

# Al-QaDaa wal-Qadr

Compiled by Chris Caras, based on his institutional and personal studies. Perfection is for Allah alone.

## Divine Decree, Destiny, Fate & Predestination

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Traditionally, the subject of *qadar* is delayed in ‘aqeedah studies until students have taken all the preceding articles of faith in detail. This would be in line with the order that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told Jibreel, concerning faith, that it is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in the decree, the good and bad thereof. We have chosen to advance it because it is part of believing in Allah and aids us significantly in comprehending the world around us. Also, new Muslims are frequently challenged by texts they read concerning *qadar*, and thus, to prevent confusion and perplexity from the small puzzle pieces, we look to the bigger picture.

{إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (49) سورة القمر}

“Truly, every thing, We have created it with *qadar* [in predetermined measurement].” [54:49]

The word “**qadar**” means decree, measurement, and estimate. The word “**qaDaa**” means judgment or execution of an order. If I want to cut a piece of wood, the *qadar* is measuring where I want to cut and placing a mark. The *qaḍā’* is making the actual cut. Although there is a

difference between the two words *linguistically*, in the creedal context, scholars generally agree that they can be used interchangeably and frequently couple them together when talking about this same overall matter. Otherwise, they may differentiate and say that *qadar* is the pre-eternal knowledge and recording of all things, while *qaDaa* is the play-by-play in action of that. Or, to make a modern analogy, *qadar* is like a movie-film roll, but *qaDaa* refers to each individual frame as it passes by the projector—and to Allah belongs the Highest example and He knows best.



## Levels of Qadar

These tenants separate theists from deists and is an essential part of believing in Allah's Sovereignty and acknowledging His intimate influence on His Creation.

Proper faith in qadar need not extend beyond these four facets...

The acknowledgment of Allah's all-encompassing knowledge of all things,

{هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (22) سورة الحشر

**“He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped but Him, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.”**

[59:22]

Allah Knows the known and unknown of the past, present and future. This even includes the most *detailed* knowledge. Contrary to the claims of Aristotle and other philosophers who claimed God only had summary knowledge of things and events and that most details were beyond His scope.

{بَلْ بَدَا لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (28) سورة

الأنعام

**“Nay, it has become manifest to them what they had been concealing before. But if they were returned (to the world), they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden. And indeed they are liars.” [6:28]**

So Allah not only knows all that would happen, but also, all possibilities of existence.

All events and details have been Written in *al-LauH al-MaHfooZ* (The Preserved Tablet)

{أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ  
(70) سورة الحج

“Do you now know that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book. Verily, that is easy for Allah.” [22:70]

{إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ (12) سورة يس

“Verily, We give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before them, and their traces and all things We have recorded with numbers in a Clear Book.” [36:12]

This is another thing known to all humans through their *fitrah*, their innate disposition, that all things are *recorded*. In the speech and literature of all nations, people will say phrases like, “It wasn’t meant to be,” or “let’s see what is written for us,” etc. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [said](#), “The first thing Allah created was the Pen, and told it to write. It said, ‘My Lord, what should I write?’ So Allah said to write everything that will happen until the Hour is established.”

Lailat al-Qadar: The Night of Decree

And then, what is decreed to take place is “sent down” to be played out each year. This night is essentially the moment that one movie reel is replaced with another on the projection machine.

{ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (1) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (2) لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (3) تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (4) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (5) }

### سورة القدر

“Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree). And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr is? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the Spirit by Allah’s Permission with all Decrees, (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn.” [97]

Worshipping Allah on that night, which is one of the odd nights from the last ten days of Ramadhan, is better than worship for a thousand months.

{ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ (3) فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ (4) أَمْرًا مِنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ (5) } سورة الدخان

“We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed. Verily, We are ever warning. Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments. As a Command from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers),” [44:3-5]

Allah’s knowledge and record do not skip over any detail, no matter how minute,

{ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يُعَلِّمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (59) } سورة الأنعام

“And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.” [6:59]

All things are created by Allah

{اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ (62)} سورة الزمر

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the *Wakeel* (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian) over all things.” [39:62]

Including our own actions,

{وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (96)} سورة الصافات

“While Allah has created you and what you make!” [37:96]

Allah’s Will is unstoppable

{وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (29)} سورة التكوير

“And you cannot will unless Allah Wills, Developer of the Worlds.” [81:29]

Essentially, everything that happens is the will of Allah. And this is the most important aspect of qadr.

{إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (82)} سورة يس

“Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" – and it is!” [36:82]

## Allah’s Names and Attributes

Some of Allah’s Beautiful Names are related to faith in qadar. Allah is **al-Qadir** (The All-Able), **al-Qadeer** (All-Powerful/Able Who does as He wants in accordance with His Wisdom,

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْزُبْ عَنْهُمُ خَلْقُهُمْ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ﴾  
بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿33﴾ سورة الأحقاف

“Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation, is **Able** to give life to the dead? Yes, He surely **has Power** to do all things.” [46:33]

And, **al-Muqtadir**, the Omnipotent

﴿وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا﴾ ﴿45﴾ سورة الكهف

“And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it (and becomes fresh and green). But later it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allah is, over all things **Omnipotent**.” [18:45]

In translations, whenever you see the words power, ability and omnipotence, it usually refers to a derivative of qadar.

Imam Ahmad called qadar the power or ability of Allah. Ibn ‘Abbaas called qadar the system of tawheed, and Ali ibn Abi Taalib deemed it Allah’s Secret. There is no contradiction between

those words. Since we are studying Allah’s attributes of knowledge, creation, and will, it is impossible for us to completely understand how qadar works or to subject it to our unreliable intellects. And ironically, the word for intellect in Arabic is ‘*aql*, which literally means *restraint*, like an animal chained to a tree. If it tries to go beyond its limits, it will choke. Thus, whenever we try to understand it more, we find ourselves unsure or even misguided and have to return to these principles. Instead, we try to understand the benefits received from proper faith in qadar and learn how *not* to believe in it by looking at the errors of deviant groups and individuals.

## By believing in Qadar properly

You learn to take precaution in all things and know how *tawakkul* (reliance upon Allah) truly works. One of the Prophet’s companions was dismounting from his ride for an errand and he asked, “Should I tie my camel to a post or just put my trust in Allah?” [As if the two were mutually exclusive] The Prophet ﷺ said, “*Tie your camel and put your trust in Allah.*” Thus, it is from the Sunnah, and from *pure faith*, to take necessary precautions and to know that **while all things are in the Hands of Allah, Allah has also decreed the causes for all results**. For example, Allah may decree that your stomach will be full at 4 p.m., but that would not come without you eating and drinking to your fill. Similarly with reward and punishment in the Hereafter and even the acceptance of prayer and invocation.

And *tawakkul* does not always mean that Allah will do for you exactly what we are relying on Him for. If we are relying on Allah for guidance, then Allah will nurture us, but if we are relying on Allah for a certain success on our own terms, we may be disappointed.

{... وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ

وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (216) { سورة البقرة



“...and it may be that you hate something but it is better for you, and it may be that you love something but it is worse for you. And Allah Knows and you do not know.”

[2:216]

Part of tawakkul is being pleased with the result, regardless of what it is. If the man lost his camel anyway, even after tying it, then he should know that this result is better for him, even if it takes him years and years to learn why, or if it's his progeny that discover the secret to his good “fortune”.

Thus, another fruit obtained by having clear faith in qadar is **facing hardship without despair**, and knowing that everything is part of Allah's Plan, and that He has the greatest Wisdom in all decrees,

{إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ (140) سورة آل عمران

“If a wound has touched you, be assured a similar wound has touched the others (disbelievers). *And so are the days that We give to men by turns, that Allah may test those who believe*, and that He may take martyrs from among you. And Allah likes not the wrongdoers.” [3:140]

Thus, the believer can remain patient during calamities and tests. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “*When Allah wants good for his slave, He hastens his punishment in the world. And when He wants bad for His slave, He withholds his sins from him until he appears before Him on the Day of Judgment....Indeed, the greater reward comes with greater trial. And truly, when Allah loves a people He subjects them to trials, so whoever is content, then for him is pleasure, and whoever is discontent, then for him is wrath.*” And Allah said:

{كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبَلُوكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ (35) سورة الأنبياء

“Everyone is going to taste death, and We shall test you with evil and good. And to Us you will be returned.” [21:35]

Similarly, since the believer realizes that everything is in Allah’s Hands and that it is all a test from Allah, he doesn’t become outraged and depressed by setbacks nor self-amazed and covetous with Allah’s blessings,

{مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ (22) لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

(23) سورة الحديد

“No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees 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. And Allah likes not every prideful boaster.” [57:22-23]

Also, by believing in qadar, you complete your faith in Allah and rid yourself of any misconceptions about Allah and His governance of the World. Further, you increase your gratitude to Allah for having chosen YOU for Islam, and picking you out of the hundreds and thousands of people around you that haven’t yet received that blessing, and even from people who were born with that blessing but do not totally appreciate it.

