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KITAB-UL-TAQDEER

(Book of Destiny)

by G.A. PARWEZ

Review: New Times, Rawalpindi, 27th June 1972.

If Iqbal has had any successor on the intellectual plane, it is undoubtedly Allama Ghulam Ahmad Parwez. What the great poet-philosopher had to say pithily and almost aphoristically, Parwez has expatiated upon, writing as eloquently as Abu-ul-Kalam Azad and documenting it as authentically as Maulana Suleman Nadvi. That is, however, true only so far as the style goes. Analytically he has no compeer amongst the modern writers on Islam. One is simply staggered with the inexhaustibility of his erudition which spans all the gamut of human knowledge; philosophy, science, anthropology, history, philology, economics and other fields of research. Allama Parwez is surely one of the most learned men of our times. But he is not a mere walking encyclopaedia. All this equipment of his is there in an ordered, systematic form; streamlined, so to say according to a highly sophisticated point of view which is derived from the Holy Quran. Allama Ghulam Ahmad Parwez is the Hazrat Shah Waliullah of our age.

In this book he has tried to tackle according to the same light the problem of human freedom. This is one of those ultimate questions which have interested men in all climes. Parwez sides with the upholders of Free Will. Man may be determined as a product of nature but since he is a member of human society, he has to be treated as free agent. It is Free Will that, according to Parwez, distinguishes man from the rest of nature. His second point is that God, in His mercy, has furnished man with some guiding principles to conduct himself responsibly further. These principles or values are enshrined in the Holy Quran. Since the most important of all the attributes of God is His "*rububiyet*" or sustainership, only that man or group of men acts in accordance with the divine plan who exemplifies it in its life.

Parwez, a firm believer in the laws of nature and their uniformity laughs to scorn at all those who neglect them. For him Freedom lies in subservience to them. He must manipulate them to attain his ends which must always be directed at the welfare of mankind. It is a bold doctrine. It holds man responsible for whatever goes on in the world. His accountability is, as it were, of a primordial order. This is so because he does not have to discover his values step by step; they have been God-given through the ages, God, in conformity with this line of thought and also according to Iqbal's teachings, is not an autocrat. This, of course, He is in the *alam-i-amar*, that is, He is free to create anything He might like, but once His creations have made their appearance on the stage, they have to follow certain rules. This goes on automatically in the realm of nature. With man it is different. He can judge the right from the wrong. Parwez's special emphasis is on this: if man is to go about blessed, he must exercise his judgement in strict conformance with the Quran because no where else are His commands to be found in an unadulterated form. Parwez has tried to prove this proposition convincingly in volume after volume of first-rate mature scholarship.

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THE BOOK OF DESTINY by G. A. PARWEZ

The Translator's Note

It is with a curious mix of feelings that I present this work. I feel proud to have conveyed to the reader of the English language a remarkable book by one of the two men I have been directly influenced most by, intellectually. (The other was my maternal grandfather Hakim Pir Rasheed-ud-Daula of Gujrat, Pakistan, a very close friend and confidante of Inayatullah Khan Al-Mashriqi, the famous mathematical genius and leader of the popular *Khaksaar* movement in the sub-continent).

I was introduced to Pervez in 1959, purely accidentally, while I was browsing in my grandfather's library. By 1968/9, I became fully convinced of the academic and logical sense his work made; I practically joined the intellectual movement of TOLU-E-ISLAM by trying to establish one of earliest representative circles (BAZM) in London area circa summer 1969. After that, I had regular personal meetings with Pervez, whenever I happened to be in Pakistan. I hold the sincere view that Pervez's interpretation of the Islamic religious thought, and that of the Quran in particular, is by far the best thing to happen to Muslim literature in modern times.

To the best of my ability, I have tried to capture the essence of Pervez's thought in a way that may be palatable to the average English language reader. At times, I have had to omit certain linguistic and cultural references which, in my view, would have been almost totally alien to non-Urdu speakers. This I have done in an effort to avoid unnecessary complexity.

In order to fully appreciate Pervez's stance, it is highly desirable to keep in mind the difference in meaning, interpretation and application of some fundamentally important terms and expressions of the Quran as he takes them and as they are conventionally taken by the dominant majority of Muslims. For that, I have recommended to the publishers to include a comparative glossary of such terms.

I am indebted to my circle of like-minded friends in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, above all Mr. Asif Jalil, for all the support and encouragement I have enjoyed throughout my occupation with this work. I also feel flattered by IDARA TOLU-E-ISLAM (the parent organization of the Pervez philosophy) for entrusting me with the task.

KHALID M. SAYYED
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
November, 1997

PERSONAL

Born in Pakistan in 1943, educated in Pakistan and England, Khalid Sayyed has taught English Language and Literature in Pakistan, the UK and Saudi Arabia (where he currently lectures at King Saud University, Riyadh) since 1970.

Settled in the UK, he is married and has three children.

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Foreword

The question of Destiny⁽¹⁾ - be it religion or philosophy - is considered to be the most difficult, complex and unexplained. The great deal that has been written on this problem has not only been unable to solve it, but also it leaves one ever more confused. After having published *Jahane-Farda*⁽²⁾ - the last volume of my *Ma'aaref ul Quran* series⁽³⁾ (the voluminous and extensive *Lughatul Quran*⁽⁴⁾ and *Mafhoomul-Quran*⁽⁵⁾) - I saw as having completed a large part of my sacred mission of promoting & publicizing the Quranic thought. I was looking forward to devoting the rest of my days to compiling & editing *Tabweebul Quran*.⁽⁶⁾ But, I noticed that nearly 90% of the queries received to seek further explanation of the Quranic teachings dealt - directly or indirectly - with the problem of destiny. Such questions, nay objections, were mostly from the young. Briefly, they said that a religion which proclaims that Man's destiny is pre-determined and unchangeable, cannot be an effective tool in a competitive life and world. Others, who had started pondering over the Quran, found several contradictions in it. For example, they said, it (the Quran) says that it is Man's choice to pick the right or wrong path of life. Yet, at other places, it says Man has no choice in the matter since righteousness is given by *Allah* alone. Such queries and objections made me see as inadequate whatever I had already written on the subject. Since it is scattered in various books, I felt a special treatise was needed to answer this enigma. Otherwise, all my efforts to get the educated young interested in the Quran would be rendered futile. They could even grow distrustful of *Din*⁽⁷⁾ (Islam). That has been the promoting force behind this treatise you have in your hands.

The Quran has clearly, and satisfactorily, explained this most complex problem like it has so eloquently, yet simply, dealt with other problems regarding human life and the universe. But, it requires a deep study of the Quran, for which one must consider the following:

1. Normally, a book deals with one subject and is divided into chapters. Each chapter deals with one particular aspect of the subject and is self-contained. All chapters chain the various aspects together to give a coherent view of the subject. The Quran has a different style. It deals - not with one subject - but with crucial problems of human existence and those of the universe at large. Obviously, a book of normal proportions, when dealing with such complex and numerous issues, just cannot discuss them in detail. Therefore, it has dealt in great detail, with the issues of human life but only touches upon the realities of the universe and human existence. It expects Man to discover the secrets of the universe. Also, the Quran does not deal with a topic fully at one time. Instead, it spreads it throughout the book through its **method of repetition** (*tasreef-e-ayaat*), - the principle, the explanation of it, illustration through examples, the exception(s) - all sprinkled all over. It is out of scope of the book you are reading to explain this particular style of the Quran and its aptness in its role of a complete and permanent eternal code of life for all mankind for ever to come. For the moment, it is suffice to state that the best approach to comprehend the Quran is to keep in view all the relevant verses throughout the book about a particular question. Isolated verses do not, and cannot, present a true picture. That has been my own approach, and, on this very basis, after a life-long toil, have

managed to compile my '*Lughaatul Quran*' and '*Mafhoomul Quran*'. In this book, too, I have adopted the same technique.

2. Another obstacle in the way of understanding the Quranic teaching is the traditional approach of translation. The fact of the matter is that the Quran cannot be translated into any language. This is true, though amazing. No other language has the vocabulary synonymous with the Quran. I have dealt with it in detail in the introductory chapter to '*Mafhoomul Quran*'. Those interested may well read it there to discover that the fact of the *Quranic 'untranslatability'* (being untranslatable) has been acknowledged by Muslim as well as non-Muslim scholars. The *Quran* can be interpreted but not translated. This very fact prompted me to author '*Mafhoomul Quran*' which, thanks to Allah, has been very well received with a wide-spread voluntary acclaim that it has helped tremendously in comprehending the Quran.

In this book I have quoted the Quranic verses (8) in the following manner: '*this verse is traditionally translated like this, but its interpretation is ...*'. This is not to say that the translation is erroneous. The question of err does not arise in an untranslatable situation. For example, verse 93, *Sura* (9) 16 is translated thus: "Allah misleads whosoever He wishes and guides whosoever He wishes." The same mode of translation can be found in all publications - even when it is translated into Arabic! Nonetheless, a careful look, in the light of the principle of '*tasreef-e-ayat*' mentioned above, reveals that this translation conveys an erroneous - rather opposing - view of the Quranic teachings in this regard. Therefore, " من يشاء " must be correctly interpreted in view of various Quranic verses in this connection before this particular verse can be understood. This is the approach I have taken - interpreting the Quranic vocabulary through Quranic verses on the basis of recognized Arabic lexicon - in interpreting the entire Quran in '*Mafhoomul Quran*'. I have made use of this technique in this book, too.

In regards to understanding the Quran, one must keep in view the point that the Quran's claim of being divine is supported by, among others, the fact that it contains no self-contradiction at all (verse 4, Sure 82). Therefore, an interpretation of a verse cannot be correct if it is contradictory to another. One must be mindful of this while reading the Quran. This is exactly what I have done. The Quran has no contradictory statements. If one is noticed, the fault lies not with the book but with the reader. Such confusion can be removed by deeper consideration, spurred by curiosity.

4. One more fundamental requirement is for the reader to shed off all the pre-conceived concepts and beliefs before reading the Quran. Otherwise, you may psychologically look for evidence in support of your views. This will render comprehending the Quran impossible. This is why the Quran puts the condition of " لا إله إلا الله " before " .., i.e., to 'get to Allah' one must clear one's mind of all 'non-Allah' concepts. *Allah* will not enter the *Kaaba* unless it is cleared of idols. (10) This is really hard to do but there is no other way to comprehending the Quran.

I have also stated in this book thus: "When '*Din*' changes to Religion (مذهب) (11) ". The difference between the two must be made clear. '*Ad Deen*' is the code of life handed down from God to mankind through his messengers by means of the process of revelation. This obliterates into '*mazhab*' (religion) by human alterations. Religion, though devised by man, is attributed to God. Common man is thus hoodwinked into their submission by the religious priesthood. When a voice of dissent is raised against a covenant of (religious) faith, the priests whip up popular opinion against it by accusations of digression from the established norms of the earlier generations (the

respected forefathers). Thus, they make sure that that voice is muted. Their efforts succeed with help from the fact that religious beliefs, however wrong, are one's most precious possession and are extremely hard to part with.

Islam, too, has gone through this process. The '*Deen*' had been given to man by God through the Messenger. Soon after, it was infiltrated by human concepts and beliefs, gradually descending to the level of religion. That very religion is our current ideology. But there is one basic difference between us (Muslims) and other religions. That very difference has the potential of reconverting religion into '*Ad-Deen*'. That fundamental difference is that we have the Book of God. It contains '*Ad-Deen*' in its original and unobliterated form. This situation is unique to Islam. Today the Quran is the only original divine book under the sun.⁽¹²⁾ Therefore, should we wish to transform our current religion into '*Ad-Deen*', we have to weigh and test our current religious beliefs and practices against the Quran - keeping those which agree with it and discarding the ones which don't. The whole point of my efforts is to bring back to light the divine '*Ad-Deen*'. Hence this book is a very important link in a long chain of my publications. It shows that one of the fundamental causes of our downfall through history is the non-Quranic belief of Destiny. This is an anti-*Deen* and illogical belief which has reduced a lively people to a mere heap of dust. I request the reader to ponder deeply over my presentations. This is highly desirable as the current concept of the problem of Destiny has been with us for centuries and has become an article of faith. To replace it with the correct Quranic concept one needs deep pondering as well as exemplary patience and rare perseverance.

This book is intended for those who wish to understand the problem of Destiny through the Quran. Hence, it contains no philosophic or linguistic discussions. I have tried to explain one of the most complex problems in a simple way, through the Quran. Also, I have tried to keep its style as simple as possible, though it is difficult to change one's writing style, especially during one's twilight years. The extent of my success can only be judged by the reader.

The Quranic verses have been referred to by the verse number above the *Sura* (chapter) number. For Example, 3/15 means: the fifteenth verse of the 3rd *Sura* (*Aal-e-Imraan*). If you don't find a particular verse printed here, please look it up in a copy of the Quran - keeping in mind that numbering of a particular verse may differ from one copy of the Quran to another.

Finally, I must state (as I always do) that this presentation is the result of human deliberations to comprehend the Quran. As such, it may not be perfect. I have presented, to the best of my faculties, what I have come to conclude as true and correct. I will consider myself successful if you agree with it. Otherwise, you are free to deliberate over the Quran yourself. I, as a rule, avoid argumentation. I will consider myself duly rewarded if my efforts succeed to reveal the Quran in its true light, even to a single reader.

Thanks

Parwez
25-B Gulberg, Lahore
September, 1971

Footnotes

- (1) Refers to the age-old debate on whether events in the human world are pre-determined or not by a super-human being.
- (2) Literally, Persian for ‘Tomorrow’s World’ - a treatise on the Hereafter (Life after death).
- (3) A series of books explaining the teachings of the Quran on the origin of the universe as well as that of Man; also the Quran’s versions of the life-stories and teachings of prophets like Abraham, Moses, Christ & Mohammad.
- (4) A dictionary of the Quranic vocabulary.
- (5) A paraphrasing of the meanings of the Quran.
- (6) Classification of the Quranic verses under topics.
- (7) ‘*Ad-Deen*’ (الدين) in Arabic is referred to the entire socio-politico-economic - and beyond system the Quran proposed for mankind. The author prefers this term for referring to ‘ISLAM’ against the popularly used ‘*Mazhab*’ (مذهب) which he contends refers to a shallow & superficial representation of only a part of ‘*Ad-Deen*’
- (8) A ‘verse’ is one unit of speech (not necessarily a complete sentence in the English sense) ending with a circular mark (o)
- (9) A ‘*Sura*’ is one chapter of the Quran (there are 114 in all).
- (10) Refers to the historical event of the *Kaaba* (the cubical structure in the courtyard of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Saudi Arabia) cleared of all idols when Prophet Mohammad triumphantly entered Makkah to reclaim the *Kaaba* to monotheism.
- (11) See (7)
- (12) Today the books universally acknowledged and accepted as divine are: The Bible (containing the old testament - especially The Torah of Moses - the New Testament and the Psalms of David) and the Quran. It has been universally established and accepted that the Quran still exists - unchanged - exactly in the form as given by Mohammad.

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THE BACKDROP

Man was born into a hostile environment - awesome forests full of terrifying wild killer-beasts and other fearsome gigantic animals; towering mountains with their looming rocks; limitless seas with their shocking storms; tumultuous rivers and streams with their destructive floods; endless rains, snowfalls with petrifying thunder and lightning; awesome volcanoes with their fiery produce; earthquakes. All these destructive forces surrounded a vulnerable mankind who did not understand, and could not defend itself against, all these forces. Man was still unaware of the natural law of cause and effect and was ignorant of the possibility of harnessing these forces. Therefore, every destructive event was seen as an accident, happening by chance. That was the limit of human thought. Logically, a helpless, vulnerable, ignorant and poor creature in such environment saw itself as a captive of destiny. That, then, is Man's first ever view of himself.

A weak, defenseless and vulnerable man has only one way to react to an awesome and dangerous element -- to submit & plead to it for mercy. This is what the early Man did. He bowed in submission to that huge fiery ball rising from the east every morning. He cowered down in front of thunder and lightning. Terrified by the overflowing river waters, he pleaded to it for respite. The lion, the snake and fire and rain became his idols. This gave birth to another belief, i.e. he must request a powerful force for help against dangers. Anthropologists refer it to as the Age of Worship.

Clearly, this human belief could not affect Nature which was bound by laws. Occasionally though, when their prayers were answered -- purely by chance -- they would grow firmer in their beliefs. Otherwise believing in their own helplessness, they would accept the situation as a matter of course.

The relatively more intelligent ones among them began exploiting this sense of helplessness by suggesting particular procedures of worship. This was the birth of the Age of Magic -- the practices of magic, sorcery, charming, occultism etc. Incidentally, this gave Man a little sense of his own power, i.e. he can, to some extent, control the forces of Nature. Still, his basic concept of his helplessness did not change. Man of this age did not possess the divine guidance of '*Wahi*' and consequently, formulated his own ideas and concepts about his own self and the universe around him. Such concepts were later on referred to as RELIGION, and are commonly found in all religions, old and new alike. The basis of religion is the same all over the world.

Contrary to this, '*Wahi*'⁽¹⁾ handed down its version of the concepts of universe, man and super-nature. They are:

1. The universe is not a result of, neither operates by, chance. It has been planned and purposefully created by an intelligent Being, and operates according to firm and permanent laws of Nature formulated by Him. The Being is referred to as 'Allah'. His laws are applicable to the physical universe as well as Man's social life, both individual and collective. Nothing is outside the sphere of these laws.
2. Everything in the universe, with the exception of Man, must -- and does -- obey the laws of Nature. This is known as the 'nature of things'. This 'nature' can not be altered. Therefore, every event in the universe takes place within the bounds of these laws. It is known as the 'the Law of Cause and Effect' in general, and 'the Law of Result of Actions' in particular reference to the human world, i.e., each and every act by Man -- even his thoughts -- produces a result.
3. Man has been created with the potentiality of discovering the laws of Nature, which enables him to harness the natural forces. Thus, the whole universe is bound but Man is not. He should not be scared of the universe. On the contrary, the universe should be 'scared' of Man. The universe is conquerable and controllable by Man.

Laws of Nature can be discovered by observation, study and experience. In today's lexicon, it is known as 'the Sciences'. But, knowledge of the laws for Man's own life (the human side of it, not the physical) has been given to him through '*Wahi*', preserved for ever in the Quran. These 'human' laws are also permanent and firm just like the rest of the laws of Nature.

4. The basic difference between Man and the rest of creation is that the universe is forced and bound to follow the laws of Nature while Man is not. He is free to choose --- either to live by these or any others laws.

Man is free to choose the laws he wishes to live by. But he must bear the consequences of his choice. For instance, one is free to consume poison as well as sugar, but the natural effect of one cannot be replaced by that of the other. That is beyond Man. This state of the Laws of Nature is applicable to Man's earthly life as well as the Hereafter.

Allah is the Absolute Power that formulated, and now exercises perfect control over, these laws. Any law --- the formula of 'if this happens, that will happen' --- is next to nothing without the enforcing authority behind it. Permanence of a law as a living reality requires the implementing authority to be living and permanent (*Hayyei* (حی) and *Qayyoom* (قیوم) in the Quran's words).

The concepts just mentioned form the basis of a code of life known as '*Ad-Deen*'. This stands in obvious contrast as a challenge to Religion. The Quran elaborates these concepts in great detail. This, then, is the subject of this book which aims at explaining clearly the question of Destiny (Fate) which Religion has rendered so complicated.

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- (1) ‘*Wahi*’ is the Quranic term for divine messages from God (Allah) to His Messengers. Literally, it means a sharp, quiet and subtle signal.

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THE CONCEPT OF ALLAH

Allah has always been and will always be. He was *Allah* even before this Universe was created, He will be *Allah* even when this Universe exists no more. Therefore, ‘*Allah’s domain*’ is not only the created universe but also beyond. This is what the *Quran* refers to as the two worlds of *Allah - Amr* and *Khalq*. *Khalq* is the created universe while *Amr* is whatever is beyond. (7/54)

Law pertains to the world of *Khalq*. Two examples are, the universal truths of ‘Cause & Effect’, and any creation being dependent on its constituent material. *Amr* relates to creation from nothingness. His determination to create from nothingness and His actions thereof run contrary to natural laws like cause and effect, creation within the universe, procreation, etc. *Amr* is based upon ‘*Allah’s will*’. (22/14, 11/107, 5/1, 22/18, 21/31). See 2/117 (below), also 6/14 and 30/11.

Takhleeq - ‘*Khalaqun*’ literally means to measure, to assess the balance and ratio of things. Thus ‘*Khalaq*’ means to make something with the right balance and ratio of elements according to a specific measure. The domain of ‘*Amr*’ (creating from nothingness) is exclusive to *Allah* and *Allah* alone. Material resulting from ‘*Amr*’ may be, and is, used in various proportions to create by Nature as well as Man. *Allah* is the best creator in this particular sense (*Khalq* - 23/14, 37/125). He also improvises (35/1), either by creating something for the first time (‘*Abdaa*’) or varying an existing formula. *GHALIB* put it aptly⁽¹⁾ Also, *IQBAL*:⁽²⁾

Characteristics of the Domain of *Amr*: This is the initial stage of creation. The chemistry of it all is beyond human comprehension and consequently, unquestionable. *Allah* used His exclusive power and privileges to create things (from nothingness) giving them their particular characteristics (24/45). He simply exercised His ‘will’. Man is told that the universe was created ‘rightfully’ (16/30) not wrongfully (3/19). It is upto Man to delve into the mechanics of it all to arrive at the ‘rightness’ of the universe around him. Suffice to say that the reality and function of the Domain of *Amr* lies outside the extents of human comprehension and its concept of ‘cause & effect’.

Having created the universe according to His own will, *Allah* introduced a great change in this cosmic program. Now, He bound His *Amr* in LAWS. This demands intense ponderance.

TAQDEER

The Arabic word '*QANOON*' (قانون) ⁽³⁾ has not been used in the *Quran* in the meaning of LAW. It seldom appears even in contemporary Arabic literature. Instead, the *Quran* has employed a root more comprehensive than *QANOON*. It is Q-D-R with the basic meaning of a measure. (قدرت الشيء بالشيء) means: I measured that thing; estimated. (قدرت عليه الثوب) means: I measured the (one) thing against the (other) thing. (قدرت على فدر) means: I made clothes for him according to measurements. Therefore, 'taqdeer' has the sense of something being fit to measurements. (مقدار) is a model standard or measure. (على فدر) means: He/It proved true to measure (expected standard). (قادر) is a person of reasonable average of height. (المقدر) is a person who forecasts the yield possible from a particular corn field.

It follows, therefore, that 'Qadrūn' or (قدر) 'Taqdeer' means a measure or a standard; also, of something to be of the right measurements, standard and estimate.

Since absolute control is required to make something according to a particular standard, (فُرِتْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ) means: I had control (and power) to make that thing according to my standard/measure.

Allah's 'AMR' Bound to Laws

It has been stated that the ‘Domain

of '*Amr*' functions under the absolute power and will of *Allah*. There are no binding laws. In the 'Domain of '*Khalq*', however, *Allah's* will is bound by laws (33/38: *Allah's* '*amr*' was bound by standards & measures) and thus '*Allah* set a standard to everything' (65/3)

This needs illustration. Liquid water is transformed to solid at freezing point and reverses at a particular temperature. It flows downhill and adapts its form to the container it is in. High temperature evaporates water into vapor which, being lighter than air, rise up as clouds. At a set temperature, clouds liquefy back into water, which, being heavier than air, falls down as rain. These facts are the ‘measures / standards of water’. Another example of the ‘standards of water’ is that in the right quantity, it is a thirst-quenching and life-giving commodity whereas in larger quantities it can even kill (e.g., drowning). A date tree yields fruit in years but banana takes only a few months. A cactus seed breeds a thorny, fruitless plant whereas a mango seed yields an exotic fruit.

Laws of Nature

It is not difficult to see, then, that (قدر) ‘*Qadr*’ of the

Quran is nothing but the Laws of Nature. Therefore, 65/3 means: *Allah* has set standards / measures to everything in the universe. These laws govern the creation, growth and death (or transformation) of all things. Consider the following from the *Quran*:

1. Regarding the birth of a human child, it says that it starts with the semen being deposited in a safe place (the female ovum) and in (77/21, 22) it stays there for a known measure. Obviously, this refers to the period a fetus stays in the mother's womb. (according to Nature's law). The Quran goes on to say in 77/23 "these

measures have been set by Us and We are the best of standard setters”. Incidentally, this verse illustrates the meaning of (قادر) i.e., the one who sets standards. A variation of this word (قادر) has been used as (قدير) in (25/54).

About the fetus it says elsewhere (13/8) that occasionally a fetus cannot achieve its full and complete growth and that God has set standards to all things.

2. About rain the *Quran* says (in 43/11, 23/18): “and We bring down rain from clouds according to a measure”. Elsewhere (13/17), it says: “after rains, streams flow according to their standards.”
3. Produce from the Earth is mentioned in (42/27): “Its produce is according to a measure set by Allah’s will. ما يشاء is explained a little further on in this book). The four seasons for harvesting & farming are mentioned in (41/10): “Allah has set standards for four harvests (of the Earth).”
4. Summing up, it says about all universe in (25/2) “He created all things and set a measure to them.”. More precisely in (54/49): “Surely, We created everything according to a measure.” Special attention should be paid to two verses from *Sura ‘Al-Aala’*: “Allah initiated all creation, then gave everything a suitable proportion, set standards to them and programmed them for growth according to those measures.”
5. Let us now look at references where (قادر) is even more clearly used in today’s sense of ‘Laws of Nature’. Even a school child knows about the Earth’s rotation causing day and night according to set laws. This enables us to forecast, with certain precision, sunrise and sunset. The *Quran* says in (73/20): “Allah has set standards to day & night.” Also, about the moon (10/5): “Allah has set stages for it.”

The meaning of (قدير) may be very clear by the following: “The sun is traveling towards its station. This is the measure set by the all-knowing and almighty (Allah).” Elsewhere (41/12), it talks about the heavenly bodies in general, and about stars in particular, and then says, “These are the standards set by the all-powerful and all-knowing (Allah)”.

This illustrates then, that (قادر) means Laws of Nature and NOT Man’s destiny.

One may ponder here on the point that the above mentioned verses say ‘Allah’s *taqdeer*’ (standards set by Allah). Therefore, it will be factually erroneous to say ‘Man’s *taqdeer*’ because Man has not (and cannot) set standards to the universe.

The truth of the matter is that so many of our problems arise because of our misuse of words and their meanings. The only way to comprehending the *Quran* is to ascertain the

correct meanings of its vocabulary, terminology and concepts.

These *taqadeer* (standards, measures - law of Nature) of *Allah's* are pre-determined (it was done in the domain of '*Amr*') and they are 'written' in the 'book of Nature / Universe'. This is referred to as 'the clearly set book'. It says in *Sura An'aam*: "*Allah* knows what is in the seas and on land. He knows every leaf that falls off a tree. He also knows even a grain in the darkness of the Earth. The truth is that each and every thing (in detail) is there in the clearly-set book." (6/59) That is to say that standards have been set to all things in the universe and are there. (17/58) ((for anyone to read if they so wish)). This is physics (science). That is why these laws are called (بقدر معلوم) in (15/21) and (15/24) i.e., laws which can be discovered. Adam (mankind) is said to have been given 'the knowledge of names'. This is nothing but the knowledge of the universe.

Laws of Nature are Permanent

Law is defined as: If..... then always

A 'law' is different from an 'order': 'Law' is based upon its consistency (if you do this, that will ALWAYS happen). 'Order' is a decision. A master issues a variety of orders to his servants. One order may differ in kind from the previous one. Therefore, 'orders' are decisions which are subject to change. But when an order (decision) becomes consistent (with no possibility of change), it becomes law (unchangeable decision). *Allah's* decisions about the universe (standards and measures) are unchangeable. The permanence of laws of Nature provides the foundation for the sciences. This ever-reliable foundation of permanent laws enables ('*tawakkal*' in the *Quranic* terminology) the earthlings to take successful trips to the Moon. In fact, the entire structure of our wonderful universe stands on the permanence, consistency and reliability of the laws of Nature.

***Allah's Word* (كلمة الله) and *Allah's Way* (سنة الله):**

Both of these

expressions in the *Quran* have been used to mean *Allah's* law. '*Kalima*' is the formula (theory) while '*SunnatAllah*' is the practical form the '*Kalimatullah*' takes. Both of these are permanent: (6/34, 6/116, 18/27 and also 10/64) for '*Kalimatullah*' and (33/62, 40/85, 48/23) for '*SunnatAllah*'. Not only are these laws permanent but they don't even change course (17/77, 35/43)! It has been mentioned above that *Allah's* '*Amr* (will) becomes (قدر) (مقدورا) 'set standards & measures' in the created universe. This is referred to as '*SunnatAllah*' in (33/38), i.e., it becomes unchangeable law.

HAQ

We have also said earlier that according to the *Quran* *Allah* has

created the universe with '*Haq*' (productive, beneficial and realizable results). This purpose of the universe is mentioned in (10/82): '*Allah* proves the validity of '*Haq*' through His laws', and also in (42/24): '*Allah*, through His laws, removes '*Baatel*' (the

wrong) and establishes ‘*Haq*’ (the right).” This phenomenon (realization of beneficial & productive results through His laws) naturally requires eons (33/5, 70/4). But their pace can be wondrously quickened if Man joins in the action by studying the physical laws of Nature and adopting *Allah*’s laws for human society - (see ‘*Islam Kya Hai?*’ (What is Islam?) or ‘*Islam: A challenge to Religion*’ by the same author for a detailed treatment of this point) The *Quran* says in (65/3): ‘Surely, *Allah* sees to it that His *Amr* (Will) is realized. That was the purpose of establishing standards & measures for all things.

The created universe has no freedom of choice: Since Laws of Nature are permanent, the universe has to follow them anyway. All things in the universe do that faithfully (please see: 16/49, 2/116 and 57/1).

Let me give you a summary of what has been said so far:

1. *Allah* has formulated and established laws for all things in the universe, exercising absolute control.
2. The universe is bound to follow the laws of Nature.
3. These laws are discoverable (قدر معلوم) by Man (2/34). The *Quran* summarizes this in (45/13): “*Allah* has made the entire universe conquerable (you can harness it). There are clear signs in this for those who care to think”.

***Allah* bound Himself!**

We have seen a great change in *Allah*’s great

design of things; i.e., His ‘*Amr*’ - absolute power and choice - transformed to building permanent Law of Nature. In other words, *Allah* bound Himself! Shocking, isn’t it? But, it IS true. We witness it routinely. For example, see (6/12 & 6/54) where He says: ‘He has made *Rahma* compulsory for Himself.⁽⁴⁾ Also, see (10/103): ‘We have the obligation to protect the convinced.⁽⁵⁾ This has also been termed as ‘*Allah*’s Promise’ in (16/38, 31/9, 31/33, 35/5, 40/55 & 40/77). Also to be noted is the declaration that He always does, and will, keep His promise (30/6, 3/193).

***Allah*’s Promises**

His promises are nothing but His laws and ‘keeping

promises’ means the laws are permanent and consistent. The *Quran* contains a significant example of *Allah*’s voluntary adherence to His own Laws. One of nature’s Laws is procreation of animals and humans through the mating of a male and a female. The *Quran* rejects the Christian belief of the virgin birth (Christ being son of *Allah*) with a wonderfully logical argument. It says that despite being the absolutely free and all-powerful initiator and originator of the universe, He bound it and Himself in laws. The law requires a male and female for procreation. How can anyone be *Allah*’s son when He

has no wife? (6/102). In other words, He would have broken His own law by getting Himself a son, but He did not!

A criticism Answered

This gives rise to the argument that a ‘law

abiding *Allah*’ ceases to be the ‘all-powerful *Allah*’. But this is misleading. One does not cease to have power if one submits to a law voluntarily. For instance, if you are made to, against your will, have a daily 3- mile early morning walk, you are forced. But if you decide to do it, on your own accord, you are free. One who keeps promises and adopts certain principles in life, is not powerless. On the contrary, such a person is termed a man of honor, upholder of principles and reliable. Therefore, *Allah* doesn’t lose any power by binding himself in His own Laws. In fact, such a *Allah* is worthy of being *Allah*. He is a *Allah* who can be trusted because His laws are reliable. Despite having the power to do so, He doesn’t break laws. This concept of *Allah* comes from ‘*Din*’.

Religion’s Concept of *Allah*

The religionists cannot or will not

accept this. The *Allah* of Religion as mentioned earlier, is a remnant of the early days of Man’s intellectual growth. Now, Man has come of age and the *Allah* of ‘*Din*’ can be appreciated. But, sadly, the religionists don’t want this concept to get popular as it threatens their privileged position of ‘mediators’ between Man and *Allah*. This allows them to exercise authority over people. For this very purpose, the clergy propagated the concept of autocracy and hereditary monarchy. They likened kings to *Allah* where both are bound by no law. People under the influence of such clergy and monarchy can only follow instructions, not observe any laws. Such is the religion’s grip on the human mind that even mutineers and freedom fighters like to see *Allah* as an absolute ruler, much in the mold of an earthly king! This dualism (to have a law-abiding human society and a lawless *Allah*) is the hallmark of religion. ‘*Ad-Din*’ wants to replace it with the monotheism of a law-abiding *Allah* and an equally law-abiding Man!.

1. ***Ghalib:*** Using the simile of a veiled lady who is using a mirror to make her face up, *Ghalib* refers to the Creator who goes on to beautify the universe.
2. ***Iqbal:*** The same idea is presented using a different simile of a hitherto not fully untapped plant of wine-bearing juice.
3. The Arabic word (قانون) ‘*Qanoon*’ is commonly understood and translated into *Urdu* as ‘law’. Note that this work was originally intended for an *Urdu* readership.
4. The Arabic work ‘*Kataba*’ literally means to write (here ‘has written or wrote’). Since writing makes something permanent, it is used to refer to a permanent decision (law). This is supported by the well known verse about fasting 2/183.

5. The Arabic word (مؤمن) “*mo'min*” is popularly translated into English as ‘believer’ which, to the author, is not a true representation. Even ‘faithful’ does not carry over the meaning of *mo'min*. This very important word springs from the root a-m-n having the basic concept of peace of mind and heart resulting from being totally convinced of something because of rational knowledge. Hence the translation of *mo'mineen* as ‘the convinced’.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

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translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

Man

It has been stated that, in the second phase of *Allah's* creation schedule, His *Amr* became Law and the universe was created bound to follow it. Also, *Allah* Himself vowed to keep the LAW constant. This was a big leap in the creation schedule. Now, even a bigger leap came, That was creation of Man. Laws were established for Man, too, but he was not bound to follow them. He was given the freedom of ignoring them. Thus:

- i) An omnipotent Creator bounds Himself to His own laws,
- ii) The Universe is bound to follow His laws
but,
- iii) Man is NOT bound to follow His laws.

Man's Will and Choice:

Man has the freedom of choice - as opposed to the rest of the Universe which is bound and forced to obey Nature's laws. The *Quran* says in (90/10): " And We showed him two paths". Also, (in 76/3): "We have guided him to the right path. It is upto him now to accept or reject it." It is further elaborated in 18/29: "Tell that Right (has arrived) from your Preserver. It is upto you now to accept or reject it". In *Sura An.Najm*, it says (53/39): Man can only get what he strives for." Endeavor springs from Man's will. Therefore, this point has been made several times in the

Quran. In *Sura Bani Israel* (17/18-20), it says: "Whoever endeavors to achieve the short-term benefits, get them, and We give the bounties of Future to whoever decides and strives for them. This is a universe of endeavor and We have not sealed our bounties closed." Also, in 4/134: "Whoever decides to get short-term benefits (should know that) *Allah* has both short-term and long-term benefits. You'll get whatever you work for" (Also in 25/62).

Man's Responsibility

As shall be elaborated in the next chapter, '*Return of Deeds*', Man is created responsible for all his actions which consequently bear results. The entire system of Reward & Punishment rests on Man's being responsible for his actions. Responsibility has to come from freedom of choice. No freedom of choice, no responsibility. That's why the *Quran* says (in 16/75-76) "The subjugated and the free can never be equal. Subsequently, one will be answerable only for actions committed out of free will (16/106). Also (in 33/5): "you won't be held answerable for (an unintentional) mistake - only for one which you make with your heart's intention". The same principle lies under the normal judicial law which distinguishes between intentional (cold-blooded) and unintentional (warm-blooded or accidental) murder, proposing different punishments for them (4/92-93).

Story of Man - Free Will and Enforcement

The *Quran* has resolved the problem of Freedom & Compulsion through the figurative story of Man. Both Man and *Iblis* (Devil) were given a command each. Both sinned (disobeyed the command). When Adam (Man) was asked to explain; he responded with

a regretful “O our *Allah*, we have done ourselves harm” (7/23). That is, Adam, by regretting and confessing to the disobedience, admitted the responsibility for the action. This gave him a chance of redemption. He was told not to worry (in 2/38): “ I will be giving guidance to you. Whoever follows it will become free of fear and grief”. This is the potential of regaining the lost Paradise. The *Quran* calls it ‘repentance to reform after having erred’ (16/119).

On the contrary, *Iblis* responded by blaming *Allah* for his action, citing his own lack of free will (7/16 and 15/39). Because he did not assume responsibility, *Iblis* had no chances of reform (15/34) and was reviled (7/18). He was ‘destined’ to eternal frustration (*Iblis* literally means frustrated). One who considers himself bound cannot improve his lot and remains frustrated for ever.

The Way of Infidels and Polytheists

The *Quran* says that the Devilish (*Iblis*) attitude of “I would not have sinned if You (*Allah*) had not wished so” is the line always taken by infidels and polytheists. They attribute their way of life to *Allah*’s will -- ‘we are what we are because *Allah* wills so’. As it is said in *Sura An'aam*: “When you question their (erroneous) way of life, the polytheists will say - ‘It is *Allah*’s will that we are, and our ancestors were, polytheists” (6/149). *Allah* rebuts that statement with: “Whatever you say (and follow) is nothing but pure conjecture (and ignorance)”. In *Sura Zakhraf*, it says that when you (the Prophet) question them, they say: ‘We would never have prayed to these idols if God did not will it’. *Allah* said, “this is just ignorance. They are nothing but conjectures.” (43/20). *Sura Yaseen* reports that when the rich are asked to let their wealth flown down to the poor, the infidels reply: ‘How can we enrich those who are poor by *Allah*’s will?’. The *Quran*’s response to that is : “surely, you are in grave ignorance!” (36/47).

Allah’s Will

Please pause here for a moment and think about our routine utterances like: ‘This is what *Allah* wanted’, or ‘It would never have happened if He didn’t want it’, or ‘Whatever takes place in this world is according to *Allah*’s will. Man cannot intervene in it. In fact, one who recites phrases like ‘*Allah*’s will is paramount’ and poetry like ‘Please don’t pray for my well-being as it may be against *Allah*’s will (by *Hasrat Mohaany*)’ is considered to be most *Allah*-loving. Please think what the *Quran* says about this attitude. I am confident of the powers of my reader’s intellect. Therefore, I leave it to you to ponder over.

Man’s Will in Man’s World

The *Quran* states that the infidels and polytheists (following *Iblis*) say that God’s will controls all events in Man’s world. But *Allah* says to men: “Do whatever you will” (41/40).

Restricted in choice But this (41/40) goes further. It says: “Do whatever you wish. Surely, whatever you do (will bear a result, as it) is watched by Him”. That is: your are free to do whatever you wish but not free to alter the natural result of that action. You can’t follow path A and expect to end up at the other end of path B. (or you can’t swallow a pinch of poison and expect it to behave like a lump of sugar. Every action has a set reaction. You can initiate and trigger a law which then follows its natural course.

Actions and Results

This is illustrated in the *Quran* at various places - *Sura Bani Israel* says: “When they disgraced, *Allah* (‘s Law of Return of Deeds) twisted their hearts,” (61/5). They (the children of Israel) were told that if they followed the last messenger of *Allah*, they would

be absolved of their miserable life, but: ‘ If you return (to your previous attitude), We will (also) return (to giving you the same miserable life once again) (17/8). *Allah’s* law is: “Whoever turns away (from Him), is turned away” (51/9). *Sura Tauba* reports: “When they turned away, *Allah* turned their hearts away” (9/127). *Sura An-Nisa* reports that whoever chooses to turn to other than the Prophet & the convinced, “We group them together”. (4/115). Contrarily, you remember Me, I remember you” (2/152), and “You help Me, I help you” (47/7).

This has so beautifully represented by *Iqbal* as:

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State of Nations

The *Quran* also tells us that the Law affecting individuals is also applicable to nations (groups of people) to bring about a change in their ‘destiny’. That means that a nation can alter its state according to the change it brings about in its psyche (13/11 and 8/53). In other words, just like individuals, nations are also bound by *Allah’s* laws of their rise and fall, revival and extinction i.e., whatever a nation does, it produces a result pre-determined by the eternal laws of Nature. This point shall be elaborated in chapter six dealing with rise and fall of nations.

Further explanation of the term ‘*Taqdeer*’

Please recall what has been said so far about the meaning of the term ‘*taqdeer*’. As reminder, *Sura An’aaam* reports: “Allah made night for rest and the sun and the moon for calculation (of time). This the *taqdeer* (destiny) of the Powerful and Knowledgeable *Allah*,” 6/97). In other words, this is *Allah’s* law. Similarly, *Sura Yaseen* reports: “And the sun is on course to its station. This the Powerful and Knowledgeable *Allah’s* *taqdeer*,” (36/38). Elsewhere, it says: “And We decorated the world’s sky with bright lamps (stars), and provided you protection through them. This the Powerful and Knowledgeable *Allah’s* *taqdeer*,” (41/12). *Sura Furqaan* reports: “He created all things and then determined *taqdeer* for them,” (25/2). Obviously, *taqdeer* means Nature’s laws. Again, *Sura AdDahr* reports: These goblets will be made of (brilliant) silver and made to special *taqdeer* (measures),” (76/16).

