# The Manifest Record and the Manifest Book

For example, a seed exhibits Destiny in two ways: demonstrating the Manifest Record (Imamun Mubin) and displaying the Manifest Book (Kitabun Mubin).

The Manifest Record, another title for Divine Knowledge and Command, includes all things and events in the universe. That is, everything and event has a pre-existence in Divine Knowledge. When it is time for them to come into the world or when God wills to bring them into the world, He clothes them in material existence. The Manifest Record refers to this. A seed contains the future life of the plant that will grow from it. The plant's life also ends in seeds, each of which may be regarded as the plant's memory. The new plants that will grow from those seeds will be almost identical with the original plant, because none of them have a conscious spirit endowed with free will. Thus, besides serving as an analogy for the Manifest Record and therefore Divine Destiny and Knowledge, a seed also indicates the Supreme Preserved Tablet (Lawhun Mahfuz) and corresponds to human memory in the human kingdom. In addition, because a seed indicates that the life-histories of creatures are recorded, it also points to afterlife.

The Manifest Book is another title for Divine Will and God's creational and operational laws of the universe. If we refer to the Manifest Record as Formal or Theoretical Destiny, the Manifest Book can be referred to as Actual Destiny. The future full-grown form of a plant or a living being, which displays all the content of the seed or fertilized ovum, can be understood as its Actual Destiny.

In short, like seeds or plants or fertilized ovum and living beings, everything that exists clearly points to Divine Destiny, determining and judging, as well as measuring, particularizing, and individualizing. True dreams that inform us of certain future events are another, undeniable indication of Destiny or Divine predetermination.

**Question:** Why is belief in Destiny one of the essentials of faith?

**Answer:** Our self-conceit and weak devotion leads us to attribute our accomplishments and good deeds to ourselves and to feel proud of ourselves. But the Qur'an explicitly states: God creates you and what you do (37:96), meaning that Divine Compassion demands good deeds and that the Power of the Lord creates them. If we analyze our lives, eventually we realize and admit that God directs us to good acts and usually prevents us from doing what is wrong.

In addition, by endowing us with sufficient capacity, power, and means to accomplish many things, He enables us to realize many accomplishments and good deeds. As God guides us to good deeds and causes us to will and then do them, the real cause of our good deeds is Divine Will. We can “own” our good deeds only through faith, sincere devotion, praying to be deserving of them, consciously believing in the need to do them, and being pleased with what God has ordained. Given this, there is no reason for us to boast or be proud; rather, we should remain humble and thank God.

On the other hand, we like to deny responsibility for our sins and misdeeds by ascribing them to Destiny. But since God neither likes nor approves of such acts, all of them belong to us and are committed by acting upon our free will. God allows sins and gives them external forms, for if He did not our free will would be pointless. Sins are the result of our decision, through our free will, to sin. God calls and guides us to good deeds, even inspires them within us, but free will enables us to disobey our Creator. Therefore, we “own” our sins and misdeeds. To protect ourselves against sin and the temptations of Satan and our carnal, evil-commanding souls, we must struggle to remove or discipline our inclinations toward sin through repentance and asking forgiveness for them. In addition, we must direct and exhort ourselves to do good deeds through prayer, devotion, and trust in God.

In short, because we have free will and are enjoined to follow religious obligations and refrain from sin and wrong deeds, we cannot ascribe our sins to God. Divine Destiny exists so that believers do not take pride in their “own” good deeds but rather thank God for them. We have free will so that the rebellious carnal self does not escape the consequences of its sins.

A second, important point to mention is that we usually complain about past events and misfortune. Even worse, we sometimes despair and abandon ourselves to a dissolute lifestyle, and might even begin to complain against God. However, Destiny allows us to relate past events and misfortunes to it so that we can receive relief, security, and consolation.

So, whatever happened in the past should be considered in the light of Destiny; what is to come, as well as sins and questions of responsibility, should be referred to human free will. In this way, the extremes of fatalism (jabr) and denying Destiny's role in human actions (i'tizal, the view of the Mu'tazila) is reconciled.