Aim of Creation from the Perspective of People of the Justice (Adlia) and Asharite Theologians

Dr. Ali Afzali¹, Zahra Haji Ebrahim Zargar²,*

¹ Associate professor, Faculty Member of Quran and Hadith University and Head of the department of theology (Kalam)- Iranian institute of philosophy (IRIP).
² P.h.D Student of theology (Kalam) - Quran and Hadith University, Tehran, Iran.

*Corresponding Author: Zahra Haji Ebrahim Zargar; Email: zargarzahra@yahoo.com

Abstract

Teleology of divine actions or purposeful creation in other words, has always been one of the most important problems being always questioned. The discussion on a purposeful creation is a corollary argument in theology; it is rooted in the four Aristotelian Causes that have been proposed to explain creatures and phenomena rationally. Concordance of Aristotelian Efficient Cause and Final Cause with all its aspects to God and the created world has been misinterpreted with the idea that God, same as created beings, will reach perfection by achieving its purpose: Creation. Based on the religious foundations of goodness (husn) and badness (qubh), Asharites deny purpose and objective in God’s actions in order to defend the scope of the divine will. However, denying purposefulness leads to futility of divine actions, which is certainly not an attribute of God. Based on rational goodness and badness, Imamiya and Mutazilites believe in the badness of a futile Creation, meaning they believe in the purposeful state of divine actions. God is needless because He is rich by essence and having an objective in Creation (a purposeful Creation) does not imply God reaching perfection by achieving this goal. Achieving perfection is a characteristic of created beings and God is immaculate of being compared with them. Therefore, with Creation, God has no self-oriented goal; but the aim is targeting created beings by leading them towards the perfection they deserve. Quran verses and traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (as) confirm this issue explicitly; they refer to the richness of God’s essence, beneficial Creation, and Creation purposes (worship of God, knowledge of God, and proximity with God). This article focuses only on the theologians’ point of views, not philosophers nor mysticists. It develops also in details the problems of Asharites’ point of views in this regard.

Keywords: aim of creation, purpose, Asharites, Mutazilites, Imamya, Islamic theology.
Introduction

In addition to the belief of the existence of God as the Creator, the monotheistic school of Islam agrees that the universe was created for a purpose and its creation is not vain and aimless. There are three perspectives about the genesis of the universe:

1. The universe is God's creation, meaning the world has a history of non-existence and it has been created by a creator.
2. The material Nature is original and needs no creator.
3. The material world is primordial and God has organized it.

The naturalists may only ask whether this nature is purposeful or not. But those who believe that God is only an organizer take another approach and ask what was the aim of the Organizer in such an arrangement. Addressing the first and second perspectives is not the subject of this study. Because this article aims to explain and review the point of view of Mutazilites and Shiites on one hand, and Asharite theologians on the other, about the aim of Creation, this article is about the first perspective. Their concern is whether God had a purpose of creating the universe or not. And if so what was this purpose?

1. Literal and Contextual Meanings of the Word Purpose

In Raqhib’s Al-Mufradat, purpose is defined as: “Purpose (objective) is the aim of an arrow, then, it has been used as a noun for any objective that one tries to achieve. It is of two types:

- Incomplete purpose, meaning a purpose that once achieved, another aim and something else is solicited such as comfort or presidency that are targets of people.
- Complete purpose, the kind of purpose one wishes nothing after its achievement such as heaven” (Al-Raqib al-Isfahani, Vol. 1, p. 605).

In Arabic Dictionary, purpose is defined as “the target having been set for shooting”1 (Ibn Manzur, vol. 7, p. 196).

In theology, “purpose means the knowledge of an expected affair for which an action is performed. It is different from motivation. If the action leads to this affair in future, it is said about the achiever that his purpose of that action was the achievement of that purpose”2 (Mutazili, Ghazi Abduljabbar, Vol. 14, pp. 44-45).

It has also been mentioned, “The thing another object goes toward and reaches it, is called purpose; moreover, it is called purpose because its achievement is requested by the execution of an action”3 (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 1, p. 175).

Purpose has also been identified as “the goal achieved by the action”4 (Fazil Miqdad, p. 221; Bahrani, Ibn Maitham, p. 111).

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1 الغَرَضُ الهدف المقصود بالرّمي، ثم جعل اسمًا لكلّ غاية يتحرّى إدراكها، و جمعه: أَغْرَاضٌ، فَأَغْرَضُ ضَرْبٌ: غَرَضٌ ناقص و هو الذي يشَوَّق بعد شيء آخر كالشّيء، و تامّ و هو الذي لا يشَوَّق بعد شيء آخر كالجَنّة

2 فاَمَا الغرض مَن أطلق، فالمراد به: العلم بالامر المتطور، الذي له فعل الفعل المقدم، فهو أحسن من الدواعي، فإذا كان للفعل ثمرة في المستقبل يقال في فعله بأن غرضه في الفعل هو ذلك الأمر (معطى)...

3 ما يتأدى إليه الشّيء و يترّزّب عليه يسمى من هذه الحقيقية غاية، و من حيث يطلب بالفعل غرضًا (أشاعر)
Accordingly, the meaning of purpose in this discussion is the aim pursued by an agent (fa’il) to be achieved consciously and it is planned in his mind before beginning the action; the efforts are carried out to achieve the purpose.

2. Research Background: Aim of Creation from the Perspectives of Aristotle and Avicenna

Discussion about the purpose and aim of Creation was first proposed by Aristotle. As a naturalist philosopher, Aristotle tried to present a rational justification of the phenomena. He sought to identify the main and most general elements in every transformation. Aristotle argues in Physics “Now that we have established these distinctions, we must proceed to consider causes, their character, and number. Knowledge is the object of our inquiry, and men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the 'why' of (which is to grasp its primary cause).” Then, he explains different meanings of cause, “In one sense, then, (1) that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists, is called 'cause', e.g. the bronze of the statue, the silver of the bowl, … (material cause). (2) In another view the form or the archetype, i.e. the description of the quiddity and its genera are called 'causes'. This type of cause is found in the details of a description (formal cause). (3) The primary source of a change or an immobility is a cause … and what makes is the cause (efficient cause). (4) ‘cause’ means also the end or 'that for the sake of which' something is done, e.g. health is the cause of hiking. When asked; “What is he hiking for?” we answer: “To be healthy”, by saying so, we have defined the cause (final cause)” (Aristotle, Book ii, Part 3, p.85). Thus, Aristotle believed that four causes could be used to present a rational explanation of every phenomenon:

1. Efficient cause: the cause induces a change or an immobility by its action.
2. Material cause: it constructs the genus of every object.
3. Formal cause: it is the essence or form describing the nature of a phenomenon.
4. Final cause: the purpose for which an action is performed.

Avicenna also says, “Goal is what the object exists for” (Avicenna, p. 283). Then, he explains: “the goal is sometimes within the agent and sometimes out of the agent. For example, men participate in a competition in order to win; they like victory because it makes them happy and their sense of superiority will be satisfied. The end is the happiness that exists in the agent. Sometimes the end may be in the recipient. Natural actions are of this type. A stone moves and falls because the stone has accepted the motion. Plants growing is another example. Sometimes the end is in a third object. For example, a person performs an action to satisfy a third person; such as the story of Farhad and Shirin in which Farhad engraves the mountains to satisfy Shirin”
(Morteza Mutahari, Vol. 7, p. 353). It is obvious “the three above-mentioned goals are not attributed to God because all causes would represent flaws in His essence. Therefore, Avicenna believes that final cause cannot be attributed to God because all our actions are under the influence of the final cause that is motivating us and under the influence of this motivation we perform an action. But God’s sublime essence cannot be under the influence of a motivation. Thus, final cause is not relevant in this regard”7 (Avicenna; p. 113; Mutahari, Morteza, Vol. 7, p. 358).

Based on what has been said, it is clear that Aristotle tried to present a rational definition for natural phenomena, for which, he introduced the Four Causes. He believed that phenomena in the world are ordered and move towards a goal. In his worldview, there is no discussion about God at all and the furthermost he presented is the Efficient Cause or stimulus that is generating a change or an immobility. When discussions about Final Cause entered into Islamic philosophy, Muslim philosophers inevitably mistook the Efficient Cause for God and, as this agent too must have a purpose for his action and must seek an objective, naturally one may ask what was God’s goal by creating the world?