It should be evident by now that the term ‘*taqdeer*’ means measures, standards, or laws of Nature running the Universe. Clearly, this is in stark contradiction to the interpretation of the term (under use in *Urdu*) in the sub-continent of India & Pakistan, viz-a-viz Man’s *taqdeer* (destiny). *Taqdeer*, in the *Quranic* sense, is nothing but *Allah’s* laws. Therefore, as far as Man is concerned, we say that:

Taqdeer (destiny) is Nature’s law which becomes functional according to the action taken by Man.

For instance, the ‘*taqdeer*’ of a person who puts a hand in fire is burning. When that burn is treated with a balm, soothing becomes its *taqdeer*. *Iqbal* represented it thus:

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Omar Farooq’s Illustration

This point is illustrated by a story about ***Omar*** (the Second Caliph). When plague broke out, he suggested moving out of the town to a nearby forest. ***Abu Obaida*** commented, “You are trying to escape *Allah’s* law?”. “Yes”, ***Omar*** replied, “I am escaping from His

(one) law to His (other) law,”. If one stays in a plague-infected area, death comes according to God’s *taqdeer* (law). But, if one leaves the epidemic-affected environment for cleaner, safer ground, death is avoided according to *Allah’s ‘taqdeer’* (law). The choice between the two ‘*taqdeers*’ (laws) is entirely Man’s own. *Iqbal* says:

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Therefore, the strong-willed choose their actions in the light of their ‘*taqdeer*’ (pre-determined results) but the weak become subject to changes in their situation - they are just like vegetation. That, then, is the *Quranic* meaning of *taqdeer*.

How did this all change?

A little further in the book, I shall deal with the problem of this shift in view when I shall elaborate upon the causes of the *Quranic System (Din)* obliterating into Religion (*Mazhab*). This shift changed the law-enforcing *Allah* into an absolute dictator and the free-willed Man became a prisoner of ‘*taqdeer*’. The religious leaders (priests) assumed the guardianship of the jail!.

Belief of Enforcement

The supporters of ‘*Mazhab*’ (as against ‘*Din*’) seek to substantiate their views of Enforcement (a bound Man as against free-willed) with certain *Quranic* verses. Before I deal with it at length later on in the book, I shall now briefly present the argument in principle. They present verses like: “Not a person knows what he (or she) will do tomorrow...” (31/34), and “No one knows the location of one’s death”... (18/24); also, *Allah* says about Himself: “He knows about their (of people) present and future” (2/255). The conclusion drawn from all this is: If Man is free-willed, it shouldn’t be difficult for him to determine what he will do tomorrow. This verse can hold good only if Man is bound.

This argument has a basic flaw. Man is surely free-willed. But, his freedom is not limitless. It is dependent on various factors beyond his control and/or knowledge. He does not have complete control over his environment and, more importantly so, neither over his fellow men’s actions. Man can be more certain about the physical universe around him when and if his knowledge of it progresses, but he cannot be certain of other (free-willed) men’s actions. In today’s world, the political change in a super-power (country like the US), affects the entire globe. Therefore, Man, unlike the Sun or the Moon, cannot foretell with certainty the actions he will take in future. Man can only decide his actions in the light of his situation, considering the various factors in play, only upto a point within the boundaries of human capabilities.

Another part of the argument is *Allah’s* knowledge of people’s future as well as present. It is erroneously concluded that *Allah* can know Man’s future only if the future is pre-determined - future of a free-willed creation cannot be predicted.

This conclusion has a basic flaw. The question of *Allah’s* knowledge is linked with the problem of TIME (a very complex philosophic question likes of which I have not set myself to deal with, as mentioned in the preface). Simply, put there is a basic difference between *Allah’s* knowledge and that of Man. The *Quran* cites the division of ‘Earth time’ into ‘day and night’ as among His great signs; also mentions the Sun and the Moon as instruments of calculation of time. This ‘time’ splits, for us earthly beings, into past, present and future. In the absolute sense, however these divisions of time do not exist. We lose all sense of time in sleep. As *Bergson* says: past, present and future are simply knots of human convenience on the thread of time. Time to *Allah* is an indivisible whole and, in

Iqbal's word, an ‘eternal now’. Since we humans are incapable of perceiving this as an indivisible whole, no example may explain it. However, one may try to explain it, to a limited extent, with reference to SPACE. Sitting inside a house we have no knowledge of the events outside (invisible). But, for someone on the roof of the building, those events are visible. *Allah* is, in the *Quranic* words, “Knower of the visible as well as the invisible, i.e., what is invisible to Man is visible to *Allah*.

As mentioned above, humans cannot rise above the ‘divisible time’. We can only become unaware of it during loss of consciousness (sleep or coma). As *Ghalib* puts it wonderfully:

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Allah, however, undergoes no loss of consciousness. He is above all this. Therefore, TIME for Him is one continuous Present.

In simpler words, then, Man is capable of exercising his free will to change his decisions. *Allah* knows what decisions Man is going to take. Therefore, Man does not know his own future actions whereas *Allah* does (know man’s future actions).

Predictions and Prophecies are Pure Conjecture

Therefore, it is erroneous to believe that anyone’s future may be predictable. One can’t predict the next spot a common fly is going to settle at, let alone the actions of a free-willed man. *Iqbal* says:

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Fortune- Tellers & Astrologers

The *Quran* tells us that, during Man’s early (ignorant) days, astrologers and fortune-tellers used to hoodwink people into believing that the future was predictable. But, at the time of the *Quran’s* revelation - when Man was becoming of age - such people will be ‘flogged with lightening hunters” (72/8-9).

‘Din’ Transformed into Religion

That was when Islam was still ‘*Din*’. After its transformation into a religion, the Muslim world also saw the emergence of these prophets, fortune-tellers and astrologers. The free-willed Man, who was expected to carve his own destiny, sunk to having his future read by palmists. *Iqbal* put it thus:

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THE LAW OF RETURNS

As it has been stated, the physical universe operates on the basic principle of ‘Cause and Effect’. Another basic principle is ‘the Uniformity of Nature’ which means that ‘the Law of Cause and Effect’ applies uniformly to the entire Universe. In other words, a CAUSE will create exactly the same EFFECT whenever and wherever the conditional factors are identical. In the social world of humans, this is known as the Law of Returns’.

The Two Levels of Human Life

Man’s life has two levels or aspects. One is PHYSICAL, just as the rest of the Universe, subject to the physical laws of Nature. For instance, humans reproduce like other animals and the elements affect them similarly in ingestion, digestion, excretion, sleep, wakefulness, illness, health, procreation, death etc. A human being even has the basic animalistic instincts like self-preservation, self-aggression and self-reproduction.

Then there is a higher level of human life manifested not in the body but in the HUMAN PERSONALITY. It is not subject to physical laws. Nonetheless, it has a different code of law called PERMANENT VALUES. Values deal with honesty, truthfulness, standards of good or bad and right or wrong. These values are reflected in what is called HUMAN CHARACTER. Animals have BEHAVIOR. Man has CHARACTER, too.

Physical laws of the Universe can be discovered through observation and experimentation. Permanent Values, however, come to Man only through divine revelation and are now preserved in the Quran. These values have their own set of laws (action and result) just as ‘cause and effect’ in the physical world. This is known as the Universal Law of Returns.

The characteristic of willful choice - unique to Man - is actually a trait of the human PERSONALITY, which flourishes by adhering to Permanent Values and withers away by violating them. By the way, a person with a developed personality is strong of will. A ‘developed’ personality lives even after the body’s death. That is ‘Life in the Hereafter’. Thus, permanent values work on Man’s personality just as physical laws do on his body. The law of cause & effect in both domains are natural and divine.

Three Categories of Laws

Human life is governed by these categories of laws:

1. Physical (laws of physics, chemistry, biology etc.) governing the human body.
2. Social laws enacted by government / society.
3. Permanent Values (moral & ethical laws) affecting the human personality.

All the three areas deem a person responsible for his / her action and the results thereof. In i) & ii), it may happen that one has to face consequences of someone else’s actions: for

example, someone drowns in a river because somebody pushes one off a bridge (or the bridge gives way because of faulty workmanship); famine strikes because of bad administration; floods ravage an area; or war creates havoc, etc. In iii), however, every person bears consequences of one's own action (even those affecting one's personality). This is known as that person's Record of Deeds.

The *Quran* holds Man responsible for all actions, individual or collective. It doesn't recognize any action in any of the three categories as being the responsibility of Fate (predetermined destiny of Man) and not of Man himself. Man gets what he works for. Pre-determined is the Law of Returns and NOT Man's actions. This is 'Destiny of Allah' not 'Destiny of Man'! Man's fate is nothing but the results of his (individual and/or collective) action! Let me elaborate some of these points.

1. 'Your destiny is what you do' (2/20)

The Quran presents the basic principle in this regard saying: "Whoever commits wrong (bad) deeds, surrounding himself with his mistakes - they are the people of hellfire". Their hopes will be dashed. On the other hand, "those who are convinced and do good (beneficial) deeds are the people of Paradise" (2/81-82). Elsewhere it says: "Whatever one does, begets full results" (2/281) -- also in (3/24, 3/160, 40/17). But, an action has to be willful, as is stated in: "You will be held responsible (only) for actions committed by your heart (will)" (2/225). That is, one is not responsible for a forced action. In my view, this verse alone sufficiently makes evident the Quranic notion that Man is created 'free of will'. In *Surah Al-Anaam*, it says: "Everyone has the responsibility of one's own actions. No one carries another's burden" (6/165). This is supported by (17/15; 35/18; 39/7; 53/38) etc.

In *Surah An-Najm*, it says: "Man can get only what he strives for" (53/39). Also, "Man is entitled to what he works for" (20/15). A just society is the one in which "no one's efforts go wasted" (21/94) and that in which "your efforts bear results" (17/18-21).

Like individuals, this law applies to nations as well - "Your predecessor (nations of past) bore the consequences of what they did and you will have what you work for. You will not be queried about their actions" (2/134). Also, see (2/141). This is because the Law of Returns states: "Deeds bring results and responsibility to the doer (s)" (2/286). "People are destroyed by their own actions" (2/79).

Suffice to say that "Everyone is mortgaged by his own actions" (74/38).

2. "You get what you do" (9/82)

The Laws of Returns means each and every action (right or wrong) produces a reaction. This is of routine occurrence in the physical world, and easy to observe and accept. Everyday occurrences like fire burns if you touch it and water quenches your thirst are evident examples of this. But, permanent values are a different matter because their consequences are not readily & directly observable. Food satisfies hunger is easier to observe than it is to see how food wrongfully earned damages one's personality. The 'Materialistic Concept of Life' does not believe in permanent values as it does not recognize the existence of the human personality. The materialists recognize only the social laws enacted by society / government. These laws bear consequences only when the relevant society comes to know actions - and that varies from one society to another.

The Soaring Global Crime Rate

The present alarming social deterioration all over the world & the ever-climbing crime-rate in all societies are due to one basic reason: People do not believe in the existence of

human personality. Life to them is the physical life only.

But, the Quran has the human personality as the pivot of its philosophy. All actions of Man, individual or collective, produce reactions. In fact, this is stated as the reason for the existence of this Universe: “*Allah* created the skies and the earth (the universe) rightfully to get everyone the result of his actions and to stop all wrongdoing” (45/22). Again, “Everything in the skies and the earth is (working) for *Allah* so that people who do bad deeds get bad results and people doing good deeds get good results” (53/31).

In *Surah Younis*, it is stated that *Allah*’s program of creation - creating all things from nothingness (*mabda*) and then reshaping them to ever new forms - exists only to get to people convinced of permanent values the results of their rightful deeds (10/4). This is repeated in (11/7, 18/6 & 67/2).

Surah Nisaa states: “whoever does wrong shall bear the consequence” (4/123) and “Whatever on does produces results” (9/82; 9/95; 14/51; 16/96-97; 40/17).

Elsewhere, the *Quran* states: “everyone shall get the result of one’s actions” (34/33). It is repeated in (7/147; 52/16; 56/24; 83/36) etc. Again, it states: “*Allah* doesn’t let go wasted any deed of a doer”.(3/197). Also: “*Allah* never wastes the return of good doers” (12/90; 3/144).

The Weighing Balance

It is to drive this very basic principle home that the *Quran* has used the simile of a weighing balance: “We shall, on the Day of Judgment, set up weighing balances and then no one shall be done wrong” (28/47). People with their good deeds weighing more than their bad ones shall prosper and flourish, the others shall be destroyed. (23/102-103). “Every small bit of human action shall be weighed” (3/16; 34/3; 99/7-8; 101/5-6). Actions shall be weighed and the reading will be given to the concerned to “See what they have been doing” (9/94; 9/7105; 10/23). This reading shall decide if the weighed deserves success because of a ‘developed personality’ or failure because of not having developed one’s personality (9/9-10).

It is hopefully clear through these *Quranic* verses that Man is responsible for all his actions and is not bound by pre-determined destiny.

Reward or punishment for forced, pre-determined actions is simply out of the question.

3. Read your book (of deeds) 17/33

The principle illustrated by the simile of the ‘Weighing Balance’ is elsewhere in the Quran elicited by the term ‘Book of Deeds’. It says: “We have appointed guardians and overseers around Man to record all his action” (13/11; 50/18). They are called ‘the exalted writers’ (82/11). This record is like “an open and clear book” (10/16).

This book is housed in each & every man. *Sura Beni Israel* states: “Every man’s book of deeds hangs in his neck”. It is rolled shut now but will be opened on the Day of Judgment and the man will be told, ‘Read your book. It is self-evident for you to take your own account this day” (17/13-14). The list of deeds and actions will not require any witnesses other than the man himself who will frankly admit his mistakes (75/14).

This is the record about which the *Quran* says: “We have a book which says nothing but the truth” (23/62). It is this very record which will make the culprit shout in despair: “O if only I was a heap of dust!” (78/40).

It should be clear, then, that each and every human action (even a passing thought or a wrongful glance - 40/19) produces a result which is recorded according to the ‘Law of Returns’. Man’s book of deeds is blank at birth and he writes in it with his own hand to affect his personality accordingly. He writes his own destiny. As *Iqbal* says:

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4. If you are good, you are good for your own self (17/7)

(Result of one man’s action cannot be transferred to another)

When action is dependent on one’s own free will, the resulting consequence cannot be shared or transferred. For instance, you may take or give money / wealth but cannot transfer to others the healthy results of regular exercise which you do. If you touch fire, only you have to bear the burning. Similarly, the consequences of one’s action on one’s personality cannot be transferred to another.

Individuality of the Human Personality

This exclusiveness is termed as the individuality of the Human Personality. In *Sura Beni Israel*, it is stated: “If you do good, it is to your own benefit and the bad deeds are (also) for your own self” (17/7). Again, in 41/16 it says: “Whoever does good, benefits his own self and whoever does bad only hurts himself”. It also says: “Your Protector is never unfair to people” (41/46), and also in 45/15. Elsewhere, it says: “One who strives, strives for one’s own self” (29/6). *Sura Younis* states: “O mankind! surely your defiance (of the Divine Law) will be upon your own self (you’ll bear the consequences)” (10/23) - also in 4/111. *Sura Al-Anaam* says: “you have been shown clear paths by your Preserver. So, Whoever keeps his eyes closed will bear the consequences on his own self” (6/105). It is repeated elsewhere: “O mankind! you have received the Truth from your Preserver. So, whoever chooses the right path shall beneficial from it while whoever goes astray will bear the loss” (10/108) - also in 17/15; 40/44; 31/12.

Another important point in this regard is that the consequences affecting the personality of a free-willed man stay for ever and cannot be erased by another man. For example, it says: “No one can help anyone through recommendation or bribe or otherwise” (2/48; 2/133).

It is not Commercial

Also it says: “Results of deeds may not be bought or helped through friendship or recommendation” (2/254). This rule applies uniformly to all. Even the Prophet himself says: “.... I fear. If I defy my Protector, I fear the punishment on that Great Day” (10/15; 9/13).

This uniqueness (individuality) of the human personality -- being responsible for one’s one action - was the basis of the Prophet’s announcement to non-Muslims: “We have our deeds, you have yours” (2/139). “You will not be queried about our ‘crimes’ not will we be asked about your actions” (34/25). “For you, your ‘din’, for us ours” (109/6). “My actions are for me yours for you. You are not responsible for my actions nor I for yours” (10/41).

Responsibility of action is only for the free-willed and never for the forced. Even *Allah* doesn’t interfere. He just keeps a watch: “*Allah* sees your actions” (2/237). “He knows them” (2/234). “No action can go unnoticed by Him”. (2/144), even “*Allah* knows what is in your hearts” 2/235).

“*Allah* watches your actions” means that no action can escape the Law of Returns - “*Allah* surrounds whatever you do” (3/119). That is why every responsibly action by Man produces a reaction and every man has to bear the consequences of his actions.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

TRAGEDIES and AFFLICTIONS

You must have come across routine events like the following:

- i) When a patient recovers, it is credited to the perseverance and skills of physicians; but failure of treatment is attributed to destiny, pre-determined by Allah.
- ii) Success in an academic examination is credited to the diligence of the candidate whereas failure is attributed to Allah.
- iii) A favorable verdict in a legal case is attributed to the brilliant skills of the counsel but Allah is blamed in case of the contrary result.
- iv) A male offspring is cause enough for celebrations in the family but a baby-girl draws sympathetic consoling remarks like: "What could you do? Allah wanted it so!"

Success due to oneself, failure due to *Allah*

Thus, Man considers himself helpless and bound in case of failure but deems himself free of will in case of success. This mental attitude is the remnant of mankind's early days when, finding themselves helpless against certain natural phenomena, they began thinking of a super-natural power. Traditional Religion has fed such ideas to this day through so-called 'sacred' evidences such as (I "عَرَفْتُ اللَّهَ بِفَنْسَخِ الْعَزَمِ" know *Allah* (exists) because of failure of my plans). ⁽¹⁾

(1) This saying is attributed to Ali (the Prophet's cousin and the fourth Caliph), but it appears erroneous. In my opinion, it has come from one of the 'Sufis' (mystics).

Oriental poetry, thriving on grief, affliction and despair, has painted the picture more bleak by verses such as :

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Mysticism finally stamped this notion into a firm, established religious belief. Let us try to see the stance of *Allah*'s '*Din*' in this regard.

What is 'museeba'? ⁽¹⁾

The Arabic word '*museeba*' stems from the three-letter root ص و ب , which carries the basic and intrinsic meaning of something descending to come to its resting place. Thus each and every occurrence or event may be termed as '*museeba*'. The *Quran* uses '*museeba*' in contrast to '*hasana*' (9/50) meaning something pleasant. Hence the popular use of '*museeba*' for an unpleasant event.

The point to ponder is whether ‘*musaaeb*’ (tragedies and afflictions) are caused by *Allah* or by Man (individually or collectively). The *Quran* presents an elaborate reply.

‘Musaaeb’ are caused by Man’s actions

Sura Shura says: “There is no tragedy which befalls you but as result of your own handiwork” (42/30). *Sura Aale-Imran* states that when they (people) are struck by an affliction, they wonder where it came from (أني هذ) - ‘ Tell them: “it is of your own doing” (3/164). *Sura Nahal* also says the same: “Their own wrongdoing brought tragedy to them” (16/34).

- (1) Commonly translated in Urdu as affliction or grief.

The Reprieve

Allah’s established procedure for wrong / bad actions is that their consequences are not readily observable initially and take some time in materializing. This time gap is the grace period of reprieve. In *Sura Az-Zumr*, it is stated that people who chose to go gleefully away from *Allah*’s way, defying and ridiculing His laws but in a little while “what wrong they have done will bear result and that (Divine Law) which they are ridiculing now will surround them” (39/48).

The *Quran* uses a very meaningful expression for this grace period of reprieve between an action and the subsequent result of it. It likens it to someone sending (this result) on before he starts his own journey. Reaching the destination, one finds that result already waiting (for the sender). The *Quran* uses the expression (بما فَرَّمْتَ أَيْدِيهِمْ) - ‘whatever their hands send on before’. *Sura Aal-e-Imran* talks about *Allah* recording all the crimes committed which will bear results as life goes on and they will be told: “This is what your hands sent on before” (3/181-182). These results have also been referred to by the expression (ما أسلفت) - i.e. “those which have passed (this path) before” (10/30). *Sura Al-Hajj* also uses the same expression in (22/9-10). *Sura Al-Qasas* states about the children of Israel (Jews) that when they are faced with a bad situation, which they have themselves sent on before, they start moaning and complaining (28/47); also: 4/62. *Sura Rome* talks about people’s attitude of crediting success to themselves boastfully, but getting depressed and frustrated over tragedies which they have already sent on themselves before (30/36). It is repeated in 42/49. *Sura Al-Fajr* states that faced with the ultimate destruction, Man will call out in despair, “only if I had sent something on for my life!” (89/24).

This applies to tragedies and afflictions as well as bounties and benefits. *Sura Muzammel* says: “Whatever good you send on for yourselves will be ready with *Allah*” (73/20).

The same phenomenon is also referred to as “whatever their selves send on for them” (5/80). The *Quran* holds Man’s personality (self) responsible for his actions since it is the seat of his power of choice and free will. That is why it says: “Self (the human personality) should keep an eye on what it sends on for tomorrow (the future)” (59/18). About realization of results it says: “Self will come to know what it sent on or left behind” (82/5) because “We write down what they send on and what they leave behind” (36/12) and that “Everything is registered in a clear book which is (always walking) ahead of them” (36/12).

Thus, all tragedies and afflictions are brought upon Man by himself (individually or collectively). *Sura Baqara* talks about the calamities befalling the children of Israel saying: “Their tragedy was of their own doing” (2/79) because “they were unfair and law-breakers” (2/59) - also: 2/61; 3/111.

Ignominy and Disgrace

In fact, *Allah's* universal law (that ignominy and disgrace are results of Man's own actions) applies to anyone and all. When a nation chooses to ignore even a part of *Allah's* law, they are ‘disgraced in this world and subject to severe punishment on the Day of Judgment’ (2/85) - also: 2/114; 22/9-10. *Sura Al-Fajr* states the same in a different way: “When Man is disgraced, he says “O my God! You disgraced me for nothing!” (89/9-16). *Allah* replies that it is not true. “*Allah* doesn't disgrace anyone. You have been disgraced by our own wrongdoing -- you used to abandon the helpless of your society; you had all the vices of a capitalistic economy -- such actions brought ignominy to you, not *Allah*!”, also 92/4-10.

Allah is not unfair

The fact that *Allah* doesn't disgrace anyone without due cause (one's own wrongdoing), as this is unfair, has been illustrated many times over in the Quran. *Sura Aal-e-Imran* talks about the tyrants of society being eventually destroyed, and -- “*Allah* is not unfair to them but they are unfair to themselves” (3/116). *Sura Tauba*, after speaking of destruction of the nations of the past, says: “*Allah* did not treat them cruelly, but they brought it upon them themselves” (9/70). Also in 11/101; 16/33 and 29/40. *Sura Younis* states: “*Allah* is not unfair to people in the slightest, but they do it to themselves” (10/44). *Allah* is omnipotent and Man is His (weak and vulnerable) creation. *Allah's* being cruel and unfair to Man is inconceivable. People bring tragedies to themselves by their own hands (ذلك بما قدمت يدك) “*Allah* is not cruel to His creatures” (22/10). In fact, “*Allah* doesn't (even) intend to be cruel to His people” (40/31). He argues: “Why will *Allah* torture you if you accept (the validity of His laws) and (show that you) are convinced (of their practical value)?” (4/147).

Allah is not a sadist. In His domain “every decision is based upon the Truth” and “everyone gets the result of one's actions” and “no one is wronged” (39/69-70). About the time of Man's actions bearing results, it says: “that day everyone will get what he worked for and no one will be wronged” (40/17). Also: “Decisions will be taken justly and fairly and no one will be wronged” (10/47) - also: (10/54).

Two verses from *An-Nisa*

In this regard, two ‘verses’ from *Sura An-Nisa* are quite significant. Talking about the ‘reverse’ mentality of a certain group of the Prophet's era, the *Quran* says: “when they are in a pleasant situation, they attribute it to *Allah*, but blame the Prophet for their troubles. Tell them “everything is from *Allah*” ('s law) 4/78. Further, it says: “What is (wrong) with them? They don't try to understand. Remember, the pleasantness you get is from *Allah* and your troubles are from you yourselves” (4/79).

There is an apparent contradiction here. One verse says the good and the bad all come from *Allah*, whereas the other verse appears to say the good is from *Allah* but the bad is from Man. The apparent contradiction can actually be resolved thus:

- i) All events- good or bad - occur according to natural (*Allah's*) laws
 (كل من عند الله).

- ii) *Allah's Law - if followed - shall bring good to you -*

ما اصابك من حسنة فمن الله

but

- iii) If you follow the path of your own choice (other than *Allah's*), the natural result will be trouble.

ما اصابك من سيئة فمن نفسك

Simply put, then, all events (actions) bear results pre-determined by *Allah's* law. If one follows the natural (*Allah's* suggested) course, one benefits. Otherwise (when one defies the divine law) the natural consequence is tragedy.

Therefore, all good is from *Allah* whereas evil is brought upon Man by himself. This point shall be elaborated later in the book under a separate heading of 'Good and Evil'.

Misconceptions

We can conclude, therefore, that (i) to attribute a tragedy to *Allah* is not only erroneous factually but is blaming *Allah* wrongfully. When people try to philosophize a tragedy by utterances like: "Man proposes and God disposes, 'His is all powerful. He can do whatever, whenever He wants', 'Only He knows why He does what He does', etc. they project an image of a lawless, irregular and unreasonable *Allah*, and (ii) all Man's efforts and endeavors are futile and all events occur because of (a whimsical *Allah*). This reduces Man to a bound, will-less creature. (I shall deal with this point in some detail later in the book).

By Chance

It is true that:

- i) Occasionally, an event has to be attributed to 'chance' as we cannot explain it, and
- ii) an individual is sometimes beset with tragedy not directly attributable to the person concerned. Sometimes, Allah's law appears to be working in the opposite direction (producing evil instead of good), as in the case of an honest official who suffers in a dishonest society.

As to 'chance' in (I) above, there can never be an 'effect' without a 'cause' in the universe. But, the cause has to be discovered by Man. During the early period of its history, mankind used to attribute, due to lack of knowledge, almost every phenomenon to chance. That has been changing through Man's march of civilization. Even today, certain uncivilized tribes in various parts of the world attribute certain phenomena to gods and goddesses. It is not so any longer when scientific discoveries unravel the mysteries of Nature. This situation improves with every generation. This ignorant state of affairs may be observed in certain sections of society even in the civilized world. As Man moves forward in the realm of science, 'chance' will give way completely to factual knowledge attained by mankind. Man has the potential to discover the entire Universe (2/31).

'Chance' is nothing but lack of knowledge!.

Individuals in an Unfair Society

As to (ii) above, an individual is a part / member of a society and, as such, is affected by it anyway. For example, a good harvest benefits even those not connected with farming at all. On the other hand, a bursting dam extends its damage even to those who have nothing at all to do with its construction or maintenance. This is why the *Quran* say: “Try to protect your society against a danger which is not restricted to the people responsible for it” (8/25).

Man behaves oddly in a society. Benefiting from the good - facilities, benefits etc. - one never refuses them on the grounds that one is not directly responsible for them. On the other hand, however, one is always complaining about the badness of society for which, again, one is not directly responsible. This attitude is referred to in the *Quran*: “When Man is enjoying Our bounties, he turns away (arrogantly from *Allah*'s law), but when evil comes to him, he raises hue and cry” (17/83). It goes on to say: “Say, everyone works according to one's tether”, therefore is directly or indirectly responsible for what happens in society. The *Quran* gives a graphic illustration of this in *Sura Sabaa* (the leaders and the led quarreling about, and blaming one another for, society's ills): “If you just imagine the time when the transgressors will be in *Allah*'s presence blaming one another for their mistakes. The led will say to the leaders, ‘but for your misleading leadership we would have followed *Allah*'s laws’. The leaders will say, ‘Why blame us? We didn't stop you from following the right path. You wronged of your own choice. You blame us wrongly!’ The led will say, ‘You crafted a society which kept us away from the right path. How can you escape responsibility?’” (34/31-33). But, excuses of both will be rejected and punishment will come to them equally: (37/33) - The leaders for their wrongdoing and the led for being their power base.

This then, is the *Quran*'s view of an individual and society. A society is nothing but a collection of individuals who have the potential of enforcing change. Please note that the *Quran* does not accept as valid the excuse of being helpless from free-willed Man. This very excuse brought upon *Iblees* the eternal punishment of being banished from benefits. It is perfectly possible, though, that individuals fail in their initial attempt(s) to bring about change in their society. But this is very different from presenting helplessness as an excuse for inaction. People who try are commended by *Allah* (2/157), others will naturally go to hell (4/97).

Early Muslim History

This, therefore, is the *Quran*'s position on social tragedies. Social life (collective existence) will be dealt with in more detail later in this book under ‘Rise & Fall of Nations’). As long as Muslims kept in view this *Quranic* position, they faced problems logically, factually and on the basis of cause & effect. The public would point out any flaws in administration and the officials would attend to them. Any difficulties on the social level were dealt with by improving the people's own individual (or collective) behavior. No one would blame problems on *Allah* or pre-determined *taqdeer* (destiny)!

A Conspiracy

Later, the rulers grew more and more oppressive which resulted in ever-increasing social ills, problems and tragedies. To avoid any public uprising against them, the rulers collaborated with the clergy - no Pharaoh can claim to be the supreme provider (أَنْ رَبُّكُمْ (الْأَعْلَى) without help from *Haman* (the clergy) - who began propagating the view that the rulers, their oppression and power, all social problems and individual tragedies etc. occur by the pre-determined will of *Allah* and thus is unavoidable and is to be patiently accepted as fate. Any dissent - even a mere thought of it - is going against the will of *Allah* is apostasy!

This propaganda through the years established as an article of the faith (anti-*Quranic*) belief of (pre-destined) calamities as the will of *Allah*.

Please remember, the *Quran* announces: “There is no calamity but brought upon you by your own hands” (42/30) - be it individual, like touching a flame, or collective as a dam giving way or the righteous suffering in a wrong society!.

This last point needs a little more elaboration. *Sura Maida* says: “O the convinced people! Keep a watch over your selves. If you keep to the right path, the wrongdoers will not be able to bring any harm to you” (5/105). This verse reveals great truths.

It says one will be safe from wrongdoers if one is on the right path. But our experience is in contradiction of this. A righteous, honest person is conspired against, wronged, and harmed by the devious. How, then, the Quran can claim what it does? This requires some deliberation.

As stated previously, Man has two levels of life. One is physical, subject to natural physical laws. On this level, there is no distinction between the good and the bad people. A flame burns anyone - believer or non-believer alike, poison kills both. Tilling land according to sound agricultural knowledge brings good harvest to everyone.

Sura Beni Israel Says:

“Our law is that whoever desires the worldly benefits and strives for them according to our deliberately established natural laws, gets them. But, the future for such a person is bled and hellish.

Contrarily, whoever desires benefits of both worlds - present & future - and strives for them accordingly, convinced of permanent values, gets good results in the present as well as the future.

Thus, both categories keep moving forward in life. Your Provider does not deprive either of the two categories of the due result of their efforts. (17/18-26).

That means the physical laws work equally for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

This is repeated in (42/20). This, therefore is *Allah*'s law on the physical level.

The other level of life - the human - is higher than the physical and is governed by permanent moral values. Living according to these values sustains and nourishes the human personality. Defiance of these values results in stalling the growth of the human personality. This is known as the future or the hereafter. But, importantly, at this level both the physical and the human lives co-exist. In a righteous (Islamic) social situation both levels of life are duly looked after without any mutual clashes. Not so in a wrong (un-Islamic) social set-up. These are clashes between the righteous people (convinced of the permanent values) and the wrongdoers (the unconvinced). In such situations, the righteous do not like to give up permanent values in favor of the worldly benefits. That is why the righteous sometimes suffer on the physical-life level. But their personalities (نفسكم) remain protected (5/105), and the benefit and damage to the human personality can only be judged when weighed in *Allah*'s balance of the Law of Returns (5/105).

Importance of Material Benefits

The *Quran* does not ignore the material side of physical life, but considers it very important. It says of a ‘*momin’s*’ (the convinced, righteous person) life, “good in the world and good in the hereafter” (2/210). The question to consider is: How to strike a

balance between the two levels of life? That is the whole point of the *Quranic* program. The clash between a righteous and a materialistic person is termed as the clash between the Right and the Wrong. When the righteous lose this battle, it is because they, in a wrongful society, exist as individuals whereas the materialists gang up. The *Quran* suggests the righteous get together and form an alliance against the wrongdoers. This is not easy, though.

Clash of Right & Wrong

It is a continual fight termed as '*jehad*: *Sura Baqara* says: "Do you hope to enter Paradise effortlessly? You also, just as the righteous of yester- years, have to go through crushing struggle. They used to fight on and on under grueling circumstances, occasionally wondering when their efforts would bear fruit. It was only then (after a long, sustained, crushing battle) that they would be successful with Allah's help. Remember, you have to do likewise!" (2/214).

As an example, the *Quran* speaks of the Battle of *Ahzaab*: "During that awful time, you were surrounded by the enemy forces, you were frightened blind with your hearts pounding wildly and (the not-so-convinced among) you were beginning to doubt the validity of *Allah's* promises. Under such awesome circumstances, the convinced displayed their steadfastness in the face of problems! (33/10-11). Such are the situations when the righteous face (physical damage and loss):

"You will face war and killing, shortage of food, loss of life and property, damage to crops and orchards. But eventually, good news will come to the steadfast who constantly keep in view their target of replacing the wrong evil system with the right good one. They say" "We are devoted to this cause. Regardless of problems and difficulties, we will keep striving to achieve that goal by moving towards that target" (2/155-156).

Obviously, one needs, along with steadfastness, material equipment. That is why it says: "Be ready to defend your borders" (8/60). On a battlefield, the righteous suffer from a technical mistake just as any other fighting force. One very illustrative example from Muslim history is the Battle of *Ohud* where the Muslims were defeated incurring heavy losses and the Prophet, after being injured, had to be rescued.

For such occasions, the *Quran* comforts the righteous: "Why worry over your problems? Your opponents also face them" (4/104). "These universal laws apply to all mankind" (3/139).

If the righteous come out victorious, they establish a just society in which (5/105) becomes practically operative, and so does 2/210.

Those who die before the establishment of such as a social system suffer in this world and life but their life in the hereafter is enviable. They are called 'Killed in *Allah's* path' and they are to be considered alive and shall live for ever (2/154).

This success, however, comes with Man's own effort which bears fruit in a collective (social) form of life of a nation.

I shall deal with this point in the next chapter.

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'FATE OF NATIONS'

Nature's 'Law of Returns' applies to nations as well as to individuals. It decides their rise and fall, life and death. Because, as seen in Chapter 5, an individual's 'fate' is connected with that of a nation, the Law of Returns pertaining to nations extends to individuals, too. Please recall Allah's law regarding change in a nation's circumstances ---

"*Allah* doesn't bring about a change in a nations circumstances unless it changes what is in their hearts (psychology)" (13/11, 8/253). This *amr* ⁽¹⁾ is referred to in (8/42): "So that *Allah's amr* is enforced. So that destruction and life come (to nations) according to clear (laws and reasons)." No nation survives or dies away whimsically (without cause or reason): "So that your Protector / Preserver never destroys the abode (of a nation) wrongfully while they are unaware (of its causes)" (6/32). Also: "It is not befitting *Allah* to destroy a settlement (of a nation) wrongfully while the inhabitants still have a chance of redemption." (11/117). *Sura Rome* speaks about the primary audience of the *Quran*.

Historical Evidence (*the Arabs*) -- despite numerous warnings of the destructive consequences of their wrong conduct, they haven't heeded. Ask them to look at the historical evidence in this regard to see what happened to nations in the past:

"If they seek it, they shall find the evidence in history. Those nations of the past were richer and stronger than these (Arabs) are. They had created wealth by hard work, established civilizations and countries more populated than these (Arabs'). Their prophets brought to them clear laws.

Allah never destroys a nation unless it brings it upon itself through its own wrongdoing. The messengers of *Allah* came to them and were ridiculed and refuted. Refusal to change their ways resulted for those nations in creating social ills and imbalance and they were ultimately destroyed." (30/9-10).

(1) *amr* has been discussed in chapter-2

Refuting a Messenger

Let us ponder for while on the expression 'refuting a messenger' (تكذيب رسول). A patient who doesn't listen to the advice of his doctor is practically denying the medical knowledge by refusing to act upon the advice. This is refuting --- (denying) the truth and acting contrary to it. The *Quran* cites examples of past nations who refuted and ridiculed *Allah's messengers* and, consequently, faced the inevitable destruction. The *Quran*, employing its philosophy of history, advises and warns its readers to learn a lesson from the historical accounts of past nations and avoid repeating the fatal mistake of ignoring (refuting) *Allah's* Law of Returns by acting contrary to it. It says: "There were several nations before you. Explore the Earth and see what happened to the one who refuted" (3/136, 6/11, 16/36)--- "and the one who had been warned!" (10/73) *Sura An'aam* says that nations are destroyed as a consequence of their (own) crimes: "Have they pondered upon the destroyed nations of the past? They enjoyed more wealth and power than these

(present day people), they had an abundance of food and prosperity. But, they were destroyed through their own sins and were replaced by other people" (6/6).

Unfairness breeds Destruction

The sins (crimes / defiance of Natural Law of Returns) which bring about the downfall of a people are numerous, the topmost being *zulm* (injustice, or better still, unfairness), saying clearly: The people who are unfair, have their roots cut". (6/45) Having mentioned the destruction and fall of those nations, the *Quran* says: "These are the ruins of cities whose inhabitants were unfair" (18/59). Elsewhere, it says:

" (If they wish, history can speak to them about) Several civilizations who were caught up by Our Law of Returns because those people were unfair. Their tall buildings fell, their wells became useless and their strong fortifications fell in ruins.

Haven't these (present day) people visited these areas yet so that (having seen those nations' sorry end) they start being rational and begin to heed? (when someone chooses to turn a blind eye to the truth, his eyes still see but) their inner eyes (hearts) go blind and thus their thinking faculties are blunted. (22/45-46)

Narrating the eye-opening accounts of several past nations, the *Quran* repeats the truth: "No settlement is destroyed unless its inhabitants are unfair". (28/59)⁽¹⁾

Thus, the rise and fall of nations is dependent upon their own deeds. Their fate is **NOT** pre-determined. They themselves decide their own destiny.

Period of Respite

It has been stated that, according to the Law of Returns, the time gap between an action and the manifestation of its result is a period of respite termed as *ajal* by the *Quran*. As the life of a nation spreads over centuries (as compared to days or years in case of an individual), their period of respite is longer, too. A tyrannical people, who exploit and suppress humanity, appear to go on prospering, is really passing through its *ajal* (the period of respite). *Sura Namal* Says:

" If (*Allah* had not provided the period of respite and) people were apprehended quickly after their unfairness, the Earth would have lost its inhabitants. *Allah* delays (the apprehension) till a certain period of respite (*ajal*). When that period expires, their destruction occurs at the specific time -- not a minute before or after" (16/61; also 35/45).

This Law is strictly enforced: "No nation can hurry or delay it." (23/43) The period of respite can save a nation if it redeems and improves itself. Otherwise, it is destroyed.

(1) I do not propose to dwell upon these historical accounts. They have been treated in my works like '*Islam Kya Hai* (What is Islam?), *Jooey Noor*, *Barq-e-Toor* and *Shola-e-Mastoos*.

Every *ajal* has a Law

Even this period of respite is not pre-determined. It is not pre-destined, for instance, for a nation to attain and retain power and glory, come what may, for two centuries. The period of glory is determined by a nation's own deeds and varies accordingly. The *Quran* says, in principal, the following:

- i) "Every nation has an *ajal* (period of life) - (10/40), and
- ii) Every *ajal* has a book (law) - (13/38)

A nation may determine its own period of respite (life) according to law. This law of respite is no mystery. (An unknown, mysterious law is useless. Law is intended to be known to those who are supposed to follow it, so that they know its consequences. That's why the *Quran* cites the historical evidence to illustrate its law of rise and fall of nations, and aptly terms it "a known law". (15/4) This is "*Allah's way*" which never changes (35/43), and it is the Law of Rise and Fall of Nations. For as long as a nation keeps on the right path (*Allah's way*) it retains its glory. When it defies *Allah's Law*, decline sets in. It enjoys a period of respite (within which there is a chance of correcting itself to retain the glory) before the decline and fall is complete. That nation is then replaced by another who has been following *Allah's way*. Early Muslims, who had, as a result of following Allah's way achieved power and glory (24/55) were told:

"If you refrain from struggle (for life and survival), you will face tragic misfortune -- another nation will replace you -- and you will be helpless. These are Allah's measures." (9/39), (11/57).

Sura Mohammad says:

"There are those among you who, when told to share their wealth with the needy, act miserly. They should know that miserliness turns against the miser. Allah doesn't need you. You need Him for your survival. If you digress from the right path, Allah will substitute you with another nation who will (be better than and) not be like you." (47/38).

It is because the law of rise and fall (life and death) of nations is: "whichever nation follows the Right path of life, survives. Others go in decline and are replaced by better nations (who follow *Allah's way*). The rise and fall of nations is determined by their own deeds. That, then, is the fate of nations (*Allah's law*).

THE BOOK

We have seen that: every event (tragic or pleasant) in life (social or individual) occurs according to Nature's established law. Man is capable of discovering that law and exercising his free will to follow or defy it.

Nonetheless, some verses in the *Quran* may appear confusing to the superficial reader. Let us look at those carefully to ascertain their true meaning. For example, *Sura Hadeed* says (according to conventional interpretation): "No calamity comes to your society or self which had not been written in a book before We created this Universe" (57/22).⁽¹⁾ Again, *Sura Tauba* says: "Say we won't get but whatever *Allah* has written for us"(9/51)
⁽¹⁾ Verses such as these are said to refer to pre-determination (destiny or fate) and have contributed a great deal to establish the common belief in an eternal, unchangeable and unavoidable destiny for individuals as well as groups. This is the source of reference to *Allah* as 'the Writer of Destiny'.

