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Raising Issues Between Theological Orientations and the Meanings of Quranic Verses: Causality as a Model

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Abstract

In the Qur'an, God establishes a connection between cause and effect, exemplified by the relationship between marriage and procreation, or between medicine and healing. This linkage is mediated through intrinsic characteristics inherent in both the cause and the effect, a concept corroborated by empirical sciences such as physics and medicine. The Qur'an raises the issue of causality because it reflects a reality experienced by humans, whereas theologians (mutakallimūn) approached it philosophically, influenced by their observation of reality, and linked it to the problem of human action creation. The majority of the Ash'arites removed this relevance, reducing it to a mere correlation, in contrast to the Mu'tazilites, whose perspective aligns more closely with the Qur'anic outlook. The study's central problem lies in elucidating how the philosophical stimulation by theologians diverges from the Qur'anic treatment of the subject, Which standards the Qur'an employs in raising issues, how this matter relates to the problem of action creation, and the stance of the empirical sciences regarding this issue. The significance of this study stems from its potential to answer these questions and to demonstrate the importance of comparing the theological orientations of the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites with the implications of the Qur'anic texts. Methodologically, this study employs a comparative approach between the Qur'an, theological discourse, and the empirical sciences, supplemented by a critical method. The key findings indicate that theologians overinterpreted the issue, even though it is subsidiary, often as a means of affirming divine transcendence. This approach diverges from the Qur'anic perspective and the empirical sciences, both of which link cause and effect. Moreover, the Qur'an's emphasis on specific issues—whether frequent or rare—correlates with their doctrinal significance and social impact. The study demonstrates the superiority of the Qur'anic approach over the theological discourse.

Keywords

Kalam, Causality, Noble Qur'an, , Creation of Actions, Creed, Theological Orientations.

Highlights

- The Qur'an addresses the cause–effect relationship based on human experience.
- Theologians (mutakallimūn) discussed the issue on a philosophical level and linked it to the creation of actions.
- While the Ashʿarites rejected causality, the Muʿtazilite view is closer to the Qur'anic perspective.
- The study compares the Qur'anic scheme on the issue with theological orientations and the natural sciences.
- The findings reveal that theologians overinterpreted the issue, whereas the Qur'an interprets it with a human and society-centered perspective.

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Kelâmî Yönelimler ile Kur'an Âyetlerinin Anlamları Arasında Meselelerin Gündeme Getirilmesi – Sebebiyet Örneği

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Öz

Kur'ân'da Allah, neden ile sonuç arasında bir bağlantı kurmaktadır; bu, evlilik ile üreme, ilaç ile iyileşme gibi ilişkilere örnek teşkil eder. Bu bağlantı, neden ile sonucun her ikisinde de var olan içsel özellikler aracılığıyla gerçekleşir; bu kavram, fizik ve tıp gibi doğa bilimleri tarafından da doğrulanmaktadır. Kur'ân, nedensellik meselesini gündeme getirmiştir çünkü bu, insanın deneyimlediği bir gerçektir; oysa kelamcılar (mutakallimûn) konuyu felsefi olarak ele almış, gözlemledikleri gerçeklikten etkilenmiş ve bunu insan fiilleri yaratma meselesiyle ilişkilendirmişlerdir. Eş'arîler çoğunlukla bu bağlantıyı kaldırmış ve onu yalnızca bir birliktelik ilişkisine indirgemiştir; bu, Mu'tezilelerin perspektifiyle zıt bir yaklaşımı temsil eder. Mu'tezilelerin görüşü ise Kur'ân perspektifiyle daha uyumludur. Bu çalışmanın temel problemi, kelamcıların felsefi yaklaşımının Kur'ân'ın konuya yaklaşımından nasıl farklılaştığını, Kur'ân'ın meseleleri gündeme getirirken hangi ölçütleri benimsediğini, bu konunun fiil yaratma meselesiyle ilişkisini ve doğa bilimlerinin bu meseleye ilişkin duruşunu ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmanın önemi, yukarıdaki soruları yanıtlayabilmesi ve Mu'tezile ile Eş'arî kelam yönelimleri ile Kur'ânî metinlerin işaret ettiği anlamları karşılaştırmanın önemini gösterebilmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Metodolojik olarak bu çalışma, Kur'ân, kelamcılar ve doğa bilimleri arasında karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşım benimsemekte ve eleştirel yöntemi de içermektedir. Başlıca bulgular, kelamcıların meseleyi abarttığını, oysa meseleyi yan önemde bir konu olmasına rağmen çoğu zaman Allah'ın tenzihini göstermek için kullandıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, Kur'ân perspektifi ve doğa bilimlerinin neden ile sonucu birbirine bağlayan görüşleriyle çelişmektedir. Ayrıca Kur'ân'ın belirli konulara verdiği önem—ister sık ister nadir olsun—bu konuların itikadi önemi ve toplumsal etkisi ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Çalışma, Kur'ân perspektifinin kelamcı yaklaşımına üstünlüğünü göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kelâm, Sebebiyet, Kur'an-ı Kerim, Fiillerin Yaratılması, Akîde, Kelâmî Yönelimler.

Öne Çıkanlar

- Kur'ân, sebep–sonuç ilişkisini insan deneyimine dayalı olarak ele almıştır.
- Kelâmcılar konuyu felsefi boyutta tartışıp fiillerin yaratılmasıyla ilişkilendirmiştir.
- Eş'arîler nedenselliği reddederken, Mu'tezile görüşü Kur'ân'a daha yakındır.
- Çalışma, Kur'ân yaklaşımını kelâm yönelimleri ve doğa bilimleriyle karşılaştırmıştır.
- Bulgular, kelâmcıların meseleyi abarttığını; Kur'ân'ın ise insan ve toplum merkezli yorumladığını göstermiştir.Aḥmad al-Raysūnī'nin usûl-i fıkhın makāsıdını bağımsız bir araştırma alanı olarak kurma çabasını ve yöntemini değerlendirmektedir.

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Introduction

Praise be to Allah and may prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of God, and upon his family, companions, and those who follow them.

Some issues in the study of kalam (Islamic theology) taught in our universities and institutes are given and stirred up beyond their actual size. In contrast to the great importance given to them in the theological curriculum, we do not find them having a striking presence in the Holy Qur'an.

Examples of this include the ambiguous texts in the Qur'an such as al-istiwa' (God's rising above the Throne), as well as the issue of kasb (acquisition), the obligation of what is beyond one's capacity, and causality. On the other hand, we find that the Qur'an grants high importance to some issues such as faith in Almighty God and monotheism, the matter of righteous deeds, and major moral issues such as justice, the prohibition of injustice, the necessity of thinking, and not blindly following the traditions of the forefathers. Among these is the matter of causality in terms of effect—whether by conjunction or without effect—as discussed by the theologians, even though the Qur'an frequently connects cause and effect without engaging in the philosophical inquiry into the nature of that connection.

