

**In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful**

**THE BELIEF IN DESTINY IN ISLAM**

All praise is due to Allah, May the Peace and blessings of Allah be upon the Messenger of Allah.

Afterwards:

I thank all members of the committee saddled with the responsibility of convoking this learned and blessed gathering of Islamic call (Da'wah), particularly its chairman Shaykh Bello Abdul Fattah Al Adaby, the Director of Ma'had al Huda al Adaby. I thank you all for honouring me with this invitation as guest speaker in this occasion that I believe one of its important objectives is to achieve unity of purpose and share common understanding. This is what Muslims of today wants. The Muslim Ummah of today is in need of it, especially when we take a look at the unlimited challenges that surrounded and continue to surround the Muslim World of today coming from every direction. I ask Allah to include this laudable effort in the scale of good deeds of all of us.

Since the topic of this lecture is "Belief in Destiny in Islam", I consider it appropriate to start with definition of the term "Al Qadr" as follows;

Al Qadar is a verbal noun, derived from the verb "Qadara" which means "to be acquainted with the scope of a thing". Linguistically, it is verdict, wisdom, degree of a thing and evaluation in balancing an affair. Al Qadar in technical sense – that which we are most concerned about in this gathering – is what knowledge precedes it and the pen (of destiny) had written all that will exist till eternity. Allah - exalted is He – has predestined the due proportion of all creatures. Allah knows what will become of events prior to their occurrence. He knows the precise time events will occur and the peculiar circumstance. Those events - without any doubt – will come to pass in accordance with what Allah predestined.

Shaykh al Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Destiny is inseparable from the power of Allah." For this reason Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said: "Destiny is the power of Allah." He is by this statement pointing to the fact that whoever refute destiny has certainly refuted the power of Allah, whereas destiny encompasses the power of Allah over all things. Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen defined Qadar as "the verdict of Allah on all creatures in accordance with His preceding knowledge and necessitating wisdom."

It is worth mentioning that the belief of a Muslim will be incomplete until he believes in destiny. This is because the belief in destiny is the belief that everything that occurs in the worldly life be it good or bad, is a predestination of Allah since sempiternity. The act of goodness as part of the deeds of man is made possible by His predestination, love and pleasure. The act of evil as part of the deed of man is done by His predestination and knowledge not by His love and pleasure. Allah is the creator of good and evil but He is pleased with good and does not like evil even though Allah is the creator of acts of mankind, their intentions and wishes, the good and the bad of them.

The belief in destiny is one of the components of faith in Islam as contained in the tradition of Thabit who narrated that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon) when he asked Jibril (May the Peace of Allah be upon) about the meaning of faith: “Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the last day and to believe in destiny, its good or bad.” [Bukhari]

## **PILLARS OF DESTINY**

The Belief in destiny – as explained earlier – is based on four pillars. It is obligatory to have faith in them as this will further help to understand the matter better. These pillars are also called stages of destiny. They are as follows:

### **THE FIRST PILLAR: KNOWLEDGE**

The belief of a Muslim in destiny will be incomplete until he believes that Allah is omniscient of all things, inclusive of events of the past, present and future. The same way His knowledge encompasses unhappen event and the consequence of such event were it to occur. A Muslim also believes that Allah knows what is in existence and non-existence, the possibility and the impossibility. He believes that Allah knows all these by His sempiternal and eternal knowledge. He does not possess knowledge after Ignorance just as he is not overtaken by forgetfulness.

As part of manifestation of the Belief in destiny is the fact that Allah is has complete knowledge about mankind, their appointed time, situations, sustenance, actions and inactions as well as their misfortune and success. He knows who among them would have his abode in paradise and who among them would have his abode in hell, even before He created them, the heavens and the earth. This has been the ordainment of Allah due to His knowledge attribute and being the All-Knowing, the Well-Acquainted, the All-Hearing and the All-Seeing. Allah, the exalted says: “He is Allah, Whom there is no deity worthy of worship except He, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen (open).” [Al Hashr: 22] and

He says: “the All-Knower of the unseen, not even the weight of an atom (or a small ant) or less than that or greater, escapes from His knowledge in the heavens or in the earth.” [Saba: 3] and He says: “ Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.” [An Nahl: 125]

