

ISLAMIC CREED SERIES • 8

DIVINE WILL AND PREDESTINATION

In the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah

القضاء والقدر

Dr. 'Umar S. al-Ashqar

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IN THE NAME OF
ALLAH
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



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'Umar S. al-Ashqar

Translated by:
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All Praise is due to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family and Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day.

Free will and predestination are important and very interesting issues of discussion by all religions and most philosophers. Belief in Destiny, both good and bad, is an integral part of the Islamic creed.

Dr. 'Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar tackled the issue in the last book of his creed (*'Aqeedah*) series. As usual, he has dealt with the issue in depth and embedded in the book all the relevant texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah in addition to the writings of the classic writers and pious predecessors. Professor Al-Ashqar has done a great job indeed by presenting the right and correct Islamic view on the issue for both lay readers and scholars alike.

It is with great pleasure that we present such an authentic, well written book on the subject. May Allah bless our efforts and those of the author with acceptance and make it a source of guidance for all who seek enlightenment.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin Al-Tuwaijri

General Manager
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Praise be to Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon His slave and Messenger Muhammad.

Divine will and Predestination (*Al-Qadaa' wal-Qadar*): Is this a matter which is directly relevant to the day-to-day life of the Muslim, or is it an obscure topic best left to the debates of philosophers and theologians?

Attitudes towards Divine Will and Predestination have always influenced Muslims' daily activities. The idea that everything is "maktoob" or "written" is well known, to such an extent that many non-Muslims regard Muslims as fatalists who see themselves as helpless in the hands of an indifferent fate. Although this idea has held sway over large numbers of the Muslim ummah, nothing could be farther from the truth of Islam as brought by the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Fatalism, which has paralyzed the ummah and given its enemies power over it, is an idea that is foreign to Islam, an idea which crept in from alien sources, or stemmed from misinterpretation of the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

In fact, the true Islamic concept of Divine Will and Predestination is an empowering notion. Whilst all that happens takes place within the framework of the Divine Will, man has freedom of choice within those parameters.

Dr. 'Umar al-Ashqar has studied this topic in depth for many years, and in this book he explains it in clear terms for the ordinary Muslim. Drawing always on the Qur'an and Sunnah, and on the words of the -greatest scholars such as Ibn Taymiyah, he explores the issue of Divine Will and Predestination. He covers some of the historical

debates that took place within the ummah on this matter, pointing out where erring groups went wrong, and explaining the correct view, that of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*.

In his final chapter, Dr. Al-Ashqar points out the benefits of believing in Divine Will and Predestination, making it clear that this is a matter which is of interest and concern for all Muslims.

May Allah guide us to correct belief, and make us among those whom He has decreed will enter Paradise.

Naṣiruddin al-Khaṭṭāb

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah Who has guided us to the Straight Path, and made us among those who obey Him, and has honoured us with Islam and guided us to *eemaan*. I pray for the blessings of Allah upon the Seal of His Messengers and Prophets, the one who conveyed the Message and fulfilled the trust, who advised the ummah sincerely and strove in Jihaad for the sake of Allah in the truest sense, until that which is certain (i.e., death) came to him from his Lord. Blessings and peace be upon him and upon his righteous family and the Companions.

This is the final book in the series which I started more than ten years ago. I praise Allah, the Almighty, for having helped me to complete this work, and I hope that Allah, the Exalted, will accept it and make my intention purely for His sake, and that He will reward me for this work of mine on the Day when I meet Him, as He helped me to complete it in this life.

By the grace of my Lord, this series has been well received by the slaves of Allah, and I hope that my Lord will accept it from me and be pleased with my work, by His grace and kindness. May He forgive me for any shortcomings that exist in it. I hope that those who read this series will make *du'aa* (supplication) for its author and pray that Allah forgive him for his mistakes and his sins. May Allah bestow His Mercy upon me by virtue of a righteous *du'aa* from a righteous slave.

Readers have waited a long time for this volume, because one thing after another kept me busy and I was occupied with unavoidable matters, until Allah willed that I should find the time to do this work, and He enabled me to complete it. Before that, I had tried to write on this topic, but I always felt uneasy after I had started to write. I was

apprehensive about writing on a topic concerning which so many writers have erred and so many intelligent people have gone astray.

This is still one of the most difficult topics that people indulge in discussing. The deviation of many of those who have gone astray started when they went astray concerning this topic. How many of those who have indulged in discussing this topic have thought that they were doing the right thing, when in fact they were utterly confused and had lost their way!

‘Allaamah Ibn al-Qayyim said, in the introduction of his book *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel fi Masaa’il al-Qadaa’ wal-Qadar wal-Hikmah wat-Ta’leel*:

“The majority of intelligent people, when discussing this topic, have dealt with it from every angle and have pursued every route and narrow path, and they have spoken of it in both the most sophisticated of terms and the simplest. They have aimed to attain knowledge of it and to understand its essence. The nations of ancient and recent times have discussed this matter and have striven hard to reach an understanding of it. All of the various sects - despite their differences - have discussed this matter. Authors have written books of different types. There is no one who is not thinking of this topic and trying to reach an understanding of its essential nature, but you see them hesitant and confused, or debating with others. Each of them has chosen his own opinion and does not think that anyone else’s view can be correct, nor will he accept anyone else’s opinion.

All of them, apart from those who adhere to the *Wahy* (Revelation) have turned away from the right path, and the door to guidance is closed to them. They have striven to no avail, seeking to quench their thirst with dirty water. They have looked at different opinions, and selected the cheapest. Each of them rejoices in the knowledge that he has, which does not benefit him in any way. They have given priority

to opinions which they think are good, over the *Wahy* which has been revealed and the *aḥaadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ). The blind are leading the blind, each of them thinking that he is drinking water, yet he remains thirsty throughout his life. He is being called to the straight path and to right guidance from afar, but he will not respond until the Day of Judgement. He is happy with the misguidance which he is following, and he is content with all kinds of falsehood and absurd notions. His *kufṛ* prevents him from following true guidance and what he means to say is ‘Is it these (poor believers) whom Allah has favoured from amongst us?’ Does Allah not know best those who are grateful? (cf. Qur’an 6:53).”¹

I found confirmation of Ibn al-Qayyim’s words, quoted above, when I studied what has been said by those who indulged in discussions of *qadar* both in the past and the contemporary. I myself was hesitant to discuss this topic and write about it, but I was motivated to do so by my desire to complete this series, and by the enquiries from many seekers of knowledge as to when I was going to publish this book.

I sought the help of Allah, and investigated the topic in depth, following the methods of the scholars who were known to be on the Straight Path and to be leaders in piety and knowledge. For this reason in this book, I have quoted extensively from the sayings of our pious predecessors (*As-Salaf aṣ-Ṣaaliḥ*), following the path of the believers and hoping that I would not deviate from this course or get lost in the twists and turns of the path. I sought the light of the *aayaat* (verses) of the Qur’an and the *aḥaadeeth* of the Messenger (ﷺ), in pursuing this topic and writing about it. Allah is the One Whose help we seek, and there is no strength and no power except in Allah. I hope that knowledgeable people will correct any mistakes I have

¹ *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel*, p. 14.

made or areas where I have failed to understand the matter correctly or to express myself clearly.

The book has seven chapters.

In Chapter One, I explained the obligation to believe in *qadar*, and that this belief is one of the basic principles of *eemaan* (faith).

Chapter Two is a brief look at the history of the discussions on *qadar*.

Chapter Three gives a definition of *qadar* and the pillars of this belief, discussing four main points:

- (i) Definition of *qadar* (predestination).
- (ii) Definition of *qadaa'* (divine will) and how it is connected to *qadar*.
- (iii) The essential components ("pillars") of belief in *qadar*, without any of which a person's belief in *qadar* is lacking.
- (iv) Proof that a person's deeds are predestined and created by Allah; I have quoted here many texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah which confirm this.

Chapter Four explains how far we can go in discussing *qadar*, what role reason plays in this, and what can and cannot be understood with regard to this topic.

Chapter Five explains the different schools of thought on *qadar*. It is divided into three sections:

- (i) Those who deny *qadar* (predestination). Here I described their opinions and pointed out where they have gone wrong, and I mentioned the debates of the scholars with this group. I described the evidence which they think supports their view, which, in fact, is confusion and doubts, and will crumble once we shed the light of truth on it, so that the one whom Allah guides and opens his heart to faith will no longer have any doubts concerning it.

(ii) The school of thought which has misled the ummah and destroyed its minds, will and dynamism, and caused their actions to benefit their enemies. This is the school of thought known as *Al-Qadariyyah al-Mujabbirah* which has given up striving on the grounds of *qadar*. I have shown that they have gone astray on seven counts.

(iii) I explained the school of thought of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*, which has three requirements. In each case I mentioned the beliefs described by the scholars of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* concerning *qadar*.

Chapter Six explains why people have been misled concerning *qadar* (predestination).

In Chapter Seven I described some of the good consequences of believing in *qadar*.

I pray to Allah that I have succeeded in explaining this principle, and I ask Him to benefit His slaves thereby, for He is the best supporter and helper. He is Sufficient for me and He is the best disposer of affairs.

Dr. 'Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar

CHAPTER ONE

BELIEF IN *QADAR* (PREDESTINATION) IS ONE OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FAITH (*UŞOOL AL-EEMAAN*)

Belief in *qadar* (predestination), is one of the basic principles of faith, without which a person's belief is incomplete. Muslim, narrated from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), describing how Jibreel (Gabriel) (عليه السلام), questioned the Messenger (ﷺ) about *eemaan* (belief), in reply he (ﷺ) said:

“It (*eemaan*) is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and to believe in divine destiny (*qadar*), both the good and the evil thereof.” He (i.e., Jibreel) said: “You have spoken rightly.”¹

There are many texts which speak of the *qadar* of Allah or enjoin belief in *qadar*. These texts include the *aayaat* (verses):

﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾

﴿Verily, We have created all things with *Qadar* [Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees - *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*].﴾
(*Qur'an* 54: 49)

﴿ ... وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

﴿...And the Command of Allah is a decree determined.﴾
(*Qur'an* 33: 38)

¹ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi 'ala Muslim*, 1/157.

﴿... وَلَكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ...﴾ (٤٢)

﴿...but [you met] that Allah might accomplish a matter already ordained [in His Knowledge]...﴾ (Qur'an 8: 42)

﴿... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ مَقْدِيرًا نَقْدِيرًا﴾ (٢)

﴿...He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.﴾

(Qur'an 25: 2)

﴿سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى﴾ (١) ﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى﴾ (٢) ﴿وَالَّذِي قَدَرَ فَهَدَى﴾ (٣)

﴿Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, Who has created [everything], and then proportioned it. And Who has measured [preordainments for everything even to be blessed or wretched]; and then guided [i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths, and guided the animals to pasture].﴾ (Qur'an 87: 1-3)

Muslim narrated in his *Saḥeeḥ* that Ṭaawoos said: “I met some people from among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah who said that everything happens by *qadar*. He said, I heard ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar say: everything happens by *qadar*, even helplessness and resourcefulness, or resourcefulness and helplessness.”²

Muslim also narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: “The *mushrikeen* (polytheists) of Quraysh came and debated about *qadar* with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then the following words were revealed:

﴿يَوْمَ يُسْجَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ﴾ (٤٨) ﴿إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ﴾ (٤٩) ﴿بِقَدَرٍ﴾

² Muslim, 4/2045, No. 2655.

﴿The Day they will be dragged on their faces into the Fire [it will be said to them]: “Taste you the touch of Hell!” Verily, We have created all things with *Qadar* [Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees - *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*].﴾
 (Qur'an 54: 48-49).”³

There are many similar texts. The texts which speak of the knowledge, power, will and creation of Allah also refer to His decree (*qadar*). Belief in *qadar* also includes belief in Allah’s knowledge, will and creation, as we will see below, supported by the relevant texts.

From the linguistic point of view - as stated by Raaghib al-Aṣḥaani, according to the report narrated from him by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalaani - the word *qadar* implies ability or power, and the object of that ability, which exists in the knowledge of Allah.⁴

Allah, the Almighty, has absolute power (*qudrah*), and His power is not lacking in any way whatsoever. Among His Names - may He be blessed and exalted - are the names *Al-Qaadir* (the Able), *Al-Qadeer* (the All-Powerful) and *Al-Muqtadir* (Omnipotent, Able to do everything). Power (*Qudrah*) is one of His Attributes.

Al-Qaadir is the active participle of the verb *qadara yaqdiru*. *Al-Qadeer* is a more intensive form, meaning the One Who does what He wants, in accordance with His wisdom, no more and no less. Therefore no one deserves to be described with this name except Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿... بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

³ Muslim, 4/2046, No. 2656; Tirmidhi, 3/229.

⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/477.

﴿...Yes, He surely is Able to do all things.﴾

(*Qur'an* 46: 33)

Al-Muqtadir is the active participle from the verbal form *aqtadara*, and is more intensive in meaning than *Qadeer*. For example, Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴾

﴿In a seat of truth [i.e. Paradise], near the Omnipotent King [*Maleek Muqtadir*] [Allah, the One, the All-Blessed, the Most High, the Owner of Majesty and Honour].﴾

(*Qur'an* 54: 55)

Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about *qadar*. He said: “*Qadar* is the power of Allah.”⁵

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “Imaam Aḥmad said that *qadar* is the power of Allah, and Ibn ‘Aqeel liked this comment very much. He said: ‘This is indicative of Aḥmad’s precise and vast knowledge of the basic principles of religion (*uṣool ad-deen*). Abu’l-Wafaa’ said, denying this means denying the power of the Lord to create and decree the actions of His slaves.’”

Hence those who deny the *qadar* of Allah do not accept the power of Allah. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Whoever does not accept the opinion of the *salaf* does not believe that Allah has power or that He is Able, like the *Jahamiyah* and those who follow them, and the *Mu’tazilah*, both those who accept the idea of *qadar* but say that it means that man is compelled by *qadar* to do what he does, and those who reject the idea of *qadar* altogether. The essence of their opinion is that Allah is not Able, and that He does not have sovereignty, for sovereignty requires either

⁵ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/308.

power, or the object of power, or both. Whatever the case may be, He must have power, and whoever does not believe that He has true power does not believe that He has sovereignty.”⁶

Those who deny *qadar* do not believe in *Tawḥeed*, because those who deny *qadar* say that the creator of good is different from the creator of evil. Those among our ummah who believe this say that the sins which occur do not happen by the Will of Allah, and they may also say that He does not know about them. They say that all the deeds of living beings happen without His power or creation. So they deny that He has an irresistible Will and complete Power. Hence Ibn ‘Abbaas said: *qadar* is the essence of *Tawḥeed*. Whoever worships Allah, the Almighty, Alone and believes in *qadar* has perfected his *Tawḥeed*, but whoever worships Allah Alone but does not believe in *qadar*, destroys his *Tawḥeed* by this disbelief.”⁷

Muslim scholars have unanimously affirmed the concept of *qadar* and stated that it is obligatory (*waajib*) to believe in it. There is no scholar among the scholars of *Ahl as-Sunnah*, the banners of guidance and lights in the darkness, who does not state that it is obligatory to believe in it, or state that the one who denies it is either guilty of *bid‘ah* or a fool.

In his commentary on the *aḥaadeeth* about *qadar* in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“In all of these *aḥaadeeth* there is clear evidence that supports the view of *Ahl as-Sunnah* concerning the belief in *qadar*, and that all events, good and bad, beneficial and harmful, happen by the will and decree of Allah, the Exalted.”⁸

⁶ *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel*, 49.

⁷ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/258.

⁸ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 16/196.

Elsewhere he said:

“The definitive proof of the texts of the Qur’an and Sunnah, and the consensus (*ijmaa’*) of the *Ṣaḥābah* (the Companions) and the prominent figures among the earlier and later generations, overwhelmingly support one another to prove the *qadar* of Allah.”⁹

Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The opinion of all the *salaf* is that all things happen by the decree of Allah, as Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴾

﴿And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure [*qadar*].﴾ (Qur’an 15: 21).”¹⁰

⁹ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 2/155.

¹⁰ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/478.

CHAPTER TWO

A GLANCE AT THE HISTORY OF QADAR (PREDESTINATION)

Belief in *qadar* (predestination) is one of the basic principles of faith. The Qur'an and Sunnah explain the concept of *qadar* (predestination), and the Messenger (ﷺ) stated that doing deeds and taking the means to an end is part of *qadar* and does not contradict this idea. He warned his ummah against those who do not believe in *qadar*, or who use *qadar* as a pretext to oppose the commandments of Islam.

The Messenger (ﷺ) became very angry when he came out one day and found his Companions debating about *qadar*; he was so angry that his face turned red as if a pomegranate had been squeezed over his face. He said:

“Is this what you have been commanded to do? Is this why I was sent to you? The people who came before you were destroyed when they disputed about this matter. I urge you not to dispute about this.”¹

The *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) (may Allah be pleased with them) responded to the urging and direction of their Prophet. It is not known that any of them debated about *qadar* (predestination), either during his lifetime or after he died.

It has not been narrated that any of the Muslims debated about *qadar* during the time of the Rightly Guided *Khulafā* (Caliphs) Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with them all). All that has been transmitted is that Abu 'Ubaydah 'Aamir ibn al-Jarraah

¹ Tirmidhi, 2/223.

objected to the fact that ‘Umar went back with the people and did not enter Syria when the plague spread there. He said to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭaab: “O’ *Ameer al-Mu’mineen*, are you running away from the decree (*qadar*) of Allah?”

‘Umar said, “If only someone other than you had said this, O’ Abu ‘Ubaydah! Yes, we are running away from the decree of Allah towards the decree of Allah. Do you not see that if you had a camel and you came to a valley where there were two patches of land, one green and fertile, and the other dry and barren, if you let it graze in the green land, you do so by the decree of Allah, and if you let it graze in the dry land, you do so by the decree of Allah.”²

Laalkaa’i narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭaab addressed the people in Al-Jaabiyah (in Syria) and said: “Whomever Allah sends astray, no one can guide him.” There was a Christian priest in front of him, who said, “Allah does not send anyone astray.” When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭaab repeated his statement, the priest started to brush his garment as an expression of his objection to ‘Umar’s words.

After his words had been translated to him, ‘Umar said: “You are lying, O’ enemy of Allah! For Allah has indeed created you, and Allah has sent you astray, then He will cause you to die, and will send you to Hell, *in sha Allah*... Allah created His creation, and when He created Adam, He spread out his progeny in His hand, and decreed who would be the people of Paradise and what they would do, and who would be the people of Hell and what they would do. Then He said, ‘These are for this, and these are for this.’ And the people dispersed with no dispute concerning *qadar*.”³

² Bukhari. See *Fath al-Baari*, 10/179, hadith no. 5729.

³ *Sharḥ Uṣool I’tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah* by Al-Laalkaa’i, 3/659.

The first person to discuss *qadar* was a man from among the people of Baṣrah, a grocer called Sansawayh. Al-Awzaa‘i said, “The first person to speak about *qadar* was a man from ‘Iraq called Sawsan. He was a Christian who became Muslim, then he went back to Christianity. Ma‘bad al-Juhani learned from him, and Gheelaan learned from Ma‘bad.”⁴

Yoonus ibn ‘Ubayd said: “I came to Baṣrah and there were no *Qadaris* there except for Sansawayh and Ma‘bad al-Juhani, and another accursed individual from Bani ‘Awaafah.”⁵

Muslim narrated that Buraydah ibn Yaḥyaa ibn Ya‘mar said: “The first person who spoke about *qadar* in Baṣrah was Ma‘bad al-Juhani.” Buraydah mentioned in his hadith that Ma‘bad and those who were with him claimed that there was no *qadar*, and that everything happened without being decreed.⁶

The *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) who were still alive at this time, such as ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbaas, Waathilah ibn al-Asqa‘, Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullah, Abu Hurayrah and Anas ibn Maalik launched a war against the people who held this opinion.⁷ This opinion was later adopted from Ma‘bad by the leaders of the *Mu‘tazilah*, such as Waaṣil ibn ‘Aṭaa’, ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd and Gheelaan ad-Dimashqi.

Waaṣil ibn ‘Aṭaa’, the leader of the *Mu‘tazilah*, claimed that evil could not be attributed to Allah, because Allah is Wise and it could not be right to say that He would want His slaves to do anything different to that which He had commanded, or that He would decree upon them to do anything and then punish them for that. He stated in

⁴ *Sharḥ Uṣool al-I‘tiqaad*, 3/750. *Ash-Sharee‘ah* by Aajiree, p. 242.

⁵ *Sharḥ Uṣool I‘tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah*, 3/749.

⁶ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 1/150.

⁷ *Al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, p. 19.

his writings that it is the individual acting on his own initiative who does good and evil, who believes or disbelieves, who obeys or disobeys Allah, and Allah is the One Who gives recompense for his deeds and enables him to do all that.⁸

An-Nazzaam, one of the *Mu'tazilah*, said that Allah could not be described as having the power to create evil and sin, for this was not possible for Allah.⁹

This is the group which our scholars dubbed *Al-Qadariyah*. "They called them this because they affirmed that the individual has the power (*qudrah*) to initiate his own actions independently of Allah, and they denied that things happen by the decree (*qadar*) and will (*qadaa'*) of Allah. In their misguidance, they themselves gave this name to their opponents, the people of guidance, and said: you are the *qadariyah* because you say that things happen by a decree (*qadar*) from Allah, so you are more deserving of this name than we are."¹⁰

In his commentary on *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*, An-Nawawi said: "Some of the *qadariyah* said: we are not *qadariyyah*, you are *qadariyyah*, because you believe in *qadar*. Ibn Qutaybah and the Imam (i.e., Imam al-Juwayni) said: this is a false and foolish argument on the part of these ignorant people, for the followers of truth refer all their affairs to Allah, the All-High, and attribute *qadar* and deeds to Him, whilst these ignorant people attribute it to themselves and claim that it belongs to them. The one who claims that something belongs to him and attributes it to himself is more entitled to be named after it than one who attributes it to someone other than himself and denies that it belongs to him."¹¹

⁸ *Al-Milal wan-Niḥal* by Shahrastaani, 1/47.

