

The Correlation Between Rational and Sharia Rulings in Islamic Jurisprudence: A Comparative Analysis of Imamiyyah and Maturidiyyah Perspectives.

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Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between rational judgment and Sharia rulings from the viewpoints of the Imamiyyah and Maturidiyyah schools of thought. The core inquiry addresses whether human actions inherently possess moral attributes—such as goodness or badness—prior to divine revelation, and whether a consistent correlation exists between the rulings of reason and those of Sharia. The significance of this discussion lies in its foundational role in shaping both ethical reasoning and legal interpretation within Islamic thought. Adopting a descriptive–analytical and comparative methodology, this research examines the theological and jurisprudential implications of rational–divine interrelation in both traditions. The findings reveal that Imamiyyah scholars affirm the independence and authority of reason in discerning moral values, maintaining that divine law never contradicts sound intellect. In contrast, Maturidiyyah scholars acknowledge this correspondence only within theological principles while rejecting it in the domain of legal rulings. These divergent positions reflect broader epistemological distinctions concerning the interplay between intellect, revelation, and divine legislation in Islamic legal theory.

Keywords: Rational and Sharia correlation, Imamiyyah, Maturidiyyah, moral epistemology, comparative Islamic jurisprudence, *usul al-fiqh*, divine legislation.

Introduction

The study of the relationship between reason and the Sharia is one of the significant issues that has always attracted the attention of scholars and religious thinkers. The relationship between reason and religious beliefs, reason and religious ethics, and reason and religious rulings constitute the three main domains in the study of the relation between reason and religion. The issue of the correlation (or concomitance) between reason and Sharia pertains to the third domain, which is usually discussed in *Usul al-Fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) under the title of “the concomitance between rational judgment and religious ruling.”

This is because the concept of *malaazimah* (necessary correlation) is a matter within *Usul al-Fiqh*, as a *usuli* issue is one through which a jurist can infer a religious ruling, and the discussion of the correlation between reason and Sharia possesses this characteristic. For example, justice is considered commendable by reason, and whatever is deemed commendable by reason is also commendable according to Sharia; therefore, justice is commendable in the view of Sharia. Another example is that, according to reason, the prerequisite of an obligation is itself obligatory; hence, from the perspective of Sharia, the prerequisite of an obligation is also obligatory.

Most scholars of *Usul* accept the concomitance between the judgment of reason and that of Sharia, while the majority of *Akhbaris* and some *Usulis* reject it. In this paper, after clarifying the intended meaning and types of *malaazimah* (correlation), we will present both rational and scriptural arguments supporting the concomitance between the judgment of reason and that of Sharia, in order to refute the objections raised by those who deny this principle.

Section One: Conceptual Analysis

1. Concomitance (Talāzum)

- a. **Linguistic meaning:** Derived from the verb form *tafa'ul*, it refers to entering into or being involved with one another. (Nafisi, 1300 SH, Vol. 2, p. 952)
- b. **Technical meaning:** It denotes the impossibility of separation between two things, the inseparability of one thing from another. It is also referred to as *malaazimah* or *istilzam*, meaning a ruling that necessitates another ruling, so that whenever the necessitated (maqtuda) exists, the necessitating (maqtadi) also exists. (Jalalzadeh, 1401 SH, Vol. 1, pp. 120, 131)

2. Rulings (Ahkam)

- a. **Linguistic meaning:** *Ahkam* is the plural of *hukm* and refers to commands, orders, decrees, laws, fatwas, or any ruling expressed in advance. (Nafisi, 1300 SH, Vol. 1, p. 118)
- b. **Technical meaning:** It refers to affirming one matter in relation to another or negating one matter in relation to another. Thus, the term denotes the laws and regulations recognized by the Sharia for the accountable (*mukallaf*), whether issued directly by the Sharia, deduced through reason or custom, and whether pertaining to beliefs, ethics, or the actions of the accountable. (Zuhayli, 1427 AH, p. 911; Sajjadi, 1373 SH, Vol. 1, p. 59; Jazairi, 1413 AH, Vol. 4, pp. 222–322; Fazel Lankarani, 1378 SH, Vol. 4, pp. 971–1081)

