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

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Abstract:

Doctrine of free will and predestination has always been an important theological issue throughout the Islamic history. Like other theologians of every Islamic era, contemporary muslim theologians have tried their best to provide rational arguments for this issue. Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, (1896- 1959) was a prominent Islamic theologian, intellectual and philosopher whose main interest was in promotion of the universal values of Islam in the contemporary context. This article is aimed to address this question that what arguments he has provided for the Islamic doctrine of good and evil. Khalifah says that man is blessed with liberty and free will. If he were merely a part of nature which is controlled by fixed laws, he would not be different from trees, heavenly bodies and matter. Furthermore, God is free and He made man also free by breathing His own spirit into him. He is not controlled and determined by fixed laws. But, freedom, having double- edged is a dangerous weapon. Man can revolt even against his Creator. However, he is not created with perverted instincts. The theory of original sin is absolutely incompatible with the teachings of Islam. God has granted free will to man which is definitely an act of a loving fosterer. If a man commits any evil as a result of endowed free will, cannot be attributed to the lack of goodness in God. So far as the theory of existence of evil in nature is concerned, Khalifah has categorically repudiated it as there is no deficiency in nature. It is only our wishes that attributed and connected virtue or vice to the occurrences and incidents of nature. There is no natural vice but there certainly exists moral vice as a result of endowed 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: Khalifah Abdul Hakim; Doctrine of Free Will; Good and Evil

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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 intricate difference existed between the formation and construction of an act (Khalq-e-amal) and the production, execution and presentation of an act (kas'b-e-amal) (كسب العمل). Man is neither the constructor nor fabricator of his doings (Khāliq) nor are his doings divinely predetermined or preplanned. The reality exists between these two positions. God is the constructor (Khāliq) of acts, and man is their producer, executer and operator (Kāsib). The function of human action is neither creation (Qad'r) (قدر) nor predestination (Jab'r) (جبر) but free performance and accomplishment.¹ About the creation the Qur'ān says;

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾²

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 in to 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 in to 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'ān has enunciated the issue in the following verses.

﴿إِنَّا بَدَيْنَهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا﴾⁴

Certainly, we have shown him the path that he may be grateful or ungrateful.

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

﴿لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ﴾⁵

Theirs is that (reward) which they earned and yours is that (reward) which you have earned.

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'an says;

﴿وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ﴾⁶

And whatever misfortune has reached you, it is because of what your hands have earned.

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'an points these facts beautifully in the following words'

﴿بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ﴾⁷

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

Khalīfah says that the human life is based on the supposition and premise 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 وَّ مَا سَوَّاهَا ۖ فَالْتَمَّهَا فُجُورًا وَتَقْوَاهَا﴾⁹

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 vice and virtue.

The Qur'an enunciates the problem beautifully.

﴿أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ، وَ لِسَانًا وَ شَفَتَيْنِ، وَ بَدَيْنَهُ النُّجْدَيْنِ﴾¹⁰

Have we not made for him a pair of eyes? And a tongue and a pair of lips-- And we have shown him both the distinct ways.

The holy Qur'ān again says;

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ، قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ﴾¹¹

There is no constraint and coercion in religion. Surely, true guidance now stands out clear from error.

﴿إِنَّا بَدَيْنَهُ السَّبِيلَ، إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَ إِمَّا كَفُورًا﴾¹²

Certainly, we have shown him the path that he may be grateful or ungrateful.

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 (Ikhtiyār-e-kas'b) (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 two-edged weapon. Khalīfah 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 man's life is based on the supposition 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’ān says;

﴿ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ﴾¹⁷

This is a reward of what your hands have sent forth and verily it is not for Allah to wrong His servants.

The holy Qur’ān further says;

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ﴾¹⁸

Whoever works good deeds, it is for the good of his own soul, and whoever does evil, then its burden is upon himself. And your Lord is not at all Unjust to His servants.

So, man becomes 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 أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ﴾¹⁹

And no person earns anything but it is on his own account; and no carrier of load shall carry the load of another. Then to your Sustainer is your eventual return. He will inform you of that wherein you used to vary.

According to Khalīfah, the responsibility of man started with the endowment and characteristic of his free-will and 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 is the bearer of the burden of others.²¹ So, man is held accountable and declared responsible for all his varied doings 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 بَدَأًا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾²³

O' our Lord! You have not created all this (universe) purposeless. 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 لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾²⁴

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

So, the purpose of man 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 الْغَفُورُ﴾²⁵

Who created death and life so that He might try you as to which of you is best among you in respect of actions.

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

﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ﴾²⁶

What did you then imagine that we had created you in vain, and that you were not to return 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 renders the belief that man is the outcome or product of sin. He is genetically and naturally sinful and tainted. Moreover, he is congenitally not flawless. But Islam vehemently refutes this concept. Islam says that the creation of man is absolutely a positive production. He is not tainted or flawed creation but he is created in the divine image.²⁸

On contrary to this dogma, Islamic concept is that every child is blessed with ‘Fitrat-e-salimah (فطرتِ سليمه) at the time of his beginning. The holy Prophet (PBUH) has thrown light on this concept in the following words;

"ما من مولودٍ الا يُولدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَآبَاؤُهُ يَهُودَانَهُ او يَنْصَرَانَهُ او يُمَجْسَانَهُ"²⁹

Every child who is born follows the right nature. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.