As mentioned, Avicenna argues that this meaning of purpose causes a flaw in God’s essence; and as a result he rejects purpose for God.8 Based on Quranic verses and Islamic traditions, theologians do not accept lack of purpose for God. Since this subject is related to the knowledge of God, it is subject of theology and Imamiya, Mutazilite, and Asharite theologians answer this question based on their own principles. In the discussion about aim of Creation Asharite theologians have a different point of view than Mutazilite and Imamiya theologians and one may say Mutazilite and Imamiya theologians share the same view on this subject.

3. Aim of Creation from the Perspective of Asharites

3.1. Basics

Before explaining Asharites’ view about the aim of Creation, it is necessary to present the principles on which basis the view is reflected. They are proposed mostly in such books as “pervasive will of God”9 and “goodness and badness”

It means a higher-ranking being is not asking any affair for the lower-ranking being, which he would consider as a purpose for him...

7 في أن الملك الحق لا غرض له مطلقا: و العالي لا يكون طالبا أمرا لأجل السافل حتى يكون ذلك جاريا منه مجرى الغرض. فذان الجواد و الملك الحق لا غرض له و العالي لا غرض له في السافل.

8 In Sharh Al-Ishārāt, Nasir al-Din al-Tousi says about Avicenna’s arguments rejecting purpose for God:

فأشار الشيخ إلى أن من يفعل لغرض فلا بد من أن يكون ذلك الفعل أحسن به من تركه. لأن الفعل الحسن في نفسه إن لم يكن أحسن بالفاعل. لم يمكن أن يصير غرضا له. ثم أنتج من ذلك أن الملك الحق لا غرض له مطلقا، و العالي لا غرض له مطلقا:

It means “When one performs an action to achieve a goal, executing it should be better than renouncing to it – because it is impossible for a good action that is not profitable in itself to its agent, could become his purpose and target. Consequently, God has absolutely no purpose and high-ranking being has no purpose at all” (Sharh Al-Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīḥāt maa al-Muhakemat, vol. 3, p. 149).

9 عموم ارادته تعالى.

This title is mentioned in Sharhul Mavaqif and Sharh al-Maquisid, two famous sources of Asharite.
3.1.1. Pervasive Will of God from Asharites Perspective

One important issue in theology is the discussion on the reality of God’s will and its pervasion. Asharites have not discussed much about the reality of God’s will but they insist on its pervasion. It is mentioned in Sharhul Mavaqif, “Every being is the intention of God and what has not come into being was not his intention … Cosmos is God’s intention.” (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, p. 173). It is noted in Sharh al-Maqaṣid, “In terms of the universality of God's will, every being is God’s intention and vice versa. What God wants is and what he does not want, is not since he is the creator of everything and willing for it; he is knowledgeable about what doesn’t become into existence and thus He does not wish for it” (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 4, p. 274). This pervasive will of God includes actions of all servants. Eiji states, “And regarding servants’ actions, He is the one wishing for them although he hates sins and disbelief” (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, pp. 173-174). From the viewpoint of Asharites, “God’s will covers whatever happens in the world and there is no difference between human being and non-human being. Because Asharites regard God as the immediate creator of everything, they have to regard his will as governing everything, including human actions, in order to save their idea of tawhid, which leads towards determinism” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, p. 271; Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, p. 121-122). Asharites present some arguments to prove the pervasiveness will of God but this outside of the scope of this article.

3.1.2. Goodness and Badness from Asharite Perspective

As reviewed in the pervasive will of God’s discussion, Asharites regard everything as the immediate creation of God and therefore they question every idea disturbing this general and universal providence. A basic set and infrastructural issue in theology is, first, whether an action is good or bad in its essence? And, second, is reason able to recognize good from bad or is it only religion that should warn us of goodness and badness of the actions? Asharites believe that actions, in their essence, are free of goodness or badness. “They argue that reason is too weak to comprehend goodness and badness of the actions; they believe that reason’s capability of recognizing good and bad would bound the divine providence. In other words, it sets God in the position of doing what reason regards as good and leaves what reason considers as bad; it is a restriction on God’s will” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, p. 229). Therefore, goodness and badness, from the perspective of Asharites, is defined in the words of Eiji as, “Badness is what is prohibited in religion under either Haram or Makrooh; goodness is what has not been prohibited

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10 فكل كائن مراد له و ما ليس كائن ليس مراد له (هذا مذهب أهل الحق) و اتفقوا على جواز استناد الكل إليه جملة فيقال جميع الكائنات مرادة لله تعالى.

11 في عموم إرادته الحق أن كل كائن مراد له، و بالعكس، لما أجمع عليه السلف من أن ما شاء الله كان. وما لم يشا لم يكن، و لأنه خلق للكل مريد، و عالم بعدم وقوع ما لم يقع فلا يريد.

12 أما أفعال العباد فهو مريد منها (كاره للمعاصي و الكفر) و تقصيله أن فعل العبد إن كان واجباً يريده الله وقوعه و يكره تركه و إن كان حراماً فيعده و المندوب بريدي وقوعه ولا يكره تركه والمكره عكسه و أما المباح و أفعال غير المكلف فلا يتعلق بها إرادة ولا كراهة بأسرها من استناد جميع الحوادث التي قدرته تعالى إبداء.

in religion such as duty, recommended and neutral actions. Reason does not intervene in the recognition of goodness and badness; hence, before being considered by religion, goodness and badness are not a true characteristic inherent to the action, meaning one cannot comment about goodness and badness of an action before religion says something about it (meaning before religious decides on the goodness or badness of an action, there is nothing in that action that allows us to assess it as good or bad and it is religion that unhides the good or bad nature of the actions)… Therefore, before being considered by religion, good and bad are not attributed to actions and it is not impossible that the (religious) lawgiver would make an opposite decision and decides what he considered as good is bad and what he considered as bad is good and the affair would change and bad becomes good and good becomes bad."14 (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, pp. 181-182).

3.1.3. Asharites Reasons for Religious Goodness and Badness

In arguing for justification of religious goodness and badness and rejecting reason and essential goodness and badness, Asharites, in short, present the following arguments15:

1. The first reason has been raised by Abul Hasan Ashari in explaining the pervasive will of God. He argues: “The evidence for God’s action being boundless and that every action He performs is good (even though reason might consider it as bad) is the fact that God is owner not owned and he has never a commander or a deterrent, no one can set any boundary to his actions. Therefore, every action performed by Him cannot be bad and it is the others’ actions that can be attributed as good or bad. If one states that telling a lie is bad because it has been regarded badly by God, we answer ‘you are right’ and if God regarded it as good, it would be beautiful. None could have objected if God had ordered to lie.”16 (Ashari, Abul Hasan, pp. 116-117).

2. “If goodness and badness were rational issues, they would be obvious and, subject to no debate; and it would be obvious like 1+1 that is equal to 2 but it is not the case” (Sobhani, Jafar, p. 63; Muhammadi, Ali, pp. 205-206).

To avoid prolongation of the discussion, key phrases have been translated only.

14 الفقيح عندنا (ما نهي عنه شرعا) نهي تحريم أو تزنيز (و الحسن بخلافه) أي ما لم ينه عنه شرعا كالواجب والمندوب والباح فان المباح عند أكثر أصحابنا من قبل الحسن و كفعل الله سبحانه و تعالى فان حسن أبدا بالاتفاق و أما فعل النهاد فقد بلغ أنه ليوصف بحبس و لا قيم بالطبيع الخصوم و فعل الدنيا المختلف فيه (و لا حكم للعقل في حسن الاشياء و قبحها و ليس ذلك) أى حسن الاشياء و قبحها (عائلا أي أمر حقيقي) حاصل (في الفعل) قبل الشرع (و كشف عنه الشرع) كما تزعم المعترقلة (بل الشرع هو المثبت له و المبين) فلا حسن ولا قبح للعالف قبل ورد الشرع (و لو عكس) الشارع (القياسية في حقه ما قبحه و قبح ما حسنه لم يكن ممتنعا و اقلب الامر) قصار الفقيح حسانا و الحسن قريبنا.

15 For detailed information about the reasons, see Sharh al-Maqasid. Vol. 4, pp. 284-289. The reasons are explained here in simple words and the translations might not be the exact translation of the footnotes and the content. However for the sake of a complete reference, I have included it in the footnote.

