

DISPUTES ABOUT PREDESTINATION TO BE AVOIDED

The tenet of predestination is one of the divine mysteries, which is beyond the comprehension of human mind. We should, therefore, avoid delving or debating about this problem. It is our faith, that Allah knows everything, that He is just, that He is immune from doing injustice, that none of His dispensations is futile, that, he is wise and that each of his acts is based on wisdom. It is another matter that, we human beings are incapable of understanding His wisdom. Therefore, instead of getting involved in controversies about predetermination we should abide by the command of the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) that:

« وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الْقَدَرُ فَأْمْسِكُوا » (الطبراني)

(Translation of meaning) When predestination comes under discussion desist from it and keep quiet (Tabrani). Likewise, Hadrat Abu Hurairah (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) has narrated that:

Once, we were debating the problem of predestination. Then the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came in and listening to our talk became displeased so much that his cheeks became red as if pomegranate juice were poured over them. He asked us: Is this what you have been commanded to do? Is it what I have been sent to you as an apostle for? The communities before you had been destroyed for raising controversies over this issue. I forbid you strictly never to dispute about this issue (Tirmizi).

« لَا يُؤْمِنُ عَبْدٌ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ حَتَّى يَعْلَمَ أَنَّ مَا أَصَابَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئْهُ، وَأَنَّ مَا أَخْطَأَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبْهُ »

The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) also observed that no one of you can become a believer unless he believes in predestination, both the good and bad of it, until he becomes convinced that whatever happened to him was bound to happen and what did not happen was not bound to happen (Ibn Majah).

The truth is that in his personal life every person is an empowered and free agent. He has the liberty of doing or not doing things. Nevertheless, Allah has undoubtedly commanded for doing good and has made provision for guiding to that end. He has also forbidden from committing evil deeds and has issued warnings of reprisal for the wrong-doers. As for predestination, it belongs solely to the sphere of divine knowledge and depends entirely on His determination.

Human beings know nothing of it nor can they anticipate what is going to happen the next moment. However, he is completely free and competent in the sphere of his personal activity. Now this is a point of trial for them. There is an inexorable correlation between freedom of choice and personal responsibility. Given this position, it is by no means legitimate to hold predestination (ipso facto its source Allah the Almighty) as accountable for all our deeds right and wrong. The correct position is that because of his freedom of will and freedom of action man is personally responsible for all his acts. To blame predestination is tantamount to telling a lie against Allah. Allah has declared:

﴿سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾﴾ الأنعام: ١٤٨

(Translation of meaning) [“They who are idolaters will say: Had Allah willed, we had not ascribed [unto Him] partners neither had our fathers, nor had we forbidden aught. Thus did those who were before them give the lie [to Allah’s messengers] till they tasted of the fear of Us. Say: Have ye any knowledge that you can adduce for us? Lo! Ye follow naught but an opinion, Lo! Ye do but guess” (Al-An’am: 148).

In another place it is declared:

﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ الزخرف: ٢٠

(Translation of meaning) [“And they say: If the Benevolent One had [so] willed, we should not have worshipped them. They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do but guess” (Az-Zukhruf: 20)].

Once, during the reign of Hadrat Umar Bin al-Khattab (RadhiAllahu) plague broke out in Syria where, he was camping at that time. When he planned to depart from that country Hadrat Abu Ubaidah (RadhiAllahu) said: O Commander of the Faithful, are you escaping from the destiny of Allah. He replied yes. From the destiny of Allah to the destiny of Allah. Plague is an epidemic.

