

Khalifa Abdul Hakim on the Doctrine of Free Will and Predestination, Good and Evil in Islam

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ABSTRACT:

Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, (1896- 1959) has done his utmost effort to present the values of Islam and its various doctrines in the garb of Philosophy. This article is a comprehensive enunciation of Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim's approach to the Doctrine of Free will and Predestination, Good and Evil in Islam. Khalifah says that man is endowed with free will. If he were merely a part of nature which is determined by fixed laws, he would not be different from matter and plants. Furthermore, God is free and when he made him in His own image and breathed His own spirit into him, as the Qur'an teaches, He made him also free. But, freedom is a double- edged weapon. If the granting of free will to man is an act of a loving fosterer, then any evil that may result from it cannot be attributed to lack of goodness in the Creator. Man can revolt even against his Creator. He is not created with perverted instincts. The theory of original sin is absolutely incompatible with the teachings of Islam. So far as the theory of existence of evil in nature is concerned, Khalifah has categorically repudiated it as there is no flaw in nature. It is only our desires that attributed good or evil to the happenings of nature. There is no natural evil but there certainly exists moral evil as a result of the gift of free will to man. However, there are two kinds of moral evil. First, the evil caused by man's own acts. Second, the evil caused by the acts of others. The sufferings caused by man's own acts are actually the result of his endowed free will. The sufferings caused by the acts of others are the source of man's purification.

Keywords:

Khalifa Abdul Hakim, Free Will, Predestination, Good, Evil in Islam, Original Sin.

The doctrine of human predestination and free- will is an important and controversial issue of religion and philosophy. To understand the issue we must observe the delicate distinction that exists

between the creation of an act (Khalq-e- amal) and the performance of an act (kasb-e- amal). Man is neither the creator of his deeds (Khaliq) nor his actions are divinely predetermined. The reality exists between these two positions. God is the creator (Khaliq) of acts, and man is their performer and operator (Kasib). The function of human action is neither creation (Qadr) nor predestination (Jabr) but free performance and accomplishment.¹ About the creation the Qur'ān says;

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ²

And Allah has created you and what you make.

According to Khalīfah, man is endowed with free will and on the basis of the freedom he chooses either the right or the wrong path. Khalīfah writes;

“Man is endowed with freewill. If he were merely a part of nature which is determined by fixed laws, he would not be different from matter and plants.... How undetermined free-will emerges from deterministic nature ruled by necessity is not understandable by any scientific hypothesis. But it is such an undeniable fact that the very act of denying it asserts it because the denier feels that he is not compelled to deny it but is denying it freely. If we were the children of physical nature only, free-will would neither be possible nor intelligible. It is by free-will that we transcend nature and step into the realm of ends which is the realm of spirit. God is free and when he made us in His own image and breathed His own spirit into us, as the Qur'ān teaches, He made us also free.”³

There are main three points which are important in this context.

1. Freedom of performance
2. Sense of discrimination between vice and virtue
3. Freedom of will and choice

On the basis of freedom of performance he would be held accountable in the world hereafter. The Qur'an has enunciated the issue in the following verses.

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا⁴

Surely we have shown him the way that he may be thankful or unthankful.

Thus he will be punished or rewarded on the basis of free will.

لَهُمَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ⁵

They shall have what they earn and you shall have what you earn.

Man is the performer and operator of his acts and therefore, he is responsible for his actions and nobody is accountable for the conduct of others. The holy Qur'ān says;

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ⁶

And whatever affliction comes to you, it is on account of what your hands have done.

So, God, the Almighty, has endowed man free-will. He is not absolutely bound to fixed laws and deterministic nature. He is capable of doing either right or wrong actions. The Holy Qur'ān points at these facts beautifully in the following words'

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ⁷

Khalifah says that the human life is based on the assumption of free-will. Therefore, he is held responsible for his right or wrong actions. He writes;

"Entire human life is based on the assumption of free-will. Our sense of moral obligation, our approbation and disapprobation of our own acts or the actions of others, our systems of laws, our sanctions, our rewards and punishments are all based on this postulate of free-will. If we were the children of physical nature only, free-will would neither be possible nor intelligible."⁸

According to the Qur'an, man possesses the faculties which can discriminate between right and wrong. The Qur'an says;

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَأَنَّهُمْ فَجُّرٌهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا⁹

And the (Human) mind and its perfection, so he intimated to it by inspiration its deviating from good and its guarding (against) evil.