3. Reason ('Aql)

- a. **Linguistic meaning:** Although the term has multiple definitions, in short, it refers to a faculty of the human soul responsible for thinking, reflection, speech, discernment, and the creation of skills and arts. (Dehkhoda, 1372 SH, Vol. 2, p. 2001)
- b. **Technical meaning:** Although there are numerous technical definitions, in brief, reason or the rational faculty (*quwwah 'aqilah*) is the power granted by God to humans through which they perceive general matters and universal laws, such as the impossibility of a contradiction in two opposing propositions, or that the whole is greater than its part. The term “general matters” refers to those not limited to a specific time or place. (Qolizadeh, 1379 SH, Vol. 1, p. 145)

4. Sharia (Shar')

- a. **Linguistic meaning:** *Shar'* literally means a clear path. The phrase “شَرَعْتُ لَهُ طَرِيقًا” means “I have shown him a path and made it clear.” Originally, *Shar'* was a verbal noun, which later came to mean a clear and evident path. It is also referred to as *Shari'ah* and metaphorically applied to the divine way. It has also been used to mean a place from which one drinks water directly, or that which God has made lawful for His servants regarding beliefs and rulings, as well as a method or path, as God says: “Then We placed you on a

path concerning the matter, so follow it" (Mustafa, Ibrahim, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 245). (Raghib Isfahani, 1412 AH, p. 450)

b. Technical meaning: In technical usage, *Sharia* refers to the teachings derived from the Lawgiver, whether related to belief or jurisprudence, whether from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, or through the fatwas of jurists. (Mu'jam Mufradat, *Usul al-Fiqh al-Muqaaran*, Vol. 1, p. 167) It is also derived from *Shar' al-Hukm, idha sannahu wa bada'ahu*, meaning what God has legislated regarding acts of worship, transactions, punishments, and personal matters, for absolute observance or avoidance. (Badri, 1428 AH, Vol. 1, p. 248)

5. Group (Fareeq)

a. Linguistic meaning: The term *fareeq* refers to a large group of people, or one of the two parties in a contract: *al-fareeq al-awwal* (the first party) and *al-fareeq al-thani* (the second party). It is also used as *al-furūq*, *al-firqah*, meaning a sect or faction of something divided. (Bostani, 1375 SH, Vol. 1, p. 663; Ibn Manzur, 1414 AH, Vol. 1, p. 3)

b. Technical meaning: In technical usage, *fareeq* refers to a group of people. For example, God says: "*Then a party among them will turn away while they are averse*" (Al-Imran/23), and "*Then there were two parties that disputed*" (An-Naml/45). It is also used in expressions such as *fareeq al-mu'minin* (group of believers) and *fareeq al-kafirin* (group of disbelievers). (Abdul-Mun'im, 1419 AH, Vol. 3, p. 41)

Section Two: The Study of Concomitance in the Teachings of the Imamiya

1. Concomitance of Principle and Its Inverse, and the Rational Proof for the Concomitance of Rational and Legal Rulings

The concept of "*concomitance between rational and Sharia rulings*" has two aspects:

1. **Concomitance of Principle (Malaazamat al-Asl):** "*Whatever reason judges to be obligatory or forbidden, Sharia also judges accordingly.*"
2. **Inverse Concomitance (Malaazamat al-'Aks):** "*Whatever Sharia judges, reason also judges accordingly.*"

Regarding the first proposition ("*whatever reason judges, Sharia also judges*"), several interpretations have been offered:

- a.** Wherever reason rules an act as good or evil, Sharia also legislates accordingly, resulting in two rulings and two judges.
- b.** When reason judges an act as good or evil, Sharia confirms the same judgment without issuing a separate ruling. In this case, there are two judges, but the ruling itself is one.
- c.** The rational judgment of an act as good or evil is identical to the Sharia ruling itself. In this sense, reason is the "inner prophet" of Sharia, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is the "external prophet" of Sharia. Therefore, just as the ruling conveyed by the external prophet is the Sharia ruling, the judgment of reason, as the internal prophet, is also the Sharia ruling. Consequently, both the ruling and the judge are unified. (Kalantari, n.d., p. 234)

Another issue concerns the meaning of the Sharia ruling in the principle of concomitance. Two possibilities exist:

- a.** It refers to the divine will, pleasure, displeasure, or prohibition.
- b.** It refers to the verbal and communicative ruling (command or prohibition). (Kalantari, *ibid.*)

Regarding the principle "*whatever Sharia judges, reason also judges*", two interpretations are also offered:

1. Reason affirms any ruling found in Sharia and believes that it is appropriately placed, just, and wise.
2. In some cases, reason legislates a ruling corresponding to that of Sharia. (Kalantari, *ibid.*, p. 240)

Rational Proof for the Concomitance of Rational and Sharia Rulings

The rational argument for this principle is as follows:

- a. What is commendable according to reason serves human welfare and happiness, while what is blameworthy leads to human ruin and misery.
- b. God, by virtue of His infinite knowledge, knows the good and evil of actions, as well as their benefits and harms, and by His wisdom desires human welfare and does not will their misery. By His unlimited power, He can achieve whatever He wills.
- c. Since humans possess power and free will, God's wise intention to achieve human welfare is realized through His legislative power and will. (Bahari, 1393 SH)
- d. Achieving human welfare through God's legislative will depends on the enactment of Sharia commands and prohibitions.

