

Pre Recording not Fate or Predestination

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Introduction

The question of "fate" or "predestination" has occupied the minds of theologians, philosophers and thinkers throughout history. People use it as a scapegoat for their misery, whether it is caused by their own fault or not.

Probably, the major cause behind the difficulty of understanding the concept of *al- alqadaa* and *al-qadar* is the failure to differentiate between the attributes of the Creator and those of the creatures. This differentiation is vital, because -for example- there are adjectives in Arabic that are suitable for the Creator but not proper for the creatures. Among these are: الجبار

al-Jabbar (the Almighty) المتكبر *al-Motakabber* (literally translated as the most arrogant). And there are adjectives in Arabic, which are good for the creatures but are not suitable for the Creator.

Among these are: ذكي *Thaki* (intelligent), عاقل *'agil* (logical)...⁽¹⁾

These attributes are not suitable for the Creator not only because Allah did not describe Himself in this way nor did His Prophet, but also because they are deeply rooted in the tradition of describing fallible beings.

This booklet is a summary and a conclusion of more than thirty years of reading, and discussions of this subject to learn from others or to convince them. The author has certainly benefited from all his readings and discussions and especially the writings of Ibn Taimyah and Ibnal Qayyim and from the references quoted in the booklet.

⁽¹⁾ ibn Haydarah p. 41.

The following procedures were used to arrive at the conclusions described in the booklet:

1- Reviewing all Quraanic verses and Prophetic traditions related to the concepts of *al-Qadaa* and *al-Qadar*.

2 - Reviewing the comments and interpretations of the Quraanic verses and the Traditions in the major works of the Muslim scholars.

3 - Analyzing these verses and traditions in the light of the general understanding of the major scholars representing the main stream of Islamic faith, including Ibn-Taimyah and his student Ibnal Qayyim, in addition to benefiting from the recent knowledge and newly discovered universal facts.

4 - Using examples at the human level to explain the concerned facts at the Divine level. This method of explanation was utilized by the Prophet (pbuh), for example in describing how much Allah will be pleased when one of the accountable creatures repents.⁽²⁾

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has helped in developing the ideas included in this booklet or helped in putting these ideas in their final form. May Allah help us to better utilize this temporary life for a happier eternal life.

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⁽²⁾ see the text of the tradition and its documentation in Chapter Three.

Chapter one

What is *al-Qadaa*? and What is *al-Qadar*?

This chapter will deal with the source of the two words, *al-Qadaa* and *al-Qadar* and their definitions in the light of the Glorious Quraan and the Prophetic traditions. This will be followed by a discussion of the relationship between the two words.

The Source of the Two Words:

The word *al-Qadaa* and *al-Qadar* appeared in some verses of the Quraan and in some Prophetic traditions.

The word *al-Qadaa* was used in the same form in three traditions. In the first the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Nothing can prevent *al-Qadaa* except prayers."⁽³⁾ In the second tradition the Prophet (pbuh) said: "If there is anything that could precede *al-Qadaa* in a race it is the evil eye."⁽⁴⁾ In the third tradition the Prophet (pbuh) encouraged Muslims to seek refuge with Allah from the severe impact of the trial, unhappiness, the unfortunate

⁽³⁾ Termithi: *al-Qadar*, *ma jaa*, and see *al-Mobarakfoori* vol. 6: 290 who commented that *ibn Hibban* and *al-Haakim* considered the tradition as a sound

Hadeeth.

⁽⁴⁾ *Ibn Qayyim*, *at-Tib* and documented with *an-Nasaei*; and see: *Ahmad*: 3: 117, 184.

Qadaa and mockery of the enemies.⁽⁵⁾

The word *al-Qadar* appeared in a famous tradition which reports that archangel Gabrielle appeared in a human form and asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the basics of faith and the pillars of Islam... In this tradition Gabrielle (pbuh) asked the Prophet: "What is *Ieeman* (basics of Faith)? The Prophet (pbuh) answered: "To believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Day of Judgment; and to believe in *al-Qadar*: the good of it and the bad."⁽⁶⁾

al-Qadaa:

It seems that the word *al-Qadaa* has a variety of dimensions. There is the general meaning and its derivations and synonyms, the relationship between this general meaning to the automatic universal system, the complete control of Allah and the accountability of the accountable creatures (human beings and the jinn).

The General Meaning:

The word *al-Qadaa* appears in the Quraan in different forms of the verb. It appears in the past tense, the present tense and the imperative form. However, their meanings can be classified under these categories:

1 - The judgment or the decree of immediate execution. An example is in the Quraan: {To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter He says to it: **Be**, and it is.}⁽⁷⁾

2 - The decree that has been executed. Its example in the Glorious Quraan is: {He is Who created you from clay, and then

⁽⁵⁾ *al-Bukhari* 8: 400.

⁽⁶⁾ *Muslim*: vol. 1: 3-5.

⁽⁷⁾ *Holy Quraan* 2: 117; and see 41: 12.

decreed a stated term قضى أجلا for you. And there is in His presence another determined term, yet you doubt within yourselves.}(⁸) also the verse which reads: {Now when Moses had **fulfilled the term**, قضى موسى الأجل and was traveling with his family}(⁹)

3 - The end of some one or something, its example is: {...of them some **have been martyred** قضى نحبه }(¹⁰); {...and Moses struck him with his fist and **made an end of him** فقضى عليه } and {If He did send down an angel, the matter would **be settled at once** لقضى الأمر }(¹¹)

4 - The judgment or the command, which is compulsory to abide by, although there is a chance to violate it. However, its violation is absolutely unforgivable; for Allah says: {Your Lord has **decreed** وقضى ربك that you worship none but Him}(¹²) and says: {Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else to whom He pleases}.(¹³)

5 - The conveying of news to a destination, such as in the verses: {...We **gave clear warning** وقضينا إلى to the Children of Israel in the Book, that twice they would do mischief on earth and

be elated with mighty arrogance}(¹⁴) and {...We **made known this decree** وقضينا إليه to him that the last remnants of these sinners should be cut off by the morning}.(¹⁵)

On reviewing the Prophetic traditions we reach the same conclusion. Among the examples which could be quoted, in addition to the previous ones, is the Prophet's saying: "When Allah has completed the creation of the creatures, He has **recorded** in His book which is with Him on the Throne: My mercy has preceded My wrath."(¹⁶)

Reviewing Arabic dictionaries, we will come to similar results.(¹⁷)

If we look carefully at all the five categories of meanings we can clearly identify the root of which *al-Qadaa* means: the judgment or the command, which is immediately executed, the cause of an imminent result, or carrying the news to a destination i.e. to an end.

It is noteworthy that, Ibn Taimiyah and Ibn al-Qayyim distinguish between two major meanings for the word *al-Qadaa*, its derivations and its synonyms:

1 - The decree of a guiding nature, which could be accepted or rejected especially by the accountable creatures (human beings and the jinn). This meaning is represented by the verse which reads: {Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him}(¹⁸) It is obvious that to obey this command is a must to enter paradise i. e. to be saved from Hell, but because of the freedom of

(⁸) Holy Quraan 6: 2.

(⁹) Holy Quraan 28: 29; and see 2: 200; 33: 37; 12: 68; 14: 22.

(¹⁰) Holy Quraan 33: 23.

(¹¹) Holy Quraan 28: 15; 6: 8; and see 10: 71.

(¹²) Holy Quraan 17: 23.

(¹³) Holy Quraan 4: 48, 116.

(¹⁴) Holy Quraan 17: 4; and see the comments of Ibn Katheer; at-Tabari; and ash-Shingeei.

(¹⁵) Holy Quraan 15: 66.

(¹⁶) al-Bukahri: 4: 279.

(¹⁷) Ibn Manzoor: Qada; Anise et. al.: qadaa; Darsh-Shoroog: qadaa.

(¹⁸) Holy Quraan 17: 23.

choice which has been granted to the accountable creatures the decree could be violated with the permission of Allah.

2 - The command that is immediately executed i.e. the cause that instantly or automatically takes effect. This meaning is found in the verse which reads: {For to anything which We have willed, We but say the word: "Be. and it is".}(¹⁹) This meaning appears in other words but always maintain the same meaning, such as:

ba'ath بعث,⁽²⁰⁾ *ja'al*. جعل (²¹) *Hakam* حكم (²²) *katab* كتب (²³),

qaddar قدر (²⁴). It should be noted that some of these words come in different contexts to give different meanings. Some of these meanings apparently mean that Allah predestined the creatures to do what they would do. However, they should be understood in the light of the direct context of the verse as well as the light of the general context which was established in the introduction.⁽²⁵⁾

In this booklet the second category is what we are concerned with. This command is composed of two types: 1) the direct command that takes an immediate effect, by which the Creator can create anything instantly; and 2) the natural laws, which consists of a cause and an immediate effect.

The Quraan and the Prophetic traditions have referred to some of these natural laws. Among these is what was mentioned in the verse that reads: {Because, Allah will never change the grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in

⁽¹⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 16: 40.

⁽²⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 17: 5.

⁽²¹⁾ Holy Quraan 21: 73.

⁽²²⁾ Holy Quraan 5: 1.

⁽²³⁾ Holy Quraan 6: 59.

⁽²⁴⁾ Holy Quraan 10: 5.

⁽²⁵⁾ see accountability and the punishments in chapter 2 and 3; also see al-Mahmood pp. 217-243.

their souls}(²⁶) And among the natural laws is that if the wealthy group among any group of people violates the guiding commands of Allah then the effect is that the whole group will be destroyed.

For Allah says: {If We want to destroy a community **amarna** أمرنا (We command) the wealthy class of this community to transgress and the community will be destroyed.}(²⁷) Among the natural laws is also that kindness to ones kindred prolongs life.⁽²⁸⁾

In the second verse the word **amarna** (we commanded) means if the wealthy group transgresses (cause) the destruction befalls (result). The natural law, here, refers to human nature where the wealthiest class is the first to violate the guiding commands of the Creator (cause) and the majority is inclined to fall short of its duty to encourage good deeds and to discourage bad deeds (another cause). The result is the destruction of the whole community. The examples of this fact are numerous in stories reported in the Glorious Quraan.⁽²⁹⁾

At the human level this natural law is similar to saying: if we want to have the door locked we turn the key to the left and if we want it to be unlocked we turn the key to the right. In other words, the verse is informing us about a natural law, which could be used by any group of human beings or jinn, and the "command"

⁽²⁶⁾ Holy Quraan 8: 53; and see 13: 11.

⁽²⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 17: 16. and see the commentaries of at-Tabari, and Ibn Katheer.

⁽²⁸⁾ Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' 8: 517.

⁽²⁹⁾ some commentators interpreted this verse to mean something similar by sayin if

we decided to destroy a population we first send commandments to the wealthy

group to be obeyd and yet they transgress...then We destroy them utterly.

See

for example Ali.

does not mean that Allah orders them.

The Automatic Systems:

The natural law, which consists of a cause and an effect, has an outstanding role to play. This is so because the natural law is the basic unit on which all the automatic systems are based. These systems enable us to sense their invisible parts and to predict their future products. Ibn Taimiyah confirmed this fact by saying: "There is nothing in this world or in the Hereafter without a cause, and Allah is the Creator of the causes and the effects."⁽³⁰⁾

To elaborate on this fact, let us take a simple automatic system that has been made by human beings. Let us take, for example, the automatic watch, which, operates without batteries and without winding. It operates automatically because it has two springs. When one spring gets loose the other gets tight and vice versa. This continuous movement provides the different gears of the watch with the required energy to move the indicators of time (hours, minutes and seconds) and date (year, month, day,) systematically.

As long as the watch is operating we can make sure that one of the springs is loosened gradually and the other is tightened, without even opening the watch and looking at what is going on inside. You can also predict that the hour needle which is indicating to 1: 00 am. After sometime will indicate to 2: 00 am...etc.

