

ISLAMIC CREED SERIES • 8

DIVINE WILL AND PREDESTINATION

In the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah

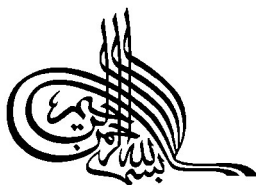
القضاء والقدر

Dr. 'Umar S. al-Ashqar

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي
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IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



**DIVINE WILL
AND
PREDESTINATION**



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Dr. 'Umar S. al-Ashqar

Translated by:
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All Praise is due to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family and Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day.

Free will and predestination are important and very interesting issues of discussion by all religions and most philosophers. Belief in Destiny, both good and bad, is an integral part of the Islamic creed.

Dr. 'Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar tackled the issue in the last book of his creed (*'Aqeedah*) series. As usual, he has dealt with the issue in depth and embedded in the book all the relevant texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah in addition to the writings of the classic writers and pious predecessors. Professor Al-Ashqar has done a great job indeed by presenting the right and correct Islamic view on the issue for both lay readers and scholars alike.

It is with great pleasure that we present such an authentic, well written book on the subject. May Allah bless our efforts and those of the author with acceptance and make it a source of guidance for all who seek enlightenment.

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Muhsin Al-Tuwaijri

General Manager
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Praise be to Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon His slave and Messenger Muhammad.

Divine will and Predestination (*Al-Qadaa' wal-Qadar*): Is this a matter which is directly relevant to the day-to-day life of the Muslim, or is it an obscure topic best left to the debates of philosophers and theologians?

Attitudes towards Divine Will and Predestination have always influenced Muslims' daily activities. The idea that everything is “*maktoob*” or “written” is well known, to such an extent that many non-Muslims regard Muslims as fatalists who see themselves as helpless in the hands of an indifferent fate. Although this idea has held sway over large numbers of the Muslim ummah, nothing could be farther from the truth of Islam as brought by the Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Fatalism, which has paralyzed the ummah and given its enemies power over it, is an idea that is foreign to Islam, an idea which crept in from alien sources, or stemmed from misinterpretation of the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

In fact, the true Islamic concept of Divine Will and Predestination is an empowering notion. Whilst all that happens takes place within the framework of the Divine Will, man has freedom of choice within those parameters.

Dr. 'Umar al-Ashqar has studied this topic in depth for many years, and in this book he explains it in clear terms for the ordinary Muslim. Drawing always on the Qur'an and Sunnah, and on the words of the -greatest scholars such as Ibn Taymiyah, he explores the issue of Divine Will and Predestination. He covers some of the historical

debates that took place within the ummah on this matter, pointing out where erring groups went wrong, and explaining the correct view, that of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*.

In his final chapter, Dr. Al-Ashqar points out the benefits of believing in Divine Will and Predestination, making it clear that this is a matter which is of interest and concern for all Muslims.

May Allah guide us to correct belief, and make us among those whom He has decreed will enter Paradise.

Naṣiruddīn al-Khaṭṭāb

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah Who has guided us to the Straight Path, and made us among those who obey Him, and has honoured us with Islam and guided us to *eemaan*. I pray for the blessings of Allah upon the Seal of His Messengers and Prophets, the one who conveyed the Message and fulfilled the trust, who advised the ummah sincerely and strove in Jihaad for the sake of Allah in the truest sense, until that which is certain (i.e., death) came to him from his Lord. Blessings and peace be upon him and upon his righteous family and the Companions.

This is the final book in the series which I started more than ten years ago. I praise Allah, the Almighty, for having helped me to complete this work, and I hope that Allah, the Exalted, will accept it and make my intention purely for His sake, and that He will reward me for this work of mine on the Day when I meet Him, as He helped me to complete it in this life.

By the grace of my Lord, this series has been well received by the slaves of Allah, and I hope that my Lord will accept it from me and be pleased with my work, by His grace and kindness. May He forgive me for any shortcomings that exist in it. I hope that those who read this series will make *du'aa'* (supplication) for its author and pray that Allah forgive him for his mistakes and his sins. May Allah bestow His Mercy upon me by virtue of a righteous *du'aa'* from a righteous slave.

