

## Aqeedah Corner: Divine Fate And Destiny (part I)

The issue of al-Qadah wal-Qadr is controversial among Muslims. Many muslim groups have tried to resolve this issue. Some of the prominent groups among those were Mo'tazila, al-Jabriyah and ahlis-Sunnah. All of these groups were reactionaries and did not solve the issue comprehensively. Moreover, they were influenced by the Greek philosophy. Since this issue deals with the Aqeedah, therefore it is very important to solve it comprehensively.

Ummayyeds first used the issue of Qadar for the justification of their actions. Their excuse, for every injustice which they committed, was that it happened just because it was predestined by Allah (swt). Therefore in other words they meant to say that if Allah had not predestined it, we could not have done this action. As a reaction to this, another group emerged in Kufa. According to them man is free in his actions and Allah (swt) has just put some guidelines on him. This later group was called Kadaariya.

Since then a discussion on al-Qadha wal-Qadar started. This issue was discussed by Greeks before Islam. They had put forward philosophical questions such as: Does man have free will or is he forced to carry out his actions? Ar-Waqioun were of the opinion that man has no free will and no choice in his behaviour. On the other hand Al-Abiqarioun were of the opinion that man has free will. When the Muslims came into contact with these ideas they attempted to answer the same questions from the view point of Islam. However, Islam is based on the concept that Allah is just and equitable, and according to this justice we have reward and punishment. Accordingly, the Muslim thinkers attempted to reconcile this premise with the philosophical questions posed by the Greeks.

The Mo'tazila were the first to take up the challenge. They responded by first establishing the central role of Allah's justice in order to prevent anyone accusing Allah of oppression. They concluded that Allah's justice has no meaning unless man has free will. Thus, they said man created his actions and he is free to do what he likes because if he does something from his own will, by choice without coercion, then his reward and punishment are both rational and just.

They maintained that if Allah creates human beings and also forces them into a certain path, such as making people sinners or believers, then to punish the sinners for being sinful and rewarding the obedient believers for believing would be unjust.

In other words, if man has no free will and choice, it means Allah is asking man to do that which he cannot, which is rejected by Allah's statement, -in translation- "Allah does not burden a soul more than it can bear." (al-Baqarah : 286)

In their methodology they followed the Greek way of thinking. Muslims assumed, like Greek philosophers, that Allah follows laws and codes like man does. They made analogy between Allah (swt) and man. Commenting on the will, they said that the person who wants good is good in himself, and the person who wants bad is both bad and evil. Likewise, he who orders justice is just, and he who orders oppression is an oppressor. Accordingly, they maintained if we assume the will of Allah embraces every aspect of life, both good and bad, Allah would then be described as good and bad, just and oppressor; which is clearly impossible.

They also said that if Allah wants the disbeliever to be a disbeliever (Kafir) and the sinner to be sinful then He should not warn and admonish them from sin and disbelief. How could it be possible that Allah wanted Abu Lahab to be a disbeliever and yet commanded him to believe and warned him from disbelief. If any man had done such a thing he would be called a fool and ignorant. Praise be to Allah who could never be accused of such things. If the disbelief of the disbeliever and the sin of the sinner were wanted by Allah then they should not be punished, because their actions were obedient to the will of Allah. The Mo'tazila repeated such arguments, with proof derived from their mind.

The Mo'tazila supported their opinions based on logic with verses from the Glorious Quran, such as, -in translation- "Allah never wants oppression for His people." They concluded from this that man has the free will to undertake an action or not; and that man initiates his actions with no

influence from Allah. For them, man had the ability to carry out or abstain from an action without any divine intervention from Allah (swt). To prove that this understanding was correct they explained how everyone easily notices when they do or do not do an action without any coercion. For example, the difference between forced and voluntary movements of the body, e.g., the difference between moving one's hands and shaking from a nervous disorder. The Mo'tazila supported their view with the following verses of Quran, -in translation- "Allah does not change the circumstances of any people until they have changed what is within themselves." (al-Ra'ad : 11) "Every soul is a pledge for its deeds." (al-Muddather : 38) They made their own interpretation for verses that contradicted their view, such as the verse, -in translation- "But Allah has created you and you handiwork." (as-Saffat : 9) In answer to the question, who is responsible for the effects and attributes of actions and things, such as the pain one experiences when bitten, the taste of food, and the knife's ability to cut; they answered, man. All attributes, emotions, organic needs and instincts, they maintained, are from man. To conclude, they held the opinion that man has free will to initiate and to undertake his actions, and he creates...

(The rest of this article will follow in the next issue of Ar-Raya. We will attempt to present what we think is the correct understanding of the issue of divine fate and destiny.)

*Ar-Raya Magazine, March 1993*