16 See Sharh al-Maqasid. Vol. 4, p. 288. Sixth reason "لم حسن الفعل أو قبح ذاته أو لصفاته و جهه لم يكن الباري مختارا في الحكم و الإلزام باطل بالإجماع".
3. “If good and bad were rational, they would remain unchanged and bad would never become good and good would never become bad. But lying to save prophet’s life becomes a good action while telling the truth becomes bad”\(^{17}\) (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 4, pp. 285-286).

4. “If one says: ‘Tomorrow I will certainly lie’, if abiding the promise is a good action, lying becomes necessarily good. If abiding the promise is bad, telling the truth becomes also bad and lying becomes good”\(^{18}\) (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 4, p. 286).

5. Asharites regard everything as the immediate creation of God, thus, human being is compelled in his actions. Explaining this point, Fakhr Al-Din Razi states: “When something is bad, it is either bad for God or bad for human beings; both assumptions are void because none of the God’s actions is bad and none of the servants’ actions is bad because they are compulsory … and compulsory actions are not bad”\(^{19}\) (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, pp. 479-480).

6. Fakhr Al-Din Razi presents a counterexample: “Unbearable duties are not bad and God has done it as he ordered Abu Lahab to have faith but Himself said that he will never have faith”\(^{20}\) (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, p. 479).

7. “If goodness and badness were of essence, their formation in mind would emerge with the conceptualization of the subject, like truth or falsehood which conceptualization does not bring goodness of truth and badness of falsehood in mind. Therefore, bad and good are not of essence”\(^{21}\) (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 4, pp. 287-288).

8. If good and bad were rational, the subject of a prohibited action and the quitter of good actions would have been punished regardless of any religious rule, while The Holy Quran says: “Wَمَا كَانَ مَعَالِيّن هَيْنَهُم بَعْثُ رَسُولًا” (Nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent a messenger (to give warning)) (Al-Israa: 15) (Taftazani, Sa’ad al-Din, Vol. 4, pp. 284-285).

3.2. Asharite Perspective about Divine Action Purposefulness Denial

According to the stated principles and from Asharites view, God’s will is absolutely universal and reason cannot undermine its universality by assessing good and bad; everything ordered by God is good and everything prohibited by God is bad; God has no obligation and reason has no role in assessing goodness and badness of actions.


\(^{20}\) "...unless He has multiplied His blessings on them, and has given them a part of His good things, and they have accepted them of His good things" (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, Al-Arbain fi usul al-Din. Vol. 1. pp. 346 & 347; Sharh al-Maqasid, vol. 4. p. 285).
In Sharhul Mavaqif, Eiji argues, “after asserting that there is no obligation for God, so he has no obligation to have a purpose by his actions and any action he performs cannot be bad; accordingly, purposeless actions are not repugnant from Him”\(^{23}\) (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, p. 202).

Taftazani also adds: “Asharites believe that divine actions are not purposeful”\(^{24}\) (Taftazani, Sa'ad al-Din, Vol. 4, p. 301).

It became clear Asharites believe that reason cannot discern the goodness and badness of actions and these are religious affairs. It means any action performed by God is good and it does not mean that God has executed them because of reason’s prior assessment of them as being good. If God punishes a righteous person, He will not be wrong. Purposefulness of Divine actions is not an obligation. If opponents argue that absence of purpose means voidance and absurdity, they will answer, it is God who labels actions as bad and good and His lack of purpose is not repugnant according to religious good and bad.

“The Asharites intention of denying purposefulness from divine action is defending the scope of God’s will and power. Goodness and badness of divine actions is not a relevant issue for them since they reject the goodness and badness from the essence of the actions. They argue that God can do whatever He likes and whatever He does is good” (Tavakoli, Gholamhossein, p. 149).

### 3.3. Asharite Arguments to Deny Purpose from Divine Action

#### 3.3.1. Logical Reasoning

1. “If God’s actions were purposeful and the purpose were acquisition of an interest and profit or disposal of corruption, God – God forbid - would be imperfect and would reach perfection by achieving the purpose. But only those things are qualified to be considered as purpose that their presence is preferred over their absence otherwise if the absence is equally preferred to the absence with relation to the agent or if the absence is preferred over the presence, it cannot lead to an action. Thus, the existence of anything that could be considered as a purpose must be preferred over its absence and this is the meaning of perfection and this is what makes the agent to achieve perfection. If one argues that God’s purpose is benefiting servants through the acquisition of expediency and disposal of corruption, it is answered that with regard of benefiting another, if the presence is preferred over its absence, it will still take advantage of it. If its presence or absence are equal for God, or if its absence is preferred over its presence, it is not at all qualified to be called a purpose”\(^{25}\) (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, pp. 202-203).

23. بعد ما بينا من انه لا يجب عليه تعالى شيء فلا يجب حينئذ أن يكون فعلا معلا بغرض ولا يقبح منه شيء فلا يقبح أن تخلو أفعاله عن الأغراض بالكلية.

24. ما ذهب إليه الأشاعرة أن أفعال الله تعالى ليست متعلقة بالأغراض.

25. لو كان فعلا تعالى لغرض من تحصيل مصلحة أو دفع مفسدة (كلان) هو (ناقصا لذاته مستكملا بتحصيل ذلك الغرض لأنه لا يصلح غرضًا للفاعل إلا ما هو أصلح له من نفسه) و ذلك لأن ما استوى وجوده و عدمه بالنظر إلى الفاعل أو كان وجوده مرجحا بالقياس إلا أنه لا يكون باعتا على الفعل وسببًا لإقامة عليه بالضرورة. فكلما كان غرضًا وجب أن يكون وجوده أصلح للتفاعل أو ألقه من عدمه (و هو معنى الكلام) فذالك يكون الفاعل مستكملا بالوجود و ناقصًا بدونه. فن氢能 ذلك المظالم لأن الفاعل قد يكون عادًا (إلى غيره) فلا يلزم (لفليس) يلزم من كونه تعالى فاعلا لغرض أن يكون من قبل الأول الله الذي يكون من فعل للغرض نفسه، بل ذلك عادًا (إلى غيره) فلا يلزم (لفليس) يلزم من كونه تعالى فاعلا لغرض أن يكون من قبل الأول الله الذي يكون من فعل للغرض نفسه، بل ذلك
2. “If contingencies were the purpose of God’s actions, they would have been achieved after Creation and due to Creation, and this is the meaning of purpose anyway. While all created beings are directly subjected to God and none is superior to the others in being the purpose as they all are direct creation of God (one cannot be regarded superior to the others à priori). If His actions are purposeful, the chain of purposes should lead to some place, which in itself is a purpose and does not depend on another purpose. Here, we have an infinite causal chain and that is impossible (the point will never be met). Or to reach an action that is purposeless and this is what we want.”26 (Eiji, Azad Al-din, Vol. 8, pp. 203-204; Taftazani, Sa'ad al-Din, Vol. 4, p. 302).

It should be noted that the purpose and aim of an action is outside (and separate) of the action itself and it is reached from and by the mean of the action. In other words, the action is involved, contributes and is effective for the existence of that purpose, which purpose cannot be achieved without that action. This (meaning the fact that the action itself is not the target and the purpose but is a tool for that purpose) cannot be considered God’s actions because He creates everything immediately, without any mediation and intervention of something else. As noted previously, so there is no being, phenomenon or event unless it is of His action and made by Him. His power has initiated it without any intermediate and intervention of any action. Not that the being and phenomenon were purpose of another action, which action participated and were involved in the creation of that being, phenomenon and event in a way that the being, phenomenon and event could not be obtained without that action, instead of assuming that being, phenomenon and event as the purpose of that action and obtained by its medium. It is wrong to assume that some of the actions and results of the glorious God are more qualified than other actions and results to be (and considered as) a purpose (instead, all of the actions and results are equal in being purpose initially and without intermediate and none of them is prefered over the other in being purpose) because when all objects are equal before glorious God, none of them is involved in the creation of the others (and all objects and events are purpose initially and by themselves and none of them has higher priority than the others to be purpose). So, putting one thing (in a unidirectional relation) purpose of another action, and not the other way around (to put that action as that thing’s purpose) is purely a claim without any logical argument. Therefore, causal relationship between the most exalted God can never be casual. Moreover, if glorious God’s actions were casual, with purpose and a target outside themselves, the chain of His actions must inevitably end and lead to a final action and that action is automatically purpose and objective (and it does not exist for another purpose) otherwise the should-be-avoided chain of purposes will occur (and the chain of purpose will never end). And the action that is purpose and aim itself must not be for another purpose otherwise it would be contrary to supposition. In this case (the action is purpose and aim itself and is not for another purpose), the claim of incumbency and necessity of having a purpose in every action (and every action being the intermediate for another purpose) becomes invalid because the glorious God’s actions have led to an action that has no purpose outside of itself and that action is inherently the objective (not to reach another purpose).

