

## Shari'ah: Between Adopting Means & Divine Decree

On Sunday, March 15, 2020, **Mufti Rabbul Haq** (*May Allah protect and preserve him*) delivered a talk explaining the role of Taqdeer and Tadbeer in Shari'ah. Below is a loose translation of his valuable words:

“Our body is a blessing and trust (*amānah*) from Allah. If we are to use this body in accordance with Allah's commands, then we hope that, Allah-willing, we will not be afflicted with any widespread disease that has people in fear, such as viruses. Allah Most High does not transform a blessing into a calamity until we transform our gratitude into ingratitude. Allah Most High says:

“*Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change themselves.*” (13:11)

One of the meanings given for this verse is:

“*Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change themselves [by adopting the means of change].*”

When one has adopted the means of change, only then can they expect Allah to change their condition.

If we want God-consciousness (*taqwā*), chastity (*tahārah*), or knowledge (*ilm*), we must first adopt the means of acquiring them. If a person says, “I want to acquire knowledge”, they must adopt the means of acquiring knowledge such as purchasing the required books, finding a teacher, and applying for admission into an Islamic school (*madrasah*). They cannot acquire knowledge by mere wishful thinking alone. Similarly, if a person desires lawful offspring, they must first get married. If they do not get married, how can they expect to produce lawful offspring? In this manner, if one does not adopt the means of committing sins, one will not incur sin. Therefore, one must avoid the means of committing sins. Instead, they should strive to adopt the means of good, so as to acquire goodness.

Allah Most High has made this world an abode of means (*dar al-asbāb*). The meaning of ‘abode of means’ is that Allah Most High has made things conventionally dependent on means. For example, we have been hearing that coronavirus is transmitted to people. In regards to this, we will say,

the creator of this transmission is Allah Most High. If he does not create this transmission, no transmission can occur. He alone is the sole creator of the transmission [of the virus]. But, at the same time, we must avoid the [conventional] means of transmission. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said:

*“There is no contagion [of disease]. There is no bad omen. There is no reincarnation as a bird. There is no worm in the stomach.”*

The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) had been granted comprehensive speech. He (peace and blessing be upon him) was able to convey profound and comprehensive meanings in a limited, small number of words. The scholars have given multiple meanings for his phrase ‘There is no contagion [of disease]’:

1. Not every disease is contagious
2. There is no contagion without Allah’s command
3. Do not transmit diseases

This third meaning is similar in grammatical structure to Allah’s saying in the Quran:

*“The Hajj is (to be performed in) the months that are well-known. So whoever undertakes Hajj in them, there should be **no obscenity, no sin, no quarrel** in the Hajj.”(2:197)*

Thus, we must ensure we do not transmit those diseases that doctors have declared highly contagious. Wherever we find ourselves, we should remain there.

If we hear of widespread disease somewhere, we must not enter that place. If we are in a place where disease has spread, we must not flee. Once, whilst travelling, Sayyiduna ‘Umar (may Allah Most High be pleased with him) heard of the spread of a contagious disease in a certain place. About such contagious diseases, the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said:

*“Flee from the leper as you would flee from a lion.”*

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) compared fleeing from leprosy like fleeing from a lion, a comparison of miraculous nature now substantiated by research on a disease called Leonine Facies.

So, Sayyiduna ‘Umar (may Allah Most High be pleased with him) consulted with his companions. However, they were unable to reach a decision. Thereupon, one companion shared a Prophetic narration which states:

*“If you hear that it (a disease) is in a land, do not go there, and if it breaks out in a land where you are, do not leave, fleeing from it.”*

This narration indicates that entering a land where it is known that disease has spread is tantamount to completely disregarding the conventional means that Allah Most High has created for adoption. In this case, one is deeming conventional means to be useless, while Allah Most High has created them to be used.

At the same time, the narration commands one to not flee from such a land. Because, fleeing is contrary to the Divine Decree. One usually flees from a disease-infested land in the hope of escaping death [which is impossible]. Thus, entering a disease-infested land contradicts ‘adopting means’ (*tadbeer*); fleeing from a disease-infested land contradicts belief in the Divine Decree (*taqdeer*). A human lives between adopting means and the Divine Decree.

A man said to ‘Umar (may Allah Most High be pleased with him), “will you flee from the Divine Decree of Allah?”

“How I wish someone other than you had said this!” Sayyiduna ‘Umar (may Allah Most High be pleased with him) replied [out of love for him], “yes, we are fleeing from the Divine Decree to the Divine Decree”.

**In conclusion:** Shari’ah commands regard for both *tadbeer* and *taqdeer*.