

Is Our Destiny Written in Advance, or Is Change in Life Possible?

Change in Life or Divine Decrees—What Are the Consequences?

Do you also think that our fate is written on our foreheads and that there is no escape from it, or that our destiny has already been written and we are condemned to carry it out?

You have surely faced situations in life where you were unhappy with your circumstances and wished you had the power to make change in life. The good news is that, as a human being, you do have this power. However, creating a change in life has its own rules, and in this lesson, we are going to examine them.

Change in life, or in other words, change in divine decrees, is governed by laws that fall under the broader principle of the law of decree and destiny. As we learned in previous lessons, everything has a decree—a measure or limit that is set for it. When we choose a particular decree, we inevitably face its destiny or its outcome. For example, if we choose the decree of staying in our hometown, we will face a certain set of consequences. If, on the other hand, we choose to migrate to another city, different decrees and choices will appear before us—choices that may completely change the course of our lives. We are allowed to choose the measure and path we want, but we must be aware that every choice carries its own destiny and specific results.

Our mistake is that we often forget the decisions we have made and then complain about the results of those decisions. For example, if after migrating to another country, we are unhappy with our living conditions, troubled by disorder in our

family life, or unable to find a job that matches our skills, we tend to trace the root of all our misfortunes to God's destiny rather than to the decision and the decree we ourselves chose. Therefore, it is better to say that within the scope of God's will, we are allowed to choose and to change, but we must be prepared to accept the consequences that such changes bring into our lives.

The Possibility of Changing One's Destiny

So far, we have understood that change in life and even in divine decrees is possible. However, the destiny and the outcomes of our choices are inseparable from the decisions we make. In reality, whenever we choose to change something, we simultaneously choose its results and consequences as well. For example, by exercising, the destiny of our lives can shift from illness, cancer, or cardiovascular problems to health, vitality, and a longer life. Likewise, by choosing the profession of teaching, we gain the opportunity to influence the lives of others.

It is true that the general conditions of our lives—such as the environment and family into which we are born, whether we are male or female, and the talents and abilities we are given—are in God's hands, and we have no role in determining them, however, the way we choose to live and the level of life we select for ourselves depend entirely on us. It is we who decide whether to attain a level of perfection similar to that of a plant, an animal, or even an inanimate object, or to bring the lower dimensions of our existence under the control of our supra-rational faculty and live truly as human beings.

Creating change in our lives depends on our own decisions and choices. In other words, as long as we do not will a change in ourselves or in our life circumstances, our situation will not change. God has given us the opportunity to choose better decrees and improve our living conditions—that is, to move from the destiny and outcome we are currently experiencing toward a better decree and choice, and to seek refuge in God as *al-Mubaddil* (the One who transforms). However, such change must be conscious and well planned. A misguided choice or a hasty decision may move us from an unfavorable situation into an even worse one. As we continue this lesson, we will point out the conditions that make change in life necessary.

Using Supplication to Create Change in Life

It is true that life does not always go the way we want, and at times, we may wish to bring about change in our lives, however, we must also consider the fact that, as human beings, our knowledge is limited and we do not have full mastery over all aspects of our lives. As a result, the most conscious and wisest approach we can take regarding change is to turn to an infallible guide—a perfect expert who is fully aware of every aspect of life, all the dimensions of our existence, the path we are on, and the ultimate goal ahead of us. Such a guide is able to redirect our life plans and goals in a way that ultimately benefits us and leads to a sound birth into the Hereafter. Therefore, God has provided a way for us to change our destiny, and that way is seeking refuge in the supplication taught by an infallible expert who knows all the dimensions of our being. Otherwise, we may make decisions that divert us from the purpose of creation and from the Straight Path we are meant to follow.

The Necessity of Creating Change in Life

As mentioned earlier, we can move from our present destinies toward a better decree. However, there are also situations in which creating change in life becomes necessary and unavoidable. For example, when we are in circumstances that hinder our religious commitment and our movement toward the purpose of creation, we must change those conditions: a job that distances us from God; a field of study that, instead of prioritizing the human and supra-rational dimension of our existence, strengthens our inclinations toward the lower aspects of our being; an environment that, instead of guiding us toward a truly human way of life, pushes us toward a vegetative or animal-like lifestyle; or relationships and social gatherings that distance us from reflecting the names and attributes of God and draw us in a direction contrary to the will of our true Beloved. Such conditions have no place in our journey toward the purpose of our creation and therefore must be changed.

In other words, we must organize the affairs of our lives according to our interests, but within the framework of reaching the purpose of our creation. Moving toward Absolute Perfection and in harmony with the will of the true Beloved brings joy and inner peace to life. No matter how prosperous our lives may be, if we lack happiness and inner peace, we will not truly enjoy living.

In reality, the lifestyle we choose must lead us to happiness and peace; otherwise, it is bound to be changed. For example, a work situation that causes us distress and takes away our peace should be changed if it is not essential. Likewise, an environment in which living and raising a family poses a threat to our religious life and to future generations, despite offering material comfort, is not a suitable place for us to live. Even the friends and people we associate with, if they gradually

distance us from God and His will, are subject to change, regardless of their contribution to our worldly success or our attachment to them. In general, any lifestyle that is incompatible with our *fitrah* and true essence, and that distances us from the purpose of our creation, has no place on our path toward God and must be changed.

In this lesson, we learned that with every decision we make, we inevitably choose its outcome as well. By understanding and applying this principle, we can change the conditions of our lives. However, not every change is beneficial. At times, in an attempt to escape an unwanted situation, we may place ourselves in circumstances that are even worse.

Therefore, the best way to remain safe from wrong decisions is to rely on the supplication of an infallible expert. In some cases, changing our circumstances is also necessary—when the current situation deprives us of happiness or inner peace, or when it hinders our religious commitment and prevents us from reaching the purpose of our creation.

Have you ever been compelled to make a change in your life for the reasons discussed in this article?