⁹ *Ibid*, 1/54.

¹⁰ *Jaami' al-Uṣool* by Ibn al-Atheer, 10/128.

¹¹ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi 'ala Muslim*, 1/154.

It is narrated in an authentic report that the Messenger (ﷺ) called the *Qadariyah*, the Magians (Zoroastrians) of this ummah. The hadith is narrated by Abu Dawood in his *Sunan* and by Al-Ḥaakim in *Al-Mustadrak*, and it is *ṣaḥeeḥ* according to the conditions of *Aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥayn* (the two most authentic collection of hadith - Bukhari and Muslim). He said: it is *ṣaḥeeḥ* according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim), if it is proven that Abu Ḥaazim heard it from Ibn ‘Umar.¹²

The reason why this group is described as the Magians of this ummah is “because of the similarity to the Magian belief that there are two origins, light and darkness. They claim that good comes from the action of the light, and evil comes from the action of darkness, and so they are dualists. Similarly, the *Qadariyah* attribute good to Allah, and evil to someone or something other than Allah. But Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is the Creator of both good and evil, and nothing of them happens except by His Will. So both are attributed to Him in the sense that He creates them and brings them into being, and they are attributed to the people who do them in the sense that they do them and have earned them.”¹³

At the end of the Umawi (Umayyad) period, there emerged groups who claimed that the individual is compelled to do what he does, and that he has no choice as to whether he does it or not. Some of them claimed that the individual has some power, but that it is ineffective. The first person to say such things was Al-Jahm ibn Ṣafwaan; from this *bid‘ah* (reprehensible innovation) there stemmed a number of


¹² Opt. cit

¹³ Nawawi quoted this from Al-Khaṭṭaabi in his commentary on *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* (*Sharḥ ‘ala Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, 1/154. See also *Jaami‘ al-Uṣool*, 10/128).

We will discuss this group and its beliefs further, and explain how misguided it is, when we discuss those who went astray concerning *qadar*.

objectionable beliefs, and great deviation and misguidance.¹⁴

This belief spread throughout the ummah and was adopted by many worshippers, ascetics and Sufis. If the previous group was akin to the Magians, this group is more like the *mushrikeen* (polytheists) who said:

﴿... لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾


﴿...‘If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners [in worship] with Him, nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything [against His Will]’...﴾
 (Qur’an 6: 148)

This latter group is worse than the former, because the former respected the commands and prohibitions (of Islam), although they said that people’s actions were not created by Allah. But this (latter) group, although they believed in *qadar*, used it as pretext and evidence to negate the importance of the commands and prohibitions.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/460; *Al-Milal wan-Nihal* by Shahrastaani, 1/85.

¹⁵ *Aqeedat as-Safaareeni*, 1/306. More information about those who follow this view will be given below.

CHAPTER THREE

DEFINITION OF *QADAA* (DIVINE WILL) AND *QADAR* (PREDESTINATION)

1- Definition of *Qadar* (Predestination)

The root of *qadar* is *qadara*. In Arabic it is said “*Qadartu ash-shay’a qadran* (or *qadaran*) (I evaluated the thing),” if one knows its quantity and other attributes.¹

In Arabic, *qadar* means decree, judgement, ultimate destiny. *Taqdeer* means to think about how to sort things out.²

In a technical sense, *qadar* means, “something of which there was prior knowledge, one of the things which was written by the Pen when it wrote down everything that was going to happen for the rest of eternity, when Allah decreed the affairs of all His creation and what would happen before it happened. He knew that these things would happen at certain times that were known to Him, and in specific ways, and so things happen in the way that He has decreed.”³

Ibn Hajar said in his definition: “What is meant is that Allah knows how things will be and when they will happen, before He initiates them. Then He creates that which He already knows will happen. Hence everything that happens stems from His knowledge, power and will.”⁴

¹ *Fath al-Baari* by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalaani, 1/118.

² *Al-Qaamoos al-Muheet* by Al-Fayroozabaadi, p. 591.

³ *Aqeedat as-Safaareeni*, 1/348.

⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, 1/118.

As-Safaareeni said, narrating from the Ash‘ariyah: “*Qadar* means that Allah brings things into being in a specific manner with regard to its essence and qualities, and in accordance with His prior knowledge and that which has been written by the Pen.”⁵

These definitions are similar to one another. They indicate that *qadar* (predestination) includes two things:

- (1) The eternal knowledge of Allah, by which He ruled that He would create whatever He wanted to exist, and that He specified the qualities of the things He wanted to create. He wrote down all of that in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (the Preserved Tablet) in His words. So the heavens and the earth, their size and dimensions, the way they are formed and everything in between them and in them - all of that is preserved in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* in precise detail.
- (2) The creation of whatever Allah, the Almighty, has decreed should exist, according to His prior knowledge and what was written by His Pen; whatever happens in reality is identical to that prior, written knowledge.

Qadar (Predestination) is a general word, referring to the prior knowledge of Allah and that which He created in accordance with that knowledge.

Imam ash-Shaafa‘i (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about *qadar*, and he responded in verse:

“Whatever You want happens, even if I do not want it to, and whatever I want, if You do not want it to happen, it does not happen.

You created mankind according to Your knowledge, and according to Your knowledge, young and old behave accordingly.

You have blessed this one and forsaken that one; You have helped this one and not that one.

⁵ *‘Aqeedat as-Safaareeni*, 1/345.

Some of them are doomed and some are blessed; some are ugly and some are beautiful.”⁶

2- Definition of *Al-Qadaa'* (Divine Will)

Al-Qadaa' means: decision, decree, judgement. *Qadaa'* is mentioned frequently in the *aḥaadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ). The root meaning is decision. The verb *qadaa yaqdee* and the words *qadaa'* and *qaadi* (“judge”) are used to refer to matters where decisions and judgements are made. *Qadaa'* (Divine Will) implies doing a thing properly, finishing it and concluding the matter. Thus it also conveys the meaning of creating.

Az-Zuhri said: in Arabic, *qadaa'* carries a number of different meanings. It refers to when something is completed and finished, everything that is carried out properly, completed, fulfilled, has become obligatory, is known or is done. All of these meanings are to be found in the *aḥaadeeth*.⁷

There are two scholarly views concerning the difference between *qadaa'* and *qadar*:

- (1) *Qadaa'* means the previous knowledge according to which Allah created all things and ruled by it from eternity, and *qadar* (predestination) refers to when creation follows that which has already been decreed. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The scholars said that *qadaa'* is the total and general decree from eternity, and *qadar* refers to the details of that decree.”⁸ Elsewhere he said: “*Qadaa'* is

⁶ *Al-I'tiqaad* by Al-Bayhaqi, p. 162; *Sharḥ Uṣool I'tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah* by Al-Laalkaa'i, 1/702.

⁷ *An-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadith*, by Ibn al-Atheer, 4/78.

⁸ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/477.

the decree in general terms from eternity, and *qadar* refers to the details of how that decree is applied.”⁹

(2) The second view is the opposite of the above, i.e., that *qadar* is the prior decree, and that *qaḍaa*’ refers to the creation.

Ibn Baṭṭaal said: “*Qaḍaa*’ refers to creation.”¹⁰ This was also the view of Al-Khaṭṭaabi. In *Ma’aalim as-Sunan* he said: “*Qadar* is a name for that which has been decreed as a result of the actions of *Al-Qaadir* (Allah, the All-High)... *Qaḍaa*’ in this sense refers to creation, as Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ فَفَضَّلْنَهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ ... ﴾

﴿Then He completed and finished from their creation [*fa qaḍaahunna*] [as] seven heavens in two Days...﴾
(*Qur’an* 41: 12), i.e., He created them.”¹¹

On this basis, “*qaḍaa*’ is more specific than *qadar*, because *qaḍaa*’ refers to the time when things are brought into existence. So *qadar* means the decree, and *qaḍaa*’ means the implementation of that decree.”¹²

This view is supported by many texts of the *Qur’an*. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ ... وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴾

﴿...and it is a matter [already] decreed [by Allah].﴾
(*Qur’an* 19: 21)

﴿ ... كَانَ عَلَى رَيْكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴾

⁹ *Faḥ al-Baari*, 11/149.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ma’aalim as-Sunan* by Al-Khaṭṭaabi, 7/70.

¹² *Al-Mufradaat* by Raaghib al-Asfahaani, p. 406.

﴿...this is with your Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished.﴾
 (Qur'an 19: 71)

﴿... وَإِذَا فَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴾

﴿...When He decrees a matter, He only says to it: 'Be!' - and it is.﴾
 (Qur'an 2: 117)

So *qadaa'* and *qadar* - according to this opinion - are two interwoven matters which cannot be separated from one another, because one of them, *qadar*, is the foundation, and the other, *qadaa'*, is the structure. Whoever wants to separate them will destroy the entire structure.¹³

3- The Pillars of Belief in *Qadar* (Predestination)

Belief in *qadar* is based on four pillars (essential components). Whoever affirms all of them has attained perfect belief in *qadar*. Whoever is sceptic about one or more of them does not have the correct belief in *qadar*. These four pillars are:

- (1) Belief that the knowledge of Allah is all-encompassing.
- (2) Belief that Allah has written in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (the Preserved Tablet) everything that will come to pass until the Day of Resurrection.
- (3) Belief in the irresistible will and perfect power of Allah; so what He wills happens and what He does not will does not happen.
- (4) Belief that Allah has created everything that exists, and that Allah has no partner in His creation.

We will discuss these four principles in more detail below.

¹³ *An-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadith* by Ibn al-Atheer, 4/78; see also *Jaami' al-Usool*, 10/104.

The first pillar: belief in the all-encompassing knowledge of Allah

This great principle is frequently reiterated in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). The knowledge of Allah encompasses all things: He knows what was and what is yet to come; with regard to that which does not happen, if it were to happen, He knows how it would be. He knows what exists and what does not exist, what is possible and what is impossible.

Allah (ﷻ), knows about His slaves, how long their lives will be, what their provision will be, their circumstances, their movements, whether they are doomed or blessed. He knows who among them are the people of Paradise and who are the people of Hell, from before the time when He created them, and created the heavens and the earth.

All of this is connected to His having knowledge and to the fact that He is the All-Knowing, All-Aware, All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلِيمٌ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ...﴾ (٢٢)

﴿He is Allah, beside Whom *Laa ilaaha illa Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He] the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 22)

﴿... أَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾ (٦٢)

﴿...that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah surrounds all things in [His] Knowledge.﴾ (Qur'an 65: 12)

﴿... عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

﴿وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾ (٤)

﴿...the All-Knower of the Unseen... not even the weight of an atom [or a small ant] or less than that or greater escapes His Knowledge in the heavens or in the earth but it is in a Clear Book [Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz].﴾

(Qur'an 34: 3)

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾﴾

﴿Verily, your Lord! It is He Who knows best who strays from His Way, and He knows best the rightly guided ones.﴾

(Qur'an 6: 117)

﴿... هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ... ﴿٣٣٦﴾﴾

﴿...He knows you well when He created you from the earth [Adam], and when you were fetuses in your mothers' wombs...﴾

(Qur'an 53: 32)

Allah (ﷻ), tells us that He knows how things that do not happen would happen if they were to happen:

﴿... وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ ... ﴿٢٧٨﴾﴾

﴿...But if they [the *kuffaar* - disbelievers] were returned [to the world], they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden...﴾

(Qur'an 6: 28)

So Allah knows about these liars, who will wish on the Day of Resurrection that they could go back to the world; He knows that if they were returned, they would go back to their disbelief and misguidance.

Allah, the Exalted, tells us about the *kuffaar* (disbelievers), who cannot bear to hear words of guidance:

﴿وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٣٦﴾﴾

﴿Had Allah known of any good in them, He would indeed have made them listen; and even if He had made them listen, they would but have turned away with aversion [to the truth].﴾ (Qur'an 8: 23)

One aspect of Allah's knowledge of what is to come is that He knows what the children who die in infancy would have done if they had grown up before they died.

Bukhari narrates in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Ibn 'Abbaas said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked about the children of the *mushrikeen* (polytheists), and he said, 'Allah knows best what they would have done.'"¹⁴

Muslim narrated that *Umm al-Mu'mineen* (the mother of the faithful) 'Aaishah, said: "A little boy died, and I said, 'It is better for him, he is one of the little birds of Paradise.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

'Do you not know that Allah created Paradise and Hell, and He created people for the one and people for the other?'"

According to another report narrated by Muslim, 'Aa'ishah said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was called to attend the funeral of a young boy among the Anṣaar, and I said, 'O' Messenger of Allah, it is good for him; he is one of the little birds of Paradise. He did not do evil and did not reach the age to do evil.' He said,

'It is not like that, O' 'Aa'ishah. Allah created people for Paradise; He created them for it when they were still in the loins of their forefathers. And He created people for Hell; He created them for it when they were still in the loins of their forefathers.'"¹⁵

¹⁴ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/493. Muslim (4/2049, no. 2659) narrated a slightly different version from Abu Hurayrah.

¹⁵ Muslim, 4/2050, no. 2662.

These *aḥaadeeth* refer to the knowledge of Allah concerning those who die in childhood; they do not imply that Allah will send them to Hell on the basis of that knowledge alone, without them having done anything wrong.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, concerning the hadith about the children of the *mushrikeen* (polytheists), “Allah knows best what they would have done”: “This means, Allah knows who among them would have believed, and who would have disbelieved, if they had reached full maturity. Then he quoted another hadith from Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

‘When the Day of Resurrection comes, Allah will test them. He will send a messenger to them in the arena of Resurrection, and whoever responds to him will be admitted to Paradise, and whoever disobeys him will be sent to Hell.’ Then what is already known to Allah will be made manifest, and He will requite them on the grounds of what has been made manifest, that is, who among them believed and who disbelieved, and not merely on the grounds of knowledge alone.”¹⁶

Rational evidence that Allah knew about the *qadar* of His creation before He created it

The truth is that the existence of this universe and every creature in it clearly indicates that Allah had knowledge of it before He created it. “For it is impossible that He could create things without knowing about them, because He creates things by His Will, and will requires a preconceived idea about the desired thing. This preconceived idea about the desired thing is knowledge of the desired thing. So creation

¹⁶ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 4/246.

requires will, and will requires knowledge, so creation requires knowledge.”¹⁷

Moreover, “The created beings which exist in it are made in a proper and perfect manner which implies that the One Who made them must have knowledge of them, because such perfect work could not have been done by one who has no knowledge.”¹⁸

The scholars also use a kind of analogy as evidence for the knowledge of Allah: “Among His creation are those who have knowledge, and knowledge is an attribute of perfection, so it is impossible for the Creator not to have knowledge.” This can be proven in two ways:

- (1) It may be said: we know that the Creator is inevitably more perfect than His creation, and that the One Who must exist (Allah) is more perfect than one who may or may not exist (creature). If we assume that the former has knowledge whilst the latter does not, then the One Who has knowledge is more perfect. If the Creator does not have knowledge, this would imply that the one who may or may not exist (creature) is more perfect than Him, and this is impossible.
- (2) Every type of knowledge that the created being has, comes from Allah, and it is impossible for the One Who created these beings with some attributes of perfection to be devoid of perfection; He is more entitled to perfection than they are, because whatever attributes of perfection the created beings are known to have, the Creator is more entitled to them, and whatever imperfections the created beings are above having, the Creator is more entitled to be above them and free of them.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Sharh at-Tahaawiyah*, p. 148.

¹⁸ Opt. cit

¹⁹ *Sharh at-Tahaawiyah*, p. 148.

All of this evidence may be summed up in the *aayah* (verse):

﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

«Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous [to His slaves], All-Aware [of everything].»
(*Qur'an* 67: 14)

What confirms Allah's knowledge is when He tells us of events before they happen. Allah, the Almighty, told us in His previous Books of the coming of our Messenger (ﷺ), and his attributes, character and signs, and He told us of many of the characteristics of his ummah. In His Book (the Qur'an), He foretold that the Romans would be victorious over the Magian Persians within three to nine years, and this happened as foretold. There are many predictions of future events, which are part of the Unseen, in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The second pillar: Belief that Allah has written everything in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (The Preserved Tablet)

The texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah indicate that Allah has written all things in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (the Preserved Tablet). According to a hadith narrated by Muslim in his *Shaheeh*, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

'Allah wrote the decrees of His creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, and He said: His Throne is above the water.'"²⁰

Tirmidhi narrated it as follows: "Allah decreed the decrees fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth."²¹

²⁰ Muslim, 4/2044, hadith no. 2653.

²¹ Tirmidhi, 4/458, no. 2156. He said: it is a *shaheeh hasan hadith* (a good authentic hadith).

In *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* it is narrated that ‘Ubaadah ibn aṣ-Ṣaamit related: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

‘The first thing which Allah created was the Pen. He (Allah) said, ‘Write!’ It said, ‘What shall I write?’ He (Allah) said: “Write the decree (*al-qadar*) of what has happened and what is to happen, for all eternity.””

Abu ‘Eesa at-Tirmidhi said: this is a *ghareeb hadith* with this Isnad.²²

Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz (the preserved tablet), in which Allah has written the decrees of His creation, is given a number of names in the Qur’an, such as *Al-Kitaab*, *Al-Kitaab al-Mubeen*, *Al-Imam al-Mubeen*, *Umm al-Kitaab* and *Al-Kitaab al-Masṭoor*. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾

﴿Nay! This is a Glorious Qur’an, [Inscribed] in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* [The Preserved Tablet]!﴾ (*Qur’an* 85: 21-22)

﴿أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ﴿٦٦﴾ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾

﴿Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is [all] in the Book [*Al-Kitaab*] [*Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*]. Verily, that is easy for Allah.﴾
(*Qur’an* 22: 70)

﴿... وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧١﴾﴾

﴿...and all things We have recorded with numbers [as a

²² Tirmidhi, 4/458, no. 2055. The hadith is *ṣaḥeeḥ*. It is *ghareeb* with regard to the Isnad (chain of narrators) with which Tirmidhi quotes it in *Baab al-Qadar*. But he also quotes it in *Kitaab at-Tafseer*, where he says, this hadith is *ḥasan ghareeb*. It is quoted by Shaykh Naaṣiruddin al-Albaani in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhi* (2/228), and he stated that he narrated it in *Silsilat al-Aḥaadeeth aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah* and elsewhere.

record] in a Clear Book [*kitaab mubeen*]. ﴿(Qur'an 36: 12)

﴿ وَالطُّورِ ﴿١﴾ وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ﴿٢﴾ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنْشُورٍ ﴿٣﴾ ﴾

﴿By the *Toor* [Mount], And by the Book Inscribed [*kitaab mastoor*], in parchment unrolled.﴾

(Qur'an 52: 1-3)

﴿ وَإِنَّمَا فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلٌّ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ ﴾

﴿And verily, it [this Qur'an] is in the Mother of the Book [*umm al-kitaab*] [i.e. *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*] with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom.﴾ (Qur'an 43: 4)

The third pillar: Belief that the Will of Allah is All-Encompassing and that His power is irresistible

This principle implies the belief that the Will of Allah is unstoppable and that His power is All-Encompassing. Whatever Allah, the All-High, wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen. Nothing can move or come to a halt in the heavens or on earth except by His Will, and nothing happens in His Dominion except what He wills.

There are many texts, which clearly state this. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ... ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

﴿And you cannot will unless [it be] that Allah wills...﴾ (Qur'an 81: 29)

﴿ ﴿١﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ... ﴿١١١﴾ ﴾

﴿And even if We had sent down unto them angels, and the dead had spoken unto them, and We had gathered

together all things before their very eyes, they would not have believed, unless Allah willed... ﴿Qur'an 6: 111﴾

﴿... وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ ...﴾ ﴿١١١﴾

﴿...If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 112)

﴿إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾ ﴿١١٢﴾

﴿Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" - and it is!﴾ (Qur'an 36: 82)

﴿... مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأِ يُجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ ﴿٣٦﴾

﴿...Allah sends astray whom He wills and He guides on the Straight Path whom He wills.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 39)

The All-Encompassing will and Irresistible Power of Allah together are manifested in what has happened and what is yet to come. But they diverge with regard to what did not and will not happen.

Whatever Allah decrees will happen inevitably comes to pass by His Power. Whatever Allah does not will does not happen because Allah does not will it, not because He is not able to bring it about. Allah, says:

﴿... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَنَلُوا وَلَكِنْ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ﴾ ﴿٢٥١﴾

﴿...If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does what He likes.﴾

(Qur'an 2: 253)

﴿... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ...﴾ ﴿٢٥١﴾

﴿...If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation...﴾ (Qur'an 5: 48)

﴿... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهَدْيِ ...﴾ ﴿٢٥١﴾

﴿...And had Allah willed, He could have gathered them together [all] on true guidance...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 35)

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا ...﴾ (177)

﴿Had Allah willed, they would not have taken others besides Him in worship...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 107)

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبِّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ...﴾ (199)

﴿And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together...﴾ (Qur'an 10: 99)

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ...﴾ (20)

﴿Have you not seen how your Lord spread the shadow. If He willed, He could have made it still...﴾ (Qur'an 25: 45)

And there are many other *aayaat* (verses) which indicate that what He wills should not happen does not happen because He does not will it, not because He is not able to bring it to pass. For He is Able to do all things, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

The fourth pillar: Belief that Allah is the Creator of all things

The texts (of the Qur'an and Sunnah) state that Allah, the All-Powerful, is the Creator of all things. He is the One Who created, formed and brought His creation into being. He is the Creator and everything besides Him is subject to His dominion and control and is created by Him.

