

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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305009 - Refutation of those who say that the divine attributes having to do with actions such as creating and granting provision are created

the question

I heard a famous shaykh say that Allah created the divine attribute of granting provision. Is this correct or not?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The attributes of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, are not created, whether they are attributes having to do with His Essence, such as His Countenance and two hands, or are attributes having to do with His actions, such as creating, granting provision, rising over the Throne, and descending (to the lowest heaven in the third part of the night), because the attribute is connected to the one to whom it is ascribed, and the one to whom it is ascribed is Allah, may He be exalted.

Granting provision (razq) is an attribute having to do with an action that is proven to be ascribed to Allah, may He be glorified in exalted, in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Ar-Razzaaq and ar-Raaziq [both meaning the Granter of provision] are among the names of Allah, may He be exalted.

The Qur'an and Sunnah affirm this characteristic of Allah, may He be blessed and exalted. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Then eat of what Allah has provided for you [which is] lawful and good. And be grateful for the

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favor of Allah, if it is [indeed] Him that you worship”

[an-Nahl 16:114]

“Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength”

[adh-Dhaariyaat 51:58].

In a marfoo’ hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him), it says: “When one of you comes to his wife, let him say, ‘Bismillah, Allahumma jannibna ash-shaytaana wajannib ash-shaytaana ma razaqtana (In the name of Allah. Keep the Shaytaan away from us and from what You bestow upon us). Narrated by al-Bukhaari (141) and Muslim (1434).

Ibn al-Qayyim said in an-Nooniyyah (2/101):

Similarly, ar-Razzaaq (Granter of provision) is one of His names, and granting provision is one of His actions.

Al-Harraas said: One of His names is ar-Razzaaq, which is an intensive form of Raaziq; this is indicative of abundance. It is taken from the root word ar-razq. With regard to the word ar-rizq (provision), that is for His slaves for whom His help and favours never cease for even the blink of an eye.

Ar-razq [granting provision], like al-khalq [creating] is the name of the things that Allah bestows upon His slave. The meaning of the divine name ar-Razzaaq is the one who sends a great deal of provision to His slaves. This is one of the divine attributes having to do with Allah’s actions, and it is connected to His being Rabb (Lord), may He be glorified and exalted. It is not appropriate to attribute it to anyone other than Him, so no one else can be called razzaaq (a granter of provision) just as no one else can be called khaaliq (a creator). Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “Allah is the one who created you, then provided for you, then will cause you to

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die, and then will give you life” [ar-Room 30:40]. All provision is in the hand of Allah alone, for He is the Creator of provision and of those to whom He sends provision; He is the Creator of the means that make provision reach people and is the Creator of the causes that make them enjoy it. So it must be attributed to Him alone, and thanks must be given to Him for it, for He is the owner of it and the one who bestows it.

End quote from Sifaat Allah ‘azza wa jall by Shaykh ‘Alawi ibn ‘Abd al-Qaadir as-Saqqaaf (175-177).

Secondly:

The Ash‘aris are of the view that the divine attributes connected to Allah’s actions are created, because these attributes which have to do with actions are a manifestation of the attribute of qudrah (might, power). Therefore they do not believe that there is a divine attribute called khalq (creating) or a divine attribute called razq (granting provision). Rather they claim that Allah’s qudrah (might, power) may be reflected in creating something at a particular time, which is khalq, or it may be reflected in granting provision at a particular time, which is razq. This is a way of avoiding affirmation of an attribute that is repeated or renewed, i.e., creation after creation, or provision after provision.

Al-Bayjoori (may Allah have mercy on him) said: What is excluded by ascribing attributes to the divine Essence is the divine attributes having to do with actions, because none of them existed from eternity according to the Ash‘aris. This is in contrast to the view of the Maturidis, because according to the Ash‘aris, these attributes are reflections of divine qudrah (might, power), the reflections of which are created, but according to the Maturidis, they are the divine attribute of takween (making, bringing into existence), which is eternal.

End quote from Sharh Jawhar at-Tawheed, p. 89.

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And he said: Allah's attributes are not created, because if they were created, that would imply that created things are part of the Essence of Allah, may He be exalted. End quote.