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4. Review of Asharites perspective about Pervasive Will of God, Religious Goodness and Badness, and Denial of Purposefulness of Divine Action

4.1. Review of Asharites perspective about Pervasive Will of God as well as Religious Goodness and Badness

4.1.1. Review of Asharites perspective about Pervasive Will of God

As stated above, God’s will covers everything and he is the immediate creator of all beings without any intermediate. Every action of all beings is performed according to God’s will and intention. There is no doubt, “Unicity in creatorship is one of the aspects of monotheism, human action and other creatures’ actions are in the realm of God’s creatorship, but Unicity in creatorship does not mean that God is the immediate (without intermediate) agent of phenomena because, in order to justify God’s creatorship and His pervasive will, we will be confined in determinism. The explanation is that God’s will, has determined that human beings are source of actions but this is not absolute and it is determined that man’s action is performed by his full free will. In other words, divine will has assigned that human beings are free agents and not obligated and compelled agents. In this way, we are not trapped by determinism while keeping scope of God’s will” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, p. 275’ Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, pp. 121-129).

4.1.2. Review of Asharites perspective about Religious Goodness and Badness

As mentioned in the above discussion on goodness and badness, Asharites regard everything as the immediate creation of God without any intermediate. Therefore, they question every idea disturbing this general and universal providence. They believe the idea that reason can assess badness or goodness of an action would bound the scope of God’s will. To them reason is not potent to assess goodness and badness. They argue that conformity of divine actions to the badness and goodness as assessed by reason is a great restriction for the implementation of divine will. Therefore, Asharites define goodness and badness as: bad is the action prohibited by badness:

A. Rational Reasons Rejecting Asharites Idea of Religious Goodness and Badness

1. Rational goodness and badness of some actions is obvious and when one refers to wise people around the world regardless of the fact that they may be materialist or they believe in God and supernatural events, one gets the same result. For example, all people admire justice and condemn criminals. If the goodness and badness of actions were religious, deniers of God and religions should not have such view; but they have.
2. If one rejects rational status of goodness and badness, one must also reject religious goodness and badness. If one cannot employ rational reasoning to prove goodness of righteous and badness of falsehood, how can one judge about the goodness and badness of God’s actions and
how can he argue that He is honest about his promises? Where is paradise from? How can one prove hell? If the answer is: “Quran has mentioned, Quran is the words of God and God is honest”, we will question: “How do you prove then Quran is honest and God shall keep up with His covenant.”? If you reply: “Quran says so. God is honest and it is the Word of God and God will keep up with His Covenants” so we shall answer: “This is a circle since this same Quran proposition as God is honest, from where and how can it be proven?” This will end nowhere unless the person accepts that falsehood is bad rationally and God does not perform bad actions; thus, God is not deceiving in his promises. All these propositions are just proven by reason and nothing else. Hence, denial of rational status of goodness and badness leads to denial of religious goodness and badness.

3. Logical idea is invariant and has fix criteria. It means if reason states that justice is good, it will always say so; if it says injustice is bad, it will always do so. But religious propositions are not invariant and they depend on situations. One time it declares a proposition as good; another time, it may declare it as bad… If goodness and badness were not rational and were absolutely religious, inversion of goodness and badness would be allowed. In other words, a bad action could become good and a good action could become bad at any time… Therefore, we should agree there is no fix criteria even in the most obvious affairs and therefore we should accept that some people, based on their own religion, could blame goodness and others would admire it.

However, when referring to the wise people, we see that they all have fix criteria and in this regard and they all agree on the badness of injustice and the goodness of justice… without waiting for (religious) lawgiver or reliable source. This indicates that goodness and badness of some of our actions are rational absolutely. If the religious lawgiver has issued a sentence, it is not for the establishment of a new rule but it is a heuristic sentence to confirm the rule of reason.”

B. Traditional Reasons Rejecting Asharites Idea of Religious Goodness and Badness

In some cases, The Holy Quran refers to the badness and goodness of some actions according to the rule of fitrah (primordial human nature). It argues that fitrah is capable of assessing bad and good:

1. أم نجعل الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات كالبغيدين في الأرض أم نجعل المنثرين كالفجار

Meaning: Shall We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the same as those who do mischief on earth? Shall We treat those who guard against evil, the same as those who turn aside from the right? (Sad: 28)

2. أفجعل المسلمين كالخاطرين

Meaning: will we treat the Muslims like the criminals? (Al-Qalam: 35)

3. هل جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان

Meaning Is the reward for good [anything] but good? (Ar-Rahman: 60)

There are also other verses ordering to actions such as justice, mercy, and forgiveness with regard to the relatives and forbidding corruption, injustice, and oppression. They assume that the

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27 This reason has been summarized from these two books and therefore I have not quoted them.
audience know of these affairs by essence and he requires no religion to comprehend them because they are consistent with his fitrah:

1. إنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَ الإِْحْسانِ وَ إِيتاءَ ذِي الْقُرْبى وَ يَنْهى عَنِ الفَحْشاءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُ مْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Meaning, ‘Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.’ (An-Nahl: 90)

2. قُلْ إِنَّما حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَواحِشَ ما ظَهَرَ مِنْها وَ ما بَطَنَ

meaning ‘Say, “My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed - and sin,”’ (Al-A'raf: 33)

3. يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ يَنْهاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

meaning ‘…who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong…’ (Al-A'raf: 157)

### 4.1.3. Review of Asharites reasons about Religious Goodness and Badness

1. The first of the Asharites reasons refers to the universality of God’s will and in order to keep its pervasiveness they shall question everything bounding it and argue that reason is less potent than being able to assess goodness and badness; otherwise God’s will is disturbed. Asharites belief in God’s will is subsequent to another principle that God is the mere and immediate (without intermediate) creator of objects and his domain accepts no cause and effect and there is no causality for others even as a subsequent causality. In this regard, they believe that God is the immediate creator of human action because they would be excluded from the realm of God’s will if they had a will and this is a flaw to God. In this belief, Asharites miss the point that interpreting divine will through the intermediate creation of actions and also the denial of the chain of cause and effects in the world, require attributing every flaw and deficiency in the world to God, which will lead to determinism. Thus, unbelievers’ blasphemy will be regarded as God’s purpose since He is the Creator and unbelievers are compelled to blasphemy.

The correct interpretation of the will of God says, “Requirement of Unicity in creatorship is not the denial of causes but it means that all tools and causes are led to God’s will. Moreover, it is true to say that everything in the world is under the domination of the divine will; but interpretations of this universality need some clarifications. Allocation of divine will to different actions is different. Allocation of divine will to the actions of natural and conscious-less agents is deterministic and it has no problem; such as the emission of heat from fire. In addition, issuance of actions from rational agents (but who are lacking free will) is also deterministic and has no problem. On the contrary, allocation of God’s will to the action of free agents is performed in such a way that God allows him to perform his actions based on his free will; God has allowed him to be free. Thus, if he commits a sin due to his free will, the sin is not related to God. Since the creature has committed sin according to his free will, it is subject of God’s will but He blames the action and the creature is punished. Will of God has assigned the issuance of action based on free will not committing the sin” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 2, pp. 273-275). Hence, this interpretation of God’s will eliminates the problems of determinism and attributing badness to
God. This interpretation is consistent with Quran and the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (as) and the famous phrase of:

لا جبر ولا تفويض، بل أمر بين الأمرين.