﴿اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ...﴾ (177)

﴿Allah is the Creator of all things...﴾ (Qur'an 39: 62)

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَالِقُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾ (177)

﴿Verily, your Lord is the All-Knowing Creator.﴾

(*Qur'an* 15: 86)

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ...﴾

﴿All praises and thanks be to Allah, Who [Alone] created the heavens and the earth, and originated the darkness and the light...﴾

(*Qur'an* 6: 1)

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ آتِفًا رَبُّكُمْ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً...﴾

﴿O' mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person [Adam], and from him [Adam] He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women...﴾

(*Qur'an* 4: 1)

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

﴿And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating.﴾

(*Qur'an* 21: 33)

And there are many similar *aayaat* (verses).

4 - People's Deeds are Created by Allah and Decreed by Him

People and their deeds are no different to any other created things when it comes to predestination (*qadar*). Allah already knows what He will create through the actions of His slaves and He knows what they will do. He has written all of that in *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (the preserved tablet). Allah created them as He willed, and His decree concerning them will be fulfilled. They will act in accordance with the will of Allah. Those, whom Allah has decreed will be blessed,

will be guided, and those whom Allah has decreed will be doomed will go astray. Allah knows the people of Paradise and facilitates and assists them to the deeds of the people of Paradise, and He knows the people of Hell and facilitates them to the actions of the people of Hell.

The texts that we have quoted above offer sufficient proof of this and there is no need to repeat them here. But there are many other texts, which also provide clear evidence concerning this matter. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾﴾

﴿While Allah has created you and what you make!﴾
(*Qur'an* 37: 96)

﴿وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾

﴿And everything they have done is noted in [their] Records [of deeds].﴾
(*Qur'an* 54: 52)

﴿... وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنْقِصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾﴾

﴿...And no female conceives or gives birth but with His Knowledge. And no aged man is granted a length of life nor is a part cut off from his life [or another man's life], but is in a Book [*Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*]. Surely, that is easy for Allah.﴾
(*Qur'an* 35: 11)

﴿مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدَىٰ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾﴾

﴿Whomsoever Allah guides, he is the guided one, and whomsoever He sends astray, - then those! They are the losers.﴾
(*Qur'an* 7: 178)

﴿... إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾ (١٦٥)

﴿...Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.﴾
(*Qur'an* 16: 125)

There are many *aḥaadeeth* which reach the level of being *mutawaatir*,²³ whose meaning is that the Lord of people knows what people will do; He has willed and decreed that, and the matter is cut and dried. He knows people's ultimate destiny, whether they are blessed (destined for Paradise) or doomed (destined for Hell). But at the same time He has told us that *qadar* is not a reason why people should not strive: "Strive, for each person will be guided to do that for which he was created."

Texts Which Indicate that Allah Has Decreed the Deeds of His Slaves

(1) *Aḥaadeeth* which indicate that the pens have dried concerning people's deeds and that events materialize accordingly

Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Jaabir said: "Suraaqah ibn Maalik ibn Ju'sham came and said: 'O' Messenger of Allah, explain our religion to us as if we had only just been created. What should we strive for today? Is it for something concerning which the pens have dried and the decree has been issued, or is it concerning something that is yet to be decided?' He (ﷺ) said, 'No, it is for something concerning which the pens have dried and the decree has been issued.' He said, 'Then why should we strive?' He said: 'Strive, for each person will be

²³ *Mutawaatir*: A terminology of the science of hadith, it means that a particular hadith has been reported through a number of chain of narrators.

provided (respective) facilities.” According to another report: “Strive, for each person will be facilitated to do his deeds.”²⁴

Tirmidhi narrated in his *Sunan* that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said to the Messenger (ﷺ): “O’ Messenger of Allah, Do you think that what we strive to do emanates from our own initiative or something that has been decreed already?” He said,

“It is something that has been decreed already, O’ son of al-Khaṭṭāb. Every person will be facilitated to what he intends to do. If he is one of the blessed, he will do that which will take him to Paradise, and if he is one of the doomed, he will be facilitated to do that which will send him to Hell.” Tirmidhi said: this is a *ṣaḥeeḥ ḥasan* hadith.²⁵

(2) Allah knows who will go to Paradise and who will go to Hell

Bukhari narrated that ‘Imran ibn Ḥuṣayn said: “A man said, ‘O’ Messenger of Allah, is it known who will go to Paradise and who will go to Hell?’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘Yes.’ He asked, ‘Then why should people strive?’ He said: ‘Everyone will be guided to do that for which he was created.’”

Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that ‘Ali said: “We were at a funeral in *Baqee’ al-Gharqad*²⁶ and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to us. He sat down, then we sat down around him. He had a small stick with him, and he lowered his head and started to draw lines on the ground with his stick. Then he said: ‘There is no one among you, there is not a living soul, but Allah has already decreed his place in Paradise or in Hell, and it has been decreed whether he is blessed or doomed.’”

²⁴ Muslim, 4/2040, hadith no. 2648.

²⁵ Tirmidhi, 4/445, hadith no. 2135.

²⁶ *Baqee’ al-Gharqad*: The cemetery of the people of Madeenah.

A man asked: “O’ Messenger of Allah, why do we not rely on what has been written, and not bother to strive?” He said: “Whoever is one of the blessed will end up doing the actions of those who are blessed, and whoever is one of the doomed will end up doing the actions of those who are doomed.” Then he said²⁷: “Strive, for everyone will be guided. Those who are blessed will be guided to do the actions of those who are blessed, and those who are doomed will be facilitated to do the actions of those who are doomed.” Then he (ﷺ) recited:

﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ ﴿٨﴾ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ فَسَنِيَرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

﴿As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, And believes in *Al-Husnaa* [the best]. We will make smooth for him the path of ease [goodness]. But he who is greedy, miser and thinks himself self-sufficient. And belies *Al-Husnaa*, We will make smooth for him the path for evil.﴾

(*Qur’an* 92: 5-10)

(3) The progeny of Adam were brought forth from his loins after he was created, and were divided into two groups - the people of Paradise and the people of Hell

Our Messenger (ﷺ) told us that after creating Adam, Allah wiped his back and brought forth his progeny from his back, looking like little ants, and from them He brought forth the people of Paradise and the people of Hell.

Maalik, Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood narrated that Muslim ibn Yasaar said: “Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) said concerning the *ayah*:

²⁷ This is how it appears in the hadith, the words “then he said” are repeated.

﴿ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴾

﴿And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed [or from Adam's loin his offspring] and made them testify as to themselves [saying]: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes! We testify," lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: "Verily, we have been unaware of this."﴾
(*Qur'an* 7: 172)

'Umar said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) being asked about this and he said: "Allah created Adam, then He wiped his back with His Right Hand, and brought forth from him his progeny. He said, "I have created these for Paradise, and they will do the deeds of the people of Paradise." Then He wiped his back (again), and brought forth more of his progeny and said: "I have created these for Hell, and they will do the deeds of the people of Hell." The man asked, "So why should we strive?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"If Allah created a person for Paradise, He will cause him to do the deeds of the people of Paradise, until he dies doing one of the deeds of the people of Paradise, so he will enter Paradise by virtue of that deed. If He created a person for Hell, He will cause him to do the deeds of the people of Hell, until he dies doing one of the deeds of the people of Hell, so he will enter Hell by virtue of that deed."²⁸

²⁸ *Mishkaat al-Maṣābeeh*, 1/34, hadith no. 95. The editor of *Al-Mishkaat*, Shaykh Naaṣiruddin al-Albaani, said: The men of its Isnad are *thiqaat* (trustworthy), the men of the two shaykhs (i.e., Bukhari and Muslim), but it is *munqaṭi'*, i.e., there is a gap in the Isnad between Muslim ibn Yasaar and 'Umar. But there are many corroborating reports.

Imam Aḥmad narrated in his *Musnad* with a *ṣaḥeeḥ* Isnad (authentic chain of narrators) that Ibn ‘Abbaas said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Allah took the Covenant from the loins of Adam at Nu‘maan - i.e., at ‘Arafaah. He brought forth from his loins all of his progeny and spread them before Him like small ants, then He addressed them directly, saying:

﴿... أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَرِفِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوْ نَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّن بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَهِيَكَمَّا يَمَّا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾

‘...‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes! We testify,’ lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Verily, we have been unaware of this.’ Or lest you should say: “It was only our fathers aforetime who took others as partners in worship along with Allah, and we were [merely their] descendants after them; will You then destroy us because of the deeds of men who practised *Al-Baaṭil* [i.e. polytheism and committing crimes and sins, invoking and worshipping others besides Allah]?’

(*Qur’an* 7: 172-173).”²⁹

Aḥmad narrated in his *Musnad* with a *ṣaḥeeḥ* Isnad from Abu Dardaa’ that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah created Adam when He created him, then He struck him on the right shoulder and his progeny emerged, looking white like small ants. Then He struck his left shoulder and his progeny emerged looking black like ashes. He said to those who were on the right, ‘To Paradise, and I do not care,’ and He said to those who were on the left, ‘To Hell, and I do not care.’”³⁰

²⁹ *Ibid*, 1/43.

³⁰ Opt. cit, 1/42.

The Messenger (ﷺ) explained in another hadith:

“Allah created His creation in darkness, then He threw from His light upon them. Whoever was touched by that light will be guided, and whomever it missed will be led astray. Hence I say that the pen has dried according to the knowledge of Allah.”

This is narrated by Tirmidhi from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr. He said, this is a *hasan* hadith.³¹

(4) Allah has written down the names of the people of Paradise and the people of Hell

Tirmidhi reported in his *Sunan* that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out to us with two books in his hand. He said, ‘Do you know what these two books are?’ We said, ‘No, O’ Messenger of Allah, we do not know unless you tell us.’ Concerning the book in his right hand, he said, ‘This is a book from the Lord of the Worlds. In it are the names of the people of Paradise, and the names of their fathers and tribes. They are all listed, down to the very last one of them; no names will ever be added or taken away.’ Then he said concerning the book in his left hand, ‘This is a book from the Lord of the Worlds. In it are the names of the people of Hell, and the names of their fathers and tribes. They are all listed, down to the very last one of them; no names will ever be added or taken away.’ His Companions said: ‘So why should we strive, O’ Messenger of Allah, if it has been decreed and decided?’ He said: ‘Do what is right and do your best, for the person who is destined for Paradise will be caused to die when he is doing one of the deeds of the people of Paradise, no matter what he did before, and the one who is destined for Hell will be caused to die when he is doing one of the

³¹ Tirmidhi, 5/26; hadith no. 2642.

deeds of the people of Hell, no matter what he did before.’ Then The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) put the books aside and said: ‘Your Lord has finished with the matter of His slaves: some are for Paradise and some are for Hell.’” Tirmidhi said: this is a *ṣaḥeeḥ ghareeb ḥasan* hadith.³²

(5) The decree on *Laylat al-Qadr* and the decree day to day

We have stated above that Allah issued His decrees for His slaves fifty thousand years before He created His creation. The Qur’an and Sunnah indicate that there are two kinds of decree: the annual decree and the daily decree. The annual decree takes place on *Laylat al-Qadr*, when details of who will live and die during the coming year, how much provision and rain people will have, what actions people will do, and so on, are transferred from *Umm al-Kitaab*. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبْرَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٦﴾ ﴾

﴿We sent it [this Qur’an] down on a blessed night [(i.e. the Night of *Al-Qadr*) in the month of Ramaḍaan]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of *Ruboobiyah* (Lordship) and in Our Oneness of worship]. Therein [that night] is decreed every matter of ordainments. As a Command [or this Qur’an or the Decree of every matter] from Us. Verily, We are ever sending [the Messengers].﴾

(*Qur’an* 44: 3-5)

The daily decree means the carrying out of the decrees so that they happen at the times previously determined. Allah (ﷻ), the All-

³² Tirmidhi, 4/450, hadith no. 2141. See also *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhi* edited by Shaykh Naaṣiruddeen al-Albaani, 2/225.

Glorious, says:

﴿يَسْتَلْهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ﴾

﴿Whosoever is in the heavens and on the earth begs of Him [its needs from Him]. Every day He is [engaged] in some affair [such as giving honour or disgrace to some, life or death to some]!﴾ (Qur'an 55: 29)

Ibn Jareer narrated from Muneeb ibn 'Abdullah that his father said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited this *aayah* (verse), and we said, "O' Messenger of Allah, what is that affair?" He said: "He forgives sins, relieves distress, raises the status of some people and lowers the status of others."

The summary of the comments of the *mufasssireen* on this *aayah* is: that part of Allah's affair every day is to give life and give death, to create and to give provision, to grant glory to some people and to humiliate others, to heal the sick, free prisoners, grant relief to the distressed, answer those who call upon Him, give to those who ask of Him, forgive sins, and other innumerable things that He does and initiates in His creation.³³

(6) The writing of the decree for a person when he is a foetus in his mother's womb

It is narrated in the *aḥaadeeth* that Allah sends an angel to the foetus in his mother's womb, to write down his provision, his lifespan and whether he is doomed (destined for Hell) or blessed (destined for Paradise). In *Ṣaḥeeḥ Bukhari* and *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, it is narrated that 'Abdullah (i.e., Ibn Mas'ood) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told us:

³³ This is stated by the author of *Ma'aarij al-Qubool*, 1/346, narrating from the *mufasssir* Al-Baghawi.

“(As regards your creation) every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, and then he becomes a clot for another forty days, and then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Then Allah sends an angel to breathe the soul into him. Then he is commanded to write four decrees: his provision, his lifespan, his deeds, and whether he will be doomed or blessed (in the Hereafter). By the One besides Whom there is no other god, one of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is no more than a cubit between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the actions of the people of Hell, and thus he enters it (Hell). And one of you may do the deeds of the people of Hell until there is no more than a cubit between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the actions of the people of Paradise, and thus he enters it (Paradise).”³⁴

In *Ṣaḥeeḥ Bukhari* it is narrated from Anas ibn Maalik (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah appoints an angel to (oversee the foetus in) the womb, and he says, ‘O’ Lord, a *nutfah* (drop of sperm); O’ Lord, an *‘alaqah* (a clot); O’ Lord, a *mudghah* (a lump of flesh).’ When Allah wants to complete His creation, he (the angel) says, ‘O’ Lord, male or female, doomed or blessed? What is his provision? What is his lifespan?’ All of that is written while he is in his mother’s womb.”³⁵

Tirmidhi narrated in his *Sunan* that Anas (رضي الله عنه) said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “When Allah wills good for His slave, He guides him.” It was said, “How does He guide him, O’ Messenger of

³⁴ Bukhari. See *Fath al-Baari*, 11/477. Muslim, 4/2037, hadith no. 2643. This version is narrated by Muslim. Also Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi.

³⁵ Bukhari, *Fath al-Baari*, 11/477; Muslim, 4/2038, hadith no. 2646. This version is by Bukhari.

Allah?” He said: “He helps him to do a righteous deed before he dies.” Tirmidhi said: this is a *ṣaḥeeh ḥasan* hadith.³⁶

Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeh* that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) stated: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A man may do the deeds of the people of Paradise for a long time, then his life ends with an action of the people of Hell, or a man may do the deeds of the people of Hell for a long time, then his life ends with an action of the people of Paradise.”³⁷

It is narrated from Sahl ibn Sa’d al-Saa’idi that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A man may do the deeds of the people of Paradise as far as people can see, but he is one of the people of Hell, or a man may do the deeds of the people of Hell as far as people can see, but he is one of the people of Paradise.”³⁸

The story of the man who the Messenger (ﷺ) said was one of the people of Hell is worth quoting because of the valuable lesson we may learn from it. In *Ṣaḥeeh Bukhari* it is narrated from Abu Ḥaazim from Sahl ibn Sa’d that during one of the military campaigns of the Prophet (ﷺ) there was a man who was excelling in fighting. The Prophet (ﷺ) looked at him and said: “Whoever wants to see a man from among the people of Hell, let him look at that man.”

One of the people followed him, and at that point he was one of the fiercest fighters against the *mushrikeen* (polytheists), until he was wounded. Then he hastened his own death by driving his sword into his chest until the point emerged between his shoulders. The man (who had seen this) rushed back to the Messenger (ﷺ) and said, “I

³⁶ Tirmidhi, 4/450, no. 2142.

³⁷ Muslim, 4/2042, hadith no. 2651.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah!” He said, “What happened?” He said, “You said to so and so, ‘Whoever wants to see a man from among the people of Hell, let them look at this man.’ He was one of the greatest among us at fighting in defence of the Muslims, but I knew that he would not die like that. When he was wounded, he hastened his own death and killed himself.” At this, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A slave may do the deeds of the people of Hell, but he is one of the people of Paradise, or he may do the deeds of the people of Paradise, but he is one of the people of Hell. But it is the final deed that counts.”³⁹

³⁹ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/499, hadith no. 6607.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIMITS WITHIN WHICH PREDESTINATION (*QADAR*) MAY BE SUBJECTED TO RATIONAL ANALYSIS

Abu al-Muẓaffar as-Sam‘aani said, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalaani narrated: “The way to understand this matter is to stop at what has been said in the Qur’an and Sunnah, without referring to analogy and reason. Whoever is not contented to stop at this point will be misled and lost in a sea of confusion, and will not find anything to put his mind at rest, because *qadar* is one of the secrets of Allah which is known only to the All-Knowing, All-Aware. He has put a veil around it and has concealed it from the minds and knowledge of His creation, for reasons that are known only unto Him, so it is not known by any Prophet who was sent or by any angel who is close to Allah.”¹

Aṭ-Ṭahaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The *qadar* is a secret of Allah concerning His creation. No angel who is close to Allah or Prophet and Messenger has any knowledge of it. Delving into the matter in depth means that one will be forsaken by Allah and lost in confusion, deprivation and transgression. So beware of examining it and thinking about it, and (exposing oneself to) insinuating whispers. Allah, the All-High, has withheld knowledge of *qadar* from His creation, and has forbidden them to seek to understand it. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ ﴾ (١٣٣)

﴿He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they

¹ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/499. See also *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 16/196.

will be questioned.﴾ (Qur'an 21: 23).”²

Al-Aajurri said: “It is not proper for the Muslims to enquire in depth into the matter of *qadar*, because *qadar* is one of the secrets of Allah, and it is obligatory to believe in all the decrees of Allah, good and evil alike. Moreover, there is no guarantee that a person’s inquiries into the matter of *qadar* will not cause him to reject the decrees of Allah concerning His slaves, and thus be misguided from the path of truth.”³

Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “It is a part of the well-known Sunnah to believe in *qadar*, both good and evil, to accept the *aḥaadeeth* on this topic and to believe in them, and not to ask why or how. The correct way is to accept it and believe in it. If a person does not know the explanation of a hadith or understand it in a rational sense, he does not have to; but he still has to believe it and accept it, like the *aḥaadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and other reports about *qadar*.”⁴

‘Ali ibn al-Madeeni said something similar to what Imam Aḥmad said about *qadar*.⁵

Some Important Principles About *Qadar*

What the scholars have said about *qadar* (predestination) sets out a number of principles which are of the utmost importance:

1. It is obligatory (*waajib*) to believe in *qadar*.
2. With regard to understanding *qadar* and defining its limits and dimensions, we must rely on the Qur’an and Sunnah, and not on

² *Sharḥ at-Ṭaḥaawiyah*, p. 276.

³ *Ash-Sharee‘ah* by Al-Aajurri, p. 149.

⁴ *Sharḥ Uṣool I’tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah*, p. 157.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 165.

rational analysis and analogy. For human reason is incapable on its own of forming the guidelines which will save it from going astray on this issue. Those who indulged in discussing this issue from a rational point of view have gone astray and gotten lost. Some of them denied *qadar* altogether; some of them thought that belief in *qadar* implied that we are compelled (*al-jabr*); and some created a conflict between shari'ah and *qadar*. Each one of these deviations caused problems in people's daily lives and societies, because ideological deviations cause deviations in behaviour and daily life.

3. We should avoid discussing *qadar* in depth, because some aspects of it cannot be comprehended by the human mind, no matter how brilliant it may be, and others cannot be comprehended except with a great deal of difficulty.

It may be said: is this not a means of restricting the human intellect? The answer is that this is not aimed at restricting human thought, but at protecting the human mind from wasting its energy on something at which it cannot excel, so that it can engage in areas where it can succeed.

Islam presents man with the guidelines for believing in *qadar*. The concept of *qadar* is based on the fact that Allah knew everything that would be, and He wrote it, willed it and created it. It is easy for the human mind to understand these facts; there is nothing difficult, complex or ambiguous here.

But searching for the secret of *qadar* and pursuing the matter in depth is a waste of intellectual energy. The attempt to understand how Allah knew, wrote, willed and created, is an attempt to understand the essence of Allah's attributes and how these attributes operate. These matters are hidden from the human mind. This is something which is unseen, which we are required to believe in, but it is not permissible to ask about their nature and essence. The one who asks about these

things is like the one who asks how Allah rose over the Throne. What we say to him is: these are attributes on which the principle of predestination (*qadar*) is based. The apparent meaning is understood, but how it happens is not known to us. It is obligatory to believe in it, but asking how is *bid'ah* (heresy).

Asking about its nature, how is the matter, exhausts those who ask about *qadar*, and makes the matter complicated and makes believing in *qadar* difficult. This is the cause of the confusion which affects many of those who look into this matter.

Hence, scholars defined the limits beyond which it is not permissible to go when discussing *qadar*. We have quoted above what Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “It is a part of the well-known Sunnah to believe in *qadar*, both good and evil, to accept the *aḥaadeeth* on this topic and to believe in them, and not to ask why or how.”⁶

Those who discussed the matter of *qadar* (predestination) indulged in discussing how Allah creates the deeds of His slaves when these deeds in fact stem from the individual, and they discussed how Allah knows what His slaves will do, and how He obliged His slaves to strive even though He knew what they would do, and He knows whether their ultimate destination will be Paradise or Hell.

