Belief in Divine Determining

# Outline

1. *Opening:* Record Clear! (From the 14th Word)
2. *Story:* A private palace
3. *Reading Circle:* Divine Determining (From 26th Word)

# Opening: *Record Clear!*

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*Nor anything fresh or dry but is [inscribed] in a Record Clear (6:59)*

*And of all things have We taken account in a Record Clear (36:12)*

*From Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth; nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but it is in the Record Clear. (34:3)*

In order to be convinced of the elevated truth which these verses state, that, *“All things together with all their states are recorded before they come into existence, when they come into existence, and after they have departed; and they are being recorded,”* we point out to be observed the All-Glorious Inscriber’s including and **preserving** in immaterial fashion in the **seeds** and **roots** of the innumerable well-ordered creatures which He **changes every season** on the page of the earth, and **particularly in the spring**, the indexes of their beings, life-histories, and principles according to which they act; and when they die His inscribing in immaterial fashion with the same pen of **Divine Determining** those indexes, life-histories and principles in the simple **seeds in their fruits**; and every passing spring even His preserving them –whether fresh or dry– in perfect order in seeds like dry chips of wood and **bones**, limited and tiny.

It is as if **each spring** is attached like a flower to the face of the earth in **extremely orderly and balanced** fashion by the hand of One All-Beautiful and All-Glorious, then plucked from it; each is placed on it, then removed. While the reality is this, one of the strangest forms of man’s misguidance is that he calls this natural writing, this inscribing full of art, this passive pattern of wisdom which is an index of dominical art and only a reflection and manifestation of the **Preserved Tablet**, *‘nature’*, and considers it to be the source and active and effective. Can there be any comparison between the ground and the Pleiades? Can there be any comparison between reality and the views of the heedless?

* TAKE AWAY POINT:
  + *Nothing is random. A particular seed will grow into a particular plant when the conditions are ripe.*
* DRILL:
  + Give some examples for preservation of programs and past histories in creation. (DNA, adaptation, mutation, tree rinks, human memories/writings/data, …)
* PRAYER:
  + *Rabbena la tüziğ gulubena ba’de iz hedeytena ve heb lena min ledünke rahmeh.. inneke entel-vehhab..*

# Story: *A private palace!*

Belief in Divine Determining produces such **pleasure and happiness** it is beyond description. We shall only allude to it with the following comparison.

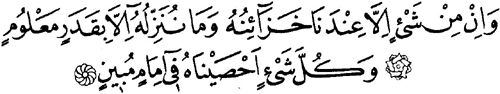
Two men travelled to the seat of government of a king, and there entered his **private palace**, a place of rare wonders. One of them **did not recognize** the king and laying hands on everything and stealing them, wanted to settle there. However, he experienced certain difficulties, for he had to manage the palace and its park, oversee its revenues, work its machines, and feed its strange animals; he suffered **constant distress**. The paradise-like park became hell for him. He pitied everything. He could not govern them. He passed his time **regretfully**. Then this thieving, unmannerly man was cast into prison as a punishment.

The second man **recognized** the king and knew himself to be his guest. He believed that all the matters in the park and palace occurred through the regulation of the law, and that everything functioned with perfect ease in accordance with a program. Leaving the difficulties to the **king's law**, he benefited with **complete enjoyment** from all the pleasures of that Paradise-like garden, and relying on the king's mercy and the efficacy of the administrative laws, he saw everything as agreeable and passed his life in perfect pleasure and happiness. He understood the meaning of the saying: *“He who believes in Divine Determining is saved from grief.”*