So, what is the underlying reason for the Qur'an raising some issues while overlooking others? And conversely, what is the reason behind the raising of certain issues in theological study even though they are tied to a specific historical reality? Furthermore, how do we judge the frequency or scarcity of such attention?

This is what we will attempt to answer, taking the issue of causality as our example.

The study is based on several assumptions, the most prominent of which are:

-The connection between cause and effect has been the subject of extensive philosophical discussion among many theologians, yet the Qur'an did not grant it the same status as it received in those debates.

-The theological stirring of certain issues is tied to a historical reality, rather than originating from Qur'anic orientations.

-The Qur'an's raising of certain issues is linked to a social need for them—a need that transcends any specific time or place.

The Quran serves as a guidance for mankind, a core component of which involves addressing the salient issues of human reality. Consequently, the Quranic discourse frequently invokes the relationship between cause (*sabab*) and effect (*musabbib*) as empirical realities perceived by people, distinct from the philosophical dimensions later explored by the theologians. While these verses affirm God Almighty as the Ultimate Agent (*al-Fāʿil al-Aṣli*), a critical question arises: given this Quranic realism, why did many theologians reinterpret this causality as a relationship of mere conjunction (*iqtirān*) lacking true influence? Is this reinterpretation rooted in historical necessity, or is it a dogmatic precaution against attributing autonomous influence to the intrinsic properties of matter? What is the criterion by which the Qur'an highlights a given issue while leaving another unaddressed? And what is the relationship between the creation of human acts and causality?

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to address the research problem—particularly with respect to an issue such as causality and its connections to the doctrine of the creation of acts—by examining the relationship between the theological schools and the implications of Qur'anic verses. The scope of the study does not extend beyond these parameters.

The reason for selecting this topic is linked to a specific situation related to theological study (al-dars al-'aqadi). Through my teaching of many theological issues, I observed that the Holy Qur'an has not been given the status it deserves in many matters of theological study. In contrast, there have been theological debates initiated by the mutakallimun (theologians) that are still present in the curricula and books of theological study.

This study is connected to the call for renewing theological-kalamic study. I believe that such renewal—which some are calling for today—should be achieved through the dominance of Qur'anic verses and their presence in the books of creed and kalam. By "dominance," I do not mean the mere frequency of Qur'anic verses appearing but rather focusing on what the Qur'an itself emphasizes and neglecting what the Qur'an neglects.

Anyone who examines the books of kalam will find certain historical topics that are still being stirred up and are considered part of creed, upon which people are classified as Sunni or innovator. This study thus came to address this matter.

How did this interest from the theologians arise at a time when we find that the Holy Qur'an did not give this issue the same level of attention? For the Qur'an connects cause and effect without delving into the philosophical dimension in which the theologians engaged.

Then, what is the criterion adopted by the Holy Qur'an in raising issues and expanding on them? And what is the relationship of this matter to the issue of the creation of actions?

The Qur'an was revealed as guidance for humankind, and part of this guidance is that it addresses the most important issues that concern people and relate to their reality. The Qur'an has brought up the relationship between cause and its effect in dozens of verses, presenting it as a practical reality observable to people, without delving into the philosophical dimension in which the theologians engaged.

These verses are not without indications that Almighty God is the original actor. If the Qur'anic reality is like this, then how did many theologians reverse the matter, making the Qur'an's raising of these issues a relationship of mere conjunction without influence?

Does this go back to a historical reality? Or is it due to fear for the creed in the event that influence is attributed to the inherent properties of things?

Then, what is the criterion by which the Qur'an raises one issue while neglecting another? And what is the relationship between the creation of actions and causality?

The methodology relied upon in this research is the inductive method, where certain verses related to the topic were examined, along with highlighting the most prominent positions of the theologians. Addressing every single verse and detailing every theological school's stance would require a work on the scale of a doctoral dissertation.

1. Causality in Language and Terminology

Causality goes back to the meaning of the term sabab (cause). In language, a sabab is anything by which one reaches something else. The earliest person we have found to mention this meaning is Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad Al-Farahidi (d. 170 AH), who said:

> "A sabab is the means to something through which it is reached, and any connection that links to something is a sabab. A sabab is a path, because you reach what you want through it."[1]

[1] Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, al-`Ayn, ed. Mahdi al-Makhzumi and Ibrahim al-Samarra'i (Beirut: Dar wa-Maktabat al-Hilal, 2008), 7:204..

According to him, sabab also means "making" (al-ja'l). This meaning was mentioned by Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani in his Mufradat, explaining that a sabab is "making." He said:

"Everything by which one reaches something is called a sabab."

He cited the verse:

"And We gave him a way to everything" (Qur'an, Al-Kahf 18:84)[2]

Meaning that Allah gave him knowledge and means by which to reach his goals. This linguistic meaning does not differ much from the technical (terminological) meaning in that it is a path to something else. Jamil Saliba mentioned three meanings of sabab among philosophers, which are interrelated. The most notable, in my view, is:

"A cause is that which is responsible for the existence of something."[3]

Here, we point to the matter of influence: in this sense, a cause is something that exerts influence. If it exerts influence, it is akin to an 'illah (efficient cause). Thus, in the definitions of philosophers, there is overlap between the two. However, Jamil Saliba stressed that there is a difference between them, saying:

"The cause (sabab) is synonymous with the efficient cause ('illah), except that scholars distinguish between them in two ways: first, a cause is that upon which something occurs, but not by it; second, the effect arises from its efficient cause without an intermediary between them."[4]

This meaning was also stated by Abu Al-Baqa' Al-Kafawi, who said: "Cause (sabab) and efficient cause ('illah) are used synonymously by the philosophers."[5]

Accordingly, causality—based on what has been mentioned—may be defined as "the relationship between the cause and the effect"[6] or it is a consistent, regular correlation between the cause and the effect[7].

What we mean here by causality is the relationship between an act and its outcomes—whether the act is one of the divine acts, such as the relationship between rain and vegetation growth, or between an earthquake and death or destruction or whether it is connected to God's creation of things in which the human's role and choice lie in utilizing what God has created—such as the effect of fruit in producing satiety, and water in quenching thirst.

The cause may also originate from a human being, such as when one person strikes another, resulting in pain.

2. Causality among Greek Philosophers, Muslim Philosophers, and the Theologians

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2 Al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of Qur'anic Terms], ed. Safwan 'Adnan al-Dawudi, 1st ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1412 AH), 391.

3 Jamil Saliba, *al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi* [The Philosophical Dictionary] (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1982), 748.

4 Saliba, al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi [The Philosophical Dictionary], 649.

5 Abu al-Baqa al-Kafawi, al-Kulliyyat [Universals], ed. 'Adnan Darwish and Muhammad al-Misri (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, n.d.), 504.

6 Saliba, al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi [The Philosophical Dictionary], 649.

7 Mahmud Nafisa, *Athar al-Falsafa al-Yunaniyya fi 'Ilm al-Kalam al-Islami hatta al-Qarn al-Sadis al-Hijri* [The Impact of Greek Philosophy on Islamic Theology up to the Sixth Hijri Century] (Syria: Dar al-Nawadir, 1st ed., 1431 AH/2010 CE), 167..

