

Ascension of Awareness Series

The Problem of **Evil**



By
Shaykh Salih as-Sindhi

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Evil

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مراقى-الوعى

شىخ صالح عبد العزىز السندى (حفظه الله)

The Problem of Evil¹

Taken from the book entitled, *Ascension of Awareness* by
Dr. Salih ‘Abdul-‘Aziz as-Sindi

Footnotes and Appendix by
Abu Nu‘maan Bashir Nelson

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¹ The problem of evil is an argument that attempts to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of a God who is omnipotent (i.e., having unlimited power; able to do anything), benevolent (i.e., well meaning; kindly), and all-good (i.e., inherently good).

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Origin of This Book

These are radio episodes that aired in the year 1440 AH on the program "*Awareness*" on Qur'ān Radio in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by the brilliant presenter: Mr. Abdullāh Az-Zahrānī, may Allāh grant him success.

These episodes were also broadcast on the internet. Then some of the virtuous people urged me to compile them into a book for wider benefit and Allāh facilitated that for me. So, I sought His help and reviewed them and modified them to be suitable for reading, rather than listening, while ensuring brevity, ease of expression, and clarity of sentences. I made each of the broadcasted episodes into a chapter.

I must point out that the academic material here - like any book - is a mixture of what Allāh has unlocked for His poor servant of His mercy, along with what I have benefited from others - from the past and the present - where I collected its scattered parts from scholarly sources, websites, and others. It did not cross my mind at the time that those episodes would turn into written papers; therefore, I did not care to record the references and document the information. When my attention was directed to turn the episodes into articles, it was very difficult for me to go through a new round of documentation according to what scientific research methodology requires; so I sufficed with indicating that here, which I hope will pave the way for me to an excuse, hoping that Allāh will magnify the reward of the people of knowledge from whom I benefited from and drew from the seas of their knowledge while I did not attribute their

speech to them, seeking refuge in Him, the Exalted, from giving the false impression of having what I have not been given.

I also do not forget to thank my dear brother Dr. Sa'ūd bin 'Uwayd al-'Awfī for his help in publishing this book (i.e., the original Arabic book), may Allāh reward him with good.

The Problem of Evil¹

Verily, from the pillars of faith is the belief that everything is by Allāh's decree, encompassed² within His knowledge, His writing down what will happen, His will, and His creation, whether it is good or evil. Nothing escapes Allāh's decree.³

Just as goodness is by Allāh's decree, so is evil. Therefore, all forms of evil, trials, calamities, and sins occur by Allāh's decree; He knew that they would happen, inscribed them in the Preserved Tablet, willed them, and created them.

The existence of evil in creation is something that puzzles some people; they ask: *How can Allāh create something with evil in it, even though He does not love it?*

I will strive to clarify this issue and answer this question with the help of Allāh by presenting six principles. Whoever understands them (i.e., these principles) will be able to easily comprehend this matter if Allāh wills.



¹ This is Chapter Nine of *Ascension of Awareness*.

² i.e., surround and have, or hold within.

³ Refer to the appendix for details concerning belief in the decree, the sixth pillar of faith.

The First Principle: Evil is not attributed to Allāh, the Exalted, neither in action nor in description. Evil is only in the things He created, not in His act of creation; or evil is in the effects of His actions which are separate from Him, not in the actions that He does.

How can evil be attributed to His Essence, His Attributes, or His actions when He is the Holy, the Pure, Free from any imperfection? And how can that be when Allāh is on a straight path:

﴿إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

“Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path” [Hūd: 56]. Consequently, all His actions are just, and His decrees, both cosmic¹ and legislative, are all wise.

How can evil be attributed to Allāh when the most knowledgeable of creation² صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said about Him:

وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ.

“And evil does not pertain to You,” [Collected by Muslim, no. 771]. This means it does not come from Him, nor does He do it. Instead, all His actions are inherently good, wise, and beneficial.



¹ i.e., universal.

² i.e., Allāh’s final Messenger Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh (may Allāh raise his rank and grant him peace).

