

# I. Belief in Qadar (Divine Predestination)

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## A. Definition of Qadar.

The belief in Qadar is one of the six articles of faith in Islam. It is the belief that Allah ﷻ has preordained everything that happens in the universe, according to His knowledge and wisdom, and that nothing happens without His permission and will. He knows everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen. He also knows the alternative scenarios, which is what would have happened if what happened did not happen, and what are the different outcomes of various causes. His knowledge is perfect and complete. The belief in Qadar does not contradict human free will and responsibilities, but rather harmonizes and balances them, as Allah ﷻ has also given humans the ability to choose and act, and He holds them accountable for their choices and actions. It is the belief that gives Muslims a sense of purpose, direction, and accountability in their life. It is the belief that assures Muslims of Allah ﷻ's fairness, wisdom, and power in His creation and His decree.

## B. Does Having a Freewill Contradict with Belief in Qadar.

### i. The metaphor of prediction.

To comprehend how our choices and decisions are not influenced by predestination, let us look at the idea of prediction. When someone foretells what would occur in the future, his prediction does not alter what would occur. For instance, if we see two trains on the same track moving towards each other, then we can readily predict that they will collide with each other. This prediction doesn't change what would happen. The accident will happen regardless of whether we predict it or not.

In the same way, if we pose a question to a college student about whether cows can fly by themselves, we can confidently predict that he will say no. This is because we are familiar with him, and we know that he is not a toddler or mentally challenged, and we know that the question is very simple. Therefore, we can anticipate his answer without difficulty, but our prediction does not influence his answer.

ii. Nothing can happen without Allah ﷻ's making it happen.

Everything that occurs is by Allah ﷻ's will and decree. Allah ﷻ is the cause and the controller of all events. Nothing takes place except by Allah ﷻ's permission and plan. Everything that happens in the universe is under the control and permission of Allah ﷻ. He is the only one who has the power and authority to make things happen or not happen. No one can do anything that Allah ﷻ does not want, and no one can prevent anything that Allah ﷻ wants. We have freewill because Allah ﷻ has given us the ability to choose and act, and He has not forced us to do anything against our will. However, He also knows what we will choose and do, and He allows our choices to happen, even if they are evil. He does not approve of evil, but He allows it to exist for a greater purpose and wisdom. Evil is a relative term, and it is a means of testing, purifying, and distinguishing the good from the bad. Without evil, there will be no good, and without good, there will be no evil. Therefore, good and evil are interrelated and interdependent, and good ultimately prevails over evil. The Prophet ﷺ Muhammad (SAW) said, "... and know that if the nations were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah ﷻ had already decreed for you, and if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah ﷻ had already decreed against you. The pen has already been lifted and the ink has already been dried." This

means that Allah ﷻ is the best of planners, and He is the most generous and the most wise. He gives everyone what He has decreed for them, and He does not withhold anything that He has decreed for them. He tests everyone with what He gives them or takes away from them, and He rewards them or punishes them accordingly. He knows what is best for everyone, and He does what He wills with His creation.

iii. We are writing our own book freely.

Allah ﷻ's knowledge of what we will be written in our books does not mean that He forces us to write them. Rather, it means that He knows what we will choose and do, based on His eternal and perfect knowledge of everything, past, present, and future. We are writing our own books, and we have the freedom to write them, because Allah ﷻ has given us the power of reason, will, and action, and He has not compelled us to do anything against our will. We are responsible for all the bad deeds that we write in our books, and Allah ﷻ is the source of all the good deeds that we write in our books, and He gives us credit for them. Therefore, there is no contradiction between Allah ﷻ's knowledge and our freedom, but rather a harmony and balance between them.

iv. Everyone is destined for what they were created for.

