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Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief concerning this is that Allah has undoubtedly created man with a disposition towards (accepting) the unity of Allah2. And this is (in consonance with) what He, the Mighty and Glorious, says:

"The true faith of Allah, for the acceptance of which He has created man" (Qur'an 30:30).3

And concerning His saying, exalted is He:

"It is not for Allah to lead a people astray after He hath rightly guided them, until He hath clearly shewn to them what they ought to fear" (Qur'an 9:116).

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq4 said: (He does not lead them astray) until He informs them of what pleases and what displeases Him. And concerning the saying of Him, who is exalted above all:

"And (He) inspired it (with the consciousness of) what is wrong for it and what is right for it," (Qur'an 91:8),

he (Imam Ja'far) said: (That means) He made manifest to it (the soul) what (acts) are permissible and what sins are to be avoided. And He, Exalted is He, says:

"Verily We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or disbelieving" (Qur'an 76:3),

and (concerning this) he (Imam Ja'far) said: (That is) We have made it (the true religion) known to him, whether he accepts it or not.

And concerning the saying of Him, who is mighty and Glorious:

"And as for Thamud, We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness to guidance" (Qur'an 41:17).

Imam Ja'far explained: (And this) despite their knowing (the truth). Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked concerning the saying of Allah, the Mighty and Glorious:

"And (did We not) guide him to the parting of the two mountain paths?" (Qur'an 90: 10).

He said: (This refers to) the path of righteousness and the path of wickedness. And he said: That which Allah has kept from the knowledge of human beings is entirely set apart from them. And he also said: Allah has adduced reasons to mankind for what He has given them and what He has made known to them.6

- 1. Fitra is a term which has several meanings, e.g., "original nature", "natural religion", and finally "Islam". MC, 42 44, 214 sqq.
- 2. Sh. Mufid attributes this to Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (Mur. iii. 327), and says that Sh. Saduq has not explained its meaning. The first meaning of fitra is ".creation"; the second is the one explained in the text. Unfortunately the text of Tas–hih here is full of lacunae and not fully comprehensible, as the editor explains in the footnotes.
- <u>3.</u> This verse is not easy to render into the English language, and should be read with the previous clause. Pickthall has "The nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created men"; Rodwell, "the faith which God hath made, and for which He hath made man"; Palmer, "(according to) the constitution whereon God has constituted man"; Muhammad `Ali, "the nature made by Allah in which He has made men". In my rendering I have tried to emphasize the idea that God has created man with a natural disposition to accept the true religion.
- 4. Here D has أيضاً erroneously, instead of الصادق ع see p.253.
- 5. That is, the soul.
- 6. The opening sentence in this section may be compared with the orthodox Sunnite view in Fiqh Akbar II. MC, 190 –191, art. 6. The discussion of Wensinck (op. cit.) leaves nothing to add, except that the Ithna `Asharite view is allied to the Mu'tazilite. Cp. The Isma'ili discussion of fitra, FC, nos. 3, 16, 65, where it is the fitra which is the proof of the existence of God and of nubuwwa. For philological discussion see Jeffery, Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'dn, 221. In Tawhid, 266 sqq., a tradition is related describing fitra as islam; this may be compared with the view of Nawawi, MC,44, and of the hadith, ibid., 215.

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