

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION
(ISTAC)

THE FUNCTION OF SENSE PERCEPTION IN AL-MATURIDI'S
THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC
THOUGHT AND CIVILIZATION (ISTAC)
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR
THE M.A. DEGREE

BY
ALDILA BT. ISAHAK

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
RABI' AL-AWWAL 1420/JULY 1999



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
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In the Name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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wa billâhi al-taufiq

ABSTRACT

In proving the feasibility of his theory of knowledge, al-Māturidī demonstrates at length the relevance of obtaining the correct and proper methodology of seeking knowledge of the reality of existence, so that a sincere believer may know the significance of *Tawhīd*. By applying *al-Sam'* and *al-'Aql* at the source, hand in hand in the utilisation of *al-Akhhār*, *al-'Iyān* and *al-Nazar*, he places *al-dīn* as the foundation of the way of life of the rational being. Sense perception being one of the means of finding the reality of existence plays a paramount role in his epistemology, for, without it, the whole truth cannot be known nor realised by the rational being. Though he is a thinker of the 10th century C.E. his insight was not impaired, for his methodology is able to withstand the rigorous process of criticisms made in this century; the 20th century, by the positivists, such as A. J. Ayer, and the revivalists of speculative philosophy, such as Alfred North Whitehead. Thus, the function of sense perception in his theory of knowledge is to assist the rational being to arrive at the transcendental truth of the universe, namely, the cosmos is infinite in nature, and that only Allāh is the One Eternal Creator and Sustainer. The present study therefore, is an attempt to present al-Māturidī's epistemology within this context.

INTRODUCTION

*And He taught Adam the nature of all things.
(Sūrat al-Baqarah, 2:31)¹*

Knowledge is that which brings ignorance out of its shell. This can be seen from the implications which the religion of Islām or *al-dīn* brings to its adherents. As history has shown, the revelation has brought about changes in human being from that of ignorant being; ignorant of the right and the wrong of morality, to that of rational being whose way of life is based on the knowledge of truth. The purpose of its creation as a rational being, therefrom, is fully realised through the understanding of the principles and guidance of *al-dīn*. This understanding however will not come about if the rational being did not attempt to acquire the knowledge of truth, i.e. the reality of existence. Namely, the strive that is inherent in the nature of the rational being, to establish a wisdom that is sought after by them, regarding their existence with other existents, vis-à-vis the ultimate Existent, namely *al-Haqq*. It is on this basis that al-Māturīdī strives to establish in his theory of knowledge, in other words, he endeavours to show, that it is knowledge which will bring about the rational being from their ignorant shell.

This knowledge however can only be considered to be correct if the means to reach it are correct as well. Thus, how can one know with some degree of certainty that what one knows is the truth, and at the same time how can one arrive at the truth, i.e. how can one know by what means will one be assured of the validity of the truth known or acquired? Furthermore, what is the measure of truth, meaning to say that what is the

¹ Throughout the thesis, the Qurānic verses are based on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'ān, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*. Brentwood: Amana Corporation, 1992.

guide that will help one to seek the right thing and whence does one know that the truth sought has been achieved and that might lead one to ascertain the purpose of the creation of the universe and its constituents. It is this, which shows the relationship of a theory of knowledge and that of cosmology. It is thus the objective of this essay to see the theory of knowledge as has been formulated by al-Māturīdī. Wherefore he had shown that the way to the truth lies in the very being or the faculties of the rational being; namely, their very constituents hold the key to reach the truth. Hence, his theory paved the way to the consequences of the full actualisation of the faculties that are inherent in the rational being. The unique physical and non-physical frames of the rational being that consists of empirical faculties and rational faculties are in fact what distinguishes the rational being from other beings.

The experiences brought about by the empirical faculties become the *sense* experience which the rational being perceive through their senses. After such experiences come into contact with their lives, one will be able to see the workings of the rational faculty, henceforth the faculties of the rational being are exercised in order to bring about logical explanation and comprehension so as to ascertain the purpose of such *sense* experience. This in turn will lead them to utilise their rational faculty to understand such experiences and thus should lead one to understand manifestations of the cosmos. It is no wonder that al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge is two-prong, namely, the way to *al-dīn* and the way to cosmology. Whence, one will see that he had carefully and logically bound the relationship between the senses and reason to become the foundation of his theory of knowledge.

