



The Concept Of Destiny and Its Relationship With Human Will And Freedom

Abdullaev Sarvar Sabitovich

Al-Fraganus University, Uzbekistan

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*Correspondence: Abdullaev Sarvar Sabitovich

Email: s_abdullaev@gmail.com

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Abstract: This article discusses the concept of destiny and its relationship with human will and freedom, exploring the various descriptions of destiny provided by Islamic scholars from different periods and schools of thought. The views of various Islamic sects, such as Sunni, Shia, Qadariyya, Jabariyya, Mu'tazila, Jahmiyya, and Karamiya regarding destiny, are examined. Additionally, the article investigates the views of the two major Sunni theological schools: Maturidi and Ash'ari, analyzing their similarities and contradictions. The author provides scholarly conclusions based on the relationship between the concept of destiny and the notions of secularism and religiosity in contemporary society.

Keywords: Destiny, Human Freedom, Hejaz, Caliphs of Rashidun

Introduction

It is known that the concept of destiny existed among the Arabs, just as it did in other cultures before Islam. From the information that has come down to us, we can highlight the following points. In this regard, the beliefs of the Arabs before Islam were generally as follows: each person had a destiny that they did not choose. Furthermore, the views of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic period were not uniform or definite. The reason for this is that, during that time, many Arabs in the Hejaz (the Arabian Peninsula) believed in various idols made of stones and wood, but there were also a small number of Jews and Christians among them, whose views were based on the respective religious doctrines. Naturally, their views were influenced by the beliefs of their religions. Additionally, there were individuals known as *Hanifs* who did not worship any idols. However, the general Arab society had very mixed and conflicting views on destiny and human freedom. Some even associated their destiny with superstitions or unfounded beliefs.

We cannot say that the issue of human freedom in pre-Islamic Arabia was based on the philosophical thought and schools of Ancient Greece. However, some of the more advanced Arabs, such as merchants, had traveled to Byzantine lands and became somewhat familiar with the local beliefs. Yet, these views were not fully studied or adopted. Later

researchers reject the idea that fundamental philosophical views were formed in a society built on the traditions of the Jahiliyyah period. Since the lives of people were not based on universally recognized religious, divine, or philosophical laws, they accepted wealth and power as measures of justice in this regard.

Methodology

After the advent of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) answered questions about destiny, just as he did regarding other matters. There were no significant questions about it after his time. During the period of the Rashidun Caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib), no questions arose that could lead to disagreements. One particular incident occurred during the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab, when a plague broke out in a city. When the army was about to enter the city, Umar ordered them to turn back, and one of his companions asked, "Umar, how do you know your destiny? Why are you retreating in fear of death?" The response to this situation was based on a hadith:

خرج عمر إلى الشام غازيا في سنة سبع عشرة، حتى إذا كان بسرخ لقيه أمراء الأجناد، فأخبروه أن الأرض سقيمة، فرجع بالناس إلى المدينة.