Readers have waited a long time for this volume, because one thing after another kept me busy and I was occupied with unavoidable matters, until Allah willed that I should find the time to do this work, and He enabled me to complete it. Before that, I had tried to write on this topic, but I always felt uneasy after I had started to write. I was

apprehensive about writing on a topic concerning which so many writers have erred and so many intelligent people have gone astray.

This is still one of the most difficult topics that people indulge in discussing. The deviation of many of those who have gone astray started when they went astray concerning this topic. How many of those who have indulged in discussing this topic have thought that they were doing the right thing, when in fact they were utterly confused and had lost their way!

‘Allaamah Ibn al-Qayyim said, in the introduction of his book *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel fi Masaa’il al-Qadaa’ wal-Qadar wal-Hikmah wat-Ta’leel*:

“The majority of intelligent people, when discussing this topic, have dealt with it from every angle and have pursued every route and narrow path, and they have spoken of it in both the most sophisticated of terms and the simplest. They have aimed to attain knowledge of it and to understand its essence. The nations of ancient and recent times have discussed this matter and have striven hard to reach an understanding of it. All of the various sects - despite their differences - have discussed this matter. Authors have written books of different types. There is no one who is not thinking of this topic and trying to reach an understanding of its essential nature, but you see them hesitant and confused, or debating with others. Each of them has chosen his own opinion and does not think that anyone else’s view can be correct, nor will he accept anyone else’s opinion.

All of them, apart from those who adhere to the *Wahy* (Revelation) have turned away from the right path, and the door to guidance is closed to them. They have striven to no avail, seeking to quench their thirst with dirty water. They have looked at different opinions, and selected the cheapest. Each of them rejoices in the knowledge that he has, which does not benefit him in any way. They have given priority

to opinions which they think are good, over the *Wahy* which has been revealed and the *aḥaadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ). The blind are leading the blind, each of them thinking that he is drinking water, yet he remains thirsty throughout his life. He is being called to the straight path and to right guidance from afar, but he will not respond until the Day of Judgement. He is happy with the misguidance which he is following, and he is content with all kinds of falsehood and absurd notions. His *kufr* prevents him from following true guidance and what he means to say is ‘Is it these (poor believers) whom Allah has favoured from amongst us?’ Does Allah not know best those who are grateful? (cf. Qur’an 6:53).”¹

I found confirmation of Ibn al-Qayyim’s words, quoted above, when I studied what has been said by those who indulged in discussions of *qadar* both in the past and the contemporary. I myself was hesitant to discuss this topic and write about it, but I was motivated to do so by my desire to complete this series, and by the enquiries from many seekers of knowledge as to when I was going to publish this book.

I sought the help of Allah, and investigated the topic in depth, following the methods of the scholars who were known to be on the Straight Path and to be leaders in piety and knowledge. For this reason in this book, I have quoted extensively from the sayings of our pious predecessors (*As-Salaf as-Ṣaaliḥ*), following the path of the believers and hoping that I would not deviate from this course or get lost in the twists and turns of the path. I sought the light of the *aayaat* (verses) of the Qur’an and the *aḥaadeeth* of the Messenger (ﷺ), in pursuing this topic and writing about it. Allah is the One Whose help we seek, and there is no strength and no power except in Allah. I hope that knowledgeable people will correct any mistakes I have

¹ *Shifaa’ al-‘Aleel*, p. 14.

made or areas where I have failed to understand the matter correctly or to express myself clearly.

The book has seven chapters.

In Chapter One, I explained the obligation to believe in *qadar*, and that this belief is one of the basic principles of *eemaan* (faith).

Chapter Two is a brief look at the history of the discussions on *qadar*.

Chapter Three gives a definition of *qadar* and the pillars of this belief, discussing four main points:

- (i) Definition of *qadar* (predestination).
- (ii) Definition of *qadaa'* (divine will) and how it is connected to *qadar*.
- (iii) The essential components (“pillars”) of belief in *qadar*, without any of which a person’s belief in *qadar* is lacking.
- (iv) Proof that a person’s deeds are predestined and created by Allah; I have quoted here many texts from the Qur’an and Sunnah which confirm this.