It was narrated that a man said: O Messenger ﷺ of Allah ﷻ, inform us about our religion as if we were newly born. Should we act according to something that has already been decreed and the pens have dried, or according to something that will happen? He said: Rather, according to what has already been decreed and the pens have dried. He said: Then what is the point of doing deeds? He said: Everyone works for what he was created for, or: for what he is facilitated for. The meaning is that the servant does not know what his fate will be, because he does what has preceded in

Allah ﷻ's knowledge. So he should strive to do what he is commanded, for his deeds are an indication of what his fate will be. Then he recited the words of Allah ﷻ, the Exalted: "So as for he who gives and fears Allah ﷻ. And believes in the best [reward]. We will ease him toward ease. But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need. And denies the best [reward]. We will ease him toward difficulty." Quran [92:5-10].

Allah ﷻ's love or dislike for people is shown by the role they have been playing in life. If they behave wickedly, then it means that Allah ﷻ is unhappy with them. If they behave virtuously, then it means that Allah ﷻ is happy with them.

### C. How to Deal with the Qadar of Allah ﷻ When It Happened.

#### i. Decisions that we have no control over

The decisions that have been made by Allah ﷻ and we have no choice over are the matters that pertain to His creation and decree, such as our birthdate, birthplace, death, gender, race, parents, physical features, health, wealth, and other circumstances that are beyond our control. We cannot question Allah ﷻ, reject or change any of these decisions, because He is the Creator and the Master of everything, and He has the right to do whatever He wills with His creation. He is the most wise and the most just, and He does not do anything without a purpose or a reason. He tests us with these decisions, and He rewards us or punishes us according to how we respond to them. Therefore, we should accept these decisions with patience and gratitude, and we should not complain or rebel against them.

ii. Trying to change the decisions made by Allah ﷻ.

Some of the decisions made by Allah ﷻ are beyond our control and choice, such as our birthplace, birthdate, race and parents. If one rejects these decisions, they cannot do anything to change them. However, some people tried to change their gender, modify their appearance by cosmetic surgeries, and so on. These people are under the curse of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. It was reported that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah ﷻ cursed the ones who perform some kinds of beautification that change the natural features of the body, such as tattooing, plucking the eyebrows, filing the teeth, making spaces between the teeth and those who alter the creation of Allah ﷻ. The curse also included those who assist others in doing these changes.

iii. Be Patient with the Qadar of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ said in a longer hadith "...Whenever something happens to you, do not say: 'I wish I had done this or that, then it would have been different.' But rather say: 'Allah ﷻ has ordained and whatever He wants He does.' For indeed, 'if' paves the way for the work of Satan." He was urging Muslims to pursue what is good for them and not to regret the past or the imaginary situations of what could have been better if they had done something else, for this is part of Satan's schemes and snares..

iv. The story of the parents who accidentally lost their four children.

It was a terrible and heartbreaking accident when the parents, who were faithful Muslims, left their four children in the car while they went to take a nap in the house. They did not remember to turn off the engine, and the garage door was shut. The garage was filled with carbon monoxide from the exhaust gas and the children, who were sleeping in the car, died of suffocation. The parents discovered

their children's death after two hours and they were shattered and tormented by the accident. They wanted to end their lives for what they had done. However, they did not lose their faith and their hope in Allah ﷻ. They enrolled in a grief management class, and the first thing that they learned was that they have to submit to the will of the higher power and to have faith in its decree. The term "higher power" was used to make the classes secular, as they were open to people with different faith and beliefs of God. They finally accepted the accident as a trial from Allah ﷻ, and they asked for His forgiveness and mercy. They found solace in believing in Qadar. The believer of Qadar would accept in day one what the disbeliever would accept in many months. Both have to come to terms with what happened sooner or later. Accepting or rejecting the Qadar will not change the fact that their children are gone.

v. Why bad things happen to good people.