It is noteworthy that *the Dahriyyūn* denied any metaphysical or unseen causality in things. This stands in contrast to Aristotle, who posited a metaphysical, transcendent cause for motion and order in the universe, ultimately tracing all movement back to an eternal, unmoved mover[8]. Reliance on efficient causality—while excluding any hidden, unseen influence in establishing the operative properties of effects—was the foundational method of pre-Socratic Greek philosophy, driven by the desire to identify the origin of the cosmos.

This intellectual trajectory developed further with Plato, for whom the search for a higher cause became an inquiry into divinity itself. The discussion reached a more systematic level with Aristotle, who expanded the discourse on causes and their various types[9].

When this discourse passed into the hands of the Muslim philosophers, al-Kindi addressed extensively the question of the influence exerted by causes upon their effects. He observed, for example, the effect of heat in the expansion and dilation of bodies, and the effect of cold in their contraction.[10]

He also elaborated on the causes of snow, thunder, lightning, and meteorological phenomena in general, consistently linking causes to their effects[11]. He also wrote about the different types of natural causes[12], expressing explicitly that causes exert influence in themselves. Among his statements is:

"The efficient cause is either proximate or remote. The remote efficient cause is like an archer whose arrow kills an animal; the archer is the remote cause of the animal's death, while the arrow is the proximate cause. The archer, intending to kill, initiated the motion of the arrow, while the arrow, like a living agent, produced the wound that caused death."[13]

One may note a marked similarity between the philosopher al-Kindi and the Muʿtazila. This is evident in the work of historians of Islamic philosophy, as "the titles of a number of works attributed to al-Kindi attest to his commitment to the Muʿtazilite approach."[14]

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābi continued along the same trajectory, positing that causes truly affect and produce their effects. He went even further by insisting that a causal effect does not occur unless no impediment exists to block the action of the cause.[15]

According to Muslim philosophers, the principle that "every event is the result of a cause" is a definitive and indispensable truth. The natural inclination of the human mind toward the concept of causality cannot, in any way, be denied. Thus, to deny the notion of causality, whether

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8 See: Jirard Jahhami, *Mafhum al-Sababiyya bayna al-Mutakallimin wa al-Falasifa: bayna al-Ghazali wa Ibn Rushd* [The Concept of Causality between Theologians and Philosophers: Between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd] (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 2nd ed., 1992), 28–29.

9 See: Nafisa, *Athar al-Falsafa al-Yunaniyya fi 'Ilm al-Kalam al-Islami hatta al-Qarn al-Sadis al-Hijri* [The Impact of Greek Philosophy on Islamic Theology up to the Sixth Hijri Century], 170–171, 174–179.

10 Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, *Rasa'il al-Kindi* [The Epistles of al-Kindi], ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Abu Ridah (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi; Matba'at al-I'timad, 1951), 2:72.

11 See: al-Kindi, *Rasa'il al-Kindi* [The Epistles of al-Kindi], 2:80, 2:84.

12 Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, *Rasa'il al-Kindi* [The Epistles of al-Kindi], ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Abu Ridah (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi; Matba'at al-I'timad, 1951), 1:169.

13 Al-Kindi, *Rasa'il al-Kindi* [The Epistles of al-Kindi], 219.

14 *Majid Fakhry, Mukhtasar Tarikh al-Falsafa al-'Arabiyya [A Concise History of Arabic Philosophy], 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Shura, 1981), 31.*

15 Wasim Nasri 'Abd al-Hafiz Da'na and Talal Ahmad Abu Rujay', "al-Irtibat al-Daruri bayna al-Asbab wa Musabbabatiha 'inda Falasifat al-Hadara al-Islamiyya: al-Tadawi Namudhajan (Ard wa Naqd)" [Necessary Connection between Causes and Their Effects among the Philosophers of Islamic Civilization: Medical Treatment as a Case Study (Presentation and Critique)], *Majallat al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya li al-Dirasat al-Insaniyya* [Journal of the Islamic University for Human Studies], 30, no. 2 (2022): 842; see also Mahmud Nafisa, *Mabda' al-Sababiyya fi al-Fikr al-Islami fi al-'Asr al-Hadith: Dirasah Ta'siliyya Muqarana* [The Principle of Causality in Modern Islamic Thought: A Comparative Foundational Study], 1st ed. (Syria: Dar al-Nawadir, 2010), 173.

at the physical or metaphysical level, would render scientific and philosophical investigation impossible[16].

After the theologians reached a consensus on denying any necessary connection between cause and effect—meaning that the existence of a cause does not entail, by logical necessity, the occurrence of its effect they did so because affirming such necessity would ultimately lead to denying the existence of God, a position held by the naturalists[17]—, the scholars of kalam differed among themselves: Did God place in material things inherent properties that have an effect on other things—such as placing in fire a power to burn, in water a power to quench thirst, and in medicine a power to heal?

Or is the relationship between cause and effect merely one of apparent conjunction, with God being the One who places the power in the fire to burn, in the water to quench...?

It is understood from Ibrahim al-Nazzam, the Mu'tazilite, that bodies possess a power deposited in them by God Almighty. He stated:

"Each has its own specific nature… water by its nature flows, and a heavy stone by its nature descends… and God is the One who brings these things together and compels them against their nature."[18]

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari reports from the Mu'tazila that most of them say:

"Causes necessitate their effects."[19]

The Mu'tazilites discussed the question of the cause and its effect in the context of *tawallud* (generated effects) and *tabā'* (natures). From their discourse it is understood that, in terms of outcome, there is no essential difference between the two, except that *tab'* (nature) remains latent within the substratum, like the latent presence of fire in wood, hardness and rolling in a stone.

A further question then arises: the phenomena that follow upon this latency and generation—such as the sprouting of plants due to rain, pain resulting from a blow, or satiety resulting from food—whose act are these?

Ibrāhim al-Naẓẓām, in addition to what has already been reported from him, holds that everything that goes beyond the human sphere (*ḥayyiz al-insān*) is an act and creation of God, by the necessity of creation. God has imprinted a specific nature in the stone and created it in such a way that, when pushed, it moves.

Al-Jāḥiẓ and Thumāmah ibn Ashras, on the other hand, argued that the human act is voluntary willing (*irādah ikhtiyāriyyah*), whereas the generated effects that follow from things when the human being engages with them are, in fact, the human being's act, but only in accordance with the natures embedded in those things, and not as a matter of his own free choice.

As for *irādah* (volition), Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf and the majority of the Mu'tazilite masters held that the servant performs the act of willing, the willed object, and everything that inheres in his limbs; and that generated effects are the act of the human being, not the act of bodies[20].

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[16] Ilhan Kutluer, "Illet," *Turkiye Diyanet Vakfi Islam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2000), 22:120–121.

[17] Nafisa, *Mabda' al-Sababiyya fi al-Fikr al-Islami fi al-'Asr al-Hadith: Dirasah Ta'siliyya Muqarana* [The Principle of Causality in Modern Islamic Thought: A Comparative Foundational Study], 173.

