

The Belief Concerning (Allah's) Intention (Irada) And Will (Mashi'a)

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Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief concerning this is (based upon) the saying of (Imam Ja'far) as-Sadiq: Allah wills (*sha'a*) and intends (*arada*); or He does not like (*lam yuhibba*) and He does not approve (*lam yarda*).²

Now by *sha'a* (He wills) is meant that nothing takes place without His knowledge and *arada* is synonymous with it; and He does not like (*lam yuhibba*) it to be said that He is "the third of the three (cf. 5, 77); and He does not approve of disbelief on the part of His slaves. Says Allah the Mighty and Glorious:

"Verily thou (O Muhammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will" (Qur'an 28:56).

And He says, Exalted is He:

"And ye will not, unless (it be that) Allah willeth" (Qur'an 76:30; 81:29).

And He says, the Glorious and Mighty:

"And if thy Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together. Wouldst thou (O Muhammad) compel men until they are believers"³ (Qur'an 10:99).

And He says, Glorious and Mighty is He:

"And it is not for any soul to believe save by the permission of Allah" (Qur'an 10:100).

And as He, the Glorious and Mighty, says:

"No soul can ever die except by Allah's leave and at a term appointed" (Qur'an 3:145).

And as He, the Glorious and Mighty, says:

“And they say, had we any chance in the affair we should not have been slain here. Say (O Muhammad): Even if ye had been in your houses those appointed to be slain would surely have gone forth to the places where they were to lie”⁴ (Qur'an 3: 154).

And as He says:

“If thy Lord willed, they would not do it; so leave them alone with their devising “(Qur'an 6: 112).

And He, the most Exalted, says:

“Had Allah willed, they would not have been polytheists” (Qur'an 6: 107).

And he says:

“And if We had willed, We could have given every soul its guidance” (Qur'an 32: 13).

And He says:

"And whomsoever Allah wishes to guide, that man's breast will He open to Islam; but whom He wishes to mislead, strait and narrow will He make his breast, as though he were mounting up to the very Heavens!"⁵(Qur'an 6: 125).

And He says:

“It is Allah's desire to assign no portion in the Hereafter” (Qur'an 3: 176).

And He says:

“Allah desires to make the burden light for you” (Qur'an 4:28).

And He says:

“Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you” (Qur'an 2: 185).

And He says:

“And Allah wishes to turn to you in mercy; but those who follow their lusts desire that ye should go greatly astray” (Qur'an 4:27).

And He says:

“And Allah desireth no injustice for (His) slaves “(Qur'an 40:31).

This is our belief concerning (Allah's) Intention and (His) Will. Our opponents denounce us for this, and

say that according to our belief, Allah intends (that man should commit) crimes and that He desired the murder of Husayn bin 'A'li, on whom both be peace.⁶

This is not what we believe. But we say that Allah desired that the sin of the sinners should be contradistinguished from the obedience of those that obey, that He desired that sins, viewed as actions, should not be ascribed to Him, but that the knowledge of these sins may be ascribed to Him, even before the commission thereof.⁷

And we hold that Allah's wish was that the murder of Husayn should be a sin against Him and the opposite of obedience. And we say that Allah intended that his (Husayn's) murder should be prohibited, and something which was not commanded.

And we say that his murder was something that was disliked and not approved;⁸ and we say that his murder was the cause of Allah's displeasure and it was not the cause of His approval, and that Allah the Mighty and Glorious did not desire to prevent his murder by means of (His) compulsion or power, but merely by prohibition and word. And if He had prohibited it by (His) compulsion and power, even as he prevented it by prohibition and word, surely he would have escaped being murdered, just as Abraham was saved from the fire, when Allah, the most Exalted, said⁹ to the fire in which he (Abraham) was thrown:

“O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham” (Qur'an 21:69).

And we say that Allah always knew that Husayn would be killed by force, and by such death, attain everlasting merit, and his murderer, everlasting wretchedness. We hold that what Allah wills; happens; and what He willeth not, will not happen.¹⁰ This is our belief regarding Allah's intention and will, and not that which is ascribed to us by our opponents and for which we are reviled by those who hold heretical views.

1. Cp. Affifi, 160. According to Ibnu'l-'Arabi, mashi'a is the divine commonsense, and is an emanation from God, something like Plotinus' First Intellect; whereas irada is the creative will. The distinction between irada and mashi'a is, according to Affifi, derived by him from Hallaj.

2. The Imam takes these four expressions and explains and illustrates them one by one.

3. Qur'an 10, 99 is expl. in Tas. (Mur. iii. 22–23)

4. *كتاباً مؤجلاً* may also be rendered "a fixed ordinance".

5. Expl. in Tas. (Mur. iii. 21 – 22).

6. Referring to the believers in extreme predestination. MC, 81,82, discusses the Mu'tazilite view, which is the same as that held here. See further MC, 143, where the Ash'arite view is fully discussed. The doctrine of al-Qummi does not differ in the main from the neo-Ash'arite.

7. MC, 143,144; BHA, nos. 118 sqq.; FC, nos. 96–89, 95.

8. The clause *مستقبلاً غير مستحسن* omitted in D.

9. قال الله تعالى للنار: كوني.. الخ D; قال الله تعالى للنار التي القى فيها: يا نار كوني.. الخ N

10. This is again difficult to reconcile. The extreme Sunnite view appears to be that everything was caused and willed by God, either directly or by means of His knowledge. The Mu'tazilites however denied ascription of evil to Allah. And the Ithna 'Asharis are close upon this view, BHA, nos. 125, 126. The Isma'ilis do not attribute evil to God, FC, p.72 (top). For a

philosophical view, see Affifi, 156 sqq. Fuller discussion, Tawhid, 272 –277.

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