* TAKE AWAY POINT:
  + *Everything functions in accordance with a program.*
  + *Compliance with the worldly and spiritual laws (muttakî) will bring in complete enjoyment.*
* DRILL:
  + Give some examples for compliance and noncompliance with the physical and spiritual laws.
  + What does *“muttaki”* mean in terms of physical and spiritual laws?
* NOTE: Cenabı Hakk'ın **ata**, **kaza** ve **kader** namında **üç kanunu** vardır. Ata, kaza kanununu, kaza da kaderi bozar. Mesela: Bir şey hakkında verilen karar, kader demektir. O kararın infazı, kaza demektir. O kararın ibtaliyle hükmü kazadan afvetmek, ata demektir. Evet yumuşak bir otun damarları katı taşı deldiği gibi, ata da kaza kanununun kat'iyetini deler. Kaza da ok gibi kader kararlarını deler. Demek atanın kazaya nisbeti, kazanın kadere nisbeti gibidir. Ata, kaza kanununun şümulünden ihraçtır. Kaza da kader kanununun külliyetinden ihracıdır. Bu hakikate vakıf olan arif*: “Ya ilahi! Hasenatım senin atandandır. Seyyiatım da senin kazandandır. Eğer atan olmasa idi, helak olurdum”* der.
  + **KADER** (karar) *(imam-ı mubin,* Record Clear) *(lehv-i mahfuz)* (plan/program) *(İlim)*
  + **KAZA** (infaz) *(kitab-ı mubin ,* Clear Book) *(lehv-i mahv ve ispat)* (implementation) *(Kudret)*
  + **ATA** (iptal)
    - *“Bazan belâ nâzil oluyor; gelirken karşısına sadaka çıkar, geri çevirir.”*
    - *“Anne babaya iyilik, ömrü uzatır. Yalan rızkı daraltır. Dua kazayı geri çevirir.”*

# Reading Circle A: *Divine Determining*

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And there is not a thing but its [sources and] treasures [inexhaustible] are with Us, but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures (15:21) And of all things have We taken account in a Clear Book (36:12)

1. **Divine Determining and the power of choice co-exist.**

Divine Determining and the power of choice are aspects of a belief pertaining to state and conscience which show the final limits of Islam and belief; they are not theoretical and do not pertain to knowledge. That is to say, a believer attributes everything to Almighty God, even his actions and self, till finally the power of choice confronts him, so he cannot evade his obligation and responsibility. It tells him: *“You are responsible and under obligation.”* Then, so that he does not become proud at his good deeds and his achievements, Divine Determining confronts him, saying: *“Know your limits; the one who does them is not you.”* Yes, Divine Determining and the power of choice are at the final degrees of belief and Islam; the former has been included among the matters of belief to **save the soul from pride**, and the latter, to **make it admit to its responsibility**. Obdurate evil-commanding souls clinging to Divine Determining in order to clear themselves of the responsibility of the evils they have committed, and their becoming proud and conceited on account of the virtues bestowed on them and their relying on the power of choice, are actions totally opposed to the mystery of Divine Determining and wisdom of the power of choice; they are not matters pertaining to knowledge which might give rise to such actions.

Yes, as the Qur'an states, man is totally responsible for his evils, for it is he who wants the evils. Since evils are destructive, man may perpetrate much destruction with a single evil act, like burning down a house with one match, and he becomes deserving of an awesome punishment. However, he does not have the right to take pride in good deeds; his part in them is extremely small. For what wants and requires the good deeds is Divine mercy, and what creates them is dominical power. Both request and reply, reason and cause, are from God. Man only comes to have them through supplication, belief, consciousness, and consent. As for evils, it is man's soul that wants them, either through capacity or through choice, —like in the white and beautiful light of the sun some substances become black and putrefy, and the blackness is related to their capacity— however, it is Almighty God Who creates the evils through a Divine law which comprises numerous benefits. That is to say, the cause and the request are from the soul, so that it is the soul which is responsible, while it is Almighty God Who creates the evils and brings them into existence, and since they have other results and fruits which are good, they are good.

It is for the above reason that the *'acquisition'* (kasb) of evil, that is, the desire for evil, is evil, but the creation of evil is not evil. A lazy man who receives damage from rain, which comprises many instances of good, may not say that the rain is not mercy. Yes, together with a minor evil in its creation are numerous instances of good. To abandon that good for a minor evil becomes a greater evil. Therefore, a minor evil becomes like good. There is no evil or ugliness in Divine creation. They rather pertain to His servant's wish and to his capacity.