Conclusion: Therefore, the rational obligations and prohibitions are identical to the Sharia obligations and prohibitions: *"Whatever reason judges, Sharia also judges."*

2. The Creator of Rational Beings and the Concomitance of Rational and Sharia Rulings

To prove this principle, some scholars refer to the fact that God is the Creator of rational beings (*Khalīq al-'Uqala'*). Shaykh Ansari states:

Whenever reason perceives that performing a certain action leads to reward and goodness for rational and wise beings, and performing another action leads to punishment and evil—or has neither of these consequences—it is impossible for the ruling of the Sharia, given by the Creator of rational and wise beings, to be contrary to that. (Kalantari, *ibid.*, p. 238)

According to him, if the meaning of the rational commendability (*husn*) or blameworthiness (*qubh*) of actions is that the doer deserves worldly praise and eternal reward, or worldly censure and eternal punishment, then proving that reason recognizes the commendability or blameworthiness of an act is in fact proving that reason has grasped God's ruling. In such a case, invoking the principle of concomitance to deduce a Sharia ruling from reason is not necessary. Evidence for this view is the statement of scholars who say, for example, that *oppression (zulm) is prohibited, and trusts (wadi'ah) are obligatory*, because their notion of obligation implies a necessary prescription whose violation incurs punishment.

However, if the meaning of *husn* and *qubh* is merely intrinsic, limited to worldly praise or blame without reference to divine reward or punishment, then the notion of commendability and blameworthiness would conflict with the principle of concomitance between reason and Sharia (Kalantari, *ibid.*, p. 231). In other words, proving intrinsic goodness or evil alone is insufficient for deducing a Sharia ruling; the principle of concomitance is needed.

To clarify Shaykh Ansari's point: whenever an act is such that it is praiseworthy or blameworthy according to reason, it will also be so in the view of God, the Creator of human rational beings. Otherwise, there would be a possibility that reason's judgments are mistaken in every matter, which is impossible given God's wisdom.

No Rational Judgment or Perception Exists Without Legal Significance

No rational judgment or perception has legal validity without acknowledgment from Sharia, and the consequence of denying this is that the path to proving the existence of God and His legislation for humanity would be closed—something that is unquestionably false from the perspective of Sharia.

Moreover, the reality of divine reward and punishment regarding human actions is nothing other than God's praise (*thawab*) and censure (*'iqab*). That is, whenever praise or censure comes from God, it constitutes reward or punishment. Divine praise and censure have different manifestations, and consequently, divine

rewards and punishments also vary according to the nature of the action. For instance, acts such as justice and benevolence are commendable, while oppression and aggression are blameworthy.

It is evident that the goodness of justice, for example, means that its doer deserves commendation and is worthy of a good reward (*thawab*), and since the reward comes from God, it is called a divine reward. Similarly, the evil of oppression means that its perpetrator deserves blame and punishment (*'iqab*), and since this punishment comes from God, it is called divine punishment. (Lahiji, 1372 SH, p. 343)

Furthermore, any act characterized by such features—whose doer deserves divine praise and reward—is certainly approved and desired by God. Conversely, an act whose doer deserves divine blame and punishment is certainly disapproved by God. Therefore, reason, in perceiving the goodness or evil of actions, can recognize the Sharia ruling in the sense of divine approval, disapproval, will, and prohibition. To deduce the divine command and prohibition, one must add that God, according to His perfect wisdom, desires human welfare and does not will human harm or misery. This divine will is realized through human free will, which implies God's legislative will, and His legislative will is expressed through commands and prohibitions.