The Second Principle: There is no pure evil in Allāh's creation, rather there is not even anything that is predominantly evil.

In His creation there is either pure good or predominantly good.

Every creation in this universe is either pure good like the Prophets عليهم السلام and the Angels, or there is predominant good in its existence.¹ For Allāh created these things which contain some evil, and He established a type of good in them that is more dominant. Therefore, the producing of these creations entails wisdom.



The Third Principle: Evil in Allāh's creation is relative and not absolute, meaning it is considered evil in its context or to those affected by it, even though with its existence, there is good from another perspective or for others, immediately or eventually, in this life or in the Hereafter.

Understanding this helps to grasp some of Allāh's great wisdom in decreeing the existence of various forms of evil, calamities, and imperfections in this universe. Undoubtedly, this results in significant benefits. And for this reason, the existence of these things is more beloved to Allāh than their non-existence.



¹ In other words, what exists in creation is either pure good or predominantly good.

The Fourth Principle: The good in Allāh's creation far, far outweighs the evil. This is perceivable with the slightest contemplation.

As a result of Allāh's mercy towards His servants – and His mercy encompasses everything – the good and bliss in this universe are far more than the evils, the calamities, and the tests. Everyone knows that the healthy are more than the sick, and that safety from volcanoes, earthquakes, fires, plane crashes, car accidents, etc., is far more common than their occurrence.

Therefore, the good in this universe is many, many times more than the evil, and this is something which cannot be denied by anyone who is just.



The Fifth Principle: The aspects of good in evil may or may not be apparent. That is, we might see some of the good resulting from the existence of evils and calamities, and sometimes it might be hidden from us. This discussion pertains to Allāh's wisdom, which is broader than the intellect of the created comprehend.

Hence, the wisdom may or may not be apparent, and its invisibility does not negate its existence, for not knowing about an existing thing does not deny its existence, and not knowing is not knowledge of non-existence. This is what all intellectuals agree upon.

Therefore, the wisdom behind the creation of evil exists, but due to the limitations of our intellects and understandings, what is

revealed to us is only a fraction, and much remains hidden. We infer what we do not know from what we know.



The Sixth Principle: Evil in Allāh’s creation is intended for other than itself, not for its own sake.

Allāh willed the existence of what He dislikes in evils for the sake of what results from it that He loves; He decreed what He dislikes for the achievement of what He loves, and the achievement of what He loves is more beloved to Him than its absence.

The principle here is: **“Missing out on predominant good is a predominant evil.”**

The wise person understands the value of achieving a predominant benefit even if it is accompanied by some harm. For example, bitter medicine may be unpleasant to the drinker from one aspect, but it is beneficial by Allāh’s will from another aspect.

The Response to the Problem of Evil

There's a doubt raised by the enemies of Allāh, the atheists¹, aimed at confusing the believers, known as the *Problem of Evil* or the *Enigma of Evil*.

This doubt has caused confusion in some people, maybe even doubt or distrust, and perhaps something greater² in some people.

The enemies of Allāh are keen on spreading it due to its effect on the ignorant and those weak in knowledge and faith, to the extent that it is said the Problem of Evil is the central argument of the atheists! Therefore, it's crucial for Muslims to understand how to refute this doubt for themselves and others.

In essence: They criticize Allāh's existence due to the presence of evil; they argue that if a capable, merciful Creator existed, evil would not exist in this universe —such as disasters, epidemics, calamities, diseases, injustice, and so forth. Hence, the existence of evil is proof of the Creator's non-existence; otherwise, why hasn't He removed it?

¹ i.e., someone who lacks belief in the existence of God (Creator). This can manifest as a rejection of religious doctrines and the supernatural, often based on the belief that there is insufficient evidence to support the existence of deities. Atheism can range from a passive lack of belief to a more active denial of theism.

² e.g., disbelief, apostasy, etc.

They diligently use this flawed argument to deceive the ignorant, and I will mention eight concise responses to help understand this topic and clear the doubt by Allāh's will.



