

Belief in Divine Decree (part 2 of 2)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

If everything has been predestined by God, how does one have any freedom of will?

(3) Allaah's Will Passes, and His Ability is Perfect

Whatever Allaah wills comes to pass, and whatever Allaah does not will does not happen. Nothing occurs in the heavens or on the earth without the Will of Allaah. Hence, whatever is in the universe occurs by the Will of Allaah, be it a divine act or actions of the creation:

["Had He so willed, he would indeed have guided you all."]¹

If we were to say that something occurs in existence without Allaah willing it, that would mean that things can occur without the Will of Allaah, and that would be a shortcoming in Allaah's power and will. Rather, everything that occurs can only be if Allaah wills it. If He did not will it to occur, it could have never come into being.

Likewise the actions of the creation occur by the Will of Allaah:

["And you do not will except that Allaah wills – Lord of the worlds."]²

No one can do anything except if Allaah wills it to be, had He willed that they do not take place, they would not have occurred.

(4) Allaah Created Everything

"He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its own measurement."

"For it is He who creates everything and determines its nature in accordance with (His own) design."³

This includes our characteristics and our deeds.

¹ Qur'aan [6:149]

² Qur'aan [81:29]

³ Qur'aan [25:2]

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The human beings are created by Allaah and so are the actions and statements that result from them. This is because the actions and the statements of a person are his characteristics; if the person is a creation, then so are his characteristics a creation of Allaah.

[“While Allaah has created you and what you do.”]⁴

We are given the physical ability and a choice. Our abilities like intelligence and memory differ just like our characteristics like height, weight, and colour. Also, we are given a will and have a choice.

If one of them does not exist, the act would not be performed. The One who has created the choice and the ability is Allaah, the Creator of the cause and the effect. Since Allaah has created both, the ability and the choice in us, hence the acts that we perform are also created by Allaah.

Human Freedom of Will

Islaamic belief in the divine decree (Qadr), every human act both in material and spiritual life is predestined, keeps human liberty intact without denying divine interference in human affairs. It does not undermine the principle of man’s moral freedom and responsibility. Man is not a helpless creature borne along by destiny. It is incorrect to believe the action of fate is blind, arbitrary, and relentless.

All is known, but freedom is also granted.

Man is responsible for his acts. Lethargic nations and individuals indolent to ordinary affairs of life are to blame themselves, not Allaah. Man is bound to obey the moral law; and he will receive merited punishment or reward as he violates or observes that law. However, if such is so, man must have it in his power to break or keep the law. Allaah would not hold us responsible for something unless we were capable of doing it:

[“Allaah does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear.”]⁵

[“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Allaah as much as you can.”]⁶

Everyone knows the difference between being compelled to do something and being free; having the choice of doing it, between a gun put to one’s head and being free in making decisions.

Some people mistakenly imagine the divine decree of each individual’s future life is so rigorously predetermined in all its details by Allaah that his own volitions or desires have no

⁴ Qur’aan [37:96]

⁵ Qur’aan [2:285]

⁶ Qur’aan [65:16]

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power to alter the course of events. It defeats common sense to reject faith or commit a sin even before knowing whether or not it was destined! Everyone has the ability to choose between righteousness and evil, so how can a person wilfully choose the road to perdition and use the divine decree (Qadr) as an excuse? It is more appropriate to walk on the blessed path and attribute it to one's destiny. Allaah knows from eternity with infallible certainty who will be saved and doomed, while Allaah has this infallible foreknowledge, we, on our part, cannot have an absolutely certain assurance as to how we will end. The Prophet, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), spoke the truth when he said:

“Seek what is beneficial to you, and ask Allaah for help. Do not lose hope, and if something were to afflict you, do not say ‘If I had done so and so’, because saying ‘If’ opens the doors for the devil.”

“If he is from the successful ones, then the deeds of the successful ones are made easy for him.”⁷

⁷ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim