

Part 10: When a Divine Decree Comes, Man Feels Helpless

Many reports from the Holy Prophet (s) and the Imams say that when a divine decree comes, the whole system of caution, especially the faculties of thinking and reasoning cease to work. This point has been depicted in Persian and Arabic literature also.

In the book of hadith, *Al-Jami'-as-Saghir* a number of Prophetic sayings to this effect have been quoted. One hadith says: "When Allah wants to carry out his decree, he wrests the power of reasoning and understanding from the people. They repent when this power is restored to them afterwards".

In the *Tuhaf-ul-Uqul* Imam Reza (a) is reported to have said: "When Allah wants his decree to be carried out, He wrests their thinking power from the people concerned. After the decree has been carried out this power is restored to each one of them. Then they wonder how it was that such a thing happened".

The famous mystic poet of Iran, Moulawi says:

- "When a divine decree comes, the power of understanding quits. Allah alone knows what He proposes".
- "When a divine decree comes, you cease to see deep. Then you cannot distinguish between a friend and a foe".
- "When a divine decree come, the physician loses his skill. His medicine does harm instead of being beneficial".

A difficulty about all such statements is that they describe fate and destiny as a force invalidating the general principal of causation and as a factor stronger than all other factors. This view is contradictory to what we have said that Allah does not decree anything to happen except through the normal course of causation. The wording of the hadiths also supports what we have said. A hadith says: "Allah declines to carry out the affairs of the world except through their causes. He has appointed a cause for everything.

Every cause has a reason behind it. Every reason is a piece of knowledge and every piece of knowledge has an eloquent door”. (Majma’ul-Bahrayn)

Another difficulty is that these statements are contradictory to the general rule expressly mentioned in the Qur’an that everything is governed by fate and destiny and there is nothing which may be outside of their area of control. If everything and every event is governed by destiny, then divine destiny must every moment be operative. As such there is no meaning of saying “When a divine decree comes”.

Hence the contents of the above-mentioned hadith and the verses are not only inconsistent with the generality of the principal of causation, but are also repugnant to the comprehensiveness of fate and destiny. They indicate that a divine decree is operative only occasionally and when it is, everything else ceases to work . Men lose their power of understanding. Eyes stop to see. Medicines are no longer effective.

Now what should we conclude? Should we think that these hadiths and reports are spurious and have been fabricated by the predestinarians or is it possible that they have a sound interpretation?

In our opinion these hadiths and reports have a sense which is not inconsistent either with the principle of causation or with the comprehensiveness of fate and destiny.

They are actually applicable to those cases in which spiritual causes overshadow the material ones.

We have already said that the material causes are not the only effective causes. The overall system of causation consists of various kinds of causes, some of which are open and some hidden. Just as some of the material causes make some other material causes ineffective, similarly on some special occasions all material causes are put out of action under the impact of some spiritual ones.

Those who look at the material and perceptible causes only, do not know that there are thousands of other causes also and when they are in operation, they make the material causes ineffective.

The Qur’an itself refers to this point in a lucid and forceful manner. Describing the events of the Battle of Badr, it says: ***“When you met the pagans’ army, Allah made them appear fewer in your eyes and you appear fewer in their eyes so that His miracle of granting you (an incredible) victory could easily be fulfilled. To Allah do all things return”.*** (Surah al-Anfal, 8:44)

This incident was a case in which the spiritual causes got the better of the material causes.

There exists a higher world order, that protects a community, which because of its excellent behaviour becomes entitled to divine support, against another community which deserve disgrace and ruin. The first community is helped though it may be lacking resources and the second community is condemned though it may be having everything at its disposal.

The Holy Qur’an says: ***“If someone trusts Allah, He will suffice Him. He will surely bring about what***

He decrees. Allah has set a measure for everything". (Surah al-Talaq, 65:3)

In this verse it has been expressly said that Allah has set a measure for everything. Nothing takes place haphazardly. In other words the system of causation has been recognized. At the same time it has been emphatically said that Allah brings His Command to pass. In other words, where there is a question of spiritual relations or invisible Divine succour, the visible causes are made ineffective.

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