وقد كان عمر - كما حَدَّثَنَا ابن حميد، قال: حَدَّثَنَا سلمة، عن محمد ابن إسحاق، عن ابن شهاب الزهري، عن عَبْدِ الْحَمِيدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ زَيْدِ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ تَوْفَلٍ، عن عبد الله ابن عباس - خَرَجَ غَازِيَا، وَخَرَجَ مَعَهُ الْمُهَاجِرُونَ وَالْأَنْصَارُ وَأَوْعَبَ النَّاسَ مَعَهُ، حَتَّى إِذَا نَزَلَ بِسُرْخَ، لَقِيَهِ أُمَرَاءُ الْأَجْنَادِ: أَبُو عبيده ابن الْجَرَّاحِ، وَيَزِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، وَشُرْحَبِيلُ بْنُ حَسَنَةَ، فَأَخْبَرُوهُ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ سَقِيمَةٌ، فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: اجْمَعْ إِلَيَّ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الْأَوْلِيْنَ، قَالَ: فَجَمَعْتُهُمْ لَهُ، فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ، فَاحْتَلَفُوا عَلَيْهِ، فَمِنْهُمْ الْقَائِلُ: خَرَجْتَ لِوَجْهِ تَرْبِيدٍ فِيهِ اللَّهُ وَمَا عِنْدَهُ، وَلَا تَرَى أَنْ يَصُدَّكَ عَنْهُ بَلَاءٌ عَرَضَ لَكَ وَمِنْهُمْ الْقَائِلُ: إِنَّهُ لِبَلَاءٍ وَقَفَاءٌ مَا تَرَى أَنْ تَقْدَمَ عَلَيْهِ، فَلَمَّا احْتَلَفُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالَ: فُؤِمُوا عَنِّي، ثُمَّ قَالَ: اجْمَعْ لِي مُهَاجِرَةَ الْأَنْصَارِ، فَجَمَعْتُهُمْ لَهُ، فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ فَسَلَكُوا طَرِيقَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ، فَكَأَنَّمَا سَمِعُوا مَا قَالُوا فَقَالُوا مِثْلَهُ فَلَمَّا احْتَلَفُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالَ: فُؤِمُوا عَنِّي، ثُمَّ قَالَ: اجْمَعْ لِي مُهَاجِرَةَ الْفَتْحِ مِنْ فُرَيْشٍ، فَجَمَعْتُهُمْ لَهُ، فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ فَلَمْ يَخْتَلَفْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُمْ اثْنَانِ، وَقَالُوا: ارْجِعْ بِالنَّاسِ، فَإِنَّهُ بَلَاءٌ وَقَفَاءٌ قَالَ: فَقَالَ لِي عمر: يا ابن عباس، اصْرُخْ فِي النَّاسِ فَقُلْ: إِنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مُصِيبٌ عَلَى ظَهْرٍ، فَأَصْبِحُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالَ: فَأَصْبَحَ عُمَرُ عَلَى ظَهْرٍ، وَأَصْبَحَ النَّاسُ عَلَيْهِ، فَلَمَّا اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَيْهِ قَالَ: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنِّي رَاجِعٌ فَارْجِعُوا، فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ: أَفِرَارًا مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ! قَالَ: نَعَمْ فِرَارًا مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ إِلَى قَدَرِ اللَّهِ، أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا هَطَّ وَاذِيًا لَهُ عِدْوَتَانِ: إِحْدَاهُمَا حَصْبَةٌ وَالْأُخْرَى جَدْبَةٌ، أَلَيْسَ يَرَعَى مَنْ رَعَى الْجَدْبَةَ بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ، وَيَرَعَى مَنْ رَعَى الْحَصْبَةَ بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ! ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَوْ غَيْرُكَ يَقُولُ هَذَا يَا أَبَا عُبَيْدَةَ! ثُمَّ خَلَا بِهِ بِنَاجِيَةٍ دُونَ النَّاسِ، فَبَيَّنَّا النَّاسَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ إِذْ أَتَى عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ عَوْفٍ - وَكَانَ مُتَحَلِّفًا عَنِ النَّاسِ لَمْ يَشْهَدْهُمْ بِالْأَمْسِ - فَقَالَ: مَا شَأْنُ النَّاسِ؟ فَأَخْبَرَ الْخَبْرَ، فَقَالَ: عِنْدِي مِنْ هَذَا عِلْمٌ، فَقَالَ: عُمَرُ: فَأَنْتَ عِنْدَنَا الْأَمِينُ الْمُصَدِّقُ، فَمَاذَا عِنْدَكَ؟

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهَذَا الْوَبَاءِ بِنَدٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ، وَلَا يُحْرَجَنَّكُمْ إِلَّا ذَلِكَ»، فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ! انْصَرَفُوا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، فَأَنْصَرَفَتْ بِهِمْ.

According to the sources, Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) traveled to Syria in the 17th year of the Hijra. However, the commanders of the army informed him that a plague had spread in the city. As a result, Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) decided not to enter the city and turned back (the text is shortened). Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) narrated that Umar said: "Gather the emigrants. I will consult with them." Some of them said that the disease was not the real cause, and everything happens by the will of Allah. However, Caliph Umar was not satisfied with this and consulted with the Ansar. They expressed the same views as the emigrants. Still unsatisfied, he asked: "If the Commander of the Believers orders you, will you follow him?" He then said: "We are returning. This is not defeat." He added: "O people, I am returning, so turn back." At this, Abu Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah said: "Are you running away from the will of Allah?" Umar replied: "Yes, we are fleeing from Allah's will to Allah's will. If a person comes to two valleys, one fertile and the other dry, wouldn't he choose to

care for his livestock in the fertile one? Allah is like the fertile valley!" He then remarked, "If anyone other than you, O Abu Ubayda, had said this, I would have responded differently!"