[18] Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Abu Ridah, *Ibrahim ibn Sayyar al-Nazzam wa Ara'uhu al-Kalamiyya wa al-Falsafiyya* [Ibrahim ibn Sayyar al-Nazzam and His Theological and Philosophical Views] (Cairo: Matba'at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1946), 115–116.

[19] Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilaf al-Musallin* [The Articles of Islamists and the Differences among the Worshippers], ed. Helmut Ritter, 3rd ed. (Germany: Dar Franz Stays, 1980), 412.

Generated effects are attributed to bodies only when the human being has no involvement in the act. In this connection Abū al-Qāsim al-Balḫi states:

> "Al-Jāḥiẓ and a group of speculative thinkers said regarding bodies, living and non-living, that they truly act by their natures. Most of the Muʿtazilites, however, have said that all acts are matters of free choice for their agents … and that God, exalted be His remembrance, has imprinted in bodies diverse natures."[21]

Perhaps the most notable point of divergence, in general terms, between the Muʿtazilite masters and their opponents lies precisely here. Al-Qāḍi ʿAbd al-Jabbār holds that, according to the Muʿtazilites,

> "Generated effects (*al-mutawallid*) are among the acts of the human being, whether they occur in part of him or in something other than him … As for the Compulsionists (*al-mujbira*), they attribute all generated effects to the act of God, exalted be He."[22]

Ibn Hazm's position in this matter coincides with that of the Muʿtazilites, and he launches a severe attack on the Ashʿarites.[23]

In contrast to this view, many of the Ash'arites hold, generally speaking, that the cause has no effect on the effect; rather, it is a process of conjunction between cause and effect, and at the moment of conjunction, God Almighty creates the effect without the cause having any influence. Thus, in both cases, the Creator is God Almighty.

This meaning is mentioned by Ibn Furak, quoting his teacher Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, as saying:

> "He used to say that all events are originated by God Almighty from the beginning and by innovation, without any cause that necessitates them or any efficient cause that generates them."[24]

This Ashʿari position is based on their denial of any real cause or effect, and of natures and generated effects (tawallud). Al-Bāqillāni states: "Tawallud, in our view, is invalid; it has no real existence in the acts of creatures nor in the acts of the Creator."[25] When cause and effect, natures, and generated effects are all negated, what remains is mere concomitance. This is what al-Ghazāli

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[20] See: Abu al-Qasim al-Ka'bi (Abd Allah ibn Ahmad), *al-Maqalat wa ma'ahu 'Uyun al-Masa'il wa al-Jawabat* [Doctrinal Treatises, with *'Uyun al-Masa'il* and the Responses], ed. Husayn Khansu, Rajih Kurdi, and Abd al-Hamid Kurdi, 2nd ed. (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Fath lil-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1442 AH/2020 CE), 378–379; al-Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, *al-Mughni fi Abwab al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl: al-Tawallud* [The Comprehensive Book on the Chapters of Divine Unity and Justice: Generation], ed. Tawfiq al-Tawil and Sa'id Zayid, rev. Ibrahim Madkur, supervised by Taha Husayn (n.p.: n.pub., n.d.), 11–12.

[21] Al-Ka'bi, *al-Maqalat wa ma'ahu 'Uyun al-Masa'il wa al-Jawabat* [Doctrinal Treatises, with *'Uyun al-Masa'il* and the Responses], 495–496.

[22] Al-Qadi Abd al-Jabbar, *al-Mughni fi Abwab al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl: al-Tawallud* [The Comprehensive Book on the Chapters of Divine Unity and Justice: Generation] (n.p.: n.pub., n.d.), 12–13.

[23] Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* [The Decisive Treatise on Religions, Sects, and Doctrines], ed. Samir Qaduri (Tunis: Dar al-Malikiyya, 1444 AH/2023 CE), 6:3.

[24] Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Furak, *Mushkil al-Hadith* [Problematic Hadith Reports], ed. Ahmad Abd al-Rahim al-Sayih (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2005), 132.

[25] Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillani, *Tamhid al-Awa'il fi Talkhis al-Dala'il* [Laying the Foundations: A Summary of the Proofs], ed. Imad al-Din Ahmad Haydar, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1407 AH/1987 CE), 75.

expresses in his words: "The conjunction between what is customarily believed to be a cause and what is believed to be its effect is not necessary in our view"[26]

This notion of mere concomitance, together with the denial of tawallud, is also found among the Māturidis. Al-Bazdawi says: "There is no tawallud in acts … For example, a man shoots an arrow at another person; it strikes him, wounds him, and he later dies from the resulting pains. According to Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jamāʿa, the flight of the arrow, its reaching the body it strikes, the wounding of that body, and the pains that occur thereafter are all acts of God Most High, which He creates in succession following these human actions."[27]

When we say that both cause and effect are originally brought into existence by God Almighty, this applies according to al-Ashʻari to external existents—such as the relationship between water and vegetation growth, fire and burning—matters related to nature. It also applies to what is called "human actions" and the effect of these actions in producing other outcomes, which is referred to as kasb (acquisition), for which Abu al-Hasan al-Ashʻari is known.

The essence of kasb according to him is:

> "That a thing occurs from the acquirer by a created power."[28]

What is meant by "created power" is the servant's (human's) own ability, and this ability has no influence in bringing about existence. Al-Shahrastani illustrated his teacher al-Ashʻari's doctrine, clarifying that there is no effect for created power:

> "According to the principle of Abu al-Hasan, there is no effect for created power in originating [an act]… Rather, God Almighty has established His practice that the actual deed occurs immediately after, beneath, or along with the created power—if the servant wills it and devotes himself to it."[29]

The prominent question here is: what led al-Ashʻari to this view? When researching the matter, its roots, and the examples cited, we find that the main reason for this position is to exalt God Almighty from having any other influencer besides Him. Al-Shahrastani expressed this by saying:

> "Abu al-Hasan al-Ashʻari said: If the Creator in reality is God Almighty, then no one else shares with Him in creation."[30]

It is as if saying that a cause has influence over something else detracts from God's power and His continuous care over the human being moment by moment.

This desire to exalt God—which, with slight variation[31]—was the same reason that led the Muʻtazila to say that God Almighty originated in things certain properties that are the ones which cause effects. Al-Qadi ʻAbd al-Jabbar said:

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[26] Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifa* [The Incoherence of the Philosophers], ed. Sulayman Dunya, 6th ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.), 237.

[27] Abu al-Yusr Muhammad al-Bazdawi, *Usul al-Din* [Principles of Religion], ed. Hans Peter Linss, with text established and annotated by Ahmad Hijazi al-Saqqa (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya lil-Turath, 1424 AH/2003 CE), 116.

[28] Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ari, *al-Luma' fi al-Radd 'ala Ahl al-Zaygh wa al-Bida'* [The Luminous Treatise: A Refutation of the People of Deviation and Innovation], ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Izz al-Din al-Sirwan, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar Lubnan lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, 1987), 26.