But as to what relates to his affirmed knowledge about unhappen event and the consequence of such event were it to occur, it has been mentioned in the Qur’an; “But if they were returned (to the world), they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden.” [An An’am: 28] So Allah knows these liars, who are wishing to have a second opportunity to return to the world, would stray from the right path and revert to sin were they to return. Allah says further: “And spend (in charity) of that with which We have provided you, before death comes to one of you and he says: “My Lord! If only You give me respite for a little while (i.e return to the worldly life), then I should give *sadaqah* (i.e *Zakat*) of my wealth, and be among the righteous. And Allah grants respite to none when his appointed time (death) comes. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” [Al Munafiqun: 10-11] Just as Allah stated in the Qur’an that the unbelievers – even if they wished – would not be able to listen to the truth, “Had Allah known of any good in them, He would indeed have made them listen, and even if He had made them listen, they would but have turned away, averse (to the truth).” [Al Anfaal: 23]

As part of the manifestations of His knowledge about all that is existing is His knowledge about the activity of infants who died at tender age and what would be of them should they attained old age. It has been reported in Sahih Bukhari, on the authority of Abdullahi Ibn ‘Abbas who said; the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) was asked about the children of the polytheists and He said; “Allah knows best about what they do”. Imam Muslim also reported on the authority of ‘Aishah, the mother of the believers, who said that Allah’s Messenger (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) was called to lead the funeral prayer of a child of the helpers of Madinah (Ansar). I said: Allah’s Messenger, there is happiness for this child who is a bird from the birds of Paradise for he committed no sin nor has he reached the age when one can commit sin. He said: ‘Aishah, per adventure, it may be otherwise, because Allah created for Paradise those who are fit for it while they were yet in their father’s loins and created for Hell those who are to go to Hell. He created them for Hell while they were yet in their father’s loins.” [Muslim]

These and other traditions speak of the knowledge of Allah about those who died at a tender age. Not that Allah will admit them into Hell without having done any act. On the sayings of the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) about the children of the polytheists, Shaykh al Islam Ibn Taymiyah (May Allah have mercy on him) said; “In other words, He (Allah) knows who will believe in Allah among them and who will disbelieve in

Allah if he attains maturity age. Furthermore it was reported in the tradition reported by Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: “On the day of Judgement Allah will test them (those who died at tender age). He will raise a messenger in a courtyard on that day. Whoever obeys him, Allah will admit him to paradise and whoever disobeys him, Allah will admit him to Hell.” At that time, the knowledge of Allah about them becomes apparent and he will reward them based on His knowledge about their belief and disbelief.

## **SECOND PILLAR: DIVINE DECREE**

We believe that Allah has decreed all things in the preserved tablet. In other words, He has decreed all that will happen till the Day of Judgment. Part of the evidence of Allah’s knowledge and divine decree of all things is His words; “Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book. Verily! That is easy for Allah.” [Hajj: 70]. It was reported on the authority of Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘As who said: I heard Allah’s Messenger (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) saying: Allah ordained the measures of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.” In the Sunan Tirmidhi, it was reported as well on the authority of ‘Ubadah Ibn Samit who said: Allah’s Messenger (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: “the first thing Allah created was pen. He (Allah) then said: “Write!” The pen asked; “What should I write?” Allah said: “Write down destiny, what has happened and all that will happen till eternity.” Tirmidhi said: this is a strange (*gharib*) narration.

And the preserved tablet is that in which Allah has decreed the measures of the creation. The Qur’an named it the book, the manifest book, clear book, mother of the book and the inscribed book. Allah says: “Nay! This is a Glorious Qur’an. Inscribed in Al Lauh al Mahfuz (the Preserved tablet).” [Al Buruj: 21-22], “And all things We have recorded with numbers (as a record) in a clear book.” [Yasin: 12] and “By the Mount. And the Book inscribed. In parchment enrolled.” [At Tur: 1-3]

## **THIRD PILLAR: DIVINE WILL**

We believe that Allah has divinely willed all that are in the heavens and the earth. Nothing exists except in accordance with His will – the exalted. It is the same whether His will is in relation to acts of the creator or acts of creatures. As to what relates to the acts of the creator, Allah has said in His clear revelation; “Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, “Be!” and it is!” [Yasin: 82]. He also said: “And your Lord creates whatsoever He wills and choses.” [Al Qasas: 68]. In other words, He creates and choses whatsoever by His will among His creatures. That is because He created mankind and selected prophets among them and among the prophets, He selected the messengers. And

among the messengers, He selected the five messengers of strong will. Thereafter, He selected Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) and made Him the best of mankind in general. Allah says; “Allah sends astray whom He wills and He guides on the Straight Path whom He wills.” [Al An’am: 39], He said; “And Allah does what He wills.” [Ibrahim: 27] and He said; “He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases.” [Al Imran: 6]

As to what relates to acts of the creatures, Allah says; “Had Allah willed, indeed He would have given them power over you, and they would have fought you.” [An Nisaa: 90], He said; “If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it, so leave them alone with their fabrications.” [Al An’am: 112] and He said; “And you will not, unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the *‘alamin* (mankind, Jinns and all that exists).” [At Takwir: 29]. The permeating will of Allah and His encyclopedic power come together in past and future events and they separate in yet-to-occur and unhappen events. This implies that whatsoever Allah wills will certainly come to pass by His power and whatever He does not will, will not be due to the absence of His will; not that He – glorified is He – lacks the power. Allah, the most exalted said; “And had Allah willed, He could have gathered them together (all) unto true guidance, so be not you one of those who are ignorant.” [Al An’aam: 35], He said; “Had Allah willed, they would not have taken others besides Him in worship.” [Al An’aam: 107], He also said; “And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them together. So, will you (O Muhammad SAW) then compel mankind, until they become believers?” [Yunus: 99] and He said; “If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does what He likes.” [Al Baqarah: 253]

The overabundance of The Prophet’s (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) affection on His Ummah (the Muslim nation) made Him to be desirous of having all mankind profess faith in Allah. In achieving this goal, He assumed heavy responsibilities and bore grievous hardships but Allah lighten those tasks by making Him (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) realize that He is not obliged to compel mankind to profess faith. Rather the duty on Him is to convey the message and He has done it. It is sufficient for Him that He has conveyed the message without being overtasked to such an extent that he had to take an unlawful means like committing suicide to freeing from being burdened.

#### **FOURTH PILLAR: CREATION**

We believe that Allah is the creator of all things and He is the disposer of affairs over all things. In other words, Allah created all beings with their nature, qualities and activities. Allah says: “Allah is the creator of all things and He is the Disposer of affairs over all things.” [Az Zumar: 62] and He said; “He has created everything and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.” [Al Furqan: 2]. Allah said about Prophet Ibrahim

(Allah's blessings and peace be upon Him) who said to His people; "While Allah has created you and what you make!" [As Saffat: 96].

Those four stages earlier mentioned encompasses that which relates to acts of Allah and acts of mankind, inclusive of all sayings, actions or inactions. All of them are known by Allah as they are recorded.

At this juncture, it is imperative to treat two important questions that relate to this topic.

### **The First Question: Does man has power and freewill?**

To answer this question, it is worth mentioning the fact that Belief in Destiny based on the above explanation, does not void the ability of man to have will in selecting actions (be they good or bad) the same way he has power to control his actions. This implies that we believe Allah has made possible for his creatures the ability to decide and control – these two gives rise to action. There is no authority for a sinner to rely on destiny as a justification for his sin. A sinner undertakes to sin by his choice without knowing that Allah destined it for him. After all no one knows destiny of Allah except after it has manifested as fate.

This is the methodology of the righteous predecessors, who are reliable scholars. They are opposed to the Qadarites and Jabarites who erred in the concept of destiny. The Qadarite scholars disprove destiny by saying that Allah did not know the acts of mankind and does not know anything until after its occurrence. The same way the Jabarites (they are the followers of Al Jahm Ibn Safwan) opined that men are compelled to act because they are like feather in the air that cannot control itself. All these statements are false as Muslims are expected to have the belief that Allah created all things and evil cannot be attributed to Him – glorified be He – let alone to His predestination and ordainment as His mercy and wisdom is perfect. It has been stated in the Qur'an that; "And we know not whether evil is intended for those on earth or whether their Lord intends for them a Right Path." [Al Jinn: 10]

Both Shari'ah and reality point to the fact that man has freewill in selecting actions and he cannot claim destiny as justification for his own actions. The following verses of the Qur'an substantiate the Shar'iah position on freewill. Allah says: "Whosoever wills, let him seek a place with (or a way to) His Lord (by obeying Him in this worldly life)!" [An Naba: 39], He says; "So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can" [At Taghaabun: 16], He says; "So go to your tilth when or how you will" [Al Baqarah: 223] and He said further; "Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned." [Al Baqarah: 286]. Were man compelled to act, he would have been obliged to act in a particular. But this is not possible as Allah commands good and prohibits evil for man without burdening with things he does not have the ability to do.

