

Freedom and determination

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

The Quran sets forth the concept that God Almighty is the Lord of the Universe; He is the sustainer and the controller of the whole world. Man cannot do anything without God's permission. These Quranic verses lay emphasis on the supremacy of God Almighty. But this does not mean that in this world everything is pre-determined and man has no choice of his own.

Everyone enjoys freedom and everyone is living with his freedom. The way man feels about what he does, or chooses not to do, is in itself testimony to there being no compulsion; everyone does as he pleases. In the light of his own experience, everyone feels himself to be a free person. Man does, in fact, enjoy complete freedom, but this freedom is a matter of his own sense of free-will. It is everyone's own feeling or experience that he is not living under any compulsion or constraints. Then what is the equation between man and God? In this

world everything was created by God, and if man wants to do anything, he needs many or all of the components of the human life support system, such as sunlight, water, air, minerals, oxygen, etc. All these things are part of the earthly infrastructure and this infrastructure is under the total control of God. So, while freedom of choice is man's privilege, the required infrastructure is provided by God. So, it is a fifty-fifty situation. Man has every right to think or plan, but when he tries to execute his planning, he has no other option than to use the divine infrastructure. In terms of free-will, he enjoys complete freedom, but in terms of infrastructure, he is completely under God's command. That is, that in terms of intention and planning, man is completely free, but in terms of implementation or actualisation, man has no freedom. He is compelled to find support from God.

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