[29] Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* [Religions and Sects] (Morocco: Mu'assasat al-Halabi, n.d.), 1:97.

[30] Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* [Religions and Sects], 1:100.

"The acts of the servants are not created in them, and they are the ones who originate them."[32]

The early Mu'tazilites and their leaders held this doctrine—among them al-Nazzam, Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir, Abu al-Hudhayl al-'Allaf[33], and Abu Rashid al-Naysaburi[34].

What matters for us from the above is that the exaltation of God was also present in this issue for the Mu'tazila. Their reasoning was that human actions—especially those containing evil, such as injustice, drinking wine, and fornication—must be attributed to the human as their creator, not to God Almighty, because saying that God creates them would mean He wills them and is pleased with them, something from which God is far exalted[35].

3. Causality in Qur'anic Verses

3.1. The Basis From Which The Qur'an is Based in Raising Issues

A reader of the Holy Qur'an will find that it follows a clear and well-defined method in how it raises issues. Some issues the Qur'an raises repeatedly, while others it mentions only rarely. We do not know of any matter that falls outside this pattern.

This applies especially to matters related to human beings: the more important such matters are and the greater their real-life impact, the more the Qur'an emphasizes them. For example, issues related to human thought and reasoning, and the necessity of using the intellect in voluntary actions, receive great attention.

This also includes major matters of the unseen that affect human behavior, such as resurrection, recompense, and the re-creation of all things on the Day of Judgment.

By contrast, we find that the Qur'an's discussion of some matters is brief and does not give them a major position. Many of the issues that the theologians (mutakallimun) stirred up fall into this category—issues that the Qur'an did not give high importance to.

One example, is the issue of taklif bima la yutaq (obligation beyond one's capacity). When the Qur'an speaks about human obligations, it speaks about a responsible adult—this is the one held accountable for their deeds.

The Qur'an, with this being clear, mentioned it to show the ease of legislation, but it did not give the matter much importance, as it occurs rarely. An example is His saying:

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity" [Al-Baqarah: 286]

Despite the clear indication in this verse the theologians delved deeply into this issue, filling pages with debate, approaching it from a perspective of mental possibility rather than real-world reality—that is, whether God could obligate a person beyond their capacity or not—while agreeing that no actual divine obligation exceeds capacity.

The Ash'arites permitted the possibility, while the Mu'tazilites and Maturidites denied it. Al-Ghazali said:

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31 Al-Hasan ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin ibn 'Adhbah, *al-Rawda al-Bahiyya fima bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Maturidiyya* [The Splendid Garden on the Relationship between the Ash'arites and the Maturidites], 1st ed. (India: Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Nizamiyya, 1322 AH), 29.

32 Al-Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmad al-Hamadhani, *Sharh al-Usul al-Khamsa* [Commentary on the Five Principles], ed. 'Abd al-Karim 'Uthman, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1384 AH), 323.

33 Abu Ridah, *Ibrahim ibn Sayyar al-Nazzam wa Ara'uhu al-Kalamiyya wa al-Falsafiyya* [Ibrahim ibn Sayyar al-Nazzam and His Theological and Philosophical Views], 110.

34 Sayyid 'Abd al-Sattar Miyhub, *Abu Rashid al-Naysaburi wa Ara'uhu al-Kalamiyya wa al-Falsafiyya* [Abu Rashid al-Naysaburi and His Theological and Philosophical Views], 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2006), 334.

35 Al-Khattaf, "Athar Tanzih Allah Ta'ala 'amma la yaliq bihi fi Ikhtilaf al-Mutakallimin" [The Impact of Declaring God Most High Transcendent from What Does Not Befit Him on the Disagreements of the Theologians], 215.

"It is within His power, Exalted is He, to obligate what is beyond capacity"[36]

The Mu'tazilites objected to those who claimed the possibility of obligation beyond capacity[37], and the Ash'arites produced both textual and rational evidences in response, along with rebuttals to the Mu'tazilites[38].

Similarly, there is the issue of *obligation upon God Almighty*—a topic into which the theologians delved. What is meant here by "obligation" is God obligating something upon Himself, not external obligation, for God would cease to be God if we were to speak of an external obligation upon Him.

The question is: must God reward the obedient and punish the disobedient? The Qur'an, judging by its apparent text, did not raise this issue due to its clarity—indeed, it perhaps addressed it in the opposite way by linking reward and punishment directly to deeds.

The theologians, however, held two main views: the view of the Ash'arites. Al-Ghazali expressed his own position and that of the Ash'arites, saying:

"We maintain that He—Glorified be He—is not obliged to reward obedience nor to punish disobedience"[39]

The Mu'tazilites, on the other hand, took a position contrary to that of the Ash'arites. They placed many of these issues under the principle of Divine Justice, holding that justice entails that God rewards the obedient for their obedience and punishes the disobedient for their sins.

These issues mentioned by al-Ghazali occupied the minds of the theologians. However, we do not find them present in the Qur'an, and the main reason for this is that they are not among the important issues in the Qur'anic discourse and therefore did not receive significant attention[40].

Perhaps one of the most prominent and contentious issues among the theologians is what is referred to as the attributes of divine reports (al-sifat al-khabariyyah), such as the terms "face," "hand," and "istiwa'" (rising over the Throne) . Such texts are relatively few in the Qur'an.

Thus, the issue of causality and its connection to the creation of actions, and the effort to strip objects of their inherent properties as the theologians did, was not given this high status in the Qur'an. Instead, the Qur'an gave primary importance to the relationship between cause and effect as something self-evident, without delving into what lies beyond it. This will be discussed in detail in the second section.

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[36] Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id* [Foundations of Doctrines], ed. Musa Muhammad 'Ali (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, 1985), 146; Muhammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillani, *Tamhid al-Awa'il fi Talkhis al-Dala'il* [Laying the Foundations: A Summary of the Proofs], ed. 'Imad al-Din Ahmad Haydar, 1st ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1987), 333; al-Kamal ibn al-Humam, *al-Musamara Sharh al-Musayara* [Evening Conversations: A Commentary on *al-Musayara*], 1st ed. (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Kubra, 1317 AH), 169.

[37] Al-Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani, *Mutashabih al-Qur'an* [Ambiguous Verses of the Qur'an], ed. 'Adnan Muhammad Zarzur (Beirut: Maktabat Dar al-Turath, n.d.), 39.

[38] Hasan al-Khattaf, "Imkaniyyat al-Taklif al-Shar'i: Dirasah bayna al-Nazar al-Shar'i wa al-Fahm al-Kalami" [The Possibility of Legal Accountability: A Study between Legal Reasoning and Theological Understanding], *Majallat Istanbul* 36 (June 2017): 147–148.

[39] Muhammad al-Ghazali, *al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad* [Moderation in Belief], ed. 'Abd Allah Muhammad al-Khalili (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004), 89; 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Amidi, *Ghayat al-Maram fi 'Ilm al-Kalam* [The Ultimate Aim in the Science of Theology], ed. Hasan Mahmud 'Abd al-Latif (Cairo: al-Majlis al-A'la lil-Shu'un al-Islamiyya, n.d.), 232; Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, *Nihayat al-Iqdam fi 'Ilm al-Kalam* [The Ultimate Endeavor in the Science of Theology], 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004), 208–232.