Also, this ‘aqeedah helps us understand the calamities in the world around us,

{أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشِيدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا (78) مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا (79) سورة النساء

“Wherever 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. And We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah **is Sufficient as a Witness.**” [4:78-79]

All things are part of Allah’s qadar, blessings are a test of gratitude, and in some cases, a hastened taste and tip of the iceberg for good deeds performed; while trials are tests, and in some cases, hastened punishment after we’ve sinned and been ungrateful to Allah.

{ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَرْجِعُونَ} (41) سورة الروم

“Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return.” [30:41]

That they may realize that security, peace and harmony come from worshiping their creator and thus repent to Him.

Muslim countries have less excuse, since they know better, so the punishment is hastened upon them in *This Life* the *Dunya*. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “*This nation of mine is one to which mercy is shown. It will have no punishment in the next world, but its punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed.*”

The Prophet’s cousin, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbaas, said,

One day I was behind the Prophet ﷺ [riding on the same mount] and he said, ‘Hey lad, I shall teach you some words: be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah [alone]. And know that if the nations were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they could not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to

gather together to harm you with anything, they could not harm you except with what Allah had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried... Recognize Allah in times of ease and prosperity, and He will remember you in times of adversity. And know that what has passed you by [and you have failed to attain] was not going to befall you, and what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and hardship with ease.

Another important and related issue to understand is that **Allah's decrees, whether legislative or existential, are full of Wisdom**, even if we do not know the wisdom. There is nothing *completely* evil never giving way to any good,

{ذَلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (6) الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ  
الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ (7)} سورة السجدة

“That is He, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful, Who made everything He has created good and He began the creation of man from clay.” [32:6-7]

Allah created evil so that we could appreciate His protection:

{قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ (1) مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (2)} سورة الفلق

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of His creation...” [113:1-2]

It is in light of the previous aayah that we understand this one: Allah did not create evil directly, but allowed evil to come from some of His creations. This is **evil in his existential** [كوبي] **decree**.

As for His Legislative decree...

{ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ  
يَعْظُمُ لِعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ (90) } سورة النحل

“Verily, Allah enjoins justice, perfect manners, and giving to those near, and forbids lewdness, and evil, and oppression. He admonishes you, that you may take heed.”

[16:90]

Some aspects of the sharia may be beyond our scope to understand the wisdom behind it.

Whether we feel we understand it or not, we should always remember the example of Prophet Ibrahim and his unquestioning obedience of Allah, through thick and thin, in sickness and in health...

{ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (100) فَبَشِّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ (101) فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ (102) فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ (103) وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ (104) قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (105) إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ (106) } سورة

الصفات

“My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous.’ So, We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing boy. And, when he was old enough to walk with him, Ibrahim said: ‘O my son! I saw in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So what do you see?’ He said: ‘O my father! Do that which you are commanded, if Allah wills, you shall find me of the patient.’ 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); We called out to him: ‘O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the dream!’ Verily, thus do We reward the good-doers. Verily, that indeed was the manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice (i.e. a ram); And We left for him a goodly remembrance among the

later generations. Salaam (peace) be upon Ibrahim! Thus indeed do We reward the good-doers.” [37:100-106]

Those who do not understand that this life is a proving ground instead think hardship is Allah’s punishment and that favors are signs of Allah’s Pleasure. Rather, it is all a test and does not necessarily indicate *anything* about Allah’s Pleasure or Displeasure with a person.

{ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ (15) وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ (16) } سورة فجر

“As for man, when his Lord tries him by giving him honor and bounties, then he says (in exultation): ‘*My Lord has honored me.*’ But when He tries him by straitening his means of life, he says: ‘*My Lord has humiliated me!*’” [89:15-16]

Likewise, forgetting that everything is from Allah and foolishly thinking that one is *beyond* Allah’s jurisdiction and that they cannot be helped and are in despair, or similarly, that whatever good has come to them was of their own earnings, not Allah’s Planning.

