

## Potence

Theologians have agreed that potence, might, is one of the perfect entitative attributes similarly to knowledge. Therefore, the Omni-Potent is regarded as one of His Names, Glory to Him. [1](#)

Potence, as far as language is concerned, as defined by lexicographers, connotes ownership, independence and plentitude. Ibn Manzour (author of the lexicon *Lisan al-Arab*) has said, "It is said that one is able to do something; he has the ability, the dominance; so he is able, capable."

The most Praised One says,

***"...in the presence of an omni-Potent Sovereign" (Qur'an, 54:55),***

that is, One Who is Able, Mighty. Ability is independence and abundance.

Al-Raghib has said, "If an individual is described as being able, it is a characteristic through which he can do something. But if Allah Almighty is described by it, it is denying that there is any incapacitation in Him." It is obvious the explanation provided by al-Raghib of the might in Allah, Praise belongs to Him, by rendering it to the negative attributes (denying incapacitation in Him), is an obvious error by him. Might is perfection, and it does not depart from His perfection.

### Defining Potence

Philosophers and logicians have interpreted potence in many ways the most significant of which are the following:

1. Potence means the ability to do or not to do. The Omni-Potent is the One Who can do something, and He can abandon doing it.
2. Potence is action at will, and inaction in the absence of such a will. The Omni-Potent is the One Who, if He pleases, does something, and if He does not, He would not do it or, if He does not want, He would not do something.

The first definition implies the soundness of doing or not doing, that they both can be done by the Omnipotent. This ability may be described as being of a “what” nature, so one may say that man, as a human, may or may not do something. As regarding the ability with readiness, it describes the ready matter, that is, it is described with attributes of perfection such as we say that a seed can become a tree.

According to both estimates, His Potence, Praise belongs to Him, cannot be explained with the use of this statement because Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is above “what” being applied to Him. Rather, He is existence all of it; so, how can we describe Him with possibilities which are among His own manifestations? Also, He, Praise is due to Him, is above matter and “readiness”; so, how can His might be explained by something based on matter, readiness, etc.?

The second definition is seen outwardly as the doer being the creator of the deed through his will. It is conditional that the doer is not perfect in his deed except when something else is added to him, which is the “will”, something which is impossible to apply to Allah, Praise belongs to Him, Who is Independent in His doing of anything besides His own self, not even the “will” if added to Him.

### Defending Both Definitions

The objective behind describing the Almighty as having Potence, Might, Ability, is to prove His perfection and goodness and to hold Him above shortcomings or defects. Had some definitions required a shortcoming or a misconception about Him, Glory to Him, it must be stripped of such requirements and must be discerned in the (light of) absolute perfection. This is not relevant to only Potence. Rather, all Attributes applied to Him, Praise belongs to Him, enjoy the same.

For example, life is the starting point for perfection and goodness, the source of feeling and knowing. The goal behind describing the most Praised One as Living is only a reference to such perfection. What we realize of life, extract from natural beings, cannot be used to describe the most Exalted One because it would require the most Praised One to be a natural existent ready for action and impression, in addition to other characteristics of material life.

For this reason, we must describe Him, Glory to Him, as life stripped of shortcomings. This is an overall restriction in all divine attributes, none of the Attributes of the most Praised One can be described through them except in this context. This is what the wise gnostic who knows Allah, Praise belongs to Him, tries to do.

It is then that the interpretation of His Might, Glory to Him, becomes accurate, according to both definitions stated above, but while stripping each of them of the shortcomings which it requires, such as the most Praised One having a “what” or a “ready” matter, as is the case in the first definition, or that the most Praised One is the doer through a will that is beyond the self, as is the case with the second definition.

Based on the above, what can be said is that the ratio of the deed to its doer cannot lack one of three

divisions:

**First:** The doer is restricted by the deed; he cannot separate himself from his deed. Such is the compelled doer like the fire as it burns or the sun as it shines.

**Second:** The doer is restricted not to leave the deed. Thus, the deed would be restricting him.

**Third:** The doer is not restricted by one of the ratios. The deed would not be resistant until it is restricted to abandonment, nor is the abandonment is resistant until it is restricted by the deed. The matter with regard to interpreting the potency is rendered to the doer being absolutely unrestricted by any deed or by the abandonment of it. [2](#)

This is what we understand when He, the Praised One, is described as the Omni-Potent, whether it is interpreted as the soundness of action or inaction, or whether it is interpreted as “If He wills, He does, and if He does not will, He does not.” We derive from both definitions the perfection of His Might, leaving aside any shortcomings.