This verse clearly indicates that man possesses the faculties which are necessary for human perfection. Through these faculties, he not only can discriminate between good and evil but can also freely choose between them.

The following verses of the holy Qur'an enunciate the issue beautifully.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ^٩ ۖ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ^{١٠} ۖ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ^{١١}

Have we not given him two eyes and a tongue and two lips, and pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways.

The holy Qur'an again says;

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ^{١٢}

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error.

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ ۖ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا ۖ وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا^{١٣}

All these verses obviously establish the fact that man is innately qualified to discriminate between good and evil and also blessed with an unrestrained freedom of choice.

If the people were not invested with free choice of performance (Ikhtiar-e- kasb) (اختيار كسب) in their acts, God would not have charged them for their misconduct.¹³

Due to this free-will, man can revolt even against his creator. Freedom is a double-edged weapon. Khalifa writes;

“But freedom is a double-edged weapon; it means the capacity of, following either the right or the wrong path. The distinctive feature of man is that he can revolt even against his creator. The first exercise of man’s free will against God is what is theologically described as the fall of Adam. His life as a human being really begins with that fall which was symptomatic of his exercise of free-will. If the granting of free-will to man is an act of a loving fosterer, then any evil that may result from it cannot be attributed to lack of goodness in the creator.”¹⁴

Only freedom brings responsibility. Without freedom there is neither responsibility nor accountability. The Qur’ān has repeatedly stated that everybody will be judged on the basis of what he has earned and performed, and no one will be accountable for the acts he has not performed.¹⁵

Responsibility

Khalīfah says that the human life is based on the assumption of free-will. Therefore, he is held responsible for his right or wrong actions. He writes;

“Entire human life is based on the assumption of free-will. Our sense of moral obligation, our approbation and disapprobation of our own acts or the actions of others, our systems of laws, our sanctions, our rewards and punishments are all based on this postulate of free-will. If we were the children of physical nature only, free-will would neither be possible nor intelligible.”¹⁶

The following verses beautifully enunciate the issue.

The Qur’an says;

ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ كَيْسٌ بِظُلَامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ¹⁷

The holy Qur'ān further says;

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ¹⁸

Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is against it, and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants.

So, man is only responsible for the endowment of free-will. The Holy Qur'ān explains the fact in the following words;

وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ¹⁹

And no person earns anything but it is on his own account; and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your eventual return and He will inform you of that wherein you used to differ.

According to Khalīfah, the responsibility of man started with his free-will and his endowment of knowledge. He did not start his life with perverted instincts. Khalīfah explains;

“Man does not start life with perverted instincts. All of his instincts, like the instincts of the animal, are instrumental of the preservation of life; it is only with false knowledge and perverted free will that disorder sets in.”²⁰

In the moral realm no one carries the burden of others.²¹ So, man is responsible and accountable for all his varied actions and this very belief in moral order completes the faith of man. Khalīfah writes;

“Belief in the moral order or the law of the moral compensation along with belief in God, the source of the moral and the natural order, completes the faith of man if he is also the doer of good deeds. All the rest of Islam is a system of corollaries that follow from this basic outlook. Anyone within the pale of orthodox Islam or outside it who has this outlook has attained truth.”²²

From the above mentioned discussion we may conclude that Man is responsible for what he does and he is not responsible for the actions which he did not commit. Moreover, God is not unfair in distributing rewards or imposing punishments. Divine acts are never arbitrary and capricious. Man is held responsible and accountable for all his actions on account of freedom of choice which God has conferred on him as his birth right. Man is to blame for all his crimes and evil practices due to his freedom of his choice.

Repudiation of the Doctrine of Original Sin

The doctrine of free will is linked with the doctrine of man's good and right nature. Man is not created with perverted instincts. So, the theory of in-born criminality is absolutely incompatible with the Islamic teachings. Man is free to choose according to his will. No restraint is imposed on his free choice. Moreover, man is a purposive being. Each and every thing of the universe has been created with a special purpose. The Qur'an says;

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا ۖ سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ²³

O' our Lord! You have not created it without purpose.

Moreover, man is a purposive being, and he is created to worship and serve the Al-Mighty Allah.

The Qur'an says;

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ²⁴

And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve me.

So, the purpose of man, according to the teachings of Islam, is the pursuit of moral ends to achieve the highest stage of perfection. The Qur'an says;

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ²⁵

Who created death and life so that He may check which of
You is best in deeds.