Those who discussed this matter tried to create conflicts between parts of the Qur'an, and they became confused and lost, and failed to reach any sound conclusion. The Messenger (ﷺ) warned his ummah against following this path and indulging in this vast desert. In *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* it is narrated with a *ḥasan* Isnad that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out when we were debating about *qadar*, and he became so angry that his face turned red, as if a pomegranate had been squeezed over his face. He said,

⁶ *Sharḥ I'tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah* by Al-Laalkaa'i, 1/157.

‘Is this what you have been commanded to do? Is this why I was sent to you? Those who came before you were destroyed when they debated about this matter. I urge you not to dispute about it.’”⁷

The extent to which the human mind can comprehend the reasons behind things, the commands and deeds, and what is good or evil in them

The majority of scholars of earlier and later times said that there are reasons and wisdom behind the commands that Allah gives and the things that He creates, because He does not issue any command except for a reason, and He does not create anything except for a reason.

Some of these reasons are connected with people, and others are related to Allah. Those that are connected with people have to do with what is good for them and is in their best interests, in this world or in the Hereafter. Those that are connected to Allah have to do with the fact that He loves to be worshipped and obeyed, and to have people turn to Him in repentance, put their hopes in Him, fear Him, place their trust in Him and struggle hard in His way and for His sake. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

﴿And I [Allah] created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [Alone].﴾ (Qur’an 51: 56)

﴿ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴾

﴿Does man think that he will be left neglected [without being punished or rewarded for the obligatory duties

⁷ Tirmidhi, 2/223.

enjoined by his Lord Allah on him]?)» (Qur'an 75: 36)

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ ﴾

«And We have sent you [O' Muhammad] not but as a mercy for the 'Aalameen [mankind, jinn and all that exists].» (Qur'an 21: 107)

﴿ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾

«Did you think that We had created you in play [without any purpose], and that you would not be brought back to Us?» (Qur'an 23: 115)

There are many texts, which indicate that Allah is Wise in all that He commands and creates; it is not possible to list them all here. The human mind can comprehend only a little of this wisdom.

Majority of the scholars also said that the human mind is able to grasp what deeds are good and evil. So reason understands that oppression, lying, stealing and killing are evil, and that justice, truthfulness, reconciliation and saving someone who is drowning are good.

The purposes that shari'ah seeks to achieve fall into three categories:

1. Every action is either good and beneficial or mischievous, even if shari'ah does not refer specifically to a given action. It is known that justice serves the interests of all, whilst oppression has the opposite effect. This category refers to right and wrong, and we may know what is right and wrong through reason or through shari'ah. But reason alone cannot know that a person will be punished for a wrong action in the Hereafter, unless shari'ah clearly states that this is the case. Whoever asserts that Allah can punish His slaves for evil actions such as *shirk*, *kufr*, etc., without sending Messengers to them, is mistaken.

2. When the Lawgiver commands something, it is good, and when He forbids something, it is evil. Thus, actions are determined to be either good or evil according to the statements of the Lawgiver.
3. The Lawgiver commands things as a test and a trial, as when Allah commanded Ibraaheem (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Ismaa'eel (Ishmael). The intention was not that the child should be slaughtered; the aim was to test Ibraaheem.

The *Mu'talifah* approved of the first category, but not the second or third. The *Ash'ari'ah* said that all the commands and prohibitions of shari'ah were in the nature of a test, and that no deeds could be described as being good or evil, whether in the light of shari'ah or otherwise. But wise people, and the majority of scholars, affirm all three categories.⁸

This is the view of the majority of *Ahl as-Sunnah*, that there are reasons behind all that Allah does and that it is possible, by rational analysis, to know which actions are good and which ones are evil. This opens the door for the human mind to examine the clear reasons for which Allah created all things, and why He prescribed the laws that He prescribed. This is a vast area, in which people can gain great knowledge, strengthen their faith, increase their conviction and come to realize the absolute perfection of the Mighty Creator.

﴿ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ... ﴾

﴿Who made everything He has created good...﴾

(Qur'an 32: 7)

How can it be otherwise, when Allah has promised to show His slaves His mighty Signs which confirm the truth of the Message

⁸ Concerning the reasons behind what Allah does and the rational analysis of which actions are good and which are bad, see *Majmoo' al-Fataawa* of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah 8/122, 308, 428.

brought by His Messenger, and He has revealed in His Book the words:

﴿ سَرُّهُمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ... ﴾
 ﴿٥٣﴾

﴿We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the truth...﴾ (Qur'an 41: 53)

The Qur'an commands us to look at, think about and ponder the *ayaat* (verses) that He has revealed, and the signs that He has created:

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْءَانَ ... ﴾
 ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an...?﴾
 (Qur'an 47: 24)

﴿ قُلْ أَنْظِرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ... ﴾
 ﴿١٠١﴾

﴿Say: 'Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth'...﴾
 (Qur'an 10: 101)

﴿ أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴾
 ﴿١٧﴾

﴿Do they not look at the camels, how they are created?﴾
 (Qur'an 88: 17)

﴿ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِهِ ۚ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾

﴿Then let man look at his food: We pour forth water in abundance. And We split the earth in clefts.﴾

(Qur'an 80: 24-26)

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON *QADAR* (PREDESTINATION)

Among the Muslims there are a number of schools of thought on the issue of *qadar* (predestination), which may be classified as follows:

1 - The View of those Who Deny *Qadar*

Some of those who are misguided on this matter deny *qadar* and claim that Allah - Exalted be He above what they say - does not know anything before it happens, and that He does not have prior knowledge. They say that Allah only knows about things after they are created and brought into being.

These people falsely claim that when Allah issues commands and prohibitions to His slaves, He does not know who will obey Him and who will disobey Him, and that He does not know who will enter Paradise and who will enter Hell, until some of His slaves respond to His commands and others reject them; only then does He know who is blessed and who is doomed. These misguided people reject belief in the prior knowledge of Allah, and they deny that Allah wrote the decrees concerning His creation before He created the heavens and the earth, as is stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

This view developed at the end of the era of the *Ṣaḥābah* (the Companions of the Prophet). The first one to say this was Ma'bad al-Juhani, whose deviated belief was followed by the leaders and *a'immaḥ* of the *Mu'tazilah*, such as Waaṣil ibn 'Aṭaa' al-Ghazzaal and 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd. Many reprehensible remarks have been transmitted from them on this issue, which imply disbelief in what Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) said about Allah having knowledge of

things and having written them before He created them.¹

The Messenger (ﷺ) was afraid that his ummah would fall into the error which this group fell into. According to a *ṣaḥeeḥ* (authentic) hadith narrated by Ibn Abi Mihjan, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“I fear for my ummah three things after I am gone: oppression of their leaders, belief in the stars (astrology) and disbelief in *qadar*.”²

It is narrated by Abu Ya‘la in his *Musnad*, Al-Khaṭeab in *At-Taareekh* and Ibn ‘Adiy in *Al-Kaamil*, with a *ṣaḥeeḥ* (sound) Isnad that Anas (رضي الله عنه) said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“I fear for my ummah two things after I am gone: disbelief in *qadar* and belief in the stars (astrology).”³

The Messenger (ﷺ) warned his ummah against this misguidance. In a hadith narrated by Ṭabaraani in *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*, and by Al-Ḥaakim in *Al-Mustadrak*, from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Discussion about *qadar* has been left for the evil people among my ummah to discuss.”⁴

Ṭabaraani narrated in *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer* that Abu Umaamah said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“This ummah is fine and will remain so until they start to speak about those who die in childhood and about *qadar*.”⁵

¹ ‘*Aqeedat as-Safaareeni*, 1/300; *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/59.

² *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jaami‘ aṣ-Ṣagheer*, 1/120, hadith no. 212.

³ *Ibid*, 1/120, hadith no. 120.

⁴ *Ibid*, 1/123, hadith no. 224.

⁵ *Ibid*, 3/72, hadith no. 3060.

The Messenger (ﷺ) called this group the “Magians” of this ummah, because the Magians (Zoroastrians) believe in the existence of two creators, light and darkness, and this group believes in the existence of many creators and say that each person is a creator alongside Allah. The Messenger (ﷺ) commanded that this group should be forsaken and boycotted, they should not be visited even when they are sick. According to the hadith narrated by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* with a *ḥasan* Isnad from Ibn ‘Umar, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Every nation has its ‘Magians’, and the ‘Magians’ of my ummah are those who say that there is no *qadar*. If they fall sick, do not visit them, and when they die, do not attend their funerals.”⁶

According to another hadith narrated by Aḥmad and Abu Dawood from Ibn ‘Umar, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The *qadariyah* are the ‘Magians’ of this ummah. If they fall sick do not visit them and when they die, do not attend their funerals.”⁷

The *Ṣaḥābah* (the Companions of the Prophet), attacked those who held these misguided beliefs on all fronts, denouncing them for their message of misguidance and falsehood. They forbade the people to mix with them and sit with them, and quoted to them the texts which exposed their falsehood and confirmed the truth of the matter of *qadar*.

In *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* it is narrated from Naafi‘ that a man came to Ibn ‘Umar and said: “So and so sends greetings of *salaam* to you.” Ibn ‘Umar said: “I have heard that he has innovated something. If he has

⁶ *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jaami‘ aṣ-Ṣagheer*, 5/37, hadith no. 5039.

⁷ *Mishkaat al-Maṣabeeḥ*, 1/38, hadith no. 107. The editor, Shaykh Naaṣiruddin al-Albaani, noted in his commentary on *Al-Mishkaat* that the hadith has a *ḥasan* Isnad.

innovated something then do not convey my greetings of *salaam* to him, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

‘In this ummah (or in my ummah) there will be landslides, transformation (of humans into animals) or stoning (from the heavens) to those who deny *qadar*.’” Tirmidhi said: this is a *ghareeb ṣaḥeeḥ ḥasan* hadith.

Tirmidhi also recorded a *marfooʿ* report from Ibn ‘Umar which says: “In my ummah there will be landslides and transformation (of humans into animals). This will happen to those who deny *qadar*.”⁸

In *Sunan at-Tirmidhi* it is narrated that ‘Abd al-Waaḥid ibn Saleem said: “I came to Makkah where I met ‘Aṭaa’ ibn Abi Rabaah. I said to him, ‘O’ Abu Muhammad, the people of Baṣrah are saying that there is no *qadar*.’ He said, ‘O’ my son, do you not read the Qur’an?’ I said, ‘Yes, I do.’ He said, ‘Then recite *Al-Zukhruf*.’ So I recited:

﴿حَمِّ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُمِينِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ ﴿٢﴾ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُولَى الْأَكْتَابِ لَذِينَ لَعَلِّي حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾﴾

﴿*Ha-Meem*. By the manifest Book [i.e. this Qur’an that makes things clear]. Verily, We have made it a Qur’an in Arabic that you may be able to understand [its meanings and its admonitions]. And verily, it [this Qur’an] is in the Mother of the Book [i.e. *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*] with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom.﴾ (Qur’an 43: 1-4)’

He said: ‘Do you know what *Umm al-Kitaab* (the Mother of the Book) is?’ I said, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ He said: ‘It is a book which Allah wrote before He created the heavens and the earth. In it, it says that Pharaoh is one of the people of Hell, and it says,

⁸ Tirmidhi, 4/456, hadith no. 2152, 2153.

﴿ تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴾

﴿Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab, and perish he!﴾
(*Qur'an* 111: 1).”

‘Aṭaa’ said: “And I met Al-Waleed, the son of ‘Ubaadah ibn aṣ-Ṣaamit, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah. I asked him, ‘What did your father advise you when he was dying?’ He said: ‘My father called me and said to me, “O’ my son, fear Allah, and know that you cannot fear Allah unless you believe in Allah, and believe in *qadar*, all of it, both good and evil. If you die believing otherwise, you will go to Hell, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

‘The first thing that Allah created was the pen, and he told it, Write! It said, What shall I write? He said, Write what has happened, and what will happen until eternity.’”” Tirmidhi said: this is a *ghareeb* hadith with this isnad.⁹

The *aimmah* (leading religious scholars) stated that these people who do not believe in the (prior) knowledge of Allah are *kaafir* (disbelievers). Among those who stated this are Imam Maalik, Imam ash-Shaafa‘i and Imam Aḥmad.¹⁰

The group which denied the prior knowledge of Allah has more or less disappeared. Sifaareeni says: “The scholars said, those who denied *qadar* have vanished. Those who denounced them as *kaafir* for this belief include Imam Maalik, Imam ash-Shaafa‘i, Imam Aḥmad and other *aimmah*.”¹¹

“Qurṭubi said: this school of thought no longer exists, and we know of no one in later times who belongs to it. Ḥaafiz ibn Ḥajar al-

⁹ Tirmidhi, 4/457, no. 2155. See also *Ṣaḥeeḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhi* edited by Shaykh Naaṣiruddin al-Albaani, 2/28.

¹⁰ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/288.

¹¹ *Aqeedat as-Safaareeni*, 1/301.

‘Asqalaani said: the *Qadariyah* nowadays are unanimously agreed that Allah knows about the deeds of His slaves before they happen, but they differ from the *Salaf* (the Pious Predecessors) in their claim that people’s deeds are done by them and stem from them independently of Allah. Although this is a false opinion, it is less serious than the former view. In later times, some of them denied that the Will of Allah has anything to do with the deeds of man, in an attempt to avoid connecting the Eternal with the created.”¹²

Nawawi said: “Those scholars of *‘ilm al-kalaam* (Islamic philosophy - scholasticism) who discuss the differences between different schools of thought said that those *Qadariyah* who believed in this reprehensible and false idea no longer exist. There is no longer anyone among the people of the *Qiblah* (i.e., Muslims) who believes in that. The *Qadariyah* in later times believed in *qadar*, but they say that what is good comes from Allah and what is bad comes from elsewhere - Exalted be Allah above what they say.”¹³

“The *Qadariyah* acknowledge that Allah has created man with a will (to choose), but they say that this will is the potential to choose; when his will is connected to something specific, then this action is not created (by Allah).”¹⁴

“In fact these people are Magians and dualists, and even worse than them. For the dualists say that there are two creators for the entire universe, but these people say that there are numerous creators for each individual, and for each action. They say that every created being is also a creator. If it were not for the fact that they have contradictory ideas, they would be counted as worse *kaafir* (disbelievers) than the Magians.

¹² *Ibid*, 1/301.

¹³ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi ‘ala Muslim*, 15/154.

¹⁴ *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/206.

The inevitable implication of this view is that people's actions lie beyond the creation of Allah and are not subject to His sovereignty and control. This means that there may exist in His Dominion things that He does not will, and that He wills things that do not happen, so they are independent of Allah and do not seek His help to obey Him or to avoid disobeying Him, and they do not seek refuge with Allah from the evil of their own selves or from their evil actions, and they do not seek his guidance to the Straight Path."¹⁵

The *Qadariyah* intended to glorify Allah when they said that Allah wanted the *kaafir* (disbelievers) to believe, but the *kaafir* is the one who wants to follow *kufir* (disbelief). Their argument is that this would lead to injustice, for how could Allah will the *kaafir* to follow *kufir* and then punish him for that? But - as the commentator on *At-Taḥaawiyah* said - "they became like someone who is trying to get out of the frying pan into the fire; they ran away from one thing and fell into something even worse, for they implied that the will of the *kaafir* overpowered the will of Allah, because Allah willed that he (the *kaafir*) should believe - according to them - but the *kaafir* willed that he should follow *kufir*, so the will of the *kaafir* was carried out instead of the will of Allah. This is one of the most reprehensible of beliefs, for which there is no evidence (*daleel*); in fact it goes against the *daleel*."¹⁶

The fact that Allah decrees that the *kaafir* will follow *kufir* is not a form of injustice towards him as the wrongdoers of the *Qadariyah* say. Allah has the strongest evidence and perfect wisdom as far as His slaves are concerned, which nobody knows except Him, may He be Exalted.

¹⁵ *Ma'aarij al-Qubool*, 2/253.

¹⁶ *Sharḥ at-Taḥaawiyah*, p. 277.

In *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* it is narrated that Abu al-Aswad ad-Di'ali said: "Imran ibn al-Ḥuṣayn said to me: 'What do you think about what people are striving to do - is it something that has been decreed for them aforetime, or are they striving in accordance with the teachings of their Prophet and the proof that has been established for them?' I said, 'It is something that has been decreed for them and is cut and dried.' He said, 'Would that not be unjust?' I became very nervous and said, 'Everything has been created by Allah, the All-Glorious, and is under His Dominion, He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned. (cf Qur'an 21: 23).'

He said, 'May Allah bless you, all I meant by my question was to see how much you understand. Two men from (the tribe of) Muzaynah came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, what do you think about people's efforts and striving today - is it something that has been decreed for them aforetime and is cut and dried, or are they striving in accordance with the teachings of their Prophet and the proof that has been established for them?" He said, "No, it is something that has been decreed for them aforetime, and is cut and dried. Confirmation of this to be found in the Book of Allah:

﴿ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾ ﴾

﴿By *Nafs* [Adam or a person or a soul], and Him Who perfected him in proportion; Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him'﴾

(*Qur'an* 91: 7-8).''''¹⁷

In *Sunan Abi Dawood* it is narrated that Ibn ad-Daylami said: "I came to 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b and said to him: "I am somewhat confused about *qadar*; tell me something that will take away this confusion from my heart.' He said, 'If Allah were to punish the people of His heavens

¹⁷ Muslim, 4/2041, hadith no. 2650.

and His earth, He could do that without being unjust towards them, and if He were to have mercy upon them His mercy would be better for them than their own deeds. Even if you were to spend an amount of gold equal in size to Mount Uḥud for the sake of Allah, Allah would not accept that from you until you believe in *qadar* and know that whatever befalls you could not have missed you, and that whatever missed you could not have befallen you. If you die believing anything other than this, you will enter Hell.’ Then I came to ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood, and he said something similar. Then I came to Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan and he said something similar. Then I came to Zayd ibn Thaabit and he said something similar.”¹⁸

By saying what they said, the *Qadariyah* gave the people of misguidance a way to defeat them in argument. ‘Umar ibn al-Haytham said, “We went out on a ship, and we were accompanied by a *Qadari* and a Magian. The *Qadari* said to the Magian, ‘Become Muslim.’ The Magian said, ‘Not until Allah wills.’ The *Qadari* said, ‘Allah wills it, but the *Shayṭaan* (Satan) does not want it.’ The Magian said, ‘Allah wills and the *Shayṭaan* wills, but what has been carried out is the will of the *Shayṭaan*; this is a strong *Shayṭaan*.”” According to another report, (the Magian) said, “I will stay with the stronger of the two.”¹⁹

The debate of *Ahl as-Sunnah* with the *Qadariyah*

The arguments of the *Mu‘tazilah* cannot stand up in debate with the rank and file of the *Ahl as-Sunnah*, let alone their scholars and leading thinkers.

The scholars mentioned that a Bedouin came to ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd and said to him: “My she-camel has been stolen; pray to Allah to bring it

¹⁸ Abu Dawood, 4/310, hadith no. 3699.

¹⁹ *Sharḥ at-Ṭaḥaawiyah*, 278.

back to me.” ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd said: “O’ Allah! this poor man’s she-camel has been stolen, and You did not want it to be stolen. O’ Allah! bring it back to him.” The Bedouin said, “Now it is lost for sure; I have given up on it.” (‘Amr) said, “How is that?” (The Bedouin) said: “Because if Allah did not want it to be stolen and it was stolen, how can I be sure that if He wants to bring it back that He will be able to? And he got up and left him.”²⁰

The response of Abu ‘Iṣaam al-Qaṣṭalaani to a *Qadari*

A man said to Abu ‘Iṣaam al-Qaṣṭalaani: “Do you think that if Allah denies me guidance and allows me to go astray, then He punishes me, then this is just and fair?” Abu ‘Iṣaam said to him: “If guidance is something that belongs to Him, then He can give it to whomsoever He wills and withhold it from whomsoever he wills.”²¹

The debate between ‘Abd al-Jabbaar al-Hamadaani and Abu Iṣḥaaq al-Asfaraayeeni

‘Abd al-Jabbaar al-Hamadaani, one of the shaykhs of the *Mu‘tazilah*, met Aṣ-Ṣaahib ibn ‘Abbaad, when Abu Iṣḥaaq al-Asfaraayeeni, one of the *aaimmah* (guides and leaders) of the Sunnah, was with him. When he saw the imam he said, “Glory be to the One Who is above all evil.”

The imam immediately said: “Glory be to the One in Whose Realm nothing happens except that which He wills.”

The qaaḍi (‘Abd al-Jabbaar) said: “Do you mean that our Lord wills that He should be disobeyed?”

²⁰ *Sharḥ Uṣṣool I’tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah*, p. 740.

²¹ *Sharḥ at-Ṭaḥaawiyah*, p. 278.

The imam said: “Will Allah be disobeyed by force (i.e., is He so weak)?”

The qaaḍi said: “Do you think that if He denies me guidance, then decrees that I should be doomed, then He has treated me fairly or unfairly?”

The imam said: “If He were to withhold from you something that belongs to you, then this would be unfair, but if He withholds from you something that belongs to Him, then He may bestow His Mercy upon whomsoever He wills.” The qaaḍi was lost for words.

In *Taareekh at-Ṭabari* it is reported that Gheelaan said to Maymoon ibn Mihraan, in the presence of Hishaam ibn ‘Abd al-Maalik, whom he had brought to debate with him: “Does Allah will that He should be disobeyed?” Maymoon said to him, “Would He be disobeyed by force (i.e., when He does not want that)?”