{ لَا يَسْأَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ (49) وَلَئِنْ أَدْخَانَا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرْاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ (50) وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَىٰ الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ (51) } سورة فصلت

“Man does not get tired of asking good (things from Allah); but if an evil touches him, then he gives up all hope and is lost in despair. And truly, if We give him a taste of mercy from Us, after some harm has touched him, he is sure to say: ‘*This is due to my (merit); I think not that the Hour will be established. But if I am brought back to my*

***Lord, surely there will be for me the best (wealth) with Him.’ Then, We verily will show to the disbelievers what they have done, and We shall make them taste a severe torment. And when We show favor to man, he withdraws and turns away; but when evil touches him, then he has recourse to long supplications.”*** [41:49–51]

These are all characteristics of those who do not understand Allah’s sovereignty and *qadr*. Everything is from Allah, the additions and the subtractions, the setbacks and the pushes.

## How does guidance (hidaayah or tawfeeq) and misguidance (Dalaalah) work?

Guidance is a gift, not a right. By not affording someone guidance, Allah has not wronged them, since He did not take what was theirs to begin with. This does not contradict the fact that Allah created all His slave upon the *fitrah*. The innate disposition is a toolbox or a radar for people to *recognize* their need for Allah and to find the true religion. But it does not entail that humans own their own guidance or that guidance is their right. Nonetheless, Allah in His infinite Generosity, has told us different ways to receive guidance. One of them is here from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who said that Allah [said](#):

My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not oppress one another. **My servants, all of you are astray except one whom I guide, so seek right guidance from Me, and I shall guide you.** O My servants, all of you are hungry except one whom I feed, so beg food from Me, so that I may give that to you. O My servants, all of you are naked except one whom I provide garments, so beg clothes from Me, so that I should clothe you. O My servants, you sin night and day and I am there to pardon your sins, so beg pardon from Me so that I should grant you pardon. O My servants, you can neither do Me any harm nor can you do Me any good. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and human of you, and the jinn of you, become as pious as the most

God-fearing in heart among you, nothing would add to My Dominion. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the human among you and the jinn among you become like the most wicked-hearted among you, it would cause no loss to My Kingdom. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the human of you and the jinn of you all stand at one ground and ask Me, and I confer upon every individual their request, it would not cause any loss to Me than that which is caused to the ocean by dipping a needle into it. **My servants, it is only your deeds that I count for you and then reward in return, so whoever finds good should praise Allah and he whoever finds otherwise should not blame except himself.**

That is for not seeking Allah's Help and thinking they do not need Allah for guidance. While one may be flabbergasted at the huge amount of misguided people in the world, one must remember that very few people in the world are actually asking Allah for guidance. Most assume themselves to be guided, or rely on their intellects or personal vibes to determine what's best for them or not, without ever asking Allah for guidance. And Allah misguides no one *after guidance* until they themselves have chosen such,

{وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ  
{(115) سورة التوبة

“And Allah will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid. Verily, Allah is All-Knower of everything.”

[9:115]

{وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ (36) {سورة

النحل



“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah a Messenger (proclaiming): ‘Worship Allah, and avoid all false deities.’ Then of them were some whom Allah guided and of them were some upon whom the straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth).” [16:36]

So Allah guides whom He chooses as a blessing to them, but misguides those who choose for themselves misguidance.

All the while, whichever path a person traverses, once they take an additional step, then the following step will be opened for them. Thus, Allah is baiting and testing all of His slaves to what course they wish to follow in life. Allah tests us, whether we choose goodness or sinfulness, *do you really want to follow this path?* As we go further down, we are always presented with opportunity to backtrack, but the more we become accustomed to a path, the harder it is to take another. You then appreciate the sensitivity of the heart

{وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَتُودُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (5) } سورة الصف

“And when Moosaa (Moses) said to his people: ‘O my people! Why do you harm me while you know certainly that I am the Messenger of Allah to you?’ So when they turned away, Allah turned their hearts away. And Allah guides not the people who are rebellious.” [61:5]

{وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ (110)}  
سورة الأنعام

“And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away (from guidance), as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly.” [6:110]

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to frequently invoke, “*O Turner of Hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.*”

Thus, we will closely monitor our gravitation towards greater good or greater evil.

Are we compelled or coerced into the actions of our lives?