We have noticed that the automatic watch is only a very simple primitive system. However, the universe is a very huge complicated net of systems, whose real size and secrets, no one knows except the Creator. It is true that human beings have discovered some of the sub-systems and their natural laws by using the inductive methods of research. But what has been discovered

⁽³⁰⁾ Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' 8: 70.

is nothing compared to what is yet to be discovered. Needless to say, what has been discovered is, mostly, limited to material things. The discovered natural laws in the areas of human and jinn nature or even the animal and plant nature are very limited. Scientists have not yet discovered complete sets of the natural laws that control human lives, even in the realm of the material components of these living things. Regarding the spiritual, intellectual and psychological components, knowledge is still vague and does not go beyond theorizing, and has not yet reached the realm of natural laws. Among these natural laws which have not yet been discovered is the law that had been exploited by one of the Prophet Solomon's men to move, in a moment, the throne of the Queen of Sheba from Yemen to Palestine,⁽³¹⁾ i.e. to cover a distance of about two thousand miles in a twinkling of an eye.

It is also evident that there is a great difference between the one who made the automatic watch and the Creator who created the whole universe. Among the differences are: 1) The watchmaker did not make the raw materials of his watch, but the Creator created the materials as well as the system. 2) The watchmaker has very little control over what he has made, but the Creator maintains a full control over what He creates: the material and the system. For the watch could stop operating for a reason known or unknown to the maker, but nothing could happen to the universe without the Creator's full knowledge and permission.

The natural laws affect each other and can nullify each other's effect, i.e. they can prevent each other's imminent result. For example, if we throw a stone away from the center of gravity asymmetrically, on our feet (cause) the stone will fall down on our feet (result). However, we can use other laws like pushing the stone away while it is falling down (cause) so that the stone will fall down away from our feet (result), or we can move our feet

⁽³¹⁾ see Holy Quraan 27: 38-40 and Qotb, Fi Zilaal vol. 19: 2641-2642.

from the original place (cause) and the stone will not fall on it (result).

Perhaps this is what the Prophet (pbuh) was referring to when he stated that nothing could stop the effect of *al-Qadaa* (the command) that has an imminent result except an accepted prayer.⁽³²⁾ This is so, because invocation means resorting to the direct decree of the Creator of everything, including all natural laws: the causes and the effects. In other words, by invocation we resort to the direct command of the Creator confirmed in the verse, which reads: {Verily when He intends a thing, His command is "Be", and it is.}⁽³³⁾ Because the Creator of the natural laws can nullify or change the effect of the natural law, by another natural law or by a direct command, whenever He wills and how He wills.⁽³⁴⁾ This fact is supported by the story of Prophet Abraham with his people, who not only opposed his preaching but also tried to burn him alive. They built a huge fire and threw him in it, but Prophet Abraham (pbuh) prayed to the Creator, who commanded the fire: {We said "O fire be cool and a means of safety for Abraham"}⁽³⁵⁾

It is also demonstrated in the story the Prophet (pbuh) told us about the three persons who were caught in a cave of which entrance was blocked by a boulder. They managed to remove the heavy boulder from the entrance by resorting only to prayer.

The natural laws vary in terms of power and comprehensiveness of the effect. For instance, fire can evaporate water, but water can put the fire out.⁽³⁶⁾ In spite of the importance of fire the Creator has made life from water for Allah says: {We

⁽³²⁾ at-Termithi: al-Qadar, ma Jaa.

⁽³³⁾ Holy Quraan 36: 82.

⁽³⁴⁾ see Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 8: 167-170.; al-Ashqar pp. 84-86.

⁽³⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 21: 69.

⁽³⁶⁾ see Ibn al-Qayyim, Shifaa p. 185; as-Sa'di, al-"ageedah pp. 167-170; Sieny, Qawa'id pp. 37-58.

made from water every living thing}.⁽³⁷⁾

On the other hand, the natural law could be composed of several causes and one result. It could be composed of a series of natural laws that have causes and effects, leading at the end to one result. For instance, the grand child is an effect of the father and the mother, and the father is an effect of a grand father...

Among the causes are all decisions that the creatures may take and for each decision or set of decisions the Creator has assigned imminent effects.

This whole universe was created by Allah to be run automatically by a huge and perfect net of natural laws. For Allah says: {Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure}⁽³⁸⁾ and {Every single thing is before His sight in due proportion}⁽³⁹⁾ These natural laws interact with each other to produce things that we sense and things that we cannot sense, such as materials, plants, animals, human beings, jinn...etc. these natural laws interact to change the forms of the things, to make the living things evolve from the earliest stages of growth to death.⁽⁴⁰⁾

This fact is noticeable in every phenomenon around us. For example, the tree begins with a seed, put in a suitable environment, watered, exposed to some air and certain degrees of heat... so it grows to a giant tree. Spring comes with its rain and warmth... and grass grows... Then severe heat or severe cold comes and the grass perishes and dies.

Everything is a creation of the Creator whether it is a cause in a natural law or an effect: the accountable creatures, animals, plants and materials... Allah has created everything including the spiritual components of the accountable creatures, the intellectual,

⁽³⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 21: 30.

⁽³⁸⁾ Holy Quraan 54: 49. and see Ibn Manzoor for the meaning of *Qadar*.

⁽³⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 13: 8; and see Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 8: 133. 533-535.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ see for instance: Ibn al-Qayyim pp. 188-189; sieny, Qawa'id pp. 37-59.

the psychological and the physical. Even the freedom of choice that different beings use to choose among the things (materials, and the natural laws) made available to them are creations of the Creator.⁽⁴¹⁾ When a being chooses to utter anything or do anything, he chooses a cause in a natural law which has an effect.

And thus Allah, the Al mighty, creates by direct command and by the automatic systems that He has made, and by the two Allah runs and manages the affairs of the whole universe.

Creation of the Lord and the Deeds of the Servant:

The previous examples show that Allah (God) can do what He wills the way He wills and when He wills. He can single out whomever He wills with his bounties including his guidance and forgiveness, without being unjust to any one. Indeed, Allah can grant guidance to whomever He wills and can deprive whomever He wills of guidance.⁽⁴²⁾ However, this absolute power and complete control over His creatures does not mean that He will treat any of His creatures unjustly. He has forbidden injustice among His creatures and has forbidden it in Himself.⁽⁴³⁾

There is no doubt that Allah has created all things and abilities from nothing, including the ability to think and to choose between right and wrong or the kind of final destiny in the Hereafter. For Allah says: {To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and

⁽⁴¹⁾ see for example: al-Bukhari, Khalg af'aal al-ibaad; Ibn al-Qaiyyim p.146; as-

Sa'di, al-'Aqeedah pp. 151-152.

⁽⁴²⁾ For examples of verses indicating to the absolute power of the Creator see:

Holy Quraan 2: 105, 220, 247, 253 and they are all included under this fact

i. e.

having absolute power does not necessitate injustice, and see the comments

Ibn

Taimiya, Majmoo' 8: 499-500.

⁽⁴³⁾ see for example Holy Quraan 4: 40; 10: 44; 18: 49; 3: 182; 8: 51; 22: 10.

the earth. How can He have a son when He has no consort? He created all things, and He has full knowledge of all things.} ⁽⁴⁴⁾ and He says: {He said "do you worship that which you have yourselves carved?} ⁽⁴⁵⁾

In other words, every act and deed of the creatures are creations of Allah, the Creator. Allah has created the accountable creatures, their abilities, and the things they choose to utter or to do. Imam Abu Haneefah concluding this fact said: "Since the doer (a human being or a jinn) is a creation of Allah, their deeds are no exceptions." ⁽⁴⁶⁾

In the light of this fact arises the often-asked question i. e. "If the Creator has created everything how could we hold the creatures accountable for their deeds?"

The example that was given by Dosooqi may explain the role of the creature (a human being or a jinni) and how accountability is justified. In this example, the role played by the creature is similar to that of a pharmacist who picks up specific quantities from a collection of chemical substances to make an effective medication or changes the quantities of the chemical substances from the same collection to make a deadly poison.⁽⁴⁷⁾ It is true that the Creator is the One who created the chemical substances and the natural laws controlling these substances and their quantities and the various possible results. However, these laws and systems are neutral and can be used to produce good things or bad things. Even though, the pharmacist or the chemist is a creation of Allah, he was granted some freedom of choice. This is why the chemist alone is held responsible for his choice among the various possible products made available to him.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Holy Quraan 6: 101; and see 25: 2.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 37: 95-96.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Abu Haneefah p. 45.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ ad-Dosooqi p. 275.

To elaborate more on this point, we also take the following example. Assume that a teacher wanted to test his students' diligence in utilizing the available information, time and facilities. He came up with a measure that can detect the various levels of diligence that range from zero to 100%. To make the test easy he chose the multiple-choice form. In other words, to every question he made a set of answers ranging from very good answer to very bad answer, as represented by the following continuum.

completely correct: ----: ----: ----: ----: completely wrong

The design of the test is based on the fact that things are better recognized and appreciated by comparing them to their opposites. For, the brightness of the daytime cannot be fully appreciated without the darkness of the night and the various degrees of light between the two. Health cannot be fully appreciated without sickness... Wealth cannot be fully appreciated without poverty. Pleasure cannot be fully appreciated without pain.

If a student chooses a wrong answer, whom should we blame? Should we blame the teacher because he included some bad choices in the test? Should we praise the teacher for the very efficient test, which covers all available possibilities? Or should we blame the student who chose the wrong answer, especially if the test is a take home exam where the students can get each other's help?

It is true that the teacher is who made the test, had provided the facilities, the information, needed time, gave the opportunity for cooperation among the students, and granted the freedom of choice. But the student himself made the choice and wasted all available opportunities to make a good choice. Should we blame

the teacher or the student?⁽⁴⁸⁾

From the above examples we can see that the good, the bad and the various grades between them are creations of Allah, the Creator. He created everything and gave the human being the opportunity to practice his authority as a vicegerent on earth, and gave Satan and his camp the opportunity to play their role as the opposition party.

This fact may explain the verse that reads: {If some good befalls them they say: "This is from Allah" but if evil, they say: "This is from you (O' Prophet). Say: "All things are from Allah"}⁽⁴⁹⁾ and the verse that reads: {By the soul and the proportion and order given to it. And its inspiration as to its wrong and to its right. Indeed, he succeeds who purifies his own self.}⁽⁵⁰⁾ and the verse that reads: {What! When a single disaster smites you, although you smote your enemies with one twice as great, you say: Where is this from? Say to them: "It is from yourselves. For Allah has power over all things."}⁽⁵¹⁾

The first verse assures that every thing is created by Allah, and no one else can create anything from nothing. The second verse assures that mankind has some kind of freedom to do good or bad. The third verse assures that Allah abhors evil deeds and the responsible creature has the opportunity to avoid evil deeds and to do good things, but if he chooses an evil deed, he is held responsible for his choice.

In fact, even *Iblees* (Satan), the chief of evil was among the believing jinn, living in paradise but failing the test because of his arrogance made him disobey the command of his Creator. Not only did he choose evil but he willfully insisted on disobeying his

⁽⁴⁸⁾ see the expansion of the example in chapter 2.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 4: 78.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 91: 7-8; and see 76: 2.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Holy Quraan 2: 165; see Ibn al-Qayyim pp. 28-29.

Creator and decided to encourage disobedience among the accountable creatures by all means.⁽⁵²⁾

Allah loves the good that He has specified in His teachings or the natural disposition that He has equipped the responsible creature with. And Allah forbids what He has made forbidden by His teachings or by the natural disposition of the accountable creatures. Therefore, the accountable creatures must try to do good things and avoid committing bad deeds.

