

Divine Justice

Divine Justice is a positive attribute and one of actions; implying that all acts of God are performed in accordance with justice and His holy being is pure of injustice. Divine justice is an Islamic belief and it is ascribed to by all Muslims in general, although there is difference of opinion in its interpretation between scholastic theologians and they are divided into two groups: Mutazali and Ashari or Adliya and Ghair Adliya.

In the Holy Quran, the quality of justice is proved for Almighty Allah and injustice is negated about Him. For example:

It is said in Quran:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.”
(3: 18)

And He says:

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“And the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly; there is none who can change His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.” (6: 115)

And says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُضَعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Surely Allah does not do injustice to the weight of an atom, and if it is a good deed He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.” (4:40)

There is no doubt in the goodness of justice and evil of injustice. Everyone likes justice and praises one who is just; they consider injustice as evil and condemn the unjust. Justice has many definitions, but this is not the time to mention them or to do any research on this topic.

The best definition is that which is derived from the words of Nahjul Balagha: Imam Ali (a.s.) has mentioned justice to be superior to generosity and he says:

Justice is placing everything in its appropriate place. [1](#)

Justice implies fulfillment of the rights of all those who have a right.

Every person, according to his creation, has some special rights and others are duty-bound to honor them; like the right to work and possession of the fruits of their labor, right of security and freedom, life and right of education, right to marry and reproduce and tens of other rights; just as one who respects the right of others in his society and he does not trespass on them. We can use two reasonings to prove justice of Allah and to negate that He is unjust:

The First Proof Is Quran

The Almighty Allah in numerous verses of Quran has ordered justice and equity and He has prohibited injustice and cruelty.

We present three verses by way of example:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others)...” (16:90)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّ مِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ

“O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah’s sake...” (4: 135)

وَلَا تَحْسِبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ

“And do not think Allah to be heedless of what the unjust do; He only respites them to a day on which the eyes shall be fixedly open.” (14:42)

The God, who has commanded justice and equity to people, and warned them against injustice and cruelty; how is it possible that He should Himself be unjust to His creatures.

The Second Is Logical Proof

One who does not observe the rights of others and oppresses them, is not in other than some conditions: either he does not perceive the evil of injustice or he is needful of that which he takes from the oppressed; or usurps the fruits of their labor in order to remove his deficiency or he does not have the power of fulfilling their rights. Or he is miserly and he observes miserliness in fulfilling the rights of others or commits injustice by way of revenge or a vain past time.

But none of these possibilities exist with regard to Almighty Allah, because you have seen before He is all-knowing and wise and He performs all His actions under the dictates of His knowledge and wisdom, and ignorance is not found in His being. He is in possession of all perfections and is not deficient in any of them.

He is the owner of all perfections and does not have any defect so that He should need to oppress others in order to make up for His deficiency. He is beneficent and generous and His own possessions are not reduced in bestowing them to others so that He should be miserly in it. He is absolute power and He does not weaken by giving power to others.

Therefore since injustice is an evil act whose evil is perceived by all sensible beings, Almighty Allah is also pure of injustice. He bestows perfection to every existing being, including man, according to its capacity and capability and He does not trespass any of their rights.

Justice in Creation

Justice in creation is in the meaning that consideration must be observed with regard to capacities in creation of existing beings of the world and from the side of Almighty Allah there is no hindrance of grace and unlawful discrimination is exercised and in explanation of this statement, it is necessary to understand the following points:

First point: Phenomena of the world of existence can be divided into two kinds: abstract world and material world.

A) Abstract world: Abstractions are existing beings, which do not have movement and growth; they are from the beginning as they should be and in terminology they have absolute functions and are not material and physical; they are not visible; they neither deteriorate nor die. They are mediums of divine favors and they have no disobedience or opposition.

These invisible beings in the terminology of religion are introduced as angels, armies of God, destiny, distributor, throne, chair, tablet and pen. From such definitions it can be concluded that between the

creator of the world and the phenomenon of the existing world there are connections which are invisible. In other words, the system of creation has come into being with a particular sequence and is being administered in this way. Angels are enforcers of divine commands and they never disobey or oppose God.

لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.” (66:6)

Also:

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

“And there is none of us but has an assigned place.” (37: 164)

It is said that the positions of angels are divinely ordained and not by way of gaining eligibility for the same; such that each of them have a special existence and their responsibilities are derived from it. It should not remain unsaid that angels in their beings and actions do not have independence, on the contrary, they are mediums and not more than that and they are needful of and related to Almighty Allah who is needless, powerful, knowing and wise.

B) Material and physical world: Materiality as opposed to abstractness possesses a form and shape. They are changeable in essence and they have movement and growth. Material forms undergo changes, but the matter remains. When matter, under the effect of movement becomes capable to accept a new form it is bestowed that form; for example the apple tree; it possesses a matter and a form. Its form can be defined to be an apple tree, which grows and gives fruits.

And its matter is defined as something, which has taken the shape of the apple tree. It means that the matter of the apple tree was having another form previously; for example it was an apple seed and it developed the capability to become a tree. After that the form of the tree was given to it. Then the tree became dried and its form changed and it turned into dust. But its matter is the same previous matter, but it does not have the signs of the apple tree. State of the matter, its form, change and transformation will continue in the same way.

The world of matter and materiality is very vast and human beings do not have perfect and correct knowledge about them. Our awareness is limited with the earth and limited number of earthly existing things like different kinds of plants, animals, minerals, water, air, light, heat and some knowledge of the sun and some stars; but we are mostly ignorant of the universe and galaxies and stars. We do not have perfect knowledge of the great universe, which is mostly unseen by us, although we have conducted extensive researches and still continue to do so; and the secrets unraveled so far are very less in

comparison to the millions of secrets that still remain to be unraveled.

But that which can be said in brief is that all of them are phenomena of material beings which have evolved through ages under the effect of different natural factors to assume a new form and when new capabilities developed, they assumed a new form. We also do not have precise and complete awareness about the future of this movement and perpetual search. Glory be to Allah, the greatest.

Second point – Law of general causality: Previously we learnt the meaning of cause and effect. Effect is the phenomenon, which does not exist in its own being. Its existence and non-existence is same and it is in this aspect that it is needful of a cause. Cause is something on which the effect depends. Between every cause and effect there is a relation of particular originality. Every effect is not created by every cause.

And every effect is not resultant of every cause. If the cause is a phenomenon, it is itself in need of a cause. And in the same way, its cause and the cause of its cause, and this continues till we come to a cause, which is not a phenomenon. That is a being free of need and self-sufficient in its existence and that is the Almighty Allah who is a necessary being (Wajibul Wujud) and who is also called as the cause of all causes.

Therefore, the law of cause and effect is a complete and all-encompassing law, which controls the world of existence and which has endowed it a system. Almighty Allah has created the universe and He controls it through the system of cause and effect. The world is having discipline and it follows a fixed law; it is administered by the command of God. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that:

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ / وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

“Surely We have created everything according to a measure. And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye.” (54:49-50)

In this legal system, every phenomenon holds a particular position and does not infringe it. If it had been other than this, the whole system would have collapsed.

Now we shall explain divine justice in creation in detail: Divine justice in creation implies that the origin of the creation of man and the distinctive qualities of all just persons is according to their capability and eligibility and denying grace and improper prejudice has not been resorted to.

According to this explanation, man is an existing being of the natural world. Like plants, he responds to nutrition, he has growth and reproduction; like different animals he possesses perceptions and intentional movement. Therefore he can be considered as a kind of plant and animal. But he is in possession of an important excellence, which is not present in other plants and animals.

Man has intelligence and reason, which is not found in any of the animals. The cause of this excellence is his abstract and ethereal soul to which the humanity of man is related. In terminology he is called as the 'form of human genus'. Like other existing beings, man also possesses matter as well as a form.

Matter of man is that which was present in another form previously and now it has assumed the shape of man and has accepted the abstract ethereal soul. Every matter is not capable to accept the human soul. Matters that have accepted the form of plants or animals cannot directly accept the human soul and become humans. It is only the seed of man (sperm) that can accept the soul of man and become a human being; and that also after many amazing changes and growths.

The seed of man also was not a seed previously; on the contrary it was present in another form. It became a seed gradually and after undergoing changes. When the human sperm was placed in an appropriate place – that is in the womb of a mother – it mixed with the female egg and becomes capable of accepting the human soul and it is joined to it and it should be as such since Almighty Allah is not miserly.

But human beings also all are not same from the aspect of sense, memory, form, skin color, height and physical perfection or deficiency; on the contrary they are different from each other. These differences are also effects of the specialties of the parents and their ancestors; kind of nutrition of the parents is effective during pregnancy and lactation; their environment, health or sickness of the father mother or grandparents. The sperm, which accepts the form of a special human being, is capable in this way and according to the system of cause and effect should be created like this.

Therefore every man in the system of cause and effect possesses a special position and according to special qualities, which his matter has bestowed has the eligibility of being and in the same way and without injustice and discrimination obtains the being and perfections of being. But if it is other than this, it should be that the universal law of cause and effect will be deranged and the original system will go awry and basically will not create existence.

Therefore justice in the creation of man and the world implies that phenomenon of the world, including human beings are according to the capability that they have developed eligibility of being and in the same quantum and in the same manner are given similar existence, perfections of being, and denying grace and improper prejudice has not been resorted to.

Divine Justice and Objections Against It

Divine Justice is an important Islamic topic, which is discussed everywhere in books of theology and philosophy. Philosophers and scholars of Islam believe in it and they defended it energetically; on the other hand some opponents have denied and refuted justice of Allah and have expressed doubts in this regard and still do it. They consider destructive earthquakes, damaging floods, children born disabled and diseased, differences between human beings, presence of carnivorous beasts and poisonous

reptiles as signs of the absence of justice in creation and in this way they have also denied the root of the existence of the creator of the world and also created doubts in resurrection.

Therefore, in present conditions, need is felt for a plan to prove the matter of divine justice and replying to the doubts. Discussion of justice and replying to objections against it is one of the important points of philosophy and theology, which is studied in detail in books of philosophy and theology and proved as a fact. Regretfully all those objections cannot be studied fully in this brief writing, but in order to assure that none of the doubts remain unanswered, we shall mention their simple and brief replies. The most important objections and their replies can be divided into four groups:

First: Natural Calamities

Like destructive earthquakes, damaging floods, terrifying storms and other natural calamities are included in this group. It is said: Occurrence of these bitter happenings, which are mostly accompanied by great losses in terms of life and property; how can they be compatible with divine justice. Why He does not prevent such incidents? Why He has created the world in this way?

In brief, it can be said that such kinds of occurrences, like natural happenings are as a result of particular causes, on the other hand previously you have seen that Almighty Allah has created and He administers the world of nature and material phenomena through the system of cause and effect; and that He has arranged the world according to the system of cause and effect and not that He first created the phenomena and after that He gave cause and effect to them; on the contrary cause and effect in their very essence are related to each other. Each of the causes and effects are placed in a particular position and negation of each of them would be construed as denial of the total system. For example, look at the stages of numbers: each of the numbers (1–2–3...and so on) holds a special position. Number five cannot take the place of ten and vice versa. It is not possible to completely remove number five from the serial of numbers. Its removal would imply removal of numeric system.

The system of creation is also like this. Every phenomenon holds a special position and is connected to its natural cause. It terminates at the cause of the causes; that is Almighty Allah as His being is free of need of others. All phenomena of the world of existence has come into existence through His intention and they are administered by the same; but not through different intentions; on the contrary through a widespread intention. Quran says:

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

“And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye.” (54:50)

Therefore earthquake is a natural phenomenon and according to the statement of experts, it has numerous benefits with it and in the system of nature it is considered to be an important matter. They

say: If there had been no earthquakes, there would have been no mountains. And if mountains had not been there, there had been no rain and snow; and if rain had not been there, plant, animal and human life would have not been possible.

Although sometimes, some earthquakes are accompanied by destruction of life and property, which are requisites of competition between natural phenomena it cannot be expected from Almighty Allah that He should personally intervene in case of destructive earthquakes and prevent them as preventing it would be only possible by negating its cause and it would necessitate the derangement of system of creation.

Preventing the damages of earthquakes is the function of human beings themselves. Almighty Allah has given sense and intelligence to man, so that through gaining knowledge and experience he may understand the causes and factors underlying the earthquakes; and through the reins of nature he may prevent the damages caused by them; or at least minimize them; that he should not inhabit areas prone to earthquakes and avoid constructions there; as some countries have taken profound steps in solving this problem.

Especially, the same thing can be said with regard to damaging floods: Floods are caused by heavy rains due to slope of surfaces of the earth and fluidity of water. Therefore the flowing of floods in special circumstances is a natural phenomenon as it is the effect of a particular cause. Falling of rain on highlands, sloping of land and flowing of water is among the great divine bounties, which provide life to plants, animals and human beings.

And all of them are good in their own position; have you so far thought that if rain had not fallen on highlands or if the earth had not been sloping or if the nature of water had not been flowing, how our life would have been? Although their necessary factor is such that in some instances there will be floods entailing loss of life and property and the responsibility of preventing these losses rests on sensible human beings. He must not build residential buildings in flood prone areas and that he must strengthen his constructions in accordance to the possibility of floods. If man falls short in this regard and suffers losses, it is due to his own shortcoming.

Second: Children born with physical defects

One of the instances that refute divine justice is the creation of children born with physical defects. Like children who at the time of birth are deaf, dumb, blind, paralyzed, disabled, insane or spastic. It is said: Existence of such deformed children who are compelled to lead a difficult life and their parents also have to suffer a great deal on account of them; how can it be compatible to divine justice? Why they do not possess perfect physical health like other children? And why they were created at all? Is it not injustice?

In reply to this doubt, it can be said: The defect of these children is either due to genetic mutation through the parents or can also be as a result of inappropriate diet of the parents, especially of the mother during pregnancy and lactation. Or as a result of toxic and harmful matters that it may come in

contact with during fetal development in a dirty environment. Or it can be due to an injury received during its fetal stage.

