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Creation of Man and Fate

مؤتمر الحضارات والفلسفة: presented to:

المنعقد في مدينة سانت بيترزبورق

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Introduction

The question of "fate" or "predestination" which is closely related to man's creativity and accountability, has occupied the minds of the 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. Others use it as an excuse to stay idle and useless members of their communities.

Probably, the major cause behind the difficulty of understanding the concept of "*fate*" is the failure to differentiate between the attributes of the Creator and those of the creatures. This differentiation is vital, because there are adjectives in Arabic –for example- that are suitable for the Creator but not proper for the creatures. Among these are: *al-Jabbar* (the Almighty) *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: *Thaki* (intelligent), *'aqlani* (logical)...(1) These attributes are not suitable for the Creator not only because Allah (God) (2) 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.

The purpose of this booklet is specifically to answer these questions:

1. How Man was created and what is his nature?

(1) ibn Haydarah p. 41.

(2) The word "Allah" is a unique name of God in Arabic it does not accept plural form. It is always singular.

2. How can he be held accountable if his deeds are creation of Allah (God)?
3. How can he be held accountable if he cannot do anything without the permission of Allah (God)?
4. How can he be held accountable if he cannot escape the fate?

In answering these questions the booklet will depend on the Islamic major sources: The Holy Quraan⁽³⁾ the Prophetic Traditions⁽⁴⁾ and the original research titled "Prerecording not Fate or Predestination". And because of the complexity of the issue of the "fate", the writer will often resort to the examples at the human level to explain the concerned facts at the Divine level.

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(3) "The Holy Quraan" refers to the literal words of Allah (God) i.e. both the content and the wording are from Allah, and it is the first source of the Islamic teachings.

(4) "The Prophetic Traditions" refers to the verbal teachings, deeds and approvals of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), and it is considered as the second source of the Islamic teachings.

Creation of Man and His Nature

There are mainly two theories of Human origin: the evolutionary theory and the religious theory. The evolutionary theory is rejected by the Bible as well as by the Islamic sources. For instance, the Holy Quraan reporting the event of creation of the father of Human beings reads: {Behold your Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud molded into shape When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit fall you down in obeisance unto him".}(⁵) The verse clearly indicates the immediacy of the creation refuting the evolutionary theory. The Quraan also confirms that man was created in the best mold (⁶) and was created with intelligence and affection from the very beginning.(⁷)

Also about the creation of man Allah says: {It is We Who created you (Mankind) and gave you shape, then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblees (Satan). 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

(⁵) Holy Quraan 15: 28-29. and see the Holy Bible, Genesis 1-4.

(⁶) Holy Quraan 95: 4.

(⁷) for example Holy Quraan 7: 11-25.

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."}(8)

It seems that the creation of man with special status aroused the envy of Iblees (Satan) who was granted by Allah the mental ability including to distinguish between the creature created from clay and the creature created from fire. He was also provided with 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 did, 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 Lord.(9) Satan's race, the jinn, were also 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

(8) 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.

(9) for the interpretations of these verses, see for example at-Tabari;

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?"}(10) 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."}(11)

Thus, a struggle began between Satan and his camp which represented evil, and Adam and his camp which 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 you shall be brought out for resurrection."}(12) So, it is clear that the original responsibility of Adam is to spread the good and to struggle with evil represented by Satan and his camp. Furthermore, the Divine justice gave equal opportunity to both races. Human being can choose to go astray and join Satan's camp, and the jinn can choose guidance and join Adam's camp.

Among the verses confirming the humans and the Jinn being accountable creatures are the verses that read: {I have only created Jinn and men save that they worship Me.}(13) and the verse: {O you assembly of jinn and mankind. Has not there come a messenger from among yourselves, reciting to

(10) Holy Quraan 7: 19-22.

(11) Holy Quraan 7: 23.

(12) Holy Quraan 7: 24-25.

(13) Holy Quraan 51: 56.