2. The second reason proposed by Asharites claims that if goodness and badness were rational arguments, there would be no disagreements on them but since disagreement exists, they are not axiom. It should be answered that the axioms are hierarchical. For instance, primordial affairs are more obvious than the observations and observations are more obvious than the experiences and so on. But they are all axioms. The most obvious form of axioms is the confirmation of a proposition that is achieved by the conceptualization of the subject obvious affairs are of this kind (Muhammadi, Ali, p. 206). Thus, it is not necessary for goodness and badness to be of the most obvious form, like primordial affairs as long as they are still considered as axioms.

3. The next problem is related to the point that when one tells a lie for saving the life of prophet badness becomes good and goodness becomes bad. Since they are interchangeable, they are not rational nor of essence. In answering to this question, it is noted that lie is bad in any situation and honesty is good in all situations. But letting prophet’s life in danger is worse than lie. Thus, reason states that one can do a bad action (tell a lie) to avoid committing something worse (not saving the life of the prophet). It includes a bigger expediency (saving the life of the prophet) (Sobhani, Jafar, p. 60).

4. Another problem is related to the case when one says: “I will certainly lie tomorrow”. In this case lie should be regarded as good if abiding promise is also good. And if abiding promise is regarded as bad, so is telling the truth, and falsehood is considered to be right. In this case, the person should not lie on the next day because otherwise he will commit two sins: one is the decision of lying and the other is the lie itself. On the other hand, the person performs one goodness that is fulfilling and abiding the promise. But if he doesn’t lie on the next day, he will leave two bad aspects, first one being the remaining of the decision of lying, and second one the lie itself. Abandoning these two are two good aspects compared to one badness, which is the lie on the previous day” (Shiravani, Ali, Vol. 1, p. 90-91).

5. The fifth reason argues that bad things are bad for either God or man. Both of them are wrong because any action performed by God cannot be bad and man’s actions are compulsory and compulsory actions are not bad. This flaw relates to the deterministic view of Asharites and the way they interpret the will of God. The first item was answered previously in details: allocation of God’s will to free agents’ actions has another meaning and therefore determinism is void. In addition, if one accepts that man is obligated in his actions, sending prophet, order, prohibition, award, and punishment would be illogical (Rabbani, Ali, p. 72).

6. The sixth reason claimed that expecting servant to perform an action that is beyond its capabilities is not bad and God has performed this regarding Abu Lahab as He ordered him to have faith but also said that he wouldn’t believe in God. It should be noted that this problem rises from a wrong interpretation of the influence of God’s will on the voluntary actions of man. Thus, God’s will is allocated to human actions on the basis of his free will. Abu Lahab had the duty to have faith, which is a free will and the verse of the Holy Quran about his disbelief was revealed after God set a seal on his heart. So he was not obligated to do not have faith (Sobhani, Jafar, p. 77).
7. The next problem was the statement that when goodness and badness are of essence, their concept would be necessary after conceptualization of the subject in mind. It is not correct as, “This type of essence is not Isagoge essence to regard it as a genus or differentia. But it is similar to the essence of proof’s chapter in such a way that if justice and injustice are presented to the spiritual aspect of a man, man sees justice as good and injustice as bad” (Sobhani, Jafar, p. 78).

8. The final problem refers to the verse of Quran, “لا و ما كنا معذبين حتی نبعث رسولًا” (meaning, ‘Nor would we visit with Our Wrath until we had sent a messenger (to give warning)’. Asharites claim that why did God send prophets while reason is enough in discerning good from bad and it is enough in assessing punishment and award? Nevertheless, God had determined award and punishment after sending prophets not sending reason. So goodness and badness are not rational. Asharites have thought that reason is fully potent to determine duties and prohibitions. But reason is authority for the affairs that are independent of duties and prohibitions. Reason cannot cover all issues and this verse aims to explain the actions that are determined by God. In this manner, God sends the prophets to explain the rules and then, He set punishments and awards (Sobhani, Jafar, p. 79).

4.2. Review of Asharites perspective about Denial of Purposefulness of Divine Action

According to the principles accepted by Asharites, they deny the purposefulness of divine actions because they have accepted universality of God’s will, the immediate (without intermediate) divine actions, and rejected rational status of good and bad. It was explained earlier that divine will has determined a situation in which the actions of a free agent are issued by himself and according to his free will. This is not in opposition with the absolute will of God as rational goodness and badness and has no interference with God’s will. It was proven in this study that goodness and badness are rational and the problems were addressed. Therefore, by questioning the foundations, their conclusion (denying the purposefulness of divine action) is questioned, too.

4.2.1. Review of Asharites Reasoning for Denial of the Purposefulness of Divine Action

A. Rational reasons rejecting Asharites denial of the purposefulness of divine action

1. The first reason stated that God would be imperfect if God’s actions were purposeful and the purpose would be going to meet an expediency or remove a corruption. In addition, the presence of anything that is considered as a purpose must be preferred over its absence and it is the meaning of perfection since the agent becomes perfect by performing the action. If the presence is not superior to the absence or if the presence is equally considered as the absence, it is not qualified as a purpose. It should be noted about this reason, “Certainly, God has not a purpose completing Himself and this argument is contrary to the essential richness of God. But, it is not correct to say that God’s action is aimless because it would be contrary to His wisdom. Therefore, God has a purpose and the purpose is defined in the statement that divine actions include some expediencies and wisdom relating to His actions and the servants’ actions, and the design, but not to His essence. Based on what has been said, the question of perfection is solved.
Besides, it is not true to define purpose as the preference of presence over absence to take some advantages because God performs actions appropriate to his dignity (wisdom) not because He takes advantage of it” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 1, p. 263-267). To explain further, Asharites believe that an agent performs an action to achieve a goal and by doing so he reaches perfection. The idea that an agent is seeking for an aim is not an issue but achieving perfection in this way is questioned. Human as an agent “can be regarded in this way. When people feel shortage, they will perform some effective actions to compensate for the shortages. Is God’s purposefulness similar? If one asks about the God’s aim of creation, does he make creator and the creation similar? Does not he consider God’s subjectivity and human subjectivity to be the same thing? Shiites believe that God has no aim in His action to complete Himself because he has no flaw to compensate the imperfection by achieving that goal. There is a difference between the idea arguing ‘God has no purpose to complete Himself’ and the idea arguing ‘creation is aimless’. This is exactly the source of difference between materialists and theologians. Materialists believe that the creation of world is purposeless while theologians regard it as purposeful. Consequently, creation of the world and man is purposeful although God has no purpose to perfect His existence” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 1, pp. 8-13). It was also stated that Asharites believe in the claim that God Himself will benefit from the creation of a system benefiting human beings. It should be stated, “God possesses all perfection attributes, and He is also Wise. Creation of beings and giving advantage to them is the requirement of his wisdom and dignity. It is wrong to assume an outer cause motivating Him to give advantage to the beings, which would restrict His power. God is the absolute perfect either he performs or doesn’t perform an action. But when he does so, the action is wise and performing a wise action does not mean that God is completed by the action” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 1, pp. 266-267).

2. The second problem proposed by Asharites asserted: “If the purpose of creation is perfection of the beings, what is the aim of giving perfection to the created beings? This would continue in the same manner and for a chain of causes and effects about the purpose of all beings and the chain is void. Therefore, they say, the chain ends in an aimless action”. In addressing this problem, it should be noted, “leading the beings to their proper perfection is a good action of essence, and this is why God performs it. Here, it is not possible to ask why God performs good actions because the answer is obvious. God performs the action because it is good. In this regard, it is nonsense to ask about the God’s aim for leading created beings to perfection since leading created beings to perfection is good and deserves the action. Here goal and action are the same thing no further goal is required” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 1, pp. 268-269). This problem rises from the wrong principle of Asharites, religious goodness and badness. We have to say, when an action is not good or bad in itself, we are compelled to move from one goal to another goal, which requires an infinite chain of causes and effects.

B. Review of traditional reasons rejecting Asharites denial of purposefulness of divine action

Asharites present no traditional reason for denying the purposefulness of divine actions. However, they provide specific interpretations for verses arguing the purposefulness of creation. They are as following:

1. أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْناكُمْ عَبَثاً وَ أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ لا تُرْجَعُونَ
(Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?) (Al-Mu’minun: 115).

In Kabir Tafsir, Fakhr Al-Din Razi interprets this verse, “If there is no resurrection, obedient servant from the wicked and the righteous from the unbelievers would not be distinguished. Hence, the creation of the world would be absurd”29 (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, vol. 23, p. 299). In Ruh al-ma’ani, Alusi says, “Do you think that God has created you absurd and you would be left without return? This verse reprehends people for their ignorance and it states that divine wisdom requires their resurrection for punishment”30 (Alusi, Seyed Mahmood, Vol. 9, p. 269).