Let us look at these verses in a *Quranic perspective*:

A 'book' to Arabs was (and still is) binding loose leaves. ⁽²⁾ But the derivative root of *kitab* is K-T-B which is pregnant with the sense of a legal obligation e.g.,

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- (1) Translation by *Maulana Mahmood-al-Hassan*.
- (2) The *Quran* opens with “This is the book which (*Sura Baqara*)”. This indicates that the *Quran* was already in the form of a book (bound leaves) before the Prophet died. The commonly held belief that the *Quran* was gathered and bound into book-form after the Prophet’s death appears contradictory to the *Quranic* evidence. Thus the *Quran* was gathered, arranged and bound into a book during Mohammad’s life.
- i) *Sura Nisa* uses the word *Kitab* for prohibition of marriage to certain relatives. (4/24) *Maulana Mahmood-al-Hasan* has translated the verse as “you have been ordered by *Allah*”, meaning thereby that he translates *kitab* as ‘order’. We have said earlier in the book that the *Quran* has used the word ‘*hukm*’ in general for ‘*qanoon*’ (law). ‘*Hukum*’ means a decision. A decision or an order which attains permanence is LAW, e. g., a governmental decision for all traffic to drive on the left. Similarly, Nature’s decision that fire radiates heat is law because it is permanent and hence is *Allah*’s Law.
 - ii) *Sura Baqara* uses the word *kitab* in (2/235). *Maulana Mahmood-al-Hasan* translates the verse thus: “And don’t intend to (enter) wedlock until the determined waiting (period) is reached”. Hence ‘*kitab*’ has been translated as ‘determined’ i.e., determined by *Allah*. This is His order, decision or LAW.
 - iii) “*Sala* is a periodic duty / obligation (*kitaban*) for the convinced” (4/104)
 - vi) “In it (the *Quran*) there are established laws (*kutub*)”. (98/3)
 - v) “You have been obliged (*kuteba*) to *Qisas*”. (2/178)
 - vi) “You have been obliged (*kuteba*) to fasting (days)”. (2/183)
 - vii) “You have been obliged (*kuteba*) to fight (battles).” (2/216)
 - viii) “About lonely women: “You don’t give them what has been determined (by law - *kuteba*) for them”. (4/12)
 - ix) “And We decreed (*katabna*) in *Zaboor*, after treating morals that the worthy shall inherit the earth”. (21/105)
 - x) Record of nations’ deed is also referred to as ‘their book’ in 45/28 saying: “Every nation shall be called to their book, (and told), you shall face the consequences of what you have been doing.” Obviously, this shall be done according to Nations’ Law of Returns. *Allah* has referred to it as ‘His book’: “Our book speaks only the truth about you” (45/29); also: (20/52).
 - xi) Nation’s Book

Sura An'aam talks about *Allah*’s knowledge encompassing the Universe - every leaf which falls off a tree, grains in the darkness of the earth, good and bad, dry and wet - everything is in ‘the clear book’ (6/59). Obviously, the book here means the laws of the physical universe.

xii) *Sura Aal-Imran* talks about the ‘established’ regulations given in clear-cut terms (as compared to the ‘similes and, examples’ to give universal truths). These ‘established’ (محکمات) are referred to as ‘mother of the book’ (3/6), i.e., the foundation and basis of law. Earlier, we have seen that universal laws are determined in the realm of *Allah’s Amr*, and are realized in the realm of *Khalq*. That’s why the *Quran* says, the origin and basis of laws is with Allah’ (13/39). About the *Sura* itself, it says that you have it in the form of (Arabic) letters and words but: “We have it in the mother of the book” (43/4).

‘Mother of the book’ or the ‘realm of *Amr*’ means *Allah’s* knowledge which is absolutely comprehensive -- “Don’t you know that *Allah* knows what ever is there in the skies and the earth? That (knowledge) is in a book” (22/70), says *Sura Hajj*. Elsewhere, it is referred to as “the clear book” (27/75).

Every event in the Universe passes through various phases on the path to its occurrence. These phases are referred to by the *Quran* as ‘*mustauda*’ (temporary store / transitory stages). Its culmination is called ‘*mastaqar*’ (destination). *Sura Qamar* says: “And each *Amr* (case) is a *mastaqar* (destination)” (54/3). And that: “Every (piece of) news has a destination.” (6/67). Also, in *Sura Hood*: “*Allah* knows the transitory stage (s) and the destination (of all things). All this (information) is in a clear book.” (11/6)

The destination of an event is its realized form. The transitory stages are subject to the law of Cause and Effect (except for the initial *Amr* Stages). Man may obtain information about this according to his capacity to learn. It is possible, though, that some of the transitory stages are still waiting to be discovered by Man. The waiting period (respite) between a human action and its result really comprises of transitory phases unobservable by Man. He can only notice the destination of an event and not the transitory phases. *Sura Anbiaa* says: “There were many settlements destroyed by Us because of their unfairness and We brought forward another nation (to take their place).” During their unfairness, and after that during its transitory phases which they couldn’t observe, they felt immune to accountability and consequences of their actions. But, in reality, their actions were unnoticeably moving towards their destination --- “When they saw Our punishment, they began scrambling to escape it”. (21/11-12) “But Our Law of Returns beckoned them to stop (and said) - ‘You can’t escape now. Come back to your pleasure houses where you enjoyed (as parasites) wealth earned by others, so that you can be asked what right you had to consume wealth not earned by you!’ They will raise a hue and cry but it will be to no avail. They will be reduced to a crop-less field or an extinguished flame!” (21/13-15)

Coming back to every event’s transitory phases and destination in ‘the clear book’ it can be seen that:

- i) *Kitab* (book) means laws (code of law),
- ii) all laws are determined and established in the ‘realm of *Amr*’ -- referred to as ‘Book of *Allah*’ (*Allah’s* knowledge), and
- iii) in the realm of *Khalq*, these laws are noticeable as Laws of Nature and are depicted in the *Quran*. They are again referred to ‘Book of *Allah*’ but here (as opposed to ii above), Man can obtain this knowledge, because they are in ‘clear book’ or ‘the known book’.

Important verse regarding the question of FATE

Let us now refer back to the verses, referred to earlier, one many find confusing or contradictory in content. Take a look first at the verses from *Sura Hadeed*:

“No calamity comes to a country nor to yourselves which was not pre-written in a book before We created this world. Verily, this is easy for *Allah* so that you don’t grief over what you can’t get or boast over what He gave you. And *Allah* doesn’t like the boastful show-offs.” (57/22-23)

- Translation in Urdu by Maulana Moahmoud-al-Hasan

This is commonly taken to mean that every calamity is pre-destined and is unavoidable. In such a helpless situation, men must patiently take what comes naturally. This attitude is considered to be a quality of pious men and is referred to as being ‘pleased with the will of Allah’. Also, men must not feel proud of the good in life as it is made possible by *Allah* and not by Man!

1. In the first instance, this interpretation of the verses in question nullifies the entire concept of the very basis of *Din* (the *Quranic* system, the Law of Returns. *Allah* appears to be contradicting His own verses like “Man gets only what he strives for”, “Every calamity which befalls Man is of his own doing”, “*Allah* neither blesses nor punishes whiteout due cause and reason -- it is all a consequence of Man’s own actions”. etc.

The *Quran* doesn’t contradict itself

Thus, this interpretation does not appear reasonable. We must also remember that the consistency of the *Quran* has been cited by it as evidence of its being divine (4/82). Let us, then, try to see what the verses in question really mean:

Each and every occurrence in the physical universe, as well as Man’s social world, takes place under pre-determined laws enacted by *Allah*.

Allah has pre-determined laws not only for calamities but also for alleviating them. For example, fire burns, but balm soothes. Therefore, in the face of a calamity (*Allah’s taqdeer*) do the needful to counter it by following (in *Omer Farooq*’s words) another of *Allah’s Taqdeer*. Disappointment and passive acceptance of tragedies may be the norm in a worldly oppressive despot but not that of the law-abiding *Allah*. So study your environment, world and universe and act according to the knowledge of Nature’s Laws you learn.

2. Secondly, *Sura Anfal* talks about a battle where a number of the enemy’s soldiers were taken prisoner with the intent of later charging money for their release. This was against the spirit of din (philosophy of religion). But, since it was a tactical mistake, it was thought worthy of just a reproach in 8/67 which is conventionally translated by *Maulana Mohmoud-al-Hasan*. Thus: “If *Allah* had not pre-written this, you would have faced severe punishment (and tragedy).”

But, the true interpretation is: ‘What you did deserves severe punishment but, since *Allah’s* law in this regard has already been given in the *Quran* (that errors merit just a reproach), you are hereby not punished.

3. Thirdly, *Sura Tauba* talks about dissemblers (hypocrites) who get very upset when the Muslims are doing well. They are pleased when the convinced are facing problems, distancing themselves from the Muslims by saying that they have before hard taken precautions against such circumstances. The *Quran* goes on to say in 9/51 (as conventionally translated in *Urdu* by *Maulan Masul-al-Hasan*): “Say (to them), we shall not get but whatever *Allah* has already written down for us. Only He is our benefactor, and Muslims should rely on *Allah* alone.”

The true meaning of it, however, is: “Tell them that whatever happens to us is (not according to your misconceptions or ill-will) under the Law of Returns, Therefore, whatever occurs is inevitable according to that law and is unavoidable. We, the Muslims, are convinced fully of its validity and permanence. We are, therefore, not upset over whatever you might say.”

The words ‘whatever *Allah* has written for us’ do not mean our pre-determined fate but whatever law has already been established. For example, see (2/187) where it says: ‘Strive to get whatever *Allah* has written for you. “obviously, ‘written’ in this verse does not mean pre-determined fate’ because that is inevitable and, as such, does not require any effort to get. Similarly, in (58/21) it says: “*Allah* has written that He and His prophets will out come out victorious.” The *Quran* is full of the monumental struggle which prophets had to do to succeed in their missions. *Sura Araaf* cites Moses’ people requesting *Allah* to “write for us good things in this life as well as in the hereafter.” *Allah*’s response was: “These (good things) are WRITTEN for those who (are ‘muttaqeen) follow *Allah*’s laws.

By *Allah*’s Permission / Order

The *Quran* nowhere mentions the commonly held belief that ‘not even a leaf on a tree stirs without *Allah*’s permission’.

We have already talked about the apparent contradiction in the *Quran* regarding calamities befalling Man (66/11 and 42/30). Verse (42/30) is very clear in its meaning which is the only one it can have. Therefore, verse (64/11) must use ‘*b-izn-Allah*’ (by *Allah*’s permission) in a different sense. Let us examine it.

Meaning of *Izn*: The Arabic word *izn* basically means an announcement. The Muslim call for obligatory prayer is *azaan*. It is also used to mean permission as well as knowledge. ‘*Izn Allah*’ also means *Allah*’s knowledge’. ⁽¹⁾ We have already seen that when *Allah*’s knowledge and intention (*amr*) enters the realm of *khalq*, it becomes law. We have also established that a permanent order (decision) is law. The same principle applies to permission, i.e., a permanent permission is called ‘law, as we understand it. This is the very sense of the term ‘*Izn Allah*’ used by *Quran*, e. g.,

- i) *Sura Hajj* : “People who have been oppressed (Muslims who had migrated away from the Meccan oppression and were still hounded by enemies of Islam, and were under the threat of hostile armed attack) are given permission to do battle”. (22/39). Obviously, this permission to take up arms is not confined to the time and people. Given the necessary conditions, battle will always be permissible. Such a situation will not need a special permission every time it occurs. That is why when Muslim fought the Jew (in the battle of Khyber) and uprooted some date-trees for tactical reason, the *Quran* said they did it with *Allah*’s permission (59/5).
- ii) Agriculture has known, clear physical laws. The *Quran* says : “Fertile land yields (good) crop by the permission of its Persevere (*Allah*).” (7/58)

(1) Imam Raghib Isfahani writes in his ‘*Mufredaat*’ that *Izn* differs from *Ilm* (knowledge) in that it also carries the sense of intention and planning on the part of the one who has knowledge

iii) The Rain-Cycle: Obviously, certain physical laws govern the cycle of rain (artificial rain is now a reality). The *Quran* says: “Don’t they ponder upon (the fact) that all things on earth are controllable by Man? And that vessels sail

on sea according to set laws? And He holds clouds in the sky so that they rain down on earth only by His permission?" (22/65)

- iv) The Muslim fighters of holy wars had dedicated their lives to the cause of Allah. Their steadfastness to uphold their high principles and ideals provided them an edge over their enemies which was said in the *Quran* to make them ten times stronger than non-Muslims. And even if they are short of equipment and supplies they will still ‘overpower ten times their own number by *Allah’s permission*’ (8/66). Clearly, *Izn* Allah here means the qualities necessary for success in war. This will always hold good. Hence, it is law. That’s why it said’ “A smaller group overpowers a larger group by *Allah’s permission* - and *Allah favors the steadfast (saabereen)*.” (2/249)

A little further on, the *Quran* talks about the time when his army rode out to meet Goliath’s, *Taloot* prayed to *Allah*: “O Preserver! Give us plenty of steadfastness so that we don’t falter and make us victorious over the Rejecters (of your *Din*).” (2/250). Then it says: “Then they (Goliath’s men) were defeated by *Allah’s permission*.” (2/251)

- v) About acceptance or rejection of *Allah’s* message, the *Quran* says: “There is no compulsion in *Din*.” (2/256) And also; “The Truth from your Persevere (is here). So, accept it if you want or reject it if you so wish.” (18/29)

Acceptance / Rejection of *Allah’s Message*

An affectionate friend of humanity, the Prophet (Mohammad) desired people to see the truth. At times, he felt it so strongly that *Allah* advised him not to damage his health. *Sura Younis* talks about this situation when *Allah* said to the Prophet that it was easy for Allah to make Man follow the right path (as the rest of creation does). But, Man has been given the gift of free choice. Nonetheless, “You (the Prophet) want to force people onto the right path.” (10/99). Remember, “No one accepts (the right path) without *Allah’s Izn!*.”

Clearly, *Izn* in this verse cannot refer to order or permission because this will contravene not only 10/94 (it deprives Man of free will), but also the very basis of the *Quranic* philosophy. Therefore, in the verse in question, *Izn* means *Allah’s* law -- no compulsion in acceptance or rejection of the Message. Exactly how Man employs the faculty of choice is made clear further in the verse: “Confused are those who do not employ reason (and rationality).” (10/100)

- vi) *Sura Mojaadela* talks about Islam’s enemies who are instigated by the Devil (*Shaitaan*) to plot conspiracies against the Muslims to demoralize them. But they should know that: “He (Shaitaan) cannot harm them even a little bit without *Allah’s Izn.*” (58/10). Very obviously, *Izn* here just cannot mean *Allah’s* permission or order. That will be ridiculous - Shaitan is the embodiment of defiance. Therefore, in this verse, *Izn* means *Allah’s* law. -- the Muslims must abide by *Allah’s* law which will not allow any devilish force to work on them!. “The convinced (Muslims) depend (entirely and strongly) upon Allah (‘s law).” 58/10.

Let us now examine the verses which talk about no calamity befalling without *Allah’s Izn*.

No Calamity befalls Man without *Allah’s Izn*

In the battle of *Uhud*, the Muslims were on the verge of victory when a contingent of archers, going against their commander's instructions, shifted from their position. This tactical mistake cost them dearly and they suffered heavy losses. *Sura Aal-Imran* narrates this episode:

“You were killing the enemy according to *Allah’s* law, were about to be victorious, and He was about to fulfill His promise to you. But, you faltered. You began to argue among yourselves over the situation and you disobeyed (your commander) and failed to wrest victory which was only moments away. Do you realize why it happened so? Some of you were taken over by short-term benefits while others preferred long-term advantages. Your attention was diverted away from the enemy (you were defeated) and it was made clear to you. (you realized your blunder, returned to your position, fought and achieved victory and thus) the ill effects of your mistake were erased. *Allah’s* law is that a mistake doesn’t banish one permanently from success. Whenever one realizes one’s mistake and returns to the right path, one benefits from *Allah’s* bounty anew.” (3/151)

Afterwards, when you pondered upon the setback with ‘ How did it happen?’, *Allah’s* reply to that was: “Tell, (them O Prophet!), that was from your own selves.” (3/165). In the light of all this, then, let us look again at verse (64/11) from *Sura Taghabun* -- “No calamity befalls you but by *Allah’s Izn*.” This is followed by a few glittering words of wisdom:

Guidance through Law

“Whosoever is convinced of *Allah* (‘s law) has his heart guided (to the right path)” (64/11). That very clearly means that if one discovers and abides by, *Allah’s* law, one is guided rightly and thus can also foresee certain possibilities turning into probabilities.

Therefore, *Izn Allah* is meant to be *Allah’s* law in the *Quranic* perspective.

Note: I have dealt with *Izn Allah* in principle. Various applications of the term shall be dealt with as we come across them later in the book

[Home](#) **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by [G. A. Parwez](#)

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

GOOD and EVIL

No other problem has given mankind more anxiety than the question of Good and Evil. Being an inseparable part of the bigger question of fate and destiny, this problem has been one of high priority for philosophers as well as people of religion. In this regard, the well-known dilemma attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas is:

If Evil exists by the will of God, He cannot be all good; and if Evil exists despite His will, He is not all powerful.

Since I have not set myself in this book the task of examining the question of destiny philosophically, I shall not trace the human intellectual endeavors in this regard.⁽¹⁾ It will be suffice to discuss it from the common man's perspective.

Sensitive Dispositions It is said that Gautum (Buddha), the crown prince of

a royal household, had a very sensitive and humane disposition. He noticed the norm of the strong controlling and oppressing the weak, both in the animal as well as the human world. He concluded that life was just a misery. Hence, it is to be shunned to the point of complete disinterest to achieve a state of freedom from life's troubles (Nirvaan). Gautum's philosophy has dominated Man's thinking for almost 2,500 years!

(1) Interested readers may refer to my work "*Insan nay Kya Socha*" (What Man has Thought).

Disapproval of the Material World The principle emanating from this

philosophy is that Matter is quagmire for the human soul. The span of worldly life must be spent to liberate the soul from its 'imprisonment'. This can be done by shunning life --- rejecting pleasures, refusing desires, and doing grueling body (Yoga) exercises. That is MYSTICISM.

Reincarnation Indian philosophers noticing the social & economic inequality

in human societies, arrived at the notion of re-incarnation --- one is rewarded or punished in life on the basis of one's previous life. This was nothing more than the ancient Greek idea of 'Transmigration of Soul'; the Indians have simply borrowed

Christianity's 'ORIGINAL SIN' it. Some thinkers came to the thesis that Man

is intrinsically evil. Christianity formulated the concept of the original sin by Adam and Eve in Paradise. Therefore, Man, born with sin, must absolve himself through believing in Christ and Crucifixion.

Dualism of Magig Persian thinkers theorized about two universal forces

eternally at war with one another - *Ahrman* (darkness) and *Yazdaan* (light). They are engaged in the struggle of good and evil. This theory of dualism, being the religion of the ancient Persian *Magig*, is attributed to *Zoarastra*. The very concept of two opposite warring forces is the origin of the theory of DIALECTISM of Hegel, the famous German philosopher. That, in turn, is the basis of the economic theories of Marx.

Shaopenhaur's Pessimism

Yet another ideology claims the non-existence of

opposing forces, attributes like right / left, above / below, etc. Thus, only good exists. Contrary to this is Shaopenhaur's ideology of pessimism claiming that only evil exists. This echoes the Buddhist philosophy. Shaopenhaur fell a victim to pessimism as any intelligent but nervous person would. Yet another school of thought claims good and evil to be individual relative human impressions rather than real. For instance, a cyclone (or flood) coming to an uninhabited jungle is not termed 'evil' but it is very much so when it ravages a human settlement. Better still, a dark night is evil for the robbed but good for the robber.

These, then, are the various, confusing, conflicting human ideologies about good and evil. Let us now see what the Quran has to say on this intriguing question.

The Quranic Philosophy

About physical events, termed . natural evil', the Quran says: "We have not created the skies and the earth and what is between them (the Universe), but rightfully (بِالْحَقِّ)" (15/75). The many-faceted word *Haq* here means something constructive. Contrarily, 'باطل' (wrong) means destructive. Therefore, the Quran pronounces the universe constructive (good) as a whole. It has been seen that there are countless FORCES OF NATURE at play according to Allah's law. We have also seen that Man has the potential of discovering and harnessing those forces – "Whatever is between the skies and the earth is rendered harnessable for you (all)" (45/13). Until the discovery of physical laws governing a force (SCIENCE), it remains uncontrolled and destructive. It becomes constructive when harnessed. Many forces of Nature were awesomely destructive during Man's infancy. They become constructively useful as they were gradually harnessed through scientific work. The Quran felicitates men who approach the Universe with a scientific mind and make discoveries and thus help probe the rightfulness of the Universe and its forces.

IN PRAISE OF RESEARCHERS

Sura Aal-e-Imran says:

"There are great signs of the Truth in the Universe and in the cycle of day & night for those who use their mental faculties wisely. That is, for those who keep in view Allah's law in every facet of life, standing, sitting or even lying down; ponder deeply over the structure of the Universe and discover enough truth to say out loud: 'O our Preserver! You haven't produced (all) this wrongfully. You are too exalted to have produced it so. (It is our ignorance which brings calamities upon us). Grant us the potential to (discover and utilize the Universe through scientific application and thus) save ourselves from destruction (and calamities).'

Nations ignoring scientific work remain deprived of the good that there is; their actions go wasted; they remain down-trodden. Clearly, such people do not get help from any quarter!" (3/189-191).

ULEMA | The Quran terms such researchers as *ULEMA* (the knowledgeable)

(35/27-28). Man's efforts to provide practical proof for 'O our Preserver! You

NATURAL FORECS haven't produced (all) this wrongfully' have harnessed

the hitherto awesomely destructive forces of Nature --- and considered 'evil' --- and have rendered them useful, constructive and 'good'. Rain water is flood if not controlled but is a revitalizing life source when harnessed. Uncontrolled fire is another such force. Yet another example is a wide variety of poisonous creatures (snakes, scorpions, etc.) which are now a valuable source of antidotes.

The author's own experience I take the liberty of citing my own personal

experience in this regard. After I have had a successful surgical operation in 1964, I experienced an accidental hemorrhage. All the expert, sincere efforts of the physician ⁽¹⁾ were in vain. I fainted. People around me, including the physician, gave up hope. My breath going, the doctor gave me an injection as a last resort. The bleeding stopped and I gradually came to, returning from the very edge of life. Later, the physician told me about the wonder-drug he had used. It was REPTILASE, an antidote made from snake poison! "O our Preserver! You haven't created (all) this wrongfully!" By the way, my experience is not unique or extraordinary. A visit to a chemist's can provide ample evidence of this phenomenon.

⁽¹⁾ My dear friend Dr. Syed Abdulwudood

Children born Deformed It was ignorance which led people to believe that

babies are born deformed as punishment for sins of a previous life. Scientific research changed all that so much so that intending marriage partners in developed countries undergo routine medical check-ups. Constant medical care ensures that children are mostly born healthy. Medical research still goes on.

The Question of Pain Pain is considered by some as the ultimate example of

evil. But medical experts point out the usefulness of the phenomenon of pain; it is actually the warning signals sent out by a body when it malfunctions. In the absence of pain, one would not be aware of a physical or physiological problem until it is too late. Pain is a blessing in disguise! ⁽¹⁾

The Right Measure It is equally important for mankind to discover the correct

measure of substances for maximum benefit. A glass-full of water gives life; huge amounts of water causes death by drowning. Arsenic in minute quantities is revitalizing but kills in large doses. Use of substances in right quantity is of immense importance. It is so effectively proved by the Homeopathic system of medicine where treatment is based upon this principle of 'the right dose'. Homeopathy is living proof of the maxim that all things in the Universe are essentially 'good'. They become 'evil' when they are in the 'wrong' quantity'.

شر ما خلق من

This should explain clearly the Quranic verses (113/1-2). One must

be careful of the evil in things. A thing becomes ‘good’ or ‘evil’ according to its use by Man. *Sura Aal-e-Imran* states this principal in (3/25) to say *Allah’s*

Allah has created ‘Good’ alone hand has ‘good’ alone and He has

(1) Pain is a crude phenomenon of Nature, like many. Scientific research is currently trying to find a way of eliminating it altogether. George Boehm hopes the research efforts to materialize in a decade. (article published in the PAKISTAN TIMES of 24.1.1971, a Lahore, Pakistan daily newspaper).

measures / standards for all things. This principle reminds one of the verse (4/79) in *Sura Nisa*: The ‘good’ you get is from *Allah* and the ‘evil’ you get is of your own doing. Verse (4/78) says: “Say: Everything is from *Allah*”. (all actions bear results in accordance with Nature’s law). Also, in (28/60), it says: “Whatever (you) get from *Allah* is ‘good’ and permanent”. (if you follow Nature’s law, you will get good for ever). *Sura Beni Israel* says: “When We bless Man with Our bounties, he acts indifferent; when he is in problems, he is frustrated” (17/83; 41/51). Elsewhere, the *Quran* says: “When We give Man a taste of bounty, he gets carried away. When he begets problems from his own doing, he gets depressed (and disappointed)” (30/36; 42/48). *Sura Aaraaf* says: “Fertile land yields well (by *Allah’s* law) whereas bad land not so well” (7/58).

MORAL GOOD & EVIL

So far we have discussed the physical universe and its properties. In the human world, however, good and evil demonstrate another diversion. A sword has the basic property of cutting (throats), but the different motives of sword-wielding

The Purpose: Standard of Good & Evil men (a tyrant and a champion of

the oppressed) produce opposing results in human society. Yet another example is the use of human faculty of mind which can be used either to deceive or to safeguard against deception. The question, then, is how to determine the (good or

The purpose can only be determined by *Wahi* evil) nature of an act in human

human social situations. Decidedly, human reason cannot provide the answer --- it is simply impossible for it to be objective. The source beyond human reason is *Allah’s* Word which has already determined the standards of good and evil – the Permanent Values. When Man follows the permanent values established by *Allah’s* Message, good occurs. Otherwise, evil happens. A society negating permanent values (relying on human reason alone) is called the Wrong System (باطل) because it results in evil. Such a society utilizes the Universe according to human reason which is guided by human emotions which are really instincts inherited from Man’s animalistic phase (self preservation, self-aggression, etc.). Self-preservation, for example, on the group level, actually means preservation of one’s nation. It is not hard to imagine the chaos resulting from this attitude by various nations all over the globe. Mankind

The present day Hell is currently going through the hell of nationalism and

the resulting chaos of selfish and ruthless human societies that we have today --- “its sparks spread (all round)” (76/8). Ignoring permanent values results in division of mankind not only on the global but also on a national level. Rich and poor classes

Rich and Poor by Birth poor classes are created and become permanent and

hereditary. A particular life-style is pre-decided for a child according to the social class it is born in. It is not surprising, by the way that Hindu clergy explained the socio-economic disparity of humanity through the philosophy of reincarnation.

Allah's Will? The viewpoint opposite to this theory attributed the social

differences to God who was the architect of Man's socio-economic status – fate! Drummed up through ages, this ideology became one of the firm tenants of faith for the common man. This propaganda was deliberate. It aimed at keeping the masses ignorant of the real cause of socio-economic disparity --- the unfair system established by the 'haves' (rulers, clergy, capitalists) to perpetuate their privileged social position to rule and control the multitudes of 'have-nots'.

The Quran is a source of 'good' Let us now refer back to the verse which

attributes all good to *Allah* and all evil to Man. The permanent Values needed to achieve 'good' are preserved in the *Quran*. *Sura An-Nahal* says: "They (who oppose) ask those who adhere (to the system)" What has your Preserver sent down? They reply: 'good' " (16/30). Thus, Allah is the source of 'good'. So is the code of life (the *Quran*) given by him. Therefore, 'good' comes from *Allah* and 'evil' comes from Man! This is further explained in the same verse: "Those who are (true to permanent values of) 'good' in this life have good in the hereafter" (16/30). This brings to light another definition of 'good'.

Good and Evil (Profit and Loss) can be quite clearly seen (as material gain and loss) in the realm of physical (animalistic) life. As such, nothing is permanently good or evil. That status changes under changing circumstances --- milk is good if one is healthy but not when one is down with flue etc.; (a glass of) water is good but (a pitcher-full of it is) evil under other condition. Therefore, good and evil are relative (not absolute).

At the human level of life, however, Good and Evil have a different

Absolute Good and Evil standard i.e. good is which develops and integrates

the human personality; evil is that disintegrates and damages it, since the human personality is non-physical, too. For instance, the Evil in poison can be readily observed, but the Evil is falsehood in beyond observation. The standard of Good and Evil for the human personality, therefore is the Permanent Values (Morality). Morals are exclusive to Man. They are non-existent in the rest of the Animal Kingdom. Morality has no basis in a society which does not accept the existence of the human personality. Such a (materialistic and secular) society has social and / or legal laws which keep the social fabric intact. Generally, such laws are erroneously referred to as morals – lying, cheating, etc. In essence, however, they are social rules not moral code. For example, a person in a secular (materialistic) society will think ⁽¹⁾ nothing of lying if it is beneficial and can go undetected by the society's law-enforcing apparatus. Contrarily, a person who accepts the existence of the human personality does not lie under any circumstances. Such abstention from falsehood aims at preserving the integrity of the human personality. That is morality. From the *Quranic* perspective, the definition of a person of high moral character (the best behavior) is: 'The one who rejects material benefits in order to preserve permanent values (to benefit one's personality)'. As against the materialistic (secular) societies, the code of morality for the human personality are permanent. Adhering to this code generates absolute Good, ignoring it results in absolute Evil, i. e., for example:

- (i) fraud will always be evil,
- (ii) fraud will always be evil, whatever its nature of gravity.,

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- (1) ‘Conscience’ is just the code of behavior learnt during early years of a child. It varies from one society to another, one time to another.
- (iii) fraud will always be evil, regardless of changing times or circumstances.

Permanent Values (pertaining to the human personality) are permanent, unchanging and absolute.

Since the concept of permanent values is non-existent in a ‘wrong’ (non-*Quranic*) society, a member of it who tries to adhere to and follow such values often incurs material losses. In the face of such a clash, mysticism suggests rejection of the (material) world as the way out. This attitude is self-deceptive. One just cannot ignore the world one lives in. The *Quran’s* suggestion under such circumstances is to create a society on the basis of Permanent Values – to ensure good for one’s body “حسنات الدنيا” (the worldly benefits) as well as for one’s personality “حسنات الآخرة” (the benefit of hereafter).

Therefore, the Absolute Good, according to the *Quran*, is that which provides good in the physical as well as the personal realm. The opposite is, of course, Absolute Evil.

The meaning of verse (16/30) of *Sura Nahal* should now be very clear which talks about “حسنات الدنيا” and “خير” in the hereafter. Such a social system is termed *ad-Deen* by the *Quran*. To summarize what we have said so far:

- The Materialistic (secular) concept of life caters only for the physical side of Man. *Ad-Deen* opposes this.
- Mysticism advocates rejection of the physical side of Man. *Ad-Deen* opposes this, too.
- *Ad-Deen* (the *Quranic*) concept of life caters for the physical as well as the personal side of Man. ***This is absolute Good.***

This Absolute Good is achievable through conviction (إيمان), and proper deeds (نحوی), or in other words, by having unshakable trust in *Allah* and the human personality and leading a life according to Permanent Values. *Sura Baqara* says: “If they become convinced and lead a proper life, they’ll get Good from *Allah*. Only if they knew!” (2/103). Such people have been called *abraar* (ابرار) in (3/198), i. e., those who enjoy the bounties of (the physical) life as well as of (the human) personality. *Sura Nahal* asks the convinced not to ‘sell’ (ignore) a permanent value for material benefits, if they want to have Good from *Allah*, (16/95).

The not-so-convinced prefer the material gain in a clash of values. This misconception is mentioned in *Sura Baqara*: “It may be that you ignore what is actually good for you and want what is actually evil. *Allah* knows and you know not” - (don’t depend upon your own knowledge of good and evil. Go by *Allah’s* knowledge) - (2/216).

The most difficult time in a clash of material and permanent values is when it involves losing one’s life. This is termed as *Jihad* (or *Qitaal*). On such an occasion, the *Quran* asks the convinced to readily offer life because ‘That is good for you if you (really know’ (9/41). Men cannot sometimes see the truth because material benefits are readily achievable and the Good takes a while in materializing. Such men are hasty (17/11).

Self assessment

A clash between physical interests and those of the

personality is the time for one to not only test oneself of one's conviction but also to spur oneself on the path of *Ad-Deen*. This is termed as *iblaa* by the *Quran*. The ultimate testing time comes with potential death during such clashes (21/35; 67/2). This is why the *Quran* wants one to always exclusively adhere to *Ad-deen*. A complete negation of permanent values, therefore, is more destructive because of a complete lack of knowledge of real good and evil.

Summary: Good and Evil are results of Man's actions alone. If he employs his capabilities to deal with Nature in accordance with Permanent Values, Good results. Otherwise, Evil is produced. Nature's Law of Deeds decides on Man's success and failure to the last iota (99/8-9; also: 2/110; 2/215; 27/89; 28/80; 73/20). Allah has NOT pre-decided success (good) or failure (evil) for Man. What He has pre-determined is the Law both for the physical and the personal aspects (in this life as well as in the hereafter).

GAIN AND LOSS

The *Quran* has also used the terms *nafa* (gain) and *zarar* (loss) for *khair* (good) and *shar* (evil), respectively.

Early Man's ignorance and fright of awesome Nature (referred to earlier in this book) made him bow and plead to Nature for mercy. This need of achieving benefit and avoiding disaster from Nature was the origin of deities and the practice of worship. The *Quran* put the forces of Nature in their right place, controllable by Man and thus, not worthy of worship. "They worship those (other than *Allah*) who do not (have the power to) benefit or damage them (people)" - (25/55 - Also: 5/77, 6/17, 6/71, 10/18, 10/106, 21/66, 22/12, 48/11). These forces do not enjoy such powers even over their own selves (25/3, 13/6). Next to gods

Not Even Exalted Men

and goddesses people believed certain exalted men

had that sort of a power. To Muslims, no one is, or can be, more highly-placed than the *Rasul* (messenger) 'Mohammed'. The *Quran* told him to announce: "tell them: I do not possess (the power) to either benefit or damage (even) my own self!" (7/188, 10/49).

Nonetheless, some men do cause harm to others. This is explained in (58/10) where it attributes such occurrences to *Allah's izn* (laws). One must safeguard

Men harming other men

oneself against such evil men. *Suar Aale Imran*: "if

you are steadfast and adhere to *Allah's* laws, no plot of them (enemies) can harm you" (3/119). Elsewhere, it says: "Had the inhabitants of these settlements been convinced of *Allah's* laws and adhered to them, they would have been showered upon by bounties of the sky and the earth. But they rejected those laws and they were apprehended because of their own deeds" (7/96). Therefore, harm comes to Man due to his own actions – "If you keep on the right track, no one can hurt you" (5/105).

Nevertheless, as is our everyday experience, good and fair people do get a

The Solution

Bad deal in society. Its solution? Simply to replace the entire

social set-up with the system based upon *Allah's* laws. Thus, His laws will benefit Man. That is why such acts by Man are attributed to *Allah*. *Sura An'aam* says: "If you are hurt by *Allah* ('s law), the only respite is from *Allah* ('s laws) as He has established measures for everything" (6/17, 10/107), also: 39/38).

One Important Point

Allah attributes to Himself the good deeds done (according to Allah's laws) by Man. This very important point needs further elaboration. Refer to the Battle of

The Battle of Bedr | *Bedr* where the holy fighters (who had already been called

Allah's Party) were told: "It was Allah killing them, not you", and also that "you did not shoot arrows at them. Allah did" (8/17).

Similarly, on the occasion of the Accord at *Hudaibiya*, Muslims repeated to the '*Rasul Allah*' (the messenger) the oath under which they had sold their wealth and persons to *Allah* (9/111), it is referred to as: "Those who were making an agreement with you (O *Rasul!*) did in actual effect made it with Allah!" At the time of the oath-taking ceremony, "Allah's hand was there above your hand!" (48/10).

Suffice to say, then, that whatever occurs in accordance with Allah's laws is attributed to *Allah* Himself. This is how '*Rasul Allah*' *Ibraheem* said, "(Allah is) who created me and then guided me (onto the right path), the one who satisfies my hunger and thirst, and cures me of any illness, and the one who will give me death and will revive me" (26/78-81).

Not only the universal events but also the potential and actions of humans is attributed to Allah. *Sura Ar-Rahman*: "Allah created Man and taught him to speak" (55/3-4). Elsewhere it says: "The One who taught him the use of the pen" (96/4). *Sura Maaeda* says: "(Those animals) which you train (to hunt) as Allah has trained you" (5/4).

All this goes to say that the *Quran* attributes directly to Allah whatever occurs or is done in accordance with His laws through the potential given to Man by Him. Some of these points will be elaborated later in this book.

Shaitaan (Devil) - Iblees

Shaitaan / Iblees (the Devil) is just another excuse for Man's actions. Let us briefly examine *Shaitaan*.

We have so far seen that:

1. Man is born with animalistic instincts (emotions or drives) as well as intellect (which serves to fulfill those drives).
2. Life at the human level requires observance of 'permanent values'.
3. In case of a clash between an animalistic instinct and a permanent value, one of the following two happens:
 - a) the permanent value triumphs and intellect works to serve its cause.
 - b) the instinct triumphs and intellect works to serve the instinct's cause.

In case of 3 (b) above, Man's emotions no longer work under a permanent value and therefore are referred to as rebellious intellect. The *Quran* refers to these unbridled emotions as '*Shaitaan*'. Linguistically, it is considered to be derived from the Arabic

root-words ‘شَاطِئٌ’ or ‘يُشَطِّئُ’ (to flare up). This is my preferred explanation of the term although some take the word to have been derived from Hebrew (meaning ‘the hinderer’) – forces which hinder the progress of permanent values.

Psychologically, when a person is overcome by his / her unbridled emotions (animalistic instincts), it gives rise to aggression (a desire to dominate others), and he / she behaves irrationally. When emotions cool off, he / she repents and frustration sets in.

The word ‘Iblees’ is a derivative of the Arabic root b-l-s which means, to be frustrated. To the Quran, ‘Shaitaan’ and ‘Iblees’ are two sides of the same coin --- unbridled emotions resulting in frustration.

Therefore, ‘Shaitann’ / ‘Iblees’ is nothing but Man’s own emotions. Also, emotions and intellect are neither good nor evil. It is how they are used which makes them so.

Incidentally, Islam (the *Quran*) values human intellect and emotion very highly. They are gifts of nature and *Allah* is a source of Good alone. Nothing of His creations can be intrinsically evil. But the ancient Persian philosophy of the Magus (*Zoarstrians*) did precisely that by pronouncing ‘aharman’ (*Shaitaan*) to be intrinsically evil and to exist without Man and to be at odds with ‘Yazdaan’ (the

The Concept of Compulsion God). The idea of *Shaitaan* being as an

independent creature was used by the irresponsible to create the notion of compulsion, i.e., all Man’s evil deeds are instigated by *Shaitaan* (an entirely separate from and independent of Man). Please refer, at this point, to our observation earlier in this book when *Iblees* disobeyed Allah one the basis of being under compulsion (having no choice and thus not being responsible for his actions). In other words, refusing to accept responsibility for one’s action is a characteristic of *Shaitaan* / *Iblees*.

Let us now turn to the *Quran* to see its view of *Shaitaan* and Man. With

The Quranic View regards to the story of Man it figuratively says: “Then

Shaitaan (led) them both to evil apprehensions” (7/20). *Sura Q* (٦٣) says: “And We have created Man and We know what evil suggestions his own self makes (to him)” (50/16). It is clear that ‘*Shaitaan*’ is nothing but Man’s own self. In the battle of *Uhud* some (hypocrites) abandoned their station out of greed. The *Quran* refers to them thus: “*Shaitaan* made them falter because of their own actions” (3/154). We have also seen that, overcome by emotions, Man loses balance of mind -- *Sura Yasin* says: “You let *Shaitaan* (emotions) overcome you and thus your reason was paralyzed and you ended up in hell” (36/60-62). *Sura Ibrahim* narrates an imaginary dialogue between *Shaitaan* and its followers on the Day of Judgment. The wrongdoers blame *Shaitaan* for their evil deeds. *Shaitaan* rejects the charge by telling them that he did not exercise any control over them – he just suggested; the deeds were done by people themselves. Therefore, “Don’t you blame me. Blame yourselves” (16/22).

----- X - X - X - X -----

The burning question, then, is how may Man avoid being overpowered by his own emotions?

How Man can avoid being controlled by his own emotions

Mysticism suggests crushing one’s emotions through strict self denial. But this is as impractical as its other suggestion of denial of this world. Human emotions

cannot be crushed into silence. Any attempts to do so is unwise. Emotions, like Reason, are an asset. The freshness, the variety and the colorfullness of human life springs from desires, which, in turn, are caused by emotions. The *Quran*'s guidance regarding human emotions is, literally as well as figuratively, out of this world! In (45/23), it says: "Do you see the one who takes his own emotions as his god? Allah('s law) makes him go astray, despite having knowledge (and reason); (it is as if) his ears and heart are sealed shut and he is blindfolded. Who else but *Allah* can help him onto the right path?" Such people are misled because "One who follows one's emotions disregarding Allah's guidance, goes astray" (28/50). It is clear, therefore, that human emotions are evil when they are uncontrolled and good if guided by *Allah*'s law. This was illustrated by the '*Rasul Allah*' when he said that

The Muslim Iblees (Shaitaan) every person has their own *Iblees*. Asked if he

himself had one, the '*Rasul Allah*' said, 'Yes, I do. But I have converted my *Iblees* to Islam.' *Iblees (Shaitaan)* is nothing but human emotions is also illustrated in the allegorical story of Man's birth. Expelled from Paradise, after *Iblees* having refused

Iblees is controllable to bow in obedience to Man vowed to mislead Man

(17/62-63). Allah responded to this challenge by saying: "People who follow Me will not come under your control" (17/65). "In fact, he (*Iblees*) will have no control over people who are convinced (of the truthfulness of *Allah*'s law) and depend upon and trust their *Allah*. His control will only work on those who ignore *Allah* ('s laws) either completely or partially" (16/99-100). Men convinced of *Allah*'s law shut *Shaitaan* out of their minds so that: "If a wandering thought of *Shaitaan* touches them, they remember (and remind themselves of *Allah*'s law) and thus they can see more clearly" (7/201). This is illustrated in the story of '*Rasul' Yousef*' (Joseph in theBible) where he refused to be enticed by the wife of his Egyptian master. *Yousef*

Yousef's example practically demonstrated that *Shaitaan* fails to overcome

the Convinced --- "Surely, he was one of Our pure (of heart) people" (12/64).

A question can arise at this point. One may ask why have this constant

Why the tussle of good and evil tussle of good and evil at all? The answer is simple. This clash of good and evil is a logical consequence of Man's

freedom of choice. Freedom of choice cannot exist if there is only one possibility. The moment of choice is the occasion where Man's potential is brought into play. This Universe operates on the principle of Evolution which is based upon clash. Life is like a stream which accelerates when it clashes with falls of stones. Only a plectrum can release the dormant notes of a harp. A sword is sharpened by 'struggling against' the whetting stone. A spark is produced by a flint only when it rubs against a stone. Similarly, clash with evil brings out the good in Man. This is known as 'the development of his self (personality). *Shaitaan* provides this essential clash which is so necessary for Man's development. The *Quran* refers to this tussle: "... We strike wrong (Evil) with (the hammer of) Right till it (Evil) is smashed into retreat" (21/18). In the social world, Good can triumph over Evil very swiftly if Allah's law is implemented. Evil keeps resisting Good; that is the work of *Shaitaan*: "They establish a system of justice based upon Evil. They were ordered not to do it. This the very thing *Shaitaan* wants – to lead them to the farthest wrong path!" 4/60).

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

IF THEN (In the Quran)

Earlier in this book, LAW has been defined as: If.... Then..... always. If (you do this) then (this will) always (happen).

Judicial Law

Law has been familiarly categorized as judicial, physical

(natural) and permanent values. Judicial laws show no intrinsic interdependence. Take, for the sake of argument, a law stating a term in prison or a fine for committing an act of theft. If a particular judiciary doesn't consider theft a crime, or the culprit is not apprehended, the act of theft will fail to produce a result. This interdependence between an act and its result is the reason for different societies being able to have different changeable laws.

Physical Law

Social norms are no different. Physical (natural) laws on the

other hand, display an intrinsic interdependence between an act and its result. No social or judicial ruling can ever affect the result (burns, for example) of an act (putting one's hand in fire). These laws are simply there in Nature. They are permanent, and come true to the definition of law at the head of this chapter.

Permanent Values

The third category of laws (permanent values) i. e., if

you don't improve the lot of the poor and needy, you'll be destroyed – give the result of an act just like the first two classes. But they are different in many respects. They are permanent as well as natural (established by *Allah*). These divine laws are given to Man through Revelation. They have a twofold result --- betterment of society as well as development of personality (of individuals). One can accept the validity of permanent values only if one accepts the existence of human personality. It follows that establishing these values in a human society depends upon *Imaan* (acceptance of human personality and revelation of these divine values). The Quran has highlighted the social as well as personal advantages of permanent values. For instance, fornication is considered to be a violation of value resulting in degeneration of personality; (25/68) at the same time it has been proposed as a social criminal act worthy of punishment. (100 lashes in public).

Law & its Philosophy

The Quran tells us that both 'the book' (law) and

hikma (the why of it) are divinely given. No law can be effective without its philosophy (the 'then' in the original definition of If ... then Always). This is precisely what happens in anarchic situations in human societies. Similarly when

Din & Mazhab

(The system & Religion)

'alDin' (an effective legal system) is reduced to 'Mazhab' (or religion ---- a set of rituals), laws

become ineffective – they bear no results. People go through the motions to 'please' God. But in 'alDin' laws are effective in that they bear results and the 'then' of them is always manifested in this world as well as in the hereafter. The '*hikma*' of these laws makes it

easy to check if actions are according to the laws. ‘*Mazhab*’ has not such provision – people do certain acts and leave the result to *Allah*, not knowing if they will bear results or not. Consequently, there is nothing (concrete results) to check them against. The *Quran* refers to such fruitless actions as (حيطت أعمالهم) : ‘their actions were wasted’.

Let me summarize what we have discussed so far. I apologize for any repetition it may bring, but I wish to drive here a very important point. The very definition of Law (If ... then Always) indicates freedom of choice. The choice of ‘If’ can only be given to one with a free will. We cannot, for example say to a blind person: ‘If you don’t look where you go, you will trip over and fall’. The question of ‘looking’ for the blind doesn’t arise. The *Quran* uses the expression ‘إِنْ فَ’ (If ... then) as well as (لَكِمْ) (so that). Let us cite some examples from the *Quran* which illustrate Man’s free will.

Some Examples from the Quran :

1. Conviction and good deeds will definitely get you into ‘Paradise’ (2/25).
2. If you follow My instructions, you will be free of fear and depression (2/38).

If you spend your wealth in Allah’s way, you will be free of fear and depression (2/262, 2/274, 2/277, 6/48, 46/13).

3. If you follow the Book in parts and deny some other parts of it, you will have a miserable life here and get severely punished in the hereafter (2/85).
4. If these people had accepted and adopted a careful life, they would have received the best return (2/103).
5. If you remember, and not forget, My laws, I will give you an increase in respect and status (2/152).
6. It would have been better for the people of the Book if they had accepted the *Quran* (3/109).
7. If you are *Momin* (convinced), you will triumph (3/138).
8. If you die, or are killed, in *Allah*’s way, you will get His protection and care (3/156).
9. No one will overpower you if you have *Allah*’s support (3/159). Allah’s support is given to one who rises to work for His ‘*din*’ (22/40), (47/7).
10. If you accept and lead a careful life, you will be rewarded highly (3/178).
11. If you keep away from blunders, your flaws will be removed (4/31).
12. If the people of the Book’ has accepted and led a careful life, We would have removed their troubles (5/65). If they had followed Allah’s Word, they would have had plentiful food (5/66). They would have enjoyed bounties of all universe (7/96).
13. Whoever accepts, and remains fair, gets peace and is guided towards prosperity (6/83).
14. If you lead a careful life, you will have distinctive life (8/29).
15. If twenty fighters (in Allah’s way) are steadfast, you will triumph over two hundred of enemy – it is when you have the same supply and provision of arms. If you are less equipped, you will overcome an enemy double in number than you (8/65-66).

16. ‘Imaan’ (Acceptance by conviction) and ‘taqwaa’ (watchful life) are harbinger of good news of good life here and in the hereafter. This is Allah’s firm law and will never change (10/62-64).
17. Whoever strives in Our Way (to uphold *alDin*), We will show them the way (29/69).
18. Whoever is steadfast after ‘Imaan’, will have angels descending with good news of being free of fear and depression here and in the hereafter (41/30-31).
19. ‘Imaan’ and good deeds result in inheritance of earth (political sovereignty) (24/55).
20. If you shy away from Allah’s laws, you will be replaced by another people (47/38; 9/38).
21. Whoever shuns Our laws will face a shortage of livelihood.
22. If you are thankful (use Allah’s bounties according to His laws) you will prosper. Otherwise, you will be punished (14/7).
23. Whoever gives to others and leads a careful life will have an easy life (92/6-10).
24. Be steadfast, galvanized and lead a watchful life, so that you succeed (3/199).
25. The children of Israel were punished with misery and oppression because they had denied and rejected *Allah*’s laws.

The above examples should vividly display that Allah has given free will to Man to choose from two possibilities. Man is free to choose one of the two paths but is NOT free to choose the destination (result). This fact (law) is unchangeable. This permanent law (value) is *taqdeer* --- the natural result of Man’s actions. We can say, therefore, that: When *Allah* decrees, and tells us its result as well, that is a permanent law.

Islam is *Al-Din* which has laws. The word ‘*din*’ literally means law. *Allah*’s laws – permanent values – are unchangeable and are given in *Allah*’s Book, the *Quran*.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

How did it all happen?

The *Quranic* verses presented so far in this book should establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that:

- i) the Universe operates under laws set by *Allah*, and
- ii) Man is a responsible being who enjoys freedom of choice of right and wrong. He can choose an action but has to bear its consequence (pre-ordained by *Allah*). This is the Law of Results of Action, which is constant and firm. ‘Ye shall reap what ye shall sow’ is the fundamental basis of life.

Our Current (Muslim) Beliefs

Contrary to this, we have been repeatedly

told by parents, friends, teachers, religious scholars, mystics etc., and read in the various interpretations of the *Quran*, compilations of *Hadith* (Traditions of Mohammed), early Islamic literature etc., that:

Not a leaf stirs or Man moves without God’s consent. Every event in the Universe occurs only when God allows. Man cannot interfere in the function of the Universe. Not only that, Man has absolutely no control over his own affairs. Each and every event in one’s life is pre-destined even before one’s birth. Destiny is unchangeable. God is omnipotent and owns absolute power and will. At his own sweet will, He bestows poverty or affluence, honor or disgrace, health or sickness, life or death, and change of fortune etc. No human effort can affect a change in fate. Therefore, men should unflinchingly accept their destiny pre-ordained by God. The more docile and accepting a man, the closer to God he is!

The question, then, is how did such contradictory beliefs come to stay as ‘Islamic ideology’ despite the *Quran* being there in its original form all along? How did such a fundamental change occur?

The importance and the magnitude of the problem necessitates a thorough and deep examination of it.

The question of Destiny has been treated in Islamic literature much more than any other. Almost every religious work on Islam deals with it because *taqdeer* has been made one of the requisites of one’s ‘*iman*’ (conviction) -- I shall deal with it later in this book. All the writings on the question (treating it partly or wholly) have only complicated the already confusing situation. The reason for this aggravation was that those treatises were based not on the *Quran* but on philosophy and logic not remotely connected with the Holy Book. I do not propose to dwell on such writings not only because of their immense volume but also because of their being largely incomprehensible to the

The Old Scholastic Philosophy is Futile Today

average man. The archaic

style of writing and the approach to issues through scholastic philosophy is useless in the modern age and the changed attitude of men to life. For example, Imam *Ibn Hazam Andalusi*, one of the most prominent early Muslim authors, has treated the question of fate and destiny in his famous '*alMilal waalNahal*'. He opens the discussion thus:

Those who believe that action comes with ability have said that the question is: Does a '*kaafir*' (dissenter) possess the ability of '*imaan*' (conviction) which he has been ordered, or does he not? They have replied that: A *kaafir* has the ability of *imaan* as a replacement, i. e., he will not have dissent for ever but will replace it with *imaan*.

The desirable answer is: He, with his good limbs and high obstacles, is apparently able to simultaneously have dissent and *imaan* along as he stays a *kaafir*. He will remain unable unless God helps him. He can act when he is helped and thus becomes able. Now it can be said that has been made to do what he did.

I am sure one cannot gain anything from this discussion which takes up hundreds of pages! Sadly, this is the style and mode of most of the Islamic literature which is even till today taught to students of religion.

History is undependable

Who introduced anti *Quranic* views and how

did they come to be the very basis of Islamic ideology? Naturally, it is a question for History to answer. It is bound to come as a shocking surprise to many of my readers that, sadly, the early Islamic history is utterly unreliable from the academic and technical point of view. Since it is outside the scope of this book, I shall very briefly present the reasons for the situation:

- i) The very first documented history, considered by Muslims as authentic as well as the source of all history, is the one authored by *Imam Tabri*. It consists of thirteen volumes. This work was compiled nearly 300 years after Mohammed. It was based not on any documented record but, by *Tabri's* own testimony, on oral tradition. Such a work is obviously not very reliable. Later, all historical account were based on *Tabri's* work. That is why it is known as 'the mother of histories'.
- ii) Only a neutral and objective account of events can be a true reflection of an era. Muslim history was compiled at a time when the Muslim community had already split into several sects. Therefore, all literature produced during that period could not be entirely free of sectarian philosophy and influences. The question of *taqdeer*, among others, has become one of the basis for sectarianism. That is why *Abu Zahra Masri* (Egyptian) thinks that today it is difficult even to establish the founder of the 'fate doctrine'.

In '*al-Mazaheb allislamia*' (the Muslim Sects), he writes:

"(when) A sect becomes an established group it is very difficult to ascertain its original founder. Hence, it is not easy to establish the birth of that sect."

- iii) We (Muslims) have since long adopted as firm belief the idea that all ancestral personalities, and literature attributed to them, is beyond and above criticism – it tantamounts to disrespect. Our children are taught the maxim:
(It is a mistake to point out a mistake of ancestors).

Under the circumstances, not many dare cast a critical look at early Muslim literature.

The Correct Attitude to History

Having thus established the unreliability of

early Muslim history, I must point out that the events and accounts pertaining to Mohammed and his companions referred to in the *Quran* must be considered as authentic and true. This logically follows the authenticity of the *Quran*. The correct approach to really Muslim history, therefore, should be that: accounts of history in contravention of the *Quranic* evidence must be rejected as factually wrong; events supported by the *Quran* must be accepted as fact. Events and accounts not mentioned in the *Quran* cannot be thus tested. Since the question of *taqdeer* has been dealt with by the *Quran*, we can test the later-day beliefs and ideas against the *Quran* for their validity.

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The *Quranic* stand on *taqdeer* has already been presented. One can find

The Idea of Compulsion at the Dawn of Islam

reference in the *Quran* to

the people of the time who believed in the idea of compulsion. *Sura Anaam* says: 'The polytheists will say that if Allah so willed, we wouldn't have been polytheists nor our ancestors nor we would have adopted certain prohibitions....' (6/149). The *Quran* pronounces them as rejecters of truth. (16/35, 43/20).

Sura Yaseen says: 'And when they are asked to use their wealth to feed the hungry, the dissenters (*Kaafirs*) say to the Convinced (*momeneen*) that Allah would have provided food to the hungry if He so willed. Their hunger is Allah's will. How can we go against His will and provide food to them?' (36/47).

The Quran says that they are clearly misled.

This shows that, even in Mohammed's time, there were people who believed in the concept of compulsion. The *Quran* rejected this view and replaced it with its positive stand. The problem of fate and pre-destiny was solved beyond the shadow of a doubt. It has been reported that *Omar* asked a thief why he had

Punishment for the Compulsion concept

committed thievery. He replied.

'It was God's will.' *Omar* sentenced him to the legal punishment for stealing and extra lashes on top of it. He explained, 'The standard sentence is for stealing. The lashes are for attributing something false to Allah' -- (*Al-Mazaahib Al-Islamia* by AbuZahra Masry. P-139 - Urdu Translation).

The concept of Compulsion could not gain a foothold in the Muslim world as long as the *Quran* remained the basis of their ideology. It could not have because the *Quran* so clearly and categorically declared it polytheistic and dissenting (*kufr*). But when the *Quran* was pushed into the background and the watchful eye of the central authority of the Caliphate (the righteous successors of *Mohammed*) was no more, the Muslim mind was infiltrated and polluted by various anti-*Quranic* concepts. The question of *taqdeer* was but one of them. One report says that the very first sect of Islam, formed on the basis of ideology, was the *Jabariya* (the Compulsionists)!

Before the advent of Islam, the people of Arabia consisted mainly of nomadic desert tribes living on dates as shepherds. They were sandwiched by the age-old glorious kingdoms of Iran and *Byzantium*. *Firdausi's 'Shahnama'* is a testimony to the Iranian's

degrading attitude towards the Arabs. These very ‘lowly’ Arabs, after having adopted Islam, ran over and captured the vast Iranian empire. The defeated and overpowered Iranians could not accept the humiliation and kept the fires of revenge raging in their hearts. They knew that the reason for the Arabs’ newly-found might was their newly-adopted philosophy of life (Islam). *Hormazan*, a captive governor from Iran, was brought

Harmazan's testimony

to Median. *Omar* asked him for his thoughts over the

incredible defeat of Iran by a handful of Arabs who were considered too low in the Iranian eye even to enter a battle with. *Hormazan's* response was very significant. He said, “Previously it was Iran against the Arabs, Now, it is Iran against the Arabs and their Allah!”

Truly, ‘the Arabs’ Allah’ was the secret of their success. It had meant a revolutionary change in their minds and hearts which gave them the will and enthusiasm to work to establish, and even die for, a higher purpose of life. Such sentiments make a people invincible. The Persians and *Byzantians* both know this well. Therefore, they began working towards distancing the Arabs from this philosophy.

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The dawn of Islam was also a severe blow to the obliterated religions of

A Conspiracy by Christians & Jews

Christianity and Judaism. Furthermore,

the growing might of the Arabs not only shook the very foundations of the *Byzantine* Empire, it also caused the Jews to be driven out of the Arabian peninsula. Therefore, the Christians and the Jews, as well as the Persians, had reasons to be revengeful against the Arabs. They, too, had the same purpose and adopted the same scheme of operations, to alleviate the Arabs from their revolutionary philosophy of the *Quran*. The way to achieve it was simply to infiltrate and pollute this philosophy much in the way their own systems (Christianity & Judaism) had already been before. Thus, *Iqbal* uses the term

Arab & Ajam

‘ajam’ not only for the Persians. It includes all non Arab groups.

His term ‘Arab Islam’ refers to the system of the *Quran* and ‘ajami Islam’ refers to all the anti-*Quranic* ideas and concepts from *Zoarastrianism* (the Magus), Christianity and Judaism etc. which found their way into the Islamic philosophy. That is how this divine system of Allah was transformed into the man-made religion which has been with us till today.

The distortion of Islam started with the Persians tampering with and obliterating the question of *taqdeer*. *Zoarastrianism* was based upon the problem of Good and Evil. The Persians were well aware of the impact of this concept. They knew that a group which believes in Man’s free will and his ability to shape his destiny attains great powers. The obvious way to render a group powerless is to make them reject Man’s free will, and believe in pre-destiny. Hence the distortion of Islamic ideology was begun with this particular question of *taqdeer*. It is a woeful tale, the death knell of the true (*Quranic*) Muslim Philosophy.

Asaawra was a group of Persian nobility and politicians who served as

The Asaawra of Islam

advisors to the emperors much in the way of the

‘nauratan’ of the famous *Mughal* emperor *Akbar* the Great of India. These imperial aides wore a gold bangle (السوار) as a symbol of distinction. Hence the term ‘asaawra’ for the group. (Incidentally, the *Quran* has used this simile of ‘gold bangles’ for the inhabitants of Paradise to symbolize their high and prestigious status).

After their defeat, the Persian army in general, and the *asaawara* in particular, offered *Saad bin Waqqas*, the Arab conqueror of Persia their conversion to Islam if accorded full Muslim rights including the right of abode in the Muslim settlements. Their wish was granted and the Persians immigrated to cities like *Kufa* and *Basra*. Today it is difficult to ascertain the reasons and motives behind this permit but, in hindsight, one tends to see it as unwise. The reason is simple. Persia, being the cradle of an ancient civilization, had several characteristics of an obliterated way of life and an ideology gone astray. Institutions like imperialism, capitalism and priesthood were their firm beliefs. Their religion was based upon the concepts of the Magus. Their intellectuals, particularly the *asaawara*, were masters of discussion on topics like philosophy of logic, theology and metaphysics, etc.

Arabs, on the other hand, had a life and mind as simple and unpolluted as the desert they inhabited. They had not been exposed to political maneuvering, theoretical discussion, or the intricacies of philosophy and logic. The ‘*din*’ (system of the *Quran*), which had elevated them to a position of distinction in the world, was a clear and simple one. It had a few clearly laid out concepts. The Arabs had drawn their power from that simple, pure and clear system.

It is easy to see, then, the consequences of such a clear-headed and simple group intermingling with the Persians who came with a deliberate plan ⁽¹⁾. The simple-minded Muslims were no match to the seasoned craft of the Persians.

(1) A few years earlier, this intermingling had had a catastrophic result. *Hormazan*, a Persian governor, along with his companions, was permitted to settle down in Medina. They conspired and assassinated Omar, a blow from which Islam has never recovered.

Settling down among the Muslims, the Persians began to propagate their own ideas very subtly. The very first Muslim to raise the question of destiny was

Ma'abad bin Khalid Jahanni, who had adopted it from *Abu Younis* – one of the *Asaawra*. From *Ma'abad* the idea passed on to *Gheelan Damashqi* who propagated it further. According to the concept, Man is completely devoid of

Influence of Christianity free will with his fate pre-determined. The

exponents of this concept are referred to as the *Jabariya* (the compulsionists).

The belief of Compulsion was also the foundation of Christian philosophy. The most bright illustration is the Christian belief of the original sin. (that Man is sinful by nature and nothing can absolve Man of the original sin committed by Adam and Eve). Also, according to the Bible, Christ’s last wish was: ‘God! Let thine be done not mine’. That was the foundation of the resigned-to-fate attitude. It has been reported that *Gheelan Damashqi*, an original Copt (Christian), adopted this view from a Christian who had converted to Islam before reverting to his original faith. The concept of dualism of Good

and Evil was there in Judaism, too. During the period of bondage under Babylon, the Israelites came into contact with the Persians near the Iranian-controlled areas. Later, their liberation and subsequent return to their homeland happened largely due to the help of the Persians. Naturally, they were impressed by the Zoroastrians from who they adopted the concept of Good & Evil dualism. The fact that the Jews were already interested in metaphysical philosophy only served to hasten the process of Jews being influenced by the Persian thought. (The famous Jewish seat of learning at Alexandria was a center for philosophical studies).

Another historical account cites, as the founder of the concept of Compulsion, *Ja'ad bin Dasham*, a Muslim who had adopted the idea from a Syrian Jew. From *Dasham*, the idea passed on to *Jaham bin Safwan*, a native of *Khorasan* (in Persia), who propagated it so vigorously that the *Jabariya* came to be known as the *Jahmiya*. The Muslim history is likewise unclear about the name of the group. They are referred to as *Jabariya* (they believed in the absolute authority and control of God) as well as *Qadariya* (they denied Man's power to decide). I shall discuss this in detail later in the book.

The question of the originator (*Ma'abad* or *Jahm*) and the source (*Zoarastrianism*, Judaism or Christianity) aside, there is no doubting the fact that this anti-*Quranic* concept came into Islam from non-Islamic sources. It occurred in the early days of the (*Abbasid*) period.

The intriguing question is how such an anti-*Quranic* concept was accepted by Muslims? Despite the philosophical arguments presented in its support, the Muslims could not, in all probability, have accepted it without an Islamic evidence. Lo and behold! They were presented with such an evidence! How did it all happen? It is another sorry tale. The evidence presented

The 'Din' Evidence for an Anti-*Quranic* Idea formed the basis not only of the question of *taqdeer* but also of all the anti-*Quranic* concepts injected into Islam.

Allah had declared the *Quran* as the original source of the 'Din'. The

The Tradition Messenger taught and followed the *Quran*. As long as it

remained so, no anti-Islamic concept could be introduced. The Conspirators attacked this foundation and propagated the notion that the ultimate authority in 'Din' is not the *Quran* alone. It is accompanied by a likeness of it – the tradition (*Hadith*) of the Messenger. Initially the tradition was presented as an instrument to interpret and explain the *Quran*. Later, it was elevated to the position of the hidden (unwritten) revelation. This notion was almost identical to the Jewish concept of two kinds of divine revelation. One is *Tora shabktals* (the visible, written revelation) of the Book of Moses, the other *Tora Shabalfa* (the hidden, unwritten revelation), consisting of the tradition of Moses, given through Aaron. The whole system of Jewish jurisprudence is based upon Mosaic Tradition. The *Quran* mentions only one kind of revelation – the one preserved in its entirety in the *Quran*. But now, the same notion of two kinds of revelation (the *Quran* and Mohammed's tradition) was floated and propagated among Muslims. The *Quran* is called 'the recited revelation' while the Tradition is termed as 'the un-recited revelation'.

Subsequently, the idea was propagated that if two pieces of revelation are found to be contradictory to each other, one of them must cancel the other. It followed logically that in case of a clash in the above mentioned two kinds of revelation, the tradition shall

supersede the *Quran*. This notion established the tradition as the ultimate source of authority in religious matters reducing the *Quran* to a book to be recited as a virtue!

The Messenger did not give the Muslims any collection of his tradition. He only gave the *Quran* (complete and duly arranged) which we have today exactly as he did. Neither his righteous successors (the first four caliphs) nor any of the other companions compiled his tradition. *Abu-Bakr & Omar* (the first and the second caliph, respectively) even forbade the writing or citing of the tradition for fear of polluting the ‘Din’ (as presented by the *Quran*)! But, once the above mentioned concept of *Hadith* had been introduced, a need arose for compiling the tradition. The compilation accepted as the most authentic (that of *Imam Bokhari*), appeared in the third century (*Hijra*). *Imam Bokhari* died in 256 H. All the other collections (with the exception of *Imam Malik’s Muatta*’ which contained very few traditions) were complied after that. All these books were compiled not from any documented record but from oral tradition of the people. It is not difficult to make an academic & historical – let alone religious – assessment of tradition compiled on oral evidence about 250 year after the death of Mohammed. Nonetheless, these traditions, since most of them were attributed to Mohammed, were accepted as authentic. Rejection of any one of them meant denouncing one’s (Muslim) faith. Apart from the possibility of human error, on the part of the tradition tellers, the opportunity it gave to fabricators of *Hadith* is staggering. For example, *Imam Bokhari* (according to his own statement) collected 600,000 pieces of tradition. Sifting through this mass – on the basis of his own judgment (he had no authority or approval from Mohammed) – he selected only about 7000, rejecting about 593,000!

You may wonder why the Muslims accepted something with such a shaky base. The reasons are sentimental. Muslims have tremendous love, affection and respect for Mohammed. Every thing and anything connected to him is highly revered. The tradition (which are his actions and pronouncements) apart, people are known to kiss & prostate in front of certain impressions in stone said to be Mohammed’s footprints! Such sentiments were exploited by the fabricators of *Hadith*, and were they successful!

This is how anti-Islamic concepts became part of the Muslim ideology.

Tradition to support Compulsion

Here are a few examples of the

tradition about the question of *taqdeer* (from a very authentic collection *Mishkat* - chapter on *taqdeer*):

- i) Report from *Abdullah bin Omar*: ‘Said the Messenger that God Almighty, 50,000 years before creating the Universe, while His throne was on water, wrote the destinies of all creatures.
(from ‘Muslim’)

- ii) The son of *Omar* reports:

‘The Messenger said that all things are subject to Destiny, even wisdom and stupidity.’

(from ‘Muslim’)

- iii) Reported from *Ali*:

‘The Messenger said, ‘Each one of you has his fate pre-decided, i. e., paradise or hell.’

(from ‘Muslim & Bukhari’)

This is elaborated upon thus:

Abdu Hraira reports: ‘The Messenger said, “One will certainly fornicate as much as has been written by Allah. (*Bokhari*’ & *Muslim*)

Further: ‘The Messenger said, “Allah created Adam, caressed his back with His right hand and created his progeny from his back, and said, ‘I have created them for Paradise, so they will behave accordingly.’ Once again He caressed Adam’s back and created his progeny and said, ‘I have created them for Hell, so they will act accordingly.’

Hearing this, a man queried, “O Messenger of Allah! What is the use of doing deeds then? The Messenger replied, ‘When God creates someone for Paradise, he is made to behave accordingly. Similarly, when He creates someone for Hell, he is made to act accordingly. Then He sends them to Paradise or Hell accordingly.

(*Maalik, Tirmizi, Abu Dawood*)

iv) *Abdullah bin Omer* reports:

‘Once the Messenger emerged (from his house, probably) carrying two books. He addressed us, ‘Do you know about these books?’ We said, ‘We know not, O Messenger of Allah!’ He pointed to the book in his right hand and said, ‘This book is from Allah. It contains the names of those destined for Paradise. Nothing can be added to, or deleted from, it.’ Then he pointed to the book in his left hand and said, ‘This book is also from Allah, It contains the names of those destined for Hell. Nothing can be added to, or deleted from, it.’

v) *Abu Darda* reports:

‘The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Allah has done and already finished His work about each single one of His subjects in FIVE areas, i.e., they have been written as his destiny: his time (age), his good or bad deeds, his place of abode, his return and his sustenance. ‘ (Ahmed)

The collections of *Hadith* are full of reports such as these. Any one looking at them in the light of the *Quran*, and of knowledge and wisdom, is bound to have a variety of objections and questions. The fabricators of such reports had foreseen this situation and fabricated suitable reports accordingly. For example, *Abu Huraira* reports: ‘We were discussing the question of *taqdeer* when the Messenger came by. Hearing our discussion, he became red in the face – as if it was full of pomegranate juice – and said, “it this what you have been instructed to do? Is this my mission? Peoples in the past were destroyed when they discussed this problem. I put you under oath, and I do it again, never to discuss, argue or talk about the question.” (from ‘Tirmizi’)

Thus the anti-*Quranic* tradition about *taqdeer* was assured immunity from criticism. Next was another very significant step regarding the figurative language (similes, etc.) of the *Quran* – a well-known style. For instance, the

The Figurative and the Literal word – (ثم استوى على العرش) in (عرش) – and

then He settled on the throne – has been taken to mean a real seat in the literal sense as well as, figuratively, the center of power and control over the universe. One can take either of the positions without jeopardizing one’s Conviction (إيمان). Other instances, however, have to be taken literally and only in one way. For example, the verse (قل هو الله احد) – Say that Allah is One - does not allow one to accept any other position than to accept

and declare that there is only one God. The *Quran* has laid down, categorically, the things essential for

Constituents of Conviction one's Conviction (popularly known as Articles of

Faith). The FIVE constituents of Conviction are Allah, Angels, Messenger, (Divine) Books, and the Judgment Day (2/177). Denying or rejecting any of these makes one a Dissenter (Kaafir) -(4/136). The Quran mentions the FIVE constituents only. But then a SIXTH article was introduced – and it has stayed – i. e., *taqdeer* (pre-destiny). Once again, this addition was made through tradition.

The SIXTH Constituent For example: i) *Ali* reports: 'Said' the Messenger

that no one can be a *momin* (convinced Muslim) until one accepts the following: 1. Testify that God alone is worthy of worship and I (Mohammed) am His Messenger sent with the Truth; 2. Accept death as fact; 3. Accept resurrection; 4. Accept *taqdeer*.'
(*Tirmizi; Ibn Maja*)

ii) *Ibn Wailmy* reports: '*Ibn Abi Kaab* visited me and I told him of some misgivings I had had about *taqdeer*, and asked him to narrate tradition in the hope of alleviating my doubt. He said, 'If Allah were to send calamities to people, He wouldn't be an oppressor. If He were merciful, His benevolence would doubtlessly exceed peoples' deeds. If you were to spend in charity gold equivalent of the *Uhad* (mountain), your deed will not be acceptable until you wholly accept *taqdeer*. You must understand that whatever reached you, had to be so; and whatever you did not get, had to be so. If you believe anything contravening this concept of *taqdeer*, you will burn in hellfire! *Ibn Wailym* further reports: 'After hearing out *Ibn Abi Ka'ab*, I went to *Abdullah Ibn Masud* who said the same. Then I went to *Huzaifa bin Alyaman* who said the same. Then I went to *Zaid Ibn Thaabit* and he quoted the Messenger's tradition to the same effect. (*Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Ibn Maaja*). That is how this concept of *taqdeer*, taken from Zoarastians, Christians and Jews became a part of Muslim philosophy. How important it has become to the religious minded among the

Elaboration by the late Syed Sulaiman Nadwi Muslims can learn from

Syed Sulaiman Nadwi's serial work on the life of Mohammed. In the fourth volume, treating concepts, he talks about Allah, Angels, Books, Messengers and Dooms Day. Then he denotes an entire chapter to *taqdeer* with the title '*Qaza-o-Qadr*'. It opens thus:

'Though the *Quran* has not listed it (*taqdeer*) in reference to *Imaan* (Articles of Faith), its frequent repetition in the *Quran* makes it important enough to be made another article of Faith. Therefore, some traditions have shown it to be the last constituent of *Imaan*'.
(*Seeratun Nabi*, P860)

The practical implications of a particular concept becoming an 'article of faith' can be assessed only when the clergy wields political power. It has been decreed (by the clergy) that a Muslim rejecting any of these articles of faith becomes a '*Murtad*' (denouncer of religion) and a *murtad* is punishable by death. The Muslim historical accounts testify to the bloodshed of Muslims committed by the clergy in the name of safeguarding the sixth article of faith.

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The question must arise here that when this anti-*Quranic* concept was

Protest against all this

being propagated was there no protesting voice

against it at all? Had the Islamic nation run out of members who would negate this alien idea by presenting the *Quranic* view? The fact is that such people did exist and strong protest were made. Their arguments were:

- i) The ultimate authority of ‘Din’ is Allah’s Book (the *Quran*) which can be understood if knowledge and reason are employed.
- ii) The Law of Returns is a fundamental principle of the *Quranic* philosophy according to which Man is responsible for his actions. The institution of divine guidance through Allah’s book and messengers and the principle of reward and punishment (both here and in the hereafter), all support the view of Man’s free will.

Rejection of this view (by the idea of Compulsion) reduces Man to the level of the inanimate (elements, minerals, etc.) and the animate (plants, animals) who have no will, and therefore, no responsibility. That is why no messenger has ever been sent to them!

These weighty arguments were rebutted by the compulsionists in a uniquely

Countering by calling names

effective way. Apart from the *Hadith*

(mentioned earlier), they developed a technique of labeling their opponents with derogatory names. This continues to this day. For example, *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* proposed certain ideas which were strongly opposed by the conservatively religious. He had said that the secret of West’s progress lies in studying and harnessing nature, so we (the Muslims of British India) must study natural sciences. The clergy picked on the word ‘nature’ and began referring to *Sir Syed* as ‘*Natury*’ (a naturalist). Their propaganda made the word synonymous with atheism, paganism, anti-religion, etc. They advised people not to pay any attention to ‘this naturalist’. Sadly, no one ever bothered to stop and ask what the term really meant. This technique of labeling an opponent out is justly illustrated by a (perhaps fictional) story in which a Hindu trader in a village was labeled as a *Wahabi* (a Muslim sect detested by the majority sect of *Sunnis*) by the village *moulvi* (Muslim priest)!

The compulsionists had invented names like *Mutazila* and *Qadariya* for their opposers. Fabricated tradition also appeared claiming that the Messenger had said, : ‘The *Qadariya* are the Magus of this (Islamic) nation’. This made them rejecters of faith (*murtad*), and therefore, punishable by death! Their writings were burned, losing valuable intellectual work for ever! That was the end of *Mutazila* (*Qadariya*). Since then, the clergy has routinely used the label of *Mutazila* to quieten voices of reason. Consequently, the Muslim world has long forgotten the use of reason and intellect. *Sir Syed* was labeled as *Mutazila* as well as I (the author of this book)! I have been declared a *kaafir* by a collective decree of 1000 religious leaders!

The Compulsionists also present certain *Quranic* verses in support of

The *Quranic* Support for Compulsion

Their view. For instance

“(He misleads whom He wished and guides whom He wishes) and (He spares whom He wishes and punishes whom He wishes) etc. Let me examine in detail some of such verses which are essential to a correct understanding of the question of *taqdeer*.

Before I embark upon the task of explaining such Quranic verses as mentioned above, it is essential to deliberate on the fundamentals of

Fundamentals of Comprehension of the <i>Quran</i>	comprehension of the
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Quran. First of all, please note that one of the evidences presented by the *Quran* in support of its claim of being divine is its consistency and absolute lack of internal contradiction (4/82). Therefore, it is not possible for the *Quran* to support as well as reject free will of Man.

Secondly, if one comes across apparent contradiction in the *Quran*, it must neither be considered superficially nor ignored. In such situations, the *Quran* has suggested deliberation with reason.

As far as deliberation in the *Quran* is concerned, there are two points of absolute importance. One is to consider all the *Quranic* verses about a particular topic to get the true picture. This is called "تصريف الآيات" - repetition of verses - by the *Quran*. Secondly, no verse can be interpreted in a way contrary to the central themes of the *Quran*. For instance, one of the central themes of the book is that *Allah* is unique. Now, Allah has been called *al-Khaaliq* (the creator). Elsewhere, He is referred to as "إِنَّ الْخَالقِينَ" (the best of creators). Apparently, there is a contradiction here – if the *Quran* recognizes creators other than Allah, He cannot be unique. This confusion is cleared when one deliberates in the manner suggested in earlier. The *Quran* calls *Allah* "فَاطَّرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ" or "وَالْأَرْضَ" (the One who has brought the Universe into existence from nothing). Only He can do it. Therefore, *Allah* and Man differ in their creative powers as Man can create **only** from matter already existing.

I propose to employ this approach later in this book to interpret 'verses of intention' – "لُو شاء", "مِن يشاء", "مَا يشاء", etc.

I must ask the reader to bear in mind one very important point in this regard. In the following chapters, when I use the expressions like 'the commonly accepted translation' or 'the current interpretation' etc., I don't mean what the masses believe in. Those translations and interpretations of the *Quran* have been authored by learned scholars. My reader may ask here, once again bewilderingly: 'How did learned scholars wrote what they did?

Let us ponder for a while on this.

We have seen that the very first Muslim history was complied by *Imam Tabri* in

Interpretations of the <i>Quran</i>	the fourth century (<i>hijra</i>). The very same <i>Tabri</i>
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is also the first ever interpreter of the *Quran*. He quotes traditions of the Messenger in support of his interpretation. This made it appear to be an interpretation by Mohammed himself. Under the circumstances, no Muslim dares differ with it! Therefore, the subsequent interpretations were based upon *Tabri*'s book. The differences, if any, were minor and even then on the basis of tradition. The translations of the *Quran* were bound to be influenced by these preceding interpretations.

Another Muslim attitude, handed down since generations, regarding their ancestors is that even a little bit of dissent is sinful. If the attitude towards tradition was that it has been simply attributed (subject to confirmation) to Mohammed, an

interpretation other than the tradition would have been possible. This was not to be. Consequently, deliberation in the *Quran* has been static for centuries. The *Quran* should be interpreted in its own light. That is precisely what I have tried to do. As to translation, as I have said in the foreword of this book, the *Quran* just cannot be translated into another language. Words exactly synonymous with the *Quranic* lexicon simply do not exist elsewhere. Therefore, I maintain that the *Quran* can be interpreted but NOT translated. A verbatim translation just does not explain the meanings of the *Quran*. In the chapters to follow, I have interpreted the *Quran* in the same way – an interpretation of the *Quran* supported by the *Quran*.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

THE LAW OF DIVINE WILL

The Arabic root ‘مشيئة’ - شَيْئَةٌ - يشاء - شاء - ي - ا - etc. is the source of words like ‘شاء’ etc. Traditionally, it is translated into Urdu as ‘to wish’. This inaccurate translation (and its interpretation) is the cause of so much confusion regarding the question of destiny. Let us first look carefully at it.

The Arabic word ‘مشيئة’ means to have an intention (to do something). Though some linguists take ‘مشيئة’ and ‘ارادة’ to be synonymous in meaning,

Intention & Will there is a semantic difference. ‘ارادة’ is to intend to do and

‘مشيئة’ is the realization of intention. Hence, ‘شيء’ (thing) is the resulting product of intention. Therefore, the two terms (مشيئة & ارادة) must be viewed with that difference regarding *Allah*, even though they are commonly taken to mean to want / to wish / to intend. For example, “(*Allah's*) His *amr* is that when He intends to do something He says to it, ‘Be’, and it is.” (36/82).

Chapter (2) of this book dealt in detail with the creation plan of *Allah*. It consists of two stages – ‘*amr*’ and ‘*khalq*’. About ‘*amr*’, I quote from my work *Lughaat-al-Quran*:

‘The process of CAUSE & EFFECT is a matter of common observation. But, the chain of events, if rolled back, has to stop somewhere (the initial starting point). There, the EFFECT had to be **without** a CAUSE. That is the moment of creation of the Universe by *Allah* – by His will and intention. Why did He do what He did? The question is unanswerable as it refers to a period not falling within our concepts of rules and laws.

(Root "ش ي ا", p. 789)

So, that is *Allah's amr*, where creation is done according to His own scheme and universal laws are established. Why does water have the characteristic of keeping its level? Why is fire hot? Why does poison kill? Simply because *Allah* wanted it so. We observe *Allah's will* (مشيئة) in the physical universe around us. Similarly, He has established laws (His مشيئة) for the social universe. These laws were given to Man through His messengers. Therefore, the *Quranic* use of “شاء - يشاء - شاء etc.” should be translated as: ‘whatever is His law or Will’ (مشيئة) and **not** as : ‘whatever He wants’. It should be: ‘Whatever He has already wanted’. This slight change in translation alleviates so much confusion and apparent contradiction. The preset chapter is an attempt to do just that.

I - لو شاء الله - If *Allah* Willed

This expression often appears in the *Quran* and is usually translated as: ‘If *Allah* wanted.....’ It should be translated as: ‘If *Allah* had formulated the Law like.....’. For instance, salt has a salty taste because *Allah* wanted it so and made it so. If He had formulated salt to be with a sweet taste, it would have been sweet. Can *Allah* change the taste of salt from salty to sweet? The answer to that is: **Yes, He can but He won’t**, because He has pledged **NOT** to make changes in laws He has established according to His will (مشيئة). Thus, in the expression concerned, the word “لَوْ” (if) means: ‘That will never happen’. *Sayyuty* writes in his ‘*Itteqan*’:

Ibn Abi Hatim, in the way of *Dhahaak*, reports from *Ibn Abbas*, who said:
‘wherever لَوْ appears in the *Quran*, it means that it will never occur’.
(*Itteqan*, Part I, 40th kind)

In *al-Melal wan-Nahal*, Imam *Ibn Hazan* supports this meaning, explaining it

Examples from the Quran elaborately. Here are some examples from the *Quran*:

i) *Allah’s* will (مشيئة) about the entire universe – inanimate matter, plants, animals etc. -- -, with the exception of Man, is that it functions slavishly according to the laws inherent in its makeup. This is known as ‘instinct’, referred to as ‘revelation’ (وحي) by the *Quran*. It is also referred to as ‘nature of things’ e.g., liquids keep their level, certain animals are herbivores while others are carnivores, and so on. All similar things behave in a similar fashion, everywhere and at all times.