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.}(14)

The Root of Responsibility:

To be accountable creatures it means that they are responsible for their deeds in this mortal life. And the root of this responsibility is spelled in the verse that reads: {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."}(15)

To be a vicegerent, as we know, is to have a distinguished status and a high position, which has its pleasures and special privileges, but it also has its responsibilities and temptations. To be vicegerent is also to be qualified for trust. The vicegerent is entitled to benefit from his position, provided that he fulfills its responsibility. Perhaps, this is what was meant in the verse that 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

(14) Holy Quraan 6: 130.

(¹⁵) Holy Quraan 2: 30-32. also see the Bible Genesis 1 –4.

foolish.}(16)

Among the privileges are all 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}.(17) Another verse reads: {We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them with transport on land and sea, given them good and pure things for sustenance, and conferred on them special favors above a great part of our creation.}(18) A third 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}.(19)

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.}(20). 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.

Special Gifts and Responsibility:

To help man take his responsibility Allah distinguished him with three special gifts. These gifts are: Reasoning

(16) Holy Quraan 33: 72; and see Dosooqi pp. 108-123 for his discussion; Masheeah pp. 50-52.

(17) Holy Quraan 14: 34.

(18) Holy Quraan 17: 70.

(19) Holy Quraan 31: 20.

(20) Holy Quraan 18: 7.

Faculty, guidance and freedom of choice.

Reasoning Faculty:

Allah Has distinguished man 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, which made them superior to the other creatures also made them responsible for their acts. This is because this special gift enables the humans to recognize the real value of the bounties they enjoy, to comprehend the Divine guidance that leads to prosperity in this life and in the Hereafter, and to utilize the facilities and the guidance given to them to secure a better life in this temporary world as well as 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, if a person is deprived of this faculty it means he has no credentials to be wise, either by being insane, ignorant (infant or a child), or helpless unconscious creature (sleeping or in a coma).

Therefore, it becomes clear that the reasoning faculty is a great gift, which in turn, demands a very high price such as being responsible for one's acts. Indeed, there is no wise responsible creature that 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.

Guidance:

In general, we can distinguish between three categories

of guidance:(21)

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 (a system) to survive as a living creature; and it varies 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 guidance was referred to in the verse that reads: {Our Lord He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, and further gave it guidance.}(22)

2 - The second type is the special guidance 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 futile?"}(23)

This guidance includes what Archangel Gabriel referred to when he said to Prophet Muhammad: “You hit the *fitrah* (natural disposition) when the prophet chose the milk instead of the wine i.e. the natural disposition leads to choose the beneficial things instead of the harmful.(24)

The previous quotations emphasize that Allah has provided human beings with guidance, the knowledge that

there is only one Creator worthy to be worshipped, and to choose the good things as part of their natural disposition. In other words, all human beings are born to be Unitarians and to be able to differentiate between good and bad. But they have the freedom to stick to this natural disposition or to deviate from it.

B - **The Teachings.** This category of guidance is represented by 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.}(25) Allah has sent messengers with guidance (teachings) to remind the human beings of the original oath, i.e. to worship their Creator alone, and to provide them with the updated detailed teachings that are suitable for every major stage of the humans' life on earth.

C - **The endowed Guidance.** Allah granted this special guidance 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 him. 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.

Freedom of Choice:

No reasonable person would deny that some kind of freedom of choice has been granted to man. Allah, glorified be He, confirms this fact and says: {Say: "The truth is from your Lord". Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and

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

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

(23) Holy Quraan 7: 172-173.

(24) Muslim: Faith, elevation.

(25) Holy Quraan 41: 17; and see 76: 3.

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.}(26) Allah also says: {We showed him the way that he may be grateful or ungrateful.}(27)

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."(28) This Prophetic tradition also 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."(29)

On the other hand, man has a wider freedom, perhaps an unlimited one, concerning the world of imagination. Human beings can imagine wild things even without being held accountable for them, as long as they do not make an effort to express them or to put them into action.(30)

In the real world, human beings also have freedom but it is limited by many factors that they have no control over.