Furthermore, Divine Determining is both exempt from evil and ugliness with regard to results and fruits, and free from tyranny and ugliness with respect to reason and cause. Because Divine Determining looks to the true causes and acts justly. Men construct their judgements on causes which they see superficially and fall into error within the pure justice of Divine Determining. For example, a judge finds you guilty of theft and sends you to prison. You are not a thief, but you have committed a murder which no one knows about. Thus, Divine Determining also sentenced you to imprisonment, but it sentenced you for the secret murder and acted justly. Since the judge sentenced you for a theft of which you were innocent, he acted unjustly. Thus, in a single thing the justice of Divine Determining and Divine creation and man's wrongful choice or acquisition were apparent in two respects; you can make analogies with this for other things. That is to say, with regard to origin and end, source and branch, cause and results, Divine Determining and creation are exempt from evil, ugliness, and tyranny.

1. **Divine Determining.**

Divine Determining has a connection with **cause and effect**. That is, this effect will occur through this cause. In which case, it may not be said that *“Since so-and-so's death is determined at such-and-such a time, what fault has the man who fired the rifle through his own choice, for if he had not fired it, the other still would have died?”*

**Q:** Why may it not be said?

**A:** Because Divine Determining specified that so-and-so's death would occur through the man's rifle. If you suppose that he did not fire the rifle, then you are supposing that Divine Determining had no connection with it, so with what would you decree his death? If you imagine cause and effect to be separate like the **Jabriyya**, or you deny Divine Determining like the **Mu'tazila**, you leave the **Sunni School** and join the heretics. We people of truth say: *“If he had not fired the rifle, we do not know if he would have died.”* The Jabariyya say: *“If he had not fired it, he still would have died.”* While the Mu'tazila say: *“If he had not fired it, he would not have died.”*

1. **Power of choice.**

According to Maturidi, inclination, the essence of the power of choice, is a theoretical or relative matter and may be attributed to God's servants. But Ash'ari considered it to have existence, so did not attribute it to them. However, according to Ash'ari, the power of disposal within inclination is a theoretical matter, which makes the inclination and the disposal together a relative matter lacking a definite external existence. Theoretical or relative matters do not require causes through which, for their existence, necessity would intervene and nullify the will and power of choice. Rather, if the cause of the theoretical matters acquires the weight of preference, the theoretical matter may become actual and existent. In which case, at that juncture, it may be abandoned. The Qur'an may say to a person at that point: *“This is evil; do not do it.”* Indeed, if God's servants had been the creators of their actions and had had the power to create, then their wills would have been removed. For an established rule in the sciences of religion and philosophy is: *“If a thing is not necessary, it may not come into existence [of itself].”* That is, there has to be a cause for a thing to come into existence. The cause necessarily requires the effect. Then no power of choice would remain.

**Q:** *“Since the one who creates the murder is Almighty God, why do you call me a murderer?”*

**A:** Because according to the rules of grammar, the active participle is derived from the infinitive, which is a relative matter. It cannot be derived from the verbal noun, which is an actual or existent matter. The infinitive is our acquisition; so we are called the murderer. The verbal noun is Almighty God's creature. Something which gives an inkling of responsibility cannot be derived from the verbal noun.

For sure, man's faculty of will and power of choice are weak and a theoretical matter, but Almighty God, the Absolutely Wise One, made that weak and partial will a condition for the connection of His universal will. He in effect says: *“My servant! Whichever way you wish to take with your will, I will take you there. In which case the responsibility is yours!”* If the comparison is not mistaken, you take a powerless child onto your shoulders and leaving the choice to him, tell him you will take him wherever he wishes. The child wants to go to a high mountain so you take him there, but he either catches cold or falls. So of course you reprimand him, saying, *“You wanted to go there,”* and you give him a slap. Thus, Almighty God, the Firmest of Judges, makes His servant's will, which is utterly weak, a condition, and His universal will follows it.

*In Short:* O man! You have **a** **will** known as **the power of choice** which is extremely weak, but whose hand in evil acts and destruction is extremely long and in good deeds is extremely short. Give one of the hands of that will of yours to supplication, so that it may reach Paradise, a fruit of the chain of good deeds, and stretch to eternal happiness. And give its other hand to the seeking of forgiveness, so that it may be short for evil deeds and will not reach the Zakkum-tree of Hell, which is one fruit of that accursed tree. That is, just as supplication and reliance on God greatly strengthen the inclination to do good, so repentance and the seeking of forgiveness cut the inclination to do evil, putting an end to its transgressions.

