

## ***Absolute Divine Providence and its Relation with Human Volition, with an Emphasis on Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī's Thought***

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### ***Abstract***

*The issue of divine providence and its relation with human volition is among the issues which dates back to the advent of human kind and has been raised as an essential issue of humans for a long time and much is written and said about it in the works of tradition, dialectical theology, philosophy, and exegesis of Islamic scholars. The verses of the Noble Qur'ān are of two types regarding the providence and volition of God, human volition, and the extent of God's direct or indirect interference in the being and creation system: one type of verses, obviously, attributes all diverse affairs and phenomena of the universe directly to God and is in such a way that has considered God as the only effective factor in the genesis of beings and the management of human and other creatures' affairs. The second type emphasizes the volition and the unique role of human in the creation system, specially his fate, and attributes the acts of natural agents, especially humans, to human himself, and holds him responsible for his acts; As a result, God has specified duties for him and has given him promises. The study at hand has focused on explaining verses and proposing and comparing different viewpoints and opinions of Islamic tradition scholars, theologians, philosophers, and especially Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī's viewpoint to reach a common ground between these two types.*

### ***Keywords***

*Divine volition, Human volition, Determinism, The Noble Qur'ān, Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī*

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### **Introduction**

Nowadays, with a closer look at the Islamic societies, we find out that many of these societies are struggling with poverty and economic, political, and even cultural underdevelopment. This underdevelopment can have different causes; but a main part of these causes is rooted in the internal issues and the beliefs of the inhabitants of these regions. Hence, it is necessary to identify, revise, and reform the beliefs that are the reason for the halt of such societies. Of these beliefs, which from a long time ago has been and is still discussed, is the issue of the divine providence and volition and its relation with human volition. In the *Qur'ān* many verses signify the human responsibility towards his acts and also his freedom of choice. In contrast, some verses put emphasis on the divine providence and volition and God's power and supremacy on the human acts. This duality of interpretation in the divine verses has caused different interpretations of the *qur'ānic* verses to be made in this regard throughout the history and diverse theological sects and denominations to be formed. The stand of these theological sects and denominations has had a great impact on their contemporary governments and cabinets, and somehow has been influential in the formation course of Islamic civilization. With the advent of Islam, the revelation of the Noble *Qur'ān*, and appearance of those verses of the Noble *Qur'ān* which signified the omnipotence (*Qur'ān* 8:43), exhaustive knowledge (*Qur'ān* 6:59), destiny and providence (*Qur'ān* 6:2; 15:22), inclusive volition and providence (*Qur'ān* 76:38) of God and also arrival of those verses that held everybody responsible for his acts, a question was put up in the thoughts of Muslims: whether the destiny of human is predetermined and human has no interference in it, and destiny, providence, and the absolute volition of God has supremacy on all acts of the human, and the divine unchangeable providence must be carried out according to a predetermined plan in the book of fate, or that the human is responsible for and dependent on his acts (*Qur'ān* 74:41) and his destiny would be determined by his own free will and volition and God has given him the freedom of choice in choosing the way of guidance or misguidance (*Qur'ān* 4:3).

Based on a famous and historical report from the first Imām of Shī‘a, known as the narration of Aṣḥagh b. Nubāta, one of the companions of Imām on the way back home from the battle of Ṣiffein asks about the quality of divine destiny and providence and its relation with human acts (*Nahj al-Balāgha*, 1993: sermon 78) and this point shows that this issue has been important from the beginning of Islam. Later, at the time of the Umayyad, the issue of the absolute reign of destiny and the divine volition and providence on all incidents and the humans being doomed by the predetermined destiny was greatly promoted so that the Umayyad had a justification for their usurped and oppressive ruling.<sup>1</sup>

After the Umayyad also this issue has always been discussed in the Islamic societies to the extent that with regard to this issue, the Islamic thinkers were divided into three intellectual sects of Determinists, Libertarians<sup>2</sup> (Delegates), and the midway mode—which was the right path of Ahl al-Bayt (a). Then, the Deterministic thought manifested itself among the Sunnī traditionists and to a great extent among the Ash‘arite, and the Libertarian thought (i.e., human is responsible for his destiny and human acts are delegated to himself) was dissolved in the Mu‘tazilite thought which were called Delegates, and the thought of “neither determinism nor delegation to oneself, but a stand between these two”<sup>3</sup> became the path of the Twelver Shī‘a (*Allāh Badāshī*, 1995: 105; *id.*, 2013: 393).