Between ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez and Gheelaan ad-Dimashqi

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez debated with Gheelaan ad-Dimashqi, one of the leaders of the *Mu’tazilah*. ‘Umar said to him: “O’ Gheelaan, I have heard that you are talking about *qadar*.” He said: “They are lying about me, O’ *Ameer al-Mu’mineen*.” He said: “Recite *Sooraah Ya-Seen* to me.” So he recited:

﴿ يَس ١ ﴾ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ نَزِيلِ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٥﴾ لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ آبَاؤَهُمْ فَهُمْ
 غَافِلُونَ ﴿٦﴾ لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي
 أَعْيُنِهِمْ أَغْشَاءً فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ
 سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ﴿﴾

﴿*Yaa-Seen*. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] By the Qur'an, full of wisdom [i.e. full of laws, evidences, and proofs], Truly, you [O' Muhammad] are one of the Messengers, On the Straight Path [i.e. on Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism]. [This is a Revelation] sent down by the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, In order that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless. Indeed the Word [of punishment] has proved true against most of them, so they will not believe. Verily, We have put on their necks iron collars reaching to the chins, so that their heads are raised up. And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see.﴾ (*Qur'an* 36: 1-9)

Gheelaan said: "By Allah, O' *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*, it is as if I had never read it before today. I bear witness, O' *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*, that I repent from what I said about *qadar* (predestination)." 'Umar said: "O' Allah! If he is sincere, then accept his repentance, and if he is lying then make him a sign for the believers."²²

Mu'aadh ibn Mu'aadh said: a friend of mine told me: "At-Taymi passed by the house of Ibn 'Awn and told him about this conversation. Ibn 'Awn said: 'I saw him crucified in Damascus.'"²³

Abu Ja'far al-Khaṭmi said:

²² The editor of *Sharḥ Uṣool I'tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah* said: This report is narrated by Al-Aajurri in *Ash-Sharee'ah*, p. 229, and by Ibn Baṭṭah in *Al-Ibaanah*, 2/326-327.

²³ The editor of *Sharḥ Uṣool I'tiqaad Ahl as-Sunnah* said: this is narrated by 'Abdullah ibn Aḥmad with a direct link between Mu'aadh and Ibn 'Awn, in *As-Sunnah*, p. 128, and by Ibn Baṭṭah, where the person who said "I saw him..." was reported to be Ibn 'Awn. *Al-Ibaanah*, 2/327. Also narrated by Aḥmad, and its men are *thiqaat* (trustworthy). *Majma' az-Zawaa'id*, 7/207.

“I was with ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeez when he summoned Gheelaan because of something that he had heard of him about *qadar*. He said to him, ‘Woe to you, O’ Gheelaan! What is this that I have heard of you?’

He said: ‘They are lying about me, O’ *Ameer al-Mu’mineen*, and putting words into my mouth that I did not say.’

‘Umar said: ‘What do you say about knowledge (the prior knowledge of Allah)?’

Gheelaan said: ‘Knowledge is executed.’

‘Umar said: ‘You are defeated. Go now and say what you like, O’ Gheelaan! If you admit the prior knowledge you are defeated (in argument), and if you deny it you are a *kaafir* (disbeliever). If you admit it and are defeated in argument that is better for you than denying it and becoming a *kaafir*.’ Then he said to him, ‘Have you read *Yaa-Seen*?’ Gheelaan said, ‘Yes.’ ‘Umar said, ‘Recite it.’ So Gheelaan recited:

﴿ يَس ۝١ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝٢ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝٣ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۝٤ نَزِيلِ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝٥ لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ ۝٦ لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَىٰ أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝٧ ﴾

﴿*Yaa-Seen*. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] By the Qur’an, full of wisdom [i.e. full of laws, evidences, and proofs]. Truly, you [O’ Muhammad] are one of the Messengers, on the Straight Path [i.e. on Allah’s religion of Islamic Monotheism]. [This is a Revelation] sent down by the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, in order that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless. Indeed

the Word [of punishment] has proved true against most of them, so they will not believe. ﴿ (Qur'an 36: 1-7)

'Umar said: 'Stop. What do you think?' Gheelaan said, 'It is as if I have never read this *aayah*, O' *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*.' 'Umar said, 'Carry on.' Gheelaan recited:

﴿ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ ﴿٨﴾
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا... ﴿٩﴾ ﴾

﴿'Verily, We have put on their necks iron collars reaching to the chins, so that their heads are raised up. And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them... ﴾ (Qur'an 36: 8-9)

'Umar said: 'Say

﴿ ... سَدًّا فَأَعْشَيْنَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ ﴾

﴿...barrier and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see. It is the same to them whether you warn them or you warn them not, they will not believe.﴾

(Qur'an 36: 9-10)'

'Umar said, 'What do you think?' Gheelaan said, 'It is as if I have never read these *aayaat* (verses) before. I swear by Allah that I will never again speak of the things that I used to speak about.' 'Umar said, 'Go.' And when Gheelaan turned away, he said, 'O' Allah, if he is lying, then make him taste the edge of the sword.'

He did not speak during the time of 'Umar, but (his successor) Yazeed ibn 'Abd al-Malik was a man who did not care about this matter or pay attention to it, so Gheelaan started to speak. When Hishaam became the *khaleefah*, he sent for him and said to him, 'You swore by Allah to 'Umar that you would never again speak about this

matter.’ Gheelaan said, ‘Let me off, and by Allah I will not do it again.’ Hishaam said, ‘May Allah not let me off if I let you off. Have you read the Opening of the Book (*Al-Faatihah*)?’ Gheelaan said, ‘Yes.’ Hishaam said, ‘Recite:

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾ ﴾

i.e., the Opening Chapter.

Gheelaan recited,

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ
الْدِّينِ ﴿٣﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the ‘*Aalameen* [mankind, jinn and all that exists]. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The Only Owner [and the Only Ruling Judge] of the Day of Recompense [i.e. the Day of Resurrection]. You [Alone] we worship, and You [Alone] we ask for help [for each and everything].﴾

(*Qur'an* 1: 2-5)

Hishaam said, ‘Stop. For what do you ask His help? For something which is in His hands and which you are not able to do, or for something that is in your hands? Take him and cut off his hands and feet, and cut off his head, and crucify him.’”²⁴

The *Qadariyah* who deny *qadar* deprive themselves of the opportunity to seek the help of Allah, the One, the Unique, because they claim that Allah could not create the deeds of His slaves, and that the individual is the creator of his own deeds, so how can they seek the help of Allah with regard to something that He could not create?

²⁴ The editor of *Sharh I'tiqaad Uşool Ahl as-Sunnah*, said: This is narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Aḥmad - who is mentioned in the Isnad - in *As-Sunnah*, p. 713-715.

With regard to what they do, they rely on their own power, strength and actions, and they demand the reward from Allah as a hired man demands his wages from his employer. But Allah has no need of His slaves and their deeds; the benefit of that goes back to the people themselves. It is the people who are in need of their own deeds, and they cannot do without the help of Allah:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾﴾

﴿You [Alone] we worship, and You [Alone] we ask for help [for each and everything].﴾ (Qur'an 1: 5)

﴿... فَأَعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ... ﴿١١٣﴾﴾

﴿...So worship Him [O' Muhammad] and put your trust in Him...﴾ (Qur'an 11: 123)

Specious Arguments and their Refutation

(1) The meaning of blotting out and confirming in the books, and the increase and decrease in people's lifespans

Some people misunderstand certain Qur'anic passages and *aḥaadeeth* of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Some of them say that if Allah knew everything that is to happen, and He has written all that in a Book which is with Him, then what is the meaning of the *ayah* (verse),

﴿يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ... ﴿١٣٩﴾﴾

﴿Allah blots out what He wills and confirms [what He wills]...﴾ (Qur'an 13: 39)?

If people's provision and lifespan is decided and they do not increase or decrease, then how do we interpret the hadith, "Whoever would like his provision to be increased and his life to be prolonged, let him uphold the ties of kinship"?

How do you understand the words of the Prophet Nooh [Noah (ﷺ)] to his people:

﴿ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا ﴾ (٣) يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخَذِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ... ﴿٤﴾

﴿“That you should worship Allah [Alone], fear [be dutiful to] Him, and obey me, He [Allah] will forgive you of your sins and respite you to an appointed term...”﴾

(Qur'an 71: 3-4)

What do you say about the hadith which says that Allah made the lifespan of Prophet Dawood (ﷺ) one hundred years, when it had originally been forty years?

The answer is that provision and lifespans are of two types: one type which has been decreed and is written in *Umm al-Kitaab*, which cannot be changed or altered, and another type of which Allah informs His angels. This is the type which can increase and decrease. Hence Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ﴾ (٣٩)

﴿Allah blots out what He wills and confirms [what He wills]. And with Him is the Mother of the Book.﴾

(Qur'an 13: 39)

The Mother of the Book (*Umm al-Kitaab*) is *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*, in which Allah has decreed all things as they will be.

In the books of the angels, lifespans and provisions increase and decrease according to the means and causes, and the angels write down a person's provision and lifespan. If he upholds the ties of kinship, his provision and lifespan be extended, otherwise they will decrease.²⁵

²⁵ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/540.

“Lifespans are also of two types: the definite lifespan which is known to Allah, and the variable lifespan. Allah commands the angel to write down the lifespan of His slave. If he upholds the ties of kinship, He commands the angel to increase his lifespan and provision. The angel does not know whether it will be increased or not, but Allah knows how matters will proceed, and when the appointed time (of death) comes, it cannot be brought forward or delayed.²⁶

Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalaani said: “What is previously known to Allah cannot be changed or altered. What can be changed or altered is what people see of the deeds of a person. It has to do with what the angels who are entrusted with caring for human beings know. This is what may be blotted out or confirmed, such as extending people’s lifespan and provision. But whatever was previously known to Allah cannot be blotted out or confirmed, and that knowledge rests with Allah.²⁷

(2) Reconciliation between the idea that Allah decrees all things and the hadith “every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah* (the natural inclination of mankind)”

Some people may say, how it is that Allah has decreed all things, when according to a *ṣaḥeeḥ* *hadith* our Prophet (ﷺ) said that every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah*?

The answer is that there is no contradiction between the texts which state that everything is decreed by Allah and the texts which state that every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah*.

Allah has created His slaves in such a way that they are free from false beliefs, and has created them with the readiness to accept the sound beliefs, but when they are born, the devils from among mankind and the jinn surround them and corrupt their sound nature (*fiṭrah*), but

²⁶ Opt. cit 8/540.

²⁷ *Fath al-Baari*, 11/488.

Allah protects those whom He wishes to guide to the truth.

Allah knows those who will remain steadfast and adhere to the sound *fiṭrah*, and those whose *fiṭrah* will be changed. He knows that from eternity and it is written. So there is no contradiction between these texts. According to the hadith narrated by Muslim, ‘Iyaad ibn Ḥammaar said: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that Allah, the Exalted, said: “I have created My slaves as *Haneefs* (pure monotheists), then the *shayaateen* (devils) mislead them, forbidding them that which I have permitted for them, and commanding them to associate others in worship with Me for which I have not revealed any authority.”

Allah knows best who will be misguided and led astray by the *shayaateen*, and He knows who will adhere firmly to the truth and be guided to the right way.

Once you understand this that we have explained here, you will know how to interpret the hadith, “Allah created Yaḥyaa ibn Zakariyya as a believer in his mother’s womb, and He created Pharaoh as a *kaafir* in his mother’s womb.” This has been narrated by Ibn ‘Uday in *Al-Kaamil*, and by Ṭabaraani in *Al-Awsaṭ*.²⁸

(3) If all things are decreed, what is the meaning of the *aayah*, ﴿whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself》?

Some of the *Qadariyah* who deny *qadar* quote as evidence the *aayah* (verse):

﴿ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ ... ﴾

﴿Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself...﴾

(*Qur'an* 4: 79)

²⁸ *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jaami' aṣ-Ṣagheer*, 3/113, hadith no. 3232.

They think that what is referred to by good and evil here is deeds of obedience (good deeds) and acts of sin (bad deeds).

But this is a misunderstanding, because what is meant by good here is blessings, and what is meant by evil is disasters. The context indicates that this is the correct understanding, because Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ أَيِنَّمَا تَكُونُوا يَدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّسَيَّدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِيبِهِمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَّقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبِهِمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ ... ﴿٧٩﴾ ﴾

“Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!’ And if some good reaches them, they say, ‘This is from Allah,’ but if some evil befalls them, they say, ‘This is from you [O’ Muhammad].’ Say: ‘All things are from Allah,’ so what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand any word? Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself...” ﴿

(Qur’an 4: 78-79)

Allah tells us that when something good happened to the *munaafiqeen* (hypocrites), such as provision, victory or good health, they would say, “This is from Allah.” But if something bad happened to them, such as sickness or fear of an enemy, they would say, “This is from you, O’ Muhammad, you are the one who has brought this religion which has turned the people against us and because of which we are suffering these calamities.”

“Good” here refers to blessings, and “evil” refers to calamities. This is like the *aayaat* (verses):

﴿ إِن تَمَسَّكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ سَوْهُمْ وَإِن تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تَصُدُّوا وَمَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا ... ﴾ (١٢٦)

﴿If a good befalls you, it grieves them, but if some evil overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain patient and become *Al-Muttaqoon* [the pious], not the least harm will their cunning do to you...﴾

(*Qur'an* 3: 120)

﴿ ... وَبَلَوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴾ (١٧١)

﴿...And We tried them with good [blessings] and evil [calamities] in order that they might turn [to Allah's Obedience].﴾

(*Qur'an* 7: 168)

Then Allah, tells us that calamities and blessings do not happen outside of the framework of His decree and will:

﴿ ... قُلْ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴾ (٧٨)

﴿...Say: 'All things are from Allah,' so what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand any word?﴾

(*Qur'an* 4: 78)

Then Allah, the All-High, explains that evil, i.e., calamities, does not have any cause except the sins of a person, which come from his own self. But the good things that happen to a person have countless reasons, because they happen by the Grace of Allah - they may happen because of a person's good deeds, or otherwise, simply by the grace of Allah. What people must do is to give thanks to their Lord and praise Him for His blessings to them, and they must repent frequently and seek His forgiveness for the sins that they have committed, which have brought upon them these disasters and calamities.

If you think about the words,

﴿ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ ... ﴾ (٧٩)

﴿Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself...﴾

(Qur'an 4: 79),

You will realize that good and evil are what Allah does to His slaves, the calamities and blessings that He sends upon them. But the phrase “is from yourself” means, because of the sins of the person. Even if this is decreed, it is because Allah has decreed that calamities will come about because of sins.

Concerning good and evil in the sense of a person’s good deeds and bad deeds, the Qur’an does not say “whatever befalls you”; rather, Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ حَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (٨٤)

﴿Whosoever brings good [Islamic Monotheism along with righteous deeds], he shall have the better thereof; and whosoever brings evil [polytheism along with evil deeds], then those who do evil deeds will only be requited for what they used to do.﴾ (Qur'an 28: 84)

It says, “whoever brings” here because the good deed is the action of the person who does it, hence this is also said with regard to sins and evil actions:

﴿...الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (٨٤)

﴿...then those who do evil deeds will only be requited for what they used to do.﴾ (Qur'an 28: 84).²⁹

²⁹ Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam, 8/110-224.

(4) How did Allah create and decree evil?

Some of the *Qadariyah* tried to cause confusion by saying that Allah is Holy and is above doing evil, so His slaves must also declare Him to be above doing evil. They have mixed truth with falsehood, thus confusing matters.

The answer to this argument is that Allah (ﷻ) does not create pure evil in which there is no good or benefit whatsoever for anybody, and in which there is no wisdom and mercy. He does not punish people without them having sinned. Some scholars such as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn al-Qayyim and others have explained the wisdom and mercy behind the creation of *Iblees*, insects and wild beasts.

Any created thing may be considered good in one sense and evil in another. Allah created *Iblees* in order to test His slaves through him, for some will hate him and will fight him and oppose his way and fight his supporters, and will be friends of Ar-Rahmaan (Allah), and will submit themselves to Him; but others will befriend *Iblees* (Satan) and follow in his footsteps.

2 - Those Who do not Strive, Relying on *Qadar* Instead

Another group have gone astray with regard to *qadar*, because they said: if Allah knows everything that we will do, and He knows where our final destiny will be, in Paradise or in Hell, and He is the Creator of our deeds, then why should we bother to strive? Why not let Allah's decree take its course, and we will get what is decreed for us whether we like it or not.

This misguidance is even worse in the cases of some devout worshippers, ascetics and *Sufis*, although it was not adopted *per se* by any distinctive group. It has not been adopted by any specific group,

but this belief is held by many ignorant Muslims and misguided heretics.³⁰

This group believes in predestination (*qadar*), and that Allah knows all things and created all things, and willed all things that exist, but they claim that Allah is pleased with and loves everything that He created and willed. They claim that there is no need for people to strive and pursue the means (of achieving things), because whatever has been decreed for them will come to them. They claim that people are forced or compelled to do the things they do, and that man has no ability to influence his actions; on the contrary, in relation to *qadar* he is like a feather blown about on the wind, or like a person who falls from a high mountain top into a vast and deep valley - as he is falling, he has no control over himself whatsoever.

These people forsake striving on the grounds of *qadar*, even before it happens. They also use *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse for the things that they do which are contrary to shari'ah. They have taken this to such extremes that they do not differentiate between *kufr* (disbelief) and *eemaan* (belief), or between those who are guided and those who are misguided, because all of that is the creation of Allah, so why should we differentiate?

This deviant belief has misled many people and diverted them from the right path; it has upset the balance of justice and truth, and wasted a huge amount of energy in the Muslim world, crippling it and, in some cases, turning it to the advantage of the enemies of Islam.

One of the effects of this belief has been the claim that Allah loves *kufr* (disbelief), *shirk* (polytheism), killing, *zinaa* (adultery and fornication), theft, disobedience to parents and other sins and crimes, because they claim that Allah loves and is pleased with everything

³⁰ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/59, 99, 256.

that He has created or brought into existence.

Another effect is that the people who believe so give up doing good and righteous deeds that will lead them to Paradise and save them from Hell, and they commit many of the major sins that doom a person to Hell, on the grounds that *qadar* (predestination) is bound to be carried out, and that everything that has been decreed for a person will come to him, so why should we strive and make the effort and exhaust ourselves?

These people have given up the idea of taking the means to an end, and they have forsaken prayer and fasting, along with *du'aa'* and the idea of seeking the help of Allah and putting one's trust in Him, because (they think) there is no point in doing any of that. Whatever Allah wills, will come to pass, so there is nothing to be gained by making *du'aa'* or striving.

Many of these people accept the oppression of evildoers and the corruption of the immoral, because what they do is in accordance with the will and decree of Allah. They neglect the duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and they do not care about carrying out the punishments prescribed by shari'ah (*hudood* and *qaṣaaṣ*, because whatever evils and crimes happen are decreed and cannot be avoided.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed this group and its beliefs in several places in his books. He said: "Those who believe in *Al-Qadaa' wal-Qadar* (Divine Will and Predestination), but claim that this corresponds to what Allah likes, end up cancelling out the laws, commands and prohibitions, although they acknowledge that Allah is the Lord of every created being in general terms, and that there is no living being except Allah who has hold of its forelock (i.e., has full control over it). This is the problem with many groups of *Ṣufis* and ascetics, whether in terms of their

beliefs or in actual fact, to the extent that some of them go to the extreme of permitting things which are forbidden, saying that obligatory actions are no longer compulsory, and favour lifting punishments.”³¹

He also says concerning them:

“These people think that Allah is the Creator of every created thing, so He is the Creator of the deeds of His slaves, and He wills everything that exists. But they do not distinguish between *eemaan* (belief) and *kufir* (disbelief), between what is good and what is evil, between truth and falsehood, between one who is guided and one who is led astray, between one who is upright and one who is sinful, between a true Prophet and a false prophet, between a friend of Allah and His enemy, between one with whom Allah is pleased and one with whom He is angry, between one whom Allah loves and one whom He hates, between justice and oppression, between righteousness and disobedience, between the actions of the people of Paradise and the actions of the people of Hell, between the righteous and the immoral. They recognize the factors that all created things have in common, that they are subject to the prior decree, irresistible will and all-encompassing power of Allah, and they are all created by Him. They recognize these common factors, but they fail to see the difference between things.”³²

“Those who followed this path went to such extremes that they said that the essence of all created things is Allah Himself. They adhered to the concept of nothing happening except by the will of Allah, to justify their own evil actions, as when Al-Ḥareeri said, ‘I reject a Lord Who could be disobeyed,’ and Ibn Israa’eel said:

³¹ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/256.

³² *Ibid* 8/60.

‘I started to do whatever He chooses for me to do,
So all of my action become acts of obedience.’

They called this reality, in the sense that this is the reality of *ruboobiyah*.”³³

Ibn al-Qayyim also discussed this group and its misguided notions in his valuable book *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel*, where he said: “Then there emerged another group which claimed that man’s voluntary actions - and in their view he has no choice in the matter - are like the actions of a tree blown off by the wind, or the actions of waves; this is forced obedience. He is not guided to do that for which he was created, rather he is forced and compelled.

Then their followers traced their footsteps and followed their path, and established this school of thought. They wrote books and added the idea that all of the obligations imposed on man by Allah are beyond his means, and that in fact was like obliging a paralyzed man to rise up to the seven heavens. So obliging man to believe and follow the laws of Allah is obliging him to something of which he is incapable; it is obliging him to do something which only the Creator can do, Who is Able to do all things. So He has obliged His creation to do His deeds, and they are not able to do that, and then He punishes them for doing it, when in fact they are not the ones who do it.

