

The Pre-Decree (Al-Qadr)

No one can escape the determinate decree, nor can anyone exceed what has been written for him in the Inscribed Tablet.

ولا محيد لأحد عن القدر المحدود، ولا يتجاوز ما خط له في
اللوح المسطور

Shaikh Al-Islām Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb رَحِمَهُ اللهُ stated: **“There is no escaping for anyone from the determinate decree nor can anyone exceed what has been written for him in the Inscribed Tablet.”**¹

There is not a person who can avoid the Pre-Decree (Qadā and Qadr) of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. This is the belief of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā’ah. Allah has decreed for the people that they will undergo tests and trials in order to establish for them reward or punishment. So Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ may decree matters for a person as a punishment for him that the person deserved because he chose to

¹ Article is based on benefits from *Sharhu ‘Aqeedatil-Imām Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb* of Shaikh Sālih Al-Fawzān, 59-62.

disobey Allah. A person takes the means that Allah has presented in front of him and then he acts. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى then arranges the results in accordance to the means that the people take. So if a person took the means that were correct and were good, then Allah arranges a good end result. But if the person takes harām (prohibited) means, then Allah arranges for him an evil end result. This is just as Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى stated in His Book:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ
وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ
فَسَنِيسِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

“As for he who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, and believes in the best reward, We will ease him towards ease.” (Al-Layl: 5-17)

So the means are provided to the people and the end result is with Allah. He جَلَّ وَعَلَا rewards the people of obedience and makes easy for them ease and aids them, and He punishes the people of sin. Allah gives mankind the ability and the means to do deeds for which they are punished, though He forbade them from sin and disobedience. So they are punished based on their bad intentions, evil behaviour and because they chose to be sinful. Allah stated regarding this:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ
وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ
فَسَنِيئَةٌ لِّعَسْرَىٰ

“As for the one who withholds (from giving) and considers himself free of need, and denies the best reward, then We will ease him towards difficulty.” (Al-Layl 8-10) So it is the person who takes the means, and then Allah decrees for him the end result based on his own actions and his intentions – and Allah did not compel him to sin or to act disobediently.

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ explained to the Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ that every affair is from the Decree and Ordainment (Qadā and Qadr) of Allah. So they asked, **“O Messenger of Allah! Should we not just rely on what is written in our book and not act?”** He responded, **“No. You must act because every person will be given ease in that for which he was created.”**²

So it is not allowed for a person to withhold from acting and say: “If Paradise has been written for me, then I’ll end up in Paradise. And if it decreed that I’m in the Fire, then that’s where I’ll end up.” This type of mindset is not permitted for a Muslim because does not know what has been written for him but he does know that he has a

² Bukhāri, no. 4945; Muslim, 2647.

choice and he knows what Allah has commanded and forbidden, and he knows what Allah has promised for those who do good and what He has threatened for those who do wrong. So a person must act for his own benefit. Do you know of any person who just sits back and not seek food or drink? And then says: "If Allah has decreed for me food and drink, then it'll come to me even as I am seated." No one does that.

Every one of us gets up and fulfils his needs. He will eat, drink, cloth himself, visit the bathroom and so on. This is the innate nature (fitrah) of mankind. His fitrah necessitates that he gets up and searches and fulfils his needs. And if a person was to approach him and beat him severely or kill his child, he will never stay silent and say: "This is the decree upon me so it doesn't matter." He will seek justice, seek his rightful revenge. So why does he not use the same argument here and allow people to abuse him, assault and harm his family and then say: "It doesn't matter, it is but the decree of Allah." This in itself proves that Allah has connected the means to the end-result. Even the birds and animals do not act upon these futile ideas. They do not remain in one place expecting provision to come to them. The birds fly out from their nests and go out and seek sustenance and they return with their bellies filled. That is because Allah has created them with this fitrah (innate nature) that they cannot attain anything unless they act. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has stated:

فَظَرَّتَ اللّٰهَ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ذَٰلِكَ
الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Adhere to the Allah’s fitrah upon which He has created all people. No alteration is there in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.” (Ar-Rūm: 30) and He جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ said:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

“He said: Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided it.” (Tāhā: 50) So Allah created each creature with an innate nature to seek out benefit for itself through action and striving. So the one who says: “Why bother acting since everything is already written” has lied and deceived himself because he acts every day for his own benefit and for his desires. He is just utilising the pre-decree as a proof not to worship Allah and not to do righteous deeds, and not to repent for his sins. He knows in his soul that he able to act and he is able to leave off acting.

