibility, whether intentionally or unintentionally, he challenged catholic ideas about Jesus's descent and his embodiment and crucifying for redemption, if it is possible for people to be saved upon their choice without God's grace, then why do we need God's grace through Jesus presence among people on the earth and his blessing, and for what Jesus was sacrificed? These questions which are appeared after he presented his ideas were demanding answers and they could endanger whole of Christian thoughts in this regard.

In fact, Pelagius's school has provided this opportunity for Augustine and other fathers of church to strengthen the pillars of Christianity (Hatzfeld, Ad, 1898, 5).

Furthermore, original sin idea and necessity of save from this universal sin because all are sinners from the moment of birth could justify another essential catholic belief, baptism. Aiming to defend Catholicism against Pelagianism and Manichaeism, Augustine played an important role in development and consolidation of original sin teaching and grace theory, but this led to controversial debate of determinism and free will. If humans are sinners and subject to the consequences of original sin while they didn't perpetrate it, and also if they are subject to Christ's blessing, divine generosity and salvation while they aren't entitled to, thus all these only mean determinism. Also how human could has moral responsibility in life?

To answer these questions and escaping from determinism trap, Augustine has introduced various justifications in his letters and some of his books which most important of them are:

- a- Fiftieth letter of Loeb collection
- b- First letter to pope Boniface

Ash'ari was confronted with two contemporary though currents, firstly Salafi's absolute determinism, secondly Mo'tazilah's beliefs about absolute free will of human which stated that persons are responsible for all their acts. Modifying determinism through acquisition theory Ash'ari tried to make partly people responsible for their acts. But he wasn't successful in his attempt and other thinkers maintained that this theory much more is a justification for determinism and he was known as a determinist.

2- Philosophical and rational approach to the question of determinism and free will is the second similarity of both thinkers. Augustine had a well-known tendency towards neoplatonic philosophical thought. Furthermore, before neoplatonism he had inclined towards Manichaeism and his debate with Manichaeism's leader in Africa is known as main cause to leave Manichaeism. He couldn't find a good rational justification for Manichaeism's determinist ideas so left it and came to neoplatonic thought for a while. Confronting with irrational ideas of superficial Salafists in a debate with Abo-Ali Jaba'i he wasn't convinced about them, so he went to Mo'atazilah and established his thought school according rationality, although he was inclined more towards his previous current for avoidance of Mo'tazilah's extremist rationalism. And it seems that acquisition theory is a rational approach for determinism.

3- Although grace teaching has conceptual differences with acquisition theory and at first look it seems that they aren't in conformity with each other at all, but because both are justifications for God's acts and also that human has free will and isn't compelled to do good acts, then they may be very close about this viewpoint that acquisition theory also leads to a kind of God's attendance and favor for creation of act and its acquisition by people, and also according to grace theory, person is subject to God's favor while doesn't deserve it. But main difference between these two theories is about doing sinful acts, in grace theory we can't attribute sin to God, so Augustine in many places in his letters has declared that human has free will to do wrong and can do sinful acts willfully, but about doing right and good acts he needs Christ's blessing and God's favor and it is possible only in this way.

4- Another common point between Augustine and Ash'ari is about attribution of sin to human without free will, but this attribution is done according to two totally different approaches.

Augustine believed that human is sinful because of original sin, a sin that is transferring through semen in lustful intercourse to fetus, and the only to remove to cleanse it is baptism and faith in Jesus Christ as continuous grace of God.

Such human only may be under Holy Ghost's favors if has faith in sacrificing the son of God and His embodiment.

But Ash'ari believed that human is compelled to do sin. Because creation of whole world is in His hand and also human's acts are happened and created things, therefore human's sins are attributed to God also. With this description that creation of acts will be accomplished simultaneously by God's power and human's willful acquisition.

5- Augustine and Ash'ari both were aware that they are accused of determinism because of their thoughts and both tried to escape from their accusation of being an irrationalist. As mentioned before invention of acquisition theory by Ash'ari and justifications of Augustine in his letter, all are for realization of this goal. Especially Augustine tried much more to avoid accusation of determinist. He justified losing free will out of original sin in this way that it is about losing his free will in Heaven, but human in the world has free will. He believed that various prayers and begging wishes in them, that there are also many verses in this regard in Holy Scripture, is a sign that shows human is free.

Second proof that is introduced by Augustine from Holy Scripture is that human ought to be children of God to be free and if they say that they were assisted to have the power to be God's children, for being merit to receive such power it is necessary that they firstly received it through free will not through grace (Schaff, 1998, 645). Therefore anybody who receives Jesus Christ through free will, and then he has merit to be God's child and anybody who is God's child then can enjoy the blessing of Christ and who enjoys this then he will be able to do right act and finally such man will be free and saved.

Conclusion

As main concerns for both thinkers, Augustine and Ash'ari, obligation to religion and religious principles is their motive to invent influential historical theories in the history of great religions including Christianity and Islam. Defending God's traits such as power, wise, and will besides irrationalness of denying human's free will, led to inventing the acquisition theory among followers of Ash'ari. Same things among Christians led to confrontation between theologians such as Augustine and Pelagius, and Pelagius tried to answer to all doubts by grace theory. Acquisition theory among followers of Ash'ari as an important Islamic sect, and grace theory among catholic church and Christians were very determinant and practical ideas, so that much of theologians in both religions were under their influence. Although Augustine and Ash'ari have different methods to invent theories of acquisition and grace, but their motive in this regard was same, resisting against extremist rationality and full assignation of free will on one hand, and absolute traditionalism and determinism on the other hand. Although their achievements in this way weren't empty of failures and unwillingly they have inclined towards determinism in another way.

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