

DEGREES OF PREDESTINATION

Predestination operates at different levels. The first of these is the level of divine will and knowledge. We believe, that Allah knows everything of the past, present and the future. His knowledge covers all that exists in this universe. He knows the good and evil deeds of all his creatures, their livelihood and their end. Allah declares:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ

قَدَّ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾ الطلاق: ١٢﴾

(Translation of meaning) [“Allah it is Who hath created the seven heavens, and of the earth the like thereof. The commandment cometh down among them slowly, that ye may know that Allah is Able to do all things, and that Allah surroundeth all things in knowledge” (At-Talaq: 12)].

The second level of predestination is that, Allah has written down his will and knowledge in a protected tablet. Thus Allah declares:

﴿أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾﴾

الحج: ٧٠

(Translation of meaning) [“Hast thou not known that Allah knoweth all that is in the heaven and the earth? Lo! It is in a record. Lo! That is easy for Allah” (Al-Hajj: 70)].

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said that:

«كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ، قَالَ: وَعَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ» (مسلم ، ترمذي)

(Translation of meaning) Allah had written the destinies of his creatures fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and earth (Muslim, Tirmizi).

The third level is that in this universe the will of Allah is supreme. His writ alone runs throughout His realm. What, He wills happens and what, He does not will does not happen. A man gets prosperity or adversity according to the allocation made by Allah. He declares:

﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ۝۵ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۝۶ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ۝۷ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ۝۸ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۝۹ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ۝۱۰ ﴾ الليل: ٥ - ١٠

(Translation of meaning) [*“As for him who giveth and is dutiful [towards his God]; and believes in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease; But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent; and disbelieveth in goodness; Surely, We will ease his way unto adversity” (Al-Lail: 5-10)]*].

We believe that the will of Allah prevails over the whole universe. There is no doubt that, the slaves of Allah too have their own wills and volition, who are also the executors of their own deeds and who also have the freedom to act. But all this is subordinate and subject to the supreme will of the Creator. Because if Allah has created his slaves on the one hand, He has also prescribed their deeds and actions. Thus He declares in the Quran:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝۹۶ ﴾ الصافات: ٩٦

(Translation of meaning) [*“And Allah has created you and whatever actions you undertake” (As-Saffat: 96)]*].

In sum, we can say that, Allah knows all the actions and deeds of his slaves because of his eternal knowledge, which He has recorded in the protected tablet. So, whatever happens does happen only within the knowledge and surveillance of Allah.

The Wisdom of Predestination: Since this universe is the exclusive domain of Allah the Almighty and He is the sole owner of his realm without any sharing or partnership, therefore, it is part of a believer's faith not to raise any question about the rationality or wisdom of any decision or determination of Allah. As Allah declares:

﴿ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ ۝۲۳ ﴾ الأنبياء: ٢٣

(Translation of meaning) [*“He is not accountable [to anybody] for his doings whereas they are all accountable” (Al-Anbiya: 23)]*].

Why do inequalities and diversities exist in this world? Why some are rich and other poor? Why some are strong and others weak? This is all due to divine predestination. We cannot question it. The benefit of the belief in divine predestination is that a man is spurred to act and to explore all the openings. He

gives thought to the divine norms operating in the universe. He is engaged in struggles without considering the consequences. If he succeeds in his endeavours, he thanks Allah and does not become arrogant. However, if he fails he attributes his failure to the will of Allah and does not become desperate or hopeless. A failure does not keep him away from further struggle but he becomes active with added vigour. If one does not believe in divine will he will lose all hope and get out of the arena of action. Thus, all his potential and possibilities may go waste. It is the belief in predestination, that keeps the believer courageous and enables him to stand steadfast in adversity. Thus Allah has pronounced:

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴾ (٢٢) لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ
الحديد: ٢٢ - ٢٣

(Translation of meaning) [“Naught of disaster befalleth in the earth or in yourselves but it is in a Book before We bring it into being—Lo! That is easy for Allah. That ye grieve not for the sake of that which hath escaped you, nor yet exult because of that which hath been given. Allah loveth not all prideful boasters” (Al-Hadid: 22-23)].

A believer has a firm belief in the fact, that, whatever Allah has decided in his favour is immutable. Whatever is his lot he is bound to get and whatever is not in his lot, he will never get. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ، خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ، وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ اِخْرَاصٌ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ، وَاسْتِعْنِ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ، فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ، فَإِنْ لَوْ تَفْتَحْ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ» (مسلم).

(Translation of meaning) A powerful and strong believer is better in the eyes of Allah than a powerless and weak believer though both have been endowed with good. Strive for what is more beneficial to you. Seek Allah’s help in that and never think that you are incapable of it. If something untoward happens do not say that had I not done so and so this would not have happened. Instead, say that this was the will of Allah. What he willed has happened. Remember that “if” and “but” open the door for Satan’s intervention (Muslim). The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) told Hadrat Ibn Abbas (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*):

«وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوْ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ، رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ» (ترمذي)

(Translation of meaning) Remember well that if all the people together decide to provide you any benefit, they cannot provide more than what has been decided by Allah and if, they decide to inflict any harm upon you, they cannot inflict more harm than what has been destined by Allah. All matters have been predetermined. There can be no increase or decrease in them (Tirmizi).

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