Ahlus-Sunnah hold that if a person left off an act of obedience due to inability, then Allah will not call him to account. However, if he left it off due to laziness, then Allah will certainly call him to account because he was

negligent and careless. So, there is a difference between laziness and inability. It is the innate nature of every person that necessitates accepting all these reasoned arguments alongside the numerous proofs from the Quran and Sunnah.

It is true that there is no escape from the determinate Pre-Decree (Qadr) of Allah but you are commanded to act upon the means (*asbāb*) that will lead you to what you want. As for the making the end result happen, then that is in the Hands of Allah. So you may act and not get anything at the end due to the fact that Allah did not decree it for you. Nevertheless, without the striving, the end result will remain illusive and unattainable! Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: **"Strive for that which will benefit you, and seek the aid of Allah. Do not give up or despair. And if something [bad] befalls you, do not say: 'If only I had done such-and-such, then this-and-that would have happened.' Instead say: 'It is but the Decree of Allah and whatever He wills, He does (Qaddar Allāhu wa māshā'a fa'ala).'"**³

You worked and acted with the means and the attainment of the objective was with Allah. If you do not attain the objective, then you should not blame yourself because you acted in accordance to your ability, and you believe in the Qadā and Qadr of Allah. So you say instead: "Maybe Allah chose for me that which was

³ Muslim, no. 2664.

better. It is possible that if I got what I wanted, it would've been bad for me. So Allah withheld it from me for my benefit." In that way, you are never displeased with the Decree of Allah.

Every affair has been written already in the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lawh Al-Mahfoodh*). Allah ﷻ commanded the Pen to write, so it wrote everything that was to occur until the Day of Resurrection. And this was 50,000 years before the creation of the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was above the water.⁴ Everything has been written, pre-decreed and pre-determined and there is no doubt that it will occur at its prescribed time. You have been commanded to take the means and act, and trust in Allah, and what has been written for you will come to you. If you do not take the means, and you refuse to act, you will not attain anything and you would have disobeyed Allah and opposed your own innate nature with which you were created.

If want children, you must marry because that is the means to attain children. Then you marry, but you do not attain children, then that is the Decree of Allah. But if you want children and you don't marry, and you remain celibate, then you will certainly not have children because you did not take the means. So after striving and seeking and trusting in Allah, then whatever is written will come to you and it was never going to miss

⁴ Hadeeth reported in Muslim.

you. And if you strived and it missed you, then it was never going to come to you.

All the portions of the Decree are taken from the *Lawhul-Mahfoodh* such as what is written for the foetus in the womb of its mother. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا نُطْفَةً، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عَلَقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يُرْسَلُ إِلَيْهِ الْمَلَكُ فَيَنْفُخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحَ، وَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ: بِكُتْبِ رِزْقِهِ، وَأَجَلِهِ، وَعَمَلِهِ، وَشَقِيٍّ أَمْ سَعِيدٍ؛ فَوَاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُهُ إِنْ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا. وَإِنْ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا

“Verily the creation of each one of you is brought together in his mother’s womb for forty days in the form of a *nutfah* (a drop), then he becomes an *’alaqah* (clot of blood) for a like period, then a *mudghah* (morsel of flesh) for a like period, then there is sent to him the angel who blows his soul into him and who is commanded with four matters: to write down his *rizq* (sustenance), his life span, his

actions, and whether he will be happy or unhappy (i.e., whether or not he will enter Paradise). By the One, other than Whom there is no deity, verily one of you performs the actions of the people of Paradise until there is but an arms length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he acts with the actions of the people of the Hellfire and thus enters it. And verily one of you performs the actions of the people of the Hellfire, until there is but an arms length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him and so he acts with the actions of the people of Paradise and thus he enters it.”⁵

So all of this is taken from the Preserved Tablet in which everything was already written.

End.

⁵ Bukhari and Muslim.