



Critical Analysis of the Concepts of Determinism and Delegation (Jabr and Tafwiz) with an Emphasis on the Supplications of Sahifah Sajjadiyyah

Mustafa Mokhtari¹

received: 2025/05/18 Accepted: 2025/05/21

Abstract

The issue of determinism (jabr) and free will (ikhtiyar), and humanity's role in creating its actions, is one of the oldest theological questions. When confronting it, three distinct theological approaches have emerged: determinism (jabr), delegation (Tafwiz), and an affair between two affairs (amr bayn al-amrayn). Following their religious leaders, Imamiyyah theologians have adopted the third approach. To prove and explain it, they've used numerous rational and transmitted proofs, while also critically analyzing the other two viewpoints. Although various books and articles have been written on the critical examination of the concepts of determinism (jabr) and delegation (Tafwiz), what distinguishes this research is its critical analysis of these ideas through an analytical study of the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah's supplications. This approach, in itself, offers innovation in the field of theological discussions. Ultimately, this research concludes that free will (ikhtiyar) and choice are crucial human

1. PhD student, Islamic Philosophy, Baqir al-Uloom University (peace be upon him).
mokhtare.m14@gmail.com

*Mokhtari, M. (2025). Critical Analysis of the Concepts of Determinism and Delegation (Jabr and Tafwiz) with an Emphasis on the Supplications of Sahifah Sajjadiyyah. *Theosophia Islamica*, 3(6), pp 105-127
Doi: 10.22081/jti.2025.71916.1079

characteristics that exist *within* the scope of God's will and power. By utilizing these, humans are considered the direct agents of their actions. This study employs a descriptive-analytical method, with data collected and examined through library and documentary resources.

Keywords

Divine Decree and Destiny, Determinism, Delegation, Free Will, Sahifah Sajjadiyyah

1- Introduction

The question of determinism (jabr) and free will (ikhtiyar) is a venerable theological issue that has been a subject of discussion since the first century Hijri. This debate originated from analyzing God's active attributes, such as justice and power, and their relationship to human actions. The core of this dispute lies specifically in actions that originate from a human being as a thinking and choosing agent. Therefore, actions arising from the human body as a natural or vegetative entity are not part of this discussion (Javadi Amoli, 2001, p. 68). In other words, is the realization of all matters in the universe uniform, with the Essence of God being their sole cause? Or is there a difference in how universal beings and cosmic affairs come into existence compared to how human actions are realized? To put it another way, is the Lord the only influential cause in the cosmic order, or do human will and free choice also play a role in this chain of causes? Are we facing a fixed and unchanging system, or is there also a variable system that can be altered, allowing for human free will in their actions?

In this regard, three main theories have been put forth in Islamic theological tradition. The Ash'arites believe that humans have no power over their own actions; rather, power belongs solely to Almighty God, who creates everything, including human deeds. Conversely, a group of the Mu'tazila considers humans to possess complete free will and choice in their actions, denying divine power in this specific regard (Al-Muhassal, 1411 AH, p. 455). This group is known as the Qadariyyah because they deny divine power. The Imamiyyah (Imami Shia) and a segment of the Mu'tazila divide human actions into two categories: Voluntary actions: These are actions where human choice is one of the contributing factors, alongside God's will and power. Involuntary actions: These are actions where human

choice plays no role in their realization (Helli, 1418 AH, p. 34). This dispute led Imami theologians to establish and clarify their moderate stance through both rational and transmitted proofs, while also refuting the opposing viewpoints¹.

In the traditional (naqli) approach, the predominant method for addressing the issue of divine decree and destiny has been to draw upon the Quran and related narrations. Less frequently have scholars utilized devotional sources. The Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, considered the most authoritative devotional-hadithic source after the Quran and Nahj al-Balaghah, comprises the supplications of Imam Sajjad (AS). Given the political and social conditions of his time, this collection served as an optimal means for disseminating Islamic teachings. The language of supplication and prayer is not one of argumentation, reasoning, or debate. Rather, it is a dialogue between a servant and their Creator, in which the servant, while requesting needs, presents their beliefs to the divine presence. For this reason, the discourse of supplication differs from that of the Quran or books of narrations. In the latter, religious truths or rulings are often presented directly and explicitly to the audience. However, the language of supplication is a realm of intimate communion and expressing needs to God, where religious teachings are sometimes conveyed indirectly, either before the main request or implicitly within the prayer itself. Consequently, extracting the truths embedded in supplications necessarily requires greater precision and attention. Among the teachings of the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, discussions of divine decree and destiny and the topic of human action in relation to God's will are present. However, these have been less frequently examined as independent research topics. Therefore, this article aims to critique the ideas of determinism (jabr) and delegation