Man, on the other hand, is different. There is no ‘human nature’ nor is he gifted with..... guidance for behavior. Social laws are given to Man externally through revelation with complete freedom of choice. That is why mankind is not naturally welded into ‘one nation’. People behave differently under the same circumstances.

A superficial look at the disharmony of the human race may give rise
Why were all people not created good? to the question: ‘Why did
Allah not create all men good and peace-loving?’

The *Quran’s* response to that query is the following. Of course, it was perfectly within His powers to create Man compelled like the rest of the creation. But, He did not will it so. He gave Man a free will. Therefore, any social system which denies men the right to exercise their free will - is anti-*Quranic*. The Messenger, much in the manner of a loving physician, desired people to accept Islam. But, *Allah* said, “Are you going to torture yourself over people not accepting the message? “ (26/3).

Sura Younis says: “ If *Allah* had willed so, all men on Earth would have become convinced (of the message but He did not will it so and gave Man the freedom of choice). Then, are you (the Messenger) going to push people to conviction (against their will)?” (10/99). “If We had wanted (all men to forcibly follow Our way), We would have provided guidance to each single person..... “ (33/13). People have complete freedom of choice to accept or reject the guidance to the right path (18/29). The aim is to develop human qualities and test the use of free will (5/48-49). Men can resolve their differences by willfully and freely choosing the right path. It will NOT be forced upon them (11/118-119). If compulsion was there, there would have been no dissenters or atheists (6/108, 6/138). In that case men would have been like stones or animals, NOT human!

Man has been created with free will. He can be made to go against his will by two methods. One is to threaten him physically. The other is to influence his psychology. Mysticism achieves this through ‘supernatural’ events (minor miracles). It was quite widespread at the advent of Islam. Therefore, the dissenters of Arabia used to press the Messenger to produce miracles in

Demand for Miracles in support of his message. *Allah* would reply through the Messenger, that He expects them to arrive at the truth by using their reasoning intellect, exercising their free will. It is not befitting *Allah* to grant the faculty of free will and then suspend it.

Sura Anaam refers to this thus: “They say why *Allah* does not give His **Allah's Reply** Messenger a miracle? Say (to them) *Allah* is perfectly capable to doing it but most of them don’t know (why He doesn’t)” (6/37). Mohammed was told that if he were to reach the inner-most depths of the earth or the loftiest heights of the sky and bring them a miracle, they will still not be (worthy of being termed) as ‘convinced’. That is, they may psychologically be forced into submission, but it will not be conviction (which comes through independent reasoning and free choice). So, don’t be like the ones who, out of ignorance, ask why *Allah* did not make all men good (6/35). Conviction springs from the bottom of one’s heart (6/36).

Elsewhere, the *Quran*, referring to this demand of miracles (13/27), talks about the Muslims who begin to think favorably of such use of miracles and says: “Tell them that if the *Quran* was to move mountains and shrink distances, or make the dead speak, even then they would not become ‘convinced’. *Allah* has set laws for everything (13/31). The law in this regard is that people who don’t use reasoning remain confused (10/150). Then said, (Do you now understand that) “If *Allah* wanted it so, He would have put the entire mankind on the right path (13/31).

- ii) All the killings and violence in the world make many of us wonder why *Allah* **Why all this violence and killing** Does not do something to stop the bloodshed. Incidentally, in the allegorical story of the creation of Man this was the eventuality feared by angels. In reply to this, *Sura Baqara* says that *Allah*, through His Messengers, sent guidance to mankind advising them against bloodshed. People would resume mutual killings and the Messengers were dead. “If *Allah* had willed it so, they would not have killed..... (2/253). *Allah* does not exercise compulsion on men. They are free to choose. That is why “some of them are convinced, some are not (2/53)”.

لو شاء الله (If *Allah* wanted) is widely taken to mean that *Allah* purposefully allows all the wrong-doing going on in the world. So, in a way, He wants the situation to be as it is. Granted that, with the advent of knowledge, not many believe in it any more, the ancient Muslim literature, that of mysticism in particular, supports this view. This view was the one presented by the atheists and dissenters at the time of the Messenger. They have been reported to say in *Sura An'aam*: “If God wanted it so, we or our ancestors would never have committed atheism ...” (6/149) - also: (16/35 and 43/20). *Sura Yasim* reports their response, when asked to help the poor, as: “Should we feed those (people) who would have been fed if *Allah* wanted it so?” (36/47).

Therefore, the *Quran* takes this view as that of the dissenters and polytheists - way of the ignorant.

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II - ما شاء الله - What Allah Wills

This expression is widely taken to mean that events occur according to *Allah's* will, no matter how hard we try to make things happen any other way. This view obviously is a result of the concept of compulsion. Let us now try to look at the *Quranic* view of this oft-used expression.

Examples from the Quran

(i) “*Sura Baqara* says: ‘Man can have no knowledge of things except for whatever (*Allah*) wills” (2/255). It should be taken as to mean that Man can obtain knowledge through laws already established by *Allah* (His will - مشيئة); even then his knowledge will be limited as compared to *Allah's*.

(ii) *Sura Kahaf* reports the allegory of two orchard owners. One of them had the right view of life while the other: “.. was unfair on himself” (18/35). He was a dissenter of *Allah* and His Law of Returns. The natural result was that his crops were all destroyed. The other man (convinced) said to him: You should have said, “All this occurs according to *Allah's* (natural) laws. Nobody, other than Him, has the power to do it” (18/39).

(iii) Please recall the following discussion from the chapter which dealt with Good and Evil.

Sura Younis reports: “O Messenger! The dissenters pester you tauntingly

Loss and Gain

to bring upon them the dreaded destruction. Tell them that it

not upto you (the messenger). Say: ‘I am not empowered (even) to hurt or benefit myself outside the bounds of laws established by *Allah*’ (10/49)., Also: “there is a law for everything. When the period of respite is over, the (destruction) comes right on time” (10/49).

Referring to the laws of ‘life and death’ for nations, *Sura Ar-Raad* says: Law of Respite “Every period of respite is under a law. People (s) are destroyed and survive according to *Allah's* laws (مشيئة). These laws were established according to the ‘Mother of Books’ He has, (He did it according to His own will (مشيئة)” (13/39).

(vi) Occasionally, there appears in the *Quran*, the phrase (اَلَا مَا شاء الله). For

But whatever *Allah* wills

Instance, in *Sura al-Aala*: ‘We have

given this *Quran* to you (O Messenger) in a way that you will not forget (any of) it – it well never happen! (87/6-7). The phrase اَلَا مَا شاء الله (except what *Allah* wills) should not be taken to mean: “you may forget of it only as much as *Allah* allows”. The Messenger was not to forget any of the revelation at all! (17/86). *Mufti Mohammed Abdu* writes in his *al-Manar*: “In the *Quran*, ‘exception to *Allah's* will مشيئة always means consistency and occurrence of event – i. e., the opposite of what has been said will never happen. اَلَا (except or but) in this phrase means that *Allah* will (مشيئة) won't be contrary to what has been said – He would have had it otherwise if He wanted it so. Therefore, the verses above (87/6-7) mean: “You will never be able to forget it”.

Supportive of this interpretation of the phrase in question are the verses from *sura Hood*, which talk about permanent occupancy of Paradise and Hell, saying: “They shall be in it till the universe is – except (this) what you Preserver wants ...” (11/109, 11/108), also: (6/120). It means that they will stay there according to the Law of *Allah’s* will (for ever).

Summarizing then, we can see that - ما شاء الله - doesn’t mean *Allah’s* will will be carried out no matter what Man does – the *Quran* has given free choice to men by saying اعملوا مَا شئتم (do whatever you wish). *Allah* exercised His will to formulate and establish laws. After that, Man is to exercise his own will to go against those laws if he so desires. However, Man should bear in mind the Law of Returns which oversees his actions (انه بما تعملون بصير 41/40). Man is free to choose his action but is not free to change the natural consequences of that action.

III - إن شاء الله - If *Allah* Wills

The phrase – traditionally translated as: If *Allah* so desires – is an everyday expression of our language (*Urdu* as well as *Arabic* speakers use it very frequently). Its significance may be seen in an imaginary conversation which follows:

- A: You’ll go there at 4 o’clock, won’t you?
 - B: *Insha Allah* (If *Allah* wills) it.
 - A: It is quite an important matter. Please don’t give me *Insha Allah*.
- Make me a firm promise that you will be there at 4 o’clock!

That shows that ‘*Insha Allah*’ is used in uncertain situations. Apparently, this usage of the term is ordinary, but, in reality, is not so. One can never be certain of one’s actions when one holds the view of Man’s inability to take action against *Allah’s* supposedly pre-decided chain of events in the human world. The resulting inconfidence has bred the habit of uttering the phrase *Insha Allah* with almost every action. So much so that the majority of Muslims, especially in the sub-continent, consider it a minor sin to omit it from one’s

The Airplane Disasters conversation. Pakistan International Airline used to

be considered quite a dependable service. By chance (really because of lack of technical application, mismanagement, etc.), it met with a few airplane accidents. During the course of investigation, the religious lobby of the country blamed the pilot’s omission of the phrase ‘*Insha Allah*’ when announcing the craft’s departure. The situation was addressed by inserting the phrase in the captain’s announcement. Still, accidents continued to happen!

The pre-fix - إن - is widely taken to mean ‘if’. But it has other uses which

Meanings of ‘In’ (إن) are, unfortunately, ignored in translating the *Quran*.

Grammatically, it is also used to mean ‘because’. *Sayyuti*, in his *Itteqan*, has presented several examples of it. Let me illustrate this with another imaginary conversation:

- A: Don’t bother with making tea. It will take quite sometime whereas I am rather in a hurry.

B: It won't take much time. I have put the kettle on. We'll have tea in ten minutes.

A: In ten minutes?

B: *Insha Allah!* (Of course. I have taken all steps needed to make tea. Nature will certainly work its laws (*Allah's will* - مشيئة) and we will definitely have tea in ten minutes. It just can't be otherwise!).

The change in meaning of إن , is so obvious! Now, it breeds confidence instead of uncertainty. According to Arabic lexicon, إن is also used to mean لـ (when). Sayyuti gives some very illustrative examples:

- i) *Sura Aal-e-Imran*: "Because you are convinced, you will (definitely) triumph (and be on top)" (3/138).
- ii) *Sura Fath*: "You will certainly enter the sacred mosque (*Kaaba in Makkah*) because you are convinced (and working according to *Allah's laws*)" (48/27).
- iii) *Sura Yousef*, referring to Messenger Yousef's (Joseph) parents and others arriving in Egypt, says: "(Yousef) said (to them) 'Enter Egypt. You will be in peace because it is all happening according to *Allah's will* - مشيئة'" (12/99).
- iv) When the father-in-law of *Moosa* (Moses), believed to be Messenger *Shoaib*, agreed with him a working contract, he said to *Moosa*: " Because I follow *Allah's way*, you will find me one of the righteous" (28/27); also: (18/69 and 37/102).
- v) In the battle of *Ahzaab*, the hypocrites had committed grave acts of betrayal against the Muslims. *Allah's law* regarding criminals is to forgive if the convicted show remorse and promise of improved behavior. Otherwise, they must be punished. In view of this, regarding the hypocrites, it was said: "The hypocrites are to be punished, according to *Allah's will*, or forgiven" (33/24).

Sura Luqman says: "And no one knows what one will do tomorrow" (31/34). This is because one can never be sure of EVERY THING - that is the

Don't say 'I'll definitely do (this or that) tomorrow'	unknown (غيب). We can predict (forecast) the exact moment of solar eclipse 100 years from
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now, but cannot tell the next landing spot of a common fly. That is why the *Quran* says: 'and don't say what you will definitely do tomorrow, except do whatever is required in that regard according to *Allah's will* (مشيئة)'. If you come across factors hitherto unknown to you, you won't succeed. So just do what you know is required. "Don't be frustrated if you fail. Retrace your steps and try to remember and see what you missed. You will be more sure of, and closer to, success" (18/23-24).

Let us now examine verses using 'In' إن , in the meaning of IF. It will be

'in' إن meaning IF	good to have a brief version of 'If <i>Allah</i> wanted so'
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(لو شاء الله) - i. e., If *Allah* so desired, He would have created poison without its lethal aspect (He did not want it so. Therefore he made poison with its characteristics it has). This is exactly what is meant in verses using 'In' in the meaning of IF:

- i) *Sura Yaseen* refers to the fact of such heavily-laden boats floating as easily as ducks. This is because He wanted it so. "If He didn't, they would sink" (36/43) similar is the case of winds helping sails (42/33).
- ii) Messenger *Nooh* (Noah) used to warn his people of the destructive consequences of their wrong ways. They would challenge him to bring upon them the dreaded calamity. He would reply: "That (calamity) will befall you according to *Allah's* will (His program - مشيئة)" (11/33).
- iii) *Allah* revealed the *Quran* in its entirety and has taken it upon Himself to safeguard it. Therefore, it is just un-thinkable that any part of the *Quran* may be lost. In this regard He says: "If we had so desired (according to Our program - مشيئة), We would have taken some it away" (17/86).

Also, He says to the Messenger: "If *Allah* had wanted so, He would have sealed your hear (so that the message would not enter it)" (42/24).

- iv) Allah created Man with the instruction: "For you there is temporary (upto a time) stay on Earth" (2/36). Man's stay on Earth, in his present form of life, the life of the Universe itself etc., are matter concerning *Allah's* program (مشيئة) Therefore, "If He so desires, O Man! He will remove you all and bring others (to replace you). And *Allah* has set laws to that effect: (4/133). See also: 14/19; 35/16).
- v) The same phrase 'If He so desired' (إن شاء الله) has been used in regards to rise and fall of nations - (6/139).

We have seen that the *Quran* says to men, 'Do whatever you like'. The

Don't desire but what *Allah* desires *Quran* says about itself: 'Be informed

that it (the *Quran*) is reminder (of truths forgotten). So, whoever so wishes may revive (them) – (80/11-12). But the *Quran* also contains verses like the following with traditionally current sense of translation):

- i) 'This is an advice. So, whoever wishes to have the path to his *Allah*. But you won't wish except what *Allah* wishes'. (76/29-30)
- ii) 'This is nothing but advice for (all) the worlds; for one among you who wishes to follow a straight path. And you don't want but what want *Allah*, the Sustainer of the worlds'. (81/27-29); also: (74/56)

Urdu Translation by: Shah Rafiuddin

Obviously, this mode of translation presents ridiculous interpretation because what it effectively means is: *Allah* gave Man a code of behavior (the *Quran*) giving him free choice to either adopt or reject it. Nevertheless, the situation is that Man does not really have a choice of his own since he is bound to make a decision which *Allah* wants him to.

This gives rise to the concept of a contradictory God. All the confusion results from the idea of Compulsion. Let us look closely at the phrase (ما تشاءون). The Arabic 'ما', although used for WHAT, is also used for NOT, which is precisely the case in these verses. (I have dealt with this grammatical point in my work on the *Quranic* lexicon, the

Lughaat-al-Quran). Therefore, (وَمَا تَشَاءُنَّ إِلَّا مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ) comes to mean: ‘and you (should) not wish but only what *Allah*’s (program - مشيئة) wishes’. In other words, it is better for Man to synchronize his desires with the cosmic and social design formulated and established by *Allah*, which, in a nutshell is this: ‘*Allah* doesn’t want his created people to deny the Truth. It will be in line with His wishes if you choose the right path. If you reject (the message) *Allah* is not affected by it (only you will be!) as each single one of you has to bear the consequences of your own individual actions. These consequences shall be manifested (in due time, according to, *Allah*’s laws - مشيئة - as His system keeps track of whatever you do. (39/7).

I am confident that very clear to the reader are the very different (almost opposite) meanings rendered to the verses in question. They transform a helplessly bonded creature into an intelligent, free-choosing creation!

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IV - من يشاء - (Whoever wishes)

The verses presented in support of their view by the Compulsionists are the ones with the phrase ‘من يشاء’ - translated as ‘whom (He) wishes. For instance: ‘He (*Allah*) misguides whom He wishes and guides whomever He wishes’ - (16/93); ‘He (*Allah*) forgives whomever He wishes and punishes whomever He wishes – ‘ (2/284); ‘He (*Allah*) gives means of living in plenty to whoever He wishes and measures it (in small measures) for whoever He wishes – ‘ (17/30).

Taken as that, these verses clash with the general and basic *Quranic* philosophy of (mis)guidance --- ‘Say (to them) the Truth is (here) from your Preserver, so accept whoever (among you) wants it or reject (if you so wish) –‘ (18/29). About punishment and forgiveness, a very frequent verse of the *Quran* is: ‘It is the result of their deeds’. The principle regarding means of living is: ‘There is nothing for Man except what he strives for – (53/39).

The contradiction renders meaningless the *Quran’s* claim of being a divine revelation because it has cited its consistency as evidence of its divine origin.

According to Arabic grammar, من يشاء can have two uses - ‘whoever

Two meanings wishes’ or ‘whomever He wishes’. For instance, 16/93

may be interpreted as either ‘*Allah* guides or misguides whomever He wishes’ or ‘whoever so wishes is guided or misguided’. Similarly, the other two examples cited above may be taken to have either *Allah* or Man as the subject of the sentence.

My stand is to take the interpretation which is consistent with other verses on the same topic as well as the overall philosophy of the *Quran*. The Law of Returns (every action of Man has a reaction, and therefore, a consequence) is the pivot of the *Quranic* ideology. Therefore, it is logical and sensible to take Man as the subject of the sentences in the verses in question.

An important verse from Sura An-Nahal Let me remind you of the previously quoted verse from *Sura An-Nahal*. The entire verse says (as traditionally

translated): ‘If *Allah* had so wanted, He would have made you all one nation but He misguides whomever He wants and guides whomever He wishes so that He inquires

from you about your deeds' (16/93)

Obviously, this translation / interpretation has intrinsic contradiction. The correct interpretation should be: 'If *Allah* has so wanted, He would have created Man as one group (like any animal species). But His plan (مشيئة) is different. He has given Man the freedom of choice. Therefore, Man may choose the right path, or the wrong one – he is completely free to make a choice. That is why *Allah* will eventually hold Man responsible for his actions'.

Some verses use the expression من يشاء (whomever We want) or Whomever *Allah* wants (whomever I want). In such cases, the subject of the sentence has to be *Allah*. For instance, *Sura Ana'am*: "We raise status according to Our wish (Our Plan) (مشيئة) (6/84). His program for raising status and position is: 'To everyone the status according to their deeds –' (46/19). Similar is the situation of the physical universe around Man. *Sura Rome*, for instance, says: 'Then He spreads them in the sky according to whatever is His wish (plan) (مشيئة) ' (30/48). The system of progeny in men is subject to similar physical Laws (*Allah's* plan) (مشيئة) (42/49-50).

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V- يفعل ما يشاء (He (*Allah*) does what He wants)

VI- يحكم ما يريد (He (*Allah*) ordains what He intends)

Please have another brief look on Chapter - 2 where I talk (and later repeat) about the two aspects of *Allah's* Plan of Creation. First is *amr* when He creates out of nothingness and establishes laws for the existence, growth and development of things. At this stage He exercises His absolute, limitless discretion – 'He creates whatever He wishes –' (42/49); 'He does whatever He intends - (24/14); 'No one can question Him over what He does –' (21/23), (5/1), 2/253). This aspect of creation (*amr*) has by no means come to an end Creation continues (35/1). The universe known to Man is just one tiny drop in the ocean of *Allah's* creation. Secondly, there is the creation (*khalq* - خلق) based upon matter already in existence. At this stage, 'He does whatever He wants'

According to His Plan (مشيئة) (يفعل ما يشاء) means that He does things

according to laws and plans already set by Him. For instance: (i) *Sura Ra'ad*: "Every action has a result in due time (set by *Allah's* law), so (things or nations) go out of existence when *Allah* ('s law) wishes it – " (13/38-39). (ii) *Sura Ibrahim*: "*Allah* has established (by His law) a firm system of life according to which the convinced survive here and in the hereafter; similarly, the transgressors go astray (and are destroyed); *Allah* does whatever He (by His law) wishes –" (14/27). (iii) *Sura Beni Israel* says that the physical universe yields its bounties to anyone who strives for them in the right way – "The Dissenters as well as the Convinced can progress if they work according to their Preserver's Law – His bounties are not denied to anyone. We want what We intend ---" (17/18-20). *Allah's* plan (wish / intention / program) (مشيئة) is to have the physical universe (here) open to everyone but restrict the hereafter to the righteous only (3/175). But it all happens according to laws (3/107). It is *Allah's* will that people bring hardship to themselves due to their own deeds (5/49). *Allah's* laws in the physical universe are naturally there while He has sent His guidance through Revelation to Man for his social life (22/16). (iv) The story of *Beni Israel* spans a wide part of the *Quran* as it illustrates *Allah's* laws regarding rise and fall of nations. *Sura Qasas* talks about the tyranny of the

Pharaohs reaching its peak and the rising of Moses against it. He educated Israelites to that purpose and took them out of bondage into Sinai for renaissance. The story of Israelites opens thus: “And We resolved to bestow Our favors on the people thus subjugated and wronged” (28/5). The resolve by *Allah* was realized not in the manner used in *amr*. Here, its manifestation required a practical

Allah's intention realized program to be followed by the Israelites. But,

when *Beni Israel*, failed to act accordingly, the promised land (5.21) was declared out of bounds for forty years (5/26). The banishment to wilderness was the end of the old and the birth of a new (next) fresher generation who very speedily seized the ‘promised’ land! Therefore, *Allah*’s resolve regarding the human social world is realized by humans.

(v) *Sura Haj*: Verse 22/8 is traditionally translated as: ‘One who is degraded by *Allah* cannot have respect. Surely, *Allah* does what He likes’. This clearly

Laws for Respect & Degradation means that there are no laws for one’s

respectability (in society or even in *Allah*’s eyes). But this is not true. See, for instance, a verse from *Sura Al-Fajr* where it says that when a person (or a nation) is degraded, he says: ‘My Preserver has degraded me (without good reason)! *Allah*’s reply to that blame is that degradation is brought upon one by one’s own deeds, e. g., ‘but because you did not respect (and cared for) the lonely (people) ... (89/16-17).

(vi) *Sura Haj*: “And We keep it (the fetus) in the wombs till a declared (fixed)

The Human Fetus’ period as We desire –“ (22/5). Obviously, ‘as we

desire doesn’t mean that *Allah* decides the duration of each fetus individually. The entire process is subject to natural biological laws. Therefore ‘as We desire (ما نشاء) means: according to (the law) which We have already willed (established).

Another incidence regarding human birth mentioned in the *Quran* may be

Zakariya’s Child relevantly interesting, i. e., the Messenger *Zakariya*

begetting *Yahya* (John). *Zakariya* was quite old and his wife was infertile and, naturally, did not expect to have children. Therefore, he was doubtfully surprised when given the news of a forthcoming son. *Allah*’s reply in verse 3/39 which is traditionally translated thus: “*Allah* does whatever He wills”. This does not mean that *Allah* arbitrarily decided to give *Zakariya* a child. It all happened under natural medical laws – he was still fertile and his wife’s deficiency was removed (21/90), so they had a child, perfectly according to natural laws.

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This brings us to a very interesting aspect of the topic under discussion.

Allah cannot be questioned over His decisions in the domain of *amr* (21/23). But, in the domain of *khalq*, the situation is different. *Allah* has promised Paradise to men if they follow the *Quranic* pattern of life ----- “This is your Preserver’s

Allah can be questioned Preserver’s promise which can be questioned”!

(25/16).

That, incidentally, is the *Quran's* image of *Allah* --- a creator who functions according to laws and is responsible for His actions. He is not a whimsical dictator. He is a law-abiding ruler. He rules by set laws not by

Concept of Allah in Imperial Islam	arbitrary decrees. Sadly, when Muslims
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abandoned the *Quran* [at the end of the period of ‘the righteous caliphate’ (the first four successors of the Messenger) around year 40 *Hijra*], their concept of *Allah* changed to one of an emperor. *Allah* became an absolutely tyrannical dictator ruling the universe and humans according to His moods. This concept of

Concept of Allah changed the Social System	<i>Allah</i> went very well with the idea of Compulsion. So, understandably, the Muslim kings found it
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to their advantage to support the idea of Compulsion, so much so that it came to be an article of faith. This illustrates how a human society is affected by its concept of God. It was very rightly said by *Comte*: ‘You Tell me about a group’s concept of God and I will tell you all about their civilization.

The *Quran* presents *Allah* in His true perspective. It also makes it clear that sovereignty is for *Allah* alone. This does away with imperialism, dictatorship, ecclesiastical leadership etc. This exclusion of all authority except *Allah*’s is the meaning of the well-known *Quranic* phrase “**لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ**” “There is not god except *Allah*!

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إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ - *Allah Control All Things*

This verse occurs frequently in the *Quran*. Traditionally, it is taken to mean that *Allah* does whatever He wants, whenever He wants. I have dealt, in Chapter 2, with the Arabic lexical root q - d- r- (قدر) and its derivatives.

Meaning of Qadeer	<i>Qadeer</i> means one who establishes measures and
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standards. Therefore, the phrase at the head of this section will mean: “*Allah* has set measures and standards to all things (according to which they function)! *Allah*’s control (measures and standards) extends over every thing. By dint of being bound by laws, measures and standards, the universe is discoverable, and hence controllable by Man (45/13). This divine control extends also to the social world of humans --- ‘(Mankind) benefits or suffers by its (own) deeds’ – (2/286). Just two verses before this, it says: ‘So one may get the protection of *Allah*, whoever so desires, or invites punishment, whoever so desires; and *Allah* is the Measurer of all things – (2/284).

Sure Aal-e-Imran: “*Allah* knows whatever is in your hearts and out. He knows everything in the expanses of the universe. He is the Measurer (standard-maker) of all things. Everyone shall face the results of their actions at the appointed time – (3/28-29); also : (5/40; 5/119-120).

Again, in *Sura Aal-e-Imran*, it says – ‘Those who take pride in being wrong, and expect undue praise, should know they cannot escape *Allah*’s law. The entire universe is His domain and He is the standard-maker of all things –‘ (3/187-188). It has been made even clearer in another place of the same *Sura*: The Muslims had to incur some losses in a battle (*Uhad*). Referring to it, the *Quran* says: “You said why it had happened to you. Tell them (O Messenger) it happened because of your own selves (doing something wrong) – *Allah* is the Measurer of all things –“ (3/169).

In *Sura Tauba*, the Convinced are told: “If you don’t take up arms in *Allah’s* way, you will get into big problems and *Allah* will replace you with other people; certainly, *Allah* is the standard-maker of all things!” (9/39). This point is elaborated elsewhere in the *Quran* when it refers to the Dissenters who are advised to learn a lesson from past peoples who were destroyed by their own deeds – Surely, *Allah* knows and controls (through measures and standards) all things – ((35/44).

At several places, the *Quran* has illustrated the Law of Returns through

Allegory of Agriculture the allegory of agriculture. Crops grow on fertile

land according to laws of nature. Barren land doesn’t produce anything even if it gets rain. Natural rule in agriculture is ‘you shall reap what you sow’. It applies to life and death of peoples: ‘So ponder upon the effects of *Allah’s* bounty (rain) which revives ‘dead’ land. The ‘dead’ (people) are revived in the same way – and He is the standard-maker of all things! -- (30/50; 18/45; 41/39). *Allah* has set measures for life and death here as well as in the hereafter.

Israelites – due entirely to their own misdeeds – fell into degrading slavery of Babylon for about a century. Their national revival and re-acquired freedom is narrated allegorically by the *Quran* and, then: “Surely, *Allah* has set standards to all things ---” (2/259).

The period of Respite fares very importantly regarding the Law of Returns. This period is set by *Allah’s* laws, e.g., a seed transforming into a fruit-bearing plant. The *Quran* illustrates this vital point in a very expressive way. The

The Messenger’s Wish Messenger (Mohammed) had the mission to

revolutionize mankind. He spent his life through back-breaking and frustrating struggles against all odds. Towards the twilight of his life he was naturally anxious about the result of his efforts. *Allah* responded thus: “Certainly, We can bring, what We promise, for you to see (but because everything happens according to set laws - Respite and Returns --), your responsibility is to spread (the message) and We have the responsibility of (its result according to set) calculations –“ (13/40).

The god who is not willing to alter His set ‘calculations’ even for His messenger cannot be imagined to ‘do whatever and whenever He likes (whimsically)’. The entire universe functions and operates by set ‘calculations’. Knowledge of these calculations has enabled Man to set foot on the Moon on

Interstellar Life his very probable way to interstellar travel and eventually,

meeting life out there. *Sura AshShura*: “Among His (great) signs is that He created the Earth and the planets and spread in both of them living creatures; and He will bring them together when He desires (according to standards and measures set by Him) –“ (43/39).

In verses 5 and 6 of *Sura Haj*, the phrase ‘certainly, *Allah* has control (through standards and measure) over all things – (إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ) – has been eloquently presented. I quote my interpretation of the two verses from my work *Mafhoomul Quran*:

Say to them: if you have doubts about the hereafter because you find the idea incredible, ponder for a while on the fact of your own being created from inorganic matter (primary life began in water and evolution has brought it to the point) where procreation is the means of progeny. The womb is

impregnated. Then the fetus becomes like a leech, eventually taking shape from a shapeless mass of flesh. The purpose of these stages is to realize the potential of semen. The fetus stays in womb for the time decided by Our plan (مشینہ), then you are born as a living human child (16/70). Some of you die young, others grow old, and infirm and childish once again.

Apart from the example of your own self, look around. Earth, for instance, is dry and lifeless before we pour rain on it and it suddenly comes alive, fertile and a treat for the eye.

All this proves that *Allah* does really exist and His law always works towards solid productive results. It can revive lifeless things, so it is not, difficult for it to resurrect the dead."

Mahfoomul- Quran pp. 751-752

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Allah has control (through standards) over all things! (22/6)

Summarizing then, these are the standards and measures set by *Allah*. The

Allah's Measures and Standards physical universe follows them

compulsively, but Man is free to make a choice of either adopting or rejecting them. But, he is not free to alter the natural consequences of his chosen actions. Considerably important is the point that the phrase in question - إن الله على كل شيء قدير - invariably uses the word 'things' (اشياء). Man appears to be excluded, making him free to choose his actions. *Allah* does not bind Man by His laws against his will. What he does is entirely Man's own decision.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

(Mis) Guidance

Sermons on the occasions of Friday's congressional prayer, the two *Eids* (end of *Ramadan*'s fasting month and *Al-Adha* to commemorate *Ibrahim*'s sacrifice on *Haj*, the annual pilgrimage to *Makkah*), the Muslim marriage, and others, often recite a verse which is traditionally translated thus:

‘Whoever is guided by *Allah* cannot go astray, and whoever is misguided by *Allah* cannot be guided by anyone –’.

In the light of this translation, please consider the following:

- (i) In the story of Fall of Man, *Allah* told mankind not to worry because:

Chain of Divine Guidance “Then I will keep sending guidance from Me.

Whoever follows My guidance shall have no fear or frustrated depression. And those who reject and deny My signs will be the people with permanent abode in hellfire – ‘(2/38-39).

- (ii) True to His promise, *Allah* started the chain of His messengers to all peoples of the world.
- (iii) The messengers of *Allah* would bring divine guidance through Revelation to mankind with (the option): ‘So whoever wishes can accept it, and whoever so desires, may reject it (18/29).

These clear verses stand in stark contrast to the interpretation mentioned above of the verse at the head of this chapter. Obviously, it necessitates a deep examination of the situation from the *Quranic* perspective.

First of all, 2/38 means that Man may discover the physical universe through

***Allah* alone is the source of guidance** Scientific study (observation and

experimentation) but laws for the social universe can only be obtained through divine guidance (Revelation). This fact has been highlighted at various places in the *Quran*:

- (i) *Sura Taha*: “Our Preserver is the One who has created all things, then guided them (to their destination)” - (20/50).
- (ii) *Sura Al-Aala*: “The One who created, then gave (all things their) balance, then set standards (for them), and then guided (them to those laws)” – (87/2-3).
- (iii) *Sura Al-Lail*: “Certainly, it is Our responsibility to guide” (92/12).
- (iv) *Sura Aal-e-Imran*: “Tell (them) the (only real) guidance is from *Allah*” – (3/72); also (2/120 and 6/71).

Furthermore, the physical universe intrinsically has the divine guidance but mankind must obtain it from without. The modus operandi was for *Allah* to hand His guidance through Revelation to His messengers who then passed it on to men --- ‘so that, after the messengers, men cannot blame *Allah*’ – (4/165); ‘Or people may not say “If *Allah* had guided us, we would have been law-abiding: “ – (13/7). A messenger’s responsibility was to ‘deliver whatever you have received from your Preserver’ (5/67). ‘Whatever received from the Preserver’ was the Book. The last and final Book of *Allah* is the *Quran* which is a guide for all humanity: ‘By this (book) *Allah* guides, whoever follows it, on to the right path and brings people out of darkness into light and guides them onto the straight, right way’ – (5/16). Thus the divine guidance would be delivered to men with: ‘So whoever is guided, does so for their own selves, and whoever decides to go the wrong way shall bear the consequences’ – (10/108); also (39/41).

This brings us, in brief, to the following

- i) *Allah* would hand over His guidance to His Messengers through Revelation.
- ii) The messengers would pass it on to men with the option of either accepting or rejecting it.

As to (i) above, a would-be messenger would be chosen unilaterally by

Messengers are chosen by <i>Allah</i>	<i>Allah</i> alone according to His plan of
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things (مشيئة). “And *Allah* would select, by His plan, whoever He wanted” --- (2/105); (3/73); “Only *Allah* knows who was to be His messenger” – (6/125). The would-be agent had no hand in, or even prior knowledge of, this duty (42/52). This position was bestowed, not earned (16/11).

Therefore, it is clear that divine guidance was revealed to men specially by *Allah*’s method of guiding men and exclusively chosen by *Allah*. A messenger could never get it from any other source --- “If my Preserver had not guided me, I would have been one of the misguided ones” - (6/78; 6/81). Ordinary men, too, should say, ‘We would never have found the right path if *Allah* hadn’t guided us; (because) “our Preserver’s messengers came with the Truth –“ (7/43). In other words, “Whoever is guided by *Allah* (through His revelation to His messengers) is on the right path –“ (7/178). The ‘right path’ is adopting His system contained in His book (the *Quran*) – *Sura Zumer*: “*Allah* sent down (to men) a book with the best of contents. That is His guidance (for) whoever wishes to be guided; and whoever is misguided (by his own choice) can never be guided (by anything or anyone else)!“ – (39/23).

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(1) People who can be guided

It has already been stated that, with the exception of Man, everything in the universe follows a pattern of existence pre-decided by *Allah*. Man has the option to follow the pattern of life suggested by *Allah* or reject it. This choice should be exercised in the light of knowledge and reason and adopted entirely independently of any physical, intellectual or psychological compulsion. This is called *Iman* (conviction). Acceptance of this Message through conviction (rational reasoning) is a pre-requisite for benefiting from it (obtaining guidance).

This code of guidance (the *Quran*) can thus lead mankind through life progressively – “Their Preserver guides them because of their conviction” (10/9). This fact is stated very early in the *Quran* (*Sura Baqara*): “This is the book which

**An objection to ‘هُدٰى لِلْمُتَقِّينَ’
(guidance for ‘The guided’)**

is free of all doubts (and anxieties). It has guidance for the ‘متقين’ (conventionally

translated as ‘the guided’). This has given rise to some confusion. It is objected that a ‘guided’ person doesn’t really need the guidance offered by the *Quran*. This dilemma stems from the conventional (non-*Quranic*) meaning of the term *muttaqi* (متقي).

People go through life broadly in two ways. Some have no specific

Meaning of *muttaqi* purpose of life in mind. With no ultimate goal, they are

driven by individual selfish interests based upon lowly emotions. They are not mindful of pitfalls in that path. On the other hand, there are those people who have a final destination of life set for themselves. They necessarily wish to avoid dangerous sharp turns to make their journey smooth and productive. Such are the men referred to as *muttaqeen*. Thus “هُدٰى لِلْمُتَقِّينَ” means a guidance for those who wish to avoid the dangers and pitfalls of the path of life. This has been reiterated several times in the *Quran*: *Sura Anaam*: “People who are convinced (by this message) and keep their conviction free of wrong (ideas and deeds) are guided” (by it) - (6/83); *Sura Tauba*: “Just following the conventional ‘good deeds’ of one’s society doesn’t bring guidance. It can be obtained by being convinced and following this message (the *Quran*)” - (9/19-20); *Sura Baqara*: “Allah’s Book guides by pointing out the right (correct) in case of disputes” - (2/213) - and also: “This book lits the dark path of life and leads the way- to safety” (2/257) – and again: “People who steadfastly face problems, can get guidance (from it)” – (2/157) - the *Quran* terms it as ‘holding on to the rope of Allah’ – (3/101, 3/102, 4/176). In other words, if one adheres to Allah’s laws against all odds, prosperity and progress open their arms – (4/65-68).

The *Quran* has summarized the above in *Sura Ankaboot*: “Those (people) who strive for Us get guided by Us and Our prosperous path” – (26/69); and also: “Allah increases (the facilities) for those who follow the right path --” (19/76).

(2) People who cannot be Guided

Allah created Man, set an ultimate destination of his life’s journey, guided him to the right path, complete with signposts. Someone who chooses not to read the signposts, or ignores them, cannot be expected to reach his destination. For instance: (i) *Sura Younis*: “Can you (O Messenger!) guide those who choose to

Those who walk blindly be blind and not see?” – (10/43). Elsewhere:

“O Messenger! You cannot make the dead listen (to you) nor those who play deaf; nor can you guide the blind. You can only deliver the message to those who are willing to be convinced and accept it” – (27/80-81); (30/52-53). Also: “One cannot talk to those who plug their ears shut” – (31/7). *Sura Faater*: “The blind and the sighted cannot be the same just as darkness and light are not; sunshine and shade are not the same as not are the dead and the living. O Messenger! You cannot talk to the dead in their graves. Only those will listen who want to” – (35/19-22).

(ii) *Sura Nahal*: “O Messenger! Despite your strong desire, how can *Allah* guide those who choose to go the wrong way?” – (16/37). Also: “How can *Allah* guide those who do not accept the truth of His message?” (16/104); “those who reject it and persuade others to do likewise” – (4/107).

(iii) As elaborated earlier, *Allah* has bestowed Man with various faculties and potentialities which are neither good nor evil in their essence. They are neutral till they

are put to use one way or the other. Human emotions are no different.

Those who follow their emotional drives Employed under *Allah's* guidance, they can work wonders; unbridled, they wreak havoc. *Sura Qasas*: “O Messenger! These people don't answer your call because they want to follow their lowly drives. Just imagine, who can be more misguided than the one who follows his drives without the guidance from *Allah*? The wrong-doers cannot benefit from the divine message” – (28/50); (30/29).

(vi) The majority of men go through life with unquestioning conformity. If the leader is on the wrong path, the led can never hope to find the right one. *Sura An'aam*

The Conformists warns against this conformist attitude of the misled masses

as it leads away from the path of *Allah* – (6/117; 6/20); (5/77).

(v) People who are selective, i. e., keep switching to and away from *Allah's* path

The Polytheists cannot hope to reach their destination. It is *shirk* in *Quranic*

terms and it leads to going far away from one's goal – (4/116).

Conviction, in practical terms, means adopting the Book of *Allah* in its

The Hypocrites totality. Being selective, or paying just lip service to *Allah's*

message also keeps one away from one's destination – (4/60).

(vi) One who is not really convinced of the validity of the Message but complacently pretends to join the convinced, all the while trying to break away, cannot reach the ultimate destination. Such people are hypocrites (منافق) - (4/142-143).

(vii) A transgressor (فاسق) is one who breaks the pattern of life required by

The Transgressors *Allah's* message and loses its protective and preservant

environment, much in the way of a decaying fruit. Such people – the transgressors (فاسقين) – cannot hope to be guided by *Allah* (5/108); (2/26); (9/24). *Sura Saff*: “When they transgress, *Allah* ('s Law of Returns) turns their hearts away; *Allah* doesn't guide transgressors” -- (61/5).

(viii) Success of any project depends upon doing everything properly and appropriately. If things are not where they ought to be, it is termed as *Zulm* –“*Allah*

The Unfair ('s law) doesn't guide the *Zaaleemeen* (the unfair)” –(2/258). This

is repeated frequently in the *Quran*.

Finally, here is the verse which very clearly says it all: “(Just think) How can *Allah* guide the people who reject His message after having accepted it? They had observed that the Messenger has brought the Truth very clearly; *Allah* doesn't guide the unfair people!” – (3/85).

It is important to note that the expression ‘How can *Allah* guide such people?’ does not refer to an eternally hopeless situation. As long as a group keeps on the wrong path, they cannot hope to arrive at their destination. But when they decide to look for, and choose, *Allah’s* path, their chances of success increase – (O Messenger) keep reminding them through the *Quran* that they are following a path of calamities (so that no one is doomed just because nobody invited them to the right path)” – (6/70).

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(3) *Allah* has sealed their hearts

ختم الله على قلوبهم

To understand verses such as the one above, one must be mindful of the following points:

(i) To benefit from *Allah’s* guidance, men must think with a cool, rational,

Receptive Mind unbiased and analytical mind. An unreceptive mind just

cannot hope to gain anything from *Allah’s* message – it is a practical impossibility.

(ii) ‘If you close your eyes, you are in the dark’. The *Quran* illustrates this in a variety of ways, some of which have already been mentioned. Consequences are natural results of Man’s own actions. *Allah* attributes them to Himself because they occur according to His Law of Returns. Let us now examine the verses containing such phrases as ‘*Allah* seals their hearts’.