The First Response is to acknowledge the existence of evil in this world but not to concede that it is pure or gratuitous¹ evil. Rather, the types of calamities, evils, injustices, and so forth have resulting goods and benefits that necessarily follow their existence. The wise Creator has decreed their existence for the goods and benefits they entail, which is logically acceptable.

Thus, the evil present in this universe, though it may be evil from one perspective, is good from another. Every mentioned instance of evil leads to greater goods; therefore, wisdom necessitates their existence rather than their absence.

For example, the water that is said to cause great floods, destroying and corrupting towns, is the same water that brings about great benefits. People need the same water for drinking, cleaning, enjoyment, and many other things.

Therefore, the existence of water results in much good and little evil. The evil that occurs is enveloped in wisdom and benefits, some of which are recognized by those who look with an eye of fairness.

¹ I.e., lacking good reason; not necessary; uncalled for; unwarranted, etc.

Similarly, the fire said to cause corruption is the same fire that people have greatly benefited from in their lives, far more than the occasional damage it causes.

Thus, for all things referred to as containing evil, we say that their existence leads to greater and greater goods.

Therefore, wisdom dictates the existence of some evil, and its presence does not imply - as they claim - the non-existence of the Creator, the Exalted.



The Second Response: Evil in this world is part of the overall goodness of the world, and the perspective should be holistic, not partial.

We make a grave mistake if we restrict our view to just a small part instead of looking at the whole picture.¹ If you stood before a beautiful painting and focused only on a small line of it, you wouldn't see its beauty. But, if you looked at it in its entirety, you would recognize its beauty and excellence.

Similarly, the existence of these evils in the world is part of the beauty that will appear to you if you look at the entirety of the world. What value does health have if we never knew sickness? What value does wealth have if we never knew poverty? What value does success have if there were no efforts and hardship?

¹ Sometimes, the bottom line cannot be understood until after reading the entire page.

Imagine life without any misfortunes, obstacles, or difficulties; it would be bland, lacking color and flavor.

We understand the goodness of things by their opposites, **"Opposites reveal the beauty of each other."**

We wouldn't recognize a straight line if we didn't know what a crooked one was. **"It is through opposites that things become clear."**

In short: Misfortunes, trials, and various forms of evil are necessary for the world's beauty. The beauty of a magnificent palace includes the existence of a bathroom, a place for urine, feces, and foul odors. Without it, the palace would lack completeness and lose part of its beauty.

This is how we should view the matter.



The Third Response: Claiming that the evil in this universe is a gratuitous evil and lacks any benefit, as atheists assert, is untenable because it requires comprehensive knowledge, which humans lack.

To assert that the existing evil brings no benefit whatsoever, either immediately or in the long term, one would need vast, encompassing knowledge, which is contrary to reality; our knowledge is limited and insufficient.

For instance, from a distance, if someone sees two individuals holding a child with a saw, preparing to cut off the child's leg, it's unreasonable and unfair to judge the situation as good or evil based

solely on that observation without understanding the context. They could be criminals, or it could be a doctor and the child's father, where the child suffers from a condition that, if not treated by amputating the leg, could lead to death. In this case, wisdom and mercy dictate the amputation for the child's survival, which is a good outcome!

Thus, if someone claims that the existing evil in the world serves no beneficial purpose, we must say to them that such a claim requires an all-encompassing understanding of reality from every angle, which is unattainable. Allāh, the Exalted, says,

﴿وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

which means, *“And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little”* [Al-Isrā: 85].



The Fourth Response: If the atheists argue that the existence of evil negates the existence of Allāh then we say to them: What about the existence of good?! Shouldn't that be considered evidence of Allāh's existence?!

Good is fundamental and more abundant, while evil is rare and incidental; health is more common than sickness, the number of people outside hospitals far exceeds those within, and safety from accidents, earthquakes, and volcanoes is much more common than their occurrence, a fact agreed upon by rational thinkers.

Again, I say: They argue that the existence of disease disproves the existence of Allāh but what about the existence of health? Why isn't the prevalence of health considered proof of Allāh's existence?