In the light of all 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 born child is blessed with ‘Fitrat-e-salimah (فطرتِ سليمه) at the time of his beginning. He is born with the potential characteristic to think freely and with the capacity to perform fairly and justly. It is irrelevant whether he is born in the house of a Muslim or a non- Muslim. What really matters is the formation of his nature at the juncture of his birth. And this very nature is flawless, untainted and un-sinned by birth. It is potentially patterned on the right, just and correct path.³⁰

So, 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 سَفَلِينَ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ﴾³¹

Certainly, we have created man in the best form and shape. Then we returned him to the lowest of the low, except those who believe and kept performing good actions so that they shall have an unending and 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. The holy Qur'an says;

﴿إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَنَازِيرِ وَمَا أُبِلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَ لَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾³²

He has only forbidden you dead meat and blood and flesh of swine, and the flesh of an animal over which any other name instead of Allah has been invoked at the time of its slaughter, but if anyone is driven to necessity and forced by necessity without willful disobedience and not desiring to exceed the limits, no sin shall be occurred upon him. Certainly, Allah is the Most-forgiving and the Most-merciful.

So, such act should not involve a willful violation of the law of sharia.

Dr. Qādiri 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 ابْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۚ وَ مَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾³⁴

Whosoever follows the path of guidance follows it for his own good. And whoever goes astray he does so to his own perils. And no carrier of burden will carry the burden of another. We do not torment until we have sent 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 Itmām-e-Hujjat

(اتمام حجت), 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 M'otazilah 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 أمر بين امرين فالله خلق الاسباب و المسيباب و رتب المسيباب على الاسباب و جعل لها مدخلا في وجودها و خلق لها شرائط و جعلها متوقفة عليها لو كرم تتحقق الشرائط لم توجد المشروطات"³⁷

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 Kas'b (كسب). But so far as the meaning of Qazā and Qad'r (قدر) is concerned, Qazā (قضاء) means creation; Qad'r (قدر) signifies measure, assessment, and estimation.³⁸

In the Qur'ān, the word Qazā (قضاء) is used in the sense of creation. The Qur'ān narrates;

﴿فَقَضَيْنَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ﴾³⁹

So, He made them seven heavens in two days.

However, the word Qad'r (قدر) is used in the meaning of estimate and measure as the holy Qur'ān says;

﴿إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ﴾⁴⁰

Certainly, we have created each and everything according to estimation and measure.

"القدرُ محرّكة القضاء والحكم"⁴¹

Qad'r is the incentive of Divine creation and decision.

Qad'r 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 living thing before it comes in to existence. God's estimation about the behaviour of human beings, before they are seen or displayed externally in the universe, is the Qad'r (قدر), which does not restrict a man to do any special act. Allah gives His statement and declaration in the shape of Qazā (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'ān says;

﴿يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۖ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ﴾⁴³

Allah establishes and wipes out what He pleases and with Him alone is the real Mother-Book.

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

"فالمحو والاثبات اشارة الى القدر و عنده أمّ لكتب اشارة الى القضاء"⁴⁴

That the abolition and establishment indicate the Qad'r, whereas the basis of the book (Ummul Kitab), signifies the Qazā.

Qazā is, therefore, mainly related to Allah and Qad'r to human beings. Qad'r is the inspiration and incentive of Qazā. Therefore, the principle of Qazā and Qad'r 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 Qazā and Qad'r.

"قال ابو عبيده لعمر لما اراد الفرار من الطاعون بالشام أفر من القضاء؟ قال عمر آخر من القضاء الله الى قدر الله"⁴⁶

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

According to Mullā Ali Qāri, the Qad'r (Divine estimation) is the real base of Divine declaration (Qazā) while kas'b (كسب) or man's performance with his free discretion is the actual cause to determine everything.⁴⁷

Allama Sa'd-ud- Din Taftāzāni clears this very concept in the following words;

"فالعمل مقدور الله تعالى بجهة الایجاد و مقدور العبد بجهة الكسب"⁴⁸

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 Qazā-o-Qad'r in the Light of the Prophetic Hadīth:

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 نتكل"⁴⁹

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 منه"⁵⁰

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 انت لاق"⁵¹

(O! Abu Hurairah!) Pen has become dried after writing (On the Louh-e-Mah'fūz) (لوح محفوظ) what you will do. (With free will and choice)

The pen (Al- Qalam) noted down (On the Louh-e-Mah'fūz) (لوح محفوظ) only what you were going to earn – in – your own free capacity.

So, the writing of Qalam or Qad'r 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 (قلم) was purely descriptive without any attempt to prefigure or mould the events of past and future.