In addition to that, the freedom of choice does not cover all our life. Sha'rawee, for instance noting that human beings are composed of three major natures: the nature of materials, the nature of plants, the nature of animals... 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 man should not interfere with them.(31)

Besides, part of our life is not subject to our conscious control such as in childhood, but we are not held responsible for our acts then.(32)

Not only that, but this freedom is limited by other factors. For example, man is not given the choice to be or not to be. But if we ask a person who is leading a normal life: do you prefer not to be? The answer most probably is: no.

It is not strange if the freedom of choice is one of the factors that make human beings responsible for their utterances and deeds, because it is so precious and it is the cause of all the fighting and wars between individuals and nations. It could be freedom of expression, freedom of exploiting others, freedom of religion...etc. To acquire or to maintain this precious thing, human beings are ready to risk or sacrifice their property, children... and their lives too.

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 and is struggling for his freedom to satisfy his vicious and wicked wishes. Adam and his followers, on the other hand, are struggling for their freedom to obey Allah.

And if we ask any reasonably wise creature: "Would you relinquish all your freedoms to be exempted from accountability" how many would say: "Yes"?

(26) Holy Quraan and see 18: 29-30.

(27) Holy Quraan 20: 50; and see 76: 3.

(28) al-Bukhari: 8: 372-373.

(29) al-Bukhari: 8: 289-290.

(30) al-Bukhari 8: 329.

(31) Sha'rawee, pp. 37-43.

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

Allah Created Everything but Man is Accountable

If Allah (God) created everything including mans' deeds how can he be held accountable for them? The answer to this question is related to what is called in Arabic *al-qadaa*, which could be interpreted to the natural laws.

al-Qadaa:

The word *al-Qadaa* appears in different forms of the verb, in the Quraan, the Prophetic traditions and the Arabic dictionaries, but their meanings can be classified under two major categories:

1 - The decree of a guiding nature, which could be accepted or rejected by the human beings. This meaning is represented by the verse which reads: {Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him}.(33) 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 choice which has been granted to the human beings 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".}(34) This meaning appears in other words but always

(33) Holy Quraan 17: 23.??

(34) Holy Quraan 16: 40. ??

maintain the same meaning.

In this booklet we are concerned with the second category. This command is composed of two types: 1) the direct command of God that takes an immediate effect, by which the Creator creates anything instantly; and 2) the natural laws, which consists of a cause and an immediate effect which produces new things based on a net of causes and effects i. e. automatic systems.

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 confirming this fact said: "There is nothing in this world or in the Hereafter without a cause, and Allah is the Creator of the causes and the effects."(35)

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, almost, without any interference from outside, depending on 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 accurately we can make sure that one of the springs is loosened gradually and the other is tightened, without even opening the watch and

(35) Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' 8: 70.

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.

As we noticed, 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 is nothing compared to what is yet to be discovered. Needless to say, what has been discovered is, mostly, limited to material aspects of the universe. 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. 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,⁽³⁶⁾ 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 from the original place (cause) and the stone will not fall on it (result).

Perhaps this is what Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was referring to when he stated that nothing could stop the effect of *al-Qadaa* (the command or the cause) that has an imminent result except an accepted prayer.⁽³⁷⁾ 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.}⁽³⁸⁾ 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.⁽³⁹⁾

The strength of prayer is demonstrated in the story of Prophet Abraham with his people, who not only opposed his

⁽³⁶⁾ see Holy Quraan 27: 38-40 and Qotb, Fi Zilaal vol. 19: 2641-2642. ??

⁽³⁷⁾ at-Termithi: al-Qadar, ma Jaa.

⁽³⁸⁾ Holy Quraan 36: 82.

⁽³⁹⁾ see Ibn Taimiyah, Majmoo' vol. 8: 167-170.; al-Ashqar pp. 84-86.

