**BELIEF IN QADER**

*Sura Ahzab/Ayat 38:*

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There is no hindrance for the Prophet with respect to what God has ordained and made lawful for him. This was God's way with those (Prophets) who passed before. The command of God is a decree determined (in due measures for every thing, event and individual).(1)

*Sura Qamer/Ayat 49:*

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Surely, We have created each and every thing by (precise) measure.(2)

*SuraHadid/Ayat 22:*

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No affliction occurs on the earth (such as droughts, famines, or earthquakes), or in your own persons (such as diseases, damages to your property, or the loss of loved ones), but it is recorded in a Book before We bring it into existence – doing so is surely easy for God –**12**(3)

12. That is, recording such acts out of His Eternal Knowledge and keeping them recorded, and then bringing them into existence by His Power for many wise purposes – such as to punish the sinful as they deserve, or to warn them against their end, or to forgive the sins of believers, or to promote the sinless to higher ranks – is absolutely easy for God.

The verse also includes a consolation for people in affliction. Provided the intended lesson has been learned, when we consider any misfortune in the light of Divine Destiny, or as an application of Divine Destiny, we may find rest and not feel the need to complain about it. The verse to come corroborates this.

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Hudhaifa b. Usaid reported directly from Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) that lie said: When the drop of (semen) remains in the womb for forty or fifty (days) or forty nights, the angel comes and says: My Lord, will he be good or evil? And both these things would be written. Then the angel says: My Lord, would he be male or female? And both these things are written. And his deeds and actions, his death, his livelihood; these are also recorded. Then his document of destiny is rolled and there is no, addition to and subtraction from it.(4)

All reported: We were in a funeral in the graveyard of Gharqad that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) came to us and we sat around him. He had a stick with him. He lowered his head and began to scratch the earth with his stick, and then raid: There is not one amongst you whom a scat in Paradise or Hell has not been allotted and about whom it has not been written down whether he would be an evil person or a blessed person. A person said: Allah's Messenger, should we not then depend npon our destiny and abandon our deeds? Thereupon he said: Acts of everyone will be facilitated in, that which has been created for him so that whoever belongs to the com. pany of the blessed will have good works made easier for himand whoever belongs to the unfortunate ones will have evil acts made easier for him. He then recited this verse (from the Qur'an):" Then, who gives to the needy and guardsagainst evil and accepts the excellent (the truth of Islam and the path of righteousness it prescribes), We shall make easy for him the easy end and who is miserly and considers himself above need, We shall make easy for him the dificult end". (5)

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**Divine Decree and Destiny (6)**

In Relation to Divine Knowledge. God is completely beyond our abilities of comparison and conception, and so we can acquire only some knowledge of His Attributes and Names, not of His Divine Essence, by meditating on and studying His acts and creatures. To understand His acts, sometimes we have to resort to comparisons, as allowed in the Qur'anic verse: God's is the highest comparison (30:27). We may get a glimpse of the relationship between Divine Decree and Destiny and Divine Knowledge by pondering the following comparisons:

Suppose an extremely skilful man, who is an engineer as well as an architect and a builder, wants to build a magnificent house. First, he must determine what type of house he wants (the house exists in his mind). Then, he draws the blueprints (the house exists as an actual design or plan). After this, he builds the house according to the blueprints (the house acquires a material existence). As people can see the house, its image is recorded in numerous memories. Even if it is completely destroyed, it lives on in these memories and in the builder's mind and plan (the final form of the house's existence, which has acquired a kind of perpetuity).

Before writing a book, an author must have its full content or knowledge of its full meaning in her mind (the book exists as knowledge or meaning). To make this knowledge or meaning visible and known, she must express it in words. Before doing this she must arrange it (a "blueprint"), and then write it down (material existence). Even if the book is destroyed and vanishes, it continues to live in the memories of those who read or heard of it, and in the author's own mind.

Such existence—existence in mind—is the thing's essential existence. Even if the thing in question is not put into words or practice, its knowledge or meaning exists in the mind. Therefore, although knowledge or meaning need matter to be seen and known in this world, they are the essence of existence, upon which material existence depends.