Khalīfah's Concept of Good and Evil:

So for the theory of existence of evil in nature is concerned, Khalīfah has categorically repudiated it. He says that there is no any shortcoming, flaw or evil in nature. It is only our wishes that attribute good or evil to the occurrences 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 variations and changes according to laws and prescribed rules. These laws are logical and rational which work for good and not evil. However, sometimes, their working does not befit our personal desires, satisfactions and 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 لِعِبَادٍ ۚ مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَ لَكِنَّ أَكْثَرِيَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾⁵⁴

And we did not create the heavens and the earth and all what is between them merely in sport. Verily, We did not create them both except with the truth, but most of them do not know (this reality).

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًاۗ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفْوُتٍۗ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَۗ بَلَّ تَرَىٰ
مِن فُطُورِهِ ثُمَّ اَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ حَاثِمًاۗ وَبُو حَسِيْرًاۗ﴾⁵⁵

Who made the seven heavens one above the other. You see no incompatibility, flaw and inconsistency in the creation of the Most-kind and beneficent God. Just look again and see! Do you see any disorder, flaw or incompatibility?

Nature in general is a system of uniformities. No one can deny the existence of these uniformities which are called the laws of nature. But, this fact must be acknowledged that these uniformities cannot always work according to our own wishes and prescribed desires or according to our limited and conflicting longings. According to Khalīfah, the best attitude towards nature is the comprehending of its workings or functioning and resignation to whatever it creates.⁵⁶ Khalīfah says that If God is good and right, then nature too is good and right, because, only goodness can come out of goodness.⁵⁷ So, according to Khalīfah, we should widen and deepen our conception of goodness to cosmic dimensions so that nature will appear to us as perfect, intact and flawless. Furthermore, any fragmentary, half- baked and disjointed standpoint would discover only blots, spots and patches.”⁵⁸

2. Moral Evil

Khalīfah’s Concept of Evil in Human Life:

According to Khalīfah evil means pain, affliction, agony, suffering and the devastation of values. In nature whatever is, is right. God cannot be criticized, censured, condemned and blamed for what he has generated and created or for the procedures and techniques and methods He uses for its preservation, conservation 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 this endowed free will, he can jump up and rise above the angels or sink and fall below the animals. If he chooses to sink and go down below the animals, he suffers the aftermaths himself and God could not be made responsible for that.⁶² Khalīfah says that man's endowed freewill becomes wrongful, sinful and devilish when any instinct in him becomes selfish, egocentric, hostile and aggressive. All hostility, belligerence and aggression is transgression of the limits prescribed by intellect and reason which is the distinctive human faculty granted to man so that he may mould his instincts work in subordination to it. Khalīfah terms reason in man as the voice of God and submission to reason is submission to God.⁶³ So, God cannot be blamed and held responsible for such misfortunes and sufferings which are the result of man's own doings. The Holy Qur'ān says;

﴿إِنَّا بَدَيْنَهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَ إِمَّا كَفُورًا﴾⁶⁴

We have shown him (Our) way, whether he is thankful or unthankful.

﴿بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ۚ وَ لَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ﴾⁶⁵

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

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۚ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَفِيلِينَ﴾⁶⁶

Surely, we have made Man in the best form and shape (in respect of reason and pattern). Then We returned him to 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, according to Khalīfah, the human dispositions and 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 Khalīfah, such kinds of undeserved sufferings may cause the purification and exaltation of man's soul. Khalīfah 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 stipend and remuneration of virtue were always paid in cash in terms of bodily pleasure or physically conveniences and the wages of vice always paid readily in bodily pain or corporeal infliction, virtue would be reduced to a calculable hedonistic barter and pleasure-seeking bargaining.⁶⁸ The wickedness, immoralities and brutalities of humanity are there to be resisted, countered and overcome so that we may rise higher and higher than merely natural beings.⁶⁹ The prophet of Islam was asked as to who among men suffered and agonized the most, and He (PBUH) replied that the prophets suffered the most. Khalīfah says that now, how is it that these beloved and high ranked prophets who suffered and agonized the most still they retained the strongest faith and powerful belief in the goodness of Almighty Allah? So, an unbelieving man when he agonizes and suffers in any way that he considers as unjust, inappropriate and undeserved brings a charge of illogicality and irrationality against life. And a man of weak and little faith has his faith shaken either in the omnipotence or the righteousness of God.⁷⁰ Life is inconceivable without change and without resistance to be overcome.⁷¹

Conclusion:

We may conclude following points from the above discussion.

1. Nature is a system of variations, changes and alterations according to laws. There is no deficiency, defect, flaw or evil in nature. It is only our wishes and conveniences that attribute good or evil to the happenings, occurrences and events of nature. Actually, there is no natural evil or vice but there certainly exists moral evil as a result of endowed freewill to man. Freedom is a two-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 events and occurrences for which he cannot be held responsible or accountable 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 remuneration and wages of virtue were always paid in cash in terms of physical conveniences and bodily pleasure and the stipend of sin always paid readily in physical affliction and bodily pain, virtue would be reduced to a calculable hedonistic barter and pleasure-seeking 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, good and bad, 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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