The Good and the Bad:

What really distinguishes good from bad and characterizes the various grades between them are the divine teachings and the divine disposition. But it is also noticeable that very often the good and the bad are relative things, i. e. what is considered good in some cases is considered bad in other cases.⁽⁵³⁾ Killing, for instance, could be an aggressive act and an evil thing to do, but it could be a legal defensive action or a means to protect the community. On the other hand, what appears to be bad for one person could be a source of something legally good for another, such as illness to a sick person and to a physician.

Al-Qadar:

Reviewing the Quraanic verses, the Prophetic Traditions and the Arabic dictionaries we will find a variety of meanings for the word *al-Qadar* and its derivations. Among these meanings are: ability, glorification, limitation, judgment, command, contemplation, definition, measurement and knowledge.⁽⁵⁴⁾

⁽⁵²⁾ Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 8: 122-123, 204-234, 275-277, 387- 405; vol. 14:

27- 28; Ibnal Qayyim, Shifaa pp. 52-64, 89; Dosooqi 120-135, 272-300.

⁽⁵³⁾ Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 14: 21.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ al-Mo'jam ...li Alfaz al-Quraan.; al-Mo'jam ...li Alfaz al-Hadeeth; Ibn Manzoor,

It is evident that many meanings of the word *al-Qadar* and its derivations in the Arabic dictionaries are influenced by the interpretations of the commentators of the Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions. It is also true that the commentators of the Quraan and the Prophetic Traditions, in their interpretations, choose their meanings from the spoken Arabic. But, depending on the context of the word, they choose one meaning and neglect the others. For example, the commentators of the Glorious Quraan interpreted the word *naqdera 'alaihi* نقدر عليه as to mean "tighten the siege on him" in lieu of the meaning that might come to mind right away; i.e. prophet *than-Noon* believing that he can go out of Allah's control. The interpreters have avoided the latter meaning because it makes him a disbeliever. The verse reads: (And remember Thannoon when he departed in wrath, he imagined that We *lan naqdera 'alaihi*)⁽⁵⁵⁾ In another example, the commentators chose "We know" for *Qaddarna* in lieu of "We destined" which comes to mind first. The verse reads: {Except his wife who We have **known** will be among those who will lag behind}⁽⁵⁶⁾

Reviewing the dictionaries and the common usage of the word *al-Qadar*, we notice that apparently, this word is more likely to mean predestination. But once we review the writings of the Islamic theologians who carefully compared the usage of the word in the Quraan and the Prophetic traditions, we find that the real meaning is that Allah, the Creator knows what will happen in this universe and had this knowledge recorded in a book.⁽⁵⁷⁾

az- Zabeedi, Anees.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 21: 87.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Holy Quraan 15: 60; and see at-Tabari; Ibn Katheer for their comments on the verse.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ see for example Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 3: 148-149; Ibnal Qayyim, Shifaa

pp. 6-24.

Generally speaking, the reviewer of the meaning of the word in the Quraan and the Prophetic traditions, and the dictionaries, will find two basic meanings:

1 - The Divine decree of an immediate effect, such as in the verse, which reads: {It is He who **made** جعل the sun to be a shining glory, and the moon to be a light of beauty and **measured** قَدَّر out stages for it.} ⁽⁵⁸⁾ and the verse which, reads: {And there is not a thing but its sources and treasures are with Us. But We only send down thereof in due and **ascertainable measures** بقدر معلوم ⁽⁵⁹⁾ and {He set on the earth mountains standing firm, high above it and bestowed blessings on the earth, and **measured** therein all things to give them nourishment **in due proportion**} وقدر فيها أقدارها ⁽⁶⁰⁾ and: {...We caused the earth to gush forth with springs, so the waters met and rose to the extent decreed أمر قد ⁽⁶¹⁾ and {It is He who created all things and ordered them in due proportions}.⁽⁶²⁾

2 - The definition of the elements of a thing, its shape, the time of its occurrence, the place of its occurrence. In other words, it means that the Creator has known every thing and had it been recorded in a book, but not predestined things. Abu Haneefah put it this way: Allah has written everything that would happen "but as

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Holy Quraan 10: 5.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 15: 21.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 41: 10.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Holy Quraan 54: 12.

⁽⁶²⁾ Holy Quraan 25: 2

a description not as a judgment." ⁽⁶³⁾ This meaning is derived from "measured the thing or defined its quantity and its time of occurrence",⁽⁶⁴⁾ as in the verse which, reads: {...except his wife who **We have known** قَدَّرنا will be among those who will lag behind.}⁽⁶⁵⁾ The same meaning was used in the Prophetic traditions, concerning estimation of the beginning of the month of Ramadan and the end of it, in case of inability of sighting the moon, because of the clouds. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: "...if you can not sight it **estimate** it. فاقدروا له." ⁽⁶⁶⁾ It is the same meaning used in a common expression in Arabic: "How much do you (estimate) *tuqadder* تُقَدِّر the cost of ..." Needless to say the creature's estimation is merely a guessing of something unknown based on some known facts. Indeed, sometimes, it could only be a wild guess. However, in case of Allah, the Creator's "estimation" is an accurate knowledge of reality.

It is to this sure knowledge, which was recorded fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and earth that, the Quraan and the Prophetic traditions are referring. Among these verses is the verse, which reads: {From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens}⁽⁶⁷⁾ and the verse that reads: {Don't you know that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on

⁽⁶³⁾ Abu Haneefah, Fiqh p. 39; and see Ibn Taimiyah vol. 8: 280, al- 'Asqalani, Imam University edition vol. 1: 118; Abdul-Wahhab p. 57; alAshqar p. 25.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ see for example az-Zabeedi; Anees.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 15: 60; and see at-Tabari and Ibn Katheer for the interpretation of the verse.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ al-Bukhari 3: 72-73.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 57: 22; and see 11: 6; 36: 20; Ibnal-Qayyim's comments, Ibnal-

Qayyim, Shifaa p. 40.

earth? In deed, it is all in a record, and is easy for Allah.}(⁶⁸) and: {No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls, but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence. That is truly easy for Allah.}(⁶⁹) In the Prophetic traditions it was reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Everyone of you, every single soul does have its seat in Paradise or the Hell being recorded, or whether it will be happy or unhappy."(⁷⁰) The Prophet was asked on one occasion: "Is it known who are the people of Paradise and who are the people of the Hell?" he replied: "Yes." They said: "Why then do people work?" He said: "Everyone will do what he will find easy to do."(⁷¹)

It is natural for a creature to find it difficult to comprehend the absolute knowledge of Allah, the Creator, and to find it impossible to perceive the reality of this unique Divine knowledge. This is natural because the knowledge of the creatures, including the knowledge of the accountable creatures is obscured by some basic limitations, such as the time factor, the place factor, and the limited senses. On the other hand, the knowledge of Allah is not limited by any of these factors, which He has created.

Time Factor:

When we say that the creature's knowledge is limited by the time factor, we mean that the human being, for example, perceives things gradually and bit by bit. In order to perceive the complete reality a person needs time, which, could be long or short, depending on the size of the thing that he intends to perceive. For example, if a person wanted to know the reality of even a small piece of paper (size, thickness, and color) he has to look at each

(⁶⁸) Holy Quraan 22: 70.

(⁶⁹) Holy Quraan 3: 5.

(⁷⁰) Muslim: 4: 1393.

(⁷¹) al-Bukhari: 8: 389.

aspect separately. In other words, he needs some time even if it is only a glance. By the time he takes a look at the other side, his knowledge of the first side becomes "history" or past, which could be subject to forgetting or distortion. Based on the time factor we can distinguish between at least four categories of human knowledge. They are:

1 - The knowledge that we have acquired in the past; and it is subject to forgetting or distortion.

2 - The knowledge that is being acquired; and it is the clearest of all.

3 - The knowledge we will acquire about coming events or things; it is unknown or, at best, is vague, till the future becomes the present.

4 - The imagination of the various possibilities of a thing or an event which is unlikely to take place, due to the absence of some elements of that event, or because any period of time cannot accommodate more than one event. Examples of these are: We cannot write without some thing to write with it, and we cannot write more than one idea at a time. But we can imagine at a time more than one thing to occupy the same period of time and by the same actor, under many conditions. For example we can imagine doing one of several things next moment.

For further demonstration, let us take this example. Assume that you are used to performing your five daily prayers at the mosque in your neighborhood. You can remember, forget or get confused over the verses or the chapter that the *imam* (leader) recited in the sunset prayer, last week (past). Certainly you know what the *imam* is reading while you are performing the prayer behind him. However, you do not know what the *imam* will read next sunset prayer, and so if the *imam* died before the next prayer is due you cannot know what he would have read if he did not die.

On the other hand, the Creator's knowledge is an absolute knowledge, which, is not limited by the time factor, because He is the Creator of time. Therefore, all things or all events, to His

knowledge, are in the present; no such thing, to Him, as past, future or a vague possibility. Not only that, His knowledge is certain and complete.

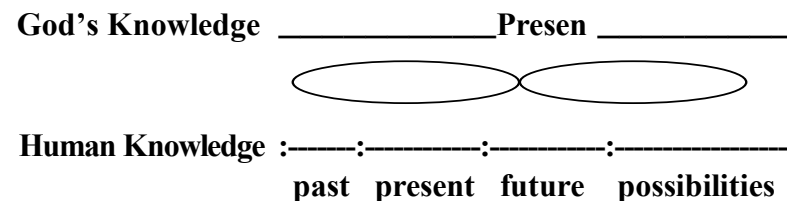
It is possible for us to predict what would happen in the future if there were a complete system, composed of causes and effects working properly such as a clock. Assume that the *imam* in our example used to recite the same chapter in the same day in the same prayer. Such as: Chapter 11 every sunset prayer every Friday. Then we can tell that he has recited the specific chapter in the specific prayer on a specific day, even if the prayer took place yesterday in our absence, or will take place tomorrow whether the *imam* lives to lead the prayer or dies before it is due.

You can record the knowledge that you have about what the *imam* will read in every prayer, and make a schedule of that... with or without the *imam's* knowledge. You can keep the record for yourself or share it or part of it with others. As long as the *imam* is consistent and goes by this system, your prediction will be accurate. Thus what has happened in the past, what will happen in the future or what is expected to happen if the needed elements are available, all will be equal to what is happening at the present, in terms of clarity.

This example is at the human level where the predictor has no control over the system that enables him to predict correctly, but in case of the Creator's knowledge the Creator has a complete control over what He has created.

One effect of the time factor is that a specific piece of information could be concrete knowledge to one person and unknown to another, or at best a vague guess. For example, the test results for the one who is correcting the test is a sure knowledge. For the student it could be a guess, and for a third person it could be unknown completely or an unexpected result. This is true because the Creator's knowledge is absolute and the creature's knowledge is limited.

The following diagram may show the difference between the absolute knowledge, which has no beginning nor an end, and to which everything is present, in terms of time, and the limited knowledge which has a beginning point and an end...



Place Factor:

When we are in a place, some of the things around us are within our reach either through our senses or through the use of extensions such as binoculars, microscopes, television cameras... Other things are beyond the reach of our senses. Why does that occur? As creatures our means of perception, i.e. senses, are limited by the place factor. We cannot be in more than one place or in more than one unit of place at a time. For instance, if you are standing at the top of a hill you will be able to see more space and things than a person standing at the bottom of the hill. Likewise, if you are standing at the point where two streets cross each other you will be able to see more space and things than a person standing on one of these streets. In other words, what seems to be known to you may be unseen or unknown to another.

On the other hand, the knowledge of Allah, the Creator, is not limited by the place factor, which itself is a creation of Allah.

The Limited Senses:

The creatures' means of knowledge (senses) are limited. In fact, some animals such as cats and dogs have sharper senses than human beings.

