

304986 - Allah governs and cares for all created things

the question

What is the difference between Allah's governing (tadbeer) of all created things and Allah's care ('inaayah) for all created things?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, tells us that (interpretation of the meaning):

“He governs [yadabbir] [each] matter from the heaven to the earth; then it will ascend to Him in a Day, the extent of which is a thousand years of those which you count.

That is the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, the Exalted in Might, the Merciful”

[as-Sajdah 32:5-6].

And He, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then He established Himself above the Throne and made subject the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. He governs [yudabbir] [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain”

[ar-Ra'd 13:2]

“Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne, governing the matter [of His creation]. There is no intercessor except after His permission. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him. Then will you not remember?”

[Yoonus 10:3].

Governing means dealing with matters in order of priority, according to the expected outcomes.

See: at-Tafseer al-Baseet (11/121).

So Allah, may He be exalted, ordains all that exists, as dictated by His wisdom and His will.

“He governs [each] matter” means: He directs the affairs of all that exists in accordance with a precise system and great wisdom.

“He governs [each] matter” means that He wills and decrees for it whatever is in accordance with His wisdom.

See: at-Tafseer al-Waseet, Majma‘ al-Buhooth al-Islamiyyah (4/50, 4/82, 5/402).

Shaykh as-Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Here Allah highlights His Lordship, divinity and greatness:

“Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days” even though He is able to create them in a single moment, because of the divine wisdom behind that, for He is not hasty in His actions.

Another aspect of His wisdom is that He created them on the basis of and for truth, so that He may be known by His names and attributes, and worship may be devoted to Him alone.

“and then”, after creating the heavens and the earth, He “established Himself above the Throne” in a manner that befits His greatness.

“governing the matter [of His creation]” in the upper and lower realms, such as causing death, giving life, sending down provision, giving the days of various fortune to people by turns, granting relief to those who have suffered harm, and responding to the pleas of those who ask of Him.

He is in full control in all senses; all of creation is subjugated to His might and submitting to His greatness and authority.

Secondly:

Part of Allah's governing all created things is His care for them. That is called the "proof of divine care" or the "proof of divine order", because it enables a person to reflect deeply on the universe and what it contains of created things, and how these things, and their conditions and circumstances, point to Allah's care for this universe and how He governs and directs the affairs of His creation, and what that points to of His knowledge, wisdom, might, and mercy towards His creation, may He be glorified.

Among the Qur'anic verses which speak of Allah's care are the following (interpretation of the meaning):

"And We placed within the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with them, and We made therein [mountain] passes [as] roads that they might be guided.

And We made the sky a protected ceiling, but they, from its signs, are turning away.

And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all [heavenly bodies] in an orbit are swimming"

[al-Anbiya' 21:31-33]

"And the earth - We have spread it and cast therein firmly set mountains and caused to grow therein [something] of every well-balanced thing.

And We have made for you therein means of living and [for] those for whom you are not providers.

And there is not a thing but that with Us are its depositories, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure.

And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers"

[al-Hijr 15:19-22].

These verses, and many other, similar verses, draw one's attention to what there is in this universe of precise order and harmony between the various parts of the universe, which definitively points to perfect divine care for this universe and all that it contains, and indicates that it is one mighty God Who has ordered all that it contains in the best manner, for there is nothing in the universe that is not in the right place and the right amount; everything in it is based on utmost wisdom, care and precision. The one who examines this wondrous precision and order in all things, on earth and in heaven and in between, which is such that any change in it would lead to disorder and chaos, cannot but believe in the oneness of Allah, may He be exalted.

If we were to ask an astronomer to explain to us the subtleties of astronomical calculations and the order, and great size and dimensions of the stars and other heavenly bodies, it would astound and dazzle us.

If we were to ask an anatomist about the human body, or a zoologist about the many types of creatures that fly, swim, walk and crawl, with their myriad forms, colours, characteristics, modes of living and unique features, that would undoubtedly lead us to affirm the Oneness of Allah.

If we were to ask a botanist about the many types of plants, and their fruits, leaves, taste and characteristics, his answer would definitively point to the oneness of Allah. If we look at the precise order of the earth, with its seas, dry land, mountains, caves, valleys, plains, rocks, sand, metals, springs, rivers, and layers, that would lead us to acknowledge the oneness of Allah.

The sound mind utterly rejects the idea that the order of anything could have come about by accident or randomly. If we enter a tidy and organized home or shop, the first glance leads us to assume that there is an organizer who has organized this home or shop, so how about this universe in which everything is organized in the best manner?

End quote from 'Aqeedat at-Tawheed fi'l-Qur'an al-Kareem (1147-149).

There is no apparent difference between 'inaayah (divine care) and tadbeer (divine governance); rather we may say that tadbeer is more comprehensive and general in meaning

than ‘inaayah.

Whatever the case, perhaps the first one to use the term ‘inaayah in this context, and describe the evidence of Allah’s governing of His universe and caring for His creation as “daleel al-‘inaayah” (proof of divine care) was the Andalusian philosopher Abu’l-Waleed ibn Rushd (Averroes), in his well-known book Manaahij al-Adillah fi ‘Aqaa’id al-Millah.

And Allah knows best.