The main question of the study is that how the exhaustive providence of God could be pulled together with human volition and free will and its requirements such as divine duty and legislation, command and prohibition, promises, justice and wisdom of God.

In this brief study we attempt, besides studying the concept of

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<sup>1</sup> . Will Durant: This belief in destiny and providence has made determinism one of the elements of Islamic thought (*Muṭahharī*, 1994: 422).

<sup>2</sup> . Of course, each of the groups of believers in the divine destiny and its opponents called the other group “Libertarian” so not to be an example of the Prophet’s tradition. (*ibid.*, 372-373; *id.*, 1998, vol. 1: 375).

<sup>3</sup> . For the further study of the theory of “neither determinism nor delegation to oneself, but a stand between these two” (q.v. *Subḥānī*, 1987: 39; *Khumeinī*, 1983: 72-73).

providence and free will, to pull together two different types of verses in the *Qur'ān* about the divine providence and its relation with human volition and to depict the viewpoint of the *Qur'ān*; however, in respect to the varied perceptions held by many *Shī'a* and *Sunnī* interpreters, here we will consider and interpret this issue only based on the works and thoughts of Allāmeḥ Sayyid Muḥammad Hussayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī because he has been one of the contemporary interpreters, philosophers, and theologians and his viewpoints have had a great impact on the formation of the thoughts of contemporary *Shī'a* scholars, and understanding his thoughts somehow gets us closer to the modern stands of *Shī'a*.

### **Conceptuality of providence and free will**

One of the attributes of God's perfection is the attribute of providence and free will. Literarily providence is interpreted as free will, and terminologically it means to have a tendency towards something to the extent that this tendency leads to craving that thing. Since for the theologians this term is a common word both for God and people, Rāghib considers it about God with the meaning of giving existence to something and the existence of something, but when it is used for humans, he takes it as purposefulness (Rāghib Esfahānī, 1991: 1471; Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, vol. 1: 103). Some scholars like Jouharī have considered free will synonymous with providence (Jouharī, 1986, vol. 1: 478). Sometimes regarding the human, free will is used with the meaning of intention; for example, "those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth" (*Qur'ān* 28:83). And sometimes it also is used as the natural agent with the meaning of a happening which is about to happen like, "a wall on the point of falling down..." (*Qur'ān* 18:77). Some theologians such as Shaykh Mufīd and 'Abd al-Jabbār consider free will the same as volition; nonetheless, they make a minor differentiation between the two terms in that the volition is as the preference of an act over another one, but free will is the origin of the performance of an act (McDermott, n.d.: 288).

It is necessary to mention that the *Qur'ān* has reminded divine free will and providence with expressions such as "shā'a" (will) and

“arāda” (want) and their derivatives and that in the Qur’ān it is used 227 times with the root of “shā’a” and 147 with the root of “arāda”. This frequency of use indicates the special importance of this issue from the monotheistic viewpoint of Islam. Besides this, the use of the mentioned attributes and names can be found in narrations (Sadūq, 1997: 336-344).

It should be noted that free will includes volition and compulsion because there is will in every volitional and compulsory act, but there is not volition in every will. For example, when a man stands up without the interference of another agent, he has done an act of volition and free will. However, if the same man moved with the threat and intimidation of another agent, though he has moved with his own will, another factor (other than him) has been influential in this act. Hence, such an act is compulsory. It is also possible that someone else takes this man away forcefully in a way that he cannot overcome him, which in this case such an act is neither based on free will nor volition. So it can be said that human acts can be divided into two types of voluntary and involuntary, and then the voluntary act itself can be divided into compulsory and volitional (Nibyān, 2009: 208; Allah Badāshī, 2007: 130-145).

### ***Existential and legislative providence***

Existential providence is the status of creating objects, which belongs only to God, and He creates objects based on His knowledge, wisdom, and expediency, and since this position is the actual right and originates from the everlasting power of God, transgression against it is impossible and Servants do not have the right of free will in this arena (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 2: 249).

