
Khayyam and the Mystery of Existence

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ABSTRACT: In summary, the outcomes of the present research can be extracted and reported as the following: Firstly, most of the existing poems that are associated to hakym Omar-e- Khayyam are his real versification and not those of another poet by the same name. Secondly, whith regard to the issue of determinism and free will, in comparison to Moetazeleh's view i.e. man's freedom, Khayyam tended more towards determinism and Ashaereh's. Thirdly, life is a moment between two nothingnesses. Thus we should make the most of the time and not lose this moment full of blessings and favours. Finally, Khayyam invited people to take their problems easy and accept the life as it is. This opinion might be associated to both the traditional moral and religious lessons and modern psychological as well as anthropological findings which assert that in order to have a calm and peaceful life, one should forget the hardships of life and adhere to these lines of poetry from Khayyam: "Many people like you come and go Seize your share ere begin taken from you"

Introduction

In this article, attempt is made to discuss the ideas and beliefs of one of the pioneers of the realm of the Islamic and Iranian science, culture, literature, and philosophy i.e., Hakim Omar-e-Khayyam-e Neishaboory. Of course, what is said only explores a limited part of the intellectual life of this prominent poet and philosopher. The reason is that the scope of the present article as well as the extent of the author's knowledge in comparison to khayyam's contributions are very limited. As a matter of fact, the main goal of this article is to discuss briefly some of his philosophical and theological contributions in general and his idea of "Determinism" and "Free will" in particular. It should also be mentioned that even in the case of these two notions, it is impossible to express all the related literature in detail. The reason is both the long history of these two notions, and their vast scope. In fact, these two notions are so ancient that some believe that this philosophy in ancient Greece and Aristotle's time dichotomy can be considered as the oldest "rational dispute" in the Islamic philosophy. Even others in the west relate it to an older age, i.e. the golden age of philosophy in Greece and Aristotle's time.

The most important problem is the origin and the end point of the world in general and the concept of Determinism and free will according to Khayyam's viewpoint.

It seems that the first discussion is the concept of "Determinism or free will" or fortuity among Muslims. This topic, if related to human, is "Determinism or free will", and if related to God, is "fortuity" (Mottahari, 1993, volume 2, p 9).

The topic "Determinism and free will" has been discussed in the west philosophy by Greeks, especially Aristotle, and there is a lot of discussion about it in Islam from the first centuries on (Saeedi Mehr, 1997, Introduction).

Khayyam's opinion

There is no doubt that Hakim Abou Al Fath Omer ben Ebrahim Khayyam is one of the famous and great philosophers, Mathematicians, stromomers, and poets in Iran.

An important issue regarding khayyam is that at about the fifth Islamic century, there were two people with the name of Khayyam; the first one was Abu fath Omar ben Ibrahim Khahyam and a poet with the name of Ali Ebn Ahmad Ben Khalaf, known as Khayyam. According to one viewpoint, almost all or a part of Nihilism, enjoy-oriented and ignoring the world is written by the second Khayyam and not the first one (Jafari, 1987, p11).

However, there is an opposite viewpoint which believes that Khayyam did not accept the afterworld for human and his confusing philosophy thoughts come from human faith facing the problems (Safa, 1990, p 529).

There is, however, another viewpoint which is somewhere between the first two viewpoints saying that Khayyam's poem doesn't imply disbelief but since he wanted to find the truth and there is no problem if Khayyam tried to perform all Islamic and religious actions and ceremonies but at the same time he say: I couldn't understand the world (Foroughi and Ghani, 1995, p 500)

But to answer this question: Khayyam was related to which one of famous Islamic schools: Mu'tazilite or Ash'arites? It should be said that according to his poems and his answers to Mohyeddin Sabri, it seems that his thought was closer to Ash'arites than Mu'tazilite (Reza Zade, 1998, p 8-10).

One of the contradictions or serious problems is that: Since God knew that human will have sins from the first time of creature, so he knew that human will sin in the future and he knew that good people will be good in the future. So if human has no sin and has no crime, then God's knowledge will become ignorance. Therefore, human has no free will to be good or bad.

But Shieh and Motazeleh (one of the sects of Suni people) believe that God's First knowledge about human actions is not a contradiction of human's free will because God knows that people will do good or bad by their own free will not by Determinism. Therefore, the human is responsible for his actions (Sharani, 1997, p 399).

With respect to Khayyam and his contributions, it should be mentioned that through analyzing his poems, one will arrive at the fact that he was against the idea of human's freedom in choosing and controlling his destiny.

It is noticeable that in spite of some scholars' beliefs who attribute most of Khayyam's poems to another poet whose name, too, was Khayyam, though an exaggerated claim, even the remaining poems are obviously indicators of his belief in the lack of man's freedom. However, Khayyam himself announces his opinion openly while at the same time advised the determinists not to go to extremity. Another point that should be mentioned is the possibility of providing justification for the agreement between Khayyam's poetry and his rational philosophical ideas. It is needless to mention that any thinker in different phases of his life might embrace conflicting ideas and views. Or an intellect might entertain something in the domain of literary taste and something else in the realm of thought and faith. To put it clearly, a religious man pays tribute to and performs religious commands and orders, though he might deeply call them into question; like what a patient, though lacking the necessary knowledge and information concerning the drugs prescribed by the physician for him, does as the doctor advises. Molavi also emphasizes on human's free will for his action and mentions things such as regret, punishment, training, order and prohibition as instances implying human's free will (Molavi, 1997, Section 130 and 131).

In addition to this, to reject the belief that human acts under Determinism by God's first knowledge about his actions, it has been mentioned that God knows all of our actions with its condition and our free will is one and the most important condition. God knows his action but we cannot say that since God knows his actions, he should act as determined, otherwise his knowledge becomes ignorance (Jaafari, 1974, pp232-229)

Simply explained, God knows one person will do some action in some condition by his free will. It should be said that a sinful action, with all of its condition, is known by God and free will is one of the conditions (Mesbah Yazdi, 1991, p177-176).

Therefore, action under free will is known, not absolutely. God knows people's sin and people's obedience (Tabatabaie, 1995, volume 3, p 321-322).

To end this topic, we finish with a prayer by hakim Khayyam:

My God! You gave people language and if they use it properly, they become the same as angels and get the reward.

My God, we just try to find and worship you and we just trust to you, since you are the first and the last of anything (Jaafari, 1987, p5).

Conclusion

Throughout the history of the Islamic civilization and culture, there has been a continuous debate about this issue and a lot of authoritative books and Treatises have been written on it and still as Kant, the great German philosopher, says it is an antonomic problem and seems that no final answer to this everlasting question will be found. Thus, the author of the present article, taking into account its antiquity and vital importance in man's life, has tried to introduce the ideas of this great Islamic philosopher in order to make the reader more familiar with one of the most famous views on the important philosophical issue of "Determinism" and "Free will". Moreover, he has tried to present the views of "Moetazeleh" and "Ashaereh" i.e. the ideas of those who are respectively for and against the idea of human's freedom and the thoughts of the other great Islamic philosophers in this article briefly.

The main purpose of this paper is to present a short overview of Khayyam's ideas concerning the problem of determinism and free will in general, and the relationship between God's eternal knowledge and man's free will in particular. In order to present a clear picture of Khayyam's views, the writer has also briefly referred to the important theological and philosophical approaches in this regard.

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