Reality on the other hand shows that every individual knows that he has freewill and ability with which he acts and abandons as well as distinguishes between what happens by his will like walking and what happens without his will like shivering. But the will and power of man will only happen by the will and power of Allah as said by Allah; “To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight. And you will not, unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the ‘*alamin* (mankind, Jinns and all that exists).” [At Takwir: 28-29]. More so, the entire world is Allah’s possession and there is nothing in His possession without His knowledge and will. Relying on destiny as justification for abandonment of obligatory acts of worship or committing sins is false due to innumerable textual evidence. The following are examples of textual and rational evidence.

1. Allah says: “Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the Messengers. And Allah is Ever All Powerful, All-Wise.” [An Nisaa: 165]. If destiny was a valid plea for mankind, it will still not contradict sending messengers because disobedience to the message brought by the messengers will still happen by Allah’s will. Allah says; “And We never punish until We have sent a messenger (to give warning).” [Al Isra: 15]
2. Narrated ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) said; “While the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) was in a funeral procession, he took a stick and started scraping the earth with it and said, “There is none of you but has his place assigned either in Hell or in Paradise.” They (the people) said; “shall we not depend upon that (and give up doing any deeds)?” He said, “Carry on doing (good deeds) for everybody will find it easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place for which he has been created.” And then the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) recited the verse: “As for him who gives (in charity) and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him. And believes in Al-Husna. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient. And denies Al-Husna. We will make smooth for him the path for evil.” [Al Layl: 5-10]. In the version of Imam Muslim; “For everyone is facilitated in that for which he has been created.” Thus, the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) instructed them to carry with good deeds and warned them against giving up on doing any deeds.
3. Man strives for what is beneficial for him in worldly affairs till he achieves it, and he will not deviate from it to unbeneficial things. He thereafter claims destiny for deviating from beneficial things to unbeneficial things. Why does he deviates from what benefits him in his worldly matters to what harms and then claimed destiny as justification? Isn’t the two matter the same? While giving explanation on this point,

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said; “Here is an example that clarifies it: if a person finds before him two paths: the first path leads to a country full of chaos, killings, stealing, violation of people’s honour, fear and hunger. The second path leads to a country full of regulation, constant security, opulent life, abundant wealth and respect for the sanctity of human life. Which of the two paths is better to follow? Such person will, without doubt, follow the second path that lead to secured land. It is impossible for any right thinking person to follow the path that leads to land of chaos and fear and then rely on destiny as justification. Why then will a person, in the matter of the Last Day, follow the path of Hell instead of path of paradise and then rely on destiny as justification. Allah says; “Have We not made for him a pair of eyes? And a tongue and a pair of lips? And shown him the two ways (good and evil)?” [Al Balad: 8-10]

4. Where a person who relies on destiny as justification for abandoning the obligatory acts of worship or committing sins, finds his rights to be infringed upon by someone who stole his money and violated his honour and then claimed destiny as justification by saying: do not blame me, my acts of breach was due to destiny. He would not accept such plea. How comes such a person would not accept destiny as justification for the acts of breach of others against him but will accept it for himself in his breach against the rights of Allah?

At the juncture it is worth to recall a wisecrack that was said by the commander of the faithfuls, ‘Umar Ibn Al Khattab when a thief was brought before him and he ordered that his hand be amputated. The thief then said; “Easy! O commander of the faithfuls. I only stole as a result of destiny. ‘Umar replied him: “And we are amputating your hand as a result of destiny.”

### **The Second Question: Does decree of matters oppose to carrying on with good deeds and exertion?**

This question can be rephrased in another expression thus; Is having or taking a means to achieve an objective a required obligatory or not? The decree of matters in the preserved tablet before its occurrence does not contradicts carrying on with good deeds and exertion. Allah has decreed all means and factors giving rise to the means, just as He decreed the outcomes (end point) and the beginnings (start point). Success is linked with the doing of good deeds and misfortune is linked with the doing of evil deeds.