So, it is accurate to say that the Might in His regard, Praised is He, is the soundness of action and inaction, that is, He is above being restricted by action or inaction. It is also accurate to use the second definition, not in the sense His action is done through a superfluous will, but according to what you have known: His being above any restriction regarding action or inaction.

## Indications of His Might

Evidences pointing out to His Might, Praise belongs to Him, are many. We are going to explain their most obvious, the strongest.

### First: Instinct

Every human being finds it within himself that he is attracted towards a lofty might when calamities take place, believing that there is a Supreme Might which is the only resort for salvation during those hard times. This is what he senses without being taught, without learning. The existence of this instinct reveals the existence of such an absolute might. Otherwise, its existence would have been regarded as nonsense.

What is meant by instinct here is not having an image of the Omni-Potent when hard times reign so it may be said that imagining something is not evidence of its existence. It is like imagining the Phoenix is not regarded as evidence of its actual existence. Rather, it is the inner inclination, one's self-conscience is attracted to it, and the sense that such an attraction is similar to the rest of his senses.

One who is deeply drowned into hard times, one who has lost all hope for any material cause, finds it within the depths of his soul that there is a feeling in which he does not doubt, the feeling that there is an

existent that knows about his problems, one who is capable of pushing them away from him.

There is no contradiction to his instinct if he is distracted from such existent when the hard times no longer are there, when calamities are no more, for not every instinctive matter manifests itself in all circumstances. The surfacing of instincts requires special conditions and atmospheres, including even the instincts of a carnal desire, anger, etc.

Briefly, just as instinct calls for the existence of the most Praised One, it also calls for His Attributes: knowledge, might, etc. The most Praised One says,

***“Say: ‘Think to yourselves, if God’s Wrath were to come upon you, or the Hour (that you dread)..., would you then call on someone other than Allah? (Reply) if you are truthful! Nay! You would (certainly) call upon Him, and if it is His Will, He would remove (the distress) which made you call upon Him and you would forget (the false gods) which you associate with Him’” (Qur’an, 6:40–41).***

## **Second: Cosmic Order**

The cosmic order, in all what is tiny and what is magnanimous in it, in all the goodness and glory, the precision and the magnificence, the mastership and the perfection, speaks of the might of the One Who initiated all things, of His ability to create what is the most precise and the most wonderful. Natural sciences have greatly helped in this field, proving the might of the Maker. The more perfect these sciences are, the more mankind becomes familiar with the cosmic systems, laws and wonders, and the more this attribute manifests itself in the best and most glorious way.

Thus, it becomes obvious that a doer’s deed, just as it reveals the existence of the doer, also reveals his quality. A good book of poems tells us about the existence of one who wrote it. Likewise, it tells us about his artistic ability, superb taste and capability to soar in the horizons of imagination in order to mold lofty meanings in good word templates. Both books, the one titled *Canon*, which deals with medicine, by Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and his other book titled *Al-Shifaa* (healing) in philosophy, prove that their author was among those who were genius in medicine and philosophy.

Therefore, we see that when He, the most Praised One, describes His magnificent actions and creations in the verses of His Holy Qur’an, He concludes them with the Attribute “the Omni-Potent”. He, the most Praised One, says,

***“Allah is He Who created seven firmaments, and of the earth (He created) a similar number; through the midst of them (all) His command descends so you may know that Allah has might over all things, and that Allah encompasses all things in (His) knowledge” (Qur’an, 65: 12).***

Precision and mastership in a deed are signs of knowledge, indications of might. We see in some statements of Imam Ali (as) how he relies in proving His might, the most Exalted One, on the magnificence of His deeds and the goodness of what He creates, the most Praised One that He is.

He (as) has said, “He initiated creations through His Might, spread the winds through His mercy and firmed with stones the field of His earth.”[3](#)

He (as) also says, “He showed us of His domain His Might and the wonders that articulate signs of His wisdom.”[4](#)

He (as) also says, “He straightened of things what is crooked thereof, set a system for their limits and synchronized, through His might, their antitheses.”[5](#)

He (as) also says, “He established testifying evidences for things which he created with His grace, and for His great might.”[6](#)

And there are other such references in his sermons and statements, peace with him.