A. *Al-Māturīdī's Purpose of Knowledge: Al-Dīn and Cosmology.*

Theory of knowledge or epistemology belongs to the realm of human experiences. For only the rational being pursues the investigation of knowledge in order to justify their belief. The urge for the justification of belief though inherent in the rational being, is not however pursued fully by every single rational being, and the consequence of this has been much discussed by al-Māturīdī in *taqlīd*. It is here that later on we shall see his arguments for the purpose of justifying one's belief beyond all reasonable doubt, in the assistance of obtaining the true knowledge about things.

Knowledge has been defined as a belief that has been justified.² In Arabic, knowledge is termed as *'ilm*. This is the term that was used by al-Māturīdī to denote the purpose of knowledge in understanding the universe. It is, however, interesting to note that he made a distinction between *al-dīn* and *'ilm*, in his theory of knowledge. This distinction however is not to create a dichotomy, for as we shall see later, the symbiotic relationship that both *al-dīn* and *'ilm* share, is in actuality are the means for the understanding of *al-Haqq*. What one can benefit from such a dichotomy maintained by al-Māturīdī is to show that unity in diversity does exist as well as being the composition of cosmology. Furthermore, one may also conclude from his thoughts that he wanted to show the relevance of *al-dīn* as the foundation or rather the way of life from which the rational being can benefit the most. Such benefit can only be experienced if it is prescribed and ascribed by the rational being in the way that has been instructed, and the only way that will enable the rational being to act as such is to seek the truth with the proper means and objective.

² Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (eds) *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy: A Companion to Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1993), 38. Henceforth cited as *Epistemology*.

1. *Al-Dīn*

Before we have an overview of his theory of knowledge, it is only logical for us to see his scope of knowledge. For only once this is established, can we see the relevance of the upcoming discussion, for one will be able to see the logic of his theory of knowledge. Therefore, it is only pertinent that the concept of *al-dīn* be discussed first in the context of his thought, for it is the only logical link which one may connect when one looks at the title of his book, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.

Al-dīn is a way of life that is complete in itself.³ It does not need any other philosophy nor religious creed to compliment it. It is the most comprehensive system of life that governs the spiritual, the physical, the psychological, the sociological and the environmental factors that make up the lives of the rational being. It is a system that is so comprehensive and vast that its comprehensiveness cannot be comprehended within the life span of the human race. Its very nature of existence appeals to the psyche of the rational being in their pursuance of the wisdom mentioned above, either to satisfy their rational self, or to satisfy their sensory self. Just as it contains the impetus for rational and sensory investigations, it naturally contains the answers as well, and thus, gives us the methodology as to how to obtain the answers of cosmology, or in the case of al-Māturīdī, he refers to it as the knowledge of the realities of things.

Due to its comprehensiveness in providing the answers concerning the reality or realities of existence, the *mutakallimūn* have been very particular in their teachings, and al-Māturīdī is no exception. For it was he, who systematised and started the discussion on the subject matter of theory of knowledge⁴ that has become the central theme of both

³ A more detailed discussion about *al-dīn* can be obtained in the monograph of Syed Naquib al-Attas, *Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992).

⁴ The reason for me saying this is based on what Fathalla Kholeif said in his commentary in *Kitāb al-*

the later scholars of Islam and modern Western thought. Due to the magnificent of *al-dīn* it is no wonder that al-Māturīdī had divided his theory of knowledge into two, namely, a theory of knowledge for *al-dīn* and a theory of knowledge concerning the universe, herein lies, in my opinion, his distinction, for he had shown the seriousness as well as the much needed in-depth understanding of this theory.

2. *Taqīd*

Taqīd according to al-Māturīdī cannot generate genuine knowledge or an understanding of the religion,⁵ for the followers will not be able to understand the reasons wherefore their conviction of adherence springs. The principles of religion which they have accepted as complete and certain that led to their conviction pertaining to its truth, is a mere appreciation of the physical structure of the religion rather than the appreciation of the real beauty that is inherent in the religion. Understanding, or being knowledgeable, is thus, a primary factor in al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge, whereby knowing and understanding the principles will in turn assist the practices of the adherents.

The negative impact that *taqīd* has on religion is that, the quantity; i.e. the by product, cannot guarantee quality.⁶ The fact that a large number of followers adhere to the principles blindly without knowing the causes or the reasons will undermine the integrity of religious truth. An inference henceforth can be made from the claim of al-Māturīdī about *taqīd*, namely, it cannot bring conviction on matter of religious truth.