Let’s take an instance of a man who said; if Allah has decreed that I will have a child, the child will surely come. There is no need for me to marry. Would we accept his statement to be correct? The answer, without doubt, is that we would not accept it. For he has not taken



the means that will allow him have a child, which is the intercourse between male and female. But this is only permitted through lawful marriage. The same is the case with the one who abandons taking actions and relies on destiny for sins he committed because he believes his fate has been earlier determined. For this reason, the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) was asked: “O Messenger of Allah! Have you seen the medicines with which we treat ourselves, the prayers with which we seek protection and the fear we have. Can they in anyway prevent the occurrence of destiny? The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) responded by saying: “they are parts of Allah’s predestination.” From this, we can see how the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon Him) made it clear that both means and causative factors are parts of predestination.

‘Umar (May Allah be pleased with Him) had a better understanding of this creedal principle. ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas narrated that ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab departed for Sham and when he reached Sargh, ‘Umar made an announcement, “I will ride back to Medina in the morning, so you should do the same.” Abu ‘Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah said (to ‘Umar), “Are you running away from what Allah had ordained?” ‘Umar said, “Would that someone else had said such a thing, O Abu ‘Ubaida! Yes, we are running from what Allah had ordained to what Allah has ordained. Don’t you agree that if you had camels that went down a valley having two places, one green and the other dry, you would graze them on the green one only if Allah had ordained that, and you would graze them on the dry one only if Allah had ordained that?” At that time ‘Abdur-Rahman Ibn ‘Auf, who had been absent because of some affairs, came and said, “I have some knowledge about this. I have heard Allah’s Apostle saying, ‘If you hear about it (an outbreak of plague) in a land, do not go to it; but if plague breaks out in a country where you are staying, do not run away from it.’” ‘Umar thanked Allah and returned to Madinah. [Bukhari]

Certainly, we are running from sickness to health, from death to life – if that is possible – with certain knowledge that these afflictions will inevitably happen one day by Allah’s predestination. We run from being afflicted while bearing in mind the words of Allah; “For each and every matter there is a Decree (from Allah)” [Ar-Ra’d: 38]. In other words everything will occur no matter the effort of man at running away from them, but the occurrence will only be at the appointed and ordained time.

There is yet another circumstance where ‘Umar forbids and reproaches a jobless man who depends unduly on predestination and does not have any vocation doing. ‘Umar sent him out of mosque and told him; “Heaven does not rain gold.” Shaykh Mustapha Zuglool (May Allah have mercy on Him) is considered an exemplar in taking means as he would not depend unduly on predestination but rather he would work, strive and call on Allah to realize his desires. Shaykh Zuglool only earned a mark of distinction by being serious and

giving due attention to issues. His philosophy of life is reflected in diligence, hardworking and assiduity. He was always between hope and fear whenever he seeks from his lord. Added to that is the fact that Shaykh (May Allah have mercy on Him) keeps away from danger and avoids running a risk with his life. For this reason, he keeps away from taking sugar and he would not allow his driver to go beyond the speed limit. These do not mean that he is afraid of death but rather they give clear indication of the truthfulness of his belief in destiny and the extent of his abidance by the Sunnah of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) in taking means.

The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) is an exemplar in taking means. In the battle of Badr the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him), despite Allah's promise of victory to the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him), He still called on His Lord fervently with persistence and humility before Him to the extent that Abu Abubakar and other companions become apprehensive for the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him). Even the honourable companions took the means and were mindful in their affairs. An example to recall is the practice of spacing between one child and another as contained in the statement of Jabir Ibn Abdullahi who said that; "We used to practice coitus interruptus while the Quran was being revealed." This is like taking precautionary measure to avoid having too much offspring at a time. Yet they have absolute knowledge of the verse: "We provide for them and for you." [Al Israa: 31] and "We provide for you and for them." [Al An'aam: 151].