Imam Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (as) answered a question by an atheist thus: “How could One Who has showed you His might in your own creation have veiled Himself from you?”[7](#)

### **Third: One Who Grants Perfection Does not Lack It**

Among the evidences for His might, Praise belongs to Him, is that He created mankind just as He created others, giving him the ability to make what is wonderful, strange, huge and amazing things. It is known that man, through his presence and ability, is the cause behind His existence, Praise belongs to Him. So, how can One Who creates mankind and bestowed things on him be lacking in what He gives?

## **Dominance of the Almighty’s Might Over Everything**

The human nature rules that the absolute perfection towards which mankind is sometimes attracted is capable of anything that is possible. It does not entertain minds at all, had it not been for the doubts raised by skeptics, that there are limits for His might, or that He can do something but not something else. Muslims during the first era embraced this belief which Allah’s Book inspired to them, the Book that states the generality of Allah’s might, Praise belongs to Him.

The matter of logic reached mentors of the Mutazilites who recorded details about the expanse of His might, Praise belongs to Him, to which we would like to refer by way of generality:

1. Al-Nizam[8](#) has said, “The Almighty cannot do what is ugly.”
2. Abbad ibn Sulayman al-Seemari[9](#) has said, “He cannot do what is the opposite of what He knows.”
3. Al-Balkhi[10](#) has said, “He cannot do similarly to what His servants do.”
4. The two Jubaais[11](#) have said, “He cannot do exactly what His servants can.”

It may have been attributed to men of wisdom that the most Praised One *cannot* do but one thing, and

that nothing comes out of Him other than a lone thing: reason. There are beliefs espoused by the dualists that are ambiguous. We shall set aside another place to explain the latter. [12](#)

This is a historic picture about the growth of this viewpoint, that is to say, limiting Allah's might! It seems that most of these individuals were influenced by imported opinions that entered the Islam lands during the period of the renaissance of translation. Their misconceptions and the latter's analyses will be presented to you after we review the evidences of those who advocate that His might is general.

## Evidences of Advocates of the Generality of Divine Might

What is meant by the "generality of His might," Praise belongs to Him, is its absorption of anything that is possible. In others words, the Almighty can create everything that He can, nothing is impossible for Him to do. Critics have come to this conclusion based on their statements such as these:

"The requirement is present, the obstacle is missing." The first is due to the fact that the Almighty is able through His own might. Its ratio to the whole is equal to its being above time, place and direction.

"As for the second, the requirement for something to be destined is its possibility. Possibility is common among all. So, the attribute of ability is also common among the probabilities, which is the ultimate pursuit."

This can be explained through the following evidence.

The "obstacles" in the way of His general ability may be one of the following matters:

**First:** Something is not possible on its own, such as the combination of two opposites or antitheses.

**Second:** There may be an obstacle in the way of His will being affected and of its inclusion of everyone. That is to say, as if there is an equivalent might that contrasts and opposes His might.

**Third:** His own Self is not equal with regard to things.

These three factors are rejected in their entirety. As for the first, what is meant by the generality of His might is its inclusion of any matter that is possible without the existence of an innate objection. Divine Might has nothing to do with this. The Doer is not at fault; the fault is in the source.

As for the Second, the equivalent might, which opposes His, is rejected on account of what has already been proven and fixed in its place, to the unity of the One Who does things, to the lack of a similitude to Him in existence. As regarding the probable might, it does not compete with His might: It is His own creation.

As for the third, His being above any restriction, condition, direction, place, makes Him equal relatively to anything that by itself is possible. So, there is no sense that there are some things that are possible

while others are not. Selectivity with regard to His might, Praise belongs to Him, is pawned to some things being close to Him rather than others similarly to man who lives in a specific place and time.

Past and future things are outside his control because he (man) is chained by time and space. As for the Absolute Abstract Who created all times and places, all essences and conditions, it does not make sense that His essence is close to one and is distant from another.

This explains that evidence.

There is something else that is more glorious and magnificent than what has been stated, and it is based on His infinitude in goodness, perfection, etc. Its outcome is that His presence, Glory to Him, is infinite, limitless. In other words, it is an absolute presence not limited by any imaginable or external limits. He is infinite in existence, infinite in perfection and goodness because the source of perfection is existence.