When they returned, the companion Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf emphasized that Umar had come to the right conclusion. He quoted the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saying: "If you hear of a plague in a city, do not enter it, and if it spreads where you are, do not leave." Upon hearing this, Umar said: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

As a result of the Islamic conquests, the expansion of the Muslim community led to encounters with regions where people held pre-Islamic beliefs and views (such as Egypt, Iran, India, China, Byzantium, and Central Asia). This resulted in questions that arose from the religious and ideological traditions of these regions. Additionally, some doctrinal divisions initially served political purposes, but later, people began to modify their views on various issues. Furthermore, during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, the compilation of pre-Islamic poetry, the works of ancient Greek philosophers, and the translation of philosophical books from Persian, Indian, and Chinese into Arabic gave rise to new questions that needed to be addressed.

Result and Discussion

During the Umayyad period, there was an increase in public discontent to some extent, and the views of "compulsion" (Jabr) began to spread. This led to the growing need for a clear understanding of the relationship between human actions and divine will, especially in the region of Sham. In this context, in a letter to the people of Sham, Ibn Abbas condemned those who dared to express dissatisfaction with fate: "But after you ordered people to be God-fearing, how could you yourselves go astray and sin without refraining from disobedience? Do not blame your actions on Allah, and do not call your sins a result of fate." In this instance, people were being condemned for using the concept of fate to justify their wrongdoings.

Ibn Abbas, along with all the Sahabah, agreed on the understanding of the issue of oppression (Jabr) between human beings and Allah. This was based on the Quran and Sunnah. We do not see any other solution except for what Ibn Abbas did in his time, where he corrected the errors regarding the relationship between humans and Allah. He directly refuted the misguided views on oppression based on the Quran. He emphasized that humans have been given free will and are responsible for their actions. He rejected the idea of oppression over human actions and provided evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. The misguided individuals, who misinterpreted the concept of oppression, often cited the verse: "Indeed, We have created all things with destiny" (Qamar 49). In their interpretation, they even claimed that weakness and intelligence were also determined by Allah. On the contrary, fate includes every event, large or small, in a person's life, implying that "everything depends on you." Their understanding of fate is seen as the source of all creation, divine will, action, and change. To support this, Mujahid states: "I said to Ibn Abbas about this, and he replied: 'O Mujahid, show me anything beyond Allah's creation and command.'"

Based on this, the "Jabariyyah" (those who believe in compulsion) deny fate. During the time of the Sahabah, they directly opposed any claim or doctrine that contradicted the teachings of the Quran. They did not offer a fragmented interpretation of Islam. On the contrary, their approach was more intellectual, focused on guiding people in their understanding of piety, the world, and humanity, helping them correct their actions, and steering them back to the right path when deviations were observed.

After the era of the Sahabah, during the time of the Tabi'in (followers), influential scholars like Hasan al-Basri (642–728) offered views on fate. His ideas began with the creation of the world, the creation of humans, and the expulsion of Satan from Allah's presence. Satan made the mistake of thinking that fire was superior to clay because he was created from fire and humans from clay. He reached the wrong conclusion that fire was better than clay. In doing so, he made three major mistakes: first, he disobeyed Allah's command; second, he judged fire superior to clay based only on outward appearance, without considering their true essence; third, he failed to see that his expulsion was a consequence of his disobedience, not because of human creation. To put it simply, people can be divided into two groups. One group openly admits their sins and regrets them, while the other group blames others for their faults. Satan belonged to the latter group. Another method of avoiding accountability for one's actions is by attributing them to fate. People may commit a wrong and then say, "What can I do? It is fate." In such cases, fate is certainly real, but it is correct to say: "I have made a mistake, I am responsible, but fate cannot be changed, and I deserve the punishment."

It is worth noting that the later Western philosophers' views on fate seem to have been influenced by the ideas of the Mu'tazila school in Islam. The ideas of this school, which had a significant intellectual influence, led to doctrinal divisions within Islamic teachings. These ideas were extensively studied by Western orientalist, who were influenced by them.

It is also important to emphasize that the errors that arose in the ideas of Mu'tazila, Qadariyyah, and Jabariyyah schools regarding fate were addressed by Abu Mansur al-Maturidi in his works, such as *"Ta'wilat Ahl al-Sunnah"* and others.

As is known, the scientific debates in society are not only based on the opinions of scholars but also the thoughts expressed by philosophers, intellectuals, poets, and writers. Therefore, it is important to understand the views of Eastern thinkers on the matter being studied. Of course, it is inevitable that their views do not fully cover the foundations of Islamic teachings, and sometimes, due to artistic expression, deviations from the truth can be observed. However, despite this, some of their ideas align with the common views of the public. For example, the philosopher-poet Firdausi says: "Fate loves punishment and is merciless; it spares no one." The poet refers to the punishment seen in fate as a result of human actions, but does not express any views on fate in terms of the trials that befall humans. In this case, the idea reflects the reality that some aspects of fate come to a person as a consequence of their voluntary actions, and this is reflected in religious texts: *"If you do good, you do good for yourselves, and if you do evil, it is for yourselves."* (Isra: 7).