Then they were followed by another group of worshippers who said that there was no sin in the universe at all, for the person who does something is obeying the will of Allah and acting in harmony with it, as it is said:

‘I started to do whatever He chooses for me to do,

³³ Opt. cit, 8/257.

So all of my action become acts of obedience.’

One of these people was condemned for something that he did, and he said: If I disobeyed His command, I still obeyed His Will, and the one who obeys His will is not to be blamed and in fact cannot be condemned. Their thinkers and philosophers who established this school of thought stated that in the case of Allah, what He wills and what He loves are the same thing, so what He loves is what He wills. He willed everything that exists in the universe, and everything that He willed, He also loves.

This group thought of Allah in the worst possible terms, attributing the worst kind of injustice to Him. They said that the commands and prohibitions of the Lord were like obliging a paralyzed man to rise up to the seven heavens, or like obliging a dead man to give life to the dead, and that Allah punishes His slaves severely for doing that which they cannot avoid doing, and for not doing that which they are incapable of doing. Rather He punishes them for doing His deeds, which man is incapable of doing and is not guided to do, rather he is compelled to do it. We see one of their *'aarifs* (one who is deemed to have attained knowledge of Allah) saying in his poetry where he complains about his Lord:

‘He was thrown into the sea, tied up and was told,

Beware! Beware! Do not get wet!’³⁴

Ibn al-Qayyim noted that this type of person wants to “attribute their sins to the decrees (of Allah), so that they can absolve themselves of guilt and sin, and say that in fact these are the deeds of the All-Knowing Creator.”³⁵

³⁴ *Shifaa' al-'Aleel* by Ibn al-Qayyim, p. 15-16.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 16.

The author of the introduction to *Ash-Shifaa'* pointed out that this (reluctance to acknowledge one's own deeds) is the reason why "the prevailing trend in every age is *al-jabr* (the belief that one is forced or compelled to do what one does)." And he said: "The belief in *al-jabr* takes away man's responsibility and the burden of having committed sins, and puts the blame on the forces which motivate the will of man and lead him to commit those sins. The overwhelming majority of people follow this belief in *al-jabr*. The one who worships idols believes that his affairs are in the hands of the gods whom he worships, and he puts the blame on time (*Ad-dahr*), and believes that man is under the control of night and day (or circumstances).

Those who say that they believe in Allah believe that divine decrees direct man as they will, and that he has no will and no choice. This idea has taken on a new form in modern times, whereby those who believe in *al-jabr* say that man's will is controlled by his instincts, genes and environment, and he has no control over these things. So he has no choice but to commit sin, because man's will has no influence over his psychological motives. It is rather the result of these psychological motives and is dominated by psychological influences or external influences which are unavoidable.

When the idea of *al-jabr* spread among the Muslims in later times, through various misguided *Şufi tariqahs* (schools), it caused a great deal of harm, especially when it was combined with the rejection of the idea of cause and effect. One of them said:

'The pen of destiny has written down what is to come.
It is all the same if we move or stay still.
It is crazy of you to seek provision,
When the foetus hidden in his mother's womb gets his provision.'"³⁶

³⁶ *Shifaa' al-'Aleel*, p. 5

The ideas of this group leads to disbelief in Allah and rejection of what is said in His Books and the message brought by His Messengers. Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Whoever affirms *qadar* but uses it as evidence and pretext to cancel out the commandments and prohibitions, is worse than one who affirms the commandments and prohibitions, but denies *qadar*. There is consensus among the Muslims and followers of other religions that whoever uses *qadar* as evidence and pretext and recognizes that Allah is the Lord of all created beings, but does not differentiate between what is permitted and what is forbidden, between a believer and a disbeliever, between one who is obedient and one who is disobedient, does not believe in any of the Messengers or in any of the Books. In this person’s view, Adam and *Iblees* (Satan) are the same, as are Nooh (Noah) and his people, Moosa (Moses) and Fir’aun (Pharaoh), the *Ṣaḥaabah* (Companions) and the *kuffaar* (disbelievers).”³⁷

He also said concerning them: “Whoever acknowledges the prior knowledge of Allah and His book, but claims that that is sufficient and that there is no need for command and prohibitions, or for striving, and that whoever is decreed to enter Paradise will do so without any effort at all on his part, and that whoever is decreed to enter Hell will do so without any evil actions on his part, these people are worse *kaafir* (disbelievers) than those (i.e., those who simply disbelieve in *qadar*), and are more astray. The implication of what they say is that commands and prohibitions, *ḥalaal* (lawful) and *ḥaraam* (unlawful), the promise of Paradise and the threat of Hell, do not count. They are worse *kaafir* than the Jews and the Christians, far worse.”³⁸

³⁷ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/100

³⁸ *Ibid* 8/288.

And he said: “If these people insist on this belief, then they are worse *kaafir* (disbelievers) than the Jews and the Christians, for the Jews and the Christians believe in commands and prohibitions, in the promise of Paradise and the threat of Hell, in reward and punishment, but they changed and distorted (the religion) and believed in parts of it and rejected other parts.”³⁹

Refutation of *Al-Qadariyah al-Jabariyah* [Those who Believe in Predestination (*Qadar*) but Say that Man is Compelled to do What he Does and has no Freedom of Will]

This group may be refuted on a number of points:

(1) Their error in using the word *jabr* (compulsion) to describe all actions of man

They use a term that is not used in the Qur’an or the Sunnah, when we are obliged to use the words narrated in the texts (i.e., the Qur’an and Sunnah). Laalkaa’i narrated with his Isnad that Baqiyah said: “I asked Awzaa’i and Zubaydi about *jabr*.

Zubaydi said: ‘Allah is too great and mighty to compel or force anyone, but He decrees, and creates His slave according to the *Fitrah* that He likes.’

Awzaa’i said: ‘I do not know of any origin for the word *al-jabr* in the Qur’an or Sunnah, so I hesitate to use the word. But *al-qaḍaa’*, *al-qadar*, *al-khalq* (creation) and *al-jabl* (forming, fashioning) - these words are known in the Qur’an and words of the Messenger of Allah.’”⁴⁰

³⁹ Opt. cit 8/262.

⁴⁰ *Sharḥ I’tiqaad Uṣool Ahl as-Sunnah*, p. 700; *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/105.

Similar views were narrated from a number of the scholars of the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors), such as Sufyaan ath-Thawri, Abu Ishaaq al-Fazaari and others.⁴¹

They did not like to say that man was compelled (*mujbar*) to do what he does, because this word (*jabr*) is vague. The word *ijbaar* may mean forcing, as in the phrase *Ajbara al-abb ibnatahu 'ala 'n-Nikah* (the father forced his daughter to get married), or *jabara al-haakim ar-rajul 'ala bay'i maalihi li wafaa' daynihi* (the judge forced the man to sell his property to pay off his debt). In these cases, *ijbaar* means forcing, so when they say *ajbara Allah al-'ibaad* (Allah compelled His slaves), it means that He forced them, not that He made them want to do their deeds because they themselves like them.

Applying this expression to Allah - may He be Blessed and Exalted - is an obvious mistake, "For Allah is far above forcing anyone. The one who forces others is the one who is not able to make others want to choose something because they themselves like it and want to do it. But Allah is Able to do that, for He is the one who makes a person want and like to do something. So how can you say that He forces and compels him, as one created being forces another?"⁴²

Using the word *jabr* (forcing, compelling) in the sense that Allah has made people want to do what He wills and choose to do that, without being forced, is correct. One of the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) said, concerning the meaning of *Al-Jabbaar* (The Compeller, one of the names of Allah), He is the One Who makes people do what He wants.⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 8/132, 294, 461.

⁴² *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/463.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 8/464.

Because the word *jabr* is vague and may mean either thing, the *Salaf* prohibited using it in either a negatory or an affirmative sense.

Shaykh al-Islam mentioned, quoting from Abu Bakr al-Khallaal in his book *As-Sunnah*, that Al-Mardhawi said to Imam Aḥmad: “O’ Abu ‘Abdullah! A man is saying that Allah compels (*ajbara*) His slaves.” He said, “We do not say this,” and he denounced it. He said: “Allah sends astray whomsoever He wills and guides whomsoever He wills.”

It is narrated from Al-Mardhawi that a man said, “Allah does not compel people to commit sin.” Another man refuted that and said, “Allah does compel people.” What he meant by that was to affirm *qadar*. They asked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal about that, and he rebuked both of them, the one who had said that Allah compels people and the one who has said that there is no compulsion, until they repented. He told them to say, “Allah sends astray whomsoever He wills and guides whomsoever He wills.”

And it is narrated that Abu Ishāaq al-Fazaari said: “Al-Awzaa‘i came to me and said, ‘Two men came to me and asked me about *qadar* (predestination), and I wanted to bring them to you so that you could hear what they say and respond to it.’

I (Abu Ishāaq) said: ‘May Allah bless you, you can answer this better than I.’

So Al-‘Awzaa‘i came to me, bringing the two men with him, and he told them to speak.

They said, ‘Some of the *Qadariyah* came to us and debated about *qadar* with us, and we debated with them, until finally we said, Allah compels us to do that which He has forbidden us to do, and He prevents us from doing that which He has commanded us to do, and He gives us provision of things that He has forbidden to us.’

I said, ‘Those who came to you with what they said have come up with *bid‘ah* (a reprehensible innovation) and have invented something new in the religion, and I think that you have come up with a *bid‘ah* similar to theirs.’

Al-‘Awzaa‘i said, ‘You are right and you have done well, O’ Abu Ishaaq.’”⁴⁴

(2) Denying that man has the freedom to choose what he does is a sign of irrational thinking

Those who claim that man does not have the will to do as he chooses are not thinking straight. They are misguided and they lead others astray. We know from our own selves that our actions are not like the actions of inanimate objects which have no control whatsoever over their own movements.

Indeed, we distinguish between the involuntary actions of our bodies, and the actions which we choose to do. So we have no control over the actions of the heart and lungs, the flow of blood through man’s veins, and the thousands of complex actions which take place within our bodies without our knowledge; these are involuntary actions in which man’s will plays no role. The same applies to the movements of a person who is afflicted with tremors and cannot stop his hand from shaking.

But when a person eats and drinks, rides (on an animal or in a vehicle), buys and sells things, sits down, stands up, gets married, gets divorced, and so on, he does those things by choice, by his own will and strength. Those who say that man does not have this power are not thinking straight, and the way they look at things is confused.

⁴⁴ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/103.

The Qur'an constantly attributes deeds to the people who do them, as when Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى... ﴾ (٢٠)

﴿And there came a man running from the farthest part of the town...﴾
(Qur'an 36: 20)

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴾ (١٠٣)

﴿Then, when they had both submitted themselves [to the Will of Allah], and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead [or on the side of his forehead for slaughtering].﴾
(Qur'an 37: 103)

﴿ ... فَوَكَرَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ... ﴾ (١٥)

﴿...so Moosa [Moses] struck him with his fist and killed him...﴾
(Qur'an 28:15)

﴿ فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ... ﴾ (٧٩)

﴿So he went forth before his people in his pomp...﴾
(Qur'an 28: 79)

- There are many texts, more than we can quote here, attribute actions to the people who do them.

(3) The claim that Allah loves and is pleased with everything that He has decreed and created

This is a false claim, for Allah willed that *kufir* (disbelief), *shirk* (polytheism) and other sins, such as *zinaa* (adultery and fornication), theft, disobedience to parents, lying, false testimony and consuming people's wealth unlawfully, should exist, but He hates them and forbids His slaves to do these things.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “Shaykh al-Islam - may Allah have mercy on him - told me that he condemned some of these groups for loving that which Allah and His Messenger hate.

The person who had been blamed said to him: ‘Love is a fire which burns away in the heart all that the Beloved does not want, and everything that exists in the universe is in accordance with His will, so what should I hate?’

The Shaykh said to him: ‘If Allah is angry with some people, and He curses them and condemns them, and you befriend them and love them, and you love and accept what they do, will you be a friend of Allah or His enemy?’

The Jabari was lost for words and could not answer.”⁴⁵

We will discuss this matter further when we deal with the universal will of Allah and His legislative will (*al-iraadah al-kawuniyah wal-iraadah ash-shar‘iyah*).

(4) The claim that belief in *qadar* implies that one need not take action or seek the means to an end

This group erred in its claim that when a person believes in predestination (*qadar*) he does not need to strive. It did not recognize the reality of *qadar*, for Allah decreed ends and means; He did not decree effects without causes. Whoever claims that Allah decreed the ends and the effects without the means and causes is fabricating a serious lie about Allah.

When Allah decrees that so and so should be given provision, He also creates the means by which he will earn that provision. Whoever claims that there is no need to strive because whatever provision has been decreed will come whether one strives or not, does not

⁴⁵ *Shifaa' al-'Aleel*, p. 16.

understand the decrees of Allah concerning His slaves.

If Allah decrees that so and so will be blessed with a child, then He decrees that he will get married and have intimate relations with his wife, for the means (and causes) are part of what is decreed.

If Allah decrees that so and so will go to Paradise, He also decrees that he will believe and do righteous deeds, and will adhere to the commandments of Allah. If He decrees that so and so will be one of the people of Hell, He also decrees the causes of that, such as not believing and not doing righteous deeds.

He may decree that so and so will get sick, then he will seek treatment and be cured. So Allah decrees the sickness, and decrees the means by which the sickness will be taken away and the person will be healed.

Allah may decree that so and so will call upon Him and seek His help, then He answers his prayer and fulfils his hopes. He may decree that another person will not call upon Him and seek His help, so He leaves him to his own devices and lets him flounder in his misery. For Allah decrees the effects and decrees their causes. So whoever claims that the effect happens without a cause does not understand the way of Allah or the decree (*qadar*) of Allah. He is like a person who claims that a child could be born with no cause, or that crops can grow without water or soil, or that one can feel full without eating and quench one's thirst without drinking.

The texts which indicate the things which we have discussed and explained here are very many.

The texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah are full of commands to pursue the prescribed means in different areas of life. There are commands to strive and hard work in pursuit of provision, to make preparations for fighting against the enemy, and to make provision for journeys.

Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ... ﴾
 ﴿ ١٥ ﴾

﴿Then when the [Jumu'ah] Ṣalaah [prayer] is ended, you may disperse through the land, and seek the Bounty of Allah [by working]...﴾
 (Qur'an 62: 10)

﴿ ... فَأَمْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ ... ﴾ ﴿ ١٥ ﴾

﴿...so walk in the path thereof and eat of His provision...﴾
 (Qur'an 67: 15)

﴿ وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ ... ﴾ ﴿ ١٦ ﴾

﴿And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war [tanks, planes, missiles, artillery] to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy...﴾
 (Qur'an 8: 60)

And He commanded travellers setting out for Ḥajj to take provisions with them:

﴿ ... وَكَرِّدُوا فِيكَ حَيْرَ الزَّادِ النُّقْوَى ... ﴾ ﴿ ١٩٧ ﴾

﴿...And take a provision [with you] for the journey, but the best provision is *At-Taqwa* [piety, righteousness]...﴾
 (Qur'an 2: 197)

And He commanded us to make *du'aa'* (supplicate) and seek His help:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ... ﴾ ﴿ ١٠ ﴾

﴿And your Lord said: "Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My

Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your [invocation]”...﴿

(Qur'an 40: 60)

﴿ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا ... ﴿١٧٨﴾ ﴾

﴿Moosa [Moses] said to his people: ‘Seek help in Allah and be patient’...﴿

(Qur'an 7: 128)

And Allah commanded us to pursue the prescribed means that lead to earning His pleasure and Paradise, such as prayer, fasting, zakah (obligatory alms) and ḥajj (pilgrimage).

The life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, and the lives of all the Prophets and those who follow their path, demonstrate that they pursued the means, and that they worked hard and strove to the utmost.

Implementing the means is part of the *qadar* of Allah. It does not contradict *qadar* at all.

The Messenger (ﷺ) taught his Companions the meaning of *qadar* (predestination), explaining that it did not mean giving up striving. On the contrary, it meant striving and making the utmost effort to attain the objective that man aspires to achieve. The *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) asked the Prophet (ﷺ), what was the use of striving if all things had been decreed, the Pen had dried and the matter had been decided by the Lord of the Worlds? He said, “Know that everyone will do that for which he was created.” He recited the *ayaat*:

﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَقَ بِالْحَقِّ ﴿٦﴾ فسننيرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ ﴿٨﴾ يَخْلُ وَاسْتَعْتَنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَكذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ ﴿١٠﴾ فسننيرُهُ لِّلْعُسْرَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ ﴾

﴿As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, And believes in *Al-Husnaa* [the best]. We will make smooth for him the path of ease

[goodness]. But he who is greedy, miser and thinks himself self-sufficient. And belies *Al-Husnaa*. We will make smooth for him the path for evil.﴾

(*Qur'an* 92: 5-10)

One of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet), who understood what Allah and His Messenger meant when he heard the *aḥaadeeth* about *qadar*, said: “I have never been striving so hard as I am now.”

What he understood that Allah meant by *qadar* (predestination) was that the prior decree of Allah does not cancel out the need to strive, and it does not imply that we should depend only on Allah’s decree. On the contrary, it should motivate us to strive hard and make the effort to attain whatever will be of benefit in this world and in the Hereafter.

But we must note that even if a person pursues the means, it is not permissible for him to rely on them alone and put his trust in them. He must put his trust in the One Who created them and initiated them.

Our scholars said: “Focusing on the means with trust is a kind of *shirk* (polytheism) that affects one’s belief in *Tawḥeed*, and not recognizing the means altogether is simply irrational. Ignoring the means altogether undermines shari‘ah, but placing one’s trust and hope in Allah stems from a proper understanding of *Tawḥeed*, reason and shari‘ah.

The explanation is that trust in the means alone makes the heart dependent on them, putting all its hopes in them. There is nothing in creation which deserves to be relied upon in such a fashion, because there is nothing (other than Allah) that is independent. Every created thing must necessarily have supporters and opponents. Moreover, unless Allah subjugates that created thing to be a means to the end that you are seeking. It will not be a means to that end by itself. This demonstrates that Allah is the Lord and Sovereign (*maleek*) of all

things and that the heavens and the earth, and everything in between, and the stars and planets, and whatever they contain, have a Creator and Controller Who is separate from them. No matter how a star, planet, angel or any other being behaves, you will find that it is not independent in anything that it does; there are inevitably other factors involved, and there are also opposing forces that try to prevent it from doing certain things.”⁴⁶

“Every means requires additional factors and has opposing forces. If those other factors are absent, and the opposing forces are not diverted, then the end will not be reached. Rain on its own will not make plants grow, unless there are other factors present, such as air, soil, etc. Crops cannot grow to maturity unless vermin are kept away from them. Food and drink will not provide nourishment unless they are consumed by the body and the digestive processes. None of these things can be of benefit unless the opposing forces are diverted.”⁴⁷

Wise men know that they cannot do anything they want independently. Often they may have all the means at their disposal, then something comes between them and the thing they want and desire.

﴿ ... حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا أَنَّهُمْ آمَرْنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَم بِالْأَمْسِ ... ﴾

﴿...until when the earth is clad in its adornments and is beautified, and its people think that they have all the powers of disposal over it, Our Command reaches it by night or by day and We make it like a clean-mown harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday!...﴾

(Qur'an 10: 24)

⁴⁶ Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam, 8/170.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 8/167.

Laalkaa‘i said that a man asked his slave woman to bring him some water. She brought it in a glass vessel, poured some water for him, and put it in his hand. He raised it to his mouth and said, “Some people claim that I cannot drink this. She is free if I do not drink it” - referring to the slave woman who had poured the water for him.

The slave woman struck the glass with the side of his shirt, and the glass fell and broke, spilling the water.⁴⁸

Thus, the slave woman proved to this poor man that he was not able to do all that he wanted, unless Allah decreed it. So she taught him a lesson, thus freeing herself from the bonds of slavery.

How many rich men, strong men and leaders have thought that they had control over their worldly affairs, then they found themselves rendered incapable, unable to do anything and prevented from doing what they wanted by a powerful enemy, a debilitating sickness, the betrayal of a friend or the greed of a loved one.

﴿وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ...﴾

﴿And a barrier will be set between them and that which they desire...﴾

(Qur'an 34: 54)

(5) Using *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse

Such people use *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse for not striving. So we see that when one of them is called to pray, fast and read Qur'an, he says, if Allah wanted me to do that I would do it. They also use *qadar* to justify the things that they do to other people, such as their wrongdoing and corruption and the things that result from that. Concerning the evil actions and wrongs that they do, they say, this is the will of Allah, we have no choice in the matter. That leads to

⁴⁸ Sharh Uṣool Ahl as-Sunnah, 727.

their letting falsehood become widespread in the Muslim world.

And we see these kind of people submitting to the oppressors, and some of them even help the oppressors, and tell the people: You have no choice but to bear with patience the will of Allah and what He has decreed for you. You see some of them committing evil actions, sins that condemn a person to Hell, such as *zinaa* (adultery and fornication), immoral actions and other sins, claiming that their deeds are the result of predestination (*qadar*).

If they believe that everything that happens has its own justification, this will make them a laughing-stock among their own wise men, and pose before them a dilemma of which they can find no way out. Ibn al-Qayyim mentions stories of such people who were dismissed as fools by the wise, and who put themselves on a level lower than that of the animals. He mentions that one of these people saw his slave committing an immoral action with his slave woman. He wanted to punish them, but his slave knew what his point of view was on the matter of *qadar*, so he said, “*Al-Qaḍaa’ wal-Qadar* did not leave us alone until we did that.” The ignorant man (his master) said to him, “Your knowledge of *Al-Qaḍaa’ wal-Qadar* is dearer to me than all other things; you are free for the sake of Allah.”

Another man saw a man committing immoral actions with his wife, and he started to hit her, but she said, “*Al-Qaḍaa’ wal-Qadar!*” He said, “O’ enemy of Allah! You commit *zina* (adultery) and justify it in such a manner?”