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"} (40)

This fact is also supported by the story Prophet Muhammad (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. In spite of the importance of fire the Creator has made life from water for Allah says: {We made from water every living thing}. (41)

Furthermore, 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} (42) and {Every single thing is before His sight

in due proportion}. (43) These natural laws interact with each other to produce new things or reproduce things that we can sense and we cannot sense, such as materials, plants, animals, human beings, jinn, electricity...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. (44)

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. Allah has created everything including the spiritual components of human beings, the intellectual, the psychological and the physical. Even the freedom of choice that different beings use to choose among the things (materials and the natural laws) is made available to man are creations of the Creator. (45) 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:

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

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

(45) see for example: al-Bukhari, Khalq afaal al-ibaad; Ibn al-Qayyim p.146; as-Sa'di, al-'Aqeedah pp. 151-152.

(40) Holy Quraan 21: 69.

(41) Holy Quraan 21: 30.

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

The previous examples show that Allah (God) can do what He wills the way He wills and when He wills.

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 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.}(46) On the other hand, He says: {"Do you worship that which you have yourselves carved?}(47)

In other words, every action of the creatures and the bounties they use are creations of Allah, the Creator. Allah has created Mankind, their abilities, and the things they choose to utter or to do. Imam Abu Haneefah concluding this fact said: "Since the actor (a human being) is a creation of Allah, his deeds are no exceptions."(48)

In the light of this fact arises the often-asked question i. e. "If everything is the creation of the Creator, how could we hold the creature responsible for their deeds?"

The following example may explain the role of the human being, and how accountability is justified.

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

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

(47) Holy Quraan 37: 95-96. ??

(48) Abu Haneefah p. 45.

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, who 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 possibilities. Or should we blame the student who chose the wrong answer, especially if the test is a take home exam?

It is true that the teacher made the test, provided the facilities, the information, the 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?

From the above example 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 beings the opportunity to practice their authority as vicegerents 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) A third verse 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 Allah created everything, 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.

For 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 human beings. Therefore, the human beings must try to do good deeds and avoid committing bad deeds. Man is accountable to his choices among the available choices. However, accountability is based on the intentions and the efforts made to realize them; not on the intentions alone or the work accomplished alone. It also depends on the means made available.

As far as creativity is concerned, in fact, man can choose among an endless collection of choices to get an endless

collection of results which God made available for him. This is true because the combinations and results that man can ever imagine at any time are all and more made available by God.

The Good and the Bad:

It was mentioned earlier that what really distinguishes the good from the 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.(52) 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. Furthermore, 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.

(49) Holy Quraan 4: 78.

(50) Holy Quraan 91: 7-8; and see 76: 2-3.

(51) Holy Quraan 3: 165; see Ibn al-Qayyim pp. 28-29.

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

Full Control of Allah and Human Freedom

In deed man has freedom of choice, but can he go out of the control of Allah. Can man do things against the will of Allah i.e. without the permission of God?

The answer is, certainly no, because Allah says: {And you shall not will, unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the Universe}.(53) This is so because, the One Who granted man all gifts including the three special gifts can take them back at any time, and He have control over everything all the time. In other words, Allah can force the humans, against their own will to do good things or to prevent them from doing bad things. But, if Allah let them do the bad, which they have chosen for their self, they will be accountable for it.

On the other hand, 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.(54)

To remove the confusion, let us look at this analogy. Assume 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, if he decides to choose the toy and become sick, who should be blamed? The child is to be blamed, because this is the price of the freedom of choice that we all chant about, fight and live for.

In fact, if we look at these painful experiences, which were imposed on us, 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, then, as painful experiences.

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 much better.

(53) Holy Quraan. 81: 29.

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

Fate (al-Qadar) and Accountability

Reviewing the Quraanic verses, the Prophetic Traditions and the Arabic dictionaries we will find a variety of meanings for this word *al-Qadar* and its derivations.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Generally speaking, we 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** the sun to be a shining glory, and the moon to be a light of beauty and **measured** out stages for it.}(56)

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 a description not as a judgment."⁽⁵⁷⁾ In other words, the Creator has an absolute and an infinite knowledge, which encompasses everything and from that knowledge all events were recorded before they occur.