## **DIVISIONS OF DESTINY IN ISLAM**

The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: "Allah has decreed the proportions of mankind fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth." It was after then that He decreed the sustenance of man, his appointed time, work, misfortune and success once again, in the womb of his mother. On the basis of textual evidence, scholars have divided destiny into two:

### **One: The absolute or irreversible destiny:**

It is whatever that is in the mother book (Preserved tablet). This will not change. It is the sempiternal destiny. Allah says: "The Sentence that comes from Me cannot be changed and I am not unjust (to the least) to the slaves" [Qaaf: 29]. The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) had once said to Ummu Habibah: "You have asked from Allah about durations of life already set, and the length of days already allotted and the sustenance the share of which has been fixed. Allah would not do anything earlier before its due time, or He would not delay anything beyond its due time." [Muslim]. Imam An Nawawi, during his

explanation of this prophetic tradition said; “Verily, appointed time and sustenance are predestined. The both cannot change to against what Allah has predestined in sempiternity. It is impossible to increase or increase predestination.”

### **Two: The conditional or restrictive destiny:**

This is whatever is in the books of the angels. This is where erasure and confirmation are permitted. And it will be said; write the lifespan of so so person. If he fails to give charity, he would be so and so. But if he gives charity, he would be so and so. It is in the knowledge of Allah and His sempiternal destiny that He will give charity or He will not. In this class of destiny, prayer, charities and others are things Allah use to change predestination. This is because destiny is conditional on those things. It is this class of destiny that is intended in the saying of Allah; “(For) each and every matter there is a Decree (from Allah). Allah blots out what He wills and confirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother of the Book.” [Ar-Ra’d: 38-39].

### **IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN POSSIBLY CHANGE DESTINY?**

The answer is yes. There are things that have impact on conditional destiny and change it. But there is nothing that can change an absolute destiny. The following factors can change conditional destiny.

- I. **Supplication and Charity:** the textual evidence that proves that supplication and charity are likely to affect or change conditional destiny is the saying of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him); “Nothing prevents destiny from happening except supplication and nothing increases one’s lifespan except charity.” This tradition was reported by Tirmidhi in the last part of the tradition that states: “Supplication is beneficial in occurred and yet-to occur events.”
- II. **Keeping family ties: the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon Him) said:** “whoever desires an expansion in his sustenance and age, should keep good relations with his kith and kin.” [Agreed upon]. A clear manifestation of this tradition can be seen in the life of Shaykh Zuglool (may Allah have mercy on him), who exhausted himself and exerted his intellect. Rarely do people like him enjoy long life. But Allah – the exalted – might have granted him long life for his act of keeping good relations with his family. The Messenger of Allah has informed us that the average lifespan of His Ummah (the Muslim nation) is between sixty and seventy years. Whereas Shaykh Zuglool lived for eighty years.

- III. **Seeking lots of forgiveness:** Allah says; “I said (to them): ‘Ask the forgiveness of your Lord; Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance and give you increase in wealth and children” [Nuh: 10-12]

It should however be noted that the mere fact that one has done one of the three identified factors does not mean that change of destiny will occur, as there could be a barrier that will hinder the occurrence of such a change. For instance, sins and acts of oppression are barriers that hinder acceptance of supplication. The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon Him) said; “Verily, man is deprived of sustenance as a result of the sin he committed.” [Imam Ahmad]

### **WHAT IS REAL MEANING OF BELIEF IN DESTINY?**

Since faith is that which resides in the heart and attested to by deed, it then becomes imperative to know that mere vocalizing statement of faith and professing belief in destiny is not sufficient. On this premise, I consider it important to point at some meanings of belief in destiny.

**Avoiding the use of “If”:** The use of “if” leads one to deny the mercies of Allah, neglect His grace and give undue regard to His blessings. The use of “if” in situations of distress and grief over what is lost or gone is prohibited in Shari’ah, as it brings no benefit. It rather opens the door of regret and sadness. On this, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said; “A strong believer is better and more lovable to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone, (but) cherish that which gives you benefit (in the Hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart, and if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don’t say: If I had not done that, it would not have happened so and so, but say: Allah did that what He had ordained to do and your “if” opens the (door) for the Satan.” [Imam Muslim]