Why is one considered evidence and not the other?!

That is one issue and here is another: For a person with a leg injury, what about the rest of their body parts? They possess countless cells functioning harmoniously and many other healthy organs performing their functions. If one leg is injured, the heart, liver, intestines, brain, hand, blood vessels, etc., are all healthy. So, when one aspect is weighed against a hundred or more, which should be considered more significant?! Obviously, the majority should prevail!

Therefore, all atheists are unable to address what might be termed, for the sake of argument, the "Problem of Good."

That is, if they use the Problem of Evil as an argument, we pose an even greater challenge to their belief system—the Problem of Good! Since good is far more abundant, why don't they deduce the existence of a merciful, generous, wise Creator from the abundance of good?! Their denial, after all this, is nothing but a manifestation of desire and blindness!



The Fifth Response: There's no necessity for the perfection of the creator to imply the perfection of the creation.

The existence of imperfect creation doesn't necessitate an imperfect creator; it might be that the creator intentionally made it imperfect. Therefore, the imperfection of the creation doesn't imply the imperfection of the creator, much less prove the non-existence of the creator! This is where atheists err: they infer the non-existence of the Creator from the imperfection of the creation, abandoning reason and understanding!

Let's consider an example: If someone enters a high quality and beautifully designed palace with dozens of well-furnished, perfectly colored, and impeccably organized rooms, and then finds one messy, poorly colored room not matching the rest of the palace's beauty, would anyone claim that the palace's builder is foolish or lacking intelligence, let alone say that the existence of this messy room proves the palace has no builder?!

Rather, the perfection seen in the rest of the palace would attest to the builder's precision and taste, and the existence of the messy room would be attributed to a rational reason. Perhaps it's meant as a punishment area, a storage space, or something else.

The essence of this example is: Even the most foolish wouldn't claim upon seeing the beautiful palace and one ugly room that the palace has no builder!

Yet, the atheist, upon seeing a vast, perfectly ordered, beautiful universe with some instances of misfortune and trials, claims the universe has no Creator!

Another example: Imagine two cell phones made by the same company, one high-quality with impressive features, everyone who

sees it is amazed by it, and the other is lower quality with fewer features. The company made it for business reasons.

Then a person concludes upon seeing them both that there's no manufacturer for either because of the second one's imperfection, it would be akin to claiming both emerged from nothingness!

Would any sane person, or even a madman, utter such a thing?!

This is precisely the atheists' situation!

They pick an example or two, or ten, or a hundred from this world where imperfections or misfortunes occur, in contrast to millions and millions of instances showing the perfection of creation and mercy towards beings, and then claim, due to those imperfections, that this universe has no Creator. Is this the reasoning of the rational?!

The correct logic states that the existence of imperfection does not negate the presence of wisdom, and the imperfection of the created does not imply the imperfection of the Creator, much less His non-existence!

In summary: Allāh Almighty willed this worldly life to be as such, with many goods and relatively fewer evils, and He has profound wisdom for both. He also willed the Afterlife to contain a realm of pure bliss and continuous pleasures, where souls desire and eyes delight, and another realm of misery and severe punishment – Allāh forbid we end up there. Anyone who has tasted a bit of pleasure and pain in this world can somewhat grasp the meaning of what

awaits in the Afterlife, despite the vast difference between the experiences in this life and the next.



The Sixth Response: The atheists' argument based on what they deemed "the Problem of Evil" is fundamentally flawed and astonishingly paradoxical! According to them, everything is materialistic, composed merely of atoms that by chance collided to form this universe without a Creator!

Consequently, there's no purpose, wisdom, feelings, good, evil, nor any fixed standard for ethics or discerning right from wrong.

How, then, can they argue about evil?! And what exactly is their standard for evil in the first place?!

How can they judge that this is evil, or this is correct, and that is not?

What is their standard? They advocate for moral relativism¹, even moral nihilism²!