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(i) Among the opening verses of *Sura Baqara* are (conventionally translated as): “It does not matter to the Rejecters whether you (O Messenger) warn them or not. They will never accept (the Message). *Allah* has sealed their hearts and ears and covered their eyes. They are in for a big punishment” – (2/6-7). Obviously, such a translation is as confusing as ‘a guide for the guided’. It naturally leads to the dilemma. If the non-Muslims are not going to accept the Message, why bother? Moreover, it is all done by *Allah*, so why punish them? The *Quran* is free of such conflicts because:

i. a: People who wish to embark on a safe journey to life’s destination may, and do, get to the heart of this divine guidance and, therefore, are successful --- (2/2-5).

i. b: But those who resolve not to listen to, or care about the Message, cannot benefit from it. They close their eyes and ‘ignore the Right Book in favor of wrong books’ (2/18); they (play and) become dumb, deaf and blind and just don’t heed the calls for a return to the right path – (2/16); they are like sheep, mindlessly following the one in the front. They reject suggestions to apply reason and logic to review their stance with: ‘but we will follow the path on which we found our ancestors (even if they were wrong!)’ (2/170).

They are just like sheep ignoring their shepherd – “dumb, deaf, blind and mindless” – (2/171). Such are the ones whose hearts get sealed – “They don’t listen to your invitation to guidance; you can see them staring at you but they are not looking!” -- (7/198); “It is the same to such people if you call them or say nothing!” (7/193).

(ii) “These people stubbornly stick to their decision of rejecting the Message” (10/74); “that is how We seal the hearts of such people” (10/74); “they boast about their ‘draped

hearts' but, actually, *Allah* has sealed their hearts because of their mentality of rejection" (40/155).

(iii) Then there are those who reject the Message without any reasoning – that is how *Allah* seals the hearts of the arrogantly stubborn (40/35). They sit to hear the Messenger absent-mindedly and later have to ask other attendees as to what the Messenger was saying. "Such are the people whose hearts are sealed by *Allah* because they follow their own selfish drives" (47/16). They arrogantly make fun of the warnings of the Messenger dismissing his call as 'nothing but stories from the past --- "they are the ones whose hearts get wrapped (in ignorance) and their ears plugged shut" (6/25). They very rudely dismiss the call of the Messenger with: "Our hearts are draped and our ears plugged shut, so your call doesn't get through to us; there is a barrier between you and us; therefore, you do what you have to do while we do what we have to" (41/5), "don't you worry about us!" Such are the people whose hearts get draped and their ears close shut" (14/57). They not only reject the Message themselves but also try to dissuade others, too: "That is how *Allah* seals the hearts of those who do not know!" (30/58-59). "Thus *Allah* seals the hearts of those who do not employ knowledge and reason – an invisible barrier is put up between such people and the *Quran*! (17/45-46).

(iv) Then there are those who pay lip-service to the cause of the Message but have not intention of really committing themselves. The *Quran* refers to them as

The Hypocrites - مُنَافِقُونَ (the hypocrites). *Sura Tauba* refers to their evading

tactics to avoid having to enter a battlefield in the service of *Allah* – these are ones who have "Their hearts sealed by *Allah* because they don't know (the Truth)" – (9/93; 9/86-87; 47/20-23).

It is important to note that these *Quranic* pronouncements are by no means restricted in time. Of course, they refer to the hypocrites at the time but they contain eternal truths. People who just say that they accept the Message, but don't really do it from the bottom of their hearts, are not *Momin* (convinced): "Have you noticed the one who chooses as his god his own lowly drives? He goes astray despite having knowledge (and reason). (Consequently,) *Allah* seals his ears and heart, and covers his eyes closed. He can't find guidance anywhere but with *Allah*" – (45/23). "Say, who can guide the one who thus rejects *Allah*'s guidance? Such people ignore their future for short-term benefits, which blind them. That's how their ears and hearts are sealed" – (16/106-108).

(v) *Sura Younis* – verse (36/7-10) are conventionally translated thus:

"*Allah*'s work has come true for many of them. They will never accept the Call. We have put high collars (of slavery) on them so that their chins are forced up. We have put up barriers in front of, as well as behind, them. We have blinded them by putting a drape over them. Therefore, it doesn't matter to them whether you warn them or not. They will never accept (the Message).

We have already discussed this verse except the opening part (لَدُّهُ حَقٌّ... لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ)

which is said to confound readers because it supports the concept of pre-destiny

***Allah*'s Word Comes True** ('they will never accept the Message'). The

confusion arises from the basically erroneous concept of compulsion. The words '*Allah*'s word has come true' should be interpreted as: *Allah*'s law is that Truth does not reveal

itself to those who do not employ knowledge and reason to look for it. That is why these people will not accept the Message. “Confusion comes to the ones who do not use their intellect” – (10/100). Their condition proves that *Allah’s* law (word) is true. “Surely, warnings can benefit only the one who follows *Allah’s* advice and is afraid (watchful) of the hitherto unrealized consequences of (man’s wrong action which result according to the Law of Returns of) *Allah*” – (36/11).

Sura A’raaf: (Conventionally translated) “And We have created a lot of *Jinns* (1) and Men for Hell! Supports the concept of pre-destiny? No. The rest of the

Created for Hell verse clears the confusion: “They possess hearts but don’t

use them for thinking, they have eyes but don’t use them to look, they have ears but don’t use them to hear. They are the ones who are like animals, nay, even worse – they are ignorant (and non-caring about the purpose of life) “ – (7/179).

Elsewhere in the *Quran*: When such people enter Hell, the overseer will inquire as to their crimes. They will respond: “If only we had listened (to *Allah’s* messengers) or used our brains, we wouldn’t have been among the people of Hell!” – (67/10).

Sura Mohammed: “Don’t they ponder over the *Quran*? Have their hearts locked themselves shut?” – (47/24). Please note the very important suffix - لـ - (of them) with the word - افـ - (locks) in this verse. It very clearly shows that men seal

Their Hearts Lock Themselves their own hearts shut to calls of reason.

(1) ‘*Jinn*’ refers to rural people of the desert.

For details, please see my work *Iblees-o-Adam*
or *Lughaat-al-Quran*.

Elsewhere, the same idea is put in other words: “When they went crooked, *Allah* crooked their hearts” (His law of Returns did it) – (61/5; 51/9; 9/127).

Finally, let me quote a verse from *Sura Al-Tatfeef* which clarifies the phrase “*Allah* has sealed their hearts” beyond any shadow of a doubt. It says:

Men’s own deeds act as result “No, it’s not like that! But (the reality is that)

their hearts get rusted because of their own deeds! (83/14).

(4) - **Whoever So wishes, accept and whoever so wishes, reject**

The human privilege of ‘freedom of choice’ has been previously dealt with in detail. Nonetheless, it is important to have a special brief recap of the *Quran’s* stance on (mis) Guidance:

One of the basic principles of the *Quranic* system is: “there is no compulsion in the matter of ‘ad-Deen’ (adopting a philosophy of life) as guidance has been shown very

clearly apart from mis-guidance. So, whoever rejects all else, and accepts *Allah's* way, will be adhering to a strong support which will never fail him” (2/256).

Man's freedom of choice is not curbed even by *Allah* himself. The Messenger used to worry about the future of the people and anxiously wanted them to accept. He was told by *Allah* that He would have created Man bound to natural law like the rest of the universe. But, it was not His plan (مشيئة). So, people cannot be forced into conviction. It is entirely upto them to accept or reject the Message (10/99). “Tell them that your Preserver has sent down the Truth to you. Whoever chooses the right path, shall benefit; whoever chooses the wrong path, shall bear its consequences. You have not been appointed a foreman over them to force them into submission!” (10/108). Every convinced person (مؤمن) should be aware of this fact (that *Allah* would have created men to willy-nilly follow His path of if it was His plan (مشيئة) – (11/118; 13/31; 16/9; 16/93; 32/13; 42/13). Even the Messenger's genuine desire for someone to accept the Message doesn't change the principle of free choice --- (28/56). *Allah* has given Man free will. Therefore, the Messenger should deliver the Message to people and say: “Whoever so wishes, accept; whoever so wishes, reject” – (18/29). “We created Man, gave him listening and sight, and showed him the way. Now, it is upto men to accept or reject it” – (76/3). “The *Quran* is a reminder. So, whoever wishes to, may recall (the Truth through it)” – (80/11-12). “We have showed him both the (good and bad) ways. So, whoever so wishes, should take his Preserver's way” – (73/19; also: 25/57).

Allah gave Man eyes and provided light (the *Quran*) to see very clearly both the (right and wrong) paths --- “Whoever looks, will have benefits for his own self; whoever (chooses to) be blind, will bear the consequences of that action ---“ (6/105). “And no one shall carry someone's load – “ (17/15). “No one shall carry someone else's load; whoever takes the right path, shall have no fear or frustration ---“ (2/38; 20/123). “If you are on the right course, the wrong-doer won't be able to hurt you. They will only hurt themselves ---“ (5/105).

The polytheist assert that they are what they are due to *Allah's* will was responded by: “*Allah* does not misguide anyone” – (6/149, 150); 16/35,36; 43/20). “They misguide themselves” – (6/141). The fact is that just as *Allah* doesn't misguide anyone, He doesn't force anyone onto the right course against their will (16/37).

Allah doesn't but religious leaders do misguide people as they are themselves misguided” – (5/77; 6/145). “Thus the misguided become a group

The Clergy supporting each other's wrong views” (7/202). “In this way, their leader lead them to an undesirable place - Hell” (14/28, 29).

Therefore, it is Man who does it. *Allah* doesn't force the right or the wrong on anyone. It is entirely Man's own free choice (من شاء). (18/29)

من يشاء - Whoever Wants or

Whomever He wants

We have already discussed (من يشاء) in its general sense. Let us now examine it in the specific sense of (mis) guidance. The discussion so far has established that:

- (i) (Mis) guidance depends entirely on Man's free will;
- (ii) The right path (*Allah's way*) can be taken by using knowledge and reason.

Now, consider the relevant *Quranic* verses.

Sura Baqara: Originally, mankind was one fraternity. Later, differences and clashes occurred among them. *Allah* sent down His guidance through His messengers, so “*Allah* guides onto the right path the one who so desires” – (2/213). The messengers were responsible for delivering the message (5/99; 3/19), not forcing men onto the right path -- “It is not your duty to put him on the right path. *Allah* guides only the one who so wishes” – (2/273 & 28/56). “*Allah* calls to the land of safety. So, whoever so desires is guided onto the right path” --- (10/25). This call was made by the messengers (14/4), on the basis of clear laws and principles revealed to them for the guidance of anyone who wanted it (22/16). This message of *Allah* has been called ‘*noor*’ (light) in (24/35, 24/40 and 24/60). *Sura Zumr* refers to it as ‘the book sent down by *Allah*’ (39/23). *Sura Faater* talks about the inequality between the blind and the sighted, the dead and the living, light and darkness, and sunshine and shade, and then --- “O Messenger! You can't make the ‘dead’ hear you. *Allah* makes listening only for those who want to” – (35/19-22). “Whoever wishes to listen” means: “He guides to Him (only) the one who turns to Him” – (13/27). Contrarily, one who does not want to cannot benefit from *Allah's* guidance.

That, therefore, is *Allah's* plan (مشيئۃ) for (mis) guidance. *Sura An'aam*: “And those who deny Our laws are (like) deaf and dumb in the dark. Whoever so desires, *Allah* misguides him; and the one who so wishes, finds himself on the right path” --- (6/39). *Sura Ibrahim* explains the right and the wrong concepts of life by the example of good and bad trees; people who accept the right concept of life get benefits here and in the hereafter; “the unfair are misguided (according to *Allah's* law); He does whatever He wishes (His discretion in formulating laws is unquestionable) – “ (14/27).

Sura Faater talks about those who view their wrong deeds as right and wish to adhere to their erroneous, self-deceptive ways. Such people cannot gain access to guidance, success and prosperity. *Allah* said to the Messenger: “Don't torture yourself with woe over their plight. *Allah* ('s law) is aware of their (erroneous) deeds” – (35/8).

As pointed out earlier in this book, on the advent of Islam, some suggested using miracles to convince the dissenters. The *Quran* responded by saying that it was not *Allah's* plan. *Allah* wants people to accept the Message of their own free will by employing knowledge and reason – “No one shall be convinced until it is according to *Allah's* wish (plan), and (sadly) so many of the people are ignorant” – (6/112).

Sura Mudasser announces that success and prosperity come to those who accept the Message from the bottom of their hearts. A confused, half-hearted acceptance does not guarantee on the guidance the right path – “in this way, *Allah's* plan misleads whoever so wishes and guides whoever so desires” – (74/31).

That is the interpretation of verses like (7/155): “O *Allah*! You misguide or guide according to your Message – “ (7/155).

Sura Shoura said to the Messenger: You have been appointed messenger without your wanting it or working for it; you guide people (by this message) on to the right path; but your brief is just to guide, not force people into it; “We guide by this message those among our creatures (men) who wish to be guided” – (42/32).

Finally, I present from *Sura Nahal* a verse which is the final word on the matter. “If *Allah* had so desired, He would have created all of you as one group; but He misleads or guides whoever wishes so --- and surely you will be held responsible for your deeds!” – (16/93). Obviously, Man has the freedom of choice; hence his accountability. This is precisely the argument presented by *Iblees* when he denied his responsibility for disobedience: “You (*Allah*) have misguided me!” – (7/16; 15/39). That is the stance of Devil not Man!

A Review

Hopefully, I have by now doubtlessly established my view on the matter: It is erroneous to take the position that *Allah* (mis) guides people at will and whimsically. Therefore, one must not take a *Quranic* verse in isolation to study it. The *Quran* should be studied under topics --- keeping in view all the verses dealing with a certain subject and interpreting **not** translating them in the light of the overall message of the Book. Let me briefly remind the reader once again that: wherever the *Quran*, in regards to human social system, mentions *Allah* the doer, it really mean that occurrences take place according to His laws and plan. (مشينة) For instance, have another look at some verses:

- (i) *Sura Beni Israel*: (17/97-98)

Conventional Translation: “Only he can be guided whom *Allah* guides; one who is misled by *Allah* has not hope but He; On the Judgment Day, We shall raise him face down, deaf, dumb and blind. Hell will be the abode for such people. That is their lot because they denied Our signs.

Suggested Interpretation: Whoever accepts the validity of *Allah*’s laws is guided; whoever refuses to accept them just cannot find the right path (because guidance to the right path is available nowhere else). Such arrogant and ignorant decisions keep men misguided and hence in a state of hell.

Also see verses (7/178; 18/7 and 39/37) in this regard.

In the *Quran*, we come across “*Allah*’s Most Beautiful Names” (الأسماء الحسنی). These are attributes of *Allah* mentioned in the Book. My reader may have come across the well-known practice of displaying 99 names of *Allah*. One of those is *Al-Muddil* (the Misleader). The *Quran* has not used this particular name. It appears

Al-Muddil - one of Allah's Names to have been derived from verses

containing expressions like (يضل) (He misleads). We have discussed the interpretation of such verses. In view of that, my personal opinion is that *Allah* must not be called (المضل) (the Misleader). He is (الهادي) the Guide. The two attributes are contradictory to each other. The *Quran* uses the term for Devil. *Sura Qasas* records the event when Moses punched a Copt dead, and said: ‘This is Devil’s doing. Surely, he is (Man’s) adversary and clear misleader – (28/15).

Also: ‘The Devil wants to mislead them (people) far away (from the right path) – (4/60).

Similarly, some others of the traditional 99 names of *Allah* should be scraped from the list, e.g., (المذل) (the Degrader) and (الضار) (the Harmer - one who harms).

(ii) *Sura Al-An'aam:* (6/39)

Conventional Translation (of a part of the verse) is: “*Allah* mis-leads whomever He desires, and guides whomever He wishes onto the right path”.

Suggested Interpretation: ‘(Mis) Guidance occurs according to *Allah’s* law and plan (مشيئة). It is men’s choice to adopt the right or the wrong path’.

The plan (مشيئة) is mentioned in the earlier part of the verse: “Those who deny our Message remain (in the dark because they choose to be) deaf and dumb”.

(iii) *Sura Ar-Rome:* (30/29)

Conventional Translation: “Who can guide the one misled by *Allah*?

Suggested Interpretation: (The earlier part of the verse explains it) “These unfair (people) so ignorantly keep following their own animalistic drives. Now, who can guide such people?

(vi) *Sura Tauba:* “It is not befitting for *Allah* to mislead people after having sent them His guidance for a watchful life” (9/115)

(v) *Sura An'aam:* (6/126)

Conventional Translation: “When *Allah* intends to guide someone He opens his heart for Islam; when He decides to mislead someone, He squeezes his heart narrow as if he was having a steep rise into the skies”

Suggested Interpretation: The verse before this one refers to those who keep finding fault with the Message; they get a consequential heavy punishment. This follows by the verse above (7/126) which goes on to say: “That is how Truth is not revealed to those who do not accept the Message.

Sura An-Nahal talks about someone who accepts the Message and later returns to (كفر) a state of denial and is punished for it. Please note that this does not apply to someone who accepts Islam sincerely and is forced into an act of denial. This is about one who “opens heart for denial” – (16/106).

Therefore, Man alone opens his heart for Islam or Kufr. If he accepts Islam, he benefits. Otherwise, he is in a loss. “That is guidance of *Allah* by this Message for whoever so wishes; and one who is misled (by *Allah’s* law & plan) cannot get guidance --- “ (39/22-23)/

“One who wants to remain misled is not (forcibly) guided by *Allah* ---“ (16/37) and:

“Those who struggle and strive for Us, We guide them to our ways – “ (29/69). This is the established system of the *Quran*.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

DOES ALLAH CONTROL WEALTH?

The idea that *Allah* directly controls the distribution of wealth is the most damaging, of all generated by the concept of Compulsion. It is believed that : *Allah* makes individuals (as well as peoples) rich or poor at His own sweet will. The poor must not feel jealous of the rich. To desire to acquire somebody else's wealth tantamounts to complaining against *Allah*'s decision. That is dissent.

In Praise of Poverty

One must be content with whatever state *Allah* keeps

one in. To unflinchingly accept *Allah*'s will is the way of His chosen people. Contentment is an invaluable asset. *Allah* likes penury. The worldly wealth is like dead meat and only dogs desire it. It may be possible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle but not for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Messengers of *Allah*, saints, exalted men, were all poor. The Messenger of *Allah* (Mohammed) says: " Poverty is my pride ". Elsewhere, he says: "Islam originally flourished among the poor and so it shall in the end ". *Baba Fareed Ganjshakar* (a saintly figure of yesteryears' sub-continent), when complained to, of poverty, by one of his followers, took him to a pond of water. Lambs who had sated themselves with water were having a deep snoring sleep, whereas the thirsty ones were desperately trying to get water. The saint told the follower: "Do you see, son, the difference of wealth and poverty? The wealthy become careless of *Allah* but the poor keep in constant touch with Him. "

Such are the anecdotes popularized by the religious to lull the poor to sleep so that they remain oblivious of all the exploitation committed against them by the rich. The entire concept is anti-Quranic, but it is said to be supported by the Quran! Let us see what Quran really says in this regard.

The Arabic word *rizq* (رِزْقٌ) refers to means of livelihood (necessities of life). In addition to *rizq*, the Quran has used terms like *fadl* and *ma'ash*.

The position of *rizq* is the same as that of guidance, treated in detail in the previous chapter. That is, *Allah* has said that: "We have sent you (men) on Earth which is well supplied by the means of your livelihood. Heat, light, air, water and food were all here even before your arrival ("We give your sustenance"). But just like our guidance, you need to work to obtain the necessities of your life. We have formulated certain laws about that, too. Whoever strives accordingly, shall get wealth. Birth of a human child is simultaneous to production of milk in the mother' breasts, but, if the mother abandons the child, it will die of hunger – We do NOT feed him even a single drop! Just look at Our system. Initially, mother's milk is more watery than fatty to suit the infant's digestive capabilities. Gradually, however, mother's milk becomes more fatty until the time comes when the child has teeth and is able to digest other food. Mother's breasts go dry. Now, parents have to work to get food for the child.

So much for '*rizq*' given by *Allah*' on the individual level. On the group-level, the situation is not very different. Our planet, Earth, contains wealth in

Distribution of Wealth raw form. Man has to find and retrieve it. This takes

place under natural laws (formulated by *Allah*). In the first instance, personal work is required. Later, the question arises of distributing the wealth so obtained in a social context. This is where the situation gets complicated. It is here that Man needs *Allah*'s guidance. If *rizq* is distributed in the light of *Allah*'s guidance (the System of Providence), every individual gets sustenance peacefully and with self-respect. Otherwise (if *rizq* is distributed under a man-made system), society becomes a living Hell (as is the current situation of the globe). Let us see what the Quran says about it all.

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1. '*Allah* Gives you Sustenance'

Allah says in the Quran: "There is none among the living on Earth whose sustenance is not upon *Allah* --- " (11/6); elsewhere, Man and other creatures

Responsibility of Providing Sustenance are mentioned separately (29/60);

Sura Rome: "*Allah* is the one who creates you all and then provides you sustenance -- " (30/40); *Sura An'aam*: "We sustain you and your off-springs -- " (6/152, 17/31).

This provision of sustenance by *Allah* is not done directly by Him because not only other creatures but also men die by the million in a famine. The current distribution and availability of food to Mankind on this planet is a living contradiction of the view that *Allah* carries out this responsibility directly. It really means that He has created the means of wealth -- "We put you in place on the

Natural System of Food Production Earth and for you made in it means of

sustenance " (7/10; 15/20). Earth has been given the potential of producing food. He sends down rain which helps to produce food -- "*Allah* is the one who created the skies and the Earth, and sends down from the sky rain and so brings out from it a variety of sustenance for you -- " (14/32); "He provides sustenance for you from the sky and the Earth -- " (35/3); also: (2/22, 10/31, 27/64, 34/36, 40/13, 45/5, 50/11, 51/22, 80/25-32); "Who can provide you food if *Allah* turns these sources of sustenance off? " (67/21, 63/30, 56/63-73); "The Earth has an infinite potential of yielding food, but at a given time, only a finite amount may be obtained -- "And We have stores of every thing but We don't send those down (bring out of the Earth) except according to known measure - - " (15/21). The term 'known measure' (قدر معلوم) clearly refers to established ways and means (natural laws) open to Man's discovery and application. Elsewhere in the Quran, it is referred to as of His plan (ما يشاء); "the reason for restricted yield of food is to check greedy oppressors among men" (42/27).

Having seen the 'known measure', let us move one step further

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2. Conditions for Obtaining Sustenance

The equation of natural resources and human effort to obtain sustenance has very eloquently been presented in *Sura Waaqea*:

“Consider your contribution against Our laws in agriculture. You plow a field and sow seeds. Who produces crops from seeds, you or We?

Who looks after crops? A calamity may fall and destroy a crop, leaving you shocked and sympathizing with your fellows and agonizing over the comprehensive loss of not only crops but also of seeds and hard work!

Consider water which is essential not only for crops but also for your own existence. Do you bring it down from clouds or do We? Clouds are formed from salty sea-water which is unusable for either farming or your own consumption. What could you do if rain-water was as salty? Why can't you arrive at the right conclusion in such a clear and simple matter? Why can't you appreciate *Allah's* systems?

Consider fire which you use in so many ways. Who has caged heat (in firewood) in that manner? You or We?

We have created all this (you only provide work). We state these facts to remind you of that forgotten truth that We have put all this, in place so that the needy get sustenance.“

(56/63-73) - from *MafhoomulQuran*

In the early part of mankind's life, food comprised mainly of the hunted animals and general natural produce of the earth. Then came the era of human handiwork. But, manufacture depends on raw material obtained from the earth. Therefore, the earth is the primary source of all sustenance (wealth).

The early period of human civilization saw the Barter System as the established way of trading. Later, coins were invented whereby precious metals (gold, silver) were used to buy necessities of life. Thus wealth (money) acquired purchasing power which started a series of complications of ever-increasing complicity. From then on 'Obtaining Sustenance' was taken to mean money /

Wealth included in *rizq* wealth as well as 'obtaining food'. So much so

that in the present age, obtaining sustenance from the earth has become secondary to earning wealth. Money is the measure of richness and poverty as well as the reward of labor. The 'potential of earning' (making money) means human intelligence, knowledge, experience, ability to understand and use the economic and monetary system, and least of all, work. Work is not always a factor!

The Quran declares desire and work as fundamental to obtaining *rizq*. It is termed as "ابتعاء فضل الله" : the search for divinely-gifted sustenance. The Quran cites the revolutionary movement of Earth to create day and night as one of His signs; they

Search for Sustenance have been made bright “so that you can search your

Preserver's bounty (*rizq*) “. (17/12) Incidentally, the expression - ابتعاء - refers to search as well as intention (plan), effort and achievement. With regards to search for sustenance, a special mention is made of boats which were the best means of transportation at the time. Sea-vessels are quite important even today. “You see the boats sailing briskly in sea so that you can search His bounty --- “ (16.14); also: (30/46; 35/12; 45/12). This search for sustenance is necessary for the convinced and the dissenters alike. Hence, one of the characteristics of the Messenger and his group is that “They search *Allah's* bounty

(and His approval) “ --- (48/29; 73/20). It even becomes obligatory for the convinced: “When you have finished *as-Sala*, spread in the earth and search *Allah*’s bounty -- “ (62/10).

As a result of this effort, sustenance will come according to natural laws, which make no distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim. Whoever farms under the right agricultural laws shall reap a good harvest. The Quran explains it

No distinction all: “Whoever wants to have short term benefits gets them

according to Our plan established by Our will; and whoever desires and strives for long-term benefits as well, and is also convinced of Our message, gets his efforts produce results; We bestow from your Preserver’s bounty, according to everyone’s effort; your Preserver’s bounty is not forbidden (or restricted) to anyone -- “ (17/18-20). *Sura Shora* reiterates this fact thus: “Whoever wishes benefits of future gets his crop yield more by Us; and We give, according to one’s effort, short-term benefits to the one who so desires, but they don’t get anything in future (42/20). That, then, is the Divine Law (Plan - مُتَبَّثَةٌ) governing the distribution of *rizq*: “Whoever (individual or group) ignores Our laws shall have

Ignoring Natural Laws Results in Food Shortages (or its) sustenance restricted -- “ (20/124), and then goes on to say: “and We will have him (or

them) raise blind on the Day of Judgment“. It is clear, therefore, that *rizq* gets available to anyone who works according to natural laws. This is the principle sent to mankind through each and every messenger of *Allah*. The Quran says about the Jews and the Christians of the time that: “If they had kept to the Tora and the Bible, and whatever *Allah* has sent down, they would have had plenty of *rizq* (from ‘up and down’) -- “ (5/66; 7/96) Such abundance of *rizq* is termed as *Allah*’s favor and bounty. It was said about the tribe Quresh that they should accept & follow the system of the Preserver of *Kaaba* who ‘gave them food to satisfy hunger and protected them from fear“ (106/4). Contrary to this, hunger and fear have been called *Allah*’s punishment.

Hunger is *Allah*’s Punishment *Sura Nahal* says:

“*Allah* explains it with the example of a township. It was in peace and contentment. ‘*Rizq*’ came to them in plenty from all four directions. They denied and rejected these bounties of *Allah*. So, *Allah* had them taste the calamities of hunger and fear. It was all due to their own deeds! (16/112).

Similarly, it talks about the people of *Saba*. They were prosperous but ignored to take proper care of their crops and orchids. So, they were all destroyed (34/15-16).

Then the Quran goes on to say that when men face shortage of sustenance, they blame *Allah* for afflicting them without cause. It is said, “Tell them that *Allah* doesn’t degrade anyone without due reason. It is all because of Man’s own wrong system and errors of deeds. You did not accord due respect to the lonely of society; you did not arrange to feed the hungry and were greedy. That is why you were destroyed-- “89/16-20). Since hunger and degradation are *Allah*’s punishment, one characteristic of the convinced (مؤمنين) is that they get respect-

Respectable Sustenance able sustenance (as well as Protection) – (8/74);

also: 8/4; 22/50; 33/31; 34/4. This respectable sustenance was desired even by *Allah's* messengers. The founder of *Kaaba* – The first-ever House of Allah – wished, after having just completed the task of erecting the sacred cubicle:

“O Allah of Universe! I have settled my progeny in this barren land so that they look after Your House. Please see that they keep getting sustenance and never remain hungry --- “ (14/37; 28/57; 2/126)

That is the 'The food from the sky' requested for his followers by Christ (5/114).

We have seen that *rizq* is available to anyone who strives for it. But, the fact is that we observe someone who struggles very hard but remains poor and his family go hungry. On the contrary, someone doesn't do any work but lives in prosperity and comfort. Why is that? Let us see.

3. Distribution of *rizq* (The Economic System)

We shall now look at the intriguing question raised above:

Why do some remain destitute despite bone-shaking hard work and others

Riches and Poverty enjoy affluence without doing any at all?

Hindu mythology finds the answer in reincarnation: One's present financial state depends on the kind of life one has had in the previous one. This state of affairs is unchangeable since it is deemed by *Eshwar Paramatma*, the Supreme God.

The Muslim preacher explains it through pre-destiny. Richness and penury are directly ordained by *Allah*. Destiny is unchangeable no matter how hard one

The Quran's answer tries. But the Quran says: It is all because of their

deeds! It is all because of the unfair economic set-up human have adopted. Armed robbers pick-pockets and thieves, for instance, deprive people of their

Unfair Economic System hard earned wealth. On the group level, the

thievery & robbery are less visible --- a feudal land-owner or an industrialist exploiting the hard-work of the farm-workers and factory-workers, respectively. There are some intriguing questions, regarding the economic system we currently have, nobody bothers to think about, let alone try to answer – Who fixes the rate of payment for a farmer, laborer etc.? How it is done and on what basis? Who controls prices, and on what basis is it done?

Obviously, it is all done by men. Destiny, reincarnation etc. have absolutely nothing to do with it. *Allah* does not distribute wealth directly. He has provided Man with *rizq*. But, the fair distribution of it is to be done by Man not by *Allah*! If it is done according to the system suggested by *Allah*, no man will go without sustenance. On the other hand, if it is done according to man-made systems, human society will turn into a den of beasts!

It is not the right place to go into the details of the Quranic Economic System. I

Quran's Economic System have treated this very important subject in detail

in my works like *Nazaam-e-Rubobiyat* (The System of Providence), *Khuda aur Sarmayadar* (God and the Capitalist), etc. Here, I shall confine myself to a few fundamental points.

- (i) The Earth, the basic source of sustenance, is to provide necessities of life to all men. The question of private ownership of land, therefore, does not simply arise. The Quran calls it *Allah's* earth (11/54); "Everything in it has been created for you all" (2/29); "We have produced in it for you all means of life --" (7/10; 15/20; it is "sustenance for people" – (50/11); therefore, it should remain accessible to all the needy (41/10).

The 'owners' of land today have simply inherited it from past men and their unfair system. In the Quranic system, land belongs to one. It is in the custody of society (government or state) which organizes a system which yields optimum produce which is distributed fairly on the basis of need.

- (ii) Money was invented to replace the barter system to make life easier. People began to hoard money and use it to exploit their fellow men. In economic terms, capital replaced work as the basis of return. This is the capitalistic system of economy in which money generates money. In Quranic terms, this is usury (interest) which is 'declaration of war' against the Quranic economic system (2/275-279).

In very clear terms, the Quran has dubbed hoarding of wealth as gathering fuel for the hellfire in which humanity is burned to ashes (9/34-35); (70/15-18). Money should circulate in society, not among just the upper strata but like blood circulates in the body - (59/7). Thus, in the Quranic society, no one ever possesses money (wealth) more than what is needed (2/219).

- (iii) The capacity of producing sustenance (wealth), i.e., work varies from person to person. This difference should be used to have various social functions performed conveniently and usefully. This is called 'division of labor' (43/32). Individuals should work according to their various capacities and the produce should be distributed on the basis of need (16/76; 16/53). It is inhuman capitalism (represented in the Quran by the ancient Egyptian capitalist *Qaroon* in the *Pharoanic* court) in which the concept of keeping one's earning to oneself thrives (28/78). This mentality is the cause of all problems and chaos (39/49).

- (iv) The *Quranic* economic system is put in place by a government which is committed to implement *Allah's* laws. It is called 'The Islamic State', in which men fulfill *Allah's* promise of 'giving *rizq* to you as well as your progeny'. In this state no individual goes without the necessities of life nor anyone possesses wealth more than what is needed.

- (v) Such a state is established by men who 'sell their selves and wealth in return for a promise of paradise (9/111). Here (in this physical life) this 'paradise' is materialized by the Islamic State and in the hereafter it is done according to *Allah's* plan (مشیۃ).

That, then, is the system in which no one is complainant of their 'destiny' for want of unfulfilled needs. No individual is dependent upon, or in bondage to another individual -- everyone gets '*rizq*' with respect. Sustenance is no doubt provided by wrong (anti-Quranic) systems, but in these, the prosperous 'haves' become intoxicated with power

resulting from affluence achieved without having to work for it. That destroys the society (28/58); the low-income groups fall natural prey to ills of poverty ---- the ills which 'restrict sustenance and they are raised on the Day of Judgment blind (20/124; 17/72). Contrary to this, the *Rizq* obtained according to *Allah's* laws is 'good and lasting' (20/131). Individuals get more than they work for, i. e., all their needs are met. Such a society is established so that "Allah gives them the return of their deeds in a better way, and even more from His bounty" --; thus *Allah* gives, according to His plan, without estimates (more than you can think of in your terms!) (24/38). That is why *Allah* calls Himself 'the best of all sustenance providers' (23/72; 62/11).

Let us now try to see who among men are likely to establish such a state and how.

4. He Gives Sustenance Beyond Estimate

We have just seen that:

- i) *Allah* created Man and provided him the sources and means of sustenance.
- ii) but sustenance can be obtained only by working to *Allah's* (natural) laws,
- iii) the distribution of sustenance thus obtained is quite an important matter; it can be dealt with neither through natural laws nor human intellect; it requires Revelation, i. e., divine guidance,
- iv) Laws of Nature and Laws of Revelation are both termed as - مشيئة الله - (*Allah's* Plan), i. e., laws which *Allah* has formulated and established, through His own exclusive discretion, for human society,
- v) In regards to *rizq*, whenever the Quran uses the phrase - من يشاء - the context will decide the subject (*Allah* or Man) of the sentence. When the subject is *Allah*, it means sustenance is made available according to *Allah's* Plan. When The subject is Man it means whoever follows *Allah's* laws shall thrive; whoever chooses to go against His laws, shall fall into destruction and degrading poverty.

Sura Zumr talks about the mentality represented by *Qaroon* (*Korah* of the Bible) and says that Man is a strange creature. When he is in a problem, he calls out

What من يشاء really means to *Allah* for help, but when he is prosperous

he becomes arrogant and credits his own self exclusively for his gains. This mentality is the root of all evils in human societies. Unfortunately, most men are not aware of it. This mentality is by no means restricted in numbers or time. This is the capitalistic mentality. History provides testimony to the sad truth that this is a destructive mentality -- 'calamities came to them because of their own deeds; and whoever among these (your people O Messenger) transgress, shall bring upon themselves calamities because of their own deeds! (39/51).

The Quran goes on to say: "Don't they know that *Allah* increases sustenance or scales it down for whoever so desires? This contains signs of truth for people who are convinced (of *Allah's* laws) -- " (39/49-52). If the subject of phrase - من يشاء - is taken to be Man (which is my preferred view), it means whoever strives according to natural laws, gets a

corresponding amount of sustenance. If the subject is taken to be *Allah*, it means that increase and decrease in sustenance occur under *Allah's Plan* (مشيئة).

Sura Qasas illustrates this reality by the example of *Korah* (*Qaroon* in the Quran). When people, who used to feel envious of *Korah's* riches, witnessed his plight,

Korah's examples said: "Certainly, the increase in sustenance for His people is done by Him according to scale for whoever so wishes – (28/82).

Sura Rome: "When We (give a) taste of bounty to men, they are very pleased by it, but when calamity comes to them due to their own deeds, they are frustrated. Don't they see that *Allah* increases or scales down sustenance for whoever so wishes? Surely, in this are signs for the Convinced" – (30/36-37).

Sura Ra'ad talks about men who violate the contract they have had with *Allah* by dividing up mankind in groups, are destined for destruction -- "*Allah* increases or decreases *rizq* according to His Plan -- " (13/26).

Sura Beni Israel talks about good social behavior and says: "Certainly, your Provider increases or decreases sustenance according to His Plan (مشيئة) " (17/30-33).

A Society established on Quranic principles has its economy based upon

What is Anfaaq ? *anfaaqq* (proper spending for greater good of society).

This Quranic term is quite meaningful. Its basic root is n-f-q (ن ف ق). In the older days, money was usually stored in string purses (with only one opening). *Naifaq* was a purse with two openings. This should explain *anfaaq*, i. e., an economic system in which money keeps flowing and is available to all the needy,. This availability must be 'in *Allah's way*' (سبيل الله), i. e., keep one's earnings available for the needy entirely free of any charge. Therefore, *Sura Baqara* says: "They ask you how much they should keep available. Tell them: all which is over and above your needs! (2/219). Such an economic system has been compared to a good crop which yields hundred-fold from just one seed. Verses 261-267 of *Sura Baqara* sing praises of *anfaaq* in *Allah's way*. Elsewhere, it is referred to as 'giving a loan to *Allah*' which is repaid with huge returns (2/245). *Sura Saba* says: "Tell them that increase in, and scaling down of sustenance is done by my Preserver for His People according to His Plan. Whatever you spend properly, will come back (many-fold); and *Allah* is the best of sustenance providers" – (34/39).

We have seen that there are two aspects of increase / decrease in sustenance (*rizq*), i. e., to obtain it from the earth according to natural laws, and to distribute

Sustenance 'without estimates' It according to permanent values

established by *Allah*. This will ensure *rizq* 'beyond calculations' (غير حساب). We have also seen that 'without estimate' does not mean without regulation. It simply means that the result is beyond your (men's) expectations and estimates. It has been experienced in Pakistan. Until a few years ago, the old methods of farming yielded an average of 20-25 'maunds' (1 manud = 80 kg. Approximately) of wheat per acre of land. When the country adopted modern methods of agriculture (farm machines, special seed, fertilizer, proper irrigation etc.), the yield multiplied 4 to 5 times! But then the vices of the capitalistic system began to show. Price of wheat fell and that of other consumer goods

rose. Less wheat sold and it started to be smuggled out of the country. Consequently, prosperity vanished and poverty came in. If the country had distributed this 'without estimate' *rizq* according to *Allah*'s guidance (as it had been produced), the society would have had 'rivers of milk and honey'. The Quran has quite comprehensively presented this fact. It says that when a society is administered by people who are not taken in by individual interest, they uphold *Allah*'s law by taking on the responsibility of providing sustenance (necessities of life) to people and are always mindful of the destructive consequence of a wrong economic system, the society is rewarded by *Allah* in a nice way due to their own deeds, and their wealth is increased by His bounty, and *Allah* gives limitless *rizq* to whoever so desires --- (24/38).

The group of Muslims in the first era of Islam were economically not very well-off. Their opponents (Chiefs of the *Quraish* tribe) used to make fun of them that the

The Convinced of the First Era destitute were hoping to overcome the

Roman and Persian empires. *Allah* said in the Quran that they (the *Quraish*) simply did not know the reality. The group of Muslims had committed themselves to *Allah*'s Plan. As a rule, this plan initially requires a lot of hard work – hunger, destitution, loss of life and property, destruction of corps etc. have to be faced (2/155). But, eventually, *Allah* gives limitless *rizq* according to His Plan –(2/212). History stands witness to this in the case of the Muslims rising as a nation. They were able to say us: "Verily, You give limitless *rizq* according to Your Plan!" – (3/26).

By now, the Quranic concept of phrases - من تشاء ، من يشاء - should be quite clear. Nonetheless, I wish to cite two verses to further clarify their meanings. (1) *Sura Shora*: "*Allah* is kind and generous to His people. He gives sustenance according to His Plan --- whoever desires benefits of future (long-term), We increase his yield for him; whoever wishes to have immediate (short-term) gains, We give him that yield accordingly and he has nothing coming in future (because the distribution of *rizq* is not done according to *Allah*'s permanent values) – (42/19-20).

(2) *Sura Yaseen*: "When they (the Dissenters) are told to spend for greater good from whatever *rizq* *Allah* has given them, they say to the Convinced: Should we feed those who would have been fed by *Allah* if He so wanted? The response was: "Surely, you are obviously not on the right track! " (36/47) meaning thereby that "*Allah* gives sustenance according to His Plan" means that men have to arrange for sustenance of men.

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"*Allah* has made some of you better than others in *rizq*" – (16/71)

Before moving on, I must explain two verses which, if seen superficially, appear to support the concept of Compulsion. One of the two is 16/71, given in part above. Apparently, it means to say that we observe that certain individuals and groups (nations) are more prosperous than others; therefore, the idea of Compulsion must be right. First of all, the true meaning of (الله فضل) (*Allah* has blessed should

Meaning of Bounty (فضل) should be seen. This particular phrase like some

others we have already seen, e.g., "*Allah* seals their hearts shut"—simply means that His blessing with His bounty happens as a result of Man's deed and according to His established laws (the reader may recall verses 17-21 of *Sura Beni Israel*, which eventually says: "See how We better some than others"

It Results from Man's Own Deeds

(17/21) the emphasis is on the how of it.

It all happens as a result of men's actions.

The second of the two verses is 43/32 which appears (conventionally) to say: "In this world's life, We allocate people's means of living; and We upgrade some over

We Distribute

others -- " 43/23). In principle, this verse should also be

interpreted on the lines of - **فضل** - in the previous verse. After 'allocation', the use of the term 'upgrading' is made clear by the verse 6/133 which says: "All grading is done according to deeds" -- . This is supported by other verses like *Sura Nisa* (The active have higher grades than the passive – 4/95); and 9/19: "Migrants and Strivers have high grades than water-suppliers to pilgrims or decoraters of the Holy Mosque.