Chapter Four explains how far we can go in discussing *qadar*, what role reason plays in this, and what can and cannot be understood with regard to this topic.

Chapter Five explains the different schools of thought on *qadar*. It is divided into three sections:

- (i) Those who deny *qadar* (predestination). Here I described their opinions and pointed out where they have gone wrong, and I mentioned the debates of the scholars with this group. I described the evidence which they think supports their view, which, in fact, is confusion and doubts, and will crumble once we shed the light of truth on it, so that the one whom Allah guides and opens his heart to faith will no longer have any doubts concerning it.

- (ii) The school of thought which has misled the ummah and destroyed its minds, will and dynamism, and caused their actions to benefit their enemies. This is the school of thought known as *Al-Qadariyyah al-Mujabbirah* which has given up striving on the grounds of *qadar*. I have shown that they have gone astray on seven counts.
- (iii) I explained the school of thought of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa 'ah*, which has three requirements. In each case I mentioned the beliefs described by the scholars of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamaa 'ah* concerning *qadar*.

Chapter Six explains why people have been misled concerning *qadar* (predestination).

In Chapter Seven I described some of the good consequences of believing in *qadar*.

I pray to Allah that I have succeeded in explaining this principle, and I ask Him to benefit His slaves thereby, for He is the best supporter and helper. He is Sufficient for me and He is the best disposer of affairs.

Dr. 'Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar

CHAPTER ONE

BELIEF IN *QADAR* (PREDESTINATION) IS ONE OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FAITH (*UŞOOL AL-EEMAAN*)

Belief in *qadar* (predestination), is one of the basic principles of faith, without which a person's belief is incomplete. Muslim, narrated from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه), describing how Jibreel (Gabriel) (جبرئيل), questioned the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) about *eemaan* (belief), in reply he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“It (*eemaan*) is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and to believe in divine destiny (*qadar*), both the good and the evil thereof.” He (i.e., Jibreel) said: “You have spoken rightly.”¹

There are many texts which speak of the *qadar* of Allah or enjoin belief in *qadar*. These texts include the *ayaat* (verses):

﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ ﴾

﴿Verily, We have created all things with *Qadar* [Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees - *Al-Lauh al-Mahfooz*].﴾

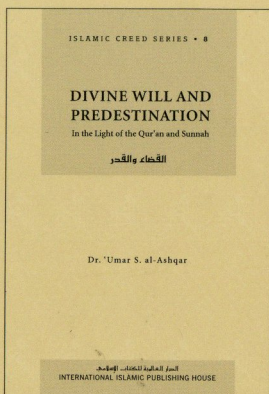
(*Qur'an* 54: 49)

﴿ ... وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

﴿...And the Command of Allah is a decree determined.﴾

(*Qur'an* 33: 38)

¹ *Sharḥ an-Nawawi 'ala Muslim*, 1/157.



Divine Will and Predestination. IS this a matter which is directly relevant to the day-to-day life of Muslims, or is it an obscure topic best left to the debates of philosophers and theologians? Does it imply that Muslims are "fatalists" who see themselves as helpless in the hands of an indifferent fate.

Attitudes towards The Divine Will and Predestination have always influenced Muslims' daily activities. In this book Dr. 'Umar S. al-Ashqar explores this topic in depth explaining it in clear terms for the ordinary Muslim. Drawing always on the Qur'an and Sunnah, and on the words of the

greatest scholars such as Ibn Taymiyah, he covers some of the historical debates that took place within the ummah on this matter, explains the correct view, that of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*.

The true Islamic concept of Divine Will and Predestination is an empowering notion. Whilst all that happens, takes place within the framework of the Divine Will, man has freedom of choice within those parameters. This is a matter which is of interest and concern for all Muslims, one which will bring many benefits, both in this world and in the hereafter.

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