Tawhīd on page xx, which he edited. I do not think this claim is false, for history has also shown that the present intellectual milieu did begin from the Islamic scholarship.

⁵ The term 'religion' is used in the entire essay to denote the religion of Islam. This is because to signify the real meaning of religion, al-Māturīdī uses the term *al-dīn* in his theory of knowledge.

⁶ Abū Maṣūūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqāndī al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, ed. Fathalla Kholeif, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq Editeurs Sari, 1982), 3. Henceforth cited as *Tawhīd*.

Hence, it does not provide any positive contribution in affirming ones' knowledge of truth or belief. Thus, we can see here that obedience in absentia of knowledge is not sufficient to qualify oneself to be a good follower of the religion.

The originality of al-Māturīdī lies in this presentation, and that *taqlīd*, an unreliable method, is a valid point of reference for any theory of knowledge. For without involving reason in questioning and investigating the value of knowledge that the followers have accepted to be true, the fundamental truth cannot be ascertained. This approach is relevant only in as much as the pursuer of knowledge is in fact striving to understand the existence of existents vis-à-vis the ultimate Existent, namely *al-Haqq*. It is in accordance with this principle that al-Māturīdī had outlined as well as discussed at length the origin as well as the means of obtaining the knowledge of the truth.

As said, *al-dīn* is the foundation of any knowledge and that al-Māturīdī had proven this by presenting it as the premise which act as the platform unto which the cosmology lies, and thus, it is only logical for him to formulate a methodology which is conducive to the rational being. According to him, the origin or the root of *al-dīn* is the interconnected faculties of the rational being, namely, *al-Sam'* and *al-'Aql*.⁷ Furthermore, in connection to these, there are three other ways or means that are further needed to sharpen the understanding of cosmology or the true nature of things in the universe, and they are, the senses / sense perception or *al-'iyān*, reports and testimony or *al-akhbār*, and finally, speculative thinking or *al-nazar*.⁸ According to him without these, the true nature of the reality of existence which the rational being seeks to establish will not be attainable. The reason we could see above lies in the premise which al-Māturīdī

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ Mustafa Ceric, *Roots of Synthetic Theology In Islām: A Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d.333/944)* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 92. Henceforth cited as *al-Māturīdī*.

placed on the importance of *al-dīn* as the foundation of the lives of the rational being. After having established the scope of al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge, it is only pertinent for one to follow his view on cosmology, so that one will be able to infer the function of sense perception in his theory of knowledge which we shall examine in the final chapter of this study.

B. Al-Māturīdī's Cosmology.

1. Allāh

Allāh is the One, Eternal Creator who Composes and Sustains the cosmos. The cosmology⁹ of the universe is the manifestation of both the physical and the invisible, whereby their existence are experienced by the sensible world. The invisible force or forces that is apparent to the senses of the rational being, is that which influence the formulations as well as the conditions of the physical manifestations. The conditions of these physical manifestations are experienced either directly through the senses of the sensibles, or indirectly through the exercise of reason of the rational being. It is here that we find the functions of the senses and the rational faculty works interchangeably and interdependently in the pursuance of the understanding of the position of the Creator, the World and also that of man, the rational being.

In establishing the purpose of knowledge, we will be able to see that al-Māturīdī places reason to be the faculty that plays the role of an arbitrator in the understanding of the realities of existence. He had established that Allāh is the Creator of all things, and

⁹ Cosmology has been defined by Osman Bakar as that which "... deals with the whole reality of the cosmos." *Tawhīd and Science: Essays of the History and Philosophy of Islamic Science* (Penang: Secretariat For Islamic Philosophy and Science, 1991), 73.

that He is the sole Composer of the universe, as such, the harmony and the uniformity that is inborn with the existence of the universe are the pivots of life.¹⁰

Being the sole Creator and the Composer of the universe, it is logical to conclude that He is the only One Sustainer in respect to the life of the rational being and the cosmos. If there would be more than one Composer, then it would mean that more than one system would be governing the cosmos. If this is so, thus, the cosmos will not be in harmony. From this it follows that Allāh is the Sustainer as well, for without the maintenance from the Creator Himself, chaos would replace the harmony and the uniformity. This understanding of the oneness in the creation of the universe is *Tawḥīd*.