The late scholar Muzzafar also believed that adherence to rational commendation and blame is identical to adherence to Sharia commendation and blame. Contrary to some who considered the two independent, Muzzafar attributed this view to many researchers and adopted it himself:

"Indeed, as many verified scholars have stated, the meaning of deserving praise is nothing but deserving reward, and the meaning of deserving blame is nothing but deserving punishment. By this, the intended meaning of praise encompasses reward, because praise signifies recompense with good, and the intended meaning of blame encompasses punishment, because blame signifies recompense with evil. Therefore, they said that the praise of the Lawgiver is the reward and His blame is the punishment, and this is what is meant." (Muzzafar, 1423 AH, Vol. 1, p. 238)

Independence of Rational and Sharia Rulings: Critical Remarks on Muzzafar's View

Most scholars of *Usul* and *Kalam* have not treated rational and Sharia rulings as independent from one another; they have often relied solely on the issue of rational *husn* (commendability) and *qubh* (blameworthiness). Based on this approach, it is not necessary to address the concomitance between rational and Sharia rulings separately due to minor differences of opinion (Kalantari, Vol. 1, pp. 238–239). Shaykh Muzzafar, assuming the duality of the principle of rational *husn* and *qubh* and the principle of concomitance, establishes the concomitance between rational and Sharia rulings from the standpoint of reason. His reasoning is as follows: whenever reason judges an act as good or evil, this implies that the judgment is universally accepted among rational beings, because they are inherently rational and wise. That is, a good action preserves social order and the continuity of humankind, whereas a bad action disrupts it. On the other hand, the Lawgiver (Sharia) is also a rational being, indeed the chief of all rational beings. Therefore, the Sharia, as rational and the Creator of reason, aligns with other rational beings and their judgments; otherwise, it would contradict the assumption that the judgment is universally agreed upon by rational beings (Kalantari, Vol. 1, pp. 236–237).

However, there are several points in Muzzafar's argument that warrant critical examination:

a. Limiting the discussion of rational *husn* and *qubh* to self-evident truths (*badaihat*) and grounding the principle of concomitance solely on them, while making the foundation firm and indisputable, restricts its scope and effectiveness. This resembles the Akhbari view, which confines the authority of reason to self-evident truths. If, however, we base it on *independent rational propositions* rather than mere self-evidence, the scope of reason's effectiveness in deducing Sharia rulings would be broader. In this approach, the agreement of rational beings is necessary, but their disagreement does not invalidate the principle.

b. When discussing the agreement of rational beings as a premise for deducing Sharia rulings through reason, the reference is to human rational beings, not the Lawgiver. If the Lawgiver is counted among the rational beings when invoking consensus, the conclusion is presupposed in the premise, resulting in a logical fallacy (*begging the question*).

c. Muzzafar defines the reality of *husn* and *qubh* as the consensus of rational beings, but this is problematic. Although the goodness or evil of actions is not a physical attribute like length, width, heat, or cold, it is also not merely a conventional concept subject to the arbitrary will of rational beings. Rather, it is a philosophical, rationally abstract concept: although it has no independent external existence, it is derived from real, external human capacities and the purpose of human creation. The alignment or misalignment of human actions with the development of these capacities and the attainment of human perfection—the purpose of creation—is real. Therefore, the goodness and evil of actions, as Muzzafar claims, are not merely matters of consensus among rational beings, and their reality cannot be reduced to such consensus.

3. Textual Evidence for the Concomitance of Rational and Sharia Rulings

The concomitance between rational and Sharia rulings can also be clearly inferred from certain Qur'anic verses and traditions:

The Holy Qur'an, in praising the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), states:

"He commands them to do what is right (al-ma'ruf) and forbids them from what is wrong (al-munkar), and makes lawful for them the good things and forbidden the impure." (Al-A'raf, 7:157)

The verse implies that what is subject to Sharia command is *ma'ruf* (right and commendable), and what is subject to prohibition is *munkar* (wrong and blameworthy). Hence, the intended meaning of *ma'ruf* and *munkar* refers to their real, objective forms, which reason can recognize. Moreover, it includes *all* real commendable and blameworthy acts, not just some, because the verse is in the context of praising the Prophet. Commanding only some *ma'ruf* and forbidding only some *munkar* would not be a distinctive trait of the Prophet or chosen servants of God, as ordinary people could also do that. Therefore, all real *ma'ruf* are subject to Sharia commands, and all real *munkar* are subject to Sharia prohibitions, encompassing obligatory and recommended commands as well as prohibited and disliked prohibitions. (Bahari, 1393 SH, p. 221)

The same reasoning applies to the lawful (*tayyibat*) and prohibited (*khabais*) things: what reason judges as good and permissible is affirmed by Sharia, i.e., *"Whatever reason judges, Sharia also judges"* (Kalantari, n.d., p. 240).