The distinction between truth and falsehood, good and evil, is only possible for those who believe in a wise Creator who instilled in hearts an innate nature that differentiates between these concepts, recognizing the goodness of virtue and the ugliness of evil.

¹ i.e., the idea that there are no absolute moral principles, and that what is considered right or wrong can vary depending on a number of factors, including culture, social context, or opinion.

² i.e., the rejection of all religious and moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless.

If we want to say there is good and evil, right and wrong, we must transcend material things; such judgments cannot be the outcome of the evolutionary theory they believe in. This understanding can only arise if we acknowledge a Creator God who instilled this natural disposition in hearts to differentiate between right and wrong. Based on their principles, everything is equal with no distinction; it's the same whether you feed and treat an orphan well or kill and dismember him! There's no difference between a lawful marriage and rape; in the atheistic legal view, they're the same.

To them, life is entirely materialistic. Materialism and nothing beyond, devoid of purpose, meaning, wisdom, feelings, emotions, or morals.

So, how can atheists then use the Problem of Evil as an argument? According to their view, there's essentially no concept of good or evil to begin with! This makes their objection dead on arrival!



The Seventh Response: Atheists' argument essentially reveals their flawed concept of the Lord.

The idea that the Lord is a Creator with vast knowledge and wisdom, possessing power and dignity, who does what He wishes, decrees what He wants, and everyone is a humble servant to Him, doesn't exist for them.

Do you know their concept of the Lord? In short, they want or imagine a god that's merely a servant or a machine (Exalted is our Lord), a device that does what they program it to do, or a servant who obeys their commands. Thus, the existence of trials and difficulties puzzles them!

Because they want a god who does nothing but fulfill their desires, shower them with pleasures, and if they desire only pleasures in their world, he must give them what they want without any trouble! And if they encounter the slightest hardship, even a thorn pricking them, they rush to deny His Existence!

Is this truly the Lord?! Exalted is Allāh far above such notions.

The Lord does what He wills and decrees what He desires. He owns dignity and pride, and the servant is just that; whether they understand the wisdom behind His actions and decrees or not, they remain servants to their Lord unequivocally.



The Eighth and Last Response: This world is created for trial and testing, not for ultimate bliss and happiness. As mentioned in the Qur'ān,

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

which means, ***“He Who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed”*** [Al-Mulk: 2]. Therefore, if this life is not meant for sheer happiness and is not the final destination, it is unreasonable to expect the fulfillment of every type of pleasure or

the elimination of all sorrows here; there is another realm, meant for pure happiness, for those who respond to their Lord.

The issue with their perspective is that it is limited to this worldly life, being content and secure within it, without aspiring for what lies beyond.

Anyone who believes in a life after this one - the true life as mentioned in the Qur'ān,

﴿وَمَنْ أَلَدَّارَ الْآخِرَةِ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

which means, ***“And indeed, the Hereafter is the true life if only they knew”*** [Al-Ankabūt: 64] will see all related problems disappear. They will understand that the trials and tribulations of this life serve as divine wisdom and that there are rewards and generous compensation in the Afterlife for those who patiently endure their trials.

This worldly life is merely moments and seconds compared to the eternal life of the Hereafter, which is everlasting. Thus, if a person falls ill, suffers, is tested, or faces poverty and then patiently perseveres and submits to their Lord, they will receive great compensation in the Hereafter. So, where lies the issue? When we weigh this matter with reason, it becomes entirely rational.

If a wealthy person said, "Whoever endures the pain of a pinch will receive a spacious house, a luxurious car, and a lot of money," who would refuse such a tempting offer?!

When compared to the reward for enduring them in the afterlife, all types of calamities in this world are less significant than

this pinch. The promised delights for the patient are far greater than any worldly offer; there's simply no comparison. The ḥadīth states,

وَالْمَوْضِعُ سَوَاطِئِ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا.

“The space of the whip of one of you in Paradise is better than the world and everything in it” [Collected by Aḥmad, no. 15563].

It becomes clear that all complexities related to this topic will dissolve for those who correctly understand this truth: Is this life meant for happiness, or is there another realm for reward, compensation, and the joy of the believers?