[40] Al-Hamadhani, *Mutashabih al-Qur'an* [Ambiguous Verses of the Qur'an], 78; al-Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani, *al-Majmu' al-Muhit bi al-Taklif* [The Comprehensive Collection on Moral Responsibility], ed. al-Ab Jin Yusuf al-Yasu'i (Beirut: al-Matba'a al-Kathulikiyya, n.d.), 1:228.

3.2. The Relationship between Cause and Cause in the Holy Qur'an and in the Sciences

As mentioned earlier, this issue was raised by the theologians in a manner different from how the Holy Qur'an addressed it. The apparent meanings of the Qur'anic verses link cause and effect, and it is noticeable that this link is governed by two parallel and inseparable principles:

1. The effect of causes upon their effects.
2. Not forgetting the original actor, who is God Almighty.

In the Qur'an, these two principles run side by side from its very beginning to its end, in every part of it, indeed in every surah no matter how short. This includes the mention of causality in the very first revealed verses and in the last of what was revealed.

It is known that the first verses revealed from the Qur'an are His saying:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created…" [Al-'Alaq: 1–5]

What is most striking in these verses is the presence of the original actor—God Almighty—so that a person should be mindful of God's presence in every one of their actions. This is noticeable from the second word onward: "in the name of your Lord…".

The preposition bā' in bismi rabbika ("in the name of your Lord") carries, as Sheikh Muhammad al-Tahir ibn 'Ashur noted, three possible meanings:

It may mean seeking help, so the meaning would be: Read seeking the help of God Almighty or beginning with God Almighty.

It may mean accompaniment, so the meaning would be: Read accompanied by what will be revealed to you from God Almighty.

It may mean "on", so the meaning would be: Read on the name of your Lord.[41]

In all these meanings, the bā' signifies the necessity of invoking the name of God Almighty at the beginning of reading. This meaning—intended to be remembered—is found at the start of every surah in the Qur'an except for Surah al-Tawbah.

In summary, this reflects the harmony between a human being's causation of an action in things and God Almighty as the ultimate Cause of causes. Without Him—glorified be He—there would be no revelation, no creation, and no reading.

This companionship between human causality and the presence of God Almighty is recurrent throughout the Qur'an. We may take as an example the last verse revealed from the Qur'an:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged." [Al-Baqarah: 281]

In this verse, we notice the same pattern seen in previous verses: the human earning—serving as a cause—is explicit in His saying: "what it earned." This means that the human being is the cause and acquirer of their actions. The divine presence is also clear here in the necessity of being mindful of returning to God Almighty and that He will hold the human accountable for what they have earned.

[41] Muhammad al-Tahir ibn 'Ashur, *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* [Liberation and Enlightenment] (Tunis: al-Dar al-Tunisiyya lil-Nashr, 1982), 30:436.

The Qur'an points to this causality explicitly in many matters' observable before our very eyes—such as water that quenches, fire that burns, and food that satiates. This appears in numerous verses, such as His saying:

> "Have you seen that which you emit? Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator? … We have made it a reminder and provision for the travelers." [Al-Waqi'ah: 58–73]

God Almighty addresses the Arabs, calling them to reflect upon things familiar to them so that these may serve as evidence for the reality of resurrection, which they deny. Among these examples is the earth that a person cultivates. The farmer takes the apparent means of farming and planting—the one who tills the soil and sows the seeds is the human being. Yet this is only in outward appearance; the true actor is God Almighty.

It could be that a person plants and takes all the means, yet there is no vegetation or growth at all—or there is growth but it does not reach completion, for some affliction may strike and prevent any benefit from it.

Things do not possess inherently effective properties of themselves; rather, these properties have an effect only by virtue of the power placed in them by God Almighty. When our Lord wills to remove this effect, there may be plants but no fruits—then comes regret, sorrow, and mutual blame. This is the meaning of His saying: "And you remained in wonder and dismay." [Al-Waqi'ah: 65]

The Qur'anic discourse then moves to water, its properties, and the way it provides quenching (al-riyy)—as well as how it is sent down. Although the term "quenching" is not explicitly stated in the verse, it is understood from the wording: "Have you seen the water that you drink?" [Al-Waqi'ah: 68]. Drinking is for the purpose of relieving thirst.

This water is not something you send down from the clouds; rather, We send it down. And it could be that even if water were to descend, there would be no benefit in it. That is, there is no necessary rational connection between drinking and quenching thirst; rather, quenching occurs because God Almighty has placed the property of quenching in the water. This is the meaning of His saying: "If We willed, We could have made it bitter" [Al-Waqi'ah: 70] —meaning useless for you.

The discourse then shifts to a condition experienced by all people: kindling fire and what results from it, such as warmth and cooking. Outwardly, it is the human who produces this fire and brings forth the tree from which fire emerges. Yet this too is only in appearance; the original actor is God Almighty—He is the One who caused it to exist and to grow. Just as trees grow after once being nothing, by the power of God Almighty, likewise will God revive the dead.

The first verse is more indicative of the issue of resurrection and of the fact that the human being is a cause in the coming into existence of a child, while the Creator is God Almighty, not the human being. The existence of human reproductive fluid is only due to the life-giving properties placed within it, and this is the meaning of His saying:

> "Have you seen that which you emit? Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator?" [Al-Waqi'ah: 58–59]

The fluid is merely fluid, yet by the properties placed in it by God Almighty, it may result in either a male or female child:

"He bestows females upon whom He wills, and He bestows males upon whom He wills" [Ash-Shura: 49]

Or it may be that the fluid exists but there is no offspring:

"…and He renders whomever He wills barren" [Ash-Shura: 50][42].

What we have mentioned about the preceding verses is only a sample from among dozens of Qur'anic verses.

The relationship between cause and effect can also be observed in the material sciences. In physics, for instance, a mirror reflects light, thus serving as its cause. Depending on the type of mirror, the reflected image appears differently:

-A convex mirror produces a small, distant image of the object.

-A concave mirror produces a large, close image.

-A flat mirror produces an image of the same size as the object and at an equal distance from it.

Similarly, the sounds we hear cannot be produced unless there is some process of collision or friction that leads to vibration—such as the vibration of an eardrum, the string of an oud, or a solid object like a spoon[43]. Sounds are thus caused by certain things, and in turn they may cause other effects such as joy, drowsiness, or fear.

The same applies to metals, which arise from numerous factors that cause their formation, such as gold, iron, gypsum, and salt. Minerals are thus effects of certain causes, and they also cause other effects—for example, salt's effect on food, or gold's role in various industries. Metals are inorganic solid substances formed through natural processes, and each metal has its own unique chemical composition, along with its magnetic, mechanical, and electrical properties. While metals may appear irregular outwardly, internally they are subject to an organized, creative structure.