She said, “My goodness, you have forsaken the Sunnah and followed the way of Ibn ‘Abbaas.” Suddenly, he realized what he was doing, so he threw down the whip and apologized to her, saying, “Were it not for you, I would have gone astray.”

A third man saw a man committing immoral actions with his wife and said, “What is this?” She said, “It is the will and decree of Allah.” He said, “We accept what Allah decrees.”⁴⁹

If *qadar* (predestination) were really a valid excuse, then everyone could kill, spread corruption, take people’s wealth and oppress others, and if anyone were to question him about his deeds, he could use *qadar* as an excuse. But all wise people know that this excuse is unacceptable, otherwise all of life would be corrupted.

Many of those who use *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse for their evil actions, immorality and misguided ways get angry when wrong is done to them. They will not accept from others who do them wrong the same excuse of *qadar* that they use to justify their own evil actions.

The way in which our scholars understood it from our Lord and our Prophet is that we must believe in *qadar* (predestination), but it is not permissible for us to use *qadar* as an excuse for not striving, or to use it as an excuse for going against shari’ah. *Qadar* should be used to explain calamities, not to justify our faults.

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “With regard to the decree of Allah, a person may be in two states: before it happens and after it happens.

Before it happens, he must seek the help of Allah, put his trust in Him and call upon Him. If the decree of Allah befalls him without him being the cause of it, then he must bear it with patience or accept it, and if it comes by his own action and is a blessing, then he should praise Allah for it; if it is a sin, then he should seek Allah’s forgiveness for that.

⁴⁹ These stories and others are quoted from Ibn al-Qayyim by the author of *Ma’aarij al-Qubool*, 2/255.

With regard to the command of Allah, a person may be in two states:

Before he does it, which is the resolve to obey the command and seek Allah's help to do so, and after the deed, when he seeks forgiveness for his shortcomings and thanks Allah for blessing him with something good." Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ فَأَصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ ... ﴾ (30)

﴿So be patient [O' Muhammad]. Verily, the Promise of Allah is true, and ask forgiveness for your fault...﴾

(Qur'an 40: 55)

Allah commanded him (the Prophet) to bear the decreed calamities with patience, and to seek forgiveness for sins. And Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ ... وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾ (181)

﴿...but if you persevere patiently, and become *Al-Muttaqoon* [the pious] then verily, that will be a determining factor in all affairs [and that is from the great matters which you must hold on with all your efforts].﴾

(Qur'an 3: 186)

And the Prophet Yoosuf (ﷺ) said:

﴿ ... إِنَّكُمْ مِنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾ (10)

﴿...Verily, he who fears Allah with obedience to Him [by abstaining from sins and evil deeds, and by performing righteous good deeds], and is patient, then surely, Allah makes not the reward of the *Muhsinoon* [good-doers] to be lost.﴾

(Qur'an 12: 90)

He mentioned bearing calamities with patience and fearing Allah by forsaking evil actions. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Strive to do that which will benefit you, seek the help of Allah and do not feel helpless. If something befalls you, do not say ‘If only I had done such and such, I would have gotten such and such...’ Instead, say ‘*Qaddar Allah wa maa shaa’a fa’al* (Allah decreed, and whatever He willed happened).’ For the words ‘if only’ open the way for the *Shayṭaan* (Satan).”⁵⁰

The wise believer does not forsake doing something on the basis that Allah’s decree concerning him is cut and dried. He must take the commands seriously, know what Allah wants him to do, and think of that which will benefit him. Then he should do his utmost to adhere to the commands of Allah and to pursue the means in which he thinks his best interests lie. If he does not succeed, he should not waste his time in regret and sorrow; in such cases he should say only, *Qaddar Allah wa maa shaa’a fa’al* (Allah decreed, and whatever He willed happened).

Believing in *qadar* and using it as a justification is beneficial in treating the psychological problems, which result from failure, which take away and waste people’s energy. Belief in *qadar* should not prevent them from striving in the future.

Referring to the hadith in which Adam used *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse

Those who have little knowledge use as evidence the hadith according to which Adam and Moosa (Peace be upon them) used *qadar* as an excuse for their faults. This is an authentic hadith narrated in the books of *Ṣaḥeeḥ* and *Sunan*.

Abu Hurayrah narrated: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Adam and Moosa (peace be upon them both) disputed before their Lord,

⁵⁰ The hadith is narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* (4/2052, hadith no. 2664) from Abu Hurayrah. *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/76.

and Adam defeated Moosa in argument.

Prophet Moosa (Moses) said: ‘You are Adam whom Allah created with His own Hand, and He breathed into you of His Spirit; His angels prostrated to you, and He caused you to dwell in His Paradise, then He sent mankind down to this earth because of your sin.’

Adam said, ‘You are Moosa, whom Allah chose to bear His Message, and with whom He spoke. He gave you the Tablets on which was written the explanation of all things, and He brought you close to Him. How long did you find that Allah had written the *Tawraat* (Torah) before I was created?’

Moosa (Moses) said, ‘Forty years.’

Adam said: ‘And did you find in it (the words),

﴿... وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ﴾

﴿...Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray.﴾
(*Qur'an* 20: 121)?’

Moosa said, ‘Yes.’

Adam said: ‘Are you blaming me for doing something that Allah had decreed I would do forty years before He created me?’”

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Thus did Adam defeat Moosa in argument.”⁵¹

There is no evidence in the hadith to support those who use *qadar* as an excuse for evil actions and sins. Adam did not use the Divine Will and Predestination (*Al-Qaḍaa' wal-Qadar*) as an excuse to justify his sin, and Moosa did not blame his father Adam for a sin from which

⁵¹ Muslim, 4/2043, hadith no. 2652. There are a number of versions of this hadith narrated by Muslim. It is also narrated by Bukhari in several places in his book, and Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi in their *Sunan*. The various versions of the hadith are also cited in *Jaami' al-Uṣool*, 10/124.

he had repented and Allah has forgiven him, and subsequently chosen him and guided him. What Moosa was blaming for, was the disaster which had led Adam and his progeny to be expelled from Paradise.

Adam cited *qadar* (predestination) as the cause of the calamity, not the sin, because *qadar* is an acceptable explanation for calamities, but it is not a reasonable justification for sins.⁵²

So people must accept *qadar* (predestination) - if calamities befall them.

﴿الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾﴾

﴿Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.’﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 156)

But those who commit sin cannot use *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse; they have to repent and seek the forgiveness of Allah:

﴿فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ ... ﴿٥٥﴾﴾

﴿...So be patient [O' Muhammad]. Verily, the Promise of Allah is true, and ask forgiveness for your fault.﴾

(*Qur'an* 40: 55)

Thus Allah tells us to bear calamities with patience and to seek forgiveness for sins and faults.

Allah condemned *Iblees* (Satan), not because he acknowledged *qadar* when he said,

﴿... رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي ... ﴿١٢٩﴾﴾

⁵² *Sharḥ at-Taḥaawiyah*, p. 154. This was also the response of Shaykh al-Islam. See *Shifaa' al-'Aleel*, p. 35.

﴿...‘O’ my Lord! Because You misled me’...﴾
 (Qur’an 15: 39),

but because he was using *qadar* as a justification for his going astray.

Ibn al-Qayyim responded differently to those who misunderstood the hadith about Adam defeating Moosa in argument. He said: “Using *qadar* as a reason for sin is useful in some cases and is harmful in others. It is useful when it is cited after one has fallen into sin then repented and given up the sin, as Adam did. In such cases, mentioning *qadar* is part of *Tawheed* and acknowledging the names and attributes of Allah in a manner that benefits both the one who mentions them and the one who hears him, because *qadar* should not be used as an excuse to cancel out a command or a prohibition, or to cancel out shari‘ah; rather, it should be mentioned as pure truth and to demonstrate the concept of *Tawheed*, and to show that one has no power and strength of one’s own.

What makes this clear is the fact that Adam said to Moosa (Moses): “Are you blaming me for doing something that Allah had decreed I would do before I was created?” If a man commits a sin, and then repents, and the matter is settled as if it never happened, then someone blames him for that, it is acceptable in such case to cite *qadar* as a reason and say, “This is something which was decreed before I was created,” because here he is not using *qadar* to cancel out the rulings of Allah or as a justification for falsehood or wrongdoing.

Concerning instances when using *qadar* (predestination) as an excuse is harmful, this is when it is mentioned with regard to the future, as when a person does something which is *haram* (unlawful), or neglects something which is *wajib* (obligatory), and if someone blames him for that, he uses *qadar* as an excuse for his doing it, thus rejecting truth and committing falsehood, as the people insisting on their polytheism used *qadar* as an excuse for their *shirk*

and their worship of others instead of Allah.”⁵³

Is it obligatory to accept and be content with what is decreed?

If sins happen by the decree of Allah, then how can we hate what He decrees? The answer to this is: “We find no *ayah* (verse) in the Book of Allah or hadith in the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) which commands people to accept everything that has been decreed of people’s actions, good and evil alike. But what people are obliged to do is to accept what Allah commands. No one has the right to be angry with what Allah has commanded. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴾

‘But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you [O’ Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept [them] with full submission.’

(Qur’an 4: 65)

People must accept what Allah decrees of calamities, which are not sins, as when they are tested with poverty, sickness, or humiliation and mistreatment at the hands of others. Bearing calamities with patience is obligatory (*waajib*), and being content with them is prescribed, but is it *waajib* (obligatory) or *mustahabb* (good and preferred)? Of the two views of the companions of Ahmad and others, the more correct view is that it is *mustahabb*, not *waajib*.⁵⁴

⁵³ *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel*, p. 35.

⁵⁴ *Majmoo’ al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/190.

(6) The claim that obliging people to do something other than what they have done is obliging them to do something that is beyond their capabilities

Those who follow this school of thought claim that the people who commit sins are not able to do anything other than what they did, and that obliging them to do something other than that is obliging them to do something that is beyond their capabilities. Islam negates this idea, as Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ... ﴾ (١٨٦)

﴿Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope...﴾
(Qur'an 2: 286)

﴿ ... لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا آتَانَهَا ... ﴾ (٧)

﴿...Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him...﴾
(Qur'an 65: 7)

They use *aayaat* (verses) such as the following as an excuse:

﴿ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَن ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴾ (١١٦)

﴿[To] those whose eyes had been under a covering from My Reminder [this Qur'an], and who could not bear to hear [it].﴾
(Qur'an 18: 101)

﴿ ... يُضَاعَفْ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴾ (٦٠)

﴿...Their torment will be doubled! They could not bear to hear [the preachers of the truth] and they used not to see [the truth because of their severe aversion, in spite of the fact that they had the sense of hearing and sight].﴾
(Qur'an 11: 20)

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ﴾⁵⁵

﴿And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see.﴾
(Qur'an 36: 9)

They said: these *aayaat* clearly state that they are not able to do (good). Thus they use some parts of the Qur'an against others and claim that parts of it contradict others. But the Qur'an is above any such thing.

The response to the confusion they cause is: "The ability that is denied in the *aayaat* which they use as evidence is not the kind of ability which is a precondition for heeding commands and prohibitions. If a person is not able, then the commands and prohibitions, promise (of Paradise) and warning (of Hell), condemnation and praise, reward and punishment do not apply. It is known that people are commanded to do some things and forbidden to do others, that they are subject to the promise (of Paradise) and warning (of Hell), hence we know that the ability referred to above is not the same as the ability that is required to heed the commands and prohibitions."⁵⁵

The ability which is described as being absent in these *aayaat* (verses) which they quote to justify themselves is not because doing (good) deeds is impossible or because they are incapable of them. It is because they themselves neglect it and occupy themselves with its opposite, as in the case of the *kaafir* (disbeliever) whom Allah has obliged to believe at the time when he is a *kaafir*, because he is not incapable of believing and it is not impossible for him. He is like one who is not able to seek knowledge because he is preoccupied with earning a living."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Opt. cit 8/291.

⁵⁶ Opt. cit 8/296.

Ability is one of the preconditions of obligation, as is mentioned in *aayaat* such as the following:

﴿... وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾

﴿...And Hajj [pilgrimage to Makkah] to the House [Ka‘bah] is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses [for one’s conveyance, provision and residence].﴾ (Qur’an 3: 97)

﴿فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَتَمَاسَّ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِيْنًا ... ﴿٥٨﴾﴾

﴿And he who finds not [the money for freeing a slave] must fast two successive months before they both touch each other. And he who is unable to do so, should feed sixty *Masaakeen* [poor]...﴾ (Qur’an 58: 4)

And in *ahaadeeth* such as: “Pray standing, and if you cannot, then sitting, and if you cannot, then on your side.”

It is well known that Allah does not enjoin what a person is unable to do because he is incapable of doing it. He does not enjoin a paralyzed man to pray standing, or a sick person to fast, or a blind man to engage in *jihad* and fighting, because doing such things are beyond their capabilities.

Muslim scholars agreed that if a person is incapable of doing some obligatory actions, he is not required to do that of which he is incapable. If a person’s foot has been cut off, he does not have to wash it, and whoever cannot do *ghusl* (take bath) to cleanse himself of *janaabah* (major ritual impurity) or stand or bow is not obliged to do that of which he is incapable. Thus it will become clear that the lack of ability mentioned in the *aayaat* (verses) which this group use as evidence is not connected at all to commands, prohibitions and

obligations, by the consensus of the Muslims. The ability which is a condition of commands and prohibitions in the *aayaat* that we have quoted is the one which Allah did not oblige anyone to do anything without having that ability.⁵⁷

(7) The view implies that all creatures are equal

This view leads its followers to regard as equal good people and immoral people, righteous people and evil people, the people of Paradise and the people of Hell. But the All-Knowing, All-Aware Allah, has differentiated between them:

﴿ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ
الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴾ (١٧٨)

﴿Shall We treat those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism] and do righteous good deeds as *Mufsidoon* [those who associate partners in worship with Allah and commit crimes] on earth? Or shall We treat the *Muttaqeen* [the pious] as the *Fujjaar* [criminals, disbelievers, the wicked]?﴾ (Qur'an 38: 28)

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَخْلُوفِينَ وَمَا هُمْ بِ... ﴾ (٣١)

﴿Or do those who earn evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism] and do righteous good deeds, in their present life and after their death?...﴾

(Qur'an 45: 21)

﴿ أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴾ (٢٥) مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

⁵⁷ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/130.

﴿Shall We then treat the Muslims [believers of Islamic Monotheism, doers of righteous deeds] like the *Mujrimoon* [criminals, polytheists and disbelievers]? What is the matter with you? How judge you?﴾
(*Qur'an* 68: 35-36)

3 - The View of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* Concerning Predestination (*Qadar*)

We have explained the views of those who went astray concerning the matter of predestination (*qadar*). Now I would like to describe the view of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* on this issue. Many scholars have written their views, and I will quote here what three of the most prominent of them have written.

(1) Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah sums up their point of view

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him and reward him greatly) said:

“The viewpoint of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*⁵⁸ on this issue is that which is indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah, and that which was followed by the *Şahaabah* (Companions), the *Muhaajiroon* (Emigrants to Madeenah) and *Anşaar* (Helpers, Muslim residents of Madeenah), and those who followed them in truth. This view is that Allah is the Creator and Sovereign of all things, which includes all independent entities and their attributes, such as people's deeds and other things.

Whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen. Nothing can happen except by His will and decree. Nothing

⁵⁸ The sunnites: people and group adhering strictly to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

is beyond Him if He wills it; rather, He is the One Who is Able to do all things, and He does not will anything but He is able to do it.

Allah knows what has happened and what is yet to come; if it is not to happen, He knows how it would have been if it had happened. This includes people's actions and other things. Allah, the Exalted, decreed the decrees of His creation before He created them; He decreed their lifespans, their provision and their deeds, and wrote that down, and He wrote down their ultimate destiny, who will be blessed and who will be doomed.

So they (*Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*) believe that He created all things, that He is Able to do all things, that His will encompasses all that exists, and that He knew and decided and wrote all things before they came into being."⁵⁹

"The *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) and *aaimmah* (the leading scholars) of this ummah are agreed that people are commanded to do that which Allah has commanded them, and are forbidden to do that which Allah has forbidden. They are agreed on their belief in His promise and His warning, which are spoken of in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

They are agreed that there is no justification for anyone with regard to neglecting any obligatory duty or committing any forbidden act; but Allah has perfect evidence against His slaves."⁶⁰

"Among the things that are agreed upon by the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors) and *aaimmah* (the leading scholars) of this ummah is their belief in Divine will and Predestination (*al-Qadaa' wal-Qadar*), and that Allah is the Creator of all things. What He wills happens, and what He does not will does not happen. Allah sends astray

⁵⁹ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/449.

⁶⁰ Opt. cit 8/452.

whomsoever He wills, and He guides whomsoever He wills. They also believe that people have their own will and freedom to choose, so they do by their own will and power that which Allah enables them to do, but they point out that people do not will anything except that which Allah wills.”⁶¹

(2) The ‘aqedah of Imam Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Ḥusayn al-Aajurri concerning predestination (*qadar*)

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said: that Allah created Paradise and created Hell. For each of them He created its people, and He swore by His Glory that He would fill Hell with jinn and mankind together.

Then He created Adam (ﷺ), and brought forth from his loins all the progeny that He would create until the Day of Resurrection. He divided them into two groups, a group for Paradise and a group for Hell.

He created *Iblees* (Satan) and commanded him to prostrate to Adam. He knew that he would not prostrate because of the decree to which he was subject, the decree that he would be doomed, which Allah knew beforehand. None can oppose the ruling of Allah, the Most Generous, Who does whatever He wills with His creation, and Whose will and decree is just.

He created Adam and Ḥawwa’ (Eve) (Peace be upon them), and He created them to come to this earth. He caused them to dwell in Paradise, and commanded them to eat freely with pleasure and delight as and when from wherever they willed (cf. 2:35), but He forbade them to come near one tree. But His decree that they would disobey Him by eating from that tree came to pass. Allah forbade

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 8/459.

them to eat from it, but He knew that He had decreed that they would eat from it.

﴿ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ ﴾

﴿He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned.﴾ *(Qur'an 21: 23)*

So they could not avoid eating from it, as a cause of their sin and expulsion from Paradise, because they had been created to come to this earth, and Allah would forgive them after they had sinned. All of this was known to Him aforetime, and it is not permissible that anything should happen in His creation without Him having already decreed it and encompassed it in His knowledge, knowing before it happens that it will happen.

He created His creation, as and when He willed, and He made them doomed and blessed before He brought them forth into this world, whilst they are still in their mothers' wombs. Their lifespan, provision and deeds are written, then He brings them forth into this world, and every person strives in accordance with what has been written and decreed for him.

Then He sent His Messengers, and sent down His Revelation to them, and commanded them to convey it to His creation. So they conveyed the Message of their Lord and advised their people. Those who were decreed by Allah to believe, believed, and those who were decreed by Allah to disbelieve, disbelieved. Allah, the Almighty, the All-High says:

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾



﴿He it is Who created you, then some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers. And Allah is

All-Seer of what you do. ﴿ (Qur'an 64: 2)

He loves whomsoever He wills of His slaves, and opens his heart to faith and Islam; and He hates others and seals their hearts, hearing and sight, so that they will never be guided. He sends astray whomsoever He wills, and He guides whomsoever He wills.

﴿ لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ ﴾

﴿He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned.﴾ (Qur'an 21: 23)

All the creation belongs to Him, and He does whatever He wants to His creation, without being unjust towards them. Glorified be our Lord far above any injustice being attributed to Him. The one who is unjust is the one who takes that which does not belong to him; but to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and all that is between them, and all that is under the soil (cf. Qur'an 20:6). To Him belong this world and the Hereafter, may He be Exalted and may His names be Blessed. He loves obedience from His slaves, and commands them to obey Him, and those who are helped by Him obey Him. He forbids disobedience but He has willed that it should happen, without liking it and without commanding people to do it. Glorified be Allah above enjoining or loving evil. Exalted be He above anything happening in His Domain that He does not will or want or know of before it happens. He knew what His creatures would do before he created them, and after He created them, and before they did it, by His will and decree.

By His command, the Pen wrote in *al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* what was to come of righteous deeds and immoral actions. He praises those among His slaves who obey Him; He attributes their good deeds to them and promises them a great reward for that, even though without His help they could not have done these deeds for which they deserved the reward.

﴿... ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

﴿...That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.﴾
(Qur'an 57: 21)

Similarly, He condemns those who disobey Him, and warns against doing so. He attributes their actions to them, and that is in accordance with the decree to which they were subject. He sends astray whomsoever He wills and guides whomsoever He wills.

Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This is our point of view concerning *qadar*."⁶²

(3) The 'aqeedah of Aṭ-Ṭahaawi concerning predestination

Aṭ-Ṭahaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said concerning *qadar* (predestination):

"He (Allah) created the universe in accordance with His knowledge, and He set out His decrees concerning them, and determined their lifespans. Nothing was unknown to Him before He created them. He knew what they would do before He created them, and He commanded them to obey Him and forbade them to disobey Him.

Everything happens according to His decree and will, and His will is irresistible. His slaves have no will except within the will of Allah, for whatever Allah wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

He guides whomsoever he wills, and protects him and keeps him away from sin by His Grace. And He sends astray whomsoever He wills, and forsakes him and tests him by His Justice.

⁶² *Ash-Sharee'ah* by Al-Aajurri, 150-152.

All people are subject to His Will, between Grace and Justice.

He is Exalted far above any opponents or rivals. None can push back His will, overturn His judgement or repel His command.

We believe in all of that, and we are certain that everything comes from Him.”⁶³

“Allah knew from eternity the number of those who would enter Paradise, and the number of those who would enter Hell; He knew them all at once, and there will be no increase or decrease in those numbers.