The reader may be reminded of the two constituent factors of obtaining sustenance from the earth:

Two Basic Factors of Earning Sustenance

(i) The natural sources of Earth (light, heat, air, water, and land etc.) which are available to Man

absolutely free (*Allah*'s bounties). The Earth has a variety of climatic and geographical conditions affecting the production of *rizq*. Man has little or no control over these various conditions.

(ii) Man's input --- it depends entirely on Man's will and effort.

The 'allocation' of *rizq* is dependent upon a combination of the two above

Difference in People's Capacities & Abilities

factors. Regarding individuals, we commonly observe differences of capacity and ability, which are caused

by the factors like the following:

- (i) Certain mental disorders inherited genetically.
- (ii) Certain physiological disorders developed during pregnancy.

As pointed out earlier, these disorders and deficiencies are natural Medical sciences are gradually progressing in their prevention and treatment. It is difficult to foresee a time when all individuals will have equal potential. However, the fact is that such medical conditions are in no way unchangeable destiny of individuals.

- (iii) The formative years (early childhood training, education and environment).
- (d) The conditions available for children's development, i.e., schools, syllabi, healthcare, psychology, etc.
- (e) The questions of supply and demand, and facilities available and their use, etc.

Obviously, the factors mentioned above pertain to society where an individual cannot control all of them. They are under compulsion by social restraint created and controlled by other men, not Allah! Since the establishment of a fair society has also been termed '*Allah*'s bounty' by the Quran, individuals getting benefits and advantageous position in

such a society is also a 'bounty of *Allah*'. Therefore, earning of sustenance comprises of the following two factors:

- (1) Human input, and
- (2) *Allah's* bounty (either natural sources or social benefits)

The question, then is: who is responsible for an individual or a group falling behind others in life as result of a shortage of '*Allah's* bounties' ? The Quran

Society is responsible holds human society responsible for it. In a Quranic society, the variance in status, or conditions in general, are too small to matter. The Quran proposes a global united fraternity of men. In a divided world, every group tries to get ahead of others, by hook or crook (16/92). In a globally one society, people who may have better 'bounties' than others do not oppress other men: "He is the one who gave you succession of the Earth, and what you've been given!" (6/166). In a fair system, *Allah's* bounties are used for universal good: "Whatever is good for (all) mankind, shall survive and stay on Earth" --- (13/17).

Regarding individuals, the Quran proposed a system in which they are not affected by the difference in capacity and ability. These differences shall be used for division of labor alone -- "So that people can work for one another" -- (43/32). The economic disparity is to be taken care of thus:

" It is true that people vary in potential to earn the sustenance. But bad individuals take advantage of the unfair social system and keep to themselves, as their personal possession, whatever bounty they get and do not return it to their subordinates who stand in need of it. How can they misuse *Allah's* bounty ?" -- (16/17).

They should know that they on their own could never have obtained that wealth --- a combination of natural resources, social setup and other working men, have all contributed to it. "*Allah's* bounty is not your possession" -- (16/53). It is to be used for the poor and the needy as a matter of right -- (70/23-24).

As to the question of social respect, the Quran finds it not on wealth, but,

Criteria for Respect according to 'the permanent value system' :

1. Each and every human being deserves respect just because of being human. --- (17/20).
2. Status in society depends upon one's input and personal character and qualities --- (6/133).
3. The one who upholds and follows *Allah's* laws the best of all is the most respected one --- (49/13).

Therefore, the differences of capacity and ability do not affect individuals in the Quranic social system. It all happens because of unfair societies human beings create for themselves and erroneously blame it on Compulsion.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

YOU EXALT AND DEGRADE WHOEVER YOU WISH

A verse from *Sura Aal-Imran* is traditionally translated thus:

“Say you, ‘*O Allah!*, O Master of the Realm, You give territory to whoever You wish and take away territory from whoever You wish; and you exalt or degrade whoever you want; in Your hand lies all good; Verily, You have control over all things’” . (3/25)

(Maulana Mahmood al Hasan)

The common man is not usually concerned with reign and empire. Social status, however, is important to most people. In most societies of today’s world, material wealth has come to be the yardstick for one’s social standing. Examples of ‘rags to riches’ (regardless of the means), and vice versa, are increasingly seen as marks of high and low social status, respectively, and as evidence of *Allah*’s direct control over an individual’s fortune.

Before attempting to interpret this particular verse, and others like it, in the
Meanings of *Ezza* and *Zilla* Quranic spirit, let me make a few introductory

points. Primarily, *ezza* in Arabic means power, intensity & dominance while *zilla* is subjugation, weakness & breaking down. (The meaning in which these two words are used in *Urdu* are represented in the *Quran* by *takreem* & *tawheen*, respectively). Secondarily, the material concept of life hold sway over the world today according to which possession of material wealth, and not personal character, guarantees one a high social standing. Also, the traditional interpretation of this verse (that *Allah* exalts or degrades one at His own sweet will and whim is refuted by the verse itself through (بِدْلَكَ الْخَيْر). (In Your hand lies all good), i.e., degradation, does not stem from *Allah*.

Let us now discuss the topic proper. Independence, sovereignty etc. have already been discussed in detail in chapter (6) (Destiny of Nations). Here, we

Conditions for achieving sovereign status should look at the conditions

laid down by the *Quran* for achieving sovereign status. These conditions (rules) are called ‘Will of *Allah*’. *Sura Anbiaa* says: “And We had written in the *Zaboor* (and, for that matter, in every divine book) – after having given the necessary instructions – that (as fundamental law) the Earth shall be inherited by Our capable people. This fundamental law embodies a universal message (and truth) for all people who follow Our laws”. (21/105-106).

Thus, the law of inheritance of the Earth very clearly states that only the ‘*saleheen*’ (the capable) shall rule the Earth. It is a pity, that the term ‘*saleheen*’ --- and subsequently, terms like ‘*saleh*’ deeds --- have been misinterpreted by traditional religionists to mean something very close to the English terms pious, piety, etc. But, in the *Quranic* sense, ‘*saleheen*’ are people who have the ability and capability to perform a particular task; ‘*saleh*’ deeds are acts which develop one’s capabilities. Therefore, ‘*saleheen*’ inheriting the control of the Earth refers to people who have the double-edged ability of

establishing a sovereign state, and maintaining it to establish the *Quranic* paradisal society (a heaven on earth) for mankind. When a group of people have the physical qualities required, they can establish sovereign states --- but minus the *Quran*, they can be only ruthless despotic anagrams like those of the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, *Gengis Khan* of the Mongols, or even the present-day materialistic empires of the world.

On the other hand, a capable group (having the physical qualities as well the guidance of permanent divine values) shall take control of society to carry out divine responsibilities on behalf of *Allah* --- ‘It is Our promise (firm law) that those of you who become convinced of *Allah*’s laws, and do ‘*saleh*’ deeds, shall inherit the control of the Earth “ (24/55). Such a state shall establish *Allah*’s law on earth and it shall be free of fear of depression. It shall be ruled by *Allah* NOT by Man (24/55). Such people are reminded by the *Quran* of the

Importance of Physical Qualities

Importance of maintaining their physical

abilities and qualities (8/60). The *Quran* has illustrated this natural law with an elaborate account of ‘*Beni Israel*’ (Children of Israel). Having narrated

The Story of Israelites

the story at several places in the *Quran*, it said in

Sura Qasas: “and We decided it was time for us to bestow leadership on a nation which had been weakened by being shackled in slavery --- “ (28/ 5,6). The expression used for ‘We decided’ (نَبَيَّنَ) has two aspects. One is in the realm of ‘*amr*’ (36/2) where manifestation of His intention follows instantaneously. The other is in the realm of *khalq* where it undergoes a series of stages and is done by Man. That is why, to manifest this divine program in case of Israelites, Moses was given a comprehensive plan based upon educating and training the enslaved children of Israel. Despite hard work, Moses could not get them to shed their inconsistent and mercurial temperament. Repeatedly, he told them: “Surely, *Allah* has promised you inheritance of the Earth. But, it doesn’t come easy. It happens according to His law which requires you to develop the required qualities by being steadfast in this mission and being convinced that you shall triumph eventually” – (7/128). The Israelites, however, did not conform, which resulted in: “the promised land was banned for them for forty years “ (5/26). Moses was instructed to let them wander in the desert of Sinai while he concentrated on raising the next generation in the right way. Ultimately, when the slavery-minded older generation had been replaced by the new young one, they rapidly took control of the land and thus: “Your *Allah*’s good word to the Children of Israel came true --- because of their steadfastness!” (7/137). “That is how We gave *Beni Israel* the inheritance of it” (26/59).

The meaning of – من يشاء - (whoever He wants / whoever wants) is so brilliantly illustrated in the story of Saul (*Taloot* in Arabic). The Israelites told their

The Story of Saul

Messenger they were ready to go to war as soon as a

commander was appointed. Their Messenger informed them that *Allah* had appointed Saul. The Israelites objected to it on grounds of *Saul*’s low economic status. The Messenger said: “*Allah* has chosen him over all of you because he has superior qualities of mind and body. Surely, *Allah* grants realm to whoever He wants; and *Allah*’s knowledge is vast” (2/247). Saul then set out with his army to confront Goliath (*Jaloot* in Arabic) verbalising his desire thus: “O our Preserver! Abound us with steadfastness!” (2/250). It was in this encounter that David slew Goliath and thus: “*Allah* granted him realm ...” (2/251). Next, the *Quran* explains why such armed excursions become necessary: “If *Allah* does not make men defend other men, oppression will be rife on

Earth; but *Allah* (doesn't want oppression of His creatures because He) is kind with His bounty to all" (2/251).

It is quite clear that the oppressed are defended by men – not by *Allah* Himself.

Allah's is Done by Man

This group of men who shield oppressed men from

the atrocities of fellow men, bear both the physical and human qualities needed for such a task. This is explained in *Sura Hajj* (22/39-41) where the Convinced are permitted to take up arms. After they had acquired political sovereignty, they were clearly told that *Allah* will be keeping an eye on their performance (10/14). If they resorted to oppressing tactics, or lost their material prowess, they would be replaced by other better people ("and they will not be like you!" 47/38).

Let us now examine the second half of the verse in question (3/25). The

Laws for Exaltation & Degradation

Quranic meaning of the term 'ezza'

(عزة) is power, dominance, superiority, etc., and that of 'zilla' (ذلة) is weakness, subjugation, inferiority, etc. *Sura Faatir* contains a basic rule in this regard: "Whoever wished to achieve 'ezza' (should know that) only *Allah* has (the laws for real) 'ezza'. It is the correct and good concept of life which can rise high by apt deeds. Contrarily, people who indulge in bad activities (going against the value-system given by *Allah*) have a severe punishment in store for them when all their ill-directed efforts are wasted" (35/10).

Sura Younis talks about such people who help *Allah* in carrying out His program for human society (the *Quran* terms them 'awlia *Allah*' – *Allah*'s colleagues) and thus are free of all fear and depression. They act upon the divine system after having been convinced of it. They are set to enjoy the niceties of both worlds. This divine law is unchangeable. Since this is an exalted achievement, they would not be depressed by the discouraging attitude of the opposition because (real) *ezza* is only with *Allah* (s' Laws)" -- 10/62-65). *Sura Nisaa* mentions the Hypocrites who liaise with the opposition of the divine program and asks: "Are they looking for 'ezza'? (Real) *Ezza* is only with *Allah*!" (4/139).

Adopting the divine system is not individual-based. One must join a

It is a collective effort

society being established for this purpose – " 'ezza'

is for *Allah*. His Messengers and the Convinced" (63/8). Contrarily, "Those who oppose (fight) *Allah* and His Messenger, are degraded because *Allah* has ordained triumph for Himself and His messengers; He is mighty and dominant (that is why His shall be done)" – (58/20, 21).

Sura Younis says: "Those who do good deeds beget good – and more.

'Ezza' from good deed

Their faces will not be darkened with 'zilla'.

Contrarily, those who do bad deeds beget badness accordingly and *zilla* will degrade them (10/26, 27). The mighty Children of Israel fell to a life of degradation and misery ('zilla' and 'maskana') because they rejected the divine law!" (2/61; 3/113).

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'Ezza' meaning social esteem and respect (as current among *Urdu*-speakers) is represented In the *Quran* by 'takreem' while the term for

'Ezza' as Respect humiliation and disrespect is 'tawheen'.

Basically, the *Quranic* principle in this regard is that respect may only be earned by one's character and behavior (49/13). "Allah's sincere men who deserve Paradise because of their deeds are worthy of respect" (37/42). *Sura Yaseen* talks about the convinced one who raised the voice of Truth in the face of strong opposition saying, "If only my people knew that Allah has blessed me with bounties and has made me one of the respected" (36/27).

Contrarily, the *Quran* terms the consequence of wrong deed as – عذاب مهين or عذاب الهون – the humiliating punishment! *Sura Hajj* contains the mechanics of such punishment: "And those who reject and refute Our laws are the ones who have a humiliating punishment" (22/57). Elsewhere , people making fun of Allah's laws are said to get a humiliating punishment (45/9). In principle, it says in *Sura Ha'Meem* that humiliating punishment is brought upon men by their own deeds (41/17).

The commonly accepted standards of respect and esteem in human

Misplaced Standard of Respect societies (political or economic power

attained through tyrannical and oppressive means) are totally misplaced. Such respect is destined to end up in humiliating punishment. This law has been illustrated by the *Quran* with a figurative example of a person, brought into Hell, who will be served extremely humiliating food with a reminder: "Taste (it now, this humiliating punishment). You considered yourself to be very powerful and respectable!" (44/49).

Before the Hereafter, such misplaced respect and power in Here has

عزة الاعثم been termed as عزة الاعثم (2/206) – the weakening power! The

'ezza' in such cases gives an illusionary sense of respect and power. Really, it leads one to – اعثم – (weakness) and results in a humiliating punishment (46/20). In a fair (*Quranic*) society, 'ezza' (power) and takreem (respect) are achieved on the basis of one's personal attributes, character and good deeds

Status according to Deeds done (46/19); "Every respectable person is

Respected" (11/3); "Every knowledgeable person attains status accordingly as Allah knows about their deeds (57/11); "And He, because of their work, becomes their colleague (6/128).

We are hopefully ready now to ponder over the topic verse in question (3/25) and look at its *Quranic* interpretation in the light of all the above:

"Say: 'O Allah! You possess the (real) power. You give sovereign power to those who follow Your laws and strip of it those who go against them; power and degradation come according to Your rules only. It could not have been haphazard (lawless) because You are the source of Good alone. You have set standards to everything. Indeed! You are worthy of being Allah!'"

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Divine Support and Help

We have already seen the verse (6/128) which says that *Allah* becomes a colleague of men in their deeds. He is the senior partner⁽¹⁾ in this arrangement. His partnership is known by His support and help (*taeed*' and '*nusra*').

'Nusra' in Arabic is used for irrigation of land through rain and long,

Meaning of '*nusra*' winding streams of a valley. Obviously, rain benefits

only those farmers who work according to natural agricultural principles. Therefore, (an individual as well as) a group of people who resolves to carryout the Divine Program, and works accordingly, sees plentiful fruit borne by their efforts: "O Convinced! If you help *Allah*, He will help you!" (47/7). Man must initiate a joint-venture by *Allah* and Man. Consequently, *Allah* rewards Man

***Allah* helps those who help Him!** plenty and with steadfastness (47/7). The

verse goes on to say: "And those who reject have failure and disappointment coming as their efforts do not bear fruit and are wasted" (47/7). "That is so because they dislike the (message) given by *Allah* and that is why their efforts

- (1) The Messenger of *Allah* (Mohammed) is reported to have said during his last moments: 'But He is the Senior Partner.' That is to say that *Allah* and Man are senior and junior, respectively, partners in this working arrangement.

remain fruitless" (49/7). The Muslims, who had emigrated to *Medina* in the Divine Cause, are referred to thus: "They help *Allah* and His messenger and

hence are true (to their cause and) in their claim of being convinced" (59/8). Elsewhere, such Muslims were referred to thus: "Certainly, *Allah* helps those who help Him: (22/40). In another instance, this point has been elaborated upon in the following manner:

"*Allah* is the one who sent His messenger with His guidance, i.e., the really true code of life, so that it triumphs over all false systems no matter how annoying it is to those who want to follow and obey more gods than (the) One.

O the Convinced! Let Us tell you a basic principle. Normally, every person in the world desires to benefit from every transaction they make. But, it is not always so. Wouldn't you, therefore, like to know of a loss-free business? Let Us tell you of such a business which never fails and thus saves you from severe torture.

It is this: Be convinced of the credibility and permanence of *Allah*'s Program being established by His messenger. Give your utmost to it – using your wealth – even your lives, if you have to. If you ponder carefully, you will see all the potential profit in this venture.

This value-system will equip you to avert all possible disasters. It will bless you with an ever-lasting paradisical life (allegorically, comfortable abode in ever-green gardens) both Here and in the Hereafter.

That is really a monumental achievement for whoever gets it; furthermore, you will get so much else you like.

Allah's support and your victories are nigh! O Messenger, give the Convinced these glad tidings!

(61/9-14)

As we have seen earlier, success in an operation requires 1) a firm conviction and 2) carrying the operation out with the right tools and in the correct

Sword needed for 'nusra'

manner. *Sura AlHadeed* elaborates this point

so eloquently: "We sent our messengers with clear laws – divine books – so that men can have a fair and just society. And we sent down iron (and steel to make swords with, symbolizing law-enforcement power), which is hard and firm and can be very beneficial to mankind if used under divine guidance. This has been done as that *Allah* can see who among you helps Him and His messenger, convinced of the (hitherto) unseen" (57/25). The Arabic term for 'unseen' is (بِالغَيْبِ) and here means the expected results, hitherto unrealized and therefore unseen, of efforts to establish the divine program. This very conviction of the future has been put down as the fundamental requirement for success (2/3).

Also, men expect *Allah's* help 'from the unseen' while He expects the same from men! Aptly, He asks the Convinced to become *Allah's* helpers (61/14). Christ said the same to his followers who readily complied. ⁽¹⁾

The first ever practical example of this mutual (*Allah* and Man) operation was the Battle of *Bedr* which was fought between the Convinced trying to

Battle of Bedr

establish the Divine Order (Fighting in the way of *Allah*) - and

their opponents (Fighting for Transgression). The *Quran* said, "And *Allah* thus helps whoever so wishes: (13/12). (It may also be interpreted as: *Allah* thus helps according to His laws). This help comes rationally not accidentally: "It contains lessons for those who ponder" (3/12). This divine help was to be the source of happiness for the Convinced (30/5). The help by angels in such

(1) I have dealt in detail with this particular story
in my work *Shola-e-Mastoor*

Help through Angels?

battles has been explained by the *Quran* as

psychological (8/9-10) so that they remain steadfast (8/12). This steadfastness brings divine support with the condition that the Convinced display perseverance and obedience of *Allah's* laws (3/ 122 – 125). "Your one hundred shall triumph over two hundred of the opponents because '*Allah* is with the steadfast (8/66). The way to ensure divine help is to

obey *Allah* and His messengers, not to quarrel among yourselves because if you squabble, you will be swept away. So, be steadfast; *Allah* is with the steadfast (8/46). Remember, *Allah* helps those who remain steadfast; they then become invincible. But, if He abandons you, who is there to help you? (3/159). If you are convinced, in the real sense, you will triumph over all!” (3/138).

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*by G. A. Parwez
translated by Khalid M. Sayyed*

‘He Forgives or Punishes Whoever He Wants’

Parts of some verses in the *Quran* contain phrases like the following:

يغفر لمن يشاء ويعذب من يشاء (3/128) which are traditionally translated as, ‘Allah forgives whoever He wishes and punishes whoever He wishes’. Such interpretation can only, and has, led to a concept of God who is whimsical, unpredictable, unsystematic and moody. This divine behavior is much like that of earthly absolute monarchs of ‘royal disposition’ in the words of the famous Persian poet *Saadi Shirazi*. This is quite contrary to the *Quranic* concept of *Allah*. Let us have a look at it.

Punishment (عذاب) is usually taken to be eternal fortune in Hell. But, the *Quranic* use of the term عذاب encompasses much more. Consequences of all wrong human actions – realizable both Here and in the Hereafter --- is عذاب in *Quranic* terms. So much so that a sentence from a court of law is also عذاب .

Maghfarah (مغفرة) does not mean ‘forgiveness’. Linguistically, it means to arrange for protection. Please refer to chapter 4 where we saw that there is a period of wait between an action and its result. If someone uses this period accordingly, the probable bad consequences of an action can be averted. That is protection (I).

Let us now see who deserves عذاب and how. *Sura Maaeda* talks about the sins committed by the Jews and says: “Very bad it is what they have sent on for themselves. They deserve divine punishment and shall be punished”

(1) I have dealt at length with this subject in my work '*Jahan-e-Farda*' (Tomorrow's World), dealing with the Hereafter.

accordingly” (5/80). *Sura Aal-e-Imran*, after having talked about sins by the Jews – rejecting the Divine Law, murdering their prophets and social reformers – says: “Tell them, O Messenger, of the (impending) torturous punishment” (3/20).

A little further on, the *Sura* says: “Those who reject the divine laws are punished severely (with عذاب) in this world and also in the Hereafter” (3/55). Also: “Those who reject Allah’s laws get عذاب in Here and in the Hereafter and can never buy themselves out of it, even if they spend all the money in the world!” (5/36). *Sura An’aat* says: “Those who deny Our guidance, shall be subjected to punishment (عذاب) because of their transgression” (6/49). *Sura Tauba*: “The opponents of the Muslims are under the erroneous arrogance because of their wealth and numbers. This very misconception shall lead them in the battlefield!” (9/52, 9/85). *Sura Hood*: “These people neither think nor care, nor listen to anyone, nor see where they are going. How can they escape punishment?” (11/18-24, 2/7).

Some verses use ‘*rahma*’ as an antonym to ‘*azaab*’. *Sura Aal-e-Imran* says: “O the Convinced! Take care and not behave like those who, after having had clear guidance from *Allah*, began squabbling and split up in factions. They are the ones who will get a big punishment when the consequences of all actions will be realized. On that occasion, some faces will come alight (as a result of their good deeds) while others will go dark because they had reverted to rejection of *Allah’s* laws after having adopted them. They will be told to have the taste of the punishment ‘for your rejection’. The bright faced people, at the same time, shall be under *Allah’s* ‘*rahma*’ (safety of protection) – (3/104 – 106).

It is obvious from all the above that punishment comes to men because of their own actions (Law of Returns or the Law of *Allah’s* Will). The verses

Interpretation of من يشاء

where the subject of من يشاء is *Allah* (whosoever

He wants) refer to *Allah’s* Will. *Sura A’raaf* reports Moses praying to *Allah*: “O *Allah*, bestow on us the niceties of Here and the Hereafter!” *Allah* replied: “(If you wish to avoid My punishment, be informed that) My punishment befalls according to (the Law of) My Will (under systematic rules, not whimsical decisions), As to My ‘*rahma*’ (Safety of Protection), it covers the entire universe but it is destined only for those among men who abide by Our laws, establish a universal system of sustenance and are fully convinced of the validity of Our laws; also for those who will follow Our illiterate Messenger, mentioned in the Torah and the Bible, who will enact the good and prohibit the bad” (7/155-156).

Sure Beni Israel: “O Messenger! Tell My adherents to converse nicely among themselves & be fair in their dealings because the Devil wants to split you up in warring factions. Don’t follow him as he is your sworn enemy. *Allah* knows what you do! If (your deeds are) according to *Allah’s* will, you will deserve His ‘*rahma*’ (Safety of Protection); otherwise, punishment (*azaab*) will befall you. It is entirely upto them to chose between *Allah’s* ‘*rahma*’ and ‘*azaab*’. O Messenger! You have not been appointed to force them to make the right choice! (17/54).

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Let us now examine ‘*maghfara*’.

It can have two applications: 1) In an epidemic, people with a greater power of resistance escape it --- in the *Quranic* set-up, this type of ‘*maghfara*’ comes

Two Applications of ‘maghfara’

with precautionary measures men may

take against calamities. 2) The epidemic victimizes one who survives but is left very weak and recovers fully when properly treated – in the *Quranic* setup, this type of ‘*maghfara*’ comes with ‘*tauba*’ (repentance). The *Quranic* concept of ‘*tauba*’ may be illustrated by the example of a wayfarer who, taking a wrong turning, goes away from the intended destination. As soon as he realizes the mistake, he turns back and returns to the spot where the wrong turning was taken. This return is known as ‘*tauba*’ But obviously, returning to the spot of mistake is not enough. One must resume the journey on the right path. That is ‘good deeds’ in the *Quranic* terms. This concept is elaborated in *Sura Nisa*: “To *Allah* ‘*tauba*’ is for those who happen to make an error due to ignorance but return as soon as they realize it; in that case *Allah* (His Law) also returns to them ..” (4/17). Subsequent to this first step, “and then if the returnee does good deeds out of conviction, only then shall he be among the successful” (28/67).

The other application of ‘maghfara’ is based upon the principle:

Good Deeds Neutralize Bad One

“Certainly, good deeds push away the

bad ones” (11/114). All this should clarify the verse (3/128) at head of this chapter. That is, whoever stubbornly refuses to learn from mistakes, gets

Punishment & Forgiveness

‘azzab’; but one who amends one’s

mistakes will escape it. It is illustrated in *Sura Maaeda* where a thief’s punishment is mentioned. The verse goes on to say: “and whoever returns after his wrong deed, and does good, *Allah* shall return to him. Surely, *Allah* is the provider of ‘maghfara’ (safety of protection) and ‘rahma’ (niceness)”. But, why should ‘maghfara’ and ‘azaab’ go hand in hand? It is because the *Quran* wanted to create a realistic balance between the two extremes of the Jewish (all punishment, no forgiveness) and the Christian (all mercy, no punishment) value-systems. The *Quran* says: “Don’t they know that it is *Allah* who controls supreme over all universe? He does it through His Laws. Similar divine laws have been suggested for human societies so that the application of punishment (عذاب) and safety of protection (مغفرة) is done according to laws & principles given by *Allah*” (5/38-40).

It follows, therefore, that a culprit should be punished only if he / she persists in criminal activity. Repentance and reformation must result in forgiveness. “Whether you expose or conceal whatever is in your hearts, *Allah* takes it all into account. Then, punishment or forgiveness is decided according to His laws – and *Allah* has set laws for everything” (2/284). Elsewhere: “Whosoever so wishes may get (through one’s actions) punishment (عذاب) or niceness (رحمة) “ (29/21).

Sura Maaeda refers to the Jews and the Christians claiming to be

Allah Has No Favorite Offspring

God’s favored children which exempted

them from punishment. The *Quran* replied by asking: “Punishment in the Hereafter aside, why does *Allah* punish you in Here? *Allah* has no children, favorite or otherwise. He punishes or protects people according to His laws as to Him alone is the control of the entire universe” (5/18)

The same sura explains: “*Allah* has promised safety or protection and great rewards to those who are convinced of His laws and then do good deeds accordingly” (5/9). In *Sura Fath*, after having spoken of the worthy attributes of ‘Mohammed, the Messenger of *Allah*, and the people with, him says: “*Allah* has promised safety of protection and great reward to the Convinced who do good deeds” – (48/29). *Sura Hood* gives safety of protection and great reward as the return of good deeds and steadfastness” – (11/11). This is repeated in (33/35). *Sura Ahzaab*, after having listed the attributes of Muslim men and women, says: “*Allah* has for them ready the safety of protection and a great reward” – (33/35).

Contrarily; ‘polytheism’ cannot get safety of protection (4/48; 4/116); “people who commit rejection of *Allah*’s laws and are unfair, and persist, cannot get ‘maghfara’ “ – (4/168).

The basic principle of reward and punishment is so beautifully given in the following verse:

“Why would *Allah* punish you if you are convinced of the validity of His laws and use his bounties properly?” (4/147).

Another important aspect of the *Quranic* system of punishment and forgiveness is the individual circumstances of the accused involved. For example, two

Punishment according to Circumstances culprits of the same crime

should not have a similar sentence if their individual circumstances differ in background, i.e., upbringing, education, awareness etc. That is why, the *Quran* proposes that women of possession ⁽¹⁾ be given half the normal sentence (4/25), whereas ladies of the Messenger’s family were to be sentenced TWICE of the usual! (33/30-32),

In addition to the individual, collective situation of a society must also be taken into consideration because ‘when vices spread widely in a society, Evil takes over (76/7), sparing no one from its effect. Therefore, the Convinced

Collective Punishment must safeguard against such a situation: “and

take care of such an evil as it does not confine itself only to the wrong-doers” (8/25). For example, a broken dam floods not only the areas of bad workmen

Individual are Bound by Society guilty of a faulty job but also those

completely detached from the situation. That is why the *Quran* emphasizes reformation of society as a whole which will automatically affect individuals. ‘*Al-Deen*’ is a social system which brings peace to its members. This was the point made by *Omar ibn Al-Khatab*, the second Caliph, when he punished the employer whose mistreatment drove some of his employees to stealing food! In another instance, Omar suspended the punishment for stealing food (just enough to quench hunger) during famine.

The misconception that salvation and forgiveness is not dependent upon Man’s deeds but on *Allah*’s whims and moods has sent Muslims down the

Requests for Forgiveness deepest pits of destruction as a nation. This

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- (1) At the advent of Islam, buying, selling and possessing women for concubinage and other purposes, was part of life. The *Quran* refers to them as ‘those possess by your right hands’. That was to be temporary for all practical purposes. Subsequently, the *Quran* outlawed the practice.

erroneous idea has led them to beliefs and practices such as this: No matter how many wrong or bad deeds one commits, *Allah* will forgive one if one recites 33 times the chant of ‘Please *Allah*, forgive’ after every prayer. The *Quranic* truth, however, is: “This is the Paradise you are inherited with because of your deeds!” (43/72) Today, Muslims believe

that they will enter Paradise only because of *Allah's* benevolent mood and momentary sweet will. The fact of the matter is that the *Quran* has said:

“Do you think you will enter Paradise easily? Nay, you haven't yet gone through the harsh stages like peoples of by-gone ages – so harsh that the earth shook under their feet and the messenger and his companions wondered when *Allah's* help would come! *Allah* consoled them by glad tidings of the imminent divine support” (2/214).

Mohammed, the Messenger of *Allah*, is reported to have said: “Paradise exists under the shade of swords!”

Sadly, that is not the end of the story. Incredible as it may appear, the fact is that one of the two most authentic works of *Hadith* (the Messenger's

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| Pride in Sins | tradition), MUSLIM, reports the following from Mohammed: |
| Sin or Allah will perish you | “By the One who possesses my self, if you |

don't sin at all, *Allah* will remove you and replace you with those who will indulge in sins and then seek *Allah's* forgiveness”.

No wonder the crime and sin rates are unabated in most Muslim societies!

Adherents to the mystical tradition, *sufis*, have reported fantastic stories

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| Mystics, too! | to make the point. One particular episode: “A devotee, after |
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having worshipped *Allah* for twelve years in a jungle, heard the divine: Say what you want? Searching for a reply, he noticed a sage (actually, the Devil) appeared and suggested asking for justice. His request for justice was replied by: ‘OK. You sat and worshipped on a stone for twelve years. Justice demands that this stone sits atop you for twelve years! After those painful twelve years, *Allah* inquired of his request once again. This time, the mystic, having learned his lesson the hard way, asked for *Allah's* benevolence. He was rewarded by appointment to the rank of ‘*Qutub*’ (a high ranking in the traditional mystic hierarchy), with the admonition:

‘Remember, justice is demanded by the devilish. Muslims always seek Our Benevolence!’

The source of such ideas appears to be the Christian dogmas invented by St. Paul. In one of his letters in the New Testament, he writes: ‘Your have

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| St. Paul's Influence | been salvaged because of belief. It is not because of |
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your deeds. It is God's gift’ – (Afseeoon, 2/8,9). Elsewhere: ‘Therefore, we conclude that Man is considered righteous because of belief, not because of deeds of religion’ --- (To the Romans: 3/28).

This established the Christian dogma of ‘God is Mercy’. Such concepts found their way into Muslim philosophy, supported by fabricated traditions like: ‘No one among you shall enter Paradise because of deeds!’ – (from *Taj al Uroos*).

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by [G. A. Parwez](#)

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

‘IS THE MOMENT OF DEATH PRE-DESTINED?’

Among the religionists, a widespread belief is that every person (in fact, every creature) has a pre-determined life span, and that the moment of death is unavoidable as well as unchangeable. This concept of pre-determination is also believed to be applicable to matters of one’s health. But, the fact of the matter is that, the adherents to this belief do everything within their power to cure an illness when it strikes. This attitude is blatantly contradictory to the belief held.

Belief and Action Discrepancy in belief and action is a destroyer of nations.

Thought and practice must go hand in hand. Incidentally, the religionists see a certain psychological advantage in having faith in pre-determination. For example, it is supposed to alleviate fear of death in fighting soldiers.

The human body, like everything, is subject to natural physical laws.

Everyone Dies “Every living being has to die” – (3/184), “Even if you take refuge inside strong fortresses!” – (4/78). “You cannot run away from it!” – (62/8). So much so that the Messenger himself was told: “They (your opponents) have to die, and so have you!” --- (39/31).

Sura Aal-e-Imran says (traditionally translated) in 3/144: “No one can die but with Allah’s *izn* (order) – this has been written down!” Please consider

Death through Allah’s ‘izn’

carefully the terms ‘*izn*’, ‘*kitab*’ and

‘*ajal*’ used in this verse (refer to Chapter 6 where the *Quranic* sense of these terms is given ---*izn*: divine law, *ajal*: period or end of a period; *Kitab*: code of law). Thus, the above verse (4/144) means that life and death occur according to divine (natural) law. The time-period spanning a man’s birth and death (*ajal*) is his age which is determined according to the divine law: “Every period as a law ---” (13/38). The end of such a period (death) cannot be shifted forward or backward –“ (63/11). That is ‘death’ is the moment when age (period of time) ends, whenever it occurs. So, the problem of its occurring before or after ‘the determined moment’ simply doesn’t arise. The really relevant question,

Can Man Control Aging?

therefore, is whether age (time-period between

birth and death) can be shortened or lengthened. ‘Young’ and ‘old’, in connection with age, are relative terms, measured against ‘normal’ age-span of a particular group. It is a known scientific fact that the normal life expectancy in any given group can be controlled through hygiene, eating habits, prevention and treatment of disease, and the standard of living etc. It applies to groups as well as individuals.

This fact is referred to by the *Quran* as “Age is not pro-longed or shortened for anyone except according to law ---“ (35/11). It is obvious that the precise period of time (age) is not pre-determined. It can be controlled through

Rules of Death

natural physical laws mentioned above in addition to factors

like hereditary tendencies, as well as post-natural care, physical and mental well-being etc. These very rules (values) determine one’s, and a group’s, age: “We have established laws of death for you (all) ----“ (56/60). It is Man’s choice to violate, or abide by, those rules: “And don’t put yourselves to death with your (own) hands! --- (2/195). Furthermore, the principle in point is amply shown by the punishments (and the difference thereof) for deliberate and accidental killing of a human being – cold-blooded murder is punishable by a sentence while accidental killing may be dealt with ‘blood-money’ ---- (4/92-93).

Sura Maaeda: “Whoever kills someone without due cause (cold-blooded murder) or spreads anarchy (treason, mutiny, rebellion etc) really kills the entire mankind. And whoever gives life to one person really gives it to the entire human race!----“ (5/32). How can a life be saved if it is pre-destined to end at a particular moment in time? This is why battling soldiers are instructed to take precautionary measures for their safety --- (4/71). In times of danger, the prayer congregation will be held in groups taking turns in guarding their fellow soldiers (4/102).

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We are left with the problem of fear of death. This can be dealt with by examining, and then accepting, the *Quranic* concepts of life and death. It

**Conviction in the Hereafter
Eliminates Fear of Death**

basically says that human existence does not end with the physical death. A human being,

having led a *Quranic* life, becomes equipped to move into the next evolutionary phase after death: “Death and life have been created so that you can test yourselves for capabilities of better work: --- (67/2). *Iqbal*, Poet of the East, so beautifully puts it one of his Persian works: “A convinced man smiles in the face of death”.

As to the deeds which develop the human potential (for travel to the next phase of life, the basic principle is to uphold a permanent value when it gets

To Die in Allah's Cause

tangled up in a tie with a physical value. The most

attractive the physical value, the more weighty the deeds to disregard it for a permanent value. The most important physical value, in fact for all life, is self-preservation (saving one's life). One who puts his life on the line in Allah's cause deserves the highest merit. Such people do not really die: "But they are alive and your are not aware of it!---" (2/154). *Iqbal*, once again, has put it so eloquently in his works to be enjoyed by readers with access to either *Persian* or *Urdu*.

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

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MISFORTUNE OF THE HUMAN FEMALE

Addressing the Annual TOLU-E-ISLAM Convention in March 1966, I read a paper titled ‘Allah’s Will’. It met with widespread appreciation. Here, I quote from the paper a fictional story meant to illustrate my point about the misfortune of the human female:

‘Noor Khan’s wife had born four girls, one after the other. Each female birth had enveloped the family in a melancholic depression. After the birth of the forth girl, Noor Khan, pressured by his parents and close relatives, had decided to take a second wife. He postponed it only after the wife had woefully pleaded with him, but had told her his firm intention of taking a second wife if she gives birth to one more girl. Unfortunately, she did bear a girl for the fifth time in a row. The wife was having fainting spells due to a sinking heart. The family was annoyed with her. The husband refused even to see her. She used to cry out alone! Female neighbors would visit and console Noor Khan’s wife saying: ‘It is all Allah’s will. He decides who begets male offspring or female. Crying won’t change anything. Nobody can alter what Allah has pre-ordained. Be patient and learn to live with it. No divine action is without goodness. He has every right to decide His creatures’ fate. King Soleman once harbored some disapproving feelings about a divine decision. He was punished to work in a bakery for 12 year years! So, don’t complain! The Almighty applies His law almost inconsiderately!’

Later in the chapter we shall examine the notion ’It is Allah who decides, of His own sweet will, who begets what (boys or girls). First, however, let us

Dejection over Female Births

ponder over widespread reaction, especially

in Oriental societies (in particular among the Muslims of the sub-continent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), of despair over the arrival of a female baby. The situation is quite common, by no means restricted to the lower (poor & uneducated) strata of society. Even the claims of broad-mindedness, on the part of the elite, belie undercurrents of the same mood. One reason for this attitude is economic as females are economically dependent on men in a male-dominated society. Secondly, there is the fundamental reason of the female

The Female is Considered Inferior

being considered as naturally inferior to

the male. Let us examine the validity of this particular notion.

The Hindu philosophy treats women like a commodity which remains in

Women and Religion

a man’s (her father husband and son) possession

all her life. She is not allowed to own anything. She gets whatever she does as charity, not as of right. As a wife, she may have to take more husbands than one. The ‘Mahabhart’ records *Dropedy* as having five husbands who lost her in a gambling bet! According to ‘Prans’, *Narpasi Kamyā* was wedded to seven men. Another lady with the name of *Warkashi* was the shared wife of the ten *Parchita Brahmin* brothers who were

well-verses in religious literature. Since the religious code was authored by Brahmins (the highest caste), they enjoy special privileges under law. The holy book '*Hathurved*' (and also '*Ragved*') records:

‘A woman claimed as his by a Brahmin is his property even if she has had ten non-Brahmin husbands. It is because Brahmins are the rightful owner of women.

The Torah says: God created Adam and woman (EVE) was created

**Woman in the Torah
and Christianity**

out of his side (rib) to alleviate his boredom and loneliness. Eve subsequently got deceived by the

Devil and she tempted Adam who was eventually expelled from Paradise. This story is the basis of the Christian view of woman as the source of all evil. Every human child is born with the original sin of Adam and Eve. The only way to salvation is the belief in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The female, being the source of evil, is detestable enough not to be touched. That forms the basis of Christian saints leading a life of celibacy. So much so that early Christian history records a sect called the *Valesians* who voluntarily castrated themselves to be close to God. The Christian belief that the female cannot enter Paradise presented the problem of Mary. It was resolved by saying that all females shall be transformed into males in the Hereafter. St. Paul preached that the male begot the female rather than the other way round; since the female was created for the male's sake, she must stay inferior to him in status.

Thinkers of the human race have not treated women any better. Aristotle, the original thinker, preached that women were inferior to men in

Philosophers

every aspect. He believed women had 28 teeth against

men's 32! He said, ‘Suffice to say that Woman reflects a flaw in Nature's plan.’ *Pluto* used to say: “A good woman is an impossibility. Every other woman is worse than the previous one”. In the modern age, *Rousseau*, the initiator of concepts like human rights and democracy, said, ‘Woman has been created solely for the purpose of obeying & serving Man and bear his injustice’. Upto the 19th Century, the Western researchers believed that ‘the very first animal to be domesticated by Man was Woman.’ It seems only yesterday that Queen Victoria of Britain, a woman herself indeed, commented angrily on the new movement for the rights of women:

‘Her Majesty the Queen strongly desires to get support and help, oral or written, of all intellectuals who can do something to put an end to this mixture of feminine stupidity and madness. The problem is too infuriating for Her Majesty to contain her anger. God has created men and women differently. Therefore, women must stay within their limits.’

Sadly, the situation has not improved upto the present day. H. L. Mencken writes: ‘The concept of love has been invented to inculcate the false notion that one woman is different from another. This is an illusion. All women are alike. C. O. Skinner says: ‘The most fantastic of human concepts is the idea that the female also contains some good’.

At present, the United States represents the apex of human civilization where women are supposed to have been emancipated. It is saddening to note from a semi-official publication, Dialogue (Number 4, volume 3, September 1970), that the research therein tries to prove that women should not be considered equal to men.

The mistreatment of the human female at the hands of the male of the species is matchless throughout the animal kingdom. At the advent of Islam,

The Quran when Christianity was the dominant philosophy, degradation of women had reached its peak.