1. **Freedom.**

**Q:** *“Divine Determining has bound us like this. It has negated our freedom. Isn't belief in it a burden and irksome for the heart and spirit, which yearn for expansion and to roam freely?”*

**A:** Absolutely not! It is not burdensome; it rather affords a luminosity and joy producing a lightness, ease, and spirit, and ensuring confidence and security. Because if man does not believe in Divine Determining, he is compelled to bear a burden as heavy as the world on the shoulders of his spirit within a constricted space, which allows him only an insignificant independence and temporary freedom. For man is connected with the whole universe. He has infinite aims and desires. But since his power, will, and freedom are insufficient to meet a millionth of these, it may be understood how awesome is the burden of the distress he bears. Thus, belief in Divine Determining throws that burden in its entirety onto the ship of Divine Determining, allowing him to roam free within its perfections with perfect ease and perfect freedom of spirit and heart. It only negates the petty freedom of the evil-commanding soul and smashes its Pharaoh-like tyranny and lordship, and its acting as it wishes. Belief in Divine Determining produces such pleasure and happiness it is beyond description. We shall only allude to it with the following comparison.

Two men travelled to the seat of government of a king, and there entered his private palace, a place of rare wonders. One of them did not recognize the king and laying hands on everything and stealing them, wanted to settle there. However, he experienced certain difficulties, for he had to manage the palace and its park, oversee its revenues, work its machines, and feed its strange animals; he suffered constant distress. The paradise-like park became hell for him. He pitied everything. He could not govern them. He passed his time regretfully. Then this thieving, unmannerly man was cast into prison as a punishment. The second man recognized the king and knew himself to be his guest. He believed that all the matters in the park and palace occurred through the regulation of the law, and that everything functioned with perfect ease in accordance with a program. Leaving the difficulties to the king's law, he benefited with complete enjoyment from all the pleasures of that Paradise-like garden, and relying on the king's mercy and the efficacy of the administrative laws, he saw everything as agreeable and passed his life in perfect pleasure and happiness. He understood the meaning of the saying: *“He who believes in Divine Determining is saved from grief.”*

1. **Tribulations.**

**Q:** *“In the First Topic you proved that everything about Divine Determining is good and beautiful. Even the evil that comes from it is good, and the ugliness, beautiful. But the disasters and tribulations in this world refute that statement.”*

**A:** O my soul and my friend who feel severe pain out of intense compassion! The facts that all virtues and perfections return to existence and that the basis of all rebellion, calamities, and defects is nonexistence are a proof that existence is pure good and non-existence, pure evil. Since non-existence is pure evil, circumstances that either result in nonexistence or give an inkling of it, also comprise evil. Therefore, life, the most brilliant light of existence, proceeding through different circumstances, finds strength; it encounters varying situations and is purified; it takes on numerous qualities and produces the desired results, and enters many stages and displays comprehensively the impresses of the Bestower of Life's Names. It is due to this fact that certain things happen to living creatures in the form of griefs, calamities, difficulties, and tribulations whereby the lights of existence are renewed in their lives, and the darkness of non-existence draws distant and their lives are purified. For arrest, repose, silence, idleness, rest, and monotony are all, both in quality and as conditions, non-existence. Even the greatest pleasure is reduced to nothing by monotony.

**In Short:** Since life displays the impresses of the Most Beautiful Names, everything that happens to it is good. For example, an extremely rich and infinitely skillful person who is proficient in many crafts, for an hour and in return for a wage, clothes a miserable wretch in a bejeweled, artistically fashioned garment. This garment he made in order to make the miserable man act as a model and to display the works of his art and his extensive wealth. He works the garment on the man, gives it various forms, and alters it. In order to display every variety of his art, he cuts it, changes it, and lengthens and shortens it. Can the poor man receiving the wage be justified it he says to the person: *“You are giving me trouble. You are making me bow down and stand up. By cutting and shortening this garment which makes me more beautiful, you are spoiling my beauty”?* Does he have the right to tell him: *“You are acting unkindly and unfairly”*? Thus, like him, in order to display the impresses of His Most Beautiful Names, the All-Glorious Maker, the Peerless Creator, alters within numerous circumstances the garment of existence He clothes on living creatures, bejeweled with senses and subtle faculties like eyes, ears, the reason, and the heart. He changes it within very many situations. Among these are circumstances in the form of suffering and calamity which show the meanings of some of His Names, and the rays of mercy within flashes of wisdom, and the subtle instances of beauty within those rays of mercy.