In order to convey this message of *Tawḥīd* or the oneness of His existence to the rational being, there must be a medium whose nature is communicable with Allāh and the rational being. The coexistence of the two natures would reflect the attestation of the unseen Creator, at the same time its physical manifestation, which will attest to the created nature of the existence of the rational being. This therefore, must be a medium of communication, as the understanding of *Tawḥīd* can only be conveyed in a way that is intelligible to the rational being. The language or the logical coherence which it carries must be able to be acquired by the rational being either through scriptures, sayings or practices, and these can be found from the prophets or messengers whom Allāh had chosen. This link between the Creator and the created is found in the institution of prophethood, and according to al-Māturīdī, the purpose of prophethood is to affirm the oneness of Allāh.¹¹ Whereupon the knowledge of the finite nature of the world can be conceived and explained.¹²

¹⁰ *Tawḥīd*, xxvi.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *Ibid*.

2. The World

The world is a finite entity whose existence is a result of the creation of the One Eternal Creator. It consists of substances that can be perceived by the senses and through speculative thinking, its nature can be deduced to be temporal, thus it implies a dependent nature upon another existence greater than itself, in this case the Ultimate Existent.¹³ The creation and the temporality of the world and its constituents is the reality of existence which al-Māturīdī tries to prove, and that the purpose of their creation is to lead the rational being to acknowledge the Ultimate Existent, whose Being permeates the entire existence of the cosmos.

Al-Māturīdī had postulated that the world is created wherein it is an abode of both the animate and inanimate objects. Their immutability is observable through the fact of procreation and annihilation which makes up their being and becoming.¹⁴ This existence can be further broken down to substances, whereby their distinctive characters are ascertained by the accidents which define them. These substances consists of contradictory natures whose coming together could only be conceived as a result of another existence whose nature must be the opposite of all that can be found in the perceptible world of the sensibles.¹⁵ The divergent nature of substances are the elements such as life and death, young and old, generation and corruption. These observations are made and confirmed by the testimony of the tradition and the scientists, through the synthesis of the senses and reason. According to al-Māturīdī, if one follows the logic of the finitude of the substances, one will have no excuse but to confirm that the world is transient.¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, xx.

¹⁴ *Al-Māturīdī*, 110-111.

¹⁵ More discussion will be done in chapter two.

¹⁶ *Tawḥīd*, xx.

Substances, in al-Māturīdī's natural philosophy, are made up of accidents which characterises each substance as it is in itself. It is from this premise that he arrived at the conclusion that the world is created, because it is made up of transient substances which completes its existence. If one can accept the nature of the components of the world to be true, then he cannot see any reason as to why a different conclusion can be made of such premises.¹⁷ From these he affirms the creation, as well as the temporality of the world.

3. Man

Faith, is a force which is inherent in the nature of man. It is a reliance or trust which man has upon anything unto which he attaches himself.¹⁸ According to al-Māturīdī, faith is the assent of the heart in believing and acknowledging the existence and the power of Allāh.¹⁹ Such assent according to him is not subjected to the acquisition of knowledge, for the prerequisite of faith is belief, namely the belief in Allāh, the Angels, the prophets, and the revealed books as demanded by the religion.²⁰ This claim suggests that knowledge does not really play an important role in bringing man closer to his Creator, for in this case, belief is the criteria. If this is true at the facet, it would thence nullify his own argument concerning *taqlīd*, for its methodology demands the believers only to follow the principles given, they need not find justifications for belief, for what is required of the adherents is to believe in Allāh and His messages that is *al-dīn*.

This then bring us to his notion of faith. If one were to accept his claim about faith then it would mean that faith cannot be included under *al-dīn*, if this is the case then

¹⁷ *Al-Māturīdī*, 126.

¹⁸ Midland (ed), *Griffin Savers Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 219. Henceforth cited as *Oxford Dictionary*.

