

Natural Law in the Mu'Tazilite Theology

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Abstract : Natural law theory, in moral philosophy, refers to a system of unchanging values held to be mutual to all humans and can be discovered through reason. The natural law theory is commonly associated with western Philosophers. In contrast, discussions on notions of natural law in Islamic intellectual history were relatively rare. This paper aims to show that the moral theory developed by the Mu'tazilite thinkers can be classified in the ideas of natural law. In doing so, this study will demonstrate that the objective and unchanging values, according to Mu'tazilite theologians, provide the guidelines for assessing the Islamic law rules in the field of human coexistence. The focus of the paper lies on 'Abd al-Ġabbār, who was the most influential thinker in the late epoch of the Mu'tazila. Although 'Abd al-Ġabbār did not leave a text with a systematic discussion of natural law, his teaching of nature, human reason, and the moral values of actions are all scattered throughout his work -'al-Muġnī fī abwāb at-tawhīd wa-l-'adl'. It is necessary to focus on 'Abd al-Ġabbār's theories on reason, nature, and ethics since natural law revolves around the basic concepts of nature, reason, and moral value. While analyzing the concept of the Nature, it will attempt to answer how he explains the world's physical structure and God's relationship to natural events. Moreover, from 'Abd al-Ġabbār's point of view, is nature a self-determined system that follows its inner principle in every kind of change, or is nature guided by an external power? Does causality govern natural events? About the concept of reason, an attempt is made to examine how human reason, according to 'Abd al-Ġabbār, conceives moral attributes. Finally, the Autor will discuss the concepts of objective values and the place of rights and duties derived from Islamic law in 'Abd al-Ġabbār's thought.

Keywords : Islamic law, Mu'tazilite theology, natural law in Islamic theology, objective and unchanging values.

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