

Reconciling the Divine Decree and Free Will in Islam	
Author	Justin Parrott - BA in Physics and English (Otterbein University), MLIS (Kent State University), and an MRes in Islamic Studies (University of Wales)
Question	Are we forced to do what we do, or do we have a choice in what we do?
Extremes	Qadarites - believed in absolute human free will (Allah has no control over us)  Jabarites - believed in absolute determinism and fatalism (we have no control over our actions)
Limitations	Allah exists outside of time and space, beyond the cosmic veil in the Unseen. Human beings can only conceive of realities within the framework of time and space. Divine providence, or predestination, is a reality that exists beyond time and space, which means we are simply incapable of conceiving it with our limited rational faculties
Al-Qaḍā' wa'l-Qadar	Ibn Ḥajar - Divine decree (al-qaḍā') consists of the entire and complete judgment forever, and the divine measurement (al-qadar) consists of the particulars of the judgment and its details - This definition is based upon the texts that speak of the decree in absolute and unchanging terms, and those that speak of modifications to the decree
Al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ	The Preserved Tablet contains everything that will come to be, including the divine scriptures, the implication being that Allah knows all things before they come into existence
Qur'an	“Do you not know that Allah fully knows whatever is in the heavens and the earth? Surely it is all written in a Record. That is certainly easy for Allah” أَلَمْ نَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ
Human being's destiny	The provision, life span, deeds, and ultimate fate in the Hereafter of every human being are written by the angels as soon as the soul is blown into the fetus
Hadith	“Then an angel is sent and the angel is ordered to write four things: his livelihood, his lifespan, his deeds, and whether he will be a wretched one or a blessed one and then he breathes the soul into him” ثُمَّ يُنْعَثُ إِلَيْهِ الْمَلَكُ فَيُؤَدِّنُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ، فَيَكْتُبُ رِزْقَهُ وَأَجَلَهُ وَعَمَلَهُ وَشَقِيٌّ أَمْ سَعِيدٌ ثُمَّ يَنْفُخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحَ
Will of Allah	Everything happens by the will of Allah, but Allah is not pleased with everything that is allowed to happen

Universal will	Encompasses everything that is allowed to be, both good and evil
Legislative will	Consists of what Allah wants from us of good deeds
Equating what Allah decrees and what He loves	<p>The Jabarites said Allah decrees good and evil and therefore loves them both, while the Qadarites said what is evil is not by the decree of Allah—which means it is created by some other power</p> <p>- In actuality, there is a distinction between what is willed and what is loved</p>
Can fate change?	<p>In the Preserved Tablet is written the unchanging decree from eternity</p> <p>The books of individuals comprising our deeds and fate as recorded by the angels can change</p>
Qur'an	“God erases or confirms whatever He will, and with Him is the Mother Book”
Ibn ‘Abbas	<p>- There are two books: a book in which is erased whatever Allah wills, and with Him is the mother of the Book</p> <p>عن ابن عباس : الكتاب كتابان : فكتاب يمحو الله منه ما يشاء ويثبت وعنده أم الكتاب</p>
Actions	<p>The catalyst for a change in fate depends upon actions: intentions, prayers, supplications, and good deeds. It is not the power of our actions in themselves that makes the change. Rather, it is the reward that Allah bestows upon us for surrendering to His will</p> <p>The knowledge of Allah does not change and is not replaced</p>
Human will	Humans have “free will” in the sense that they are not forced to do what they choose to do. Humans are rewarded or punished in the Hereafter based upon what they did with their God-given will
Ibn Taymiyyah	What He wills comes to be and what He does not will cannot come to be, Allah misguides whomever He wills and guides whomever he wills, and the servants have will and ability, acting upon their ability and their will according to what Allah has enabled for them. Indeed, the servants do not will unless Allah wills
Qur'an	“This is a message for all people; for those who wish to take the straight path. But you will only wish to do so by the will of God, the Lord of all people”
Why do good?	Good deeds lead to a good ending, and evil deeds lead to an evil ending
Hadith	“Good works protect from evil fates. Charity in secret extinguishes the wrath of the Lord, maintaining family ties increases life span, and every good deed is charity. The people of good in the world are the people of good in the Hereafter, and the people of evil in the world are the people of evil in the Hereafter.”