This applies as well to the states of matter—gas, solid, liquid, and plasma. Matter can transform from one state to another due to certain factors, and its influence changes accordingly. It is both caused by certain things and a cause of others. For example, water is liquid, but with a drop in temperature it turns into a solid. This transformation affects the structure of the substance and also impacts other things. It should be noted that such substances, arise from certain transformations; evaporation and chemical reactions between certain materials, for instance, are the causes behind the formation of gypsum[44].

Medical conditions are no exception to this principle. Some illnesses are caused by certain factors, and these illnesses in turn cause other effects. Likewise, medications can have causal chains of effects. For example, muscle-building drugs can cause side effects on sexual and reproductive functions: in men, they lead to reduced pituitary gland hormones, which results in the inability to produce sperm; in women, they can decrease body fat, increase hair growth, and cause menstrual irregularities. There are also psychological effects, such as increased aggression and criminal behavior[45].

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[42] See the general meaning of these verses in: Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* [Al-Qurtubi's Qur'an Commentary], ed. Ahmad al-Barduni and Ibrahim Atfish, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya, 1964), 17:217; Ibn Ashur, *al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* [Liberation and Enlightenment], 7:158.

[43] Khayr Sulayman Shawahin, *al-Fizya al-Amma* [General Physics] (Jordan: Alam al-Kutub al-Hadith, 2017), 165, 192.

[44] Jirjis Salama 'Awwad, *Fizya' al-Hala al-Sulba* [Solid-State Physics], 1st ed. (Jordan: Dar Amjad lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 2018), 10–11, 16.

[45] Rose Ghazi 'Imran, *al-Munashshitat al-Riyadiyya* [Sports Stimulants], 1st ed. (Jordan: Dar Amjad lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 2015), 21.

According to the Qurʾān, there is an inherent order in the physical world, in short, indicate that whatever occurs in the universe is not the product of mere chance, but unfolds within the framework of a universal law. In the Qurʾānic discourse, such laws are referred to as "sunnat Allāh" (the way of God)[46].

3.3. Cases of Attribution of Action to Man and to God

One who examines the Holy Qur'an will find that it does not address the attribution of actions to their doers on a single level. What I have concluded is that when an action is near in occurrence and attainment—whether it is part of the obligations (takalif), natural human functions, ordinary actions that humans regularly perform, or matters within the realm of what is permissible to do or not do—it is attributed to human beings. This is the case in many Qur'anic verses, in fact in most of them.

These actions include those of prophets, believers, disbelievers, and sinners alike. One example is His saying:

> "And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth gently… and those who, when reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind." [Al-Furqan: 63–73]

Here, good qualities are attributed to the believers, such as walking humbly, speaking kindly, spending the night in prostration and standing in prayer, giving charity, repenting, and performing righteous deeds. Likewise, the verse attributes to them abstention from actions incompatible with faith—such as extravagance, stinginess, associating partners with God, killing, fornication, and bearing false witness.

It should be noted here that attributing the above actions to human beings in no way indicates their independence from God Almighty, nor that the action is brought about fully by them alone. This is made clear in many verses, including His saying:

> "And you do not will except that Allah, Lord of the worlds, wills." [Al-Takwir: 29]47 When an action requires a long period of time, occurs contrary to the norm, or will happen in the future, the Qur'an attributes the action to God Almighty—while still requiring that people take the necessary means for it to occur. Examples of such actions include upbringing, provision, acquiring sovereignty, knowledge, and wisdom.

One example is His saying:

> "And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers… they defeated them by permission of Allah. And David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him from what He willed. And if Allah had not repelled some people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is full of bounty to the worlds." [Al-Baqarah: 250–251]

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[46] Musa Turshak, "Nedensellik İlkesi Bağlamında Sünnetullahı Anlamak" [Understanding *Sunnat Allāh* in the Context of the Principle of Causality], *Bitlis Eren University Journal of Social Sciences Institute* 8/2 (2019), 576.

[47] Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Maturidi, *al-Tawhid* [Divine Unity], ed. Fath Allah Khalif (Alexandria: Dar al-Jami'at al-Misriyya, n.d.), 291; Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* [The Decisive Treatise on Religions, Sects, and Doctrines] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, n.d.), 3:87.

Although the verse attributes the defeat to them, it immediately follows with the phrase "by permission of Allah" so that it is not imagined they could have done it without His aid. Likewise, kingship, wisdom, and knowledge are attributed to God Almighty, because such matters are not within immediate human reach—they require taking certain means and often take time to acquire.

It is also known that in matters that belong exclusively to God Almighty, the Qur'an never attributes them to humans under any circumstances—such as giving life and death, divinity and lordship, and the creation of the night and day, and of the heavens and the earth... For example:

> "Blessed is He who placed constellations in the sky and placed therein a [burning] lamp and an illuminated moon. And it is He who made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude." [Al-Furqan: 61–62]

The educational and moral benefits here are many. When something is far beyond human reach, or when an action concerns the future, attributing it to God Almighty serves to instill awareness of His greatness, the weakness of humankind, and their constant need for Him in every time and place. This is supported by His saying to His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

> "And never say of anything, 'Indeed, I will do that tomorrow,'" [Al-Kahf: 23]

The address to the Prophet (peace be upon him) here is also an address to his entire community—except where the text clearly indicates that it applies exclusively to him[48].

In summary, attributing one's actions to oneself does not contradict the creed, and it would have been better for the theologians not to exaggerate this issue. They should have followed the Qur'anic methodology in addressing it, for the Holy Qur'an, when attributing actions to humans, proceeds from the reality humans live—humans perceive in themselves the power and ability to act or to refrain.

It is worth noting that even the prophets attributed their actions to themselves, as God Almighty relates about them. One example is Moses (peace be upon him), in His saying:

> "I have come to you with clear proof from your Lord, so send with me the Children of Israel." [Al-A'raf: 105]
>
> "So he threw down his staff, and behold! it was a clear serpent." [Al-A'raf: 107]
>
> "And he drew out his hand, and behold! it was white for the observers." [Al-A'raf: 108]

Here, Moses attributes to himself the coming, the throwing of the staff, and the drawing out of his hand.

A good moral act should be attributed to the human so that he may receive his reward in this life and the Hereafter, and an evil moral act should likewise be attributed to him so that he may receive the due punishment in this life and the Hereafter. Under no circumstances should one shirk moral responsibility. This is perhaps one of the most important moral fruits derived from the issue of causality.

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[48] Abu al-Muzaffar Mansur ibn Muhammad al-Sam'ani, *Qawati' al-Adilla fi al-Usul* [Decisive Proofs in Legal Theory], ed. Muhammad Hasan Muhammad Hasan Isma'il al-Shafi'i, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1999), 1:226; Muhammad Mustafa al-Zuhayli, *al-Wajiz fi Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami* [The Concise Manual of Islamic Legal Theory], 2nd ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Khayr lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 2006), 2:74.

There is another important point: linking the relationship between cause and effect leads a person to understand the divine social laws (sunan ilahiyyah ijtima'iyyah) in creation. There are no miracles that will save people from defeat when they abandon the law of God Almighty, and there is no food or fruit descending from the heavens; rather, there is hard work and effort.

This drives a person to take the means and to understand God's laws in creation. The Qur'an connects these laws with taking the means, as if the means themselves are effective in their own right—while at the same time reminding the human being that God Almighty is the ultimate Cause of causes. Divine miracles for the prophets, and divine favors for His righteous servants, come outside the normal relationship of cause and effect.

Adam (peace be upon him) came into existence without a father or mother, Jesus (peace be upon him) without a father, and God saved Moses (peace be upon him) as a nursing infant in a way contrary to ordinary social laws. Indeed, in such cases these laws are suspended, and humans are left in wonder.

We see this in God's words:

> "And when you fear for him, cast him into the river, and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him among the messengers." [Al-Qasas: 7]

Here, casting him into the river was the means of saving him, even though outwardly throwing him in would appear to bring certain destruction.

This interpretation of miracles is clear among all Muslim philosophers, and likewise among theologians—Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites alike. Those who affirm that things possess an intrinsic nature and properties maintain that God withdraws these properties: He removes, for example, the property of burning from firewood, and thus eliminates the capacity for combustion. Al-Zamakhshari, representing the Mu'tazilite position, states:

> "If you ask: How did the fire become cool while it was still fire? I would answer: God removed from it the nature with which He had endowed it—namely heat and burning—while leaving it as it was in respect of illumination and flame; and God is powerful over all things. It is also possible that, by His power, He repelled from the body of Abraham, peace be upon him, the harm of its heat and made him experience the opposite of that—just as He does with the keepers of Hell."[49]

As for those who deny that material things have inherent properties and natures, the matter is straightforward for them: it is simply that God does not create burning in the fire, and does not create healing in the medicine.

Conclusion

After God facilitated the completion of this research, it can be said that the Qur'an's extensive treatment of the cause-and-effect relationship reflects the realism of its discourse. People observe that fire burns, water quenches, and food satisfies hunger. Such an approach does not harm the creed, for the true influencer is God Almighty. This true influencer is especially prominent in the Meccan verses, which built the foundation of human belief. Once that creed is

[49] Mahmud ibn 'Umar ibn Ahmad al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf 'an Haqa'iq Ghawamid al-Tanzil wa 'Uyun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Ta'wil* [Al-Kashshaf: Unveiling the Subtleties of Revelation and the Finest Interpretive Statements], 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Rayyan lil-Turath, 1987), 3:126.

firmly established, there is no fear in acknowledging that water quenches or that food satiates—since these effects were placed there by the power of God Almighty.

The Qur'an consistently presents the harmony between the cause producing its effect and the presence of God Almighty in dozens of verses, affirming the necessity of recognizing the effect of the cause on its effect, while also recognizing that this effect would not exist without God.

This recurrent connection between cause and effect in various aspects of life is mentioned in the Qur'an more than enough to make its point—yet without delving into the philosophical dimensions explored by the theologians. Those theologians who debated whether the relationship between cause and effect is merely a matter of conjunction without influence did not find such an approach in the Qur'an. Instead, the Qur'an connects cause and effect while clarifying that the true actor is God Almighty. This Qur'anic linkage ensures the stability of life and establishes laws by which people can live—laws that require engaging with phenomena and their effects as if they are decisive, while at the same time remembering the ultimate influencer, God Almighty.

The absence of such balance disrupts the material, intellectual, spiritual, and faith-based order that God intends. This imbalance may occur either by ignoring the apparent causes and attributing everything directly to God—which is not proper etiquette with Him—or by over-relying on apparent causes without recognizing God's will. The former is often observed among those who promote undisciplined forms of Sufism, imagining that God is the direct doer of all things without taking the means, relying solely on supplication without the necessary preparatory actions that precede it—such as physical readiness and financial expenditure... This is contrary to the method of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was the closest of all people to God Almighty, yet even so, he would not supplicate to God in battle except after putting on his armor and arranging the ranks of the army.

Alternatively, imbalance occurs when the true influencer—God Almighty—is ignored or forgotten, and all apparent effects are attributed purely to material causes. This is the direction taken by Western materialist life after the rise of the Industrial Revolution, grounded in the world of experimentation, which led to the denial of the Creator. In this worldview, matter alone exists and produces effects through empirical processes, while anything unseen is dismissed as meaningless and nonexistent. This tendency became prominent in positivist philosophy, founded by Auguste Comte.

The study has shown that the Qur'an addresses causality as something self-evident, requiring no elaborate reflection except for the purpose of linking the effect to its true influencer while maintaining awareness of God's power. The properties of things are deposited in them, and to claim otherwise is to conflict with the reality humans experience. The assertion that God creates the effect only at the moment of conjunction—without inherent properties—lacks evidence, and it leads to the absurdity of equating all substances. There is no known capacity for iron to cause plant growth, nor for fire to produce cold. Denying inherent properties is as though one imagines iron could evaporate, that a thirsty person could be quenched by drinking oil, or that one could be satisfied by eating dirt.

The inherent properties God has placed in things are clearly affirmed in the Qur'an: fire burns, water produces vegetation, honey heals, water flows, mountains serve as pegs, marriage produces offspring, and work produces sustenance. Yet so that people do not view the causal link between cause and effect as absolutely binding, sometimes the cause exists without the effect—as

when fire did not burn Abraham (peace be upon him)—and in the case of miracles, effects exist without their normal causes, such as the creation of Adam and Jesus (peace be upon them).

It is of crucial importance to recognize that this interconnectedness in the Qur'an, operating according to a system of causality, plays a fundamental role in matters related to the divine patterns (sunan ilāhiyyah). Factors of victory and defeat, strength and weakness, the rise and decline of nations, and the movement of human beings in the universe all unfold in accordance with this system.

It has also become clear that the Qur'an raises issues in proportion to their importance in real life. The more an action is required from the servant, the more the Qur'an emphasizes it. For this reason, matters such as monotheism (tawhid) and righteous deeds permeate the entire Qur'an. This pattern, and the effects it produces, do not align with the speculative theological (kalam) approaches—and this is logical, for the One who revealed the Qur'an—glorified and exalted is He—knows best what reforms human beings and what corrupts them.

The study has shown that the material experimental sciences—such as medicine, chemistry, and physics—point to the existence of properties that God Almighty has placed within these things, and these properties influence other things by God's creation.

Based on the above, it can be said that the Qur'an provides a fertile foundation for renewing the science of kalam through Qur'anic centrality and authority.

The study has also shown that there are varying levels of attributing actions to humans or to God Almighty: when an action is difficult, arduous, and beyond the usual or expected, it is attributed to God to keep a person connected to Him; when the action is instinctive, natural, permissible, or connected to obligations, God attributes it to the human.

Accordingly, the researcher recommends giving careful attention to the following areas of study:

1. The attribution of actions to God in the Qur'an, including its aims and the principles and constraints governing it.
2. The attribution of human actions in the Qur'an, and the doctrinal, social, and educational objectives that may be derived from it.

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