Asharite interpretations of this verse indicate the creation of the world would be aimless if there was no resurrection and God has created human beings for duties, award, and punishment in another world.

2. وَ ما خَلَقْنَا السَّماواتِ وَ الأَْرْضَ وَ ما بَيْنَهُما لاعِبينَ
(And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport.) (Ad-Dukhan: 38)

It is mentioned in Kabir Tafsir, “If there were no resurrection, creation would be aimless and plaything”31 (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, vol. 27, p. 662). In Ruh al-ma’ani, Alusi says, “This verse is an evidence for occurrence of resurrection”32 (Alusi, Seyed Mahmood, Vol. 9, p. 269).

See Al-Mazhari’ Tafsir, Vol. 6, p. 411:

لم نخلق في كتب البعث، بل خلقناكم للتكليف، ثم للرجوع من دار التكليف إلى دار الجزاء، فنثيب المحسن و نعاقب المسيء، أكثر من قول الشافعية للبعث، و أكثر من قول الشافعية للتكليف، و أكثر من قول الشافعية للجزاء، و أكثر من قول الشافعية لللزوم، و أكثر من قول الشافعية للخشد، و أكثر من قول الشافعية للحجة، و أكثر من قول الشافعية للهجة.

See Nasafi, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad. Madārik al-tanzīl wa-dhīaqā’IQ al-ta’wil. Vol. 3p. 193:

ما خلقناكم للتكليف، ثم للرجوع من دار التكليف إلى دار الجزاء، فنثيب المحسن و نعاقب المسيء.


ما خلقناكم للتكليف، و إنما خلقناكم للআملين و العابثين و المجرمين وغير المطيعين.

See Ale Ghazi, Seyyed Abdolghader Molla Havish. Bayan al-Maani. Vol. 4, p. 368:

خلقناكم لحكمة و ليكون مصيركم إلينا.


فإن خلقكم بغية بعث من قبل العبىغة و إثر خلقكم و إثر إلزامكم على أعمالكم.

See: Qunawi, Ismail ibn Muhammad. Ḥāshiyat al-Qinawi’ alá Tafsīr al-Imām al-Bayḍawī. Vol. 13, p. 238:

فلما نفى كون التلبيش إثر الخلق و الإدراك فلا بد من حكمه دعائي إليه و تلك الحكمة هي التعب في الدنيا و المجازاة في الآخرة و المجازاة فيها لا تكون إلا بالبحث و إعادة الأرواح إلى أبادهم و إحيائهم ثانياً بعد إماتتهم.

See al-Shahab comments, Vol. 6, p. 610:

إنما خلقناكم للتكليف و إلزامكم على أعمالكم و لو لم يحل محل الباء كان هذا الخلق لعباً و عاباً.33
Asharites interpretations of this verse indicate that if the resurrection were not to investigate individuals, creation would be absurd.

(Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire) (Al-E-Imran: 191)

Fakhr Al-Din Razi states, “Vain is an undermining affair that has never had strength while the creation of earth and heavens is fix and constant” (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, vol. 9, p. 462).

In Ruh al-ma'ani, Alusi argues, “Vain is absurd and aimless that has no benefit, no remarkable advantage, or no purpose” (Alusi, Seyed Mahmood, Vol. 9, p. 269).

Asharites interpretations not only see the creation of heaven and earth purposeful but they regard an expediency or wisdom for it, which the most important one is human servitude and acquisition of the knowledge of God to achieve redemption.

See Anwar al-tanzil wa-asrar al-ta'wil, vol. 5, p. 103:

See Al-Mazhari’ Tafsir, Vol. 8, p. 374:

See Nasafi, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad. Madārik al-tanzil wa-haqā’iq al-ta’wil. Vol. 4, p. 192:

See Abu Hayyan, Muhammad ibn Yusef. Al-Bahr al-Muhit fi Tafsir. Vol. 9, p. 407:

See Ale Ghazi, Seyyed Abdolghader Molla Havish. Bayan al-Ma‘ani. Vol. 4, p. 105:

See Anwar al-tanzil wa-asrar al-ta’wil, vol. 2, p. 54:

See Nasafi, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad. Madārik al-tanzil wa-haqā’iq al-ta’wil. Vol. 1, p. 300:


See Ināyat al-qāḍi wa-kifāyat al-rāfi’ī al-Baydāwī. Vol. 3, p. 179:

See Ināyat al-qāḍi wa-kifāyat al-rāfi’ī al-Baydāwī. Vol. 3, p. 179:

See Ināyat al-qāḍi wa-kifāyat al-rāfi’ī al-Baydāwī. Vol. 3, p. 179:

See Ināyat al-qāḍi wa-kifāyat al-rāfi’ī al-Baydāwī. Vol. 3, p. 179:
(And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire) (Sad: 27)  

It’s noted in Kabir Tafsir, “This verse signifies that God is the creator of all objects between heaven and earth and the servants’ actions are performed between heaven and earth; thus God must be their creator” (Fakhr Al-Din Razi, vol.26, p. 387). Explaining the meaning of vain, Alusi states, “Vain is an action without wisdom” (Alusi, Seyed Mahmood, Vol. 12, p. 180).

Asharites define this verse as the idea that creation of the heaven, the earth, and all created beings between them are based on wisdom and they are not vain. The aim is to oblige servants and punish them in the day of judgement as the purpose of worldly duties. However, Fakhr Al-Din Razi’s interpretation of this verse is different from the other Asharites.

Investigation of some Asharites interpretations about the verses arguing purposefulness of the Creation makes clear that Creation includes some expediency such as servants’ duty. They also discuss that if there were no resurrection, judgement, and punishment, creation of the world would be vain. In the beginning, it seems that Shiites and Asharites interpretations are the same but it should be noted that Asharites believe that whatever God performs is Wisdom itself. It does not say God does actions that are regarded wise. Asharites declare that God does not perform a rational action because it is the requirement of his wisdom and he has not done it to be away from absurdity. God is the creator of expediency as well as being the creator of creatures and beings regardless of creating a being for expediency, establishing a developmental relationship, and causality (Mutahari, Morteza, Vol. 1, pp. 46-47). Thus, Asharites interpretations have mentioned some purposes for creation in this regard. Previously, Asharites idea about the immediate (without intermediate) Creation was criticized. In addition, the ideas of

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35 See also: Anam: 73; Yunes: 5; Ibrahim: 19, Hajar: 85; Nahl: 3; Ankabout: 44; Rme: 8; Zumar: 5; Qiamat: 36; ….  
36 هذه الآية تدل على كونه تعالى خالقا لكل ما بين السماوات والأرض، وأعمال العباد حاصلة بين السماء والأرض، فوجب أن يكون الله تعالى خالقاً لها والباطل ما لا حكمة فيه.  
37 والباطل ما لا حكمة فيه.  
See Al-Mazhari’ Tafsir, Vol. 8, p. 173:  
و ما خلقناه و ما بينهما باطل لحكمة فيه أو ذوي دين يملؤهم عابثون أو الباطل الذي هو متابة الهدى بل للحق الذي هو الاستدلال على وجود الصفح و شكر تعبته باستثناء أورامه و إنهاء مناهيه.  
See Nasafi, Abd Allah ibn Ahmad. Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqā‘IQ al-ta‘wīl. Vol. 4, p. 61:  
ما خلقناها و ما بينهما للعبث و اللمع، و لكن للحق المبين، و هو أننا خلقنا فنسرأ أودعناها العالم، و منحاها المكمن، و أزحنا علها، ثم عضناها للمنافع العظيمة بالتكليف، و أعدنا لها عافية و جزاء على حسب أعمالهم.  
See Abu Hayyan, Muhammad ibn Yusef. Al-Bahr al-Muhit fi Tafsir. Vol. 9, p. 152:  
معنى باطلا، عينا أو كون خلقها باطلا.  
ما خلقناها وما بينهما باطل لحكمة فيه، بل للقيقه و نعتها باطل لا حكمة فيه، بل للقيقه و نعتها باطل لا حكمة فيه.  
الذي ذكر من هذه الأشياء لا غاية ظن الذين كفرن لأنه إن كفروا لم يكفرن و أنفسهم إلا الذي هو يعذبونه جزاء الذنوب الذي هو غاية التكليف.
religious goodness and badness were questioned. In this manner, interpretation of creation purposefulness is not acceptable based on the principles of Asharites because if the expediencies and Creation are in the same matter without any causal relationship, how could the expediencies and Creation make a connection. God explains the relationships in Quran and one cannot make a conclusion when there is no verse in this regard. Accordingly, reason is not capable of understanding the preferences among expediencies.