1. For further study, refer to: **Hilli, 1413 AH, p. 87** and **Lahiji, 1383, p. 326**.

(Tafwiz) by taking the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah's supplications as a foundational source—a rich wellspring of religious knowledge—to investigate a sub-issue of divine decree and destiny: the manner in which human actions are created. This article, in turn, offers a new style of research for scholars in the field of theology. It highlights the potential of devotional texts, especially the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, to serve as a primary source for investigation. Since this issue is typically discussed in theological texts under the broader topic of divine decree and destiny, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of divine decree and destiny and its categories for a more precise explanation of the problem at hand.

2- Meaning and Categories of Divine decree and destiny

The terms " Divine decree " (فضلا) and " destiny " (قدر) have been used with various meanings in Arabic lexicography.

" Divine decree " refers to concepts such as: Creating, Announcing, Judging or ruling, Making a matter definitive (Azahari, 1421 AH, Vol. 9, p. 170; Ibn Faris, 1404 AH, Vol. 5, p. 99). " destiny " is used to denote the ultimate limit or boundary of a thing, encompassing its measure, quantity, and other specific characteristics (Ibn Faris, 1404 AH, Vol. 5, p. 62).

In Islamic theology (ilm al-kalam), the terms " Divine decree " and " destiny " are used in three distinct senses.1- In terms of Divine Knowledge: Here, " Divine decree " and " destiny " refer to the manifestation and disclosure of all things in God's eternal knowledge (Tusi, 1407 AH, p. 200). In this context: Divine decree signifies God's general and simple knowledge of the realities of existence, which is identical with the very essence of the Necessary Being (God). destiny denotes God's detailed knowledge of the specifics of those realities (Tusi, 1407 AH, p. 200; Lahiji, 1383 SH, p. 320). The verses: وَ قَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ ("And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture")

(Al-Isra: 4) and «فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَّرْنَا هِيَ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ» ("So We saved him and his family, except his wife; We destined her to be among those who remained behind") (An-Naml: 57) refer to this meaning [of Divine decree and destiny as divine knowledge and decree]. 2-In terms of Obligatory Rulings: This usage of " Divine decree " is limited to obligatory acts (wājibāt) and forbidden acts (muḥarramāt) (Tusi, 1407 AH, p. 200). The verses: «وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ» ("And your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship except Him") (Al-Isra: 23) and «إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ» ("Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ") (Yunus: 93) are among the verses that signify this meaning (Tabatabai, 1417 AH, Vol. 13, p. 73). 3- In terms of the Creation of Things and God's Active Agency in Relation to Them: This refers to God's act of creating and His direct involvement as the agent (Tusi, 1407 AH, p. 200; Lahiji, 1383 SH, p. 320). The noble verse: «وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ» ("And there is not a thing but that with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down except by a known measure.") (Al-Hijr: 21) is, in essence, an articulation of this type of Divine decree and destiny (Lahiji, 1383 SH, p. 320).¹

From early on, the point of contention among Muslim theologians has been the explanation of Divine decree and destiny in the latter sense, specifically concerning how human actions are created. The core question is: Does a human being possess will and power to perform an action, or not? In response to this question, three perspectives have emerged: Determinism (Jabr), Delegation (Tafwiz), and An affair between two affairs (Amr bayn al-Amrayn).

1. Supplications 6 (verses 5-7), 16 (verses 6 and 10), 47 (verses 12 and 17), and 7 (verse 2) are among the passages that signify this meaning [of Qada and Qadar as the creation of things and God's active agency].

3- Examining the Issue by Analyzing the Supplications of Sahifa Sajjadiyya

To gain a deeper understanding of the issue of Divine Decree and its relationship with human will, one can look to supplications as a rich source of doctrinal teachings. Among these, the Sahifa Sajjadiyya, with its profound themes and precise analyses of the relationship between the servant and God, offers a unique capacity for intellectual contemplation on this matter.

