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## What is divine justice and how is it implemented?

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)

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One of the highest and unrivaled of the divine attributes, or powers, or energies, is justice. God provides His creatures with justice according to their needs for their orderly performance and formation.



God sustains and holds the universe in two ways. The first is His creative force: “He said and they came to be, He commanded and they were built”. The second way is

His maintaining power and His providence which hold the universe together and “promote” it in accordance with the purpose of each being. Therefore, the divine justice administers the necessary providence to each being so that it succeeds in the purpose for which it was created. In this way nature is held in equilibrium. Every time this equilibrium becomes unsettled for whatever reason, the divine justice reinstates the balance and thus the fine tuning of the creation is being continued or rather is being expanded in accordance with the divine will.

After the fall of the two rational beings- angels and humans- which has hauled the rest of the creation towards decay, the divine powers and energies became apparent and particularly the divine justice, which reinstates either severally or jointly those elements which do not obey the order, as it was originally intended by the Creator.

The divine justice holds all beings to order and no factor can impose upon them and change its designs. As far as immaterial things are concerned, this is how things are. For rational beings though and particularly man, the divine justice is totally applied but for some reason of divine ‘providence’, it is accomplished in various ways in accordance with each man’s interest. The implementation of the divine justice is so varied that only few people and especially those ‘illuminated’ may comprehend its criteria. Paul’s caution convinces us on this: “If we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world” (1 Corinthians 10, 31-32). Since God governs the universe infallibly and in a divine way, the divine justice intervenes unsparingly in order to reinstate things and bring them back to order, since no mistake was made at the time of their creation.

If the divine justice does not reinstate the equilibrium, the impression will be given that the creation of the universe has caused the mistake and not man’s transgression and misuse. The divine justice as perfect and divine-like, as with all of the divine attributes, is recognized as having two energies: One is the energy of harmony and balance and the other is the practical continuation of the divine consummate love. Even though we violate our status and our duty, God does not withdraw His cohesive and providential love and stewardship, since according to Paul, His divine attributes are unchangeable.

The application of the divine justice is seen in many ways. The holy hymn-writer and the Fathers- having experienced in the practical form of the spiritual war- tell us a lot on this issue. If man is careful he may avert the enforcement of the divine justice in his life. He must correct the trespass through repentance and love for hard work relevant to the pleasure which resulted from it. “Consider my affliction

and my trouble, and forgive all my sins" (Psalms 25, 16), "my knees are weak through fasting; my body has become gaunt, with no fat" ( Psalm 109, 24), "for I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink" ( psalm 103,9), "I walked around as if I were mourning for my friend or my brother" ( psalm 35, 14), "listen to my cry for help ( Psalm39, 12), "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (psalm 51, 5).

If man violates either a moral or a natural law in his personal life or against his



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It is precisely

this kind of divine justice which our Lord meant when He said: “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matthew 5, 18). If “every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution” (Hebrews 2, 2) what else do we need in order to believe that divine justice is unbribable. A very specific apothegm of our Fathers on this issue is the following: “If you do not want to suffer, learn not to mistreat”. The all-seeing eye of the comprehensive providence of God for His creation operates with His God-like and infallible justice, even if this seems incomprehensible.

***Translated from the Greek:*** Γέροντος Ιωσήφ Βατοπαιδινού, Συζητήσεις στον Άθωνα, Ψυχοφελή Βατοπαιδινά 13, Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Έκδοσις Α΄, Άγιον Όρος 2003, by Olga Konari Kokkinou