The absence of infinitude in the aspect of existence is inherent to its absence in the aspect of perfection. What perfection is there that is more magnificent and wonderful than the Might that is infinite due to His perfection being infinite? This proves the expanse of His Might that encompasses anything that can be.

## **Expanse of His Might, Glory to Him, in Another Sense**

The expanse of His Might, Glory to Him, has two meanings. One of them you have already come to know. The second is submitted by men of wisdom in their books. Its conclusion is that the cosmic phenomena, what is abstract and what is material, what is innate and what they do, end up at His Might, Praise belongs to Him.

Just since there is no partner with Him in His essence, there is no partner with Him in His actions. Anything for which the word “existent” is used is directly created by Allah, Praise belongs to Him, or through causes and effects. Everyone relies on Him, there is no avoiding it. This is the uniqueness of the Creator that we will explain when we discuss the negative attributes.

Those who oppose this meaning of expanse of Might are the dualists who have made a doer for goodness as being different from the doer of evil and all Mutazilites who made man an independent doer in his actions. By His leave, the most Exalted One, we will explain this in its place and how both of these doctrines are wrong. [13](#)

As regarding the statement of wise men, that is, what comes out of Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is first reason from which the second reason was issued, up to the end of the circle of existence at the matter and the hyle [14](#), apparently it is purely hypothetical and is not different from all existents ending at Allah, Praise belongs to Him, through causes and effects, and the details are in their proper place.

## Religious Texts and the Expanse of His Might, Glory to Him

Texts from the Quran and Sunnah have supported each other with regard to the expanse of His Might and its absolution. We would like to quote some of them here:

The most Praised One says,

***“...And Allah has might over all things” (Qur’an, 33:27).***

He has also said,

***“Allah (alone) prevails over all things” (Qur’an, 18:45).***

He has also said,

***“...Nor is Allah to be frustrated by anything whatever in the heavens or on earth, for He is all-Knowing, all-Mighty” (Qur’an, 35:44).***

Imam al-Sadiq (as) has said, “All things are with him alike with regard to His knowledge, potency, authority and might (over them).”<sup>15</sup>

Imam Mousa ibn Jafar (as) has said, “He is the Omni-Potent Who is never incapable.”<sup>16</sup>

## Questions and Answers

Those who advocate the generality of His Might, Glory to Him, have been faced by several questions which we are going to submit then analyze. These questions are:

1. “Can the most Praised One create His likeness?” If this question is answered in the affirmative, it will require the hypothesis that there will thus be a partner with Him, Glory to Him. And if it is answered in the negative, it will prove that His might is limited, not general.
2. “Is He capable of making the wide world fit into an egg without the world’s size being minimized or the egg maximized?” If it is answered in the affirmative, it will require the opposite of what is necessary, that is, the thing to be contained is greater than the container. If it is answered in the negative, it will indicate that His might is not general.
3. “Can He, Praise belongs to Him, create something to which He cannot put an end?” If it is answered in the affirmative, it will then indicate that His might is not broad, since He cannot put an end to something. And if it is answered in the negative, it will necessitate the non-generality of His might. The answer to a question such as this, be it positive or negative, will indicate the limitation of His might.

These are the questions. As regarding answering them, this is done once through generalization and

once through details.

As regarding generalizing, the claim is that His might is relevant to what can be done by the Self. The contexts of these questions are not matters that are innately possible. Rather, they all are either impossible by themselves or something that requires such impossibility. The inability to undertake them is not regarded as an indication of a shortcoming in the doer. If a tailor cannot make a shirt out of bricks, and if the painter cannot paint a painting of a peacock on water, it is not regarded as a defect in the ability of either.

This is similar to our asking a skilled mathematician to let the result of  $2 \times 2$  be five. On this basis, the question is not restricted to what is stated; rather, anything that is not possible by itself does not fall within the frame of might because this thing itself is faulty, whereas the might is not.

As regarding the detailed answer for these three questions, here is its explanation for you.

As regarding the first, demanding someone to create someone else similar to him is impossible to fit within the frame of one's ability, and to demand it is to demand what is impossible.

In other words, creating a peer requires the combination of two opposites in one and the same thing. Since the hypothesis supposes the existence of someone similar to Him, Glory to Him, this becomes a must, not a probability, something timeless (that has already taken place) rather than incidental, unlimited, not limited.

Since might is attached to him, which is not attached to something which is non-existent, it must be incidental rather than timeless, probable rather than a must, infinite rather than finite. This is what we have said, that is, it requires the existence of two antitheses in one and the same thing.