Legislative providence is that God, by sending messengers, informs the Servants from what is expedient or harmful to them so that the Servants do or quit acts with their volition and without any coercion into doing or quitting. So transgression against it is possible (Ṭayyib, 1999, vol. 5: 388). “We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful” (Qur’ān 76:3)

### ***Verses indicating the exhaustive providence of God***

*In the Noble Qur'ān, there are many verses that indicate the complete control of God on all of the universe affairs; verses that have introduced all incidents of the universe based on divine providence and show human void of any volition (Qur'ān 2:213, 247; 3:37; 13:26, 39; 14:4; 76:30; 81:29). Its other manifestation is the monotheism in the ownership, creativity, divinity, and the absolute and exhaustive control of God which is obvious in many verses of the Qur'ān (Allāh Badāshī, 2013: 182-198). In addition to these, the verses of free will, knowledge, omnipotence, and divinely exhaustive authorization also indicate the absolute ruling of God on all affairs (Qur'ān 36:182; 11:107; 85:16; 81:29; 2:33; 6:59; 42:49, 50; 64:11; 7:58; 59: 5).*

### ***Verses indicating the volition and free will of human***

*There are many verses that officially recognize the role of human and his free will and volition in the creation system and the determination of his destiny, and have attributed the acts of humans to themselves. These verses can be divided into some categories:*

***The attribution of acts to Servants:*** *"Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: 'This is from God,' to traffic with it for miserable price! - Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby" (Qur'ān 2:79). There are also other verses that attribute human acts to himself (Qur'ān 74:38; 9:14; 10:41; 28:55; 13:11).*

***Praise and blame or reward and punishment of acts:*** *"He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit" (Qur'ān 6:160; q.v. Qur'ān 99:7; 3:30; 16:97; 59:18; 53:40)*

***Human providence:*** *"The truth is from your Lord ': Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it)..." (Qur'ān 18:29; q.v. Qur'ān 76:3).*

***Questioning the acts:*** *"But stop them, for they must be asked" (Qur'ān 37:24; q.v. Qur'ān 17:36; 21:23; 7:6).*

### ***Special features and traits of human***

***Repentance and fallibility:*** "Others (there are who) have acknowledged their wrong-doings..." (Qur'ān 9:102; q.v. Qur'ān 60:4; 12:97-98).

***Chagrin and remorse:*** "O my Lord! send me back (to life); In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected..." (Qur'ān 23:99-100; q.v. Qur'ān 6:31; 78:40)

### ***The comparison of two categories of verses***

As it can be seen in the above verses, the first category of verses indicates the exhaustive providence of God, but the second category of verses indicates that the human has will and free choice and is responsible for his choices. As Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī also expresses the relation between the providence of God and human volition under the verse of 32 in the *Ornaments of Gold* chapter, "The reason for that the choice of provision and livelihood is not in the hands of humans is the discrepancy between persons in their wealth and poverty, blessing and safety, and offspring and other things which are counted as sustenance; though if you look at every human, you can see that he also wants providence to its utmost extent which is the topmost in his imagination. However, we see that nobody reaches such an aspiration and does not get all of what he wishes and what he likes. We understand from here that provision is not in the hands of humans because if it were, no poor or needy person would be found in any manifestations of sustenance and also in having provision no two persons could be found different from each other. So the difference we see between them is the most vivid reason for that the sustenance in this world is divided among people through the providence of God, and not through the providence of human. In addition, the will and act of humans in attaining sustenance is one of its many requisites, and the other conditions are not in the hands of human, and what is ideal for everybody from different types of sustenance is achieved when all those conditions together are available, and the aggregation of these conditions is in the hand of God from whom all conditions and causes originate" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol.

18: 147). Here Allāmeḥ, in addition to proving the divine absolute providence, also proves the human will. In other words, the aggregation of these verses shows that the human will is not the absolute will and in the horizon of the providence of God. Since if we accept that human has absolute volition, then we must note this point that a creature has been found that is out of the governance and power circle of God, and this is idolatry and is in conflict with the Unity of the Divine Acts (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 12: 389). On the other hand, if we accept that human is forced absolutely, then the result would be nothing except for the absurdness of duty and punishment, and this opinion is in contrast with the freedom of choice in humans which is an obvious matter. So it is right that the system of creation is composed based on “a stand between those two”; i.e., our power, intelligence, awareness, freedom of choice, and will belong to Him and is in line with the divine will and providence and is caused by it; since God has provided us with all the arrangements and requirements of will, it is us that ultimately decide to do or quit the affairs. Hence, as our acts are in need of the arrangements that the Beneficent God has bestowed upon us, we can attribute these arrangements both to Him and to the person who has done the acts. Therefore, not only is not there any contrast and opposition between these two categories, but also there is a certain similarity between them. (Ibid., vol. 5: 385, vol. 10: 163).