On the other hand, the knowledge of Allah, the Creator, is not limited by the limited senses. He sees and hears every thing. So, His knowledge is absolute and unlimited, for Allah says: {In whatever business you may be and whatever portion you may be reciting from the Quraan and whatever deed you may be doing, We are witness thereof. When you are deeply engrossed therein. Nor is hidden from the Lord so much as the weight of an atom on the earth or in the heaven. And not the least and not the greatest of these things but are recorded in a clear record.}(72)

As long as the knowledge of Allah is not limited by time, place or limited means of attaining knowledge, it must be complete and what is recorded from it is definitely accurate.

Perhaps from this fact came the belief, which is expressed in Arabic as "*la yanfa'o al-hathar minal qadar*", meaning caution does not prevent *al-Qadar*. We find a similar miss conception in English where *al-Qadar* is considered as a fate, which we cannot escape or "*predestination*". In reality, *al-Qadar* is a pre-recording from the absolute knowledge of the Creator, Whose knowledge is complete, perfect and encompasses everything, no matter when it exists or where it exists.(73)

Ibnal Qayyim, depending on some verses and prophetic traditions, distinguishes between five categories of *al-Qadar*: 1) recording everything which will happen to all creatures fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth, 2) recording the accountable creatures' deeds, 3) recording every one's life while he or she is still in the mother's womb, 4) annual recording (*Laylatul qadr*), and 5) the daily recording.(74)

About the relationship between these five categories, Ibnal-Qayyim says: "every one of these is a detail of the previous

(72) Holy Quraan 10: 61.

(73) Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmoo'* vol. 8: 274, 275-296.

(74) Ibnal Qayyim pp. 7-24.

one"(75) But what Ibn Taimiyah said is probably more acceptable i.e. the latter four types of recording are just processes of informing the concerned angels. In other words, at the appropriate time the concerned angels are informed and they put that in their records.(76) Therefore, the latter four categories could be subject to abrogation, i. e. the angel may be informed gradually where some of the things appear to be stable and others seems to be changing. Perhaps this is what one verse is referring to. It reads: {Allah blots out or confirms what He pleases. With Him is the mother of the Book.}(77)

The Quraan the Prophetic traditions have revealed some of these unseen things, such as: the destiny of Abo Lahab and his spouse.(78) and the destiny of the ten Companions who received the glad tidings to enter Paradise.(79)

Thus we come to know that the word *kitabah* (writing) means recording the reality of the things and events depending on the absolute knowledge of Allah. So *al-Qadar* is a pre recording; not predestination. Consequently, there is no contradiction between having the accountable creatures accountable for their deeds (or choices) and to have these deeds recorded before the creation of any thing including human beings and the jinn.

Ibn Taimiyah wonders about those who blame *al-Qadar* or Fate for their mischievous acts and refuse to excuse the others for their injustices and insist on taking revenge, without seeking an excuse for them in Fate, as they would for themselves.(80)

(75) Ibnal Qayyim p. 24.

(76) Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmoo'* vol. 8: 399, vol. 14: 488-492.

(77) Holy Quraan 13: 39; and see Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmoo'* vol. 8: 517, 540; *al-Ashqar* p. 67.

(78) Holy Quran Chapter: 111.

(79) *ibnal Atheer* vol. 8: 265-566.

(80) Ibn Taimiyah, *Majmoo'* vol. 8: 107, 248-250.

There is a Prophetic tradition, which creates some confusion, and it is worthy to be discussed. It reports that: "Adam and Prophet Moses (peace be upon them) argued with each other. Moses said to Adam: 'O Adam. You are our father who disappointed us and turned us out of Paradise.' Then, Adam said to him 'O Moses. Allah favored you with talking to you directly and He wrote the Torah for you with His own hand. Do you blame me for action, which Allah recorded about me forty years before my creation?'. So Adam confuted Moses,..." The prophet (pbuh) repeated the statement three times.⁽⁸¹⁾ This response of Adam should not be taken literally. Because if we take it literally it means that the father of humanity is blaming *al-Qada* for his wrong decision.

The literal meaning is not true, because Adam and Eve did acknowledge their mistake, repented and asked Allah for forgiveness. The Quraan reports: {They said: "our Lord, we have wronged our own soul. If You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy we shall certainly be lost.}⁽⁸²⁾ Adam's argument should only be understood as a proper response to prophet Moses' teasing blame and as an expression of consoling himself for a regretful choice he had made. For consoling oneself by blaming fate is permissible as much as to help avoid despair, but not to provide us with an excuse for further mistake. The prophet (pbuh) said: "The strong believer is better and is more beloved by Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in both. Do your best to acquire what is beneficial to you and seek help from Allah and do not despair. If a wrong happens to you, do not say: 'If I have done so and so' but say: 'Allah willed and His will be done. For, the letter *if* opens the

⁽⁸¹⁾ al-Bukhari 8: 399.

⁽⁸²⁾ Holy Quraan 7: 23.

gate for Satan."⁽⁸³⁾

Anyhow, in all cases no one knows what is recorded in the book with Allah. Therefore, the accountable creatures should do their best to invest the Creator's bounties, including the ability to think, the freedom of choice according to the Divine guidance. Accountability is based on the intentions and the efforts made to realize them; not on the work accomplished alone.

A very crude example of this at the human level is a third person collecting complete information about the trip of X from different sources and record it. Even if everything occurs as it was recorded before hand, we cannot say that the one who recorded the trip has forced the X.

The Relationship between the Two Words:

Scholars differ on the nature of the relationship between *al-Qadaa* and *al-Qadar*. There are those who differentiate between the two.⁽⁸⁴⁾ An example of this opinion is what was reported by Ibn Manzoor "az-Zohri who says: that linguistically, *al-Qadaa* has different meanings rooted in "the thing that is finished and completed, and everything that has been perfected, completed, concluded, executed, made compulsory, informed, ... And among the meanings of *al-Qadaa* is the meaning which is connected to *al-Qadar*. *Al-Qadar* means *at-Taqdeer* (could mean planned or estimated!) and *al-Qadaa* means creation."⁽⁸⁵⁾ Others consider them synonymous.⁽⁸⁶⁾

⁽⁸³⁾ Muslim 4: 1401; and see Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 8: 177-178; Ibn al-Qayyim p. 18.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Darweesh pp. 26-40.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Ibn Manzoor.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ See for instance: at-Termithi where a tradition about al-Qadaa is titled al-Qadar; al-Mahmood p. 29.

Reviewing the Quraanic verses and the Prophetic traditions that we quoted earlier in the discussion of the two words, we notice that some of the derivations of the word *al-Qadar* were used to mean *al-Qadaa*.⁽⁸⁷⁾ However, recalling the tradition which says: "Nothing can prevent *al-Qadaa* except the prayers"⁽⁸⁸⁾ and "If there is anything that can precede *al-Qadaa* in a race it would be the evil eye",⁽⁸⁹⁾ we can conclude that, in general, there is a difference between the two words, even though some derivations of the word *al-Qadar* are synonymous to *al-Qadaa*. This conclusion is supported by the famous Prophetic tradition that defines *al-Qadar* clearly. When Archangel Gabrielle (pbuh) asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the basics of faith he responded: "To believe in Allah, ... and to believe in *al-Qadar*; the good of it and the bad."⁽⁹⁰⁾

It is evident from the latter Tradition that *al-Qadar* means what has been recorded from the absolute knowledge of the Creator, to which every thing is in the present, regardless of the difference of time and place. For this knowledge is not something that could be interfered with or could be outdistanced in a race as is the case with *al-Qadaa*.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 56: 49; 13: 8.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ at-Tirmithi: *al-Qadar*, *la yarod*. and see al-Mobarkfoori who reported that Ibn

Hibban and al-Haakim said it is a sound Tradition.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ at-Tirmithi: *al-Qadar*, and see Ahmad: 3: 117, 184.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Muslim: 1: 3-4.

chapter two

The Accountable creatures

From the Islamic perspective there is a consensus that the jinn and human beings are distinguished to be accountable creatures, i. e. they are accountable for their deeds in this temporal life. But what is the root of this distinction? In this chapter, we will discuss the root of responsibility, necessity of difference in the means of living, and in the basic bounties.

The Root of Responsibility:

Allah, glorified be He, says: {Behold, your Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood

while we celebrate Your praises and glorify Your Holy name? He said: "I know what you do not know." And He taught Adam the names of all things. Then placed them before the angels; and said: "Tell Me the names of these things if you are right" They said: "Glory to you we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. In truth, You are perfect in knowledge and wisdom."}(91) Allah also distinguished mankind by making the angels prostrate before Adam, for Allah says: (When I have fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of My spirit fall you down in obeisance to him)(92)

To be a vicegerent, as we know, is to have a distinguished status and a high position, which has its pleasures and its privileges, but it also has its responsibilities and temptations. To be vicegerent is also to be worthy of trust. The vicegerent is entitled to benefit from his position, provided that he accepts its responsibility. Perhaps, this is what was meant in the verse, which reads: {We did indeed offer the trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof. But man undertook it. He was indeed unjust and foolish.}(93)

Among the privileges are the bounties of Allah, the Creator, which we are never able to count. This is emphasized in the verse that reads: {And He gave you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favors of Allah you will never be able to number them.}(94) Another verse reads: {We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them

(91) Holy Quraan 2: 30-32.

(92) Holy Quraan 38: 72, and see verses 71-85.

(93) Holy Quraan 33: 72; and see Dosooqi pp. 108-123 for his discussion; Iqbaal pp. 61-62 quoted in al-khateeb, Masheeah pp. 50-52.

(94) Holy Quraan 14: 34.

good and pure things for sustenance, and conferred on them special favors above a great part of our creation.}(95)) Another verse reads: {Don't you see that Allah has subjected to your use all things in the heavens and on earth and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measures, both seen and unseen}(96) and the verse: {It is Allah Who subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command that you may seek of His bounty. And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that are in the heavens and on earth. Behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect.}(97) As it is clear, these bounties are not only for enjoyment in this temporary life, but also a means to secure maximum enjoyment in the eternal life in the Hereafter. For Allah says: {We have made what is on earth as a glittering show for the earth, in order that We test them - as to which of them are best in conduct.}(98). In other words, this life is not the whole story, but a transitional stage to the eternal life, which is decided by this life functioning as a test. And from here came the responsibility of human beings.

With regards to the jinn, the other accountable creatures, we can recall what was mentioned previously about the creation of Adam and making these angels prostrate before him. Iblees (Satan), a jinni who was with angels when they were commanded by the Creator to prostrate themselves before Adam, chose by his own will to disobey the command out of arrogance. This disobedience was a cause for his discharge from Paradise. Satan's arrogance did not stop there, but drove him further to ask his

(95) Holy Quraan 17: 70.

(96) Holy Quraan 31: 20.

(97) Holy Quraan 45: 12-13.

(98) Holy Quraan 18: 7.

Creator for an opportunity to tempt and mislead Adam and all of those who follow the guidance of Allah. Reporting this event Allah says: {It is We Who created you and gave you shape, then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblees. He refused to be of those who bowed down. (God) said: "What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you?" he said "I am better than him; You created me from fire and created him from clay." (God) said: "Get down from this. It is not for you to be arrogant here, for you are the meanest of the creatures." He said: "Give me respite till they are raised up." God said: "You are among those who have respite." He said because you have made me go astray, I will wait for them in Your straight way. Then I will assault them, from before them and behind them, from their right and their left. And most of them will be ungrateful to you. (God) said: "Get out of this disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow you I will fill Hell with you all."}(⁹⁹)

It is evident that Allah has granted Satan the mental ability to distinguish between the creature which was created from clay and the creature which was created from fire, and granted him the guidance which is the command to prostrate before Adam, and the freedom of choice. He was able to obey his Creator as the angels had done, but willfully, out of arrogance, he chose to disobey and to misuse the bounties His Creator has bestowed on him. In spite of this, Satan shamelessly lied and blamed his Creator for his own mischief and claimed: "Because you made me go astray", which is the claim of all who follow their lower desires and disobey their

(⁹⁹) Holy Quraan 7: 11-18; There is no clear cut verse which says that all jinn are the descendants of Satan but Satan is a jinni as in verse 18:50.

