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Part 11: Divine Destiny and Material Compulsion

Difference Between The Two Doctrines

We have already said that the materialists and some Christians have used the question of fate and destiny as a weapon in their attack on Islam. They say that an essential result of the belief in destiny and fate is that man should consider himself to be powerless and unable to build a better society.

As we have said this misunderstanding is due to the fact that the difference between a belief in fate and destiny and predestinarianism has been ignored. According to the doctrine of predestination man has no liberty and no will of his own. He has no real control over what he says or does. His own moral and temperamental qualities have no bearing on his destiny. But according to the doctrine of fate and destiny, the Divine Will and Knowledge do not necessitate anything except through the system of cause and effect. It is unbecoming of the uniqueness and greatness of Allah that He should attach His Will and Knowledge to a thing direct without employing the medium of causes. Hence His Knowledge and Will attach to man's actions and deeds, his success and failure only through this medium. Allah has destined man to be free and to be a master of his destiny. As far as human liberty is concerned, there is no difference between the views of the religionists and the materialists. As a matter of fact, if the inevitability of the occurrence of an event through its cause automatically means compulsion and helplessness of man, then this is a view which is held by both. But if it does not mean that, and actually it does not, then again there is no difference between the two schools. Hence any criticism of the Islamic belief by the materialists and others who believe in the law of causation is simply based on misunderstanding and lack of knowledge.

But let us add that from another angle there is a very vital and remarkable difference between the two schools. The belief in fate and destiny as taught by religion leads to hope and extraordinary greater effort. But this is not true of the materialistic thinking. This is the real difference between the two schools.

As already stated, the effective factors which collectively constitute the world causes and are considered to be the manifestations of fate and destiny are not all material. They include spiritual causes also which

are also a part of the effective factors and play a role in changing destiny.

According to this view a number of non-material forces are part of the world order.

For example, the support of justice and equity is a spiritual force. This world is in existence because of justice and as a result of the efforts of those who defend its cause. Their efforts are not wasted.

The Holy Qur'an says: ***"Believers, if you help Allah's cause, He will help you and will make you stand firmly"***. (Surah Muhammad, 47:7)

"Surely Allah defends those who are true. Allah does not like any treacherous ingrateful man". (Surah al-Hajj, 22:38)

"Surely whoever helps Allah's cause, shall he be helped by Him. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty". (Surah al-Hajj, 22:40)

Another force in the world is trust in Allah. Trust in Allah means that one should pursue the right path with determination and without faltering. Allah protects him who pursues the right goal without any regard to his own personal gain, who performs his duty selflessly and who has confidence in divine help.

These are the examples of some of the special forces at work in the world. From religious point of view they are a part of the system of causation and manifestations of fate and destiny.

Therefore a sound belief in divinely ordained destiny leads the believer to correct action and makes him confident of the results. From materialistic point of view the rules of morality do not affect the universal systems. In this respect virtue and vice, right and wrong, justice and injustice are all alike. The universal systems are neutral to the virtuous and the wicked. But from religious point of view, that is not so. Those who believe in justice and uprightness, also believe in Divine Wisdom, Divine Mercy and Divine Justice. They believe that he who seeks Allah's pleasure and follows the injunctions prescribed by Him, will be safe. Such a belief in divine destiny and divine sagacity resulting in trust in Allah puts an end to the fear of death, devastation, poverty and helplessness. It rectifies the biggest weakness of man, which is fear of annihilation or wretched existence.

It was belief in such forces of the world which made the Muslims of the early era of Islam so active, industrious, bold and gallant. Describing them the Qur'an says: ***"Such people when warned to fear, those who are gathered against them, (the threat of danger) increased their faith and they cried: Allah is sufficient for us! Most excellent is He in whom we trust!"***. (Surah Aale Imran, 3:172)

"So they returned with grace and favour from Allah, and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is of infinite bounty". (Surah Aale Imran, 3:173 – 174)

From the foregoing it is clear that there is a vast difference between a belief in fate and destiny based on the Qur'anic teachings and a materialistic belief in it in accordance with the materialistic theory of

causation.

All that a materialist believes is that the more efforts he puts to achieve his objective, the better results he is likely to obtain. But a Muslim having faith in destiny believes that the world has been so arranged that the whole system of causes and effects will come to his aid if he whole-heartedly exerts himself to serve the cause of his creed. His power naturally increases thousands of times when the energy stored in the world comes to his aid.

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