Thus, the answer to the second question becomes obvious. The might being independent of making the big thing fit into the small thing is not from the standpoint of its being improbable by itself. Commonsense rules that the container must be greater than what it contains. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, making a big thing fit in a small container requires the doing of its opposite: the container is smaller than what it contains. Attempting to do such a thing requires doing one thing, the container or what it contains, being small and the same time big.

As regarding the third question, the supposition is impossible because it requires an impossibility by itself. Supposing the most Praised One is incapable of creating a thing which He Himself had created is not separate from impossibility, and here is an explanation for it.

Since the indicated thing is doable, it is (likewise) perishable. Since it is preconditioned to non-extinction, such condition is not possible. The issue becomes one thing being probable and a must, perishable and non-perishable, all at the same time.

In other words, its being created hinges on the ability of putting an end to it because what is made is

sustained by its Maker. If the tie with the latter is severed, it will require its becoming non-existent. Its being non-perishable requires its being not created in the first place. What the question presupposes, if at all, is the presence of two antitheses.

Thus, the answers to questions similar to these become possible such as one may ask: Can Allah create a body which He cannot cause to move? This falls into the category of combining two opposites. The supposition that its having a beginning necessitates its having an end, that it can be mobilized. Yet, at the same time, we claimed that the most Praised One is supposedly unable to mobilize it!

These hypotheses and their likes do not harm the generality of His might. Rather, they only fool simple-minded people. As for people of distinction and perfection, they are greater than being ignorant of how to respond to them.

## **Misconceptions of Those Who Deny Might's Generality**

You have come to know some details about this issue in the beginning of the research. It is now time to look deeply into it and analyze it in a way that suits the condition of this book.

### **Allah, Glory to Him, "Cannot" Do What is Ugly**

Al-Nizami seeks to argue that the Almighty cannot do what is ugly, that had He been able to do it, He would have. Thus, He would be either ignorant of its ugliness or is in need for so doing, and both matters are impossible.

The answer to it is clear. What is meant by His ability to do something ugly is that such an ability is the same, whether in doing what is ugly or in doing what is good. Just as He is able to send one who obeys Him to Paradise, He likewise is able to send him to hell. The issue here is not what "incapacitates" Him from doing it. Since this action violates His wisdom, Glory to Him, His justice and equity, He does not do it. An ugly deed is committed by a doer who is either ignorant of its ugliness or he is in need of doing it.

Both matters are not present with His sanctity. A big difference exists between the inability to do something in the first place and not actually doing it simply because there is no need to do it. A kind father can slaughter his son, but the motive to doing such a thing does not exist with him. Such an action is not done except by an ignorant wretch or someone who [for some reason] needs to commit it.

A Nizami individual has confused "inability" with the absence of a motive.

### **Almighty's "Inability" To Do the Opposite of What He Knows**

Abbad ibn Sulayman al-Seemari claims that His might is not broad. He says that if Allah knows that something will take place, it definitely will, so its taking place is a must. What He knows that it will not take place does not at all take place, so it is prohibited from taking place. What is a must, or what cannot

be, has nothing to do with might, since might is relevant to something which may take place or which may not. The thing, according to this man's knowledge, which is unilateral, having one definite status, does not fall within the scope of might.

Example: If He, the most Praised and Exalted One, knows that a man will be born in a certain period of time, that man's presence in that period will be definite and known. So, His might is not relevant to its not taking place, which is the opposite of what He knows. This is so because the supposition is that this man's presence became a must, while his non-presence became impossible, since His knowledge reveals the reality completely.

There are two ways to respond to this argument. First, the requirement of what he states is that His might is not relevant to a thing in the first place. This is so because a thing may either be known in His knowledge, the most Praised One, as being coming into reality, or He may know that it will not come to exist. The first must come to be, whereas the second will not. Everything enters into one of these two frames. This requires that His might must not be described as depending on anything at all. The theory is false, that is for sure.

Second, this son of Abbad did not make a distinction between what by itself is a must and what can be so by someone else. He also did not differentiate between what by itself is impossible to come to be and one which is made impossible to be by someone else. The objection to might being attached to something is the innate presence or non-presence, not the existence and non-existence as a result of others being attached to a thing coming into existence or not.