5. Aim of Creation from the Perspective of Adliya (Shiites and Mutazilites)

After explaining the Asharites ideas about aim of Creation, this section describes the views of Shiites and Mutazilites in this regard.

5.1. Adliya Idea about God’s Will as well as Goodness and Badness

In terms of divine will and the way for its allocation to human free actions, Asharites believe that everything, even human action, has been created immediately because God’s will is pervasive. This leads to believe in determinism. Mutazilites walk in another false path and believe that human actions are free absolutely and they are excluded from God’s will. Ghazi Abduljabbar notes: “It is not proper for God to create human actions because individuals’ oppression and sins would be attributed to God” (Mutazili, Ghazi Abduljabbar, p. 231). Shiites perspective differs in terms of the quality of God’s will allocation to human actions. In the criticism of the first reason proposed by Asharites for religious badness and goodness and denial of rational goodness and badness that has already been discussed, it was argued that Adliya believe in the rational goodness and badness. The rational and traditional reasons proposed by Imamiya scholars were mentioned to answer the doubts. For Mutazilites, they agree with Imamiya on the rational status of goodness and badness. Under the title of Al-Tadil (justify) va Al-Tajvir (oppression)38, Ghazi Abduljabbar Mutazili states about goodness and badness in addition to their types. He adds: “God leaves it because of his essential richness and the knowledge about badness of a bad action”39 (Mutazili, Abdoljabbar, Vol. 6, p. 177). He presents an idea contrary to Asharites arguing that badness and goodness are not discernible before God tells us.

5.2. Adliya Idea about Divine Action Purposefulness and Purposeful Creation

Adliya scholars believe that God’s actions are purposeful. The aim is leading creatures to their proper perfection. This idea rises from the principle of rational goodness and badness. They argue that God is immaculate to perform actions without intention. The sources of Mutazilites

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38 In this book, like in other theological books, there is no reference of goodness and badness and Ghazi Abduljabbar has named it (ta’dil) and (tajvir). Moreover, Mutazilites theological books are very rare and sometimes of second hand and some of the facts that are really not from them have anyway been imputed to them. Anyway, we have no other choice than referring to these same books when explaining Mutazilites beliefs. This is because of a long dominance of Asharites thinking over Sunites views that there is no appropriate access to Mutazilites sources.

39 اعلم أنّ الّذي يدل على ذلك: أنه قد ثبت كونه تعالى عالما بقبح القبيح، و بأنه غني عنه. و من كان هذه حاله لا يختار القبيح على وجه. يدل على ذلك أنّ الواحد منا، إذا استطع عن العلم و الكتب و علم عناه و فقههما، لم يجز أن يختارهما، نحو أن نعلم أنه ان صدق و عدل توصل الى درهم يحتاج إليه، و مثان كتب أو ظلم توصل إليه، ف معال من حاله أنه لا يختار فعلا عليه وجه. و اعلم أن هذه الدلالة مبنية على أشياء: منها أنه تعالى عالم بنظري.
have no direct reference to the purposefulness of God's actions but it is clear according to the principles of their thought that their thoughts are similar to Shiites in this regard. It is mentioned in Ishraq al-Lahut, “Multaizli states that every action lacking purpose and goal is vain while God is immaculate of such actions” (Ubaydli, Seyed Amid al-Din, p. 387).

It is noted in Talkhis al-Muhasil, “Multaizli states that God acts for a purpose completing others unless his actions would be vain; God is clean of performing an absurd action” (Tousi, Nasir al-Din, p. 454).

In Tajrid al-Eteqad, Tousi counts, “Denial of purpose from divine action leads to its vanity and vanity is impossible and the purpose cannot be attributed to God” (Tousi, Nasir al-Din, p. 198).

Allameh Helli articulates: “Imamia believe that God creates based on a goal, wisdom, and the expediency of servants” (Allameh Helli, p. 89).

Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani utters: “Shiites agree that God performs no vain action and His actions are purposeful. The purpose is not related to the subject but is related to the action” (Sobhani, Jafar, Vol. 1, pp. 28-29).

Morteza Murtahri affirms: “One of the principles of Shiites is purpose and aim in the actions of God. Ashrafit reject this principle. They state that having purpose is just a characteristic of human beings or similar creatures but God is immaculate of such affairs. Considering a purpose for God is impossible. But considering a purpose aiming at created beings has been never in contradiction with God’s perfection and essential richness (Murtahri, Morteza, p. 65).

5.2.1. Rational Reasons for Purposefulness of God’s Actions

The logical reason for purposefulness of divine actions according to theological books, “God is wise and the wise’s actions are not empty of wisdom. Moreover, one who does an action without any purpose is senseless. Accordingly, God is pure of these attributes and his actions are purposeful.” (Shobbar, Seyed Abdollah, Vol. 1, p. 86; Shahid Avel, p. 273).

5.2.2. Traditional Reasons for Purposefulness of God’s Actions

A. Verses of the Holy Quran

In The Holy Quran, God insists that world has not been created vain and it has a purpose. This purpose has also been emphasized in the traditions of Ahlul Bayt (as). Verses indicating God’s independency of creation are prior to the verses about its purposefulness.

Verses indicating God’s independency of creation are prior to the verses about its purposefulness:

وَ قالَ مُوسى إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَ مَنْ فِي الأَْرْضِ جَميعاً فَإِنَّ اللََّّ لَغَنِيٌّ حَميدٌ (40) 

The verses indicating God’s independency of creation are prior to the verses about its purposefulness:

وَ قالَ مُوسى إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَ مَنْ فِي الأَْرْضِ جَميعاً فَإِنَّ اللََّّ لَغَنِيٌّ حَميدٌ (40) 

The purpose of the verses is that there is a difference between the purpose of action and the purpose of agent. Considering a purpose for God is impossible. But considering a purpose aiming at created beings has been never in contradiction with God’s perfection and essential richness (Murtahri, Morteza, p. 65).
(And Musa said: If you are ungrateful, you and those on earth all together, most surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised) (Ibrahim: 8)

وَ مَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّهُ يُجاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعالَمينَ

(And whoever strives hard, he strives only for his own soul; most surely Allah is Self-sufficient, above [need of] the worlds)(Ankabout: 6)

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَ لا يَرْضى لِعِبادِهِ الْكَفَرُ

(If you are ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient above all need of you) (Zumar: 7)

2. General Verses about the Purposefulness of Creation

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّما خَلَقْناكُمْ عَبَثاً وَ أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنا لا تُرْجَعُونَ

(What! did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?) (Mumenoon: 115)

وَ ما خَلَقْنَا السَّماواتِ وَ الأَْرْضَ وَ ما بَيْنَهُما لاعِبينَ

(And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport.) (Dukhan: 38)/ Had We wished to make a diversion, We would have made it from before Ourselves: by no means would We do [it](Anbiya: 17)

(Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire) (Al-E-Imran: 191)

وَ ما خَلَقْنَا السَّماءَ وَ الأَْرْضَ وَ ما بَيْنَهُما باطِلاً ذلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ

(And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain; that is the opinion of those who disbelieve then woe to those who disbelieve on account of the fire) (Sad: 27)

3. Verses Introducing the Aim of Creation

أَفِشَطْتُمْ أَنَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَ الإِّنْسَ إِلا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

(And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me.) (Dariyat: 56)

Test

إِنَّمَا خَلَقْتُ الْمَوْتَ وَ الْحَياةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً وَ هُوَ الْعَزيزُ الْغَفُورُ

(Who created death and life that He may try you-- which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving,) (Mulk: 2)

أَنَا جِلْعُلَتُ ما عَلَى الأَْرْضِ زِيَةً لِيَلْتَفُّوهُمْ أَيْمَنَ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلاً

41 These hadiths implicate the essential richness of God and His needlessness of creation

-Imam Reza states:

«وَ لَمْ يَخْلُقِ اللَُّّ الْعَرْشَ لِحَاجَةٍ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ لأَِنَّهُ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَرْشِ وَ عَنْ جَمِيعِ مَا خَلَقَ...»