Likewise, God has full and exact knowledge of the universe and all its contents. This is stated many times in the Qur'an as, for example, in:

It may be that you dislike a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you. God knows, but you know not. (2:216)

Say: "Whether you hide what is in your breasts or reveal it, God knows it. He knows all that the heavens and the Earth contain; and He has power over all things." (3:29)

With Him are the keys of the Unseen. None but He knows them. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls but He knows it; not a grain amid the darkness of the soil, nothing of wet or dry, but (it is) in a Manifest Book. (6:59)

Say: "If the ocean were ink for the words of my Lord, assuredly the ocean would be used up before the words of my Lord were finished, even if We brought another (ocean) like it, for its aid." (18:109)

Even if He had not created the universe, it still would exist in His Knowledge. Since God is beyond all time and space, both of which are united in His Knowledge as a single point, and since His eternal, all-encompassing Knowledge does not depend on them, time is a unified whole. Given this, precedence or posteriority, sequence or division of time, and all other time-related concepts do not exist for Him. We should always remember that our categories of past, present, and future time are only artificial categories designed to make our lives more manageable. Time and space are also only two dimensions of creation.

Everything eternally exists in God's Knowledge, and He literally knows everything about everything. Divine Power clothes a thing in material existence according to Divine Will, and this transference from Knowledge into our own world takes place within the limits of time and space. Knowledge and Will are two essential Attributes of Divine Being: God knows things, things exist in His Knowledge, His Will determines all of their specific and general characteristics, and His Power gives them material existence. The overall relationship between Divine Knowledge and Destiny, is best expressed as: There is not a thing but with us are the stores thereof. We send it not down save in appointed measure (15:21).

In Relation to Registry and Duplication. Everything that exists in Divine Knowledge has an individualized form and a certain measure, or, if we may say so, as a plan or project, is in a Record. This record is called, in one respect, the Supreme Preserved Tablet (85:22) and, in another, the Manifest Record (36:12). The Qur'an states that nothing befalls us save that which God has decreed or preordained for us (9:51) and there is not a moving creature on the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are communities like mankind, and that God has neglected nothing in the Record (6:38).

This Record (or original Register) is a for Divine Knowledge in relation to creation. During the "process" of creation, this Register is duplicated. Its first, most comprehensive duplication—all of creation—is the Tablet of Effacement and Confirmation (or the Manifest Book.) While the Supreme Preserved Tablet (or the Manifest Record) contains the originals of everything in Divine Knowledge, as well as the principles and laws of creation, the Tablet of Effacement and Confirmation is the reality and, metaphorically, a page of the stream of time. Divine Power transfers things from the Supreme Preserved Tablet onto the Tablet of Effacement and Confirmation, arranges them on the page of time and, in turn, attaches them to the string of time. Nothing changes on the Supreme Preserved Tablet, for everything there is fixed. But during the process of creation, God effaces what He wills, and confirms and establishes what He wills (13:39).

After birth, everyone is registered in a Registry of Births. Then, based on this information, everyone receives an identity document. Similarly, everyone's complete personal characteristics, particularities, and future life-history are registered on the Supreme Preserved Tablet, which then is copied by angels. They record all the information related to one's body, and encode it in cells as information or laws. For this information to work and come to life, however, the spirit must be breathed into the body.

The other part of this copy is fastened around our neck as an invisible book (17:13). We enact whatever is in that book as long as we are alive. This does not mean that Destiny or predetermination compels us to act in a certain way, for Destiny is no more than a sort of knowledge. For example, you send someone somewhere to do a job. Having procured the necessary supplies, you brief the man and send him on his way. Since you know in advance how he will behave, you record the journey's details in a notebook and hide it in a secret pocket in his jacket. Unaware of the notebook, this fellow behaves as he wishes while traveling. You also dispatch two of your most reliable men to follow him in order to observe and videotape secretly whatever he says and does. When he returns, you compare the videotapes with the notebook and see that they are exactly the same. Afterwards, you interview him to see if he followed your instructions, and then either reward, punish, or forgive him accordingly.

As in the example above, God, Who is beyond all time and space and therefore has comprehensive knowledge, records our life-history in the original Register. Angels copy this information and fasten a personal register, which we call destiny or fate, around each person's neck. God's apparent foreknowledge and recording of our deeds and words do not compel us to perform them, for whatever we say or do is the result of using our free will. [1] Our complete life is recorded by two angels, called KiramunKatibun (noble scribers). On the Day of Judgment, our record will be presented to us, and we will be told to read it:

Every man's book of life-history (fate) have We fastened around his neck, and We shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open. (It will be said unto him): "Read your book. Your own self suffices as a reckoner against you this day." (17:13–14)

In Relation to Divine Will. God registers everything in His Knowledge in a record containing each thing's unique characteristics, life span, provision, time and place of birth and death, and all of its words and actions. All of this takes place by Divine Will, for it is through Divine Will that every thing and event, whether in the realm of Divine Knowledge or in this world, is known and given a certain course or direction. Nothing exists beyond the scope of the Divine Will.