### **Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī and attaching the providence of God to the providence of human**

In the Noble Qur'ān, there are verses in which the term “will” is used for the human and deem providence and volition for him and consider him the agent of change in his destiny and, hence, some responsibilities are determined for the human and certain rewards and punishments follow them, "Say, 'The truth is from your Lord': Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it): for the wrong-doers We have prepared a Fire whose (smoke and flames) will hem them in..." (Qur'ān 18:29).

It can be understood from the qur'ānic verses that the providence of humans is derived from the providence that God has given humans and



*it is through His permission that humans are able to do an act. God says about this, "But ye will not, except as God wills" (Qur'ān 76:30). This verse and other similar verses say that human is neither completely forced nor a hundred percent free and independent, but whatever a human has, from intelligence and ingenuity to physical ability and decision-making power, all come from God. This is the very fact that, on one hand, makes the human forever needy of the creator, and, on the other hand, to the extent of his freedom and volition assigns him commitment and responsibility.*

*Under this honorable verse, Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī states, "There is an exception in this verse by which it can be understood that the realization of the providence of Servant is restricted to the will of God. It turns out that the providence of the Sublime God has impact on the providence and act of the Servant, that is, if God wants that an act be committed by the Servant, first the providence and will is made; so the providence of God is applied to the providence of the Servant, not to the act of the Servant. In other words, it is applied independently and without intermediaries to the providence of the Servant and is applied to his act with intermediary. So the influence of the providence of God is not such to require compulsion for the Servant, and it is not like that the Servant be independent in his "will" and does whatever he wishes, even though God does not want it. Therefore, the act of the Servant is voluntary because it is based on his own volition and will, and that the volition of the Servant is not based on the volition of someone else.*

*This verse was for disillusionment because the atheists had an illusion that they were independent in their providence and their volition was not dependent on the volition of their God.... But He, Great be His Glory, is one that every creature is emanated from His presence, and everything ends in Him. So there would be no providence without His providence and will not be realized without his will... (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 1: 81, vol. 2: 143).*

*Therefore, not only is not there any contrast and opposition between this category of verses and those verses that deem providence for God, but also there is a certain similarity between them.*

*So based on the verses, the differences between the providence of*

*Sublime God and the providence of human can be discussed in two major issues:*

***No need for the availability of requirements:*** *One of the differences between the providence of God and the providence of the Servants is that the providence of the creatures can be realized out in the world provided that its requirements are available; i.e., noticing the intended phenomenon and its image, inclination and interest towards it, determination and decision for carrying it out, and, most importantly, the providence of Servants are all dependent on the permission of God... but the providence of God does not need any of these affairs at all because God has intuitive knowledge and encompassment over all things and as soon as the will is made, it is created and realized (Muṣṭafavī, 1989, vol. 6: 158).*

***Being absolute and indefinite:*** *One of the other differences between the providence of God and the providence of Servants is that the providence of Servants is infinite and is confined with a lot of restrictions because the providence is one of the manifestations and works of power and knowledge, and the omnipotence and omniscience in the universe belong to God, and creatures have confined knowledge and power which originate from the indefinite power of God; so the scope of providence and volition of creatures is as much as their knowledge and power (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 12: 279). About the Servants being confined and the dependence of their providence on the providence of God, the Qur'ān says, "Nor say of anything, 'I shall be sure to do so and so tomorrow', without adding, 'So please God!' and call thy Lord to mind when thou forgettest, and say, 'I hope that my Lord will guide me ever closer (even) than this to the right road'" (Qur'ān 18:23-24).*

*This verse indicates the point that since human has limited knowledge and power and is not aware of the obstacles that will occur in the future, his providence also is confined and dependent on the providence of God and he cannot get anything done without the providence of God (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1995, vol. 12: 385)*

***The use of the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt (a) in the interpretation of verses***

As it was explained above, based on the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (a), the acts of the human is neither compulsory nor delegated, rather "a stand between those two". This interpretation has been reported with different documents in the tradition resources that says the human is neither compelled nor left alone to himself, but rather it is "a stand between these two" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 1: 160; Şadūq, 1997: 206).