Another verse indicating the concomitance of rational and Sharia rulings is in Surah An-Nahl:

"Indeed, Allah commands justice, benevolence, and giving to relatives, and forbids indecency, wrongdoing, and oppression." (An-Nahl, 16:90)

This verse shows that justice, benevolence, and generosity toward relatives are desirable and commendable, and are the subject of divine command, while indecency, wrongdoing, and oppression are undesirable and blameworthy, and are prohibited by God. Justice represents moderation and balance, which reason also recognizes as good. The generality of *ma'ruf* and *munkar* in this verse is consistent with the generality discussed previously (Al-Imran, 3:104) (Kalantari, n.d., p. 240).

Shaykh Ansari also cites the verse: *"O my son! Establish prayer, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong."* (Luqman, 31:17)

as evidence for the principle of concomitance, although he does not detail the reasoning, asserting that the evidence is apparent (Kalantari, n.d., p. 240).

In explanation, the command to enjoin good and forbid evil encompasses all commendable and blameworthy acts, whether rational or Sharia-based. Thus, what reason judges as good is also desired by Sharia, and what reason judges as evil is disliked by Sharia. From these verses, one can infer the concomitance of rational and Sharia rulings in terms of divine will, prohibition, desirability, and undesirability. However, this does not imply that a Sharia directive (*command or prohibition*) is necessarily issued; it pertains to approval or disapproval.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in part of his Farewell Sermon stated: “O people! There is nothing that brings you closer to Paradise or distances you from Hellfire except that I have commanded it for you, and nothing that distances you from Paradise or brings you closer to Hellfire except that I have forbidden it for you.” (Kulayni, 1388 AH, Vol. 2, p. 60; Har’ Amili, 1389 AH, Vol. 12, p. 27)

This statement confirms that all rationally commendable acts are commanded, and all blameworthy acts are forbidden by Sharia.

The Concomitance of Rational and Sharia Rulings

The concomitance of rational and Sharia rulings can be summarized as follows: Human voluntary actions, which fall within the scope of divine command and prohibition as indicated by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), are of two types:

1. Actions that lead a person toward Paradise and keep them away from Hell.
2. Actions that have the opposite effect.

In other words, actions are intrinsically either commendable and desirable (*ma’ruf*), or blameworthy and evil (*munkar*), i.e., they have an inherent goodness or badness (*husn* or *qubh* in themselves). Consequently, actions that are commendable and lead to Paradise are subject to Sharia commands, while blameworthy actions that lead to Hell are subject to Sharia prohibitions. Therefore, whenever reason can recognize the intrinsic goodness or badness of an act, it simultaneously recognizes that a commendable act is subject to Sharia command and a blameworthy act is subject to Sharia prohibition. This expresses the principle: “Whatever reason judges, Sharia also judges.” (Kalantari, n.d., p. 240)

A narration from Imam al-Sadiq illustrates this point: A person said that when he goes to the restroom, he hears the singing from neighbors and sometimes lingers to listen. The Imam replied: “Praise God and repent from what is forbidden, for God only prohibits what is intrinsically blameworthy.” (Har’ Amili, 1398 AH, Vol. 2, p. 957)

This narration demonstrates that what is subject to Sharia prohibitions possesses intrinsic and real blameworthiness. Therefore, when a human can recognize an action as inherently blameworthy through reason, they have in fact grasped that it is subject to Sharia prohibition—reinforcing the principle of concomitance (“Whatever reason judges, Sharia also judges”) (Kalantari, n.d., p. 241).

Imam Khomeini, while accepting this principle, asserts that whenever reason fully comprehends the subject matter of an act, it can infer that the Sharia ruling applies to it: “When the intellect perceives the full scope of a matter, it recognizes that a Sharia ruling pertains to it.” (Khomeini, 1385 SH, p. 14)

4. The Principle of Concomitance and Test-Based (Experimental) Obligations

The author of *Fusul*, though himself a jurist, does not fully align with the traditional Usuli scholars regarding the principle of concomitance. He distinguishes between the concomitance of intrinsic rational goodness or badness of an act (*husn* or *qubh* of the act) and the occurrence of divine obligation (*taklif*), as well as the goodness or badness of the obligation itself.

He does not agree with the Usulis that if an act possesses intrinsic rational goodness or badness, this necessarily entails a corresponding Sharia ruling of obligation or prohibition. However, he asserts that if an obligation—whether to perform or refrain from an act—is commendable, then it certainly originates

from the Sharia. In other words, he affirms the concomitance between the goodness of an obligation (*husn al-taklif*) and the occurrence of the obligation itself.