Lord.(¹⁰⁰) Perhaps this was why the jinn, Satan's race, were granted mental ability, guidance and freedom of choice, to be held responsible for their deeds.

Satan did exactly what he had threatened to do and started with Adam himself and his spouse Eve. Allah says: {O' Adam dwell you and your wife in the Garden and enjoy its good things as you wish but do not approach this tree or you become transgressors. Then Satan began to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their private parts that were hidden from them (before). He said: "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save you become angels or beings to live forever." And he swore to them, both, that he was their sincere advisor. So, by deceit he brought about their fall; when they tasted the tree, their private parts became manifest to them. And they began to sew together the leaves of Paradise over themselves. And their Lord called out to them: Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you : "verily Satan is an avowed enemy of you?"}(¹⁰¹) Adam and Eve repented and prayed sincerely for forgiveness. For Allah says: {They said: "Our Lord we have wronged our own souls, If you do not forgive us and bestow on us Your mercy we shall be certainly among the losers.}(¹⁰²)

Thus, a struggle began between Satan and his camp which represented evil, and Adam and his camp who represent good, as Allah says: {"Get you down with enmity between yourselves. The earth will be your place for dwelling and enjoyment for a time. He said: "Therein, you shall live and therein you shall die, and from it

(¹⁰⁰) for the interpretations of these verses, see for example at-Tabari: al-Khateeb,

Masheeah pp. 57-58.

(¹⁰¹) Holy Quraan 7: 19-22.

(¹⁰²) Holy Quraan 7: 23.

you shall be brought out for resurrection.}(¹⁰³) The original responsibility of Adam is to spread the good and to fight evil represented in Satan and his camp. Furthermore, the Divine justice gave equal opportunity to both races: mankind and Jinn. Human being can choose to go astray and the jinn can choose guidance.

Among the verses confirming the human beings and the Jinn to be accountable creatures is the verse that reads: {I have only created Jinn and men save that they worship Me.}(¹⁰⁴) and the verse: {O you assembly of jinn and mankind. Has not there come a messenger from among yourselves, reciting to you my verses and warning you the meeting of this Day of yours? They will say: We bear witness against ourselves". It was the life of this world that deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.}(¹⁰⁵)

Allah, the Creator has bestowed many bounties on His creatures. For example, Allah made the materials for the use of the plants, the animals, the jinn and the human beings. He made plants for the benefit of the animals, the jinn and the human beings. He also made the animals for the service of jinn and human beings. However, by distinguishing jinn and human beings with special gifts, He made them both superior to the other creatures and responsible for their deeds.

Special Gifts and Responsibility:

We referred earlier to three special gifts that made the jinn and the human beings accountable creatures. What are these gifts, and what is their importance?

Reasoning Faculty:

(¹⁰³) Holy Quraan 7: 24-25.

(¹⁰⁴) Holy Quraan 51: 56.

(¹⁰⁵) Holy Quraan 6: 130.

Allah Has distinguished the accountable creatures (mankind and the jinn) with a special mental ability i.e. a high ability to perceive things, to distinguish between them, to remember a good proportion of them for a long period of time, and to develop more information from them to be used, instantly or in the future. This ability made the accountable creatures superior to other creatures.

On the other hand, this ability made human beings and the jinn, responsible for their acts. For this ability enables them to perceive the real value of the bounties they enjoy, to comprehend the Divine guidance that leads to prosperity in this life or the Hereafter, and to utilize the facilities and the guidance given to them to secure a better life in this temporary world and in the eternal world.

To be deprived of this ability, for the responsible creature, is to be degraded to the level of the animals or the plants. In other words, the deprived creature, in this case, is originally an accountable creature but lost his credentials to be wise, either by being insane, ignorant (infant or a child), or helpless unconscious creature (asleep or in comma).

Therefore, it becomes clear that the reasoning faculty is a great gift, which demands, in turn, a very high price such as being responsible for one's acts. Indeed, there is no wise responsible creature who would give up this gift and wish to be a lower grade creature, or to be insane, ignorant or unconscious all his life at any price.(¹⁰⁶)

(¹⁰⁶) What was reported about some pious people who wish, at their death, to be a creature which is not accountable for their acts, should not be understood as a rejection of the bounty of the Creator that they have already enjoyed, but as an expression of their fear of their Lord, especially since the time has come for

Guidance:

The word *hidayah* هداية (guidance) has been used in the Glorious Quraan, and the Prophetic traditions in different places, either independently or along with its antonym *Dalal* ضلال (misguidance). Its meanings come sometimes in different words. In general, we can distinguish between three categories of guidance:⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

A – **The Innate.** This category could be divided into two types:

1 - The general guidance which all creatures have, i. e. the natural instincts or natural knowledge. This type of guidance secures the needed knowledge to survive as a living creature; and creatures vary in terms of efficiency and complexity. For instance, the system that helps the simple worm differs from the system that helps the ants and the bees to survive and lead a fruitful life. This meaning was used in the verse that reads: {Our Lord He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, and further gave it guidance.}⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

2 - The second type is represented by the verse which reads: {And when Your Lord brought forth the children of Adam from their loins their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves saying: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "We do testify. This lest they say on the Day of Judgment "of this we were never mindful." Or lest you say "our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are their descendants after them. Will You destroy us because of the deeds of men who were

accountability.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ For the detail of this categorization see Ibnal-Qayyim, Shifaa pp. 65-85.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3; 87: 1-3.

futile?"⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Perhaps this is the natural disposition, which the Prophet (pbuh) is referring to when he said: "None is born except according to the *fitrah* (natural disposition), but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magus..." The Companions said: "O Prophet of Allah, what about those who pass away during infancy?" The Prophet said: "Allah knows what they would be doing?"⁽¹¹⁰⁾

These quotations emphasize that Allah has provided human beings with guidance, the knowledge that there is only one Creator worthy to be worshipped, as part of their natural disposition. In other words all accountable creatures are born to be Unitarian without and to be able to differentiate between good and bad. However, they have the choice to stick to this natural disposition or to deviate from it. Perhaps this is why the Prophet (pbuh) in the previous Prophetic tradition avoided passing a firm judgment on those who die. Allah alone knows, for sure the destiny of those who pass away, because He alone is aware of all factors deciding the destiny of the deceased. However, the Prophet, on another occasion, confirmed that the children of Muslims and non-Muslims are all in Paradise.⁽¹¹¹⁾

B - **The Teachings.** This category of guidance is represented in the verse that reads: (As to Thamood, We gave them guidance but they preferred blindness to guidance. So, the stunning punishment of humiliation seized them because of what they had earned.)⁽¹¹²⁾ Allah has sent messengers with guidance (teachings) to remind the accountable creatures of the original

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 7: 172-173.

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ al-Bukhari: 8: 389-390; and see Muslim: 4: 1398.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 4: 243-247; Ibnal-Qayyim pp. 22-29; and see footnotes 35-38 of chapter three.

⁽¹¹²⁾ Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3; 87: 1-3.41: 17.

oath, i.e. to worship only their Creator, and to provide them with the detailed teachings that are suitable for every major stage of human's life on earth.

C - The endowed Guidance. This category of guidance is granted by Allah to His prophets and others, as a special favor. If the Creator grants guidance to any of His creatures, it is His property and He can bestow from His bounties on whomever He wills. And if He deprives any of His creatures this category of guidance, and leaves him to his own accomplishments, the Creator is not causing injustice to anyone. Even as a creature you can give anyone whatever you own, and deprive anyone of it, as long as he has no right to it at all.

We can distinguish between two kinds of guidance, in terms of clarity: 1) specific guidance or teachings. 2) general guidance which could be interpreted in more than one accepted way.

Also, in terms of obligation there are eight categories: 1) compulsory per person, 2) compulsory per community, 3) strongly recommended, 4) lightly recommended, 5) specifically permitted, 6), discouraged, 7) specifically forbidden. There are, certainly, things that are permissible because they are not discouraged or forbidden directly or indirectly. It is evident that these teachings or guidance are reminders of the original guidance and details of the natural disposition.

Freedom of Choice:

No reasonable person would deny that some kind of freedom of choice has been granted to the accountable creatures. Allah, glorified be He, confirms this fact and says: {Say: "The truth is from your Lord". Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills let him disbelieve. Verily, for the wrong doers We have prepared a fire... Verily, As for those who believe and do

righteous deeds We shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who does well.}(¹¹³) Allah also says: {We showed him the way that he may be grateful or ungrateful.}(¹¹⁴)

The Prophet (pbuh) confirming this fact said: "No one enters Paradise without being shown his seat in Hell if he did not do well, in order to increase his appreciation. No one enters Hell without being shown his seat in Paradise if he did well, in order to regret what he has done."(¹¹⁵) This Prophetic tradition indirectly indicates that there are varying degrees of freedom of choice. This fact is confirmed by another tradition, which says that the Prophet said: "Avoid what I have made forbidden to you and do as much of what I commanded you to do."(¹¹⁶)

As is the case with any test, there is a limit, which should not be transgressed, and the critical line between failure and success in this test is made clear in the verse, which reads: (Allah shall never forgive that partners should be worshipped with Him. But He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases).(¹¹⁷) For Allah **may** forgive other sins, especially if they occurred because of ignorance or laziness, not because of arrogance or rejection of the Creator's command. He forgives any sin followed by sincere repentance, but never forgives a person who worships other thing with Him.

On the other hand, the accountable creature has a wider freedom, perhaps an unlimited one, concerning the world of imagination. Accountable creatures can imagine wild things without being held accountable for them, as long as they do not

(¹¹³) Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3; 87: 1-3.18: 29.

(¹¹⁴) Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3; 87: 1-3.76: 3; and see: 25: 57; 74: 36-37; 90: 10.

(¹¹⁵) al-Bukhari: 8: 372-373.

(¹¹⁶) al-Bukhari: 8: 289-290.

(¹¹⁷) Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3; 87: 1-3.4: 48, 116.

make an effort to express them or to put them into action.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

In the real world, these creatures do have freedom but it is affected by many factors that accountable creatures have no control over.

We have established in the first chapter that there is no contradiction between the fact that Allah is the Creator of everything and that the responsible creature is responsible for his choices. We gave an example of a student who takes a multiple-choice test and is held responsible for his bad choices.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

To elaborate more on this point, let us take the following example, at the human level too. Assume that a teacher of Chemistry, wanted to test his students' degree of comprehension, their efficiency in utilizing the available means, time, their diligence and the proficiency of the work they accomplish. He provided for each question several answers ranging from the formulas that kill instantly to the medication that cures all kinds of illness. The students were provided with sufficient information about each formula, in addition to what they had been taught before. The students were granted the freedom to choose between the available formulas, but to pass the test they had to choose, at least, a formula, which does not contain any poison.

The difficulty of the test was represented by two factors:

1 - The most poisonous formula is the most enjoyable experience and requires the least effort, patience, and skill. The formula that cures all kinds of sickness is the least enjoyable and requires the highest degree of effort, patience and skill.

2 - The means and the facilities vary greatly, including the allocated time which is not known, i.e. the end of the test is not known. The time could be short or long...etc. However, the task

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ al-Bukhari 8: 329.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ see the sub title: "creation of the Lord and the deeds of the servant"

could be completed or only part of it is complete; it does not matter. The reward or the punishment is based on the correct steps up to the end of the test time. The reward or the punishment is decided by dividing the effort made by the available means including time. In this way, it will be possible for every one to compete fairly with anyone else, regardless of the kind of means and the size of the facilities.

