

Issue of Badaa

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In another session, al-Mamoon invited him to debate Sulayman al-Maroozi, Khurasan's scientist in kalam(theology), and the debate between them dealt with some significant topics which were being debated then by scholars of the science of kalam, and the starting-point of the discussion was the issue of Badaa(change in an earlier divine ruling). The Holy Imam (A.S.) explained its sound meaning, indicating that the Sublime and Great God had innermost knowledge which nobody but He knew, and that was the source of badaa and knowledge which He taught His angels and Prophets.To explain it in a way which would remove all confusion and ambiguity, we can say about badaa is that God makes manifest that His Will is linked to an advantage which necessitates it, and the apparent reality is that His Will is hinging on what is opposite to it. Then He after that makes manifest His actual Will when the advantage is satisfied from all aspects and the reasons for which it was not previously manifested are removed, and it appears to the creation as if God willed to abandon His first Will, hence it is in the view of creation, not in the reality of Will, badaa. This is the theory of badaa in its simple logical context which Imamis (Shi'as) uphold and which some people misunderstood and misinterpreted, giving it a wrong meaning which necessitated attributing ignorance to the Almighty God and an excuse to wage an unfair campaign of defamation against Imami Shi'as .by their opponents from among the followers of other sects

Holy Imam(A.S.) Proves Badaa

The Holy Imam (A.S.) has proven the accuracy of badaa in which Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) believe by first quoting the Holy Qur'an, for Allah Almighty said, "So leave them alone, for you shall not be blamed for that,"(Sura Az-Zariyat,Ayah 54) meaning thereby that He intends to annihilate them, then the Almighty, according to the badaa theory, He has said, "So remind, for reminding may avail the believers,"(Sura Az-Zariyat,Ayah 55) which indicates a shift from the first decision as observed from studying the context of both verses. Second, he tries to prove it by traditions narrated from his forefathers from the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) who said: "God sent his wahi(revelation) to one of His prophets to inform him that he would die on a particular day, and when that prophet was told so, he pleaded God, the King, while on his bed, saying, `Lord! Postpone my demise till I see my son growing up to carry out my will,' till he fell from his bed,

whereupon God sent his wahi again to the same prophet to inform him that He decided to postpone it."It is apparent that badaa in the meaning which we indicated requires no alarm .whatsoever and it does not justify waging a campaign of defamation to those who believe in it

Eternity Versus Transience of the Will

The same discussion led to discussing the will's eternity and transience, and the Holy Imam (A.S.) stood to disprove the theory which called for the eternity of the will, proving its being transient by revealing its own self-contradiction, removing the confusion which may occupy anyone's mind in its regard. Will, as the Holy Imam (A.S.) says, is one of the actions of the Almighty. It is not one of His attributes; therefore, it is transient, not perpetual, since an action is a form of event, and the deed cannot be identical to the doer, so the will cannot be identical to the willing person. Will is not like hearing or seeing or knowing as al-Maroozi tried to prove, because it does not make sense, the Holy Imam(A.S.) says, to say that He wanted Himself. Does He want to be "something," or does He want to be Alive, Seeing, Hearing, or Able? If this is according to His Will, it would require the impossible which is the change occurring to the self, for the meaning then would be that He wanted Himself to be something which was not... Sublime is God greatly above all of this. Thus did the debates between the Holy Imam(A.S.) and al-Maroozi occur frequently about the eternity of the will versus its transience about .relevant matters

Al-Maroozi's Argumentativeness

In his debates with the Holy Imam(A.S.), al-Maroozi kept arguing and coming back to the same point from which he had started his argument in an inflexible argumentative manner. While accepting that to desire something (to "will", to wish) is a verb, he goes back to deny that and claim that it is an adjective, and he may admit something and say something else. The Holy Imam(A.S.) asks him, "O Abu Sulayman! Can you tell me if the will is a verb or not?" He says, "Yes, it is a verb." He asks, "Is it causative, since verbs are?" "It is not a verb," comes the answer. The Holy Imam (A.S.) asks, "Is there any with Him who is eternal?" Sulayman answers, "Willing is doing." He says, "O Sulayman! This is the same which you criticized Dirar and his followers about for saying that everything God Almighty has created in His heavens and earth, ocean or land, dog or pig, monkey, human, or an animal, is God's will, and that God's will gives life and takes life away, and it goes here or drinks from there, marries, enjoys food, commits immoral acts, disbelieves and commits shirk..." Sulayman said, "It is like hearing, seeing, or

knowing; that is, it is an adjective, an attribute." Having abstained from providing an answer to the Holy Imam's question, Sulayman goes back to the beginning of the argument regarding whether the will is an adjective, an attribute, or a verb, but the Holy Imam(A.S.) nevertheless repeats his argument with him by following another route different from the one he took first, which indicates how commonsense the idea seems to him and his ability to prove it however .he willed

Imam's Style in Debating

The debate continues between them in the same calm manner in which the Holy Imam (A.S.) coins his questions, which is the most magnificent method of debate. In his way of providing answers, the Holy Imam(A.S.) never blocks the way before his opponent to continue the debate; rather, he leaves him completely free to debate in whatever manner he wishes through his questions till he brings him to a dead-end where he cannot proceed anymore just to go back seeking another route which the Holy Imam(A.S.) himself wants him to seek out of his .own will and after his own conviction

Al-Mamun Rebukes al-Maroozi for Fumbling About

But Sulayman kept fumbling about in his answers to the Holy Imam's questions after the Holy Imam(A.S.) had closed before him all avenues of his argument, and al-Mamun was quick to notice his fumbling about which indicated Sulayman's loss, so he rebuked him and criticized him. It is reported that during the debate, when Imam Reza (A.S.) asked him to continue his questions, he said, "Will is one of His attributes." The Holy Imam(A.S.) said, "How many times has it been said that it is one of His attributes, so is it a new attribute, or has it always been so?" Sulayman said, "New." The Holy Imam (A.S.) said, "Allahu Akbar! You are telling me that His attribute is new! Had it been one of His attributes, and an eternal one, then He willed and He created as long as His will and His creation are eternal...! This means it is an attribute of someone who did not know what he did! God is Elevated above this..." Sulayman said, "Things are not a will, and He did not will anything." Here the Holy Imam(A.S.) said, "You have hissed, O Sulayman! He did and He created as long as His will and His creation are eternal...?! This is the attribute of someone who does not know what he did! Elevated is God above all of that." Sulayman, turning to al-Mamun, then said, "Master! I have already informed him that it is like hearing and seeing and knowing." Al-Mamun said, "Woe unto you, Sulayman! How you have erred and how often you have repeated yourself! Stop it and take another route, for you seem

to be unable to provide any answer better than that."The debate continues after that till Sulayman's tongue is tied, whereupon al-Mamun says, "O Sulayman! This is the most learned descendant of Hashim," and the session disperses