Contrary to the perception of the determinists, Allāmeḥ holds that the human can change his destiny by the will and volition which is deposited in his nature, and achieve the eternal bliss or everlasting affliction by the power of choice. In other words, among all kinds of creatures, the human kind is a kind of being whose existence never gets perfect unless with a series of volitional and voluntary acts (Ibid., vol. 4: 48).

Under the verse 68 of *The Story* chapter, he states, "There is not doubt that the human has an existential free will over the acts he does based on knowledge and free will... on the other hand, human sees himself free-willed per se, with the legislative free will, to do or quit an act; i.e., in contrast to the existential free will, he considers himself free-willed legislatively (Ibid., vol. 16: 97). To Allāmeḥ's belief, it is based on this will that the human is responsible for his acts (Ibid., vol. 12: 69) and must respond for his good and bad acts (Ibid., 484-485).

In the book *Qurb al-isnād*, it is narrated by Bazanṭī that he said, "I told Imām Riḍā (a), 'some of our companions believe in determinism and some others in ability. What is your opinion?' He told me, 'Write that the Sublime God says, 'O the son of Adam, you think what you want for yourself, your wish, is independent from you; it is not like this, rather you want because of my providence and you do my obligations with my force and it is by my bless that you have strength to disobey me. It is me that has made you hearing, sighted, and strong. Every good and bad reaching you is from me, and what disaster and evil reaches you is from you, and this is because I deserve good things more than you, and you deserve bad things more than me' ... O Bazanṭī, I told you everything

with this remark...." (Ḥimyarī, 1992: 151). This narration or one similar to it has been narrated through common and particular ways . So this narration can be used to suggest that what is sin from acts is not attributed to God only because it is sin.

Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates from Imām Bāqir (a) and Imām Ṣādiq (a), "God's love towards His creatures is more than that He forces them to commit sin and then punishes them, and God is mightier than that He wants something and it does not occur." The narrator says, "Those two nobles were asked, 'Is there a third position between compulsion and delegation?' They said, 'Yes, there is a position wider than the gap between the sky and the earth'" (Ṣadūq, 1977: 360).

Someone asked Ja'far b. Ṣādiq (a) about fate and destiny. Then Imām said, "What you can censure a Servant for is his act, and what you cannot censure a Servant for is an act of God. The Sublime God [for censuring] says to His Servant, 'Why did you disobey? Why did you become evildoer? Why did you drink wine? Why did you do adultery?' So these are the acts of the Servant; but He does not ask, 'Why did you become sick? Why did you become incapable? Why did you become white? Why did you become black?' It is because these affairs are the acts of the Sublime God." (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 5: 59).

### ***False results of the belief in attaching the absolute free will of God to all objects and acts***

If in the issue of the divine providence and free will we believe in the attachment, i.e., we believe that the providence of God attaches to all objects and all acts of the human, this belief would have results that here we want to show regarding the works of Allāmeḥ. In explaining the narration of Aṣḥāb b. Nubātah in the book 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Rizā, Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī says, "The scholars of dialectic theology have brought up this issue as if the divine free will is attached to all parts and works of the universe. Nothing in the universe comes into existence unless through the divine free will and volition, and it is impossible that His will won't occur, and also everything that does not come into existence is due to His refusal for giving existence to it as the divine free will is not attached to it becoming existent, otherwise it could have

*become existent. So what exists must exist (it is a necessary being), and what does not exist must not exist (it is an impossible being), and it is not possible for none of these two categories to be out of the authority of the divine volition and will. If we generalize this principle and include all creatures, there will be a problem about the voluntary acts that we humans do (because our acts also are beings. If they become existent, they become existent obligatorily and necessarily due to the divine free will. If they do not become existent, they do not become existent due to His refusal. Therefore, we are compelled in what we do and what we do not); while at first glance and before start we figure out that to us the relationship of doing that act is the same as quitting it, i.e., we feel power and volition in ourselves for doing it as much as we feel for quitting it. If between them, that is doing and quitting, we commit one of them, this can be determined by our volition and then our free will. It is us that at first choose and then free-will it and as a result, one side overweighs the other side whereas both sides have been equal so far. So consciously, our acts are volitional and our free will is influential in their realization and is the cause for their generation. However, if we accept the above general principle and hold that the pre-eternal and unbreakable free will of God is attached to our acts, in the first place this volition that we consider for ourselves is void, and then against our conscience we have to say that our free will is not effective in doing and quitting our acts. If this is the case, then power before the act has no longer any meaning and as a result, duty would be meaningless because duty is derived from that the responsible person must have power over the act before the act itself; especially, if the responsible person intends to disobey, his duty would be the duty beyond the power. The other problem, in this case, is that rewarding someone who has obeyed compulsorily would be a causeless rewarding, and punishing the disobeying person under compulsion is also oppression and evil." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2008: 159-161).*