On the other hand, the students were permitted to consult with each other freely and to persuade each other. The good students were encouraged to convince as many students as possible in order to get extra credit, and bad students were given the permission to convince as many as they could to get lesser grades.

If a student decided to choose the most enjoyable formula regardless of the warnings of the teacher and the good colleagues, consequently fails the test, who should be blamed? The one who made the test or the one who made the choice?

It is true that there are some differences between the teacher and God. God is the One Who created the accountable creatures and their abilities. God is the One Who created the means that He has made available to them and the One Who created all possibilities. He can deprive His creatures of any of their abilities and of any means, but He granted them some measure of freedom of choice.

Is the Freedom of Choice an Absolute Power?

We have demonstrated that freedom of choice is one of the major factors of accountability. Is this freedom an absolute power? In answering this question Sha'rawee says that human beings are composed of three major natures: the nature of materials, the nature of plants, the nature of animals. But they are also distinguished by the ability of reasoning. In other words, there are components which function automatically and the creature has no

control over them. They function without the creature being aware of what is going on. In fact, for his own benefit the creatures should not interfere.⁽¹²⁰⁾

Not only that, but this freedom is limited by other factors. For example, the accountable creatures are not given the choice to be or not to be, and part of their lives is not subject to their conscious control (e. g. childhood, while asleep). Therefore, the child, the insane, the sleeping person, are not held responsible for their acts.⁽¹²¹⁾ Besides, the One Who granted them these three major gifts can take them back at any time, have control over everything all the time. Allah says: {And you shall not will, unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the Universe}. ⁽¹²²⁾ Allah can force the accountable being to do good things or to prevent him from doing bad things. But, if Allah let him do the bad, which he has chosen for himself, he will be accountable for that.

To remove the possible confusion let us take this analogy. Assume that you have a young child who can comprehend instruction (has reasoning faculty). You put before him a dish of food and a toy that has germs, and explained to him that the food is good for his health but the toy is harmful for his health (guidance). Then you gave him freedom to make his own choice (limited free will). The whole situation is still under your control because you can interfere at any moment to force him to act against his will. However he decided to choose the toy and became sick. Who should be blamed? You should be blamed or him? Not only that, the toy could be difficult to reach, but he wanted it by all means and was trying desperately to get it and you made it easy for him to reach. The child is still to be blamed, because this is the

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Sha'rawee, pp. 37-43.

⁽¹²¹⁾ al-Bukhari: al-Hodood, la yorjam.

⁽¹²²⁾ Holy Quraan. 81: 29.

price of the freedom of choice that we all chant about, fight and live for.

Sometimes, a person may be exposed to painful experiences, because of some factors beyond his control, such as the other creatures. People could be subject to injustice or unpleasant accidents. One may try hard to remove this bad situation in vain. How do these experiences count? This experience goes into his credit.

In fact, if we look at these painful experiences in the long run, not excluding life in the Hereafter, we recognize that these experiences always have happy endings. They are always for the person's benefit, but he may fail to understand the wisdom behind them. So, they appear to him as painful experiences. Very often, we are reluctant to offer a little sacrifice now to get a big reward later on.

If we review our past, we will certainly find things that we had wished badly to realize but which had never become a reality and that caused us great pain at the time. However, later on, we were glad it did not happen, because, in reality it was not good for us or because we could have missed something, which is better. Allah says: {Fighting (to defend Islam) is ordained for you, though you dislike it. And it may be that you dislike a thing, which is good for you and that you like a thing, which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.} ⁽¹²³⁾

It is not strange if the freedom of choice is one of the factors that make accountable creatures responsible for their deeds, because this freedom is behind all the fighting and wars between individuals and countries. It could be freedom of expression, freedom of exploiting others, freedom of religion...etc. To acquire or to maintain this precious thing, freedom, the creatures are ready

⁽¹²³⁾ Holy Quraan. 2: 216.

In fact, even the struggle between Satan and his followers, and Adam and his followers is a struggle for freedom. Satan, for example, refused to give up his freedom for the sake of Allah, his Creator. Adam is fighting for his freedom to obey Allah.

Chapter Three

Given the fact that the accountable creatures are distinguished by: the reasoning faculty, guidance, and freedom of choice, it is natural to hold them accountable for their deeds. In this chapter we will deal with the nature of the perfect test, leniency in calling to account, and rewards and punishment.

It is needless to say that creatures differ in the gifts they are born with and the gifts they can acquire, i. e. the capabilities and the facilities that Allah has made available to them. These gifts range from, apparently, the positive ones to, apparently, the negative ones. Not only that the degree of availability or deprivation is not measured only by the number of gifts available to the creature, but also by the degree of availability (high or low degree of availability or deprivation from the positive gifts).

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men only to worship Me.} ⁽¹²⁵⁾ and Allah says: {He is the One Who created death and life, in order to try which of you is best in deeds.} ⁽¹²⁶⁾ The verse confirms that the original goal is to achieve happiness in the eternal life, but the temporary life is an indispensable means to achieve that.

After all, what is considered to be good or bad is a hard currency to be invested to achieve happiness in this life and in the Hereafter. In other words, we have two kinds of hard currency:

1- the situation of availability of these gifts is a positive hard currency. For Allah says: {It is He Who has made you His agents, inheritors of the Earth. He has raised your ranks: some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He has bestowed on you. For your Lord is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.} ⁽¹²⁷⁾

2 -The situation of deprivation from these gifts is a negative hard currency. For the Prophet (pbuh) said: " Strange are the conducts of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not so in the case of anyone except the believer. For, if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks Allah. Thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation and endures it patiently, there is good for him in it." ⁽¹²⁸⁾

In other words, a Muslim may suffer from bad experiences or problems, while he is young or old, against his will, without having any control over the situation. This goes into his credit, sometimes, to settle some of his bad choices in the future or in the past.

So, the pleasant experiences and the painful experiences are all universal hard currencies not only in this world but also in the

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 51: 56.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Holy Quraan 67: 2; and see 28: 77; 6: 165.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 21: 35. see ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' Vol.: 209-20.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Holy Quraan Muslim: vol. 4: 1541.

Hereafter. The ultimate goal of the accountable creature should be how to invest this capital the best way possible. Consequently, the good deeds go to one's credit and the bad deeds go to one's debt, and the first wipes out the second. For Allah says: {Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the night. For the good deeds remove the bad ones. Let this fact be the word of remembrance to those who remember.} ⁽¹²⁹⁾

In fact, in the Hereafter, this is the only way to settle injustice among the creatures Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet, said: "Do you know who is the bankrupt?" They (the Companions) said: "A bankrupt is the one who has neither money nor wealth." He (the Prophet) said: " The bankrupt among my followers is he who would come on the day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and the obligatory charity *Zakat* but he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and consumed the wealth of others against their will and shed the blood of others and beat others. His virtues would be credited to the account of the ones who suffered at his hand. And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then the sins of those who had been hurt would be added to his account, and he would be thrown in the Hell-fire." ⁽¹³⁰⁾

In general, we notice that the more the person's possession of the positive hard currency the greater becomes his responsibility and risk. In deed, most of those opposed the messengers of Allah are among those who have more of the positive currency such as power and wealth. The Prophet (pbuh) confirming this fact said: "Paradise and Hell quarreled in the presence of their Lord. Paradise said: 'O Lord. what is wrong with me that only the poor and humble people enter me?' Hell (fire) said: 'I have been favored with the arrogant people.' So, Allah said to Paradise: 'You are My

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Holy Quraan 11: 114.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Muslim, 4: 1366; al-Bukhari, 8: 355-6.

Mercy, and said to Hell: 'You are My Punishment, which I inflict upon whom I wish, and I shall fill both of you...'(¹³¹)

The other side of the coin represents possessing more of the negative hard currency. The extreme form of hard currency requires greater courage and stronger will. Only the most courageous and the strongest creatures, such as the prophets, can excel in their investment. Most of the creatures fall in the middle of the curve i.e. possess less of either of the two types of hard currencies: the positive and the negative. And their risk is smaller.

Apparently, the test is an easy one because it is a take home exam. But in reality, it is not completely easy, because the temptation of the positive hard currency is great and requires strong will to struggle with it. Likewise, the pain of the negative hard currency is great and requires great patience and tolerance. For the Prophet said: "The Hell-fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of dislike and undesirable things."(¹³²) In addition to that, the responsible creature has to choose between the bitter truth, whose supporters are less in number and the sweet falsehood whose supporters are greater in number. The person who wants to pass the test, must, also, be ready to challenge Satan and his supporters with their tempting means.

Perhaps the hardest part of test is the struggle between the hope and the unknown time assigned for the exam. A person may invest most or all of his money to achieve worldly gains and pleasures, hoping that there will be enough time to invest for the Hereafter, later on. At the best, one may decide to concentrate on gaining more means to be able, in the future, to achieve more eternal gains. However, no one knows when his test will come to

(¹³¹) al-Bukhari, 9: 408.

(¹³²) al-Bukhari, 8: 327.

an end. It could end just before he starts to invest in the eternal gains or even before, then all his effort will be in vain. Allah confirming this fact says: {Leave them alone, to enjoy the good things of this life and to please themselves. Let false hope amuse them; soon knowledge will undeceive them. We have never destroyed a population that had not a term decreed and assigned beforehand. Neither can a people anticipate its term, nor delay it.}(¹³³)

As is the case with all tests, there is a critical point that discriminates between those who will succeed from those who will fail. This critical point is clearly stated in the Glorious Quraan, for Allah says: {Allah never forgives that partners are associated with Him; but He forgives anything else to whom, He pleases. To set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.}(¹³⁴) In other words, Allah does not accept the deeds of a person who worship anything beside Him. Even if these things or persons being worshipped only for interception, for Allah says: {Surely, the worship and obedience is for Allah only. And those who take protectors and savers besides Him say: "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah." Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and disbeliever.}(¹³⁵)

The criterion to define this kind of association is Islam, because Allah has sent messengers to all folks (¹³⁶) but the last version of the Divine messages sent to the accountable creatures is Islam. For, Allah says: {The religion before Allah is Islam.} and {If any one desires a religion other than Islam never will it be

(¹³³) Holy Quraan 15: 3-5; see al-Bukhari, 8: 285-6.

(¹³⁴) Holy Quraan 4: 48, 116.

(¹³⁵) Holy Quraan 39: 3.

(¹³⁶) Holy Quraan 35: 24.

accepted from him}.

⁽¹³⁷⁾

When a person succeeds, he does not create something, which did not exist, but chooses among the things that Allah has made available for him, and invests the efforts that Allah has bestowed on him, and with the permission and support that Allah has granted to him.

When a person fails the test, he does not create something new, but uses his own will to choose from among the things that Allah has made available to him, in order to test him.

Accounting for the Deeds:

Discussing accountability, we should recall all the good things that we enjoy, before we remember the little effort we put in to obtaining everlasting rewards. Without the gifts of Allah, we could never be able to do the good deeds that we do to deserve them. This fact could be demonstrated by the following example at the creatures level.

Assume that you want to encourage your child to fulfill his obligations and to study hard to secure a bright future for himself. So, you promise him a reward for doing his own duties and to secure his own happiness in future. Originally, the son should take care of his own obligations to absolve himself, and to secure a bright future. But, you are doing your son a favor when you promise him a gift and doing him a favor by fulfilling your promise.