Bad things may happen to good people for various reasons, such as to test their faith and patience, to purify them from their sins and shortcomings, to elevate their ranks and rewards, to teach them lessons and wisdom, or to prevent them from a greater harm or a lesser good. It is not cruel to make good people suffer, because Allah ﷻ is the most just and the most wise, and He does not wrong anyone in the least. He knows what is best for His servants, and He has a hidden wisdom behind everything that He does or allows to happen. This is illustrated by the story of Musa (AS) and the righteous slave, who was Khidr, a righteous person sent by Allah ﷻ to teach Musa some of the secrets of His decree. Khidr ruined a ship that belonged to some poor fishermen, and he killed a boy who was the son of some righteous parents. Musa was shocked and objected to these actions, but Khidr explained to him the reasons behind them. He said that he damaged the ship to prevent it from being taken by a tyrant king who was waging war and was taking every good ship, and he killed

the boy to spare his parents from his wickedness and ingratitude when he grows up, and to replace them with a better and pious son. Thus, Khidr showed Musa that what appeared to be bad things were actually good things in disguise, and that Allah ﷻ's decree is always based on His knowledge and wisdom.

vi. We are not born with equal opportunities.

Some people are born with all the fame and wealth they need, while others are deprived, because Allah ﷻ has created people with different abilities, talents, circumstances, and destinies, and He has given them different provisions and blessings, according to His wisdom and justice. We are not born to equal opportunities, because Allah ﷻ has favored some people over others in some aspects, such as knowledge, power, beauty, health, etc., and He has given them more responsibilities and duties accordingly. However, Allah ﷻ has given everyone equal opportunity to believe in Him and to worship Him, and He has given everyone the opportunity to do good deeds and to earn His rewards. Allah ﷻ controls the distribution of wealth, and He gives it to whom He wills, and He withholds it from whom He wills. He tests some people with wealth, and He tests some people with poverty, and He sees how they use it or cope with it. He does not judge people by their wealth, but by their faith and deeds.

vii. How to get our preassigned shares.

Our share of wealth, health, etc., were preassigned. Our role in obtaining them is to work hard and seek lawful means, while trusting in Allah ﷻ and relying on His provision. We cannot obtain anything that Allah ﷻ has not decreed for us, nor can we lose anything that Allah ﷻ has decreed for us. However, we do not know what Allah ﷻ has decreed for us, so we have to strive and make efforts, and use the causes and

means that Allah ﷻ has created for us. We also have to be content and grateful for whatever Allah ﷻ gives us, and not be greedy or envious of what He gives others.

This is illustrated by the story of the camel of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (RAA), who was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet ﷺ Muhammad and the fourth caliph of Islam. Ali Ibn Abi Talib entrusted his camel to a man while he went to the market to buy some things. He saw that the man was eyeing the camel with greed, so he decided to give him the camel as a gift on his way back. However, when he returned, he found that the man had taken the camel and fled. He then said "Glory be to Allah ﷻ, if he had been patient, he would have received the camel in a lawful way as a gift, but he stole the camel and got it in an unlawful way. The lesson to learn is that the camel was decreed by Allah ﷻ for the man anyway, he could have gotten it in a lawful way if he was honest. But because of his dishonesty, he got the same camel in an unlawful way.

viii. The story of the dream of a court that assembles to decree Qadar.

A righteous man had a recurring dream in which he saw the decree of Allah ﷻ being issued by a court that would determine his fate and provisions. One night, he saw in his dream that the court had decreed the death of his only cow, which was his sole source of income and livelihood. He woke up terrified and quickly took his cow to the market and sold it. He then returned home feeling relieved that he had escaped the decree of Allah ﷻ. He went to sleep and dreamed again of the court, which said that he had attempted to avoid the decree of the cow, so they ordered the death of his only son, who was his pride and joy. He woke up horrified and ran to the market and bought back his cow, hoping to save his son. He went to sleep and dreamed once more of the court, which said that he had not learned his lesson yet. He still thought

that he could defy the Qadar of Allah ﷻ, so they decreed the death of both his only son and his only cow.