Similarly, their actions are in accordance with His knowledge of what they will do, and each person is guided to do that for which he was created. They will be judged according to their last deeds; the blessed is the one who is blessed by the decree of Allah, and the doomed is the one who is doomed by the decree of Allah.

The principle of *qadar* (predestination) is a secret of Allah’s creation which He did not expose to any angel who is close to Him or to any Prophet who was sent by Him. Discussing this matter in depth leads to misguidance, deprivation (of Allah’s mercy) and transgression (into forbidden territory). So beware of that and be careful to avoid pursuing the matter in your thoughts and questioning. For Allah has kept the knowledge of *qadar* (predestination) away from His creation and has forbidden them to try to fathom it, as He, the All-Glorious, says:

﴿ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ ﴾

‘He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned.’ (Qur’an 21: 23)

⁶³ *Al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*, with commentary and footnotes by Shaykh Naasiruddin al-Albaani, p. 21.

Whoever asks, ‘Why does He do that?’ has rejected the ruling of the Qur’an, and whoever rejects the ruling of the Qur’an is one of the *kaafir* (disbelievers).

This is all that is needed by the close friend of Allah whose heart is filled with light, which is the status of those who have deep knowledge, because knowledge is of two types: knowledge which is manifested in creation, and knowledge that is concealed from creation. Denying the knowledge that is manifested is *kufir* (disbelief), and claiming to know the things that are concealed is *kufir* (disbelief). Faith can only be affirmed by accepting the knowledge that exists, and leaving alone that concealed knowledge known only to Allah.

We believe in *al-Lauh al-Mahfooz* (The Preserved Tablet) and in the Pen, and in everything in it that has been decreed. Even if all of creation were to come together against something that Allah has decreed will happen, to make it not happen, they will never be able to do that. And if they were all to come together for something that Allah has decreed will not happen, to make it happen, they will never be able to do that. The Pen has dried concerning what is to happen until the Day of Resurrection. Whatever misses a person could not have befallen him, and whatever befalls him could not have missed him.

Each person must realize that Allah already knows everything that will happen to His creatures. He has decreed that and His will is inevitable and irresistible. None can stop it, overturn it, remove it or change it. None can add to or take away from His creation in His heavens and His earth. This is one of the bonds of faith and one of the principles of knowledge and the acknowledgement of the *Tawheed* (Oneness) and *ruboobiyah* (Lordship) of Allah, as He, the All-High, says in His Book:

﴿ ... وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرُوْهُ نَقْدِيْرًا ﴾

﴿...‘He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements [*fa qaddarahu taqdeeran*].’﴾
(*Qur’an* 25: 2)

﴿... وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا ﴾

﴿...‘And the Command of Allah is a decree determined’﴾
(*Qur’an* 33: 38)

So woe to those who oppose Allah by debating His decree and who examine the matter with a foolish heart, seeking with their delusions to examine the deep mysteries of the Unseen and thereby becoming lying and sinful people (26: 222).”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*, 31.

CHAPTER SIX

REASONS WHY PEOPLE GO ASTRAY WITH REGARD TO *QADAR* (PREDESTINATION)

The reasons why the *Qadariyah an-Nafaat* who denied predestination (*qadar*) and the *Qadariyah al-Mujbirah* who believed that man is compelled to do what he does (*al-jabr*) went astray on this issue. Each group saw only a part of the true picture, and was blind to the other parts. So they are like a one-eyed man who sees only one side of a thing and does not see the other side. The *Qadariyah* who did not believe in *qadar* said that Allah does not will *kufur*, sin and disobedience; He does not love them or accept them, so how can we say that He created the deeds of His slaves which include *kufur*, sin and disobedience?

The *Qadariyah al-Mujbirah* who believe in *al-jabr* believed that Allah is the Creator of all things, and claimed that He loves and accepts everything that He creates and brings into existence.

Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa 'ah see the whole picture of the reality, so they believe in the truth that each of these two groups believe, and they reject the falsehood which each followed. So they say: "Although Allah wills that disobedience and sin should exist by His decree, He does not love them or accept them or command them; rather he hates them and forbids them."

This is the view of all the *Salaf* (Pious Predecessors), who said: whatever Allah wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen. Hence, the *fuqahaa'* (Islamic jurists) agreed that if a person who swears an oath and says, "By Allah I shall definitely do such and such *In sha' Allah* (if Allah wills)", he does not break his

oath if he does not do it, even if it was something that is *wajib* (obligatory) or *mustahabb* (preferred/recommended). But if he says, "If Allah likes me to do this," he will have broken his oath if it was something that is *wajib* or *mustahabb*.

Those (scholars) of *Ahl as-Sunnah* who examined this issue said that in the Book of Allah, His Will is of two types: His *qadari* will, i.e., His decrees concerning His creation, and His *shar'ee* will, i.e., the laws that He wants His slaves to follow.

His *shar'ee* will encompasses all that He loves and is pleased with; His *qadari* or *kawni* (universal) will encompasses all that exists.

His *shar'ee* will is referred to in *ayaat* such as the following:

﴿... يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ ...﴾ (١٨٥)

﴿...Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 185)

﴿... مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَليُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ (٦)

﴿...Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour to you that you may be thankful.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 6)

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ لَكُمْ وَبَهْدِكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ (١١)
 ﴿وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (١٧)
 ﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا﴾ (١٨)

﴿Allah wishes to make clear [what is lawful and what is unlawful] to you, and to show you the ways of those before you, and accept your repentance and Allah is the

All-Knower, All-Wise. Allah wishes to accept your repentance, but those who follow their lusts, wish that you [believers] should deviate tremendously away [from the Right Path]. Allah wishes to lighten [the burden] for you; and man was created weak [cannot be patient to leave sexual intercourse with woman].﴾

(Qur'an 4: 26-28)

﴿... إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

﴿...Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O' members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification.﴾

(Qur'an 33: 33)

This kind of will (*shar'ee*) does not necessarily come to pass, unless it is joined by the second type of will. This type of will clearly indicates that Allah does not love sin, disobedience, misguidance and *kufr* (disbelief); He does not enjoin them and He does not accept them, even though He wills that they should exist.

Allah loves and accepts things that have to do with His religious, *shar'ee* will; He rewards those who do them and grants them admittance to Paradise, helping them in this world and in the Hereafter and granting victory to His pious close friends and righteous slaves.¹

This will encompasses all kinds of acts of obedience, whether or not they happen.²

Allah's universal or *qadari* will is the will that encompasses all that exists, concerning which we say that whatever Allah wills happens,

¹ *Sharh at-Tahaawiyah*, p. 116; *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/188, 58.

² *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/198.

and whatever He does not will, does not happen. This is the will referred to in *aayaat* (verses) such as the following:

﴿ فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا ... ﴾ (١٧٥)

﴿And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted...﴾

(*Qur'an* 6: 125)

﴿ وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ ... ﴾ (١٧٤)

﴿And my advice will not profit you, even if I wish to give you good counsel, if Allah's Will is to keep you astray...﴾

(*Qur'an* 11: 34)

﴿ ... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴾ (١٧٣)

﴿...If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does what He likes.﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 253)

﴿ وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ... ﴾ (١٣٦)

﴿It was better for you to say, when you entered your garden: 'That which Allah wills [will come to pass]! There is no power but with Allah!'...﴾ (*Qur'an* 18: 39)

This will is all-encompassing and nothing that exists operates outside of it. Everything that happens in the universe happens by this will of Allah. This will applies to both believers and disbelievers, righteous and immoral, the people of Paradise and the people of Hell, the friends of Allah and His enemies, the people of obedience whom He loves and who love Him, upon whom He and His angels send

blessings, and the people of disobedience whom He hates and detests, who are cursed by Allah and those who curse.³

This will encompasses all that happens, both obedience and disobedience, but it does not include that which does not happen.⁴

In relation to both kinds of will, created beings fall into four categories:

1. Those to which both kinds of will apply, i.e., righteous deeds. For Allah wills them by His *shar'ee* will, and He enjoins, loves and accepts them, and He wills them by His universal *qadari* will, otherwise they (righteous deeds) would not happen.
2. Those to which only His *shar'ee* will apply, which are the righteous deeds that Allah enjoins, but the *kuffaar* (disbelievers) and immoral people disobey Him. All of this is His *shar'ee* will, which He loves and accepts, whether it happens or not.
3. Those to which only His *qadari* (universal) will apply, which are the things which Allah decrees and wills but He does not command, such as permissible things and sins. He does not enjoin them, and He does not accept or like them. He does not enjoin evil or accept *kufir* (disbelief) for His slaves. Were it not for His will, decree and creation of them, they would not have existed, for what Allah wills happens and what He does not will does not happen.
4. Those to which neither type of will apply, which are the permissible things and sins that do not happen and do not exist.⁵

The blessed ones among the slaves of Allah are those for whom Allah decrees the same by His universal *qadari* will as by His *shar'ee* will.

³ *Sharḥ at-Ṭaḥaawiyah*, p. 116; *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/198, 58.

⁴ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh al-Islam*, 8/198.

⁵ *Ibid*, 8/189.

The doomed ones are those for whom He wills by His universal *qadari* will that which He does not will by His *shar'ee* will. *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* are those who understand the religion of Allah properly, and do not use parts of the Qur'an as evidence against other parts. They know that the rulings of Allah concerning His creation happen according to both types of will. Whoever looks at people's deeds through both lenses (i.e., acknowledges both types of will) has full sight, and whoever looks at the *shar'ee* will without the universal *qadari* will, or vice versa, is one-eyed, as it were, like Quraysh when they said:

﴿... لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾

﴿... 'If Allah had willed, we would not have taken partners [in worship] with Him, nor would our fathers, and we would not have forbidden anything [against His Will]'...﴾

(*Qur'an* 6: 148)

Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿... كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ

عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ﴾

﴿...Likewise belied those who were before them, [they argued falsely with Allah's Messengers], till they tasted Our Wrath. Say: 'Have you any knowledge [proof] that you can produce before us? Verily, you follow nothing but guess and you do nothing but lie.'﴾

(*Qur'an* 6: 148)⁶

⁶ *Majmoo' al-Fataawa Shaykh Al-Islam*, 8/198.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BENEFITS OF BELIEVING IN QADAR (PREDESTINATION)

We have explained above that the belief in *qadar* (predestination) brought by Islam is free from the weakness, laziness and apathy that have affected a large part of the Muslim ummah down through the ages in the name of belief in *qadar*. The cause of that has been the deviation of the Muslims from a proper understanding of the concept of *qadar* (predestination).

Whoever ponders the belief in *qadar* (predestination) as brought by Islam will find that it has many great benefits which led and still lead to the reform of the individual and of the ummah.

We will describe below some of these benefits of belief in predestination (*qadar*) that we have learned from this study:

1 - Belief in *Qadar* (Predestination) is a Means of Ridding Oneself of *Shirk*

Many philosophers have claimed that good comes from Allah, the All-Glorious, and that evil is the creation of other gods; they said this in order to avoid attributing evil to Allah.¹

The Magians (Zoroastrians) claimed that Light was the creator of good, and Darkness was the creator of evil.

Those among this ummah who claimed that Allah does not create the deeds of His slaves, or that He does not create the misguided deeds, are claiming that there are creators other than Allah.

¹ *Shifaa' al-'Aleel*, p. 14.

Perfect *Tawhēed* (belief in the Oneness of the only God - Allah) is not attained except by those who affirm that Allah Alone is the Creator of everything in the universe, and that His will prevails over His creation - what He wills happens and what He does not will does not happen. All of those who do not believe in *qadar* do not believe truly that their Lord is One and Alone (*Tawhēed*) and do not acknowledge Him properly. Belief in predestination (*qadar*) is what marks the difference between *Tawhēed* and *shirk*. The one who believes in *qadar* affirms that this universe and everything in it was created by One God; those who do not believe this imply that there are other gods and lords besides Allah.

2 - Adhering to the True Path During Both Times of Ease and Times of Difficulty

Because of their shortcomings and weaknesses, people cannot always adhere to the straight path. Allah (ﷻ), says:

﴿ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَّا الصَّالِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾

﴿Verily, man [disbeliever] was created very impatient; Irritable [discontented] when evil touches him; And niggardly when good touches him. Except those who are devoted to *Ṣalaah* [prayers].﴾ (Qur'an 70: 19-22)

Belief in *qadar* makes a person persist in his adherence to the straight path, so that he is not reckless at times of ease, and does not fall into despair when calamity strikes, for he knows that everything good that happens to him comes from Allah, and is not because of his intelligence or good planning:

﴿ وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ... ﴿٥٢﴾ ﴾

﴿And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah...﴾
 (Qur'an 16: 53)

He is not like Qaaroon (Korah) who showed off before his people and arrogantly displayed before them the treasures and wealth that Allah had bestowed upon him.

﴿ إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَىٰ فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُوزِ مَا إِنَّ مَفَاحِمَهُ لَسَنُوءًا بِالْمُضْبَكِ أُولَىٰ الْقُوَّةِ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا ءَاتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَأَحْسِنَ ۚ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۗ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي... ﴿٧٨﴾ ﴾

﴿Verily, Qaaroon [Korah] was of Moosa's [Moses] people, but he behaved arrogantly towards them. And We gave him of the treasures, that of which the keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. Remember when his people said to him: 'Do not exult [with riches, being ungrateful to Allah]. Verily, Allah likes not those who exult [with riches, being ungrateful to Allah]. 'But seek, with that [wealth] which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the *Mufsidoon* [those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupters].' He said: 'This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess...')﴾
 (Qur'an 28: 76-78)

And when trials and tribulations befall a person, he knows that this is happening by the decree of Allah, as a test from Him, so he does not panic or despair, rather he seeks the reward of Allah and bears it with patience, and this faith brings contentment and tranquillity to the heart of the believer.

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٥٦﴾ لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ... ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

﴿No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees [*Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*] before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah. In order that you may not grieve at the things over that you fail to get, nor rejoice over that which has been given to you...﴾
(Qur'an 57: 22-23)

And Allah praised His slaves,

﴿ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ ﴾

﴿Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.' They are those on whom are the *Salawaat* [i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven] from their Lord, and [they are those who] receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones.﴾
(Qur'an 2: 156-157)

3 - The One Who Believes in *Qadar* is Always Careful

Those who believe in *qadar* are always careful, for:

﴿... فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾﴾

﴿...None feels secure from the Plan of Allah except the people who are the losers.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 99).

People's hearts are always turning over and changing, for their hearts are between two of the fingers of *Ar-Rahmaan* (Allah, the All-Merciful), Who turns them over as He wills, and the trials which are sent against people's hearts are many. The believer is always careful lest there come to him something which will lead him astray, just as he always fears that his final actions may be bad. This does not make him lazy and apathetic, rather it motivates him to strive persistently to follow the straight path, to do many righteous deeds and to avoid sins and punishable deeds.

And the believer's heart is always attached to its Creator, calling upon Him, putting its hope in Him, seeking His help and asking Him to make it adhere firmly to the straight path, and to be guided aright.

4 - Facing Difficulties and Dangers with a Strong Heart

When a person believes that everything that happens is decreed, and that provision and lifespans are in the hand of Allah, then he can confront difficulties and ordeals with a strong heart and with his head held high. This belief was one of the greatest motives which spurred the *mujahideen* (warriors in the way of Allah) to acts of courage on the battlefield without feeling scared. They would seek death wherever they could find it, throwing themselves into dangerous situations where they thought they would be killed. Then you would

find one of them later on, dying in his own bed (of natural causes); he would weep for not having fallen in battle as a *shaheed* (martyr) even though he exposed himself to dangers.

This belief is one of the greatest sources of strength for the righteous in confronting evildoers and tyrants. For the sake of Allah, they do not fear the blame of any man, because they know that the matter is in the hand of Allah, and whatever He decreed for them would come to them.

They were not afraid to speak the word of truth lest their provision be cut off, for provision is in the hand of Allah. Whatever provision Allah has decreed for His slave cannot be withheld from anyone, and whatever Allah withholds from His slave, none can cause it to reach him.

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GLOSSARY

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|--|
| <i>Al-'Aalameen</i> | العالمين | : The worlds (mankind, jinn and all that exists). |
| <i>Aayah</i> | آية | : Plural <i>aayaat</i> ; verse of the Qur'an. |
| <i>Ahaadeeth</i> | أحاديث | : Sing. <i>Hadeeth</i> , the Prophet's sayings. |
| <i>Ahl as-Sunnah</i> | أهل السنة | : People of Sunnah, group of Muslims adhering strictly to the Sunnah of the Prophet. |
| <i>Al-Muttaqoon*</i> | المتقون | : Sing. <i>Muttaqui</i> . The pious, the dutiful. |
| <i>Al-Qadeer</i> | القدير | : The All-Powerful; An Attributive name of Allah. |
| <i>At-Taqwa</i> | التقوى | : Piety, righteousness. |
| <i>Bid'ah</i> | بدعة | : A reprehensible innovation in religion, heresy. |
| <i>Eemaan</i> | إيمان | : Faith. |
| <i>Fiṭrah</i> | فطرة | : The natural inclination of mankind. |
| <i>Fujjaar</i> | فجار | : Sing. <i>Faajir</i> , criminals, disbelievers, the wicked. |
| <i>Halaal</i> | حلال | : Lawful, as per Islamic law. |
| <i>Haneef</i> | حنيف | : Pure monotheist. |
| <i>Haraam</i> | حرام | : Unlawful (in shari'ah). |

* Subjective case of *al-Muttaqeen*.

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------|---|
| <i>Jabr</i> | جبر | : Forcing, compelling. |
| <i>Kaafir</i> | كافر | : Disbeliever. |
| <i>Kufr</i> | كفر | : Disbelief. |
| <i>Laylat al-Qadr</i> | ليلة القدر | : The Night of Decree (in which the Quran was revealed and it is in the month of Ramaḍan, most likely one of the odd last ten nights of it). |
| <i>Masaakeen</i> | مساكين | : Sing. <i>Miskeen</i> ; poor. |
| <i>Mufasssireen**</i> | مفسرين | : Sing. <i>Mufasssir</i> ; the text of the Qur'an. |
| <i>Mufsideen*</i> | مفسدون | : Sing. <i>Mufsid</i> . Wrongdoers, those who associate partners in worship with Allah and commit crimes. |
| <i>Muhsinoon*</i> | محسنون | : Sing. <i>Muhsin</i> , Good-doers. |
| <i>Mujrimoon*</i> | مجرمون | : Sing. <i>Mujrim</i> , criminals, polytheists and disbelievers. |
| <i>Munaafiqeen**</i> | منافقين | : Sing. <i>Munaafiq</i> . Hypocrites. |
| <i>Mushrikeen**</i> | مشركين | : Sing. <i>Mushrik</i> , polytheists. |
| <i>Mustahabb</i> | مستحب | : Recommended, preferred. |
| <i>Qadar</i> | قدر | : Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees - <i>Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz</i> (The Preserved Tablet). |

* Subjective case of *Mufsideen*, *Muhsineen*, *Mujrimeen* - respectively

** Objective case of *Mufasssiroon*, *Munafiqoon*, *Mushrikoon* - respectively

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--|
| <i>Qudrah</i> | قدرة : | Power. |
| <i>Rabb</i> | رب : | Lord. Sustainer, Ruler, Master. |
| <i>Salaam</i> | سلام : | Peace. |
| <i>Şalaah</i> | صلاة : | Prayer: (obligatory and optional). |
| <i>Shaheed</i> | شهيد : | Martyr, dying for the Cause of Allah. |
| <i>Shayaateen</i> | شياطين : | Sing. <i>Shaytaan</i> ; devils. |
| <i>Shirk</i> | شرك : | Polytheism, associating partner with Allah. |
| <i>Taqdeer</i> | تقدير : | Destiny. |
| <i>Tawheed</i> | توحيد : | Oneness of Allah. |
| <i>Umm al-Kitaab</i> | ام الكتاب : | The Mother of the Book, name of the 1st chapter of the Qur'an (<i>Soorah al-Faatiḥah</i>); the Preserved Tablet. |
| <i>Waajib</i> | واجب : | Obligatory. |
| <i>Wahy</i> | وحي : | Revelation. |
| <i>Zakaah</i> | زكاة / زكوة : | Obligatory annual alm. |
| <i>Zina</i> | زنا : | Adultery and fornication. |

SYMBOLS' DIRECTORY

(سُبْحَانَكَ) : *Subḥaanahu wa Ta'aala* - "The Exalted."

(سَلَامٌ) : *Ṣalla-Allahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* -
"Blessings and Peace be upon him."

(سَلَامٌ) : *'Alayhis-Salaam* - "May Peace be upon him."

(رَضِيَ) : *Raḍi-Allahu 'Anhu* - "May Allah be pleased with him."

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TRANSLITERATION CHART

| | |
|-----|--|
| أ | a |
| آ.ى | aa |
| ب | b |
| ت | t |
| ة | h or t (when followed by another Arabic word) |
| ث | th |
| ج | j |
| ح | ḥ |
| خ | kh |
| د | d |
| ذ | dh |
| ر | r |
| ز | z |
| س | s |
| ش | sh |
| ص | ṣ |
| ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ |

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| ظ | z |
| ع | ' |
| غ | gh |
| ف | f |
| ق | q |
| ك | k |
| ل | l |
| م | m |
| ن | n |
| هـ - ه - هـ | h |
| و | w |
| و (as vowel) | oo |
| ي | y |
| ي (as vowel) | ee |
| ء | ' (Omitted in initial position) |

| | | |
|----|---------|------------------|
| َ | Fathah | a |
| ِ | Kasra | i |
| ُ | Ḍammah | u |
| ّ | Shaddah | Double letter |
| ◌◌ | Sukoon | Absence of vowel |