An Explanation of the Previous Divine Knowledge to the Essence in the Īmran Ṣābi’s Hadith

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Abstract

One of the important issues in the field of divine names and attributes is God’s previous knowledge to his essence before creating possible beings. According to the appearance of the Īmran Ṣābi’s narration, Imām Reḍā (A.S) denies God’s need for such knowledge that is incompatible with another Imām’s narration in which God’s knowledge to His essence is affirmed. The commentators of this narration like hadith scholars, philosophers, and mystics disagree in explaining and solving such incompatibility. ‘Allāmih Majlisī has mentioned four justifications that all of them can be criticized. Qāżī Sa’īd Qummī accepts the apparent meaning of Hadith and attributes this knowledge to the level of Unity. This viewpoint is incompatible with those traditions in which the attributes of essence are affirmed. ‘Allāmih Jafarī uses only the principle of identity in justifying this Hadith and does not accept the attributing this to God’s intuitive knowledge. In this article, Mullū Ṣadrā’s viewpoint that is based on intuition knowledge and the principle of identity is more compatible with Imām Reḍā’s (A.S) Hadith in solving this contradiction.

Key words: Imām Reḍā’s (A.S), Īmran Ṣābi’s debate, Names and attributes, Divine Knowledge, the principle of identity, intuitive knowledge.

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