

With the Noble Qur'an:

Al-QaDaa wal Qadar (القضاء والقدر) Predestined Fate and Destiny)

(Translated)

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Allah (swt) says, ﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ * لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾ **“No calamity strikes upon the earth or within yourselves except that it is in a Register before We bring it into being—indeed that, for Allah, is easy * In order that you may not despair over what has eluded you nor exult over what He has given you. And Allah does not like any self-deluded, boastful person.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Hadid: 22-23].

The noble verse opens with the negative particle (مَا maa) followed by the exception particle (إِلَّا illa) to convey restriction (ḥasr), meaning the restriction of all afflictions to being recorded in a Book.

And **“calamity”** (مصيبة muṣeebah) refers to everything that befalls a person that he dislikes and that harms him, including direct afflictions upon oneself such as illness, weakness, fear, or hunger, as well as indirect afflictions that occur on earth such as drought, floods, earthquakes, or otherwise. In other words, a calamity is everything with which a person is tested that he dislikes or that harms him. The word calamity (muṣeebah) appears as an indefinite (نكرة nakirah) noun in the context of negation to denote generality, indicating the general scope of all afflictions.

And **“strikes”** (أصاب asaaba) means descended or occurred, and its grammatical subject is the word calamity (museebah) preceded by the preposition (من min); hence, the word (museebah) is genitive in form but nominative in grammatical position. The direct object of (asaaba) is omitted, understood implicitly as: “struck you” or “struck anyone.”

“On the earth” (جار ومجرور fee al-ard) is a prepositional clause positioned after the indefinite noun (museebah), serving as its adjective, or a prepositional attachment with an omitted adjective (متعلقة بصفة محذوفة) meaning “a calamity occurring on the earth”; the meaning is: calamities occurring on earth, which are general calamities as previously exemplified.

“Nor within yourselves” (ولا في أنفسكم wa-laa fee anfusikum) refers to personal afflictions that strike each individual, conjunctionally linked to general calamities on earth to convey diversification and exhaustive categorization of calamities. The negation with (lā) is repeated to emphasize the importance of personal calamities affecting man due to their intense impact upon his soul.

“Except that it is in a Register before We bring it into being” (إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا illa fee kitaabin min qabli an nabra'ahaa) is an exception following a negation to express restriction; the meaning is: no calamity strikes on earth or within yourselves except that it is recorded in a Book. The verb bara'a (برأ) means “created” (khalaqa), and the pronoun (haa) attached to (nabra'ahaa) refers to the earth, though it may also refer to the souls, as well as to the calamity itself. The Shariah texts indicate that the recording took place before the creation of the heavens and the earth. Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, and Ahmad narrated on the authority of Ubadah ibn as-Samit that he said, «يَا بَنِيَّ، إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَجِدَ طَعَمَ

حَقِيقَةُ الْإِيمَانِ حَتَّى تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ مَا أَصَابَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئِكَ، وَمَا أَخْطَاكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبِكَ، سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ، قَالَ: رَبِّ وَمَاذَا أَكْتُبُ؟ قَالَ: اكْتُبْ مَقَادِيرَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ. يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى غَيْرِ هَذَا فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي. “O my son, you will never taste the reality of Iman until you know that what has afflicted you could not have missed you, and what has missed you could not have afflicted you. I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “Indeed, the first thing Allah created was the Pen. He said to it: Write! It asked: My Lord, what shall I write? He said: Write the decrees of everything until the Hour is established.” O my son, I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say, “Whoever dies believing other than this is not of me.””

The recording in a Book is a metaphor (كناية kinaayah) for the prior knowledge of Allah (swt); however, the metaphor does not preclude the literal meaning, that is, it does not prevent the actual existence of a Book in which calamities are written down. Abundant Shariah texts corroborate the existence of a Book, which is the Preserved Tablet (اللوح المحفوظ Al-Lawḥ I-Mahfūz). Allah (swt) says, ﴿أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ﴾ “Do you not know that Allah knows whatever is in the heaven and the earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed, that for Allah is easy.” [TMQ Surah Al-Hajj: 70].

This noble verse combines the specific knowledge of Allah (swt) regarding the heavens and the earth with the actual existence of a Book in which Allah (swt) wrote down that knowledge; the verse also indicates that this is easy for Him (swt).

Likewise, the verse we are reflecting upon today described the recording of calamities in a Book prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth as something easy for Allah (swt), saying, ﴿إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾ “Indeed, that for Allah is easy.”