However, the Creator's reward is much greater than any reward a human can afford, because nothing is comparable to Paradise, which is the greatest reward one can ever get or imagine.⁽¹³⁸⁾ Perhaps this is why the Prophet (pbuh) said: The

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Holy Quraan 3: 19, 85.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 362-74..

deeds of anyone of you will not save you from Hell-fire." The Companions said: "Even you, O' Messenger of Allah?" He said: "No, even I unless and until Allah bestows His Mercy on me. Therefore, do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and worship Allah in the forenoon and in the afternoon, during a part of the night, and always adopt a middle, moderate, regular course whereby you will reach your target (Paradise)." ⁽¹³⁹⁾ This, of course, means that we deserve the reward not only because of our effort, but, because of the mercy of Allah. For the promise of reward is a form of the mercy of Allah, the reward itself is a form of the mercy of Allah, the greatness of the reward is also a form of the mercy of Allah.

Since the reward is tremendously great, no wonder if the punishment is similarly great for whoever fails the test by wasting all chances of success. Those who deserve punishment have broken their oath to Allah to worship Him alone, as is clearly mentioned in the Glorious Quraan. Allah says: {When your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves saying: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, we do testify." This lest you should say on the day of Judgment: "of this we were never mindful.}" ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Not only that but they rejected His messengers who reminded them.

Anyhow, the Muslim should recognize that this life is, originally, for cultivation, and some temporary enjoyments and the Hereafter is for reaping and harvest. Allah says: {Seek with the gifts of Allah the home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion in this world. But do good as Allah has been good to you and do not seek mischief on earth. For Allah does not love those who do

⁽¹³⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 313.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 7: 172.

mischievous.}(¹⁴¹) Allah also says: {Know you all, that the life of this world is but play and amusement. pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying in rivalry among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude, how rain and the growth when it brings forth delight to the hearts of the tillers. Soon it withers, and you see it turn yellow. Then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a severe penalty or forgiveness from Allah and good pleasure. What is the life of this world but goods and chattels of deception.}(¹⁴²)

Mercy in Accounting:

There are numerous verses and prophetic traditions that demonstrate the ample mercy of Allah in calling His creatures to accounting their deeds. The following tradition may suffice to demonstrate this kind of mercy. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "When the people of Paradise have entered Paradise, and the people of the Fire have entered the Fire, Allah will say: "Take out of the Fire whoever has got faith equal to a mustard seed in his heart." They will come out, and by that time they would have burnt and become like coal, and then they will be thrown into the river of al-Hayat (life) and they will spring up just as a seed grows on the bank of a rainwater stream..."(¹⁴³)

In addition to that, the accountable creature is not judged or held accountable for what he does while lacking either of these qualifications: reasoning faculty, guidance, or freedom of choice. The story of 'Ammar bin Yasir who was forced into rejecting the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is well known. The comment of Allah on this act, which is usually considered as

(¹⁴¹) Holy Quraan 28: 77.

(¹⁴²) Holy Quraan 57: 20-21.

(¹⁴³) al-Bukhari, 8: 368.

apostasy, is: {Any one who after accepting faith in Allah utters unbelief except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in faith. But as those who open their hearts to unfaith on them is wrath from Allah and for them a dreadful penalty.}(¹⁴⁴)

In fact, Allah has given His creatures the opportunity to gain rewards even by mere good intentions. The Prophet said: "...if somebody intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, Allah will write it for him as a full good deed; and if he intends to do a good deed and actually does it, Allah will write it for him with Him as deserving ten to seven hundred times to many more times. And if somebody intends to do a bad deed and does not do it, then Allah will write it a full good deed, and if he intends to do it and acutely does it, then Allah will write it one bad deed."(¹⁴⁵)

Therefore, the rewards are bound to their intentions. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The reward of the deeds depends on the intentions. Every person will get what he has intended."(¹⁴⁶) Not only that, but Allah may forgive some sins and multiply the rewards to include the relatives of the one who did the good deeds. Allah says: {...And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in faith, to them We shall join their offspring (who deserve lower grades), without taking away anything from their rewards. Every one is in pledge for his deeds.}(¹⁴⁷)

In deed, the mercy of Allah has no limits, for the Prophet said: "Allah says: "I am just as My slave thinks I am, (i. e. I am ready to do for him what he thinks I will do for him). I am with him if he remembers Me in himself, I too remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a better

(¹⁴⁴) Holy Quraan 16: 106; and see 24: 33; Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo', vol. 8: 437-515.

(¹⁴⁵) al-Bukhari, 8: 329

(¹⁴⁶) al-Bukhari, 1: 1-2.

(¹⁴⁷) Holy Quraan 52: 21.

group; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running." In another tradition the Prophet said: "When Allah created the creation, He wrote in His book...' Verily My Mercy overcomes my Anger'"⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Therefore, Allah, glorified be He, is more pleased with the repentance of His creature than a man who would be pleased by recovering from a very desperate situation. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than a man who encamps at a place where his life is in jeopardy, but he has his riding beast carrying his food and water. He then rests his head and sleeps for a short while and wakes to find his riding beast gone. He starts looking for it and suffers from severe heat and thirst or what Allah wills. He then says: 'I will go back to my place' He returns and sleeps again, and then getting up, he raises his head to find his riding beast standing beside him."⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

This mercy of Allah is demonstrated by not only forgiving the sins for free, but also by converting the sins into rewards as long as the servant repents. Allah says: {...If he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, Allah will change the bad deeds of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful}⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

As we mentioned earlier, it is important to notice that accounting is not based on what a person may accomplish only, but on what he accomplishes in the light of his capabilities and facilities. In other words, accountability is based on the effort a person puts, divided by the capabilities and facilities available to him. Therefore, a person who lives only a short period of time has

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ al-Bukhari, 9: 369-70; Muslim, 4: 1408.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 214.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 25: 70.

equal opportunity as a person who lives for a longer period of time. The same thing is true concerning power, wealth, and health, regardless of the size of what is accomplished by each of them. This fact is clearly demonstrated in the way *zakat* (obligatory alms) is calculated. *zakat* is fixed at 2.5%. If you have more surpluses you pay more *zakat*. If you have less you pay less according to this fixed percentage.

Of course, *zakat* is only the minimum amount to spend on charity, and there is no limit for the maximum. The reward is great beyond imagination, for Allah says: {The parable of those who spend their substance in the ways of Allah is that of a grain of corn. It grows seven ears, each ear has a hundred grains, and Allah gives manifold to whom, He pleases. And Allah cares for all and He knows all things.}⁽¹⁵¹⁾

In general, there are four ways of spending:

1 - to spend on something which is forbidden in order to acquire a temporary pleasure, but to be punished for it, in the Hereafter.

2 - to spend on a worldly pleasure, which is permissible, but not recommended because it comes at the expenses of the investment for the eternal life.

3 - to spend on the necessities in order to get worldly pleasure as well as eternal reward.

4 - to spend for the sake of Allah, even at the expense of worldly pleasure.

The greater the ambition of a person, the more he concentrates on the fourth category then the third. Indeed, the mercy of Allah has no limit and His bounties are priceless. The One, Who has these attributes will not punish his creature and put him in Hell forever, just for a minor sin. Allah, glorified be He, threatens to fill

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Holy Quraan 2: 261.

Hell, only, with ⁽¹⁵²⁾ those who commit a major sin, such a breaking the oath, showing ingratitude, and wasting all opportunities to pass the test.

Granting Time for Reconsideration:

Allah says: {But your Lord is Most Forgiving, Full of Mercy. If He were to call them at once to account for what they have earned, then surely He would hasten their punishment. But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no refuge.}⁽¹⁵³⁾ Therefore, the prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah will not accept the excuse of any person whose instance of death is delayed till he is sixty years of age."⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ In fact Allah grants his creature the opportunity to repent to the very last moment. The Prophet said on an occasion: "A person may do deeds of the people of Paradise while in fact, he is from the dwellers of Hellfire. Similarly, a person may do deeds that seem, to the people, as the deeds of the people of Hell while in fact, he is from the dwellers of Paradise. Verily, the deeds depend upon the last action."⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ So, the final decision is what is counted. To elaborate on this point let us consider this example, at a human level.

Age is similar to the limited time of a test, with some exceptions. In the test, the student has the right to terminate his time of exam whenever he chooses, before the test time is finished. In life, the creature has no right to terminate the time of the test whenever he decides. The test duration is, usually, known to the students, while in case of the life test it is unknown. These two differences are essential parts of the life test, because the reward in

⁽¹⁵²⁾ Holy Quraan 7: 10-18; 11: 117; 32: 6-13; 38: 71-85.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Holy Quraan 18: 58.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 287.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 330-1.

the latter is eternal and the little deed could be equal to a great deed.

Assume, also, that you are the teacher and while you were correcting the answers of a student, you find out that the student started with correct answers, but then crossed these answers and started writing wrong ones. What will you do in this case? Will you give him grades on the crossed answers or will you grade him on the final answers?

Assume also that you bought a car to be delivered to your place, would you pay the original price if the car reached your place damaged?

The Possible Future:

Very often we plan for the future or we imagine what something would be in the future. For example, we might say: "If I have enough money I will perform hajj (pilgrimage) next year." Or somebody might say: "If I have power I will make all people happy."

It could happen that the person who wished for enough money to perform pilgrimage would have enough money and he fulfills his wish. It is also possible that he would have the money but spend it on something, which is forbidden and harmful.

It could happen that the person who wished for power would get it and he would fulfill his wish or exploit it for his own interests.

Assume that you knew about the wish of the first one and you promised him the needed money. But someone whom you trust told you that the promised person would certainly use the money to harm himself. Would you give him the money you have promised?

I am sure that any reasonable person would answer: "I would not." This person takes this kind of decision and breaks his promise or deprives a person of a promised thing, depending on a

prediction that could turn out to be true or false. In some cases, this person may base his decision on his awareness of all probabilities. But such case represents only a fraction of his decisions.

To the Creator such decisions are based on inevitable occurrences or certain “possibilities”, because to Allah the “possibilities” of all things are sure knowledge. This fact explains why killing a child was justified in the story of Moses and his companion, in Chapter 18.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Killing the child was good for the child as well as for his parents, because if he had lived he would have done things that are punishable and cause his parents trouble and pain.

Among the examples of the inevitable possibilities are: the futures of those who die not knowing anything about a revealed religion, while being insane, or during childhood. Those will be tested on the day of Judgment, for the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Brought for accounting will be the one who died without receiving the message of Allah, died insane, and in childhood. The one who did not receive any message of Allah will say: "I did not receive either a book or a messenger"; the insane will say "you did not give me reasoning faculty to distinguish between good and bad"; the child will say: "I did not reach the age of accountability." Then the Prophet added: "There will be set for them a fire, and they will be told to enter it. Those, whom Allah knows will enter paradise, if they were provided with the factors of accountability, will obey and enter this fire. And those whom Allah knows will be of the people of Hell, even though provided with the factors of accountability, will refrain from doing so."⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

In all cases Allah can let them enter Paradise for free as it is the

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Holy Quraan 18: 74, 80, and see the comments of Ibn Taimiyah, vol. 8: 69.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Ibnal Qayim, Shifa p. 30; and see Ahmad for similar meaning, 4:34.

case of the deceased child. In a long prophetic tradition the Prophet, reporting what he saw in Paradise said: "... and the tall man who was in the garden, is Abraham and the children around him are those children who die with their *fitrah* (natural disposition)." The narrator added: some Muslims asked: "O' Prophet of Allah. What about the children of the pagans?" The Prophet replied: "Including the children of pagans."⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ This legal opinion outweighs the opinion, which leaves the destiny of the children of the non-Muslims to the knowledge of Allah. The latter opinion depends on the prophetic tradition, which reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah knows what they would be doing had they lived to reach the age of accountability". ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Perhaps the best explanation for this tradition is that no one can tell for sure what would be the destiny of the deceased.