*After mentioning the inappropriate requisites of the belief in the absolute free will of God, Allāmeḥ attempts to provide a clear explanation of the relation between the divine providence and the volitional acts of human. In a treatise on compulsion and*

determination, he holds, "A volitional act that is committed by human and is done based on his free will and volition is in a sense obligatory and in another sense possible. If we consider an act from an aspect through which all conditions, from knowledge to free will, the proper instruments and machinery, the material that the act is done on it, and the time and place conditions are available for it to become existent, such an act is necessarily existent, and it is this act that we hold the pre-eternal free will of God is attached to and is a matter of His fate and destiny.

Moreover, if we ponder from another aspect through which all the aforementioned conditions are not considered, and assess the act only with one of those conditions like the agent, then of course such an act is not necessary, but it is possible and cannot transgress the possibility limit. So if an act becomes necessary from the first aspect, it also is not required to be necessarily existent from the second aspect.

So it became clear that regarding the issue of fate and destiny and its generalization towards all creatures, the scholars of dialectic theology have concluded that the acts of the human are not volitional; this is not true because we told that the divine free will attaches to the acts of humans, with all the status and characteristics of its existence which one of them is its relation with the causes and conditions of its existence.

In other words, the free will of God is attached to an act committed by someone in such a way that the mentioned act is committed by the volition of that person and not in an absolute way, and also in such and such time and place, not every time and place. When the volition is attached like this, if that person commits that act without volition, then the intention has deviated from the volition and this deviation is impossible.

Now, we can say the effect of the pre-eternal free will for making the mentioned act necessarily existent requires that the act be done by the agent with volition; as we already said such an act is attached to the pre-eternal free will. As a result, this very act under discussion is relatively a necessary being through the divine pre-eternal free will, and at the same time it is relatively a possible existence through the

*volition of the agent himself.*

*So the volition of the mentioned agent is in line with the free will of God, and not in its horizon so that they cannot be added up; thus, no one can say that if the divine free will impacts, the human volition will become ineffective and void, and he cannot use such an excuse to become deterministic.*

*So in the words of Allāmeḥ, the mistake of determinists is caused by that they couldn't recognize how the free will of God is attached to the acts of Servants. Also, they could not differentiate between two longitudinal wills and two horizontal wills. The result of this mistake is that they say the volition of the Servant has become ineffective because of the pre-eternal free will of God.*

*Although Mu'tazilaists have opposed the determinists in the issue of the acts of the Servants to be volitional and its other requirements, they have gone extreme in proving the issue of volition. They held that if the pre-eternal free will of God is attached to the acts of Servants, there will be no volition. So the acts of the Servants are not under the pre-eternal free will of God, and they became obliged to consider another creator for the acts of humans and that is the humans themselves. In short, they became obliged to say, "All creatures have a creator with the name of God, but the acts of humans have another creator who is the human himself."*

*They were unaware of this fact that this itself is duality. Moreover, they have got scruples which are way bigger than the scruple of the determinists, as Imām Riḍā (a) said, "Mu'tazilaists wanted in some way to describe God as just; instead they denied the omnipotence and sovereignty of God" (Ibid., 167-175).*

### ***The final conclusion of Allāmeḥ from the narrations***

*If the reader looks carefully at the above detailed explanation of the narrations, finally he can reach this conclusion that different narrations have considered this issue in many and various ways, and have provided different reasons regarding the context and the existing conditions. These reasons are classified in four groups as following.*

***To reason with command and prohibition, and punishment and***

**reward:** Its instances testify the existence of volition and that there is no completion and no delegation, and this was the reasoning of the Commander of the Faithful (a) in his response to that old man. Also what we have used from the word of the Sublime God is close to this way.