No, everyone is *eased* into what they were created for. Ali ibn Abi Taalib once [said](#), “We were in the company of the Prophet and he said, ‘*There is none among you but has his place written for him, either in Paradise or in the Hell-fire.*’ We said, ‘O Allah's Messenger! Shall we depend (on this fact and give up striving)?’ He replied, ‘*No! Carry on doing good deeds, for everybody will find easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place.*’ Then the Prophet ﷺ recited:

{ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى (5) وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى (6) فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى (7) وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ  
وَاسْتَغْنَى (8) وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى (9) فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى (10) } سورة الليل

“As for him who gives (in charity) and sustains piety, and confirms the best (Islam). We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness and Paradise). But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, and denies the best, We will make smooth for him the path for hardship (disobedience and Hell).” [92:5-10]

Allah created physical laws of cause and effect and that is how His creation and retribution work. Thus, no one will be condemned forever in Hell whilst being a true believer.

If you ever have any confusion, recall the difference between bodily functions, like that of the liver and kidneys compared to voluntary actions, like speech and hand movement. Also, remember the difference between ourselves and angels—who automatically do what they’re told and inspired, while we feel quite free to choose. We do not feel angels pushing us here or there, against our will, but instead we do as we choose. And if this freedom is what confuses you, then just remember that the Prophets, being truthful, informed their followers of some events in the

future, by Allah’s Permission. If Allah did not know and already have influenced the future, then the Prophets would only be guessing and would not be truthful. Rather, their prophecies will take place, even if everyone around the world gathers to prevent it from coming true.

{ .. وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَا خْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِن لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (42) { سورة الأنفال

“Even if you had made a mutual appointment to meet, you would certainly have failed in the appointment, but you met, so that Allah might accomplish a matter already ordained (in His Knowledge), so that those who were to be destroyed might be destroyed after a clear evidence, and those who were to live might live after a clear evidence. And surely, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.” [8:42]

Can we blame our sins on qadar?

One of the Muslims during the time of the second caliph, Umar ibnal-Khattaab, was caught stealing. When asked why, the man replied, “It was the Decree of Allah.” So Umar said, “Then I will cut off your hand by the decree of Allah.” So what’s the ruling on doing this? Is it advisable for Muslims to attribute their sins to Allah’s qadr?

{ سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ (148) { سورة الأنعام

“Those who associate with Allah will say: ‘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).’ Likewise denied those who were before them till they tasted Our Wrath. Say: ‘Have you any knowledge (proof) that you can produce before us? Verily, you follow nothing but conjecture and you do nothing but lie.’ Say: ‘With Allah

**is the perfect argument; had He so willed, He would indeed have guided you all.”**

[6:148-9]

Is this a contradiction? Remember, misguidance is the default for mankind. Guidance is only a gift from Allah. The error of the polytheists here was thinking that they were forced into misguidance, but rather, the truth is that they refused to take guidance or ask Allah for it.

As for attributing our sins to Allah’s Decree, some scholars make a concession, saying that you may attribute a past sin to qadr *if you repented from it*, and it is now part of your past, i.e. long gone.

They make this ruling from looking at the Prophet’s [words](#), “*Moses argued with Adam and said to him, ‘You are the one who got the people out of Paradise by your sin, and thus made them miserable.’ Adam replied, ‘O Moses! You are the one whom Allah selected for His Message and spoke to personally. Yet you blame me for a thing which Allah had ordained for me before He created me? So Adam overcame Moses by this argument.*” Other scholars said that this indicates the validity of attributing the *aftermath* and consequence of sin to qadar, since Musa’s complaint was not that Adam wasn’t perfect, but that he inadvertently was expelled from Paradise. For example, if someone said, “I was with this stranger one night, and Allah decreed she would get pregnant,” or “I carelessly fired a shot into the air, and Allah Decreed it would break a car window on the other side of town.”

Another point of etiquette concerning qadr is that if you experience something you’re not pleased with, say: *qadarullahi wa maa shaa’a fa’ala*. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [said](#), “*A strong believer is better and is more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in both. Be keen over what benefits you (in the Hereafter), seek Allah’s Aid, and do not be helpless. And if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don’t say: If I had not done such-and-such, it would not have happened this way, but say: **Allah’s Ordainment and whatever He Wills He Does**, because ‘if’ opens the door for the Satan.*” For example, saying, “If only I did this differently,” or, “Had such and such happened instead...,” leads to displeasure over Allah’s decree and wallowing in self-pity. A strong believer should deal with what is with him or her currently and not fret or speculate about what could have been.