3-1- Humanity and the Crossroads of Truth and Falsehood

The necessity of believing in religious obligations and ultimate felicity or wretchedness in the afterlife dictates that humans should pursue the path of happiness solely by following God's will and avoiding His wrath. Every individual in this earthly life finds themselves facing decisions, some of which align with God's will and some that contradict it. In essence, they find themselves in a battleground of truth and falsehood, where ultimately they must choose one side. In supplication 9, paragraphs 3 and 4, while addressing this point, there's a plea to God to guide the human soul in decision-making and not abandon it to its own devices, so that it may safely navigate the crossroads of truth and falsehood. This is because, "if God were to leave the soul to its own devices, it would choose falsehood and command evil." Therefore, when appealing to the Lord, we ask Him: "When we decide between two things, one of which pleases You and the other angers You, then incline us towards that which pleases You and weaken our strength concerning that which angers You, and at that moment, do not leave our souls to their own control." (Fayz al-Islam, 1376, p. 143). This passage indicates that in the decision-making phase for performing an action, a human is neither

passive nor coerced, nor solely determined by the will of the Lord. Instead, they possess willpower, yet their will is not independent of God's will. On the contrary, they ask God not to abandon them to their own soul, as they would then choose nothing but falsehood. They request God to guide them in their decisions towards what pleases the Lord. This is also evident from the analysis of the word "hamm" (هَمَّ), which originates from "humam" (هَمَم), meaning "decision" (Fayyumi, 1414 AH, p. 641). This point clarifies that if determinism (jabr) were accepted, and human will were considered ineffective, then the phrase (هَمَمْنَا بِهِمَّيْنِ) would either be metaphorical or redundant. This is because decision-making only has meaning where there is a right to choose and free will. Therefore, in summary, three key points can be inferred from the analysis of these two passages: 1-The human soul possesses free will and the right to choose. 2- If the soul is left free and unrestrained in its choices, it will incline towards falsehood and evil. 3-The servant's free will is not independent of the Lord's will. Rather, to achieve felicity, if one aligns their will with the Lord's will, God, out of His general mercy, will incline them towards the path of truth. Therefore, it is not the case that human affairs are entirely delegated to them and that God plays no role in choices and the process of their realization. Hence, human free will and Divine providence are two causes for choosing the path of the Lord's pleasure.

In supplication 16, paragraphs 23 and 24, a similar point is expressed: "When I stand between Your call and the call of Satan, I follow his call... and in this situation, I am certain that the ultimate outcome of Your call is towards Paradise, and the consequence of Satan's call is towards Hell" (Ansarian, 1388, p. 65). The concept of an invitation to Paradise or Hell only makes sense if the servant has the right to choose and accept the invitation. According to the idea of

determinism, if a human follows Satan's call, they are compelled to do so and must go to Hell. However, accepting this notion is, firstly, contrary to conscience and, secondly, contrary to Divine justice. From this passage, it is understood that the right to choose rests with the human being. It is they who, knowing the ultimate outcome of God's invitation and Satan's invitation, choose to follow one of the two. Of course, they ask God to assist them in accepting His invitation.

3-2- The Existence of Factors for Obedience or Disobedience to God

As discussed, one type of Divine Decree is the legislative Divine Decree. This means that, based on His wisdom and knowledge of true benefits and harms, God Almighty has established rulings for humanity. He has made obedience or disobedience to these rulings the cause of human felicity or wretchedness. However, alongside these religious rulings and commands, God has also set forth the causes of felicity and wretchedness. In supplication 47, paragraph 67, some of the factors leading to felicity and guidance are mentioned as follows: "O God, I am Your servant, whom You blessed before creation and after coming into existence; so You placed him among those You guided to Your religion, and You granted him success in fulfilling Your right, and You preserved him with the rope of Your mercy and kindness, and You admitted him into Your party, and You guided him to befriend Your friends and to be hostile towards Your enemies." In this passage, "blessing", "guidance towards religion", "Divine grace", "continuation of God's mercy and kindness", "guidance towards friends", and "recognition of enemies" are enumerated among the blessings and factors leading to felicity. Similarly, in the same supplication, paragraph 68 refers to some of the factors leading to wretchedness: "His disobedience was not out of enmity towards You or rebellion against You, but rather his desires invited him to