**To reason with the occurrence of affairs in the Noble Qur'an which are not in agreement with compulsion and delegation:** That is, if it were actually compulsion or delegation, those affairs would not be mentioned in the Qur'an, like this verse that says, "To God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth" (Qur'an 3:189), or this one that says, "Nor is thy Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants" (Qur'an 41:46) , or this one saying, "Say: 'Nay, God never commands what is shameful'" (Qur'an 7:28). Nonetheless, it is possible to have controversy over the latest verse and hold that if one of the acts were shameful or oppressing, when this very act be attributed to God, it would no longer be called oppressing and shameful. So no oppression and shamefulness is committed by God. However, this controversy is not correct and the beginning of the verse answers it with its referent since it says at the beginning of the verse, "When they do aught that is shameful, they say: 'We found our fathers doing so'; and 'God commanded us thus.'" Referring to the expression of "to that" makes us to say that the next negation which says "Say: 'Nay, God never commands what is shameful'" also refers to the same shameful act, whether we call it shameful or not.

**To reason with attributes:** It is because God is named with the most beautiful names and is attributed with the best and greatest attributes; attributes with whose existence neither compulsion nor delegation is correct. For example, the Sublime God is omnipotent, dominant, benevolent, and merciful. The true and actual meanings of these attributes are not realized in the Purified God unless the existence of everything be from Him and the deficiency of every creature and its corruption be referred to the creature itself and not to God, as this meaning was pointed out in the narrations we mentioned from the book Divine Unity.

**To reason with the instance of penitence and the appropriateness**



*of blame: If the sin were not from the Servant, his penitence and God's blaming of him is meaningless because based on compulsion by which all acts are attributed to God, there would be no difference between good and bad acts so that the blame of the Servant in his bad acts could be appropriate and in his good acts inappropriate. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol.1: 95-105)*

### **Conclusion**

*Through pondering and studying different proposed viewpoints on the issue under discussion, the final result of this article can be summarized in the following points:*

*1. From the viewpoint of Islamic scholars, the early proposition of the issue of compulsion and volition and its background dates back to the beginning of Islam and the revelation teachings and narrations of Prophet Muḥammad (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a).*

*2. Generally viewed, different viewpoints about human volition can be limited to three theories: a) extreme determinist, b) extreme Mu'tazilaist, and c) the midway Twelver Shī'a, since the root of other sayings and ideas returns in a way to one of these.*

*3. Determinists have considered the verses about the providence and free will of the Sublime God true and the verses about human volition possible; Mu'tazilaists, in contrary, have considered referring to the first category of the verses possible and referring to the second category of verses true .*

*4. Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, as a deist interpreter and philosopher – whose theistic viewpoint, philosophical and mystic thought, and doctrinal origin stem from the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah – who had a multi-faceted stance towards this issue, and in interpretive topics under the Qur'ānic verses used the special approach of interpreting the Qur'ān with the Qur'ān and regarded the coherence and cohesion of a set of verses together and also gained the most scientific benefit from the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt(a) by using those narrations*

for explaining the compulsion and volition issue, holds that if the reader studies these narrations carefully, he will see that they contain special and many methods of reasoning: to reason with command, prohibition, punishment, and reward; to refer to the Noble Qur'ān and reason with the occurrence of affairs which do not agree with compulsion and delegation; to reason with the attributes and the most beautiful names of God like omnipotence, dominance, benevolence, and mercifulness of God; to reason with the instance of penitence, and the appropriateness of blaming the human.

5. Finally, Allāmeḥ has solved the issue under discussion in two basic ways: a) through the contents of the form of the qur'ānic verses and a collective outlook towards all of them, especially under the verse 30 of the Time chapter in which the providence of God is attached to human providence and not to human acts, b) through a set of narrations of Aḥl al-Bayt (a), especially those narrations which explain the midway theory of Shī'a—i.e., neither absolute compulsion nor absolute delegation. In this way, both the volition and free will of human and also the absolute providence of God in the entire system of genesis and legislation are preserved; however, this providence is not directly attached to human acts to be in need of compulsion, but rather it attaches to providence of the Servant. Thus, human free will becomes in line with the free will of God, i.e., God wants human to do an act or quit it by his volition.

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