

8. The Belief concerning the Origination of Human Actions

Ash-Shaykh Abu Ja'far¹, may Allah have mercy upon him, says: "Human actions are created (makhluqah), in the sense that Allah possesses fore-knowledge (khalq taqdir) [of them], and not in the sense that Allah compels mankind to act in a particular manner by creating a certain disposition (khalq takwin). The meaning of all this is that Allah never ceases to be aware of the potentialities (maqadir) of human beings."

Abu 'Abdillah, may Allah have mercy upon him, says: The correct doctrine transmitted from the Family of the Prophet (Ahlu 'l-Bayt), may Allah bless him and his progeny, is that, "the actions of men are not created by Allah", and what is related by Abu Ja'far is not a genuine traditions, and the authority for it not acceptable.

On the contrary, the genuine reports are diametrically opposed to it, so if this were so – as the unscrupulous scholars maintained – then it could be said, for instance, that he who knew the Prophet 'created' him, or he who knew something about what the Almighty Allah has fashioned and proved it for himself (i.e., confirmed his belief in it) created this particular thing.

Thus the (rational) argument shows that this is a fallacy which even the rank and file of the Imams' following would not perpetrate, least of all the Imams themselves, peace be upon them. Predestination, however, linguistically implies creation, since to determine a thing involves action, while the knowledge, or conception, of a thing does not; yet in all circumstances Allah, the Exalted, is far removed from the creation of abominable or base deeds.

It has been related that Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida, peace be upon them, was asked about human actions, whether they are created by Allah; he, peace be upon him, answered: "If He created their actions, He would not have dissociated Himself from them. Whereas He, the Exalted, stated that:

Allah renounces the polytheists (as does also) His Messenger [9:3],

which signifies that He dissociates Himself from their polytheism and base actions, and not from their beings."Abu Hanifah asked Abu '1-Hasan Musa ibn Ja'far, peace be upon them both, about human actions, and from whom they proceed; he replied that there were three alternatives:-

i) that all actions are from Allah, the Sublime, or,

ii) that they proceed jointly from man and Allah, or iii) that they are from man alone.

Now, if they were all from Allah, the Sublime, then He alone deserves to be praised for their goodness or to be blamed for their baseness, and so praise or blame for them pertain to none save Him; if they are created jointly by Allah and His servant, then the praise or the blame would pertain to them both. Since these two alternatives are absurd, it is self-evident that human actions are all from men; it rests with Him; if He pleases, He has the right to punish them for their wickedness, or if He pleases He will pardon them, for the reward of piety and forgiveness is in His hands. And there are still further traditions and reports which can be adduced in support of this.

1. N, qala Abu Ja'far .(without ash-Shaykh).

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