He also accepts that the intrinsic goodness or badness of an act can be a determinant of the goodness or badness of the obligation, but it is not a sufficient cause. This is because an obligation may contain elements of undesirability or difficulty that are hidden from human reason and understanding.

To support his view, he presents the example of **test-based (experimental) obligations**. In such obligations, there is no doubt regarding the goodness of the obligation itself, even though the objective of the obligation is not the intrinsic goodness of the act but rather the demonstration of the servant's obedience and submission. If the goodness of the obligation were strictly conditioned on the goodness of the act, then test-based obligations would not be commendable (Esfahani, 1404 AH, pp. 337–338; Kalantari, n.d., p. 234).

5. The Principle of Concomitance and Sharia Rulings in Cases of Taqiyya

Another objection raised by the author of *Fusul* against the inverse concomitance principle concerns Sharia rulings related to **taqiyya** (precautionary dissimulation). In such cases, the ruling issued may be contrary to the actual moral or rational value of the act; hence, the act's objective does not carry real benefit or goodness. Nevertheless, the obligation itself is still commendable, and the goodness of the obligation does not always depend on the intrinsic goodness of the act (Esfahani, 1404 AH, p. 238; Kalantari, n.d., p. 235).

6. The Principle of Concomitance, Devotional Obligations (*Taklif Ta'abbudi*), and the Verse on the Absence of Punishment

One more challenge to the concomitance principle involves **devotional obligations** (*taklif ta'abbudi*). The goodness of such obligations depends on the intention of approaching God (*niyyah taqrib*) and obeying His command; performing these acts is not intrinsically desired by Sharia and thus lacks inherent Shariaic goodness.

- If the rational goodness of these acts is considered independently of the intention to obey and draw near to God, then the **direct concomitance principle** (*whatever reason judges as good is also judged good by Sharia*) is violated, because reason may perceive an act as good while Sharia does not.
- Conversely, if the rational goodness of the act depends on the intention of devotion, then the **inverse concomitance principle** (*whatever Sharia commands is also rationally good*) is challenged, because in this case, the rational goodness is contingent upon Sharia's command; the act is judged good by reason only after it has been prescribed by Sharia.

Thus, devotional obligations demonstrate that the rational evaluation of acts can depend on the Shariaic framework, which appears to challenge the general applicability of the inverse concomitance principle (Esfahani, 1404 AH, p. 339; Kalantari, n.d., pp. 236–237).

Argument from the Verse of the Non-Punishment: "And We would not punish [anyone] until We sent a messenger." (Al-Isra, 17:15)

The Almighty has stated that **until a messenger is sent, no one will be punished**. The Ash'arites have used this verse to argue for the **denial of intellectual recognition of moral good and evil** (*ḥusn and qubh 'aqlī*). However, Fāzil Tūnī has rejected their argument, stating that the verse does not negate the **connection between rational judgment and the judgment of the Shari'ah**. He explains that if there were a necessary connection between rational and divine judgments, then disobedience to rational judgment would entail divine punishment (Kalāntarī, n.d., p. 241). In other words, if the rational judgment necessitated a Shari'ah ruling, then violating it would also warrant divine retribution.

Third Topic: Moral Good and Evil and the Connection between Rational and Shari'ah Judgments from the Māturidī Perspective

According to what is stated in the book *Al-Tawḥīd*, Imām al-Māturīdī generally accepts the principle of **moral good and evil (ḥusn and qubh) as entailing worthiness of praise or blame**. For example, in discussing the necessity of prophethood and humanity's need for the sending of messengers, he relies on reason, asserting that reason **approves truthfulness and justice, and disapproves of injustice and falsehood** (Māturīdī, n.d., p. 179).

Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī also writes regarding reason in religious knowledge that **reason judges the creation of the universe to be wise**, because an action contrary to wisdom is, from the perspective of reason, morally reprehensible (ibid., p. 4).

One of the prominent scholars of the Māturīdī school, Kamāl al-Dīn Bayāzī, believes that:

- **Good (ḥusn)** means being worthy of praise and reward for those who acknowledge the prophethood of the messengers.
- **Evil (qubh)** means being worthy of blame and punishment for those who deny it.

This judgment is **rational**: although reason cannot fully comprehend moral good and evil, it can recognize that **God is the one who establishes good and evil**, and reason is certain of this (Bayāzī, 2007, p. 81).