(55) al-Mo'jam ...li Alfaz al-Quraan.; al-Mo'jam ...li Alfaz al-Hadeeth;Ibn Manzoor, az- Zabeedi, Anees.

(56) Holy Quraan 10: 5.

(57) Abu Haneefah, Fiqh p. 39; and see Ibn Taimiyah vol. 8: 280, al-'Asqalani,

Imam University ed. vol. 1: 118; Abdul-Wahhab p. 57; alAshqar p. 25.

The Knowledge of the Creator and the Human:

It is to this absolute knowledge, which was recorded fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and the earth that the Quraan and the Prophetic traditions are referring to. Among these verses is the one, which reads: {From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens}(58) and {Don't you know that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? In deed, it is all in a record, and is easy for Allah.}(59) Allah also says: {No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls, but is recorded in a book before We bring it into existence. That is truly easy for Allah.}(60) 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."⁽⁶¹⁾ The Prophet was asked on one occasion: "Is it known [to Allah] 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."⁽⁶²⁾

It is natural for the human beings to find it difficult to comprehend the absolute knowledge of Allah, the Creator, also to find it impossible to perceive the reality of this unique Divine knowledge. This is natural because the knowledge of the human beings 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

(58) Holy Quraan 3: 5; and see 11: 6; 36: 20; Ibnal-Qayyim's comments, Ibnal-Qayyim, Shifaa p. 40.

(59) Holy Quraan 22: 70.

(60) Holy Quraan 57: 22.

(61) Muslim: 4: 1393.

(62) al-Bukhari: 8: 389.

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 volume and the complexity 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 he has to look at each page 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, but it is still far from being complete or perfect.

3 - The knowledge we will acquire about the 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 that would take place or would not, depending on the circumstances.

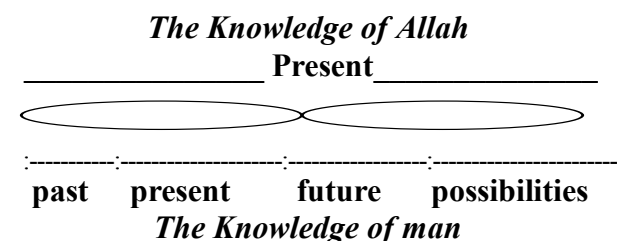
One effect of the time factor is that a specific piece of information could be concrete knowledge to one person and unknown to another, or at best a vague guess. For example,

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.

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, perfect and complete.

For us to predict what would happen in the future is possible only if there was an accurate system, composed of causes and effects such as an accurate clock.

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 or their extensions. 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. Furthermore, if you are standing at the bottom of the hill you will be able to see less space and things than a person standing at the top 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, because of the place factor 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. For the knowledge of Allah encompasses everything everywhere.

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.}(63)

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.

(63) Holy Quraan 10: 61.

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 and perfect, and it encompasses everything, no matter when it exists or where it exists.(64)

Pre-recording is not Predestination:

From the above-mentioned facts about the nature of God's knowledge and prerecording it became clear that there is no contradiction between accountability and having man's deeds recorded before the creation of any thing including human beings.

Ibn Taimiyah wonders about those who blame *al-Qadar* or Fate for their mischievous acts and refuse to find an excuse for the others in fate for their injustices and insist on taking revenge.(65)

Anyhow, in all cases no one knows what is recorded in the book with Allah. Therefore, the human beings should do their best to invest the Creator's bounties, including the ability to think, the freedom of choice according to the Divine guidance.

A very crude example of *al-Qadar*, (fate) at the human level, is a third person (X) collecting complete information about the trip of Y from different sources and recording it, including some of the events which Y did not plan or occurs against his will. Even if everything occurs as it was recorded before hand, we cannot blame X for them because no one can claim that X has forced Y to do what he did or what occurred to him.