Entered the *Quran* with a resounding claim that the prevailing notions about women are fabrications of the male mind. They have absolutely nothing to do with reality. Men and women are equally human. “Your Preserver created you from one living being” --- (4/1). The biological difference between male and female is of function not of status. They have equal potential as human beings. *Sura Ahzab* says:

“Both men and women can:

1. submit completely to the will of *Allah*,
2. be members of the group which is convinced of the validity of *Allah*’s laws to ensure universal peace,
3. preserve and use their capabilities in the Divine Cause,
4. practically prove their commitment to *Allah*’s program,
5. be steadfast,
6. improve themselves progressively working for *Allah*’s plan,
7. sacrifice for others,
8. exercise self-control
9. put their sexuality under *Allah*’s program,
10. remember always *Allah*’s plan and laws,

Equality of Sexes

Allah promises for them safety of protection and a great reward!

(33/35)

Thus covering each and every aspect of human life, the *Quran* announces: “And whoever does good deeds --- male or female --, and is convinced of the Divine Message, shall enter Paradise with none of their deeds going waste!” --- (4/124). Regarding marital life, the *Quran* treats them absolutely equally as far rights and responsibilities are concerned (ولهن مثل الذي عليهن بالمعروف). The only exception is that, after a divorce or the death of a partner, the male may remarry immediately while the female has to undergo a period of waiting. The reason is very clearly biological --- pregnancy.

It is interesting to note the purpose of marital union put forward by the

Purpose of Marriage

Quran: “So that it breeds calmness, closeness and

benevolence between you. In it there is truth for those who care to ponder” – (30/21). Obviously, there can be no mutual love and peace of mind if a marital union is based upon the notion of one partner’s superiority and dominance over the other. As far as *Quran* is concerned, EQUALITY is the rule regarding men and women.

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But later, as had happened with religions before, Muslims abandoned

But Later

the *Quran* pure. Consequently, wrong notions about the female

of the human species infiltrated and eventually became part of the Muslim philosophy. The technique employed to achieve this was, as I have previously mentioned, fabricated traditions of the Messenger of Allah (Mohammed), the most prominent champion of equality of human rights. For example, borrowing

Fabricated Traditions

from old Testament, *Ibn Kathir* wrote in his

commentary on the *Quran*:

‘True Tradition has it that woman is created out of (man’s) rib. Since the top-most rib is the most curved, it can only break if you try to straighten it. So, you can use it to your benefit only with the curve there.’

The Authentic Collection By *Bokhari* reports from *Abu Huraira*: ‘The Messenger of Allah said: “If the children of Israel were not created, meat would never rot; if Eve was not created no wife would betray her husband!” Another report in *Bokhari* says: ‘The Messenger said, “After I am no more, no problem will be more damaging to men than women!”’ Yet another report says: ‘The Messenger said, “Three things are ominous – woman, home and horse” – (*Bokhari; Book of Marriage*). The Book of Prophets in *Bokhari* reports the Messenger as saying: ‘When I visited Paradise, I found the majority to have been the poor; in Hell the majority were women.”

Such fabricated Tradition are also to be found aplenty as far as marital life is concerned. They put a husband as an absolute ruler over his wife. Such

Men are QAWWAMOON Over Women

fabrication was supported by certain *Quranic* verses, suitably interpreted, of course. A well-known

example is the famous verse from *Sura Al-Nisa* (4/34) which is traditionally translated as: ‘Men are controllers of women’. The Arabic term ‘*Qawwamoon*’ really means those who provide a sustainable and suitable environment. The verse in question should, therefore, be interpreted as: ‘As women have to spend a considerable amount of their time and energy in bearing and rearing children, men should take on the responsibility of providing the necessities of life’. It is simply division of labor.

It may be interesting to see the background which is traditionally reported for this particular verse. Under the common practice of recording ‘the background of revelation’, it has been reported that: ‘A woman complained to the Messenger that her husband had slapped her. The Messenger had barely finished delivering his ruling of retribution when this verse was revealed, forcing him to cancel his decision!’ Another Tradition says:

The Messenger said, “Don’t hit your wives”. Later, Omar came and said, “Your ruling has encouraged wives to be aggressive to their husbands.” The Messenger permitted wife-beating which resulted in widespread application. Several women came and complained to the Messenger. He said, “It is not nice that you hit your wives.” He wanted to get women the right of retribution but this verse was revealed upholding the ruling that husbands may beat their wives up because they are their lords.

Ash’as reports: “I happened to visit Omar on one occasion. The couple quarreled, by chance. Omar hit his wife. Later, he said to me, “*Ash’as*, remember three points which I heard from the Messenger and have remembered to this day. One, never ask a husband why he hit his wife.

Second, never forget to offer additional prayer (*witr*) before going to bed at night". The third point was forgotten by the reporter.

Going a step further, another Tradition reports the Messenger as saying: "I if could order prostration to anyone other than Allah, I would have ordered wives to prostrate (themselves in submission) in front of their husbands!"

Statements of a similar nature have been attributed to *Ali*, the fourth

Sayings attributed to Ali

Caliph (successor of Mohammed), in the well-

known book *Nahaj-al-Belaagha*. *Ali* is reported to have said: 'O people! Women have faulty beliefs and reason and have less than full share. (Therefore) Keep away from women of loose character, and be careful even of good women! Don't carry out their instructions even in fair matters so that they don't expect you to comply in unfair situations.' Elsewhere, *Ali* is reported to have said, The female is like a nice well-behaved scorpion – enjoyable to live with but stings whenever she can! Another statement of his is: "Woman is all evil. A bigger evil is that one cannot be without her!" Interestingly there can be found Traditions of a contrasting nature. For example, it is reported that the Messenger said, "Paradise lies under the feet of one's mother."

Such Traditions were fabricated in the monarchical era (mainly the *Abbasid* period) of Muslim history. It was the time when women were treated as a commodity. *Ahmed Ameen*, the Egyptian, writes in *Daha-el-Islam*:

Baghdad had commerce of slaves (men and woman). One particular market place was known as *Share-Dar-alRafiq* (the Slave Market Street). Traders of slaves were known as *nakkaas*, a term originally used for cattle traders. They worked under an offical inspector known as *Qayyam-ar-Rafiq*. Caliph *Mutawakkil*'s harem had 4000 temporary concubines.

The Persians learnt the philosophy of mysticism from Christians, passing it on to Muslim mystics, who in the manner of Christian monks and *Hindu jogis*, adopted a life of celibacy because the female was believed to be the source of all evil. *Ali Hajveri* (a highly respected mystic, popularly known as *Daata Ganj Baksh*) writes:

'The very first evil to befall Man in Paradise originated from Woman. The very first evil to appear on Earth (the squabble of Cain and Abel) occurred because of a woman. When Allah wanted to punish the two angels *Haroot* and *Maroot*, that, too, was because of a woman. Even today, all religious as well as worldly problems occur because of women!'

It is no wonder, therefore, that the arrival of a baby girl is not exactly exhilarating for the family, and she herself is plagued by a permanent inferiority

Civilized Societies of Today

complex. It is tragic that, despite our claims

of being advanced in education and civilization, the despicable situation of maltreatment of the female continues. The age-old tradition of dowry in many Oriental societies is a case in point. Furthermore, according to the prevalent, the so-called *Sharia* Laws, the husband retains the right of divorcing the wife quite easily at any time he deems convenient for himself. Contrarily, the wife has to go through an excruciatingly humiliating legal process which they often consider to be more painful than their unsuccessful married life! Even when a woman succeeds in getting free from the shackles of such a marital contract, the simple basic question of existence for the rest of their lives stares her squarely and icily in the face. In addition to being financial, the question is also

of protection of honor. In most societies even today, a man's patronage is considered essential for a woman's protection. Even when a woman does manage to live without male protection, she is under constant threat of ostracization if the evil elements of society spread rumors about her morals. Kidnapping & rapes are common occurrences. The *Quran* very eloquently referred to the ignorant Arab practice of burying alive their infant baby girls by asking: "What will your reply when that child will be asked on the Day of Judgment: 'Why were you killed?'" (81/9). Today's girls may well ask that from Allah Himself! I have had several young girls and women putting to me the unanswerable query: "Why did Allah made me a female?" "What did my brother do to deserve the better life form of a boy?" Trying to answer this query, the Hindu philosophy put the blame on one's previous sinful life. The Muslim theological answer is: 'It is entirely Allah's own unquestionable will to make a person male or female or bestow an honorific life or strip one of it'. The Hindu philosophy does not blame *Brahama* (the Supreme God) whereas the Muslim philosophy does! The Muslim 'God' appears to be unjust and unfair!

The religionists attempt to support their stand with some examples from

Erroneous Examples from Nature

Nature where animals are not allowed to

question the choice of their sex or species, etc. But such examples should not be applied to the human situation. No animal is concerned with, or even conscience of, status, humiliation, respect etc. Man is self-aware as well as sensitive. The *Quran* declares Man (both men and women) to be respectable by birth (17/70). A just God simply could not create the two sexes with different status; He declares: "We are not unjust to Our people!" – (50/29). In actuality, it is us humans who have created for ourselves unjust, unfair and unequal societies. In a *Quranic* society, the female will not feel, and will not be, inferior to the male. The biological difference between the sexes is for performing various complimentary natural functions. This difference does not affect their human status at all. Status in a *Quranic* society shall be determined by the quality of one's performance (46/19), man or woman (3/194)! The natural biological difference should not be a source of jealousy, or even envy (4/32-35). The *Quran* aims to put a permanent end to partisan human societies, patriarchy or matriarchy, and create a society on the basis of absolute equality of opportunities, rights, responsibilities and merit of performance.

Male and Female Offspring

Verses 49 & 50 of *Sura 42* in this regard uses the phrase (من يشاء) and the term (قدير). If (من يشاء) is to be interpreted in the traditional mode to mean 'to whom He wants' it should be in agreement with the view of an absolutely equal status of the sexes. Taking the *Quranic* position of equality of sexes, the phrase means 'according to His plan' (مشيئة), i.e., natural laws of conception fertility, pregnancy and so on. Infertility, for example, is mentioned in the case of Messenger Zakaria's wife who got treated and was cured before she gave birth to a boy (John) – (21/90). Treatment of sterility is fairly common in today's medically advanced world.

Extensive medical research is being done in the era of fetal sex. *Sura Aal-e-Imran* says: "He is the One who gives you shape in wombs according to His plan" – (3/5). Scientists now know how the sex of a baby is determined by Nature. Next, they are trying to discover ways of controlling the process in a way which enables us to choose the sex of a fetus. This ability of Man to discover Nature and use it to his advantage was referred to

by the *Quran* in (2/31). That is what is meant by ‘angels bowing to Man (2/34), i. e., Man can harness the forces of Nature because it is so permanent (30/30).

Thus, Man is gradually becoming the master of his own destiny.

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PRAYER

In this chapter I propose to tackle one of the most delicate and sensitive issues in the domain of religion, viz. a viz. prayer, be it in the form of certain rituals of worship, or the act of making a request to the Almighty. It is a sensitive issue because prayer is directly concerned with human sentiments and emotions whereas the *Quran* suggests the use of reason to tackle life's problems.

Prayer has been an element of humanity ever since the dawn of history.

Universality of Prayer

It has been one common characteristic of mankind

regardless of time, place, society, philosophy, or the deity involved, or even the rites employed. The incentive for prayer is asking an invisible mighty power for help. Even worship is invariably a prelude to prayer. Sacrificial or other offerings made to a deity are also conditionally accompanied by a request. Prayer is solace for the wronged, support for the weak, hope for the dismayed, shoulder to cry on for the hurt and the last chance for the hopeless. The more sentimental, devoted and absorbed a prayer feels, the better are the chances considered for the prayer's success.

I propose to examine critically such an emotional issue because the *Quran* bases its teaching on reason and logic (even metaphysical phenomena like the Hereafter – 2/219-200). It guides to the path of *Allah* (the Truth) those who strive to ponder upon it (29/69).

The prevalent concept of prayer makes it an activity in which *Allah* is

The Current Concept of Prayer

requested to do, or give, something. But

the Arabic term *du'aa* (دعا) means to call out to (beckon) someone. As 'calling out' is often for help, the term has also come to be used for 'seeking help', 'asking for', 'requesting', etc.

The *Quran* often uses the same term for both the currently prevalent but erroneous concept as well as the *Quranic* version of it, for example, '*Ilaah*' (الله) (to mean an idol as well as *Allah*) and '*Ibaada*' (for reverential worship as well as practical adoption of *Allah*'s law). Similarly, '*da'aa*, *yad'oo* etc. has been used in the meaning of the idolators calling out to their gods and goddesses for help, as well as for a Muslim to obey *Allah*. Let us first look at instances in the *Quran* where this particular term and its derivatives have been used to mean 'obedience to *Allah*'. *Sura Al-Momin*: "He (*Allah*) lives and give life. Say

***Da'aa* to mean obedience**

(O Messenger!): I have been forbidden to obey

those whom you call (obey) other than *Allah*. I have been ordered to submit to the Preserver of all worlds! (40/65,66). *Sura Maryam* cites Abraham saying to his people: "And I sever connections with those who obey someone other than *Allah* ..." (19/48, 49). *Sura Momin*: "Your Preserver says to you: 'Call me and I will answer you. Those who transgress My obedience shall enter Hell, humiliated!'" --- (40/60). *Sura Toor* mentions residents of Paradise answering the query about their deserving the good end by: "Previously (in the worldly life), we used to call (obey) Him". The Messenger was told: "Say: 'I only call (obey) my Preserver and do not have anyone sharing with Him!' – (72/20). Messenger, in

general, beckoned: “and don’t call (obey) any other god along with *Allah*: -- (26/213; 28/88; 72/18). *Sura An’āam* clearly says to the Messenger to say to men: “After having received such clear guidance, how can I call a god other than *Allah*? I have been ordered to submit (only) to the Preserver of all worlds!” – (6/71).

Let us now look at the instances where *da’aa* has been used in the

***Da’aa* to mean petition**

Quran to mean calling out to *Allah* (for help,

guidance, etc.). Before we do that, however, we should look at some of the questions raised by this particular meaning of ‘*da’aa*’.

The belief in an unchangeable pre-destined life renders *da’aa* simply futile. For example, the pre-written destiny of a dying patient cannot be altered by praying (*da’aa*) --- believing that prayer can alter destiny negates the original belief of unchangeable destiny! Furthermore, this projects *Allah* in a strange way --- He first decides something (unchangeable destiny) and then waits for prayer by men to change it!

Difficulties also arise with the view that *Allah* rules by decree – making decisions as events occur. For example, A (right) and B (wrong), involved in a law suit against one another, both pray to *Allah* for success. Obviously, only one prayer will be answered. Who is it going to be? What if A had not prayed at all? If we take the view that A’s prayer will be answered because he is in the right (which is contrary to our social experience, anyway), then once again, prayer is rendered pointless. Again, one may take the view that, in order to succeed, prayer must be accompanied by proper action. In that case, will B win despite being wrong and A lose despite being right?

These problems are compounded further by the traditional interpretation of the famous verse from *Sur Baqara*:

“(O Messenger!) when My people ask you about Me, tell them that I am close to them; whenever a caller calls, I respond with a reply.” (2/186)

The problem with this interpretation, as is frequently observed is that it doesn’t hold true in countless cases of oppressed, poor and down-trodden people around the globe. The traditional response to this argument claims that *Allah* listens to everyone but decides and does what is really good for the petitioner; therefore, an unanswered prayer is actually a blessing in disguise. This response, apart from being unable to satisfy the wronged, has far-reaching undesirable consequences. The oppressed are asked to accept the state of affairs as *Allah*’s better judgment and take all injustice and unfairness committed against them lying down, silently and happily!

Another traditionalist belief is that *Allah* answers prayers only of His

***Allah* listens to His favorites**

chosen people. This has resulted in the

proliferation of the so-called ‘intermediaries’ forming a link between Man and *Allah*. Countless needy people refer to those ‘exalted’ men – dead or alive! -- to forward their requests to *Allah*, with a recommendation.

Obviously, this particular belief is a product of the autocratic period of

Divinity of the king

Muslim history. It was to the benefit of the absolute

rulers to have the people believe that ‘the king is god’s shadow on earth’. It was, therefore, natural for the masses to imagine *Allah* in the same mould as they experienced their earthly rulers (His shadows), complete with His divine court, guards, secretaries, intermediaries, and above all, a whimsical process of decision-making.

About the ‘intermediaries’, the *Quran* says: “They are men just like yourselves” -- (7/194). About dead ‘agents’, (whose graves are so very reverentially visited by millions), it says: “They just can’t hear you. Even if they do, they cannot respond!” – (35/14). Also, “They remain ignorant of whatever you say to them” – (46/5); “They don’t know even about their own resurrection” --- (16/21).

How can such dead people help the living?

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

As to the question how, then, are prayers answered?, let us once

How are prayers answered

again look at verse 2/186 which says: “When

My men ask you of Me tell them I am close to them and respond to everyone who calls Me”. It goes on: “If you wish an answer from Me, you must be convinced of My guidance and obey Me. *Sura Shura* says: Those get their answers who are convinced and do good (proper and fruitful) deeds” – (42/26). *Sura Momin*: “You call Me, I’ll respond. (But) Those who defy and transgress, they will enter Hell, humiliated!” --- (40/60). *Sura A’raaf*, while talking about ‘calling out to Allah’, says: “He certainly doesn’t like the transgressors” – (7/55). Those who reject the laws of Allah, do not get their prayers answered” – (40/50). Conviction, followed by continuous diligence to adopt and implement His laws, is the fundamental requirement for getting prayers answered. In fact, such men work at it constantly round the clock and “call out to their Preserver, in hope and despair, and keep available for common use what He has given to them!” --- (32/15-16).

Sura Aal-eImran contains a beautiful account of this concept. I quote here my interpretation of it from my work *Mafsoom-ul-Quran*:

For those who put their reason to use, there are great signs, in the creation of the universe and the cycle of day and night, of the scope and validity of His laws.

It is for those men of reason who constantly keep in view Allah’s laws, be they standing, sitting, or lying down; they keep pondering over the creation of the universe. Their research makes them convinced and say: “O our Preserver! You have created this universe neither in futility nor to destructive purpose. You are too great to have done it so!

Grant us the ability to (benefit properly from the universe as a result of our scientific research and practical experimentation and thus) save ourselves from destruction.

Nations who do not follow this course of action see their efforts wasted away and they plunge into a humiliating, miserable existence with help coming from nowhere.

It is desirable to harness the forces of Nature and use them for the universal sustenance of Man, not for his destruction. This can be done only by a people who are firmly convinced of the divine guidance.

Therefore, these men of reason also say: ‘O our Sustainer! We heard a caller calling us to be convinced of the validity of our Preserver’s laws. We responded to his call and became convinced’.

Then these convinced men of reason desire in their hearts (and they pray): ‘O our Sustainer! Please save us from the consequences of errors we make. Make up for our little slips and mistakes of judgment and application. Please give us the eventual end of a prosperous existence.

O our Preserver! Please keep Your promise You have made, through Your messengers (Divine Revelation), of bestowing us with prosperity and success. Please don’t let us be

humiliated on the Dooms Day.

We are sure You are a keeper of promises! (3/189-193).

To all this, *Allah's* reply is the following:

'Their Preserver then responded to them: "(I have heard your prayers, but you must remember that) I don't waste the work of a worker – man or woman – and respond fully to an action)"' (3/194).

Let us now make things even clearer by looking at the situation of the

Prayers of Divine Messengers Answered

exalted messengers of *Allah*

praying and having their prayers answered.

About Noah, it is said that he called out to *Allah* when his people opposed him vehemently. *Allah* says: "So We are the best (of those) who answer (prayers)" – (37/75). How did He do it? "We revealed upon him (the way of) constructing an ark"! (23/27).

When Moses was told to free Israelites from the oppressive slavery of the Egyptians, he prayed for divine help in view of the gravity of the commission. *Allah* answered: "O Moses, We (hereby) grant what you seek" (20/30). "Go you and your brother (to the Pharaoh), with My word; don't you be lax with it!" – (20/42). Elsewhere; '*Allah*' said, "I have answered your prayer. So be steadfast and never follow those who do not know" (10/89).

Again, when Moses prayed for his people to be granted bounties of Here and the Hereafter, he was told it could happen only if "They follow the last Messenger; Our blessing, although encompassing the entire Universe, can be obtained by men if they are convinced of Our laws, abide by them and provide sustenance for others" ---(7/156-157).

Zakariya's prayer for a son was granted right away in principal but materialized only when: "We cured his wife for her" --- (21/89-90). It is obvious, therefore, that prayers are answered only when the relevant laws are properly applied. Praying without appropriate action is commented upon in *Sura Ra'ad* with the allegory of a thirsty person standing inactive on the banks of a river. Such prayers all go wasted (13/14).

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A possible comment on the above can be the intriguing question. Does *Allah* not at all answer prayers of the oppressed? Does anyone? The *Quran's*

Prayer of the Oppressed Answered

reply to this is in the affirmative. Yes,

their prayers are answered. Following is how it happens. Look at a leaf from the Muslim history of the early period.

Years of consistent hard struggle had resulted in the Muslims' own sovereign rule in the town of *Yathrib* (Medina). In the meantime, Muslims still trapped in Mecca came under increasing oppression at the hands of the *Quresh* (the ruling tribe of non-Muslims). The oppressed Muslims prayed to *Allah* for their salvation. *Allah* said to the Muslims in Medina: "What has come upon you that you do not take up arms in *Allah's* way? The weak men, women and children call out to US: "O our Preserve! Take us out of this town of transgressors. Please send some helper and friend for us!" – (4/75).

Clearly, *Allah* does not help the oppressed directly. He does it indirectly

The Quranic State Answers!

through other men. For the first thirteen years

of the movement, the Muslims' prayers (under the oppression of the *Quresh* in Mecca) were answered by words of advice, consolation and suggestions of remaining steadfast, etc. *Allah* said, "Who is the One who answers the call to Him of the desperate and removes their predicament? He (does it when He) makes you the inheritors of Earth!" – (27/26). Please remember that this inheritance is a result of their convinced good deeds (24/55).

Elsewhere, about the Muslims the *Quran* says: "They are the ones who respond to their Preserver's beckoning and establish *sala* (a comprehensive system of adopting *Allah*'s system), make decisions through mutual consultation, and keep for common use whatever sustenance they have" --- (42/38). This method of ruling through mutual consultation, established to create and sustain a fair and just social order, is the same employed to salvage the Israelites from the shackles of Egyptian bondage. *Sura Qasas*:

"The Pharaoh had carried transgression to extremes. He operated a policy of 'divide and rule' by oppressing and neutralizing the potentially dangerous while promoting the inept and the weak.

Our Law of Returns demanded to bestow upon the oppressed its bounties, i.e., inheritance of, and power in, the land where they could have their own sovereign government." --- (28/4-6).

Let me ask you to ponder – just for a few seconds – upon the question: why and when do the oppressed need to pray to *Allah*? They do so in an unjust, unfair and oppressive society which is oblivious to their predicament, abandons

Why pray? them by neglecting them completely. They see no other recourse open to them than to plead with the Almighty. But this never happens in a fair

Not so in a Just Society and just society, simply because they do not need to. This fact was so very eloquently illustrated by Omar, the second Caliph,

Omar's Eloquent Statement when he announced:

"I have been entrusted with the responsibility of the Caliphate so that I stop your prayers on their way out and not let them reach *Allah*!"

that sums up the purpose and target of the *Quranic* social order.

In such a society, no one needs to pray to the Almighty because His representatives on Earth are taking care of them. In such a society there are no individual prayers. That explains the fact that all the Muslim prayers mentioned

Muslim Prayers are Collective in the *Quran* are collective. A glance at those can make clear their purpose. Some of them are:

1. O Preserver of all worlds! Guide us on the right path, the course of those blessed by You! (1/5-7)
2. O our Sustainer! Bestow nice things on us Here as well as in the Hereafter. (2/201)
3. O our Sustainer! Give us steadfastness so that we don't falter. Save us from the consequences of small errors. Give us triumph over the enemy. (3/146-147)

4. O our Sustainer! Ignore our errors and forgetfulness. Don't let us slip back into ignorance like nations of the past. Give us strength to carry out our responsibilities. Give us triumph over those who oppose Your system. (2/286); (3/15)
5. O our Preserver! Don't let us go astray now that we are on the right path. Please keep us provided for. (3/7)
6. O our Sustainer! Keep the promises you have made to us through your messengers. (3/192-193)
7. Let us be among the doers of good deeds (5/83). Not among the transgressors (7/47)
8. Let the Right decide the conflict between us and our opponents. (7/89)
9. O *Allah*! Save us from the oppressors. (10/85)
10. Prayers to be saved from the punishment in Hell. (25/65)
11. Let our families (wife and children) be the cause of happiness; let us be the leaders among law-abiders. (25/74)
12. O our Sustainer! Take us, as well as our brethren gone before us with conviction, under Your protective fold. O *Allah*! Keep our hearts free of malice for our brothers. (59/10)
13. (Muslims praying in Heaven to) Complete our light. (66/8)

It is time now to consider the most important question one may ask at this point: Granted that prayers are collective, what do they achieve? This, being a pivotal question, needs careful consideration.

Human action springs from desire. Desire, and the subsequent will, directly influence an action and its performance. It prepares one psychologically for the

What Prayer Achieves

forthcoming action. The verbalization of desire is

prayer. As *Iqbal* very aptly put it in one of his poems for children:

My desire is on my lips as prayer
Be my life as a candle fairer

Psychological change in a person, and for that matter, in a nation, has far-

Psychological Change

reaching effects. One can only wonder at the

linguistic depth the pre-Islamic Arabic had reached. The simple nomads of the '*jahiliya*' (Ignorance) period used to milk their animals but not quite, leaving a little in there to induce down more. That little amount of milk left was called (*الداعية*) (the caller; the prayer). This illustrates prayer in the human context, i.e., the condition which spurs emotions into action for subsequent performance. Expression of ones desire is prayer.

It is important to consider two fundamental points regarding desire.

First, the nature of desire. The *Quran* suggests the standard of a Muslim's desire as: "and don't desire but what *Allah* wants" --- (81/29), i.e., abide by His laws and follow His system. As mentioned earlier, the sole purpose of human endeavor is to develop one's personality. The standard to measure

Keep your desires in line with *Allah*'s Will

this development is to see

how much of '*Allahness*' is reflected in one's personality. Of course, one kind of divine attributes are beyond humans (e.g., eternity and immortality). But humans can develop in themselves the godly attributes of benevolence, sustenance, kindness, etc. This depends upon having a desire to develop such attributes. So, men should desire what *Allah* wants them to, which can be found in His

Revelation (the *Quran*), without which: “Man instead of praying for good, prays for bad, in his haste” – (17/11).

Second, the objective of a desire must always be kept in view. The *Quran* says the Convinced “Keep in view Allah’s law standing, sitting, and lying” – (3/191). Again, in *Sura Ha’Meem*: “Those who say, ‘Allah is our

What is Remembering Allah preserver’, and then stand firm, they have

angels descending upon them to console and comfort them with their support Here and in the Hereafter, and give them glad tidings of Paradise promised to them. There (in Paradise) you will get what you wish and will happen what you pray for” --- (41/30-31). A Muslim, by definition, does not desire (pray) for anything out of line with Allah’s Will. That, therefore, guarantees answering of the *Momeneen*’s (the Convinced) prayers.

Regarding the ‘help by angels’, the *Quran* has clearly called it ‘psychological satisfaction’ (8/10) resulting in steadfastness – (8/11).

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As far as praying for someone else is concerned, it is nothing but the

Prayer for Others expression of one’s good wishes. It acts as moral

support for others. One such case in point is the practice of praying for the dead (who of course remain unaffected) which is a solace to the bereaved. Such acts are socially desirable to promote gregariousness. That is why the Messenger was told to appreciate and felicitate those who bring in their donations because “Your prayer is satisfying for them” – (9/103).

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The *Quran* reports some individual prayers of divine messengers. Job

Individual Prayers of Messengers (Ayyub) prayed to Allah in his

predicament and He salvaged him (3/83, 84); Jonah (Younis) called out to Him and his calamity was alleviated (31/87,88). In the first place, the *Quran* reports not details as to how such help was given. Secondly, and fundamentally, it is impossible for us to fully comprehend the mechanism of divine Revelation and the nature of the Allah – Messenger relationship. Therefore, it is better left at that. The Messenger Mohammed’s individual prayer mentioned in the *Quran* is ideal for everyone: “Say, ‘O Preserver! Give me knowledge aplenty!’” (20/114).

A commonly held belief is that rejecting the mechanism of prayers makes one deny the benevolence (رَحْمَة - traditionally translated as mercy) of

**Prayer is Blessing and Denying
Blessing is Denying Allah** Allllah, which is denying Allah and His powers.
Let us see what رَحْمَة (rahma)

really is in the *Quranic* context. For that, we must recall the concept of ‘tauba’ (repentance) mentioned earlier in this book.

The ancient Judaic jurisprudence had no place for ‘tauba’. Every little error had to be punished. The Hindu concept of ‘Karam yoge’ (reincarnation) held a similar position. The Christians

believe in ‘the original sin’; Christ went to the cross to absolve Man of sins; anyone believing in the Christ’s being the Savior, gets salvation; that is the basis of the ‘God is Mercy’ belief.

The *Quran* holds a view different from both of the above. *Allah’s* Law of

‘Rahma’

Returns contains both justice and clemency, the latter having a

concept different from the Christian. The *Quranic* concept of clemency may be illustrated by the example of a person putting his / her hand in a flame. The burning which results naturally in pain is justice. At the same time, Nature has created cure and treatment of burns. That is *Allah’s* clemency (*rahma*). This fact can be useful only to those who know and utilize it. This, in the *Quranic* sense, is tauba (repentance), i.e., efforts to rectify a mistake. This point is aptly illustrated in the figurative story of Man’s creation. Both Man and the Devil erred but whereas Man repented and was willing to rectify his error, the Devil refused to confess, standing defiant. Nature (*Allah*) was clement to Man but not to the Devil.

The *Quran* elaborates it in *Sura AzZumr*: “Say (O My Messenger) to those who have done wrong to themselves, ‘Don’t lose hope of *Allah’s* clemency. Verily, He has created means of recovering all falterings. He certainly is the Protector and Clement!’ Come back to your Preserver and submit to Him before your error bears result, after which no one will be able to come to your aid” --- (39/53-55). Elsewhere, it is clarified thus: “When they, who are convinced of Our laws, come to you (My Messenger), say to them: ‘Peace be upon you as your Preserver has bound upon Himself to be clement, i.e., anyone of you who unknowingly falters, then repents and rectifies it, shall find *Allah* protecting and clement’” --- (6/54).

This is not to be taken as a license to commit wrongs. It says: “This is how your Preserver shall be clement to you. But if you return (to your ways), Our system (of punishment) shall return to you. – (17/8).

Tauba (repentance), therefore, is only for those who are convinced of the natural Law of Returns. The disbelievers, on the other hand, have been said to be hopeless of divine clemency. *Sura Ankaboot* says: “Those who reject *Allah’s* Law and its Principle of Returns, are the ones hopeless of My clemency” --- (29/23).

Elsewhere, the *Quran* says: “That who loses faith in his Preserver’s clemency, has surely lost his way” --- (15/56). Contrary to this: “Verily, those who are convinced and abandon (everything for *Allah*) and struggle in *Allah’s* way, seek *Allah’s* clemency. Certainly, *Allah* is Protector and Clement” --- (2/218). *Allah’s* clemency (*rahma*), therefore, is for those who strive. Says the *Quran*:

“Even among the Convinced, the lethargic – save the invalid – can never be at par with those who strive with their selves and wealth in the way of *Allah*. He holds the strugglers in a higher status than those who shirk action. The system benefits all but the endeavoring are graded higher than the passive ones – Higher status and protection and clemency. Certainly, *Allah* is Protector and Clement.” (4/95-96)

Finally, consider *Sura Al’Araaf* where Moses prayed for His blessing for Israelites and got this reply: “Surely, My clemency encompasses everything. But among men, only those merit it who abide by His laws, work for universal sustenance of mankind, are convinced of the validity of Our laws, and follow the illiterate Messenger in the future, who they find mentioned in the Torah and the Bible – he will promote good and forbid wrong, allow nice things and disallow bad, break their unnatural yoke of slavery, lighten them by relieving them of slabs. That is the only way to obtain *Allah’s* clemency, covering the entire universe in its benevolent clouds!” (7/156-157).

Home **Kitab-ul-Taqdeer** (Book of Destiny)

by G. A. Parwez

translated by Khalid M. Sayyed

THE SUMMARY

The Universe, and everything in it, was created with its characteristics pre-determined and its behavior intrinsically programmed in it by Nature. Life,

The Inanimate, Plants & Animals going through its evolutionary phases

from the simplest to the most complex, was no different till it reached the

Humans human form. This was different from all previous creation. *Sura*

Momenoon: “We started creation of Man from essence of clay (inanimate matter) gradually taking it to sexual procreation. Thus We made his semen which impregnated the womb and came to stay in the female egg; then changed the semen into a leech-like form, which later transformed into a meat-like piece; then arose a skeleton within it which We covered with flesh. Then We made him into a creation of another kind!” --- (23/12-14). The attribute setting this new creation apart from the rest of the previous was ‘Divine Energy’ --- “and He blew into him from His energy and made for you (powers of) hearing and sight and thought” – (32/9). This deviation from the hitherto normal was done for a purpose: “Then We gave him hearing and sight; guided him onto the path to accept or reject it” --- (76/2-3). Elsewhere: “We guided him to **two** paths” – (90/10). This testifies to the faculty of choice Man enjoys as compared to the rest of the Universe. Previously, only Allah had the power of choice. Now, Man was created in His image. Man’s faculty of freedom of choice is the colorful thread running through the fabric of the Universe. This

Manifestations of Freedom of Choice has been allegorically illustrated in

the Story of Man’s creation where Man chooses to abide by laws of Nature of his own accord. It is creditable to him simple because he could have refused. A forced action, with no alternative, carries no merit. This new ‘free’ creature was told: “and He has rendered harnessable for you all whatever there is in the Earth and in the skies” --- (45/13). The modern age of science and technology is living testimony of this human attribute, i.e., to harness nature. Science functions on the firm basis of the laws of nature being consistent. The *Quran* refers to these laws as Allah’s will; the Universe is functioning under His will (laws of nature) and it is called its *taqdeer* (destiny).

As regards Man, his existence has two aspects. One: physical existence where he is similar to animals; two: human life where he should follow a code of law referred to as ‘permanent values’, given to him through divine revelation and meant to develop his ‘personality’.

Harnessing the forces of nature is a human attribute; keeping them

The Status of the Convinced within the confines of the divine permanent-

value system is a humane (*mo’min*) attribute. This causes Man’s potential capabilities to manifest to incredible heights. The *Quran* refers to such men as ‘the elevated’ --- (3/138). This ambition to rise up was the driving force behind the phenomenal success of

early Muslims. The selfish and the greedy exploiters of men, alarmed by the situation, got to work against it. They knew it very clearly that it is the *Quran* which taught them to be the masters of their

Revenge on the Momeneen

own fate. The Muslims had to be dissuaded

from the idea that Man can shape his own destiny. Therefore, their adversaries and opponents began – according to a well thought-out conspiracy --- to propagate the age-old belief of Magus of pre-decided destiny of Man. To start with, philosophical discussions on freedom of choice were initiated. Later, the concept of pre-destiny was cloaked in the sacredly religious garb of fabricated tradition of Mohammed. This era saw the appearance of the first-ever commentary of the *Quran* as well as the very first account of history (both by *Tabri*). Both the works were based upon oral tradition attributed to the Messenger through his companions. Collections of these traditions were compiled into book from around the same time. With the passage of time, the idea of pre-destiny of Man attained the sanctity of a religious dogma and,

Propagation of Pre- destiny

subsequently, an article of faith. The idea

spread the notion that dominance and subjugation, status, wealth, happiness and tragedy, success and failure, etc. are all directly controlled by Allah. No human effort can alter individual or collective destiny pre-decided by Him. Therefore, one should be content with whatever state one is in. The oppressor, the cruel, the tyrant, the exploiter are all but pawns in the great divine universal plan and so should not be blamed or complained against that is actually insolence to Allah Himself!

All this development took place during the monarchical period of Muslim history – very obviously, such concepts are very well suited to the motives and purposes of autocratic rulers. In addition to that, kingship and priesthood always have gone, and still, go hand in hand for their mutual benefit, i.e., to rule the populace. Thus, the religious support for such concepts was readily available. The whole idea was reinforced by the concept of mysticism which is really based upon indifference to the practical world and being in an eccentric domain of its own. The inactivity thus bred soon took life out of the Muslim nation. They began believing in the non-*Quranic*, un-Islamic ideology of contentment with their lot. The state of affairs has been there for almost a millennium. Consequently, Muslims, the shapers of the world's destiny, have been reduced to a lethargic, inactive, unscientific-minded group of believers in their

The Duality

pre-decided destiny. But, tragically, Muslims today are torn

between the idea of pre-destiny and practices to change it. The paradoxical behavior is evident in cases like illness, murder, etc. where all efforts are employed to change the course of events. At the same time, strong belief in

The Psychological Dilemma

pre-destiny is verbally expressed!

Consequently, this split psychology renders people half-hearted and ineffective in their actions. A shaky hand always misses the target!

The correct way is for the Muslims in particular, and mankind in general,

The Correct Way

to examine their ideology in the light of the living Book

of Allah – the *Quran*. They should retain what the Book condones. All other notions should be discarded. The focal point of the *Quran* is the Law of Returns --- every human

action bears a result, sooner or later. That makes Man responsible for his actions. Otherwise, the entire system of divine guidance is rendered pointless.

Furthermore, the idea of pre-destiny also makes a mockery of our judicial machinery. Why punish a criminal when he / she only was an instrument in the grand divine plan of things pre-decided at the birth of the Universe?

The same difficulty arises in the case of morality, too! I hope by now it is quite clear that the traditional notion of Man's (or a man's) pre-decided destiny does not hold any ground whatsoever. All human social problems are of their own making (42/30); and only they themselves can solve them as they are fully capable of and responsible for doing it.

From some quarters, an objection is raised to the idea of Man being the

An Objection master of his own destiny. It is said that this contradicts with

the omnipotence of Allah. But this objection is superficial. It would hold good if Allah's authority was restricted by someone other than Himself, but not if He does it of His Own accord. In fact, it substantiates His potency when He formulates laws with the rule that those laws are unchangeable (10/64). He has Himself restricted His powers.

Some present an even flimsier objection in that emphasis on divine

Law in Nothing but Standing Orders laws excludes the person of Allah.

The frivolousness of this argument is quite clear. Allah made some laws through issuing orders which stand for all time. By obeying His laws Man is actually obeying Allah.

Some object on my use of terms like Allah's law instead of Allah's

Order and Law will or Allah's orders (instructions). True, words are not

essential, actions are. But when certain terms tend to alter the real meaning originally intended, words do become important. Terms like 'order', 'instructions', etc. give the impression of being changeable, but 'law' comes out as permanent. Furthermore, obeying orders can be mechanical but following a law is with full awareness and conviction. A law can be tested for its validity by the results it claims to produce. This is exactly what the *Quran* has done when it says that 'kitab' (law) and 'hikma' (its purpose) are both from Allah. Therefore, every action can be seen to be according to the law or

Action and Result otherwise from the result it does or does not bear. One

example is the establishment of the prayer system. The *Quran* claims: "Surely, 'sala' is to eradicate the obscene and the forbidden" ---- (29/45). It is common knowledge that it has not done that during all these centuries of Muslim history (except for a brief initial period). My view is that there is something wrong or lacking in the current idea and / or practice of 'sala'. The *Quran*'s claim is not wrong. We (the Muslims) are.

That is but one example. The *Quran* presents all its laws with their purposes stated. They should be followed with periodic check whether the relevant purposes are being met (the claimed results produced).

That, then, is the essential difference between 'mazhab' (religion) and 'deen' (The *Quranic* System). The former requires mechanical carrying out of orders (rituals)

whereas the latter requires following laws with full awareness and responsibility. That, in other words, is *taqdeer* (destiny), i.e., obeying Allah's law out of choice!

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Appendix

GLOSSARY OF QURANIC TERMS

It is important to glance comparatively at some useful Quranic terms and expression used in this book. Their interpretation by Perwez, apparently digressing from the traditional, is based upon two principles:

The language employed by the Quran should be looked at from its perspective
 of the time of the appearance of the Book (5th / 6th century AD);

The Quran reinforces and clarifies the terms and expressions used by it through
 ‘repetition of verses’, i.e., using antonyms, synonyms, explanation, and repetition, etc.

Parwez's approach is no where more elaborately illustrated than in his monumental *Lughaat-al-Quran* (Language of the Quran).

| TERM | TRADITIONAL | PERWEZ |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Deen | Religion (the principles, the rituals, etc.) based upon the Book, the Traditions of Mohammed, various schools of thought | The way of life (principles) suggested for mankind in the Quran. |
| Mazhab | Religion | Any way (or philosophy) of life. |
| Sala | The five obligatory daily prayers | The entire system of following Allah's way (including the ritual prayers) |
| Zaka | The 2.5 % tax paid to the poor from one's annual holdings. | The entire system of the state managing its finance. |
| Izza | Social status and respect | Power and control |
| Zilla | Degradation | Weakness and vulnerability |
| Taqdeer | Pre-decided destiny | Universal laws of Nature |
| Aakhera | Life after death | Future as well as the Hereafter |
| Iman | Faith, belief | Satisfied conviction |
| Momin | A pious Muslim | A deeply convinced Muslim |
| Janna | Paradise in heaven | Paradise as well as a paradisical society on Earth (Here) |
| Jahannum | Hell | Hell in the Hereafter as well as hellish life on Earth (Here) |
| Aadam | Adam, the first man | Mankind |
| Shaitaan / Iblees | The Devil | Human sentiments of rebellion and emotions of depression |
| Malaaeka | Angels | Forces of Nature |
| Qible | Kaaba, the sacred House of Allah in | The physical (and spiritual) center of |

Mecca

the Muslim nation