¹⁹ *Al-Māturīdī*, 204-205.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

one would be treading on a dangerous ground, for faith constitutes one of the foundations in the lives of the rational being in their relations with the Creator. If faith is not connected to *al-dīn*, then the purpose of the message that is inherent in prophethood is defeated. Therefore, in order to see the logic behind his claim, one may propose that what is meant by al-Māturīdī concerning faith is that such an assent is crucial in matters of religion, when the rational being is required to believe in and accept the truth of the messages of the Qur'ān in matters pertaining to the absent facts (*al-ghayb*) which one may classify as historical facts, for example the life story of the prophets in the Qur'ān and those concerning the world of the unseen.²¹ As to this realm of belief, its authenticity could not possibly undergo a rigorous investigation, it rather depends largely on *al-Sam'* and *al-'Aql*, as he understood and interpreted. Another consequence of this notion is that being knowledgeable in something does not automatically mean that faith is obtained, and furthermore, according to al-Māturīdī, faith belongs to the realm of the heart, or the internal representation of man, and that the physical reflection of man cannot be the measure of his faith in Allāh and that such faith in man can only be known and judged by Allāh.²²

Man, the sensible-rational being whose existence is supported by the empirical senses and reason, is able to perceive and understand the cosmology of the universe. Al-Māturīdī views man as a being whose life will be fulfilled if and when he conforms to the prescribed morality that has been revealed by Allāh.²³ As such, this objective can only be achieved if man knows and understands the purpose of his existence in conformity with that of the Ultimate Being. He is also capable of acquiring the knowledge of the true

²¹ Ibid., 204-205.

²² Ibid., 205.

²³ Ibid., 208.

nature of things. As mentioned above, knowledge of *al-dīn* can only be obtained if its foundations are *al-sam'* and *al-'aql* taken together, and that it is under *al-sam'* that prophethood is considered as one of the methods whereby knowledge is obtained.

According to al-Māturīdī one of the reasons which he mentioned concerning the necessity of prophethood, is due to reason itself, for if man were allowed to follow his desires, conflicts and chaos will rule their world.²⁴ According to him, it is through reason that man seeks to find a conciliation to coexist with one another. However, because of different interests and desires which man has, it is not possible for man to find a common ground of reconciliation by exercising their own reason. Thus the purpose of prophethood, and that is it brings about policies and guidelines that were revealed, authenticated and forwarded to humankind. The messages carried out in prophethood contain divine sanctions, which has been specially formulated by the Creator to suit the nature of the rational being.²⁵ It follows from this that man's action is governed by the Arbitrator of the universe. From here it takes us to the next question that has become one of the main themes of *kalām*, namely the question of the freedom of man with regard to their accountability to their Creator, i.e. *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, wherefore the principle of *kasb* by al-Māturīdī will be seen.

Free will and predestination or predetermination when seen at a glance will show a paradox, for such a contradictory notion cannot make sense. It is due to such a paradox that one may find conciliation attempted in Islamic history, and as such three major schools of thoughts emerged; the Jabrites, who claimed an absolute predetermination; the Mu'tazilites or the Qadarites, who claimed a total free will of man,²⁶ and finally the

²⁴ The role of reason will be further elaborated in the first chapter..

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

middle-road school of Ahl al-Sunnah, who claims that both free will and predestination does coexist in a harmonious and logical manner, which one may see in al-Māturīdī's treatment. A question may arise as to how can there possibly be a free will whence fate is predestined or predetermined. The question of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* is a classical theological question which occupies a central theme in both Christian and Islamic theology. For it is through this discussion that concepts such as Allāh's Justice, which includes the existence of evil permeating the lives of man, the concept of reward and punishment in the Hereafter or accountability of man are also implicated. One of the implications which are involved in this area, is that man should not be accountable for their actions, since evil is the creation of Allāh. This involves a direct discussion of the relationship between man and his Creator, and if one were not careful, one may ended up demeaning the absolute Will of Allāh.

Qaḍā' and *qadar* according to al-Māturīdī, refers to the absolute decree of Allāh. This can be found at the initiation of every action, and His recurrent creation over the existence of the cosmos²⁷ respectively. The popular understanding of these two concepts has been translated to represent free will and predestination²⁸ or predetermination. Free will refers to man's ability to choose and act upon his own decision in living his life, predestination or predetermination on the other hand, refers to the Will of Allāh, whereby, all things exist is due to Him or created by Him, thus, this would naturally include things that effects human lives. *Qaḍā'* and *qadar* is a principle of justice which explains the power or the Will of Allāh which He has over His subjects. This also shows us the delicate balance which man has in their attempt to understand the true nature of

²⁷ Ibid., 213.