The views of the Eastern thinker Omar Khayyam on fate and human free will are also interesting. It is true that Khayyam's Rubaiyat are primarily artistic works. However, we can analyze his thoughts related to the subject in the context of philosophy:

"When God, in the beginning, saw clay, He knew what would arise from my actions. I do not step outside of His command, Then why, on the Day of Judgment, should I face punishment?"

During the Soviet era, commentators claimed that Khayyam's worldview, as reflected in his ghazals, was devoid of religious significance. However, if we pay attention to several aspects, the answer to this issue becomes clearer. In works of art, expressions often include metaphor, symbolism, and exaggeration, and interpreting them literally can lead to false conclusions. Moreover, regardless of the author's idea, the reader may interpret the work based on their worldview. Thus, it is essential to emphasize that conclusions in artistic works that do not align with the principles of Islamic teachings are not accepted. Upon closer examination, the poet himself acknowledges God's role as the creator and as the one who knows the outcome of all things. Therefore, even when expressing his amazement, the poet may present opposing ideas. In fate, the punishment for actions performed by humans can always be of two types: one is caused by human will, such as intentionally committing murder; the other is involuntary, such as a driver causing someone's death by accident while driving. The second case is beyond the driver's control—it is fate. In both examples, both individuals performed the same action, but the second person will not be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. Thus, the poet may be reflecting on fate and posing a rhetorical question: "Do you punish or not, is that right?"

In general, Khayyam's Rubaiyat may seem to lack clear meaning, but they still fall within the domain of literary science.

When we study the views of Eastern thinkers, we can observe that their complete views, in the post-Islamic period, were derived from Islamic faith. Regarding fate and human free will, they also expressed their opinions based on Islamic teachings.

Discussion

Human beings, as rational beings, are unique in that they have the ability to freely choose and make decisions in the world. For this reason, freedom is considered an essential and inseparable part of human life, both morally and legally. However, there are concepts that seem to be in opposition to human freedom. For example, the concept of fate often comes into conflict with the idea of human freedom. Throughout life, is a person truly free, or is their fate predetermined? Is everything only subject to the will of Allah? If everything is determined by Allah's will, then why are human actions held accountable in divine texts? Questions like these, which seem contradictory, fuel the desire to understand the world more deeply.

In addressing this, it is first important to understand the meaning of the concept of fate. However, different worldviews offer different answers to this issue. These responses can be categorized into three main perspectives:

1. Those who reject fate as a purely religious concept and consider religion to be outside the scope of knowledge (e.g., materialists, atheists, agnostics, and so on).
2. Those who believe that human beings cannot escape their fate (e.g., determinists).
3. Those who believe in fate based on their religious beliefs (including Islam and other religious teachings).

Each of these three perspectives has its own distinct sources and views. This article will explore the various ideas that have emerged from the early Islamic period to the present and examine how they relate to human freedom.

Methodology of the Article: Openness, reasonableness, scientific approach, comparative debate, and scientific analysis.

As previously emphasized, after the advent of Islam, there were no major disputes concerning the concepts of divine will (qaza) and predestination (qadar) or human freedom. When any question arose, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would provide answers through divine revelation, and everyone accepted his responses. During the time of the companions, there was little debate on such matters. The few instances of dispute were resolved in a way that left little room for further discussion, as illustrated in the earlier example. We will now examine the issues that arose in later periods and how they were addressed.

Before delving into this discussion, it is important to emphasize that the concept of fate is an integral part of the Islamic faith. A well-known authentic hadith, narrated by Umar ibn al-Khattab, illustrates this. This hadith has been recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari, and although the full text is long, we will cite the relevant part. According to this narration, the angel Jibril (Gabriel) appeared before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in human form, asking a series of questions. In the final part of the conversation, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) identifies the questioner and states that his goal was to teach you about your religion. One of the questions asked was, "What is faith (iman)?" The Prophet (PBUH) responded, "To believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and the resurrection after death. And to believe that both good and bad fate are from Allah." The human form of the angel affirmed the answer with "correct."