This world is a passage, and everyone in it, whether living in luxury or facing trials, will die. Then, a new life will begin, where the patient believers are rewarded, and those who turned away and were discontent are judged accordingly. What justice is greater than this?

And for the patient believers, what favor is greater than this?!

In summary: Our belief as Muslims regarding the occurrence of evil in this world is based on two pillars:

- **The first:** The perfection of Allāh in His knowledge, His wisdom, His mercy, His might, His justice, and His dominion.
- **The second:** The imperfection of the servant in his intellect, his knowledge, his capability, and his perception.

Anyone who believes in the absolute perfection of Allāh and recognizes their own imperfections will find that all problems related to this topic will dissolve by the will of Allāh. Allāh says,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُوَ
الْحَكِيمُ الْحَبِيرُ﴾

which means, ***“Praise be to Allāh, to whom belongs everything in the heavens and the earth, and to Him will be praise in the Hereafter. He is the Wise, the Informed.”*** [Saba’: 1]

For Further Benefit:

I recommend reading an enlightening faith-based and scientific section by Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy on him, in his magnificent book "*Miftāḥ Dār aṣ-Ṣa'ādah*" (2/812 - 847), published by Dar 'Alam al-Fawā'id.

الإيمان بالقدر

من الدروس المهمة لعامة الأمة في العقيدة

للشيخ أحمد بن محمد النجّار

Belief in the Divine Decree¹

Taken from the book entitled, *Important Lessons for the Muslim
Masses in Creed* by

Dr. Ahmed an-Najjār

Translated by: Abu Nu'maan Bashir Nelson

¹ The sixth pillar of faith.

The Divine Decree is Allāh's decreeing of the events in accordance with what preceded of His knowledge, and what is necessitated by His wisdom.

Belief in the Divine Decree is either a general belief, or a detailed belief.

General belief: To believe that everything is preordained, and that the One Who decreed these things is Allāh (the Mighty and Majestic) alone.

Detailed belief: To believe in everything mentioned in the religious texts concerning the details of whatever is associated with the Divine Decree.

Consequently, whatever is associated with being guided and going astray, and whatever is associated with wisdom, and whatever is associated with the means and there being no conflict between their utilization and Divine Decree, all of that is included in belief in the Divine Decree (*al-Qadr*).

Belief in the Divine Decree stands on (four) levels that are (considered to be) its pillars; whoever does not believe in them is not a believer in the Divine Decree.

The Levels of Belief in the Divine Decree.

The First Aspect: *Al-'Ilm (Knowledge)*: The intended meaning of knowledge is Allāh's all-encompassing knowledge of everything. Allāh says,

﴿وَسِعَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾

which means, ***“He has encompassed all things in knowledge.”*** [Tā Hā: 98].

Allāh knows what was (i.e., the past), what will be (i.e., the future), and what was not, and how it would have been had it occurred. Allāh knows what doesn't exist, and how it would be if it existed. Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصَّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾

which means, ***“Indeed, the worst of the living creatures in the sight of Allāh are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason. Had Allāh known any good in them, He would have made them hear. And if He had made them hear they would (still) have turned away while they were refusing”*** [Al-Anfāl: 22-23].

It is not possible for anything to occur contrary to the Qadr because the decree is associated with Allāh's eternal knowledge, and there is nothing hidden from Allāh.

The Second Aspect: *Al-Kitābah (Writing)*, and it is that which was written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūdḥ*). Allāh created the pen and ordered it to write in the Preserved Tablet everything that will occur up until the Day of Judgement.

The One Who ordered the pen to write is Allāh, and it is not possible for there to be any change (*tagh-yīr*) or substitution (*tab-dīl*) of what was written in the Preserved Tablet because it agrees (i.e., it conforms) with Allāh’s eternal knowledge.

The supporting evidence for the *Writing* is Allāh’s saying,

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَرَهُمْ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

which means, “**Indeed, it is We Who bring the dead to life and record what they have put forth and what they left behind, and all thing We have enumerated in a clear register**” [Yāsīn: 12].