Reward and Punishment:

There are two types of reward and punishment: the ones in this world and the ones in the Hereafter.

Rewards and Punishments in this World:

The rewards in this world take countless forms. Allah says: {And He gave you all that you asked for, and if you count the gifts of Allah, you will never be able to count them.} ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Among these rewards is victory. For example, Allah says: {When the believers saw the confederate forces, they said: "This is what Allah and His Apostle had promised us, and what Allah and His Apostle told us was true." And it only added to their faith and their zeal in

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ al-Bukhari, 9: 138-42.

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, 2: 262-4; Ibnal Qayim, Ahkam pp. 619-656.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 14: 34.

obedience.} ⁽¹⁶¹⁾ As a result of facing the calamity with complete submission to Allah and with faith in Him, He brought them victory, even without fighting. Allah says: {And Allah turned back the unbelievers for calls their fury, without gaining any advantage. Allah is enough for the believers in their fight, and Allah is full of strength, able to enforce His will.} ⁽¹⁶²⁾

Among the rewards of this world are the things, which are good in this life and in the Hereafter, such as guidance. Allah says: {but for those who receive guidance He increases the light of guidance and bestows on them their piety and restraint from evil.} ⁽¹⁶³⁾

Among the rewards of this world are wealth and authority, which are good in this life and could be good for the Hereafter, depending on the way these rewards are being exploited.

Ibnal al-Qayyim, confirming this fact, said: "Allah has mentioned in several places in the Quraan that the second good deed could be a reward for the first good deed, and the second bad deed could be a punishment for the first bad deed." ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Among the verses he quoted were: {And those who strive in our cause, We will certainly guide them to our paths. For, verily Allah is with those who do right} ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ and {remember Moses said: to his people: "O' my people why do you vex and insult me, though you know that I am the apostle of Allah to you. Then when they went wrong Allah let their hearts go wrong. For Allah does not guide those

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Holy Quraan 33: 22.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ Holy Quraan 33: 25-28.

⁽¹⁶³⁾ Holy Quraan 47: 17.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Ibnal Qayim, Shifaa p. 161.

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Holy Quraan 29: 69.

who are rebellious transgressors.} ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

But in all cases these rewards are to be invested but not to be wasted in order to gain the maximum pleasure in both lives: the temporary and the eternal.

Wealth is one form of reward in this life, and it is of great advantage but also carries great risk. The Prophet said: "...The rich are, in fact, the poor on the day of Resurrection except him to whom Allah gives wealth, which he gives in charity, to his right, left, front and back." ⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ In another tradition, the Prophet said: "I stood at the gate of Paradise and saw that the majority of the people who had entered it were poor people, while the ones who were lucky in this world were waiting..." ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

Authority is also a reward in this life, but it could be a cause of reward or punishment in the Hereafter life. The Prophet said: "Any man to whom Allah has given the authority of ruling some people and does not look after them in an honest manner, will never experience even the smell of Paradise." ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ The Prophet also said: "Paradise and Hell quarreled in the presence of their Lord. Paradise said: "O Lord. What is wrong with me that only the poor and the humble people enter me?" Hell said: "I have been favored with the arrogant people..." ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Concerning punishment in this world, sometimes it could be for warning, for Allah says: {Assuredly Allah helped you in many battlefields and on the day of Hunain, your numbers elated you, but they did not avail you. The land for all that it is wide

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Holy Quraan 61: 5.

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 300.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 362-3.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, 9: 197.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ al-Bukhari, 9: 408.

constrained you and you turned back in retreat.} ⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Allah also says: {We broke them up into sections on this earth. There are among them some who are righteous and some who are opposite. We have tried them with both prosperity and adversity, in order that they might turn back to us.} ⁽¹⁷²⁾

Some of the punishment could be to remove sins, for the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Never does it happen that a believer stricken with discomfort, hardship or illness, grief, or even with mental worry, and his sins are not expiated for him," ⁽¹⁷³⁾

Among the punishments in this world are those that leave effect in the life Hereafter. An example of this is misguidance in this life to deserve more punishment in the eternal life, as in the verse which reads: {In their hearts is a disease and Allah has increased their disease. And grievous is the penalty they incur.} ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

The Rewards and Punishments in the Hereafter:

The rewards and punishments in the Hereafter vary greatly in form or in intensity. Indeed, they exceed the imagination of the creatures. However, the Quraanic verses and the Prophetic verses quoted below may give some idea about them.

Abu Horairah reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah says: 'I have prepared for My pious slaves things which have never been seen by an eye, or heard by an ear, or imagined by a human being,'" ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Holy Quraan 9: 25-26.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ Holy Quraan 7: 168.

⁽¹⁷³⁾ Muslim, 4: 1364.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Holy Quraan 2: 8-10; and see the punishment of hating the truth as punishment

for the rejection of the Truth in verse 6: 120-125.

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ al-Bukhari, 4: 306-7.

The Prophet also said: "...a place equal to an arrow bow of anyone of you, or a place equal to a foot in Paradise is better than the whole world and whatever is in it. If one of the women of Paradise looked at the earth, she would fill the whole space between the sky and the earth with light, and would fill whatever is in between them, with perfume; and the veil of her face is better than the whole world and whatever is in it." ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

About the greatness of the reward the prophet also (pbuh) said: "I know the person who will be the last to come out of Hell, and the last to enter Paradise. He will be a man who will come out of Hell crawling, and Allah will say to him: 'Go and enter Paradise' He will go to it, but he will imagine that it has been filled, and then he will return and say: 'O, Lord, I have found it full.' Allah will say: 'Go and enter Paradise, and you will have what equals the world and ten times as much or you will have as ten times of the like of the world.... It is said, that person will be the lowest in degree amongst the people of Paradise.'" ⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

The rewards in the Hereafter not only vary in grades but also, the highest grade is limited, and only a few will deserve it. Allah says: {And you shall be sorted out into three classes. There will be the companions of the right hand. Who will be the companions of the right hand? And there will be the companions of the left hand. Who will be the companions of the left hand? And those foremost in faith will be foremost in the Hereafter. These will be those nearest to Allah, in gardens of bliss, a number of the first ones and a few of the latter ones. They will be on thrones encrusted with gold and precious stone, reclining on these thrones, facing each other. They are served by youths of perpetual freshness, with goblets shining beakers, and cups filled with clear flowing

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 371-2.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 373-4.

fountains. They will receive no after-ache, nor will they suffer intoxication, and with any fruit that they may select, and any that they may desire of fowls' flesh. And there will be companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes, like well-guarded pearls. A reward for their past life. They will hear no frivolity therein, nor any taint of ill. Only the saying "peace! peace." The companions of the right hand. What will be the companions of the right hand. They will be among lote-trees without thorns. Among tall trees with flowers or fruits piled one above another. In long-extended shade, by water flowing constantly and fruit in abundance, whose season is not limited nor forbidden. And on thrones of dignity raised high, We have created their companions of special creation, and made them virgin pure undefiled, beloved by nature, equal in age. For the companions of the right hand a goodly number from the early ones and a goodly number of the latter. }⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

The Prophet, confirming the varying grades, said in his glad tidings for the mother of Harithah, a martyr of the Battle of Badr: "...There are many paradises, and he is in the highest *Firdous* (the highest in Paradise)."⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ The Prophet also said: "There are one hundred degrees in Paradise which Allah has prepared for those who carry on Jihad (fight in defending Islam) in His cause. The distance between every two degrees is like the distance between the sky and the earth..."⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

From what was mentioned we can easily conclude that the rewards are much greater than the good deeds the accountable creatures can do, especially knowing that the Creator is the one who provided the creature with all their capabilities and available facilities. Therefore, the Prophet said: "...know that your deeds

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Holy Quraan 56: 7-40.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 372

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ al-Bukhari, 9: 383.

will not make you enter Paradise."⁽¹⁸¹⁾

Concerning punishment, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah will say to the person who will have the minimum punishment in Hell, on the day of Resurrection, 'If you had things equal to whatever is on earth, would you ransom yourself from the punishment with it?' He will reply: 'Yes. ' Allah will say: 'I asked you a much easier thing than this while you were in the back of Adam, i. e. not to worship others besides me, but you refused and insisted to worship others besides Me.'"⁽¹⁸²⁾

About the least form of punishment the Prophet said: "The person who will have the least punishment from amongst the Hell people, on the day of Resurrection, will be a man under whose arch of the feet a smoldering ember will be placed so that his brain will boil because of it."⁽¹⁸³⁾

If the rewards in the Hereafter are great beyond imagination and so is the punishment, wouldn't be wiser for the accountable creatures to try hard to obtain the eternal rewards and avoid the eternal punishment?

Don't we think it is worthy to put more effort and sacrifice more time and wealth to find the best guidance that leads to success in the eternal life? In other words, should not we consider Islam as a way to achieve the eternal success?

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 366.

⁽¹⁸²⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 366.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ al-Bukhari: 8: 368; and see ibn al-Atheer vol. 10: 512-20.

Summary and Conclusion

We can conclude from the first chapter that *al-Qadaa* is the direct command of Allah, which has an imminent effect. It is also the unlimited numbers of the natural laws, which, in turn, form a huge web of automatic systems that run the affairs of the Universe under the complete control of the Creator, Allah. In other words, Allah creates and runs the affairs of the Universe and every thing in it by *al-Qadaa*.

Al-Qadar on the other hand refers to what was recorded beforehand from the absolute knowledge of Allah, which is not limited by the time factor, the place factor, or the limited senses. To this knowledge there is nothing, which is past or future or a probability, or unknown. Therefore all things are recorded in a Book (اللوحة المحفوظة the Protected Tablet) which does not leave out anything that will happen. It records them, exactly, as they will occur. However, since we do not know what was recorded we have to do our best to save ourselves from Hell and qualify to enter Paradise. In other words, *al-Qadar* is only a **pre-recording**,

not a plan or predestination.

Knowing the previous facts, we come to recognize that believing in *al-Qadaa* and *al-Qadar* does not contradict the fact that jinn and men are responsible for their deeds. In other words, they are responsible for the way they utilize the bounties of Allah, which were made available to them in this world. This responsibility rests, mainly, on three gifts of Allah: the faculty of reasoning, the guidance, and the freedom of choice from among the causes, which have imminent effects (natural laws). It is also evident that this freedom is not absolute. It is limited by the capabilities and the facilities made available to the accountable creatures. Above all, it is limited by the will of the Creator of jinn, men, and everything. For Allah, the giver of everything can take back anything at any moment.

It is natural that this just obligation requires an efficient and just test, and this test is represented by the moments of pleasure and the moments of pain. These moments are nothing except hard currencies to be invested in order to gain great rewards in the eternal life. In other words, this life is not only to enjoy according to the Divine law but also to invest to secure eternal happiness in the Hereafter. Regardless of the difference in facilities and means made available for each person equal opportunity for fair competition was granted, because the reward or the punishment is based on dividing the efforts by the bounties granted for each person.

The test seems to be easy, because it is similar to the take home exam, but it is difficult because life is a struggle between two forces: good and evil. Not only that but the means of the evil forces are attractive and enjoyable while the means of the good forces require patience and hard working.

It was also clear that Allah is Merciful in calling His creatures to account for their deeds. He gives many opportunities for repentance, and may forgive minor sins for free. Indeed, He may

turn the bad deeds of those who repent to good deeds. Anyway, none of these privileges, is guaranteed for a particular person. Therefore, we have to do our best to pass the test. Furthermore, accountability is not for what was written in the Book of Allah, but for what we do by utilizing our capabilities and facilities.

The reward in the Hereafter is so great that all our good deeds do not suffice to deserve them. So, the punishment in the Hereafter is great, for those who show ingratitude, reject all reminders and waste all opportunities of success.

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