something You forbade and warned against, and Your enemy and his enemy assisted him in this matter, so he embarked on sin despite knowing Your warning..." (Ansarian, 1388, p. 202). In this passage, "desires and whims of the self" and the "common enemy of humanity and God" (Satan) are introduced as factors of disobedience. Additionally, in supplication 16, paragraph 14¹, "ignorance" is identified as a cause of rebellion and disobedience. However, it's important to understand that the "ignorance" referred to in this passage is not "lack of knowledge." If it were, the repentance of those who commit a sin knowingly and then repent would not be accepted, based on the verse: «إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ» "Indeed, the acceptance of repentance by Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance" (Quran 4:17). This is while most exegetes have understood "ignorance" (جهل) in the noble verse to mean "lack of reflection on the outcome of an action," or in other words, "heedlessness of the outcome of an action." In this passage, too, the intention behind "ignorance" is "heedlessness of the outcome of an action," which afflicts the sinner and leads to the commission of sin (Madani Shirazi, 1435 AH, Vol. 3, p. 122). Furthermore, in paragraph 27 of supplication 16, we read: "I am more reckless in committing falsehood, and heedless when obeying You, and my awareness and vigilance are less in the face of Your warnings. With this, how can I count my faults and recall my sins?" (Ayati, 1375, p. 107). In this passage, qualities such as "recklessness," "heedlessness," and "lack of attention to the Lord's warnings" are counted among the causes of disobedience to God's commands.

What pertains to our main issue is that the mention of factors for obedience in contrast to factors for disobedience to Divine commands indicates that the arena of action for humans is such that, on one hand, factors of obedience invite them towards submission and

¹ "I am the one who disobeyed You through his ignorance."

compliance, and on the other hand, factors of wretchedness drive them towards disobedience. If Divine Decree were absolute and beyond human power and will, how should the purpose of these factors be justified? If humans were without will and free choice in this arena, firstly, truth and falsehood would be meaningless concerning them. Secondly, the establishment of these factors would be futile and without purpose. This is while the opposite of futility is wisdom. A wise act is one that is not devoid of a reasonable end and purpose, and moreover, it is accompanied by the choice of what is best and most preferable (Motahari, 1381, Vol. 1, p. 46). If only factors of wretchedness existed, humans would have no escape from disobeying God in their actions, and this would support the idea of determinism. However, in contrast to these factors of disobedience, factors of felicity have also been mentioned as part of creation and Divine will. When both are considered together, it points to the reality that humans are constantly exposed to the choice and option of determining their path to felicity or wretchedness. This point is also alluded to in narrations, stating that Divine Decree in the actions of servants consists of "commanding obedience, forbidding disobedience, enabling the performance of good deeds, abandoning sin, assisting in drawing closer to the Lord, warning, promising, creating desire for performing deeds, and instilling fear to abandon disobedience"¹ (Ibn Shu'ba Harrani, 1363, p. 467). The existence of commands and prohibitions, promises and warnings,

1. الأَمْرُ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَ النَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ وَ التَّمَكِينُ مِنْ فِعْلِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَ تَرْكِ السَّيِّئَةِ وَ الْمَعُونَةُ عَلَى الْقُرْبَةِ إِلَيْهِ وَ الْجَدْلَانُ لِمَنْ عَضَاهُ وَ الْوَعْدُ وَ الْوَعِيدُ وَ التَّرْغِيبُ وَ التَّرْهِيْبُ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ قَضَاءُ اللَّهِ فِي أَعْمَالِنَا وَ قَدْرُهُ لِأَعْمَالِنَا.

"Commanding obedience, forbidding disobedience, enabling the performance of good deeds and abandoning evil, assisting in drawing closer to Him, abandoning one who disobeys Him, promising and warning, encouraging and deterring; all of that is God's decree in our actions and His destiny for our deeds."

and encouragement and deterrence, all depend on humans having free will and the ability to choose between obedience and disobedience.

This is why if a person disregards the factors of obedience, they will go astray and succumb to disobeying God. In the first paragraph of supplication 49, we read: "O my God, You guided me, but I turned to frivolity and heedlessness; You advised me, but I hardened my heart; You bestowed good blessings upon me, but I disobeyed; then You made known to me what You had forbidden, and I recognized it and sought forgiveness, and You forgave my sin; then I returned to sin once more, and You overlooked it" (Ayati, 1375, p. 352). Guidance, admonition, and good blessings are among the factors of felicity. The existence of these factors contradicts wisdom if a servant is compelled towards deviation and sin. On one hand, God Almighty guides His servant and calls them to the path of truth, yet on the other hand, the servant is compelled by the very same God to move on the path of falsehood. These two are incompatible. Therefore, guidance is from Him, while deviation and the commission of sin are due to the servant's poor choice.

3-3- Acknowledging Actions and Attributing Them to Oneself

Supplication Twelve in Sahifa Sajjadiyya is titled "Confession of Sins and Request for Repentance." The word "Itiraf" (اعتراف), meaning "confession" or "acknowledgment," has various meanings, one of which is "acknowledging against oneself" (Madani Shirazi, 1435, Vol. 7, p. 382). "Confession of sin" only makes sense when the doer has, with independent will and choice, performed an action that should not have been done. If they regret their action, they make this confession a prelude to attracting God's mercy, asking Him to grant them the grace

of repentance and return from sin, and to include them in His forgiveness.