Al-Kitābah is of two types:

- The Writing in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūdḥ*).
- The Writing in the scrolls (*aṣ-Ṣuḥuf*) of the Angels.

That which was written in the Preserved Tablet is not subject to any change nor substitution, but that which is written in the scrolls of the Angels can be changed and substituted.

The Third Aspect: *Al-Mashī’ah (Will)*: The intended meaning of will is Allāh’s universal will (*al-irādah al-kawniyyah*). Everything in existence is by Allāh’s will. Whatever He willed occurs

and whatever He does not will does not occur. The slave's will follows and is under Allāh's will. Allāh says,

﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾

which means, ***“You cannot will unless Allāh wills. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise.”*** [Al-Insān: 30].

The Fourth Aspect: Al-Khalq (Creation): The intended meaning is that Allāh (Alone) is al-Khāliq (i.e., the Creator), and everything besides Him is created. Allāh says,

﴿اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ﴾

which means, ***“Allāh is the Creator of all things...”*** [Az-Zumar: 62]. Both the slave and his actions are a part of Allāh's creation, and Allāh created the slave and his actions.

If it is asked: How can Allāh be the Creator of the slave's actions and the actions are attributed to the slave? Allāh created the slave and placed within him both a will and an ability, and his actions are the consequence (i.e., result) of that.

Therefore, Allāh is also the Creator of the results of both will and ability. So, nothing is outside of Allāh's creation.

The Nullifiers of Belief in the Divine Decree

The nullifiers of belief in the Divine Decree are two:

- The belief that Allāh compels (i.e., forces) the slaves to act.
- The belief that the slaves create their actions.

The First Nullifier: The belief that Allāh compels (i.e., forces) the slaves with respect to their actions; whoever believes that the slave has no ability of his own nor actions of his own, and that Allāh makes him do what he does, then such a person has nullified his faith in the Divine Decree.

The slave has an ability, and he has a will, so he is the one who acted, and the action is attributed to him (on account of that). I will further explain this with an example: When the slave prays, the prayer is attributed to him because he is the one who engaged in the action. However, the one who created the slave and his prayer is Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.

So, the action is attributed to the slave due to him engaging in it, and it is said: The slave is the one praying; it is attributed to Allāh in terms of creation, so it is said: Allāh created the slave and his ṣalāh.

As for the Jabariyyah, then they say that Allāh is the One praying because He compelled the slave to act. Those (who hold this belief) are the Jabariyyah.¹

The Second Nullifier: The belief that the slave created his actions; whoever believes that the slave is the one who creates his actions, meaning: he is the one who created his ṣalāh for example, then this is one of the nullifiers of belief in the Divine Decree; because the One Who created the ṣalāh is Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and there is no creator besides Allāh.

¹ The Qadariyyah and the Jabariyyah are two sects who deviated from the way of the Prophet and his companions with respect to belief in al-Qadr.

The Qadariyyah affirm for the human being a free will, but they deny the Divine Decree, and the Jabariyyah affirm the Divine Decree, but they deny free will.

The two are examples of how Satan beautifies the path of evil by ordering some with exceeding the limits (i.e., doing too much) and others with falling short of what is required (i.e., not doing enough).

Verily, one of the pillars of faith is the belief that everything is by Allāh's decree, encompassed within His knowledge, His writing, His will, and His creation, whether it is good or evil. Nothing escapes Allāh's decree.

Just as goodness is by Allāh's decree, so is evil. Therefore, all forms of evils, trials, calamities, and sins occur by Allāh's decree; He knew that they would happen, inscribed them in the Preserved Tablet, willed them, and created them.

The existence of evil in creation is something that puzzles some people; they ask: *How can Allāh create something with evil in it, even though He does not love it?*

This book strives to clarify this issue and answer this question with the help of Allāh by presenting six principles. Whoever understands these principles will be able to easily comprehend this matter if Allāh wills.

-Adapted excerpt from the book



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