The holy Qur'ān further establishes the purposive basis of human creation.

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّنَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ²⁶

What did you then think that we had created you in vain,
and that you shall not be returned to us.

Christianity considers man genetically tainted and congenitally flawed as he is a production of sin. Every child is sinned and originally tainted. Khalifa writes;

“Every great prophet suffers for the sake of humanity and is truly a saviour, but Jesus was made the Son and Saviour. The simple and sweet religion of Jesus was thus beclouded by irrational mysteries, sapping the very foundations of morality by depriving man of free – will, and making God a cruel, revengeful tyrant, visiting the sin of the first parents on innumerable generations-----
-- According to this kind of dogmatism, moral effort loses its value and assurance of well – being, here and hereafter.²⁷

Christianity believes that man is the product of sin; he is genetically tainted, he is congenitally flawed. But Islam rejects this attitude. It believes that the creation of man is positive achievement; he is created in the divine image.²⁸

The Islamic view is that every child is vested with ‘Fitrat-e- salima’ (فطرت سليمة) at the time of his birth. The holy Prophet (PBUH) has thrown light on this concept in the following words;

ما من مولود الا يولد على الفطرة فأبواه او يُنصرانه او يُمجسانه كمثل
البيهمة (جعاء) هل ترى فيها جدهاء²⁹

No child is born, but follows the right nature, then his parents make him a Jew, or a Christian or a Magian, as

a beast is born with all its limbs intact (or without a effect); do you see one born maimed and mutilated.

In light of all of the above discussion, we may conclude easily that man is not inborn tainted or sinned. He is born with right nature.

According to these narrations of the Prophet (PBUH) every child is vested with 'Fitrat-e-salima' (فطرتِ سلیمہ) at the time of his birth; he is born with the potential capacity to think and act fairly. It is immaterial whether his birth takes place in the house of a Muslim or that of a non-Muslim. What really matters is the configuration of his nature at the juncture of his birth. And this nature is potentially patterned on the right path.³⁰

So, the Islamic view is that human nature is patterned on the right path by the Almighty Allah. At another place the holy Qur'an enunciates the issue in the following words;

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۝ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
أَمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ³¹

Surely we have created man in the best make. Then we render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good so that they shall have self-perpetuating reward.

The above mentioned verses clearly denote man's good nature. Man is not created with perverted instincts.

The Principle of Exemption

If a man commits any unlawful act in a state of compulsion or in an extreme necessity, he would be exempted from the criminal liability. This principle is derived from the following verse of the holy Qur'an.

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ³²

He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, blood and flesh of swine, and that (animal) over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked at the time of its slaughter, but whoever is driven to necessity not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him, surely Allah is forgiving, merciful.

This act should not involve a willful violation of the law of sharia.

Dr. Qadri writes;

“Thus God has put aside the onus of sin and criminal ability in a state of undesirable compulsion, where man cannot act on the basis of his free will and choice and is stripped of his discretionary power in the exercise of his options. This is a profound and highly laudable principle of Shariat which exempts from legal liability criminal acts committed by man in a state of extreme compulsion.”³³

At another place the Qur'an says;

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَلَا تَزِرُ
وِازِرَةً وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۖ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا³⁴

Whoever goes aright for his own soul does he go aright, and whoever goes astray to its detriment only does he go astray; nor can the bearer of a burden bear the burden of another, nor do we chastise until we raise an apostle.

So, we may conclude that the freedom and choice to choose the right path well as the wrong path is entirely and absolutely the responsibility of an individual and it is not dictated by divine preference or plan. The second thing is that no one will share the burden of the wrongful acts performed by others and there is no concept of vicarious liability in divine reckoning or plan. The third important thing is the principle of Itmam-e- Hujjat, according to which no one will be punished unless the truth is revealed to him through the Messengers of God.

If God had to reward humanity arbitrarily in conformity to a pre designed scheme, there was hardly any need for the raising of Prophets and for the transmission of divine revelation.³⁵

According to Motazilah man himself was the creator of his acts, independent of God's will as according to them man is endowed with absolute freedom. But the Jabria school of thought supported the idea of absolute determinism. However, Matureedi school of thought tried to reconcile the extreme positions and create a compromise between them. According to this theory, man is neither the creator of his acts nor is he handicapped by the predestined divine fate in the exercise of his choice and in the free operation of his will but he is perpetrator of his deeds.³⁶ According to Imam Ja'far Sadiq, it is the balanced view between two intractable positions.

