

The Issue of Freewill & Allaah's statement "You do not will unless Allah wills"

Explained by Imam Ibn Uthaymeen

"But you cannot will, unless Allah wills."

The Quran 76:30



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ

For whoever wills among you to take the straight path (Surah al-Takwir Verse 28)

"For whoever wills" is connected to what came before it, "It is only a reminder to the worlds, for whoever among you wills to take the straight path". As for those who choose not to take the straight path, they neither accept the reminder, nor do they gain any benefit from it. Allah says about those who do accept the reminder:

ن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَ لِمَ

In that is surely a reminder for whoever has a heart or listens while he is heedful. [Sūrah Qāf, 50:37]

For anyone who does not want to take this straight path, there is no way to benefit such a person with this Quran.

The Issue of Freewill:

Here is a question: **Do people actually have freewill to do as they choose?** Yes, people have the freedom to choose as they will. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) wants, he does something, if not he does not do it.

If this were not the case—if people had no freewill—then anyone to whom the messengers were sent would have an excuse against Allah to plead (because they disbelieved): **“We had no choice in the matter.”**

So yes, people certainly have the freedom to act on their choices. Each individual knows that if he decides, for example, to visit Mecca, Medina, or some other place, it is by his choice. Anytime a person makes a choice, it is by his own decision. He neither feels others force his choice on him or force him to prefer one thing over another.

Similarly, if an individual chooses to obey Allah, it is by his own choice. And should someone choose to commit a sin, it is also by his own choice. So people do have freewill yet we know with total certainty that people will never “will,” or actually make something happen (including his own actions), unless Allah has willed it to happen before it happens. For this reason, after "For whoever wills among you to take the straight path" Allah then clarifies: "And you do not will unless Allah wills".

We do not will for anything to happen unless Allah has already allowed it to happen. So when anything happens, we know Allah has obviously allowed

it to take place. If Allah had not allowed it to happen, we could not have willed it to occur ourselves as Allah (عِلَاعَت) says:

وَلَوْ كَفَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ مِّنْ فَمِنُهُم اخْتَلَفُوا وَلَكِن الْبَيِّنَاتُ جَاءَتْهُمْ مَّا بَعُدْ مَنْ بَعْدِهِم مِّنَ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا مَا اللَّهُ شَاءَ وَلَوْ
افْتَتَلُوا مَا اللَّهُ شَاءَ

If Allah had willed, those (generations) succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, so some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other. [Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:253]

So after we have done anything, we know we chose to do it based on our will and choice, but we also know that this occurred by the will of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), (وجل), ti dehsilpmocca evah ton dluow ew ,ti delliw ton dah eh fl .

Now we come to another question: Based on the points above, we then have an excuse to commit sins because whatever happens, Allah allows it and has willed it. We say no, we have no justification for sinning because we have no way of knowing whether Allah has willed something or not until after we have done the deed – after we have chosen to do it. We cannot say, “Allah has willed this for me,” until the sin has already taken place. So once the sin does take place, once it is committed, why was it committed? Because of our freewill and our choice to do it. Therefore, sinners have no justification or excuse before Allah. He nullifies this claim by saying:

دَافُوا حَتَّى قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبَ كَذَلِكَ شَيْءٍ مِّنْ حَرَمْنَا وَلَا أَبَاؤُنَا وَلَا أَشْرَكْنَا مَا اللَّهُ شَاءَ لَوْ أَشْرَكُوا الَّذِينَ سَيَقُولُ
بِأَسْنَا

Those who associated others (in worship) with Allah will say, “If Allah had willed, we would not have associated partners with him, nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything (against his will).”

Likewise, those before them denied until they tasted our punishment. [Sūrah al-An’ām, 6:148]

If they had any justification for making their Shirk (worshipping others with Allah), then they would not have been punished by Allah; they would have been spared the punishment. But they had no right or excuse to worship others, so they were punished. As another example, consider that if someone were informed about a land, safe and peaceful, with sufficient

provision and affluence for everyone, everywhere and with successful commerce and a strong economy not found in another land. At the same time, the person is also told of a land where people constantly fear for their lives, live in chaos, having no reliable economy, no law and order, no guaranteed safety for anyone. To which land would he choose to travel? Of course, he travels to the first land and he does not imagine someone, somewhere has forced him to make his decision. He chose the first land based on his own determination and freewill.

We have before us now a similar choice: a path to good and a path leading to evil. Allah has already clearly simplified the two for us: this is the path to Paradise, this one to Hell.

In addition, he explained some of what is waiting for us in Paradise of blessings and enjoyment and some punishments that await us in the fire. Which path do we take? Clearly, we would choose the path to Paradise just like we would choose to move to the peaceful land over the land in turmoil. Had we chosen the path to the fire, we alone would have justifiably been to blame. We would have made the worst, most foolish choice just as if we had decided to move to the land of fear and instability. Everyone would understandably hold us responsible for our own choice.

Therefore, in Allah's statement "**For whoever wills among you**", he confirms that each individual has the choice and will to decide his actions; he has freewill. Still, we know that even before we do or will anything, once it has happened, we know full well that Allah willed it to happen. Otherwise, it would not have occurred.

Many times, people become determined to do something, yet at the last minute they find themselves unable to do it for whatever reason. This is because Allah did not will such an action to take place. For example, we may decide to go to the mosque to attend a lecture, yet on our way there, we may then remember we have some other obligations which prevent us from attending.

As a final example, it is said that a common Bedouin, knowing little about the details of religion, was asked, "**How do you know you have a Lord?**" he answered, "**By unfulfilled determination and changes in plans.**" In other words, a person may be fully determined to do something, completely

resolved and able to do it. Yet, something totally contradictory to his intentions occurs. Who changed his resolve? He does not think someone made him prefer something over his original decision. Instead, Allah simply did not will it to happen.

Similarly, a person may plan to do something and sets out to accomplish his plans, but he then finds within himself some reason not to carry out his plans. It may be something physically preventing him or simply a change of mind; he decides to do something else instead. All of this is from Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).

Source : [Explaining Sūrah al-Takwīr](#) - Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn. Translated by Abu az-Zubayr Harrison

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