

WHY DID GOD CREATE? (PART 2 OF 3): DIVINE MERCY AND JUSTICE

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Description: The answer to the fundamental question about the reason why God created. Part 2: The manifestation of Divine Mercy and Justice in God's act of creating.

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The Merciful, the Forgiving

In the creation of humankind, the divine attributes of forgiveness, mercy and kindness are also manifested. Human beings were created good and pure with a natural awareness of good and evil. The Almighty also created in humans desires, and gave them an ability to control those desires according to divine law or to turn them loose and follow them blindly. God created mankind knowing that they would disobey Him. Consequently, He taught human beings, beginning with Adam, how to repent and thereby purify themselves of their sins. Adam and Eve represent a pattern for all mankind to follow. They forgot the commandment of God, and Satan played on their desires. After they had disobeyed God, they turned back to Him in repentance, and He forgave them. In humankind's disobedience and turning back to God in repentance, the divine attributes of total forgiveness and infinite mercy become manifest. The final Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, informed his followers of this reality, saying:

“If you did not commit sins and turn to God, seeking His forgiveness, He would have replaced you with another people who would sin, ask God’s forgiveness and He would forgive them.” (Saheeh Muslim)

Every one of the 114 Chapters of the final revelation, except one, begins with the prayer, “In the name of God, the Beneficent the Most Merciful.” God’s attributes of mercy and forgiveness are stressed to encourage humans not to fall into despair. No matter how great the sins of human beings may be, God can forgive them if man turns back to Him in sincere repentance. The Messenger, was quoted as saying:

“When God created the universe, He made an obligation on Himself [recorded] in a document kept by Him: ‘My mercy supersedes my wrath.’” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

He was also reported to have said:

“[God created] mercy with one hundred parts, one of which was sent down upon the jinn, human beings and other living beings. It is out of this one part that they love each other, show kindness to each other and even the animals treat their offspring with affection. God has reserved the remaining ninety-nine parts for His true worshippers on the Day of Resurrection.” (Saheeh Muslim)

Had God wished, He could have created mankind like angels, incapable of committing sin. However, that was not His wish, as He had already created angels. Human beings were created capable of making mistakes and when they realize their errors and seek God’s forgiveness, the divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness become manifest.

Supreme Justice

In the judgment of mankind at the end of this world, God’s attributes of supreme justice and fairness also become manifest. Based on His infinite knowledge, God could have created all members of the human race who were to live on earth and immediately placed some of them in paradise and the remainder in hell. Before creating man, God already knew what choices they would make in this life, what provision and opportunities He would give them, and in what state of belief or disbelief they would die. Therefore, in one sense it could be said that some people were created for paradise and others for hell. Aisha, wife of the Prophet Muhammad, quoted him as saying:

“Don’t you know that God created paradise and hell, and He created inhabitants for each?” (Abu Dawood, An-Nasai)

If God had immediately placed those headed for paradise in paradise, they would not question God’s decision. Those in paradise would happily accept an everlasting life of bliss and be thankful that they were not placed in hell. However, those immediately placed in hell would ask why. They would feel a sense of unfairness due to their ignorance of what they would have done had they lived on earth. Those in hell would relentlessly argue that had they been given a chance to live out their lives on earth, they would have believed and done righteous deeds. Consequently, God allows human beings to live out their lives on earth and make all the choices they would have made, so that everyone who enters hell will know that they chose hell by themselves. They will recognize God’s mercy in their lives and acknowledge their sin in rejecting His signs and guidance. And they will accept His judgment as being just and beyond reproach. However, they will still beg for another chance to do good in this world, as God says in the Quran:

“If only you could see [the time] when the sinners will bow their heads before their Lord, [saying], ‘Our Lord! We have now seen and heard, so send us back and we will

do righteous deeds. Verily, we now believe with certainty.” (Quran 32:12)

However, if God were to send them back to this world having forgotten what they had seen of hell, they would again choose evil and end up in hell as before. God spoke about this in the Quran:

“But if they were returned [to this world], they would certainly go back to what was forbidden to them. Indeed they are liars.” (Quran 6:28)

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