## Could widescale Historic Injustices be a part of the Qadar of Allah the Beneficent?

If the torture and murder of a single person is possible, then it is possible for that, more than once. The only things which are *impossible* in this dunya are those prevented by the physical laws, and anything else Allah promises not to allow take place until Yawm al-Qiyaamah.

One of the things we learn from qadar, just as we learn to accept and move on from the past with respect to personal events, we also have to come to terms with widescale events and oppressions, like the Holocaust and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Regarding one event that took place some time before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the massacre of hundreds, or even thousands of *kitabi* believers in Yemen at the hands of a tyrannical king. Allah says:

{ قُتِلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ (4) النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ (5) إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ (6) وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ (7) وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ (8) الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (9) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ (10) } سورة البروج

“Cursed were the companions of the trench, the fire full of fuel, when they were sitting over it, and they were, with what they were doing to the believers, witnesses. And they did not avenge them except that they believed in Allah the Mighty Praiseworthy: the One to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is over all things a Witness. Truly those who try the believing men and the believing women and thereafter do not repent, then for them is the punishment of Hell and for them is the punishment of the blaze.” [85:4-10]

In more than one passage, Allah briefly addresses the grave injustices done by leaders of the Jews and Christians who changed their religion

{... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اِخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ (253) } سورة البقرة

“... And if Allah willed, they would not have fought each other after proofs came to them, but they disputed. So among them were those who believed and among them who disbelieved. And if Allah willed, they would not have fought each other but Allah does what He desires.” [2:253]

And regarding other oppressors,

{وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ (42)}  
سورة إبراهيم

“And do not think Allah unaware of what the wrongdoers do, He is only delaying them to a Day where the visions will be fixated [in horror].” [14:42]

And likewise,

{وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ مَلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ (178)}  
سورة آل عمران

“And let not those who disbelieve think that our delaying them is good for themselves. We only give time for them *so that they increase in sin* and for them is a humiliating torment.” [3:178]

As we learned above, Allah always presents us with opportunities to test the limits of our righteousness, and like that, allowing some others to test the limits of their disbelief, wickedness and oppression. And just like the righteous would receive higher levels in Paradise for their patience, the wicked would be punished greater during on the Day of Resurrection.

## Deviation in Qadar

Heresy regarding qadar came from failure to differentiate between Allah's existential will and decree, which He may not Love, vs. His Legislative decree, which He loves to have followed. This was the pronouncement of Jahm bin Safwaan (d. 127 ah) after his failed debates with Hindu atheists. From him, and other philosophers, this belief migrated to some extreme mystic groups who will say, for example, "I may have disobeyed Allah's Sharia but I still obeyed His Existential Decree," and similar sophistry. Allah allows disobedience in His creation to ultimately manifest His attributes of Might, Justice, Retribution, Forgiveness and Mercy on the Day of Judgment; and increase our awe, appreciation, love, hope and fear in Him while knowing that.

By claiming that we were *compelled* into our actions, some heretics gave license to opportunists to commit immorality and oppression with the excuse that Allah made them do it. They failed to distinguish between those actions that Allah *controls directly* (i.e. His actions), and the things which are merely caused by or in the chain reaction of His actions. We are not the fingers of Allah being controlled directly by Him. We are Allah's creation in His kingdom. Allah does not need to force us to follow His plan. We are eased into Allah's plan and we are willful participants—whatever we choose to do, whether to be pleased and happy or angry and resentful—is within the kingdom and creation, knowledge, writing and will of Allah. Interestingly, many [physicists](#) working to refine the theory of time believe it could be possible that the future is just as set as the past and present.

Others claimed we were totally independent of Allah's qadar inadvertently declared that everyone else's will and desire overcame Allah's and that Allah is not capable of Helping or influencing their lives or the world around them or respond to their prayers. This entered into the Muslims from Christian philosophers around Damascus that accepted Islam in the first century. Some of the remaining companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ deemed them heretics. The idea started by individuals who wanted to remove any attribution of evil to Allah. They did not see it possible or

wise that Allah could *will* disobedience or oppression. Maybe if Allah only wanted angels, sure, but Allah wanted beings with their own abilities to choose. Rather, we've learned that all this is within Allah's Will, no one is beyond His sovereignty, and He has the greatest Wisdom in permitting this to happen.

والله أعلم وصلى الله على نبيه محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين وسلم تسليما كثيرا

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