

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq's (a.s) Debate With Abil Awja

Abil Awja first of all had a narrow-minded nature; secondly the company of Hasan Basri had further spoiled his belief, therefore doubts and conjectures used to fill his mind all the time. In addition to being an atheist, this fellow was also brash and foul-tongued. One day he came to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s) and said, “I don't understand how long the Hajj pilgrims would continue to trample the land of Mecca and how long would they continue to worship these stones and rocks? How long would they continue to run around it like runaway camels? Are these not actions of ignorant and stupid people? As you are the Imam of the Muslims and the son of the founder of Islam, give me a satisfactory reply.”

Imam (a.s) said, “O man! You have not reflected on the actual matter. The Ka'ba is the protected sanctuary through which the Almighty Allah tests His slaves, because this House is associated with Him. Therefore it is emphasized to respect and visit it. It is appointed as the place of worship for prophets and the direction of prayers of religious people. This house is the channel of His mercy and the medium of salvation. He created this house two thousand years before the creation of the world. The dignity of our slavehood is only that we follow each and every command of Allah and let the purpose for which the Ka'ba is created, be fulfilled.”

Awja said, “I am sorry to say that you have associated this house to such a personality whose existence, I refuse to believe. How can one believe in the existence of something, which is unseen? And till one does not believe, there is no question of obeying His commands.”

Imam (a.s) said, “You do not use your intellect. He is present and seeing everywhere and at every moment; and is nearer to you than your jugular vein. He listens to what we say and sees us and He knows the secrets of our hearts.”

He said, “First prove His existence. If he is on the earth, he went to the heavens and if he is on the heavens, how did he come to the earth?” Imam (a.s) said, “He is not confined in space that another place should be empty of Him, or some place should surround Him. If He had been confined to a place what difference would have remained between Him and the creatures?”

Awja asked, "But how does this prove that He is the Creator of all things?" Imam (a.s) replied, "Does such an obvious fact require a proof? I ask only you, who has created you?" "No one has created me," replied he. Imam said, "Is it possible for a created thing to come into being without a maker?" When Awja heard this he became worried and changing tracks said, "Okay, let it be. Tell me what is the use of things like Day of Judgment, accounting, Paradise and Hell etc. of which you are a believer? After death, a man is mixed with the dust and all these things are mere assumptions. Imam (a.s) said, "Even if it is assumed that you are right, there is no fear for us after death and if your belief is wrong there is no scope for your salvation, while we are risk-free in both the cases. Now you tell me, which of us is better?"

Hearing this, he bowed down his head and after remaining silent for sometime said, "I accept your statement, but tell me, the Quran says, 'When the skins of the inmates of Hell are burnt down, they would be given fresh skins.' Can you explain that the skins that had committed the sins are burnt once, what is the fault of the new skins?" Imam (a.s) said, "They would be the same old skins, only their forms would be changed again. Like a brick is powdered and mixed with water and put in a die for making another brick. The same would be the case of the skins of the people of Hell." He said, "Further, you tell me why different people die due to different diseases? What is the problem if all were to die due to the same disease?" Imam (a.s) said, "If it had been so, people would have remained fearless of death till the appearance of this disease and Allah does not like that anyone should be fearless of death."

<http://www.al-islam.org/akhlaq-al-aimma-morals-manners-holy-imams-maulana-sayyid-zafar-hasan-amrohi/knowledge-ahl-ul-bayt#debate-abil-awja>

Imam Sadiq (as) debate with Ibn Abil Awja
Ibn Abi al-'Awja' came in to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be on him, and he asked him:
-O Ibn Abi al-'Awja', are you created or not?
-I am not created.
-If you were created, then how would you be?
So Ibn Abi al-'Awja' became perplexed and gave no answer. (Al-Tabrasi, al-Ihtijaj. Bihar al-Anwar.)

<http://anecdotesofahlulbayt.blogspot.ca/2014/06/ibn-abi-al-awja-came-in-to-imam-al.html>