



## GOD – CREATOR OF EVIL?

IF GOD EXISTS WHY IS THERE EVIL IN THE WORLD?

**This paper is based on reading of Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani on the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafi – Sharh al-Aqa'id al-Nasafi**

The first point to discuss is the issue of whether Allah is the creator of everything or can humans create their actions. This will help to understand whether Evil is brought about by humans or God.

The view amongst the Ah'l Sunna wa'l Jama' is that,

Allah is the creator (khaliq) of all the actions of His creatures whether of Unbelief in Islam (al-kufr) or of Belief in Islam (al-iman), of obedience (al-ta'a) or of disobedience (al-'isyan).

There are a number of verses which justify this view for instance, the statement of Allah, "And Allah has created you and what you do" (Qur'an 37:94). This means "your doing," the ma (what) being masdariya (related to a verbal noun) so that there is no necessity for omitting the pronoun; or it means "your deed," the ma being mawsula (relational), and this comprises actions. Similarly, there is the statement of Allah, "Allah is the creator of everything" (Qur'an 39:63, 13:17). This by rational proof means everything possible, and the action of the creature is a possible thing. There is also the statement of Allah, "Is the one who creates as the one who does not?" (Qur'an 16:17). This praises the office of creator, and connects it up with being worthy of receiving adoration (al-ibada).

Therefore all actions evil or otherwise are by His Will and Desire

An objection may be raised that the evil-doer is without choice and somewhat 'forced' in his evil-doing, so it is not sound to make him legally responsible for being obedient. In reply we say that Allah willed for him evil-doing but it occurred by his own choice, so there is no compulsion. For He knew that he would choose evil-doing, so as a result He cannot be accused of making him legally responsible for the impossible, because he had a choice.

Having said that, since the Knowledge and Will of Allah have been rendered universal it is absolutely certain that compulsion of creatures must follow, for Knowledge and Will are either connected with the existence of the action and so it is necessary, or with the non-existence of the action and then it is impossible; and there can be no choice when there is necessity and impossibility. In answer we say that He knows and wills that the creature will do the action or not do it by his own choice, so there is no confusion about that. Objection may be made that his act of free choice is either necessary or impossible, both are inconsistent with free choice. To this we reply that this position is impossible, for necessity by choice proves choice as a reality and is not inconsistent with it.

One could argue that there is no meaning to the statement that the creature acts by choice, unless he be the one who brings his actions into existence by purpose and will; and that it has already been shown that Allah is independent in creating actions and bringing them into existence; and also that it is a well-known fact that a thing over which someone has power does not come under two independent powers.



The key point in this discussion is differentiating between Allah, who is the creator (al-khaliq) of everything and the creature, who is an acquirer (kasib). The clarification of this position is that when the creature expends his power and will in action it is an acquisition (kasb) and when Allah brings it into existence, it is a creating (khalq).

One may object by saying, “How is it that the acquisition of evil is evil, vulgar, and necessarily deserving of blame and punishment, whereas the creating of it is not?” We reply that the reason why this is so is because the Creator is all-Wise and Great, and because He does not create anything unless it has a praiseworthy outcome. Although we do not perceive it, we must hold that those actions which we deem evil sometimes have in them wise and beneficial matters, just as in the creation of the base and harmful bodies which give pain, whereas it is not so in the case of acquisition; for sometimes the good may be done and sometimes the evil. So together with the prohibition of that which is evil we make his acquisition of it evil and vulgar and necessarily deserving of blame and punishment.

In short, Allah is the creator of Evil, but humans acquire evil acts through choice which were already known by Allah through His Knowledge, Will and Desire.

In fact, it is that Allah exists that Evil exists as He is its creator. It is not down to Allah’s inability that it exists based on the assumption that God only creates Good and cannot remove Evil as then He would no longer be a God. Does He not create disbelief, atheism, agnosticism? How can they be a worse Evil than to create the concept that He doesn’t exist?

In conclusion, these acts of evil and good which Allah has created as trials, opportunities and evidence are so that we have the choice to acquire acts. These acts that Allah has created through His Knowledge, Will and Desire are under His complete authority, and has created them in order to then hold individuals to account and either reward or punish depending on the decisions and choices they make.

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