Favour (divine)

**Divine favour** (*lutf, tawfiq*) is the notion that God assists human beings by inspiring them to perform good acts and to refrain from bad ones and is the subject of a major theological doctrine pronounced by the Mu'tazila and contested by their adversaries. This form of assistance is one of the two types of guidance (*huda, hidaya*) with which God is believed to favour humans, the other being instruction (*irshad*), provided through the medium of prophetic teachings.

The Qur'an depicts divine providence in a wide variety of ways, most notably in terms of the bestowal of sustenance (*rizq*, e.g., Q 2:60; 5:114) and grace (*faddl*, e.g., Q 2:64; 34:10) on humans. God is described as being benevolent (*lutf*) to His creatures (e.g., Q 12:101; 22:62; 42:18); it is from this adjective that the Mu'tazila derived their term of choice, *lutf*, which is said to denote, in ordinary language, kindness (*rifq*) and assistance (*ma'una*) (Abd al-Jabbar, vol. 13, 9–11). As a more narrowly defined theological term, *lutf* refers specifically to the assistance by which God motivates human beings to enhance their moral and soteriological standing, as opposed to worldly aspects of divine providence.

The Mu'tazila held almost unanimously that the provision of *lutf* is obligatory on God, the chief exception being Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825), an early member of the Baghdādī current of the school (van Ess, *TG*, 3, 121ff.). As an aspect of the Mu'tazīlī theory of God's justice (*'adl*), the doctrine of divine favour is secondary to the more primary tenets, that goodness and badness are real and objective properties of acts, and as such discernible to the mind, and that God is hence obliged, as a moral agent, to refrain from bad acts and to perform duties. He took on one set of providential duties as soon as He created human beings, who, as moral agents themselves, are subject to certain obligations of their own (a condition known as *taklīf*), and hence accountable for their acts in the hereafter and liable to suffer an eternity of punishment in hell or to be rewarded in heaven. These divine obligations towards humans, it is argued, hinge
on the notion that God, as beneficent creator, wills benefit ( salari) for human beings and so must bring about circumstances conducive to their attainment of happiness and avoidance of misery in the hereafter. His first obligation is to provide them with the means to fulfill their obligations; for instance, intellect, with which they can distinguish good and bad acts; volition, which enables them to choose freely; and the capacity ( qudra) to produce their own acts ( Abd al-Jabbār, 11, 367ff.). A good creator, according to the Mu'tazila, does not then leave His creatures to their own devices but is obliged to provide them with two types of guidance: instructional, which takes the form of prophetic teachings, and motivational, termed lutf. God is required to motivate humans to make the right choices, because obligations involve hardship ( mashaqqa) and are hence inherently unattractive choices of action. Although agents are motivated by their knowledge of the ethical properties of acts to perform good acts and refrain from bad ones, they also come under the formidable sway of “motives of need,” which often urge them to act differently. Yet no matter the quality and quantity of any particular instance of assistance that God bestows on an individual, it can only make a certain choice of action more compelling and likely than another; it does not determine it, as that would violate the more primary Mu'tazil principle of human free choice ( ikhtiyār).

All occurrences intended to motivate humans in the manner described constitute instances of divine assistance ( often in the plural, alāfī). None can be intrinsically bad; God cannot, for instance, lie in order to motivate humans to obey Him. The exact nature of the alāfī depends, to some extent, on the recipient's circumstances and can take the form of advantages or disadvantages, provisions or deprivations ( al-Zamakhshart, 67). Some alāfī are created by God, including many cases of illness and other forms of suffering and hardship, which may serve as lessons or ordeals. Others are commanded by God but performed by the recipient of the assistance, the main example being acts of worship enjoined in revelation, which serve as reminders. If an instance of lutf is followed by the agent's performance of a good act, it can be described as “acting in accord with God's favour” ( taufiq). If followed by refraining from a bad act, it is described as “prevention of error” ( isma). Prophets are infallible ( ma'sām), because error is prevented in all their acts.

Beyond Mu'tazilism, the belief in divine providence, including God’s day-to-day guidance and assistance to believers, is central to the popular theology of Muslims but nonetheless features as only a minor subject in formal theology. Most Sunnite theologians oppose the Mu'tazili doctrine that God is under ethical obligations and therefore understand all forms of assistance He provides to His creatures as acts of favour, as opposed to duties. Drawing on the Qur'an ( e.g., Q 3:160; 74:31), Ash'arites further maintain that God also forsakes ( khidhlān) some people by motivating them to commit bad acts, although this does not undermine His goodness, and that the assistance God provides does not merely affect the likelihood of the choices made by the recipients but, in fact, determines them. Some, including Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'art ( d. 324/936), the founder of the school, go further, defining lutf and taufiq as a capacity ( qudra) that God creates within the agent, causing him to perform a particular act of obedience to the exclusion of any other act, and khidhlān as a capacity for a particular act of disobedience.
Fay

Fay' in classical legal thought is usually the collective wealth of Muslims derived from the taxation of conquered peoples. Fay' revenue is contrasted, on the one hand, with ghannāma, spoils taken through battle, and, on the other, with sadaqa (or zakāt), alms paid by the Muslims themselves. The fay' is usually to be redistrib-uted to Muslim fighters as an ‘atā‘ (stipend) and sometimes for other public purposes (maṣāliḥ).

The verb fā‘ā and associated terms have the basic meaning of “return.” The evidence of the Qur‘ān and pre-Islamic poetry suggests that derivatives of the root were used in connection with the taking of spoils in war in pre-Islamic Arabia (Q 33:50, 59:6, 7; Imru‘ al-Qays, 211). The classical Islamic distinction between “spoils” and “revenue” began to take shape during the development of the first Muslim empire, in the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries. By the mid-second/eighth century the policy of distributing to the conquerors not conquered land but only the revenue from that land had become widespread, with the result that “spoils” (ghanīma) were distinguished from “collective wealth,” or “revenue” (fay’). However, the more general sense of “spoils” did not disappear completely after the 100s/720s (Simonsen, 141–2; cf. Morimoto, 139–44).

Contests among Muslims over the resources of the early empire generated many of the internal conflicts of the first/seventh and second/eighth centuries, and abuse of the fay’ is the subject of recurrent complaints attributed to groups dissatisfied with their place in the new elite. Al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680) is said to have accused the Umayyads of “claiming exclusive possession of the fay’” (al-Tabarī, 2:300). Fair distribution of the fay’ is said to have been one of the principles upon which Zayd b. ‘Abbās (d. 122/740) followers pledged allegiance (al-Tabarī, 2:1687). Conversely, those holding power are said to have invoked the fay’ as a right to be defended against rebels: in 66/685 the Qurashī Ibn Muṭr warned his supporters that the followers of the rebel al-Mukhtar

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