This hadith establishes that belief in both the good and bad aspects of fate being from Allah is a fundamental part of Islamic creed. Despite this, over time, differing views on the matter emerged. These differences became particularly pronounced during the time of Ali ibn Abi Talib due to political divisions surrounding the caliphate. Some people began to perceive fate as a form of oppression, leading to the spread of the belief that fate was synonymous with coercion (jabriyya). This interpretation of fate gave rise to two meanings: First, the belief that nothing can happen in the world unless it is the will of Allah, including both good and bad. Second, the idea that Allah's name *Al-Jabbar* (The Compeller) is related to Allah's majesty and power. *Al-Jabbar* refers to the One who is supreme, whose will cannot be challenged, and who alleviates the suffering of the weak, brings comfort to those in distress, and grants them patience and endurance in times of calamity. This name is mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Hashr (59:23). Allah's names encompass various attributes, including those that reflect His sovereignty, perfection, and majesty.

Understanding the Name Al-Jabbar

Allah sometimes puts His creation through severe trials, during which His enemies appear to be powerful, carrying out their plans. In these moments, the weak in faith may be tempted to bow to these apparent powers and regard them as divine. However, Allah alone is the true *Al-Jabbar*—the One whose will is final. The name *Al-Jabbar* when applied to Allah signifies His perfect power and majesty. On the other hand, when used for a human, it implies oppression or tyranny, which is a defective attribute. For example, the Qur'anic verse in Surah Ghafir (40:35) states, "Thus Allah seals the hearts of every arrogant and tyrannical heart," showing the negative connotation of *jabbar* when attributed to humans. Human arrogance and tyranny are misguided, as humans are inherently weak and needy. Unlike Allah, who is the source of all power and majesty, human arrogance is unjustified.

Furthermore, some people, particularly those influenced by the *jabriyya* school of thought, misinterpreted the name *Al-Jabbar*, arguing that whatever a person does is pointless, as everything is predestined. This misguided belief was later formalized into a theological sect. However, this view is considered erroneous, and we will discuss its faults further in the following sections.

In conclusion, while the concept of fate (*qadar*) is central to Islamic belief, its interpretation has led to different schools of thought over time. Understanding these variations is essential to grasp how early Islamic scholars and later thinkers approached issues of human freedom, divine will, and predestination. The debate over fate and freedom is not just theological but also deeply philosophical, touching on human agency and the nature of divine justice.

One of the meanings of the word "Al-Jabbar" is "the one who reforms things." It also carries the meaning of striking the oppressor and providing salvation to the oppressed. It also signifies the One who accomplishes whatever He wills. Additionally, it has the meaning of providing peace and comfort to broken hearts. Furthermore, it implies the One who guides on the path He has chosen.

However, when Ali ibn Abi Talib (r.a.) explained these concepts, he clarified the issue of human responsibility for their actions and Allah's omnipotence by referring to Allah's creative power and majesty.

Among the great scholars of the Sahabah, another prominent figure was Abdullah ibn Abbas (r.a.). He expressed the following thoughts regarding fate and human free will:

ثم زاد احتجاج الناس بالقدر في عهد الدولة وبرزت الأموية، وبرزت الجبرية الخالصة كعقيدة تفسر العلاقة بين الشئنة الإلهية وبين الفعل الإنساني وخاصة في الشام . فهذا ابن عباس رضي عنه في رسالة له إلى أهل الشام يرفض قول الجبرية في الإحتجاج بالقدر «أما بعد أتأمرون الناس بالتقوى وبكم ضل المتقون وتنهون عن المعاصي وبكم ظهر العاصون» ثم يقول «هل منكم مفر على الله يحمل إجرامه عليه و ينسب ذنوبه علانية إليه»

Conclusion

1. The concept of fate directly clashes with the issue of human free will. Does a person have free will, or do they follow the line of fate involuntarily? Has a person been granted independent will and free choice, or does everything happen solely by Allah's will? These contradictory questions compel a deeper study of the concept of fate.

2. Islamic teachings, compared to secular and religious doctrines, fully express the issue of freedom. However, its application by rulers has not always been rational and just. Human factors can lead to injustice in any perfect system of teaching. Therefore, considering the shortcomings committed by humans as flaws in religious teachings is incorrect.
3. The concept of human freedom refers to the independence of human activity. The understanding of freedom is dependent on objective circumstances. Freedom is specific and not always the same. A person's awareness of their freedom depends on their knowledge and experience. Humans are conscious beings. The concept of freedom reveals the essence of human life.
4. The concept of human freedom has historical, ethnographic, socio-political, economic, and cultural characteristics. For Western existential philosophy, freedom is a rational level of thought. Eastern peoples, on the other hand, evaluate freedom based on factors such as stable social and moral environments, religious tolerance, and inter-ethnic harmony. A person's spiritual freedom is deeply connected to their cultural, moral, and emotional values.

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