لا جبر ولا قدر ولكن أمرين فالله خلق الاسباب والسيباب ورتب
السيباب على الاسباب وجعل لها مدخلا في وجودها وخلق لها شرائط و
جعلها متفقة عليها لو كتمت تحقق الشرائط لم توجد البشرى وطات³⁷

There is neither determinism nor absolutism; the fact is in between these two positions. Allah has created the causes and effects and has composed the effects on the basis of certain causes which have been made effective. Then He has created the conditions for the functioning of the causes which have been made dependent in a manner that, if conditions are not fulfilled, the conditioned causes cannot come into existence. And, therefore, they cannot create any effect without this principle- process.

The exact status of human action is neither creation or absolutism nor predeterminism, but free earning and independent performance, which is known as 'Kasb' (كسب). But so far as the meaning of Qaza and Qadr (قضاء و قدر) is concerned, Qaza (قضاء) means creation; Qadr (قدر) signifies measure, assessment, and estimation.³⁸

In the holy Qur'ān, the word Qaza (قضا) is used in the sense of creation. The Qur'ān narrates;

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ³⁹

So, He created then seven heavens in two periods.

However, the word Qadr (قدر) is used in the sense of measure as the holy Qur'ān says;

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ⁴⁰

Surely, we have created everything according to a measure (estimation).

الْقَدَرُ مُحَرَكَةُ الْقَضَاءِ وَالْحَكْمِ⁴¹

Qadr is the incentive of Divine creation and decision.

Qadr is the main incentive of what is created or ordained by God in respect of various issues.

So, in the light of above discussion, it is clear that Allah being the 'Alim ul ghayb' (knower of the unknown) knows about each and every creature before it comes in to existence. God's assessment and estimation about the conduct and behaviour of human beings, before they are seen or displayed externally in the universe, is the Qadr (قدر), which does not bind a man to perform any particular act. Allah gives His declaration in the form of Qaza (قضاء).

God is all- knowing and no aspect of reality is unknown to Him. He has the fore- knowledge of all the happenings and events, but this fore- knowledge does not constitute an act of Divine predetermination. God does not interfere with man's freedom of choice.⁴² The holy Qur'an says;

يَسْخَرُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۖ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ⁴³

Allah establishes and abolishes what He pleases and with Him is the basis of the book.

In this context, Sheikh Abdul Haque Muhaddis Dehlvi explains the Qur'ānic verse in the following way;

فالمحو والاثبات اشارة الى القدر وعنده اُمُّ لكتب اشارة الى القضاء⁴⁴

That the abolition and establishment indicate the Qadr, whereas the basis of the book (Ummul Kitab), signifies the Qaza.

Qaza is, therefore, mainly related to Allah and Qadr to human beings. Qadr is the inspiration and incentive of Qaza. Therefore, the principle of Qaza and Qadr is itself an endorsement of human freedom.⁴⁵

The following conversation which was occurred between Hazrat Umar (R.A), and Abu Ubaidah also explains the distinction between the Qaza and Qadr.

قال ابو عبيدة لعبر لما اراد الفرار من الطاعون بالشام اتفر من القضاء قال

عمر اخر من القضاء الله الى قدر الله⁴⁶

Abu Ubaidah asked Umar when he intended to leave Syria on account of plague: Are you running away from Qaza? Hazrat Umar replied. I am moving from Allah's Qaza to His Qadr.

According to Mulla Ali Qari, the Qadr (Divine estimation) is the real base of Divine declaration (Qaza) while kasb (act) or man's performance with his free discretion is the actual cause to determine everything.⁴⁷

Allama Saad-ud- Din Taftazani clears this very concept in the following words;

فالفعل مقدور الله تعالى بجهة اليجاد ومقدور العبد بجهة الكسب⁴⁸

That the human act is within the jurisdiction of Allah,
as regards its creation, and within the jurisdiction of man, as
regards its performance.

The Concept of Qaza-o-Qadr in the Light of the Prophetic Hadith

Hazrat Ali narrated that the companions of the holy Prophet (PBUH), asked a question to the holy Prophet (PBUH) when he stated that the dwelling of every person, in hell or heaven, had been pre- inscribed.

يا رسول الله فلم نعمل أفلا نتكل⁴⁹

O! Holy Prophet (PBUH), shouldn't we rely on
whatever has been written and give up the performance
of duties.