This is an invalid view that is contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and scholarly consensus (ijmaa'). There is nothing untoward in believing that Allah, may He be exalted, speaks words time after time, or creates things time after time, or grants provision time after time.

Trying to avoid the issue by suggesting that it is a reflection of another attribute (qudrah) is of no avail, because it may be said to them (by way of refuting them): This reflection must either be something that does exist or something that does not exist. If it exists, then in that case you are suggesting that something that is repeatedly created has become part of the divine attributes.

But if what is connected to the divine attribute is something that does not exist, this implies something extremely abhorrent and repugnant, which is the notion that Allah does not create and does not provide. Ar-Raazi suggested to his followers that they should believe that created things could be part of the divine attributes, as a justification for his view concerning the reflection (of the divine attributes), as stated in his book *al-Arba'eena wa'l-Mataalib al-'Aaliyah*.

The Ash'aris interpreted the texts which speak of the divine attributes of creating and granting provision by saying that what is meant by *khalq* (creating) is the person who is created, and what is meant by *razq* (granting provision) is the person who is given provision.

The Maturidis differed from the Ash'aris in this regard, and they attributed to Allah an eternal attribute that they called *takween* (making, bringing into existence), under which they included the divine attributes having to do with actions. The Maturidis clearly stated that to deny the attribute of *takween* and to claim that creating (*khalq*) is the same as the created being would be tantamount to disbelief (*kufr*), which is denying the Maker and implies that the universe was not created by Allah. They explained that the divine attribute of *qudrah* (might, power) would not necessitate the existence of a created being, for Allah is able to create many things that He did

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not create, so there must inevitably be another attribute, other than qudrah (might, power), from which creation came.

Abu'l-Mu'een an-Nasafi said: The view of most of the Mu'tazilah, and all the Najjaaris and Ash'aris, is that to suggest that the act of bringing into existence (takween) and the one who is brought into existence (mukawwan) are the same thing is something impossible. That is because saying that takween and mukawwan are the same is like saying that hitting and the one who is hit are the same, or that breaking of the thing that is broken are the same, or that eating and the thing that is eaten are the same. That is obviously wrong, and may best be described as nonsense. The same applies to the issue under discussion here. If the act of bringing into existence (takween) and the one who is brought into existence (mukawwan) are the same thing, and that which is brought into existence (mukawwan) came about through the attribute of takween, then that means that what was brought into existence came about by itself, and was not brought about by Allah, may He be exalted. In that case, Allah, may He be exalted, is not the one who created the universe; rather the universe, and every part of it, created itself, because it came into existence through creating (khalq) and it created itself. Thus it is itself a creator and is itself the created thing; hence it is the creator, and it is the act of creating, and it is the created thing. Moreover, that implies denial of the Maker, affirmation that there is no need for Him, and denial that created beings are dependent on Him, and all of that is not possible. ...

Because if takween is the same as the mukawwan, then there would be nothing for Allah in relation to the universe that would dictate that He is the Creator of the universe and that the universe is His creation, except the fact that He is eternal and existed before the universe - and the fact that He existed before all others does not mean that the latter is the creation of the former, if He is not the one who made it.

And to affirm that Allah has power (qudrah) over all things and that He has might does not mean that what He could do actually happened, unless the one who has power (qudrah) caused it to

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happen. Suggesting that [takween is the same as mukawwan] is denying that Allah is the Creator of the universe, and denying that Allah created the universe and denying that the universe is created by Allah constitutes disbelief (kufr).

End quote from at-Tamheed by an-Nasafi, p. 29.

See also: Tabsirat al-Adillah, p. 428.

It should be noted that the Maturidis regard the attribute of takween as eternal, not something that is renewed or repeated; they did not affirm the divine attributes of creating, granting provision, giving life and causing death, so as to avoid belief in a divine attribute that is renewed and repeated.

All of that is not correct. The divine attributes include creating, granting provision, giving life and causing death; Allah creates time after time, and grants provision time after time, may He be blessed and exalted. The evidence for that is abundant, and none of His attributes are created or can be said to have not existed previously.

And Allah knows best.