Which is a part of the destiny created by Allah. Hadrat Umar (RadhiAllahu) explained his point to Hadrat Abu Ubaidah (RadhiAllahu) by an example. If there is a barren land, which has no fertility and no greenery. If a shepherd decides to transfer from such a land to a fertile land with greenery, he may be

held as transferring from one destiny of Allah to another. To ward off one destiny by another is part of our faith. Allah has created both the malady as well as its remedy. It was inquired of the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*): Whether, we should use medicines or rely on blowing or seek some other protection? The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied yes these are also part of the destiny. According to yet another tradition, the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«تَدَاوُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ، سُبْحَانَهُ، لَمْ يَضَعْ دَاءً، إِلَّا وَضَعَ مَعَهُ شِفَاءً، إِلَّا الْهَرَمَ»

(Translation of meaning) O slaves of Allah! Get treated with medicines because except old age. Allah has provided a remedy for every sickness (Ahmad). The person who by making an excuse of destiny sits down and does not act despite his ability to act and thus suffers a loss, is a real criminal. Relying on one's fate, if somebody does not work to satisfy his hunger but remains idle till he dies of starvation dies a *haram* death. Goodness and badness of deeds depends upon the end-result of such deeds. If one's deed ends in good he is blessed. If it is bad he will be reckoned with. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عَاقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكًا بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ، فَيُكْتَبُ عَمَلُهُ، وَأَجَلُهُ، وَرِزْقُهُ، وَشَقِيٌّ أَوْ سَعِيدٌ، ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحُ، فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَيَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ، فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ، فَيَدْخُلُ النَّارَ» (البخاري).

(Translation of meaning) Each one of you is created in this way that for forty days he remains deposited in the womb of his mother in the form of fluid semen. Then semen is converted into coagulated blood. Then, it becomes a lump of flesh. Then, Allah sends one of His angels along with instructions about four matters. So, he writes down the particulars of his deeds, his death, his livelihood and his good fate or bad fate. Then, soul is infused into this body. By the entity who is alone worthy of worship, one of you acts like the men of Paradise throughout his life until there remains a distance of only an arm's length between him and the Paradise but ,then his written destiny overtakes him and he begins to act like the people of Hell and then he is consigned to Hell. Likewise, one of you keeps on acting like the people of Hell throughout his life until the distance between him and Hell remains an arm's length but, then the

written destiny overtakes him and then after repenting, he starts acting like the people of the Paradise and then he is admitted to the Paradise.

When Heaven and Hell are situated side by side and everything depends on one's deeds, then a believer must strive to perform good deeds and never lose the smallest opportunity of doing that. One should beware of one's end. Nobody knows, when, he meets with his death. One should do good to the best of his capacity and should leave the result to Allah the Almighty. Undoubtedly, Allah never burdens any of His slaves beyond his capacity. It appears to be a magnificent possibility that a person is sunken deep in sins but just at the brink of Hell he repents and returns to his Creator and thus by doing good deeds deserves Heaven. This possibility is due to the mercy and beneficence of Allah the Almighty. So must repent and embark on good deeds so that, our end is good. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that

«لَا يَرُدُّ الْقَدْرُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ» (ترمذي)

(Translation of meaning) Destiny can be changed only by prayers (Tirmizi, Hakim). And the doors of Allah the Almighty are always open for prayers. Just repentance for our sins and prayer for an opportunity to perform good deeds is the key to Heaven. One should hasten to it lest the opportunity of repentance and prayers is lost as there is no guarantee for our life.

The belief in predestination is not a chain in the feet of a believer but it is a shining lamp of his hope and potentiality. It is not an excuse for non-action but an incentive for action and effort. According to Hadrat Ali (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*), the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

(Translation of meaning) The destination of each one of you to either Heaven or Hell according to his belief and practice has already been written down. Then the Companions inquired: O Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) should not we then desist from doing anything and relying upon our written destiny? The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied: keep on performing good deeds because for each that path will be facilitated for which he has been created. If, he is fortunate the path of righteousness and welfare will be made easy for him and if, he is callous and wicked then the path of callousness will be made easy for him. Then he recited this *Ayat* from the Quran:

﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى ﴿١٠﴾ ﴾ **الليل: ٥ - ١٠**

(Translation of meaning) [“As for him who giveth and is dutiful [towards Allah]; And believeth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto the seat 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)].

The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) taught this meaning of predestination to his Companions and by acting on his teachings, they deserved success in this life and in the life hereafter.

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