	<p>صَنَائِعُ الْمَعْرُوفِ تَقِي مَصَارِعَ السَّوِّءِ وَالصَّدَقَةُ خَفِيًّا تُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ وَصِلَةُ الرَّجْمِ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْعُمْرِ وَكُلُّ مَعْرُوفٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَأَهْلُ الْمَعْرُوفِ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَهْلُ الْمَعْرُوفِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَهْلُ الْمُنْكَرِ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَهْلُ الْمُنْكَرِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ</p>
Family ties	The act of maintaining family ties is a means by which Allah increases the amount of provision and the length of lifespan in one's record
Hadith	"There is no Muslim on the earth who calls upon Allah in supplication but that Allah will grant it to him or divert some evil away from him, so long as he does not ask for something sinful"
Prophetic supplication	"O Allah, guide me among those You have guided, secure me among those You have secured, protect me among those You have protected, bless me in what You have given me, and save me from the evil You have decreed. Verily, You alone decree and none can issue decree over You. Verily, he cannot be humiliated whoever is protected by You"
Asking for a change in fate	<p>'Umar RA: "O Allah, if You have written me among the blessed, then affirm it therein. And if You have written me among the sinful and the damned, then wipe it away and affirm me among the blessed. Verily, You wipe away and affirm whatever You will, and with You is the Mother of the Book"</p> <p>اللهم إن كنت كتبتني في أهل السعادة فأثبتني فيها ، وإن كنت كتبتني في أهل الشقاوة والذنب فامحني وأثبتني في أهل السعادة والمغفرة ، فإنك تمحو ما تشاء وتثبت وعندك أم الكتاب</p>
Tawakkul	<p>People mistakenly assume that trusting in Allah's decree means we should not act, like a person who does not wear his car's safety belt, thinking it has no effect on what Allah chooses to ordain</p> <p>- 'Umar RA in the incident of the plague shows us that trust in Allah does not preclude acting upon the pattern of causes we observe in daily life</p> <p>The correct way to rely upon Allah is with the awareness that Allah has decreed goodness for those who work for good</p>
Rizq	We have faith that if we work for our provision, then Allah will provide it
'Umar RA	<p>- "Let not one of you refrain from working for his provision, supplicating to Allah to provide while he knows that the sky does not rain gold and silver."</p> <p>لَا يَفْعَدُ أَحَدُكُمْ عَنْ طَلَبِ الرِّزْقِ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي فَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ أَنَّ السَّمَاءَ لَا تُمَطِّرُ ذَهَبًا وَلَا فِضَّةً</p>
Cause and effect	The key point to remember is that the actions and causes, without the will of Allah to back them up, are essentially futile, yet they are still necessary for bringing about a good fate
Ibn Taymiyyah	It is a duty upon the servant before the decree takes place to seek refuge in Allah, to depend upon Him, and to call upon Him. If the result of the decree is not from his actions, then he must be patient

	<p>over it and satisfied with it. If it was the result of his actions and it is a blessing, he praises Allah for that. If it was the result of sin, then he seeks forgiveness from Him for that</p>
<p>Accepting Allah's decree</p> <p>Hadith</p>	<p>Allah puts us through trials because they are means by which we grow morally and spiritually</p> <p>"If something befalls you, then do not say, 'If only I had done something else.' Rather say, 'Allah has decreed and whatever he wills, He does.' Verily, the phrase 'if only' opens the way for the work of Satan"</p> <p>وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ</p> <p>- We have faith that there is divine wisdom behind every event that we may not fully understand and accepting His decree is a way of instilling within us contentment and peace of mind. Saying 'if only' allows Satan to cast opposition to the divine decree in one's heart</p>
<p>Conundrum</p> <p>'Aqīdat al-Ṭahāwīyyah</p> <p>Hadith</p> <p>Ibn Hanbal بِلا تَكْيِيف</p>	<p>Allah's actions and decrees are from beyond the confines of time and space</p> <p>Predestination is an enigma due to our limited ability to conceive of realities beyond time and space</p> <p>It is a mystery in its essence, as free will and predestination are an apparent contradiction. It is also a mystery in its details, as we often cannot directly discern the hidden wisdom behind the catastrophes and evil that Allah allows to happen</p> <p>The essence of divine decree is God's secret within creation. No intimate angel or prophetic emissary has ever been privy to it. Delving into the decree is a means to spiritual loss, a descent into deprivation, and a path towards transgression. So beware about thinking, reflecting or letting doubts assail you with regards to this matter</p> <p>وَأَصْلُ الْقَدَرِ سِرُّ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي خَلْقِهِ</p> <p>"If predestination is mentioned, then hold back"</p> <p>وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الْقَدَرُ فَأَمْسِكُوا</p> <p>The principle is to believe in "its good and its evil, affirming the narrations regarding it and having faith in them without asking why or how"</p> <p>We understand the simple reality of predestination through the literary images of the Pen, the Preserved Tablet, and the records of deeds. Any investigation after this is impossible and will lead us astray</p> <p>As opposed to blind uncritical faith, acknowledging the mystery of predestination requires the humble recognition that the ghayb is an expansive unknowable reality that lies beyond our senses</p>

Fahim Hoosen	<p>Predestination is a secret of Allah Ta'ālā in his creation. It is something beyond human comprehension. It constitutes the belief that Allah ﷻ in eternity had known and predetermined everything that was to occur, at which time and in which way. Together with this belief