²⁸ Ibid., 208.

things especially that of his relationship with his Creator. The question of the freedom of choice or will which the rational being exercise using their reason seems to contradict the Will of Allāh. This is so, because the precedence of Allāh is above everything else in the universe, thus, every existence in cosmology runs according to the Will of Allāh.²⁹ Due to this, conflicts may occur as a result of the negative elements which exists in the cosmos, especially those directly involving the lives of man, i.e. bad and evil. The argument is that these negative elements are the creations of Allāh, since He is the Creator of everything existing in the world of the sensibles, if there are negative elements as well as evilness in the cosmos, then Allāh who is also the Creator of these negative elements, thus, the Creator cannot be Just as claimed. Furthermore, if man's destiny is fated or predetermined, then the whole idea of accountability of reward and punishment in the Hereafter would be defeated, for why should man be accountable for what he had done or what will become of him, since Allāh has designed his life. This in turn will show that there is no justice in Allāh's Will, for He has already determine the consequences. It is because of the nature of this conflict that al-Māturīdī attempted to reconcile these two paradoxes by introducing the concept of *kasb* or acquisition.

The power of man in acting upon the choices he made is not an independent power that is inherent in man. According to al-Māturīdī, man's action is the acquired action that was created by Allāh in bestowing the capacity for man to act according to the choices he made.³⁰ This acquisition of power of man from that of what Allāh has invested or created in him, is called *kasb*, and thus, the action of man is divided into two, one that is attributed to Allāh, in its creation, and secondly that which is attributed to

²⁹ Ibid., 217.

³⁰ Ibid.

man, in its acquisition.³¹ The capacity that is created in man and acquired by him comes about as and when man decides to carry out his actions according to the good or bad choices which he had made after much deliberations upon the principles and decrees that has been revealed by Allāh. It is due to this conscious effort of deciding and acting upon after deliberation through reason that gives room for rewards and punishments to take place. However, such action could not possibly emerged out of nowhere, for man must have intended to do something before such action is carried out. When one look at the relationship between intention and the action of man, only then will one could make sense as to why was it in the first place Allāh had created such capability in man, for it is not possible that Allāh merely created such action or capacity without any purpose, even though He may know everything that man will do. For if this is so, then, one may argue that man should not be accountable for his actions, for they have been created by Allāh, however, when the element of intention is introduced, then one cannot argue against the principle of accountability. This is so, because man is judged by his intention, it was through his intention that actions are brought about by man to act accordingly.³² According to al-Māturīdī, this guidance is directly inferred from *qadar*, whereby, from it, the detailed definition of what constitute wisdom is inherent. By knowing the bad and the good alternatives which man learns to acquire will lead him to choose what is good for himself, as it is reason which tells man to act according to that which is beneficial for himself, rather than that which will be harmful.³³ It is without reason, that the rational being will not be able to understand the wisdom behind the creations of the universe.

³¹ *Tawhīd*, xxxiii.

³² *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

³³ *Al-Māturīdī*, 213.

In sum we could see that the cosmos which we experience through our sense perception and the rationalisation of their interpretation over what it has to offer, shows that *al-dīn* is to be the foundation as well as the key for such pursuance. This key by itself however is useless, for the rational being to unlock the door of truth, the correct combinations of *al-sam'*, *al-'aql*, *al-'iyān*, *al-akhbār* and *al-nazar* must be put into place prior to the key being placed. The reason for the safekeeping of *al-dīn* is due to its nature, whereby the preciousness of the reality of existence of the universe is beyond the imaginations of the rational being. Thus, to safeguard it, its Creator will protect it from the unworthy or the unscrupulous being from exploitation and contempt, henceforth, be kept in a safe, whose key and the combinations can be sought after by the rational being, thus through *al-dīn* the teleological nature of cosmology can be fully understood as well as comprehended.

From above we were given a peek at these combinations as well as the key, and these so called combinations or the theory as to how one can arrive at the knowledge of truth will be seen in detailed in the following chapter, i.e. chapter one. Chapter two will be especially dedicated to the role or the function of sense perception in acquiring knowledge, and the relevance of sense perception in al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge. In the conclusion, we will see the applicability of al-Māturīdī's theory of knowledge in the contemporary scientific thought.

The wisdom behind existence can be found through knowledge. A knowledge that can satisfy human endeavour in exercising his/her rational and empirical faculties. As we will find later on, is the wisdom which al-Māturīdī had tried to establish, if not, at least tried to assist in finding its establishment. For instance, the challenge which the concept of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* poses to the rational being, is a classical tug of war between man and