From the Māturīdī statements, it is clear that **the Wise God commands nothing that is evil** (Ṣiddīqī, 2008, p. 124). Therefore, reason recognizes as good whatever God commands and recognizes as evil whatever God forbids. Consequently, **a sound intellect considers whatever is good as good, and whatever is evil as evil**.

However, this does **not mean that God's rulings always align with human intellectual comprehension of good and evil**, because reason may err in some cases or fail to perceive moral good and evil in certain circumstances. Therefore, a necessary connection between rational judgment and Shari'ah judgment **does not exist**. Accordingly, knowing God's rulings is **not possible by reason alone**; it requires the sending of messengers by God (Khilāf, 1956, p. 99).

Thus, the Māturīdīs rely on God's command and prohibition to define rational good and evil, **but this does not imply that every act's goodness or evilness is solely known through God's commands**. Rather, God commands an act because it is good and forbids it because it is evil, and reason can perceive the goodness of what is commanded and the evil of what is prohibited.

From the statements of both groups—**Ahl al-Sunnah** and **Imāmīyah**—it is clear that the theological schools of both sides accept **rational recognition of moral good and evil (ḥusn and qubh 'aqlī)**. That is, in both the Imāmīyah and the Māturīdīyah, reason has the capacity to perceive ḥusn and qubh. This constitutes a common ground between the two groups.

However, there are also differences between them, as follows:

a. Scope of Reason's Perception of Good and Evil:

Among the Imāmīyah, the scope of reason is **broad**; it can independently comprehend both the principles (*uṣūl*) and branches (*furū'*) of religion. In contrast, among the Māturīdīs, although reason can perceive ḥusn and qubh, its scope is **limited**. The early Māturīdīs held that reason has independence only in understanding the principles of religion—such as the obligation to believe in God and the prohibition of disbelief—while the branches of religion can only be understood through Shari'ah rulings. This view is also upheld by the later Māturīdīs, who maintain that while reason can recognize ḥusn and qubh, it **does not by itself establish a ruling in either the principles or branches of religion for human acts**; the ruling is confirmed only after God has declared it. Consequently, reason can grasp the conditions of reward and punishment for some actions (Zuhaylī, 1406 AH, Vol. 1, p. 120). Therefore, the Māturīdīs agree with the Imāmīyah regarding the independence of reason in understanding the principles of religion, but align with the Ash'arites

regarding the lack of independence of reason in comprehending the branches of religion (‘Alīyān, 2008, p. 156).

As a result, the **disagreement about the scope of reason** affects the discussion of the connection (*talāzum*) between rational and Shari’ah judgments. Accordingly:

- According to the Imāmīyah, since reason is independent in understanding both principles and branches, **the connection between rational and Shari’ah judgments applies to both principles and branches.**
- According to the early Māturīdīs, reason is independent only in understanding the principles of religion; hence, **the connection exists only for principles, not for branches.**
- The later Māturīdīs adopt a general position denying such a connection entirely (‘Alīyān, 2008, p. 158).

b. Merit of Reward and Punishment:

Another point of difference between the two groups concerns the **ability of reason to establish eligibility for reward and punishment.** Among the Imāmīyah, reason knows that **anyone who performs a morally good action is worthy of reward, and anyone who performs a morally evil action is worthy of punishment.** In other words, reason can, **independently of Shari’ah,** determine reward and punishment because these are natural consequences of good and evil actions. Since reason can perceive the moral value of actions, it can also perceive their eligibility for reward and punishment, because of the connection between rational and Shari’ah judgments. Furthermore, whenever Shari’ah establishes a person as deserving of reward or punishment, reason can also recognize this.

Nonetheless, the **Akhbārīs** and some Imāmī Shi’ite Usūlīs **entirely reject** the connection between rational and Shari’ah judgments regarding eligibility for reward and punishment by reason alone (‘Alīyān, 2008, p. 197).

Among the Māturīdīs or Ahl al-Sunnah, as mentioned regarding the scope of reason, there is a difference between early and later scholars. **The later Māturīdīs reject the ability of reason to determine eligibility for reward and punishment** (Raḥīlī, 1406 AH, Vol. 1, p. 121). On the other hand, the **early Māturīdīs accept that reason can determine eligibility for reward and punishment** in the **principles of religion and matters of belief**, such as faith in God, the prohibition of disbelief, and the prohibition of actions that are evil in God’s sight, such as ignorance and falsehood; however, they reject this for the branches of jurisprudence (Bahārī, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 19).

b. Principle of *Lutf* (Divine Benevolence):

The principle of *lutf* in kalām (Islamic theology) refers to the necessity of God performing an action through which the morally responsible person (*mukallaf*) is brought closer to obedience and kept away from sin (Golpayegani, n.d., p. 97). From the perspective of the **Mu’tazila** and the **Imāmīyah**, *lutf* is obligatory on God toward His servants, because benevolence (*lutf*) is good (*ḥasan*), and God performs nothing except good (same, p. 97).