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

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

Accountability, Reward and Punishment

The Muslim believes that Allah has distinguished the accountable creatures (the Humans and the Jinn) with special gifts that made them responsible for their deeds.

Furthermore, the Muslim truly believes that Allah shall not treat any one unjustly. Allah says: {Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; Whoever works evil, it is against his own soul, Nor is your Lord ever unjust to his servants}.(⁶⁶)

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. It is also natural to have a fair test to measure the degree of each individual's diligence. So, this life is a place for the test and the Hereafter is the place for accountability and rewarding or punishment.

To be fair the test should be sensitive to all differences in the given bounties, capabilities and degrees of diligence.

The name of the game in this test is how the accountable creature will deal, efficiently, with the different "positive" or "negative" means.

After all, what is considered to be good, bad or the degrees between the two are hard currency to be invested to achieve happiness in this life and in the Hereafter life. In other words, we have two kinds of 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 people fall in the middle of the curve i.e. succeed in dealing with the lesser of either of the two types of hard currency: the positive and the negative. And their risk is smaller.

The test is not easy for the Prophet said: "The Hell-fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of dislikes and undesirable things."(⁶⁷) 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 the test is the struggle between the hope of living longer and the unknown time assigned for the test for each person.(⁶⁸)

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 Holy 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}.(⁶⁹)

However, accountability is based on the intentions, the efforts made to realize them and the available means; not on the intentions alone or the work accomplished alone.

(⁶⁷) al-Bukhari, 8: 327.

(⁶⁸) Holy Quraan 15: 3-5; see al-Bukhari, 8: 285-6.

(⁶⁹) Holy Quraan 4: 48, 116.

(⁶⁶) Holy Quraan 41: 46 and see 3: 182; 8: 51; 22: 10.

Furthermore, Allah is Most Forgiving, Full of Mercy.⁽⁷⁰⁾ 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."⁽⁷¹⁾ So, the final decision is important and sometimes it is vital. 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 the latter is eternal and the little accomplishment could be equal to a great accomplishment.

Assume, 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?

Allah is also Merciful in calling His creatures to account for their deeds. He gives many opportunities for repentance, and may forgive minor sins for free. In fact, 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.

Types of Rewards and Punishments:

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.

To a believer calamities are negative means of gaining rewards and the gifts are positive means of gaining rewards. The non-believer receives all his rewards for his good deeds in this life and for his bad deeds he could be punished in this life or in the Hereafter or in both.

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 servants things which have never been seen by an eye, or heard by an ear, or imagined by a human being,'"⁽⁷²⁾

Concerning 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."⁽⁷³⁾

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Holy Quraan 18: 58.

⁽⁷¹⁾ al-Bukhari, 8: 330-1.

⁽⁷²⁾ al-Bukhari, 4: 306-7.

⁽⁷³⁾ al-Bukhari: 8: 368; and see ibn al-Atheer vol. 10: 512-20.

Summary and Conclusion

Finally, we can conclude from the previous discussions that regardless of the evolutionary theory, which is refuted logically the Holy books of the divine religions confirm that human beings are a distinguished creation from the very beginning.

They are responsible for the way they utilize the bounties of Allah (God), 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 man. Above all, it is limited by the will of the Creator of everything including man. For Allah, the giver of everything can take back anything He gives at any moment.

Looking carefully at the term “fate” we come to a conclusion that “fate” is a prerecording from the absolute and perfect knowledge of Allah (God), but not predestination nor a plan or a judgment.

It is true that Allah created everything including the human’s deeds but the humans are responsible for them because they have the freedom to choose between the different causes that have imminent effects. This is to say, at

the human level, the student is responsible for his choice among the right and the wrong answers of a multiple-choice test.

On the hand, the rewards and punishments in the Hereafter vary greatly in form or in intensity. Indeed, they exceed the imagination of the creatures.

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 by trying harder to find the right path and to do our best to follow it.?

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