For example, an embryo faces innumerable alternatives: whether it will be a live being, whether it will exist or not, when and where it will be born and die, and how long it will live, to mention just a few. All beings are completely unique in complexion and countenance, character, likes and dislikes, and so on, although they are formed from the same basic elements. A particle of food entering a body, whether an embryo or fully developed, also faces countless alternatives as to its final destination. If a single particle destined for the right eye's pupil were to go to the right ear, this might result in an anomaly.

Thus, the all-encompassing Divine Will orders everything according to a miraculously calculated plan, and is responsible for the universe's miraculous order and harmony. No leaf falls and no seed germinates unless God wills it to do so.

Our free will is included in Divine Will. However, our relation with Divine Will differs from that of other beings, for only we (and the jinn) can choose, a consequence of free will. Based on His knowledge of how we will act and speak, God Almighty has recorded all details of our life. As He is not bound by the human, and therefore artificial, division of time into past, present, and future, what we consider predetermination exists in relation to us, not to God Himself. For Him, predetermination means His eternal knowledge of our acts.[2]

In sum: Divine Will dominates creation, and nothing can exist or happen beyond Its scope. It is also responsible for the universe's miraculous order and harmony, and gives every thing and event a specific direction and characteristics. The existence of Divine Will does not negate human free will.

In Relation to Creation. There are two aspects of the relation between Divine Decree and Destiny and creation. First, as a determining and compelling factor, Destiny is absolutely dominant everywhere, except for the realm in which our free will has a part. Everything occurs according to Its measure and determination, judgment and direction. God is the absolute owner of sovereignty, and thus does what He wills. No can call Him to account for His acts. Being absolutely Just and Wise, and absolutely Merciful and Compassionate, He does only good and never wrongs His creatures.

We cannot interfere with the universe's operation. The sun always sends heat and light independent of us, the Earth rotates on its axis and around the sun, days and months pass, the seasons and years come and go, and we have no control over nature. There are innumerable instances of wisdom in all of God's acts, all of which benefit us. So, we must study and reflect on His acts to discover their wisdom:

In the creation of the heavens and the Earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for men of understanding. Those that remember and mention God standing, sitting, and lying down, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the Earth. "Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Protect us from the punishment of the Fire." (3:190–91)

We should reflect on what happens to us. God never wills evil for His creatures, for whatever evil befalls you is from yourself (4:79). In other words, our sins are the source of our misfortunes. God allows misfortunes to strike us so that our sins will be forgiven or so that we will be promoted to higher ranks. But this does not mean that God, for a reason known only to Him, sometimes overlooks our sins and does not punish us.

The second aspect of this relationship concerns the religious injunctions and prohibitions, which relate to human free will. While Divine Destiny is absolutely dominant in those areas in which our free will has no part (e.g., creating and controlling all things and beings, as well as animate and inanimate bodies, planetary movements, and all natural events or phenomena), It takes our free will into consideration. God creates all things and events, including all our deeds, because He has honored us with free will and prepared an eternal abode for us. Although He desires that we always do what is good and insistently invites us to it, He does not refrain from giving eternal, physical existence to our bad choices and evil acts, however displeased with them He is.

[1] Such foreknowledge and prerecording are apparent, because past and future time are relevant only to humanity. They cannot, and do not, apply to God. As He "sees" everything simultaneously, there is no such thing as "fore" or "pre" when speaking of Him.

[2] Islam does not accept the theistic concept of God, namely, that He created the universe and left it to run itself. We are contained by time and space, and therefore are limited in the following ways: we cannot draw exactly true conclusions about the relation between the Creator and the creation, we cannot perceive eternity, and we have little true information about this world. God is beyond all time and space, infinite and eternal. He holds the universe in His "hand" and controls and manages it as He wills. However, so that we might glimpse His actions and acquire some knowledge of Him and His Attributes, He allows those of His manifestations related to creation to be limited by time and space. If He did not, life could not exist and we could acquire no knowledge of Him and the universe. Therefore, what we have said about His Will and Destiny should be considered in light of the fact that we can talk about these matters only from within the bounds of this life (limited by time, space, and matter) and of our very existence.

References:

**(1) 33:38/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(2)54:49/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(3)57:22/The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal**

**(4) Sahih Muslim, Book #033, Hadith #6392**

**(5) Sahih Muslim, Book #033, Hadith #6398**

**(6)FethullahGülen on 14 September 2001. Posted in** [**Essentials of the Islamic Faith**](http://fgulen.com/en/fethullah-gulens-works/faith/essentials-of-the-islamic-faith)