**Firm belief and certainty** that only Allah elevates whosoever He wills and gives dominion to whosoever He wills among His servants. This is the understanding ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) had, which made him reject the request of the hypocrites who wanted him to oppose the caliphate authority of Abu bakr As Siddiq. These hypocrites are the Kharijites and Rafidites who only pretend to harbor love of ‘Ali but their main objective is to destroy Islam brought by Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) and violently cause instability in the affairs of the Muslims, followers of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him). These people have followers and offspring up till present day whom I consider to be Kharajites of the contemporary times. They are on the footsteps of the early hypocrites as they tried to cause instability in any Muslim societies that enjoy

security and stability. They equally work day and night under the cover of love of knowledge, scholars and spiritual leaders, to cause calamity by accusing some Muslim leaders of lacking the capacity to lead, after people had accepted their leadership and had given allegiance. Allah says; “The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allah. And on that day, the believers (i.e Muslims) will rejoice.” [Ar Rum: 4]. I am of the view that the problem of these people can be traced to their ignorance of the power of Allah, His judgment and destiny. Allah says; “Say (O Muhammad): “O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will and You endue with honour whom You will, and You humiliate who You will. In Your Hand is the good. Verily, You are Able to do all things.” [Al Imran: 26]

**Submission to the ordainment of Allah and His Messenger** as reflected in the story of Jalbib and his wife that was pleased with the ordainment of Allah and accepted the advice of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings be upon Him) that she should marry Jalbib in spite of the fact that he was an ugly man. She therefore became famous among people.

**Having a firm knowledge** that what has passed you by was not going to befall you. The job that you could not get, the contract you were not awarded and the position you did not succeed in occupying are all manifestations of Allah’s destiny. In so far you have taken means and met all required conditions; know that Allah did not decree it for you. A man said to the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him): I will lose my she-camel and rely on Allah. He (the Prophet) replied; “Tie it and rely on Allah.” [Ibn Majah].

**Giving obedience to whoever Allah has given authority**, say in a mosque, company, group or family as commanded by Allah thus; “Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) and those of you in authority” [An Nisaa: 52]. At no time should a person be without being under a leadership. It is imperative for a Muslim to be under the leadership of a leader in any society he may find himself. The Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said; “Whoever dies without having given allegiance, dies in a state of ignorance.”

**Taking lawful means** and then relying on Allah while avoiding the statement of some people in our country who say; “A therapeutic use of sorcery is not prohibited”. This is a blemish thought and misconception which has led some Muslims in our country to take narcotics and alcoholic substance under the pretense of seeking cure. They do these things forgetting or pretend to forget the saying of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him); “Allah has not made the healing of my Ummah (Muslim nation) in what He has made forbidden (for them).” The same way we find people dealing with the Jinns and this is also forbidden by the Qur’anic and Prophetic tradition. Allah says: “But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah’s leave.” [Al Baqarah: 102]. The Prophet (Peace and blessings

of Allah be upon Him) said: “Whoever comes to a soothsayer or fortune teller and believes what he says has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad.” [Imam Ahmad]

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion I would like to point out that Islam warned against diving into matters of destiny with bare reason. The reason for this is not unconnected to the fact that belief in destiny is the true measure through which the extent of one’s faith in Allah is determined in the real sense. It is the most difficult test in determining the extent of man’s perception about his lord and the consequence of such perception in terms of true-hearted certainty in Allah and also in giving befitting attributes to Him.

There are many questions in matters of destiny that can lead a rationalist who dive into it astray. So many controversies have been raised about matters of destiny and people have engaged in countless arguments and offered interpretation of verses of destiny in Qur’an relying on reason, even to the extent that enemies of Islam at every point in time instigate confusion in the understanding of the Muslims’ creed through dialogue on destiny. Uncertainties were forcibly introduced around it to such a level that only those with sound faith and clear certainty, who know Allah by His beautiful names and elevated attributes, submitted their affairs to Him in complete satisfaction and have confidence in Him that would not find doubts into their hearts. It is through this that we can appreciate the importance of faith among other pillars of Islam.

It is impossible for reason alone to decipher the essence of destiny, for it is a divine mystery in the creatures of Allah. Whatever Allah discloses to us in His book or through the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him), we become aware of it and believe in it. And whatever our Lord keeps to Himself unrevealed, we believe in it as well due to His absolute justice, perfect wisdom and bearing in mind that He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while others will be questioned.

Lastly, I ask Allah to strengthen us on Tawheed (monotheism) and sound creed. Verily, He has the sufficient power to grant our request and accept our supplication. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet, Muhammad.

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