Explanation: Anything relevant to might must by itself be possible and in which the ratio of existence and non-existence is the same. Its existence probability, when the cause is present, does not get it out of possibility. Also, its being non-existent, in the absence of a cause, does not get it out of that limit either.

Therefore, His knowledge, though ranging between causing existence or non-existence, i.e. the necessity of existence compared to the presence of its cause, and the necessity of non-existence relevant to the absence of its cause, this necessity at both ends does not make a thing a must by itself or the contrary. Rather, even after the attachment of necessity or its absence, with regard to the existence or non-existence of its cause, is described through possibility, it does not depart from the limit of straight-forwardness.

In the supposed example, I mean the birth of someone at a particular time, it is relevant to His knowledge and will, Praise belongs to Him, that dominates His creation in that circumstance, and the opposite does not take place. But if it does not take place, it is not due to His being unable to cause it to happen.

Rather, it falls in the expanse of His knowledge, Praise belongs to Him, whether He creates or does not create. Rather, it is due to being the opposite of what He knows and wants. A big difference exists between not doing something (not creating a particular thing/person) because it is the opposite of what

He knows to be good and His inability to do it.

## His “Inability” to Do Similarly to What His Servants Do

Al-Balkhi went as far as suggesting that Allah Almighty “cannot” do similarly to what His servants can, because it is either obedience to Him or disobedience or foolhardiness. Man’s actions cannot depart from these three categories, and they are all impossible to apply to the most Exalted One. Otherwise, His actions would have been categorized as obedience, disobedience or foolhardiness.

The first two require that there should be someone who orders Allah Almighty, which is impossible. The last enters under the category of ugliness, which is (also) impossible to apply to Him, Praise belongs to Him. An answer has been provided about His “inability” to do what is ugly, so there is no need for repetition. As for the first two, we would like to say the following:

Obedience and disobedience are not among the true matters that stand by a thing itself. Rather, they are two matters which reason comprehends when comparing the action of the ordered one with his violation of it. It is then that we find no confusion about His ability, Glory to Him, to do similarly to what His servant does by way of similarity, such as His action, Praise belongs to Him, being united in essence and form with the deed and form of His servant.

As regarding His action, Praise belongs to Him, not being described as obedience or disobedience, in this case, it does not harm His ability, the most Exalted One, to do similarly to what man does because the criterion in similarity is the reality of the action, its outer truth, not the labels, be they symbolic or extractive, which do not affect the reality of the thing.

In support of what we have stated, *allama* al-Hilli says the following as he explains abstraction:

“Obedience and foolhardiness are two characteristics which do not require the variation of the essence.”<sup>17</sup> Let us suppose that someone built a house in obedience of an order he received from his boss. Allah, Praise belongs to Him, can create the likeness of that house without a difference from it as much as one hair.

While the servant’s action is characterized as obedience, His action, Praise belongs to Him, is not. But this does not cause an essential difference between both actions; rather, both actions are united in essence and in form.

Yes, there are actions made by man directly. They stand through him similarly to an explanation provided for a topic, such as eating and drinking. Their being not done by Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is due to their being among the material actions that stand by the material topic, and Allah, Praise belongs to Him, is above matter, so He is not characterized by these actions.

Nevertheless, man and his direct actions are all due to His assistance, Praise belongs to Him, to His might and means, so much so that if the outpouring from the Lord stops, man and his actions would all

become things of the past.

## The Almighty's "Inability" to Do Exactly What His Servant Does

Both Jubais have concluded that there is an absence of the expanse of His ability, Glory to Him, just as others have, as we indicated above, but they provide a different explanation. They say that the Almighty *cannot* do exactly what His servant does. Otherwise, there would have been a requirement for both antitheses to be present if Allah wills something while His servant abhors it, or vice versa.

An explanation of inherence: What is decreed will come to pass on the call of the One Who can make it happen, and it stays in the world of nonexistence where it is kept from happening. Had there been two decrees actualized by two able ones, and if we suppose that one of them has a reason to bring it into being while the other, at the same time, does not have such a reason, this will require looking into that cause. It remains in the world of nonexistence in as far as the one that does not want it to come into being is concerned. Hence, it becomes existent and nonexistent; such are contradictions.

The answer is as follows.

**First:** Nonexistence is not relevant to only the way mentioned by both Jubais, i.e. the one in which one of them (the able person) has a cause to bring it into being, whereas the other keeps it from happening in the world of nonexistence. Rather, the prevention (from it coming into existence) takes place if the will of each one of them is relevant to bringing into being the same decree, its exactness. This would require two complete causes combined for the sake of one effect.