* TAKE AWAY POINTS:
  + *Divine Determining and power of choice co-exist and doesn’t negate each other.*
  + *The first saves the soul from pride, the second makes it admit to its responsibility.*
  + *There is no evil in Divine creation. They rather pertain to His servant's wish and to his capacity.*
  + *A lazy man who receives damage from rain, which comprises many instances of good, may not say that the rain is not mercy.*
  + *The 'acquisition' of evil, that is, the desire for evil, is evil, but the creation of evil is not evil.*
  + *Just as supplication and reliance on God greatly strengthen the inclination to do good, so repentance and the seeking of forgiveness cut the inclination to do evil.*
  + *Even the greatest pleasure is reduced to nothing by monotony. The meanings of some of His Names, and the rays of mercy within flashes of wisdom, and the subtle instances of beauty within those rays of mercy are sometimes shown in the form of suffering.*
  + *He who believes in Divine Determining is saved from grief.*
  + *Ash’ari and Maturidi are on the straight path. Jabriyya and Mu’tazila have deviated from it.*

Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama‘a

**The Jabriyya**

*no control predestined*

**Ash’ari**

*Inclination*

Shafi

**Maturidi**

*Power of Choice*

Hanafi

**The Mu’tazila**

**(Qadariyya)**

*full control*

*no destiny*

* POEM:

*I am ephemeral; I do not want another who is thus.*

*I am impotent; I do not want another who is thus.*

*I have surrendered my spirit to the Most Merciful; I do not want another.*

*I want another, but let him be an eternal friend.*

*I am a mere atom, but I desire an Everlasting Sun.*

*I am nothing, yet I wish for these beings, all of them*.

* SUPPLICATION: The 33 degrees of reflection in the recitation, **God is Most Great**.

*God is Most Great! The Eternal, All-Knowing, All-Wise, Most Generous, Most Compassionate, All-Beauteous, the Inscriber, the Pre-Eternal! What is the reality of the universe in its entirety and in its parts, and its pages and levels, and what is the reality of beings altogether and singly, in their existence and continuation, but the lines of the pen of His Determining and Decree, and His setting in order and determining, with knowledge and wisdom; what are they but the skillful inscriptions of His knowledge and wisdom and regulating and forming, with art and favor; the adornments of the shining hand of His art and favor and embellishing and illuminating, with grace and munificence; the flowers of the subtleties of His favor and munificence and making known and loved, with mercy and bounty; the fruits of the effusions of His mercy and bounty and pity and compassion, with beauty and perfection; the flashes and manifestations of His beauty and perfection through the testimony of the transience of the mirrors and the ephemerality of the places of manifestation and the permanence of that transcendent, eternal beauty, and its constant manifestation and appearance throughout the passage of the seasons, centuries, and ages, and the perpetual bestowal of bounties throughout the passage of the creatures and days and people?*

*Indeed, a perfect work points to one possessing intellect who performs a perfect act, and the perfect act points to one with understanding who possesses perfect names, and the perfect names point to perfect attributes, and perfect attributes point to perfect qualities, and the perfect qualities point to the perfection of the essence from which they proceed, and this is absolutely certain.*

*Indeed, the ephemerality of the mirrors and death of creatures together with the perpetual manifestation and constant effulgence is the clearest of proofs that their apparent beauty does not belong to the places of manifestation; it is the most eloquent statement and clearest argument for a transcendent beauty, and renewed bestowal, to the Necessary Existent, to the Enduring One, the Loving One...*

*O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad from pre-eternity to post-eternity to the number of things encompassed by Divine Knowledge, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.*

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*Congratulations! You’ve completed this unit.*