

Free Will and Predestination

Divine Decree and Destiny: God's Will or Our Choice?

Free Will and Predestination: Is Divine Decree and Destiny a sign of one or the other?

The subject of free will and predestination is one of the most fascinating, important, and challenging debates around which diverse opinions revolve, and it is closely connected to topics such as the law of divine decree and destiny.

In discussions on free will, some believe in predestination. These individuals believe that we are all born into a specific fate and destiny determined beforehand, and that we are incapable of changing our destiny; therefore, we are compelled to accept it as inevitable. This group believes humans enter the world with a predetermined destiny, devoid of free will.

In fact, similar notions can be observed, to varying degrees, in many people around us. You too may have often heard individuals attributing all life events to fate and destiny. For instance, in the context of marriage and choosing a spouse, phrases like “Whatever is destined will happen” are frequently heard. Or when a marriage ends in divorce, expressions such as “Poor thing, that was their destiny” are commonly uttered. Such statements imply that a person’s spouse and the outcome of their marriage were predetermined, and that the individual had no real role in these matters.

— But what exactly does “destiny” mean?

- Is destiny a fixed and inescapable script written for us?
- Are we mere puppets on strings controlled by fate, which moves us as it pleases?
- On the other hand, if we affirm the existence of free will, where does God's will stand?
- Is divine will in conflict with our free will?

In previous lessons, we explained that according to the divine law and the law of decree and destiny, every decree leads to a specific destiny. That is, every decision and choice we make in life carries a certain value and decree, culminating in an inevitable result or destiny. We are free in making decisions and are accountable for their outcomes. Therefore, the law of divine decree and destiny has been structured to be compatible with human free will because a being who lacks freedom of choice cannot be held responsible for its actions. We determine a significant part of our fate by our own choices, and thus bear responsibility for them. For example, choosing to marry an irresponsible person, especially without seeking advice or doing thorough research, inevitably results in marital hardship or divorce. This outcome is a direct result of our own choices.

The pressing question here is: Where does God's will fit into decree and destiny? Doesn't divine will equate to predestination?

To fully clarify the subject of free will and predestination, we must carefully examine the relationship between the law of divine decree and destiny and God's will.

How Do God's Will and Our Free Will Coexist?

In the examination of free will and predestination, it is noteworthy that the law of decree and destiny, on the one hand, operates entirely according to God's will, yet on the other hand, it is in no way in conflict with human free will. Undoubtedly, everything in the cosmos happens according to God's will- not even a leaf falls from a tree without His consent. Human free will is no exception to this rule.

In the law of decree and destiny — which is essentially the law of cause and effect or action and reaction— God's will has ordained that human beings possess free will and have the capacity to choose their own paths in life. That is, every choice and decision we make by our own volition leads to an outcome or destiny, and all of this unfolds under God's will. On this basis, human free will is not contradictory to divine will but exists under its dominion. Thus, God's will does not mean predestination.

For example, when a student chooses to study diligently throughout the academic year, the result is good grades and success. Conversely, when they choose laziness and negligence, poor grades and failure follow. All of this is part of the divine law — yet at the same time the outcome stems from the individual's own will. In fact, if it was otherwise, life itself would lose its meaning because divine tests, good deeds, rewards, sins, transgressions, punishments, recompense, Heaven, and Hell would have no significance without free will.

However, it must be noted that God's will in granting us free will does not imply His approval of all our actions. For example, when a person chooses to consume poison and dies as a result, they have, by their God-given freedom, chosen the 'decree' of poison which led to the 'destiny of death. However, God is by no means pleased

with suicide. God has given us free will so that we may willingly walk the path of servitude, strive to acquire divine attributes and human assets, and attain bliss in this world and the hereafter because the only path to our growth lies in facing contradictions and crossroads and freely choosing the right path ourselves.

Naturally, there are also instances where we had no role in the matter — such as the country and family we were born into, or congenital diseases we inherited from our mothers. Accordingly, it is evident that we will not be questioned or held responsible for such matters, and God's justice ensures that every person is judged in accordance with the circumstances of their life.

In this lesson, we examined the subject of free will and predestination. We explained that God's will has decreed that human beings possess free will and act on their own volition in this world — meaning that our free will is governed by the authority of God. According to the law of decree and destiny, as ordained by God, we are free to choose any decree we desire, and every decree we choose will have a destiny or outcome. For example, if we choose the decree of exercise, we will enjoy a healthier and stronger body, and conversely, its lack will have opposite results. Thus, in the discourse of free will and predestination, it should be concluded that the law of divine decree and destiny is grounded in our free will — and this free will itself is by God's will.

What is your view on the issue of free will and predestination? Has this article influenced your perspective? Let us know your thoughts.