

Where is the God's Justice in a World of Suffering?

I Doubt God's Fairness!

How Does All This Discrimination in the World Align with God's Justice?

Where is God's justice? If God is just, why does He differentiate between His servants? Why are some born in luxury and others in hardship? Why are some born into faithful and righteous families while others are born into criminal or carefree families? What sin has the latter committed to grow up in a tainted environment? How will God punish such individuals, especially when they had no role in choosing their family or living conditions? Can these individuals complain to God on the Day of Judgment about the deviations in their lives that were not their fault? How does this align with God's justice?

In previous lessons, we introduced a very important principle called the law of acquisition. We said that according to this law, everything we interact with throughout the day—be it our possessions, clothing, food, the people around us, the sights we see, the sounds we hear, the thoughts we have, and even the words we speak—are all acquired and absorbed by our souls. We also mentioned that the type of birth, our appearance, and our status in the hereafter are all products of our acquisitions in this world. Accordingly, individuals are divided into two groups in the hereafter: the first group consists of those who have positive and radiant acquisitions and actions in this world, while the second group consists of those with tainted and impure acquisitions and actions. The first group enters heaven due to

their good acquisitions, while the second group is sent to hell because of their vile acquisitions.

With this understanding, an important question arises, which is one of the most common doubts regarding God's justice. The question is: many of a person's acquisitions, whether positive or negative, are not in their control. In other words, individuals do not choose these acquisitions by their own will; rather, they are unintentionally exposed to them. For example, someone born into a faithful and righteous family experiences a pure and healthy atmosphere from childhood, which provides a foundation for healthy acquisitions. On the other hand, someone born into a corrupt and sinful family is constantly exposed to various forms of tainted and impure acquisitions. Given this, is it fair for the first person to go to heaven for the good things they had little role in, while the second person goes to hell for the impurities they also had little role in? How does this align with God's justice?

This issue appears to be a question, but it contains multiple questions and ambiguities that, if clarified, will resolve the original question. Therefore, we will address these ambiguities and their answers.

Examining the Difference Between Justice and Equality

The most important ambiguity that needs to be clarified is the concept of God's justice. Those who speak of discrimination in creation often equate God's justice with equality, believing that God is just only if He gives equal possessions and blessings to all humans. If He differentiates between individuals in this regard, they think He has wronged some.

This understanding of justice is incorrect. Justice does not always mean equality. Justice means that every being receives blessings according to its capacity and potential. If two beings have the same capacity and potential, God's justice towards them may result in equality; however, in other cases, justice will not be equal. To illustrate, consider two containers of water, each with a ten-liter capacity. If we pour ten liters into one and five liters into the other, have we acted justly? Naturally, no. The second container's capacity is as much as the first, but we have denied it its right. Now, if one container has ten liters and the other five liters of capacity, and we fill both to the brim, have we acted justly? Yes, because we have given each according to its capacity and entitlement. In this case, although the amount of water in the two containers is not equal, this difference relates to their inherent differences, not our behavior. Another example is that of students in a classroom. Justice among students is not giving everyone the same grade; rather, it is that each student receives a grade according to their effort and knowledge. Anything else would be injustice.

Considering these points, God's justice does not mean giving all individuals equal inanimate, vegetative, animal, or intellective possessions. God's justice is that He gives each person according to their capacity and expects the same in return. The level of God's expectation in this regard is very important. God considers all material and spiritual abilities, as well as genetic and hereditary traits, when determining duties and evaluating deeds, and He does not expect more than one's capacity. In other words, God's expectations from someone with fewer possessions and qualities are low, while they are high for someone with more. Thus, an action

may be good and commendable for one person, elevating their status with God, while the same action may be bad and unacceptable for another.

Moreover, God's justice is not only about distributing blessings and qualities; it also applies to the distribution of trials and tests. God considers the existential capacity and inner potential of individuals when testing them, resulting in the greatest trials and tribulations throughout history being faced by the prophets and the *Ahlul Bayt* (Peace be upon them), who had the greatest existential capacity. These trials are ones that none of us could endure even a fraction of. Therefore, to understand God's justice, we must first consider all aspects of individuals' lives and view ourselves and others as eternal beings, taking the hereafter into account in our calculations. All our deficiencies and lacks in this world will be compensated in the next world in the best possible way.

Another point relates to the distribution of super-rational talents among humans, which can be said to be the most important topic in the discussion of God's justice. The purpose of our presence in this world is solely to enhance this aspect of our existence. If importance is given to other aspects, it is due to their role in the development of this aspect, not because they have intrinsic value. In simpler terms, we are not born to become doctors or engineers and to elevate our educational qualifications. We are not born to marry and raise our children. We are not born to accumulate wealth and achieve high social status. While these qualities are all valuable and undoubtedly luminous, they are not the ultimate purpose of our creation. If we lack in any of these areas, it does not matter. What is important is our super-rational dimension and our potential to resemble God, which fortunately

we all share equally, and we all have the capability to reach the status of God's deputy on earth.

Not All Qualities Are Good!

The different situations of humans in this world can somewhat be likened to the positions of participants in a running race. The running field is wide and curved, divided into several sections, such that the inner area is smaller than the outer area. The race judge places each participant according to their position in the curved field; that is, a person in the outer curve, who has to cover a longer distance, is placed ahead of others, while someone who will cover a shorter distance is placed behind. Thus, when all runners reach the bend, their positions become equal. Ultimately, they all cover the same distance, and justice is established among them. Therefore, it does not matter where we currently stand or whether we have more or less qualities; what matters is our effort. If each of us performs our duties correctly, given our current circumstances and the resources we have, we will reach our true position at the bend of this field.

Another point is that having many possessions and qualities is not always good. Being born into a faithful family or having great wealth, high intelligence, and other qualities does not necessarily bring us closer to God or increase our chances of success and happiness in life. In fact, often these very qualities can distance us from God, and the more we have, the more dangerous it becomes. In this regard, there is no difference between sacred qualities, such as wearing clerical clothing, being engaged in *jihad* (struggle in the cause of God), performing *mustahab* (recommended) acts, or being involved in religious gatherings and mosques, and

other inanimate, vegetative, or animal qualities. Sometimes, getting caught up in the matters with religious and sacred forms or appearance can distance us from God just as much as engaging in forbidden and sinful matters.

Furthermore, when God grants a blessing to someone and withholds that blessing from another, it does not mean that He has honored the first person and humiliated the second. Both trials and blessings are means of testing [1], and in fact, being tested with blessings is much harder and more dangerous than being tested with trials and calamities. Abundant blessings and qualities in any area are like a state-of-the-art car; if the driver does not know how to use this car, they will kill themselves and those around them.

Considering the points we discussed, it is true that humans do not have the same status regarding worldly blessings and qualities. However, this does not undermine God's justice, as God expects from each person according to their capacity. Of course, this is not an excuse for idleness and laziness. We are all obliged to strive for improvement in our lives, both materially and spiritually. However, we should not think that to reach God, we must be in someone else's position and enjoy their blessings. God provides growth and closeness opportunities for everyone according to their circumstances. All we need to do is trust God's plan and perform our duties correctly, wherever we are. Additionally, what is important is our equality in the super-rational dimension, which fortunately we all share, and in this regard, no one has superiority over another.

References

[1]. Quran, 89: 15-16