The **Māturīdīs** accept that God bestows *lutf*, but they **deny its obligation**, since God’s benevolence is an act of grace and favor toward His servants. That is, God grants the one whom He favors the ability to perform good deeds and refrain from evil (Shahrestānī, 1425 AH, p. 226).

It appears that from the Imāmīyah perspective, the “obligation” of the principle of *lutf* is not a juridical obligation but rather a **moral goodness of action**, which is a necessary consequence of God’s inherent

perfection: the emanation of good actions and the absence of evil actions. Reason plays the role of discovering this necessary consequence (Golpayegani, 1383 SH, p. 230).

c. Principle of *Ṣalāḥ* (Welfare or Well-being):

The goal of *ṣalāḥ* is any action that is free from corruption and brings about worldly benefit and ultimate happiness in the Hereafter (Shahrestānī, 1425 AH, p. 226). According to the **Imāmīyah** and **Mu'tazila**, since God is wise, it is obligatory according to His wisdom that He ensure the performance of actions that are beneficial (*ṣāliḥ*) for His servants. Consequently, awarding **reward and punishment** to the doer is also obligatory, because reason dictates that a person performing good actions deserves reward and a person performing evil actions deserves punishment. Given the connection (*talāzum*) between rational and Shari'ah judgments, it is therefore obligatory on God, as the Wise, to ensure *ṣalāḥ* according to His wisdom (Shahrānī, 1429 AH, Vol. 1, p. 491).

However, according to the **Māturīdīs**, God's observance of His servants' welfare is an act of grace and favor, **not an obligation**. In other words, God, as the Creator, ensures what is beneficial for His servants **out of favor and benevolence, not due to an obligation of His own wisdom** (Shahrānī, 1429 AH, Vol. 1, p. 492).

Conclusion

From the perspective of the **Imāmīyah** and the **Mu'tazila**, rational and Shari'ah judgments (*ḥukm al-'aql wa al-shar'*) are interdependent (*mālāzim*). Whatever the intellect clearly and decisively approves is also approved by Shari'ah, and whatever it disapproves of is likewise disapproved by Shari'ah. The intellect acts as the **inner messenger** of Shari'ah, just as prophets are the outward messengers of the law. Thus, reason serves as a revealer and reporter of Shari'ah's judgments. Conversely, whatever Shari'ah considers desirable or undesirable, the intellect also affirms, even if it is unable to grasp the criterion for this judgment and cannot determine the intrinsic goodness or badness before the Shari'ah's ruling. Since reason acknowledges the knowledge and wisdom of the Lawgiver, it regards the divine rulings as encompassing wisdom and benefit. In the context of the interdependence of rational and Shari'ah judgments, this principle has been recognized by jurists as a **rational proof for Shari'ah rulings**.

From the **Māturīdī** perspective, whatever God commands is good, and whatever He prohibits is evil. However, this does not mean that God's command or prohibition is the cause of the goodness or badness of things. Rather, goodness and badness exist inherently in things, and the intellect perceives them only after the divine command or prohibition.

The **Imāmīyah** and **Māturīdīyah** differ regarding the interdependence of rational and Shari'ah judgments. The Imāmīyah hold that this interdependence applies to both the principles (*uṣūl*) and the detailed rulings (*furū'*) of religion. The earlier Māturīdīs accept interdependence only for the principles of religion but reject it for the detailed rulings. Nevertheless, for the Māturīdīs, interdependence does not imply that Shari'ah rulings must necessarily coincide with rational judgment.

Other differences arise regarding the principles of **Luṭf** (divine benevolence), **Ṣalāḥ** (welfare), and the entitlement to reward and punishment. The Imāmīyah maintain that divine *luṭf* and *ṣalāḥ* are obligatory upon God toward His servants, whereas the Māturīdīs regard these as acts of God's grace and favor. Regarding the entitlement to reward and punishment, the Imāmīyah assert that reason is competent to determine this in both the principles and detailed rulings of religion. The earlier Māturīdīs accept this competence only in some principles and reject it in the detailed rulings, while the later Māturīdīs deny any such competence to reason.

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