In any case, the defect of the newborn is related to the defect of the matter that has accepted the form of human being. Almighty Allah has not given a defective existence to such children; on the contrary He created them but their capacity of accepting matter was not more than this. Special capacity and capability of the matter of each of them also would be the effect of the cause and its special causes.

Two questions arise at this point: Firstly, the God who is aware of the defect of this matter, why did He bring that defective human being into existence? Secondly, is the Almighty Allah not capable of bestowing a perfect and healthy matter to man?

In reply to the first question, it can be said: As mentioned previously, the existence of material phenomena is related to a particular capability that develops in that matter. Every capability that develops in that matter is according to the form, which would be given to it. Matters which develop the capability to create the form of human beings would be given human forms. Human soul is good and perfection, it should be increased, finally it is that if this matter is having the capacity of physical maturity it will mature in the proper manner and if there was defect in it, it would be deprived of perfect maturity.

In reply to the second question, it can be said: As mentioned previously, Almighty Allah has created and manages the phenomena of existence through causes and effects and it is through this that the world is arranged. It cannot be expected from Almighty Allah to personally intervene in some circumstances, and that without natural causes He should assure the perfect development of a thing, which does not possess perfect matter. It would imply that Allah in some instances nullifies the law of cause and effect causing disruption of the system of the world; and this is not acceptable. In other words, there is no doubt in the power of Almighty Allah but His power cannot be related to a logically impossible matter and the derangement of the system of cause and effect is from the logically impossible matters.

Therefore, defects which are seen in children are due to defective sperm and lack of capability of the sperm with which the soul of man was added. And those defects themselves also were effects of their special cause and were necessary factors of the material world and a product of competition of material beings and their prevention is not possible except through prevention of occurrence of their natural causes. Allah has bestowed man with intelligence and sense, so that he may discover through study and experience the causes of these defects and that he may use this knowledge in childbirth; on the contrary even at the time of selecting the spouse; and that he may observe all the rules of hygiene in his environment and nutrition during pregnancy and delivery and can prevent the birth of defective children to the maximum.

It is possible that someone might say: In case the parents and those responsible for making the environment healthy and general hygiene do not fulfill their obligations and they brought a defective child into this world; but what is its fault that it is compelled to spend its life in extreme difficulties? We reply:

Although he is not responsible for this, Almighty Allah has also not made him responsible more than what he can bear. He is a man and every man is given spiritual perfection according to his capability and efforts. His patience and forbearance would also not remain unrewarded and in the world after death, he would be recompensed for them. His parents and other caretakers would also be rewarded well.

Third: Differences between Individuals

Another excuse for objecting to the justice of God is the difference of complexion, beauty and ugliness, intelligence and memory, physical powers and other types of such matters. It is said that all human beings have right to live, why are they created with such differences? Why all human beings are not given equal intelligence? What is the fault of ugly people that they are created so ugly? Are such differences not discrimination and injustice?

In reply, it can be said: These differences or causes of different capabilities were present in the eggs of the parents and which they inherited from their ancestors or it is the effect of the parts and environment of their life or it is the effect of type of nutrition of the parents, especially that of the mother during pregnancy. In any case, differences in human beings are due to differences in their natural capabilities. In other words, differences cannot be denied, but they should not be considered as improper prejudice; prejudice is justified only when two seeds which were same from the aspect of capability are given two kinds of perfection of existence; while the fact is that it is not so.

Fourth: Existence of Harmful Creatures

It is said that the existence of harmful creatures, like carnivorous beasts, poisonous reptiles, different harmful viruses and microbes which pose danger to the life and safety of human beings and some animals; how can they be compatible with divine justice? What is the benefit of such harmful creatures? And why were they created at all?

In reply it can be said: Generosity and beneficence of Almighty Allah demands that He must bestow existence to every matter, which develops in itself the capability to accept a soul in proportion of its capability. If it develops the ability to accept the soul of animals, it would be given the soul of wild and harmful beasts, the soul of animals will be added to it and if it develops the capacity of the existence of microbe, the same existence will be given to it.

Although such animals may be harmful to man, they are beneficial and good to themselves. Although the scorpion is harmful for human beings, it is good and perfection for itself. Moreover, the existence of these animals is absolutely beneficial although man has not yet discovered those benefits. Our ignorance is not a proof of their uselessness.

Almighty Allah has given intelligence and sense to man so that he may gain benefits from even poisonous animals and that he may prevent their harms. Man is able to even confront harmful viruses and microbes by observing hygiene and by using antibiotics; and he can neutralize them effectively.

Therefore the existence of harmful animals cannot be considered as evil and absence of justice in creation.

1. [Compilation of Nahjul Balagha, Pg. 131.](#)

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