In several passages of Supplication Twelve, there's an acknowledgment of sin and regret. In paragraph 6, we read: "O my God, does my confession of the evil of what I have done benefit me with You? And does acknowledging before Your presence the ugliness of what I have committed free me from Your punishment?" (Fayz al-Islam, 1376, p. 96). Acknowledging the badness of deeds and the ugliness of actions, and attributing them to oneself, indicates the human's role and their agency in performing the act. If actions were to emanate directly from God without any intermediary, firstly, attributing sin to oneself would be an error. Secondly, there would be no need for the servant to confess for something in which they were compelled, to then make that confession a means of deliverance from punishment.

"If You punish me, it is my desert; I am an oppressor, a corruptor, a sinner, a defaulter, negligent, and oblivious of my own well-being." (Ayati, 1996, p. 365) Oppression, excess, sin, shortcoming, negligence, and heedlessness are blameworthy attributes that the Imam (peace be upon him) attributes to himself, and for this reason, he considers God's punishment to be a result of his own actions. Similarly, in Supplication 47, verses 76 to 78, the use of the first-person pronoun points to the main cause of the undesirable actions: «أَنَا الْمُسِيءُ الْمُعْتَرِفُ الْخَاطِئُ الْعَاثِرُ. أَنَا الَّذِي أَقْدَمَ عَلَيْكَ مُجْتَرِئاً. أَنَا الَّذِي عَصَاكَ مُتَعَمِّداً؛» "I am the evildoer, the confessor (to evildoing), the sinner, the one who stumbles; I am the one who dared to act (in sin) against You; I am the one who intentionally disobeyed and defied You." (Feyz al-Islam, 1997, p. 344) Similarly, in Supplication 52, verse 7, destruction is attributed to the agent's own actions, stating: "My own deeds

destroyed me."¹ These passages, in addition to negating the idea of determinism and proving the involvement of human will, also indicate that humans are not independent in their actions and that the execution of deeds is not entirely delegated to them. In other words, their agency is not absolute; rather, God's will is also involved. This is because they seek help and guidance from God, asking Him to assist them both in the stage of choosing and deciding and in the stage of acting².

3-4The Position of the Will of God

In the framework of determinism, the relationship between the creation of human actions and God's will is direct and unmediated. Just as the cosmic order and the natural world are directly subject to God's will—«إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ»—"His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (Ya-Sin: 82)—this will is also direct, unmediated, and by God's decree in the system of human actions. Fakhr al-Razi explains this point by stating: "If the creation of the servants' actions were not by God's decree and preference, He would not be the owner of those actions. This contradicts the consensus of Muslims, who believe that God is the owner of both His servants and their actions; therefore, He is also the Creator of their actions" (Razi, 1420 AH, Vol. 1, p. 208).

In critique of this idea, it must be stated that accepting human will in the creation of actions does not contradict God's being the

1. عَمَلِي أَهْلَكَنِي.

"My deeds have destroyed me."

2. وَإِذَا هَمَمْنَا بِهَمٍّ يَرْضِيكَ أَحَدَهُمَا عَنَّا، وَ يُسْخِطُكَ الْآخَرَ عَلَيْنَا، فَمِلْ بِنَا إِلَى مَا يَرْضِيكَ عَنَّا، وَ أُوهِنْ قُوَّتَنَا عَمَّا يُسْخِطُكَ عَلَيْنَا. (٣/٩)

"And when we intend to do two things, one of which pleases You and the other displeases You, incline us towards that which pleases You and weaken our strength from that which displeases You." (9/3)

ultimate Willer in all matters of existence. According to Imami theologians, the universe operates under a system of vertical wills, where God's will is on one side and human will is on the other. All wills operate in alignment with God's overarching will. (Sobhani, 2000, Vol. 1, p. 261).

Based on this vertical system, just as accepting determinism is incorrect, so too is succumbing to the idea of delegation (Tafwiz). Considering humans to be independent would mean excluding God from the realm of sovereignty and divine decree over the world (Helli, 1413 AH, p. 584) and disregarding God's will in the domain of human actions. Some narrations describe the idea of delegation as follows: "The Qadariyya are the Magians of this nation; they are those who wished to describe God with the attribute of justice while simultaneously removing Him from the attributes of sovereignty and power. The verse: «يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ. إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ» (he Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces: 'Taste the touch of Saqar (Hell).') Indeed, We created all things with a divine decree)' (Qamar: 48-49) was revealed concerning them" (Sadūq, 1398 AH, p. 382). This designation stems from the fact that this group considered humans the creators of voluntary actions, while God was seen as the creator of other things. In this sense, they were akin to the Magians (Qawm-e Majus), who believed in a god of good and a god of evil. (Qomi, 1415 AH, Vol. 2, p. 181) In support of this claim, numerous passages in the Sahifa Sajjadiyya's supplications refer to the place of God's will and also to other causes for the realization of an action, reminding us that humans are not the sole cause of their own affairs.