In another Hadith which is narrated by Abdullah bin Amr, the companions asked the holy prophet (PBUH)

فيم العمل يا رسول الله ان كان امر قد فرغ منه⁵⁰

What is the status or necessity of a legal act if everything has already been decided?

The holy Prophet (PBUH) explained the issue in the following words;

جفّ القلم بما أنت لاق⁵¹

O! Abu Hurairah! The pen (Al- Qalam) noted down
(On the Louh-e- Mahfooz) only what you were going to
earn – in – your own free capacity.

So, the writing of Qalam or Qadr is nothing but a simple narration of the facts which had already happened and which had to take place in the future and it does not bind anyone to be criminal or non- criminal. It just means that God foresaw the prospective acts of human being which performed through free

will and choice. God declared only those acts and their consequences without disturbing the freedom of human will.

So, according to the above mentioned discussion, it has become clear that nothing was predetermined or arbitrarily decided. The function of Qalam was purely descriptive without any attempt to prefigure or mould the events of past and future.

Khalīfah's Concept of Good and Evil

So far as the existence of evil in nature is concerned, Khalīfah has categorically repudiated it. He says that there is no any flaw or evil in nature. It is only our desires and conveniences that attribute good or evil to the happenings of nature.⁵² While discussing on the problem of good and evil, Khalīfah has narrated its two aspects.

1- Natural Evil (Evil in Nature)

2- Moral Evil (Evil in human life)

1. Khalīfah's Concept of Natural Evil (Repudiation of Evil in Nature)

Khalīfah says that according to the Holy Qur'ān there is no flaw or evil in nature. Nature is a system of changes according to laws. These laws are rational and work for good and not evil. Sometimes, their working does not suit our personal conveniences, we call it evil. He writes;

“Nature is a system of changes according to laws. ... The working of nature is flawless; it is only our ignorance which sees change where it cannot discern the law and which calls that evil which does not suit its transient desire of convenience. ...there is no natural or cosmic evil; nature is not a battlefield of Ahriman and Yazdan. The whole process is planned by an Almighty and knowing power; it is good and tends towards goodness; death and decay are phases in the process of the fulfillment of a plan. ... Islam denies the existence of cosmic evil; the problem arises out of ignorance or narrowness of vision; real insight in to the working of nature would find no fault with it. So the question that of

God is omnipotent why He allows evil to exist in nature is answered by the Qur'ān by the denial of evil in nature."⁵³

Khalīfah has established his thesis in the light of the following verses of the Qur'ān.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعِبِينَ ۖ مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ⁵⁴

And we did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both except with the truth, but most of them do not know.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۚ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ ۚ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ⁵⁵

Who created the seven heavens alike; You see no incongruity in the creation of the beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder?

Nature in general is a system of uniformities and nobody can deny that these uniformities, called the laws of nature, exist. But, these uniformities cannot always work according to our desires or according to our limited and contradictory wishes. Khalīfah says that the best attitude towards nature is the understanding of its workings and resignation to whatever it brings forth.⁵⁶ If God is good, then nature too is good. Only goodness can come out of goodness.⁵⁷ So, according to Khalīfah, we should broaden our conception of goodness to cosmic dimensions so that nature will appear to us as flawless. And any fragmentary standpoint would discover only blots and patches."⁵⁸

2. Moral Evil

Khalīfah's Concept of Evil in Human Life

By evil Khalīfah means pain and suffering and the destruction of values. In nature whatever is, is right. God cannot be blamed for what he has created or for the methods He uses for its maintenance and development.⁵⁹

But so far as moral evil or evil in human life is concerned, Khalīfah says that it is due to man's freedom of following either the right or the wrong path as the freedom is a double-edged weapon.⁶⁰ However, Khalīfah has narrated two kinds of evil. The evil or suffering caused by man's own acts and the evil or suffering caused by the acts of others.⁶¹

Kinds of sufferings

So, in the light of Khalīfah's words, there are two kinds of sufferings.

- 1) Evil and sufferings caused by man's own acts.
- 2) Evil and sufferings caused by the acts of others or workings of nature.