The believer’s stance toward the calamities that befall him is patience and seeking reward (al-ṣabr wal-iḥtisāb), so he remains patient while seeking the reward for his patience with Allah (swt), saying, “Indeed to Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return,” thereby attaining the mercy of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ * الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾ “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient * They are those who, when calamity strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” * Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the rightly guided.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 155-157].

«عَجِبْتُ لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ ، إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ، إِنْ أَصَابَهُ مَا يُحِبُّ ، إِنْ أَصَابَهُ كُفْرٌ خَيْرٌ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ مَا يَكْرَهُ فَصَبَرَ كَانَ لَهُ خَيْرٌ، وَلَيْسَ كُلُّ أَحَدٍ أَمْرُهُ كُلُّهُ خَيْرٌ إِلَّا الْمُؤْمِنُ» “I marvel at the affair of the believer, for his affair is entirely good. If something pleasing befalls him, he praises Allah and it is good for him; and if something disliked befalls him, he exercises patience and it is good for him. And this applies to no one except the believer.” [Narrated by Ahmad and Muslim].

These calamities that occur on earth or within the lives of people belong to Al-QaDaa wal Qadar (Predestined Fate and Destiny), because human actions fall into two spheres. The first sphere is one in which man controls his actions, performing all his deeds by choice—eating, sleeping, working, and so forth—doing all of this by his own will and volition. This sphere is the domain of accountability, where he is rewarded for his deeds if they conform to the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt), and punished for them if they deviate from Allah’s commands and prohibitions. Allah (swt) says, ﴿فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ * وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ﴾ “So whoever does an atom’s

weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” [TMQ Surah Al-Zalzalah: 7-8].

The second sphere is that in which actions originate from man or happen to him involuntarily, beyond his ability to avert. This includes what is necessitated by the order of existence—such as a human being's physical form, height, color, and limited capabilities, as well as the properties and natural laws decreed by Allah (swt) in the heavens, the earth, and all within them, such as gravity, day and night, rain, and winds. It also includes what is not necessitated by the order of existence—such as being struck by a car, a plane crash, falling from a roof or mountain peak, contracting an illness, or similar occurrences. Man is not held accountable for these, as they occurred from him or upon him without his ability to control them or prevent their occurrence.

As for, ﴿لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ﴾ **“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you nor exult over what He has given you.”** The rationale (تعلييل ta'leel) here is introduced by ﴿لِكَيْلَا li-kaylā), highlighting the wisdom behind informing us that the calamities descending upon us originate from Allah (swt) and that He (swt) knew, recorded, and decreed them prior to creating the heavens and the earth. The wisdom behind this disclosure is to console believers and grant them patience, so that they may firmly believe that whatever afflicted them could not have missed them, and whatever missed them could not have afflicted them. Thus, a believer does not despair over a good that passed him by and which he could not attain, nor does he despair over a calamity that befell him; instead, he remains patient and seeks reward.

Likewise, he does not exult excessively over what Allah (swt) has granted him. The blameworthy exultation referred to here is excessive joy that leads to arrogance, insolence, and ingratitude for divine favors, such as the exultation of Korah (Qarun), as Allah (swt) says, ﴿إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ﴾ **“When his people said to him, “Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.”**” [TMQ Surah Al-Qasas: 76].

This is the exultation that leads to self-conceit, vanity, and boastfulness, as further indicated by the subsequent phrase in the very same verse, ﴿وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾ **“And Allah does not like any self-deluded, boastful person.”** As for the natural joy a person feels for something he loves, it is not blameworthy—such as the joy of the martyrs over the honor they behold with Allah (swt), as He says, ﴿فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ﴾ **“Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty”** [TMQ Surah Aal-i 'Imran: 170], as well as the joy of a fasting person upon breaking his fast and upon meeting his Lord.

As for ﴿وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾ **“And Allah does not like any self-deluded, boastful person,”** it is established in the Fundamentals of Shariah Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh أصول الفقه) that everything disliked by Allah (swt) is prohibited and forbidden. Thus, the expression (والله لا يحب) “And Allah does not like” serves as a contextualization (قرينة qareenah) evidencing decisiveness (حزم jazm) in the demand to refrain (طلب الترك talab ut-tark), meaning the prohibition of what follows it. Self-delusion (ikhtiyaal) refers to pride and vanity over what one has been granted, while boastfulness (fakhr) is ostentation, self-aggrandizement, and self-praise regarding what a person has received. Both are forbidden, prohibited, and sinful for the perpetrator. The word Fakhoor (فخور) is an intensive form (صيغة مبالغة seeghat mubaalaghah) derived from fakhr, meaning one who boasts excessively.