-Imam Sadiq states:

«وَ هُوَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ لاَ حَاجَةَ بِهِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ مِمَّا خَلَقَ وَ خَلْقُهُ جَمِيعاً مُحْتَاجُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَ إِنَّمَا خَلَقَ الأَْشْيَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَاجَةٍ...»

(Behar al-Anwar, vol.10,p198)
(Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try them [as to] which of them is best in works.) (Kahf: 7)

(And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods-- and His dominion [extends] on the water-- that He might manifest to you, which of you is best in action,...) (Hud: 7)

Knowledge of God and understanding of divine power

Allah is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth the like of them; the decree continues to descend among them, that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah indeed encompasses all things in [His] knowledge.) (Talaq: 12)

Achieving divine mercy and nearness to God

The traditions of Ahlul Bayt also insist on the God’s independence of creation and non-vanity of Creation. They also mention some goals for Creation:


2. "روى هشام بن الحكيم عن أبي عبيدة أنه قال: إنما خلق الناس اجلاء الأزمنة. وَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماواتِ وَ الأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَ كَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْماءِ لِيَبْلُوُكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً...") (Kahf: 7)

وعَلِيَّة مَنْ لَمْ يَذَٰكَرَ عَلَى الْجَاهِلِينَ ۚ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماواتِ وَ الأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَ كَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْماءِ لِيَبْلُوُكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً...") (Hud: 7)

Knowledge of God and understanding of divine power

Allah is He Who created seven heavens, and of the earth the like of them; the decree continues to descend among them, that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah indeed encompasses all things in [His] knowledge.) (Talaq: 12)

Achieving divine mercy and nearness to God

And if your Lord had pleased He would certainly have made people a single nation, and they shall continue to differ. Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for this He created them...) (Hud: 118-119)

B. Traditions of the Infallibles

The traditions of Ahlul Bayt also insist on the God’s independence of creation and non-vanity of Creation. They also mention some goals for Creation:

1. "روى هشام بن الحكيم عن أبي عبيدة أنه قال: إنما خلق الناس اجلاء الأزمنة. وَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماواتِ وَ الأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَ كَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْماءِ لِيَبْلُوُكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً..."

2. "روى هشام بن الحكيم عن أبي عبيدة أنه قال: إنما خلق الناس اجلاء الأزمنة. وَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماواتِ وَ الأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَ كَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْماءِ لِيَبْلُوُكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً..."

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) says, “In divine book of Moses (pbuh), God says: ‘Oh my servants, I have not created creatures to increase from small to many or to remove the fear of loneliness in myself, to use them for an action I had been unable, or to take advantage of it, or to remove a corruption from myself. If all creatures worship and serve me in heaven and earth, both night and day, without fatigue, they cannot add to my perfection. I am pure of these affairs (Majlesi, Muhammad Bagher, Vol. 5, p. 313).

It is narrated from Hisham ibn Hakam that a heretic asked Imam Sadiq (pbuh): Why did God create beings while He did not need them and there were no obligation for their creation and a vain action is not attributed to Him? Imam answered: He created them to reveal His wisdom, assign His knowledge, and confirm His measures. The person asked: Why God has created another world and this world is not enough for awards and punishments? Imam answered: Because this

42 Se also, Anam: 73; Ibrahim: 19; Hijr: 85; Nahl: 3; Ankabout: 44, Rome: 8; Zumar: 5; Qiamat: 36; …
world is the place of examination and a place for acquisition of mercy and kindness, it is filled with corruptions and passions whereby God test the servants. Therefore, the ground for action is not a place for judgement (Majlesi, Muhammad Bagher, Vol. 5, p. 317).

3. “الطَّالِقَانِيُّ عَنْ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ بْنِ يَحْيَى الْجَلُودِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ زَكَرِيَّا الْجَوْهَرِيِّ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عُمَارَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ الصَّادِقَ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ لِمَ خَلَقَ اللَّّ الْخَلْقَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّّ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَخْلُقْ خَلْقَهُ عَبَثاً وَ لَمْ يَتْرُكْهُمْ سُدًى بَلْ خَلَقَهُمْ لِلَّيْفُهُمْ إِلَّاظْهَارِ قُدْرَتِهِ وَ لِيُكَلِّفَهُمْ طَاعَتَهُ فَيَسْتَوْجِبُوا بِذَلِكَ رِضْوَانَهُ وَ مَا خَلَقَهُمْ لِيَجْلِبَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْفَعَةً وَ لَِّ لَيَدْفَعَ بِهِمْ مَضَرَّةً بَلْ خَلَقَهُمْ لِيَنْفَعَهُمْ وَ يُوصِلَهُمْ إِلَى نَعِيمِ الأَْبَد”

Muhammad ibn Amareh Says: I asked Imam Sadiq(pbuh), What was God’s aim of creating human being? He answered: God did not create man in vain and He has not left them useless. He created humankind to reveal His power and oblige them to serve Him to be deserved of heaven and paradise. God did not create them to take an advantage or to remove a corruption from Himself; but they are created to enjoy the mercy of creation and achieve the eternal paradise (Majlesi, Muhammad Bagher, Vol. 5, p. 313).

4. “خَرَجَ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ ع عَلَى أَصْحَابِهِ فَقَالَ: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّّ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ مَا خَلَقَ الْعِبَادَ إِلاَّ لِيَعْرِفُوهُ فَإِذَا عَرَفُوهُ عَبَدُوهُ فَإِذَا عَبَدُوهُ اسْتَغْنَوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ مَا سِوَاه....”

Imam Hossein(pbuh) says: “Oh people, God has created servants only to acquire knowledge about Him; thus, when they recognize Him, they worship and serve Him. Hence, they will be needless of serving somebody besides God” (Majlesi, Muhammad Bagher, Vol. 5, p. 312).

On the appearance of the verses about the purposefulness of Creation, one may feel some kind of inconsistency. A careful attention shows a full consistency. God’s knowledge is an introduction to servitude, servitude is an introduction to test, and test is an introduction to achieving God’s mercy and final perfection, which is proximity to God (Hashem poor, Ghorbanali, pp. 91-92). Moreover, purposefulness of creation should not be misunderstood with the idea that God needs Creation to achieve perfection because God has declared His richness in many verses of Quran. In addition, God has not created this world aimless and He had a purpose for Creation. God’s aim of creating humankind is ‘leading him to proper perfection without aiming a result for Himself’.

The infallibles sayings indicate also that God does not need Creation. He has created the world to lead created beings, especially human beings, to perfection and enjoy the mercies issued by God. The point that God’s knowledge, servitude, and recognition as well as enjoying divine mercy and paradise are introduced as goals of Creation should not confuse us that God needs to be recognized and requires His power to be admired. Obviously, recognition of God and understanding His attributes and qualities cause human perfection. In this way, man can understand that only God deserves worship. One can enter the divine paradise and enjoy of its infinite blessings by worshiping him and denying worshiping any other.

**Conclusion**

After reviewing the ideas of Asharite, Mutazilite, and Shiite theologians, it is concluded that creation is based on purpose and aim. Denying the purposefulness of divine actions, as agreed by Asharites, is rejected because it is rooted in the false principles of religious goodness and badness, immediate creation of human actions, and denial of causality.
Accepting causality and believing in rational status of goodness and badness, Adliya believe that purposeless creation is a vain action and vain action does not belong to God. Hence, it is bad rationally. The purpose and aims of Creation is not targeted to God unless it is questioned that God will be completed by Creation because created beings achieve perfection by reaching God. The aim of Creation relates to creatures because God is Absolute Needless and it gains no advantage from Creation. God has created creatures based on wisdom for their expediency and leads them to their proper perfection. Many verses of Quran reject the futility and absurdity of creation and its purposefulness. Sayings of the Ahlul Bayt also insist on the God’s independence from Creation but also non-futility of Creation. They agree that Creation aims to benefit creatures and help them achieving perfection.
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