1. Evil or Suffering Caused by Man's Own Acts

According to Khalīfah, the sufferings caused by man's own acts are actually the result of his endowed free will. With his free will, he can rise above the angels or sink below the animals. If he chooses to sink below the animals, he suffers the consequences himself and God could not be held responsible for that.⁶² Khalīfah says that man's freewill becomes sinful and devilish when any instinct in him becomes selfish and aggressive. All aggression is transgression of the limits prescribed by reason which is the distinctive human faculty granted to man so that he may make his instincts work in subordination to it. Reason in man is the voice of God and submission to reason is submission to God.⁶³ So, God cannot be held responsible for such sufferings which are the result on man's own acts. The Holy Qur'ān says;

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا⁶⁴

We have shown him (Our) way, whether he is grateful or ungrateful.

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَن لَّهُ مَعَادِيرٌ⁶⁵

Nay1! Man himself keeps an eye on the exact state of his soul.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۖ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ⁶⁶

Surely, we have created Man in the best mould (in respect of reason and form). Then We returned him to the condition of the lowest of the low.

This evil is, basically the result of man's own wrong doings. These are the consequences and aftermaths of man's willful violation of the laws of well-being.

So, the human instincts are not to be identified with the devil. Man's emotions and instincts are not evil-in-themselves. The evil comes on the surface when man's instinct becomes selfish and aggressive.

2. Evil or Suffering Caused by the Acts of Others or Caused by Those Happenings which are out of Control (Undeserved Sufferings-----A Source of the Purification of Soul)

There are such sufferings which are caused by the wrong doings of others. Sometimes, these sufferings are caused by those happenings which are out of control. According to Khalifah, such kinds of undeserved sufferings may cause the purification and exaltation of man's soul. Khalifah writes;

"But what about undeserved sufferings? Most highly moral and spiritual men suffer at the hands of vicious men as well as at the hands of nature. The theistic view about this kind of suffering is that souls can be purified and exalted only in the school of adversity and suffering. It brings out the noblest qualities of man and tests his character. Character can be built only by the overcoming of resistance. A noble soul may suffer either as a result of some wrong done by others or as a result of the workings of nature. In all cases the right attitude towards life would purify and strengthen a man's character. Our idea of the nobility of the soul is connected with sufferings of both kinds. Against undeserved suffering man

can bring his qualities of patience and fortitude. If he proves his worth thereby, this undeserved suffering cannot be called an unmixed evil; it becomes an instrument of positive good."⁶⁷

It is very important to note that if the wages of virtue were always paid in cash in terms of physical pleasure and the wages of sin always paid readily in physical pain, virtue would be reduced to a calculable hedonistic bargaining.⁶⁸ The immoralities and cruelties of humanity are there to be resisted and overcome so that we may rise higher than merely natural beings.⁶⁹ The Prophet of Islam was asked as to who among men suffered the most, and He replied that the prophets suffered the most. Khalifah says that now, how is it that these prophets who suffered the most still retained the strongest faith in the goodness of God? An unbelieving man when he suffers in any way that he considers as undeserved brings a charge of irrationality against life. And a man of little faith has his faith shaken either in the omnipotence or the goodness of God.⁷⁰ Life is inconceivable without change and without resistance to be overcome.⁷¹

We may conclude following points from the above discussion.

1. Nature is a system of changes according to laws. There is no flaw or evil in nature. It is only our desires and conveniences that attribute good or evil to the happenings of nature. There is no natural evil but there certainly exists moral evil as a result of the gift of freewill to man. Freedom is a double-edged weapon.
2. There are two kinds of moral evil. (a) The evil caused by man's own acts (b) And the evil caused by the acts of others or suffering caused by those happenings for which he cannot be held responsible and which are out of control.
3. The sufferings caused by man's own acts are actually the result of his endowed free-will. The sufferings caused by the acts of others or by the wrong doings of others are the source and instrument of man's purification and positive good.
4. If the wages of virtue were always paid in cash in terms of physical pleasure and the wages of sin always paid readily

in physical pain, virtue would be reduced to a calculable hedonistic bargaining. The freedom of choice makes man responsible for all his actions. In the moral realm, no one would carry the burden of the sins of others.

5. God is the creator (خالق) of acts, and man is their performer and operator (كاسب). The function of human action is neither creation (خلق) nor predetermination (قدر) but free performance and accomplishment.
6. Man has been endowed with freedom of performance and sense of discrimination between vice and virtue and freedom of will and choice.
7. Only freedom brings responsibility. Without freedom there is neither responsibility nor accountability. Man is to blame for all his crimes and evil practices due to his freedom of choice and God does not perpetrate injustice in his dealings with erring mankind. Islam rejects the doctrine of original sin. According to Islam, Every child is born with the right nature

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