**Second:** His (supposed) "inability" to do exactly what His servant does is due to the fact that it is relevant to what can be done through possible means. If it becomes impossible, might is not relevant to it. Its dissociation from what is impossible does not at all mean that it is limited.

The images supposed by both Jubais, or what we have added to them, do not prove anything more than an action coming up under those circumstances being impossible. This is so because it requires the combination of two antitheses, according to the supposition of the two Jubais, or on the combination of two perfect causes into one effect, according to our own supposition, which is impossible and out of the frame of might; it is not even labeled as inability.

**Third:** What do both men mean when they say, "exactly what the servant of Allah can do"? Do they mean the thing before its existence, or do they mean after its existence? If they mean the first, there is no specificity here, there is no particular circumstance. The thing in this phase does not go beyond being a totally inclusive concept. If they mean the second probability, the fact that might is not attached to it due to being the likeness of bringing about what is already doing so, which is impossible, and what is impossible is outside the framework of might.

**Fourth:** The reference they both (Jubais) stated about the will of the servant of Allah hinging on first

creating him, whereas the will of the most Praised One hinges on its opposite, is a concept of dualists which found its way to Islamic circles. It depicts the action of a servant as his (own) creation rather than being a creation of Allah, Glory to Him, through causation, and that there are two independent doers (Allah and His servant). Each of these doers has his own particular sphere. In this case, the will of the servant is not attached to the will of Allah, Glory to Him, through any means.

But this is false, as we will explain when we discuss the Unity of Allah in His creation. Every doer, be it a doer out of his own self-will or not, does not do anything except when the most Praised One enables him through His own will. If a servant wants something, he does so through the will of Allah and His might in a way which does not require coercion or out of a need, as we will explain with the permission of the Praised One.

[1.](#) The difference between an adjective and a name is that the first is not understood as a subject: Nobody would say, “Zaid came to know.” This is the opposite of the second: It is dealt with as such, so it is said, “Zaid knows” (or he is a man of knowledge). Hence, this [rule] is applied when dealing with His Names and Attributes, Glory to Him. Knowledge, potency and life are [linguistically, according to Arabic] adjectives, while “the all-Knowing”, the “Omni-Potent” and the “Living” are His Names, the most Exalted One.

[2.](#) Thus, you have come to know that describing Him, the most Praised One, as being the Omni-Potent, which means stripping Him of being restricted by either side, is in synch with describing how the option is all His, Praise to Him, and you will come to know its discussion later if the Praised One so permits.

[3.](#) Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 1.

[4.](#) Ibid., Sermon of Images No. 91.

[5.](#) Ibid.

[6.](#) Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 165.

[7.](#) Al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, p. 91.

[8.](#) His name is Ibrahim ibn Sayyar ibn Hani al-Nizam. He died in 231 A.H./853 A.D. The century in which he lived was rich with foreign translations of opinions that were imported into Islamic lands. It is thought that he was influenced by those views and ideologies.

[9.](#) He is quoted as having said that the evidence of pronouncements is self entitative, not created. We could not find his biography in lexicons. Allama al-Hilla mentioned his theory about the might of the Almighty, Praise to Him, in his book titled Nahjul-Mustarshidin. Refer to Irshad al-Talibin ila Nahj al-Mustarshidin, p. 189.

[10.](#) His name is “Abul-Qasim” al-Kabi, and he died in 317 A.H./929 A.D.

[11.](#) They are: Sheikh “Abu Ali” Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab who died in 303 A.H./916 A.D. and his son, “Abu Hashim”, Abdul-Salam ibn Muhammad, who died in 321 A.H./933 A.D. Both were among heads and pillars of the Mutazilites, and they have opinions which contradict those of all their mentors.

[12.](#) The discussion of the beliefs of dualists will be stated in the chapter on Tawhid in [the subject of] creation.

[13.](#) We will state how the doctrine of the dualists is wrong when we discuss the Oneness of Creator and the falsehood of the Mutazilites’ claim when we discuss determinism and empowerment.

[14.](#) For the full meaning of this word, refer to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). –Tr.

[15.](#) Al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, pp 76, 131.

[16.](#) Ibid.

[17.](#) Al-Hilli, Kashf al-Murad, p. 174 (Said edition).

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