In Supplication 37, verse 13, we read: «وَلَمْ تَحْمِلْهُ عَلَى الْمُنَاقَشَاتِ»

" means to make something a ¹ «مَغْفِرَتِكَ إِلَى مَشِيئَتِهَا»¹ means to achieve a goal. The term "alat" (آلات) refers to all the outward and inward faculties of the human soul through which one undertakes actions. (Madani Shirazi, 1435 AH, Vol. 5, p. 257). This supplication suggests that, contrary to the deterministic view which denies the system of cause and effect and considers the divine essence to be the sole cause in the affairs of the world, there are other causes and means that, subordinate to God's will, play a role in the realization of actions. Humans, through their own will and the utilization of these means, bring an action to completion.

Although some passages might initially appear to support a deterministic view—for instance, Supplication 47, verse 15, states: "You are the one who willed, so whatever You willed became certain and definite..."—other passages, such as Supplication 16, verse 14, steer the reader away from this incorrect perception. There, it states: "I am the one whose back has been burdened by transgressions, whose life has been destroyed by sins, and who has disobeyed You due to ignorance." Attributing actions like error, sin, and disobedience to oneself indicates that the agent's own will drives these actions. This is because attributing an action without the agent's will would be an unrealistic correlation. Furthermore, in Supplication 47, verses 78 and 79, the role of the agent's will in the realization of an action is explicitly stated: "I intentionally disobeyed You; I hid myself from Your servants during sin, but I openly rose in opposition to You." This attribution, however, doesn't mean that the creation of actions rests solely on human will. As stated earlier, human will operates in alignment with God's will, and humans are the direct agents of their

¹ "You did not make him strict concerning the tools and instruments (outward and inward faculties and what belongs to the human body) whose use You made a means to reach Your forgiveness." (Feyz al-Islam, 1997, p. 248)

actions. Therefore, in various supplications, requests are made to God to incline the human heart towards obedience and submission—to the very path He has set for the devout. In other words, the action is attributed to its direct agent, but God Almighty is the originator of the action (Helli, 1413 AH, p. 586).

In Supplication 9, verse 6, after expressing the inherent human weakness present since creation, assistance is sought from God for guidance and success in fulfilling obligations and abandoning forbidden acts: "Help us by Your grace, and guide us to Your straight path, and blind the eyes of our hearts from whatever is contrary to Your love, and let no part of our bodies fall into disobedience and defiance of You; grant us success that we may not even conceive of what You have forbidden, nor approach sins, and that we may achieve Your pleasure." (Feyz al-Islam, 1997, p. 87). Continuing, Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him), with profound insight, even considers the smallest actions of individuals, expressing God's causality in the most minute details and choices of His servants: "Place the secrets of our hearts, the movements of our limbs, the hidden glances of our eyes, and the words of our tongues in what earns Your reward, so that no good deed by which we deserve Your recompense escapes us, and no evil deed by which we incur Your punishment remains for us." (Feyz al-Islam, 1997, p. 87).

Performing good deeds is due to God's divine grace, and committing evil is due to His abandonment. Both good and evil were known to God in eternity, without His knowledge being the cause of the servant's actions. God Almighty issued commands, prohibitions, promises, and warnings, establishing them as motivations for His servants so that they would will good deeds and refrain from evil. This is divine grace, for grace is the preparation of the means for willing and choosing good actions (Lahiji, 1383, p. 328). Therefore, Divine Will is

directed towards preparing the means for human inclination towards love and away from disobedience. It is then the individual's free will and choice to utilize this divine grace and obey God's command. Consequently, God's foreknowledge (Divine decree and destiny), while certain, is not the sole and complete cause for the realization of human actions. Rather, other factors such as warnings, rewards and punishments, Heaven and Hell, and other divine promises play a causal role in enabling human beings to choose the correct path.

3-5 The Impossibility of *Taklif* (Divine Obligation) and its Implications

Humans are inherently imperfect beings, yet they possess an innate capacity for perfection. For this reason, religious obligations (*takalif shari'ah*) have been instituted to compensate for this imperfection and to facilitate their spiritual development. Divine obligations aim to achieve spiritual perfections, the effects of which include the moderation of carnal desires, liberation from sensual passions, and freedom from the shackles of both internal and external adversaries. Therefore, to impose an obligation (*taklif*) on someone who, firstly, lacks the capacity for perfection and, secondly, has no power or choice to perform or abstain from an action—being merely an executor of God's will—would be imposing an impossible task (*taklif bi ma la yutaq*). This type of obligation is inherently repugnant and would not be issued by rational beings, let alone by God, who is absolutely wise (Helli, 1418 AH, p. 42). The Holy Quran also states that the measure of divine obligation (*taklif*) is commensurate with human capacity and ability: "وُسْعَهَا إِلَّا أَنْفُسًا اللَّهُ يُكَلِّفُ لَا" ("Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.") (Al-Baqarah: 286). This verse indicates that the capacity of individuals is considered when divine obligations are set, and no command or prohibition beyond the normal human capacity is demanded. Moreover, the wisdom behind imposing

obligations is to test individuals. God, who enjoins these obligations upon humanity, also provides the means and context for such trials (Javadi Amoli, 1388 AH, Vol. 7, p. 646). This allows individuals to attain degrees of perfection if they fulfill these obligations correctly, or to be deprived of such perfections if they disobey. This can only happen if the individual is granted the right to choose and exercise their will. Supplication 1, verse 21, explicitly refers to these two points: "Then He commanded us to test our obedience, and He forbade us to test our gratitude."

Concepts such as reward and punishment, Heaven and Hell, and promises and warnings, which are articulated to give glad tidings and to admonish individuals, truly find their meaning alongside the concept of divine obligation (taklif). These are also among the necessities of Divine decree and destiny. If the origin of actions were solely attributed to God's will, these concepts would be rendered futile and meaningless. Yet, many verses in the Holy Quran explicitly mention these concepts. Similarly, numerous passages in the Sahifa Sajjadiyya refer to them. Some examples include: "O You who has promised good recompense through His benevolence..." (12/10), "Make Your forgiveness easy for us out of Your grace, and grant us refuge from Your torment through Your overlooking of our faults. Indeed, we have no strength against Your justice." (10/2), "We seek refuge in You from... deprivation of reward and entering into punishment." (8/9), "You named supplication and calling upon You an act of worship and abandoning it arrogance, and You threatened entry into Hell with disgrace and humiliation for abandoning supplication" (45/15). This passage refers to the verse: "إِنَّ الَّذِينَ «ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ، إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ» (Ghafir/60), which translates to: "Call upon Me; I will respond to you. Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell in humiliation." If God's agency in relation to human actions were direct and unmediated, then concepts like

reward, punishment, and promises related to them would have no influence on an individual's actions, rendering God Almighty's words meaningless. However, since the inclusion of promises and warnings by the Wise Lord within His legislative decree is necessary to motivate individuals to perform good deeds and abandon sin, these factors serve as intermediate causes for the realization of actions. The direct cause, therefore, remains the individual's free will (Lahiji, 1383, p. 329).

3-6 Responsibility

Another consequence of the deterministic viewpoint is the abandonment of responsibilities that fall upon humanity in life. If individuals consider themselves to have no influence over their actions, they would feel absolved of various moral, social, political, and familial responsibilities, and would therefore make no effort or strive for them. This stands in contrast to the inherent human feeling of responsibility, which is why people strive to meet their own and their family's needs. In reality, there's a fundamental conflict between determinism and responsibility, as responsibility is directly linked to freedom and choice. A free and autonomous being can be held accountable, meaning one can ask them, "Why did you do that?" (Motahari, 1381 AH, Vol. 15, p. 193). For this reason, in Supplication 20, verse 3, Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) asks God to "employ the hours of his life in matters about which he will be questioned on the Day of Judgment." The fact that a servant is responsible for these matters implies the necessity of freedom.

Conclusion

The discussion of Divine decree and destiny and the manner in which human actions are created is one of the oldest theological issues. Facing this question, three main perspectives have emerged:

determinism (Jabr), delegation (Tafwiz), and the an affair between two affairs (Amr Bayn Amrayn). Imami theologians, employing both rational and textual approaches, have chosen the third perspective and critiqued the other two. Based on some narrations, Divine decree and destiny is divided into two types: definite (hatmi) and indefinite (ghayr hatmi). In definite decree, no will other than God's has any influence. However, in indefinite decree, which pertains to human actions, alongside God's will, human will and choice are also effective and serve as one of the determining factors of an action. An analytical examination of passages from the Sahifa Sajjadiyya's supplications indicates that humans possess free will in creating their own actions. Not only do they have the ability to choose the type of action, but they can also seek God's help to align His will with theirs, guiding them toward the best choices and decisions. Furthermore, they can ask for divine assistance in the realm of action and execution, enabling their faculties and strengths to realize what God has commanded and forbidden. Therefore, the relationship of human will to God's will is not metaphorical but a real relationship, operating "in alignment with" God's will. For this reason, the ideologies of determinism (Jabr) and delegation (Tafwiz) have fallen into the pitfalls of extremism and negligence in this matter.

References

* Holy Quran. Sahifa Sajjadiyya.

1. Ibn Faris, Ahmad. (1404 AH). *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*. Qom: Maktab al-'Ilam al-Islami. [In Arabic]
2. Azhari, Muhammad ibn Ahmad. (1421 AH). *Tahzib al-Lughah*. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi. [In Arabic]
3. Ansarian, Hossein. (1388 SH). *Tarjume Sahifa Sajjadiyya*. Qom: Dar al-'Irfan. [In Arabic]
4. Javadi Amoli, Abdullah; Shafieyan, Mohammad Hasan. (1380 SH). *Ali ibn Musa al-Reza va al-Falsafa al-Ilahiyyah* (2nd ed.). Qom: Isra Publications. [In Arabic]
5. Javadi Amoli, Abdullah. (1388 SH). *Tafsir Tasnim* (Vol. 4). Qom: Isra Publications. [In Arabic]
6. Fakhr al-Razi, Muhammad ibn Umar. (1411 AH). *Al-Muhassal*. (1st ed.). Cairo: Maktabat Dar al-Turath. [In Arabic]
7. Feyz al-Islam, Ali Naqi. (1376 SH). *Tarjume Sahifa Sajjadiyya*. Tehran: Nashr Faqih. [In Arabic]
8. Ayati, Abdol Mohammad. (1375 SH). *Tarjume Sahifa Sajjadiyya* (2nd ed.). Tehran: Soroush. [In Persian]
9. Ibn Shu'ba Harrani, Hasan ibn Ali. (1363 SH). *Tuhf al-Uqul 'an Al al-Rasul*. Qom: Jami'a Mudarrisin. [In Arabic]
10. Helli, Hasan ibn Yusuf. (1413 AH). *Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-I'tiqad* (4th ed.). Qom: Nashr Islami. [In Arabic]
11. Helli, Hasan ibn Yusuf. (1418 AH). *Istiqsa' al-Nazar fi al-Qada' wa al-Qadar*. Mashhad: Dar al-Inba' al-Ghayb. [In Arabic]
12. Razi, Fakhr al-Din. (1420 AH). *Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghayb* (3rd ed.). Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi. [In Arabic]
13. Subhani, Ja'far. (1379 SH). *Buhuth fi al-Milal wa al-Nihal* (Vol. 1). Qom: Mu'assasah Imam Sadiq (AS). [In Arabic]

14. Saduq, Muhammad ibn Ali. (1398 AH). *Al-Tawhid*. Qom: Mu'assasah Nashr Islami. [In Arabic]
15. Tusi, Khwaja Nasir al-Din. (1407 AH). *Tajrid al-I'tiqad*. Qom: Daftar Tablighat Islami. [In Arabic]
16. Lahiji, Fayyaz. (1383 SH). Gowhar Morad. Tehran: Nashr Sayeh. [In Arabic]
17. Tabatabai, Muhammad Husayn. (1417 AH). *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran* (Vol. 13). Qom: Nashr Islami. [In Arabic]
18. Fayyumi, Ahmad ibn Muhammad. (1414 AH). *Al-Misbah al-Munir fi Gharib al-Sharh al-Kabir* (2nd ed.). Qom: Mu'assasah Dar al-Hijrah.
19. Qadi Sa'id Qomi. (1415 AH). *Sharh Tawhid Saduq*. Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. [In Persian]
20. Madani Shirazi, Sayyid Ali Khan ibn Ahmad. (1435 AH). *Riyad al-Salikin fi Sharh Sahifa Sayyid al-Sajidin*. (Vols. 3, 5, 7). Qom: Daftar Intisharat Islami. [In Arabic]
21. Motahari, Morteza. (1381 SH). *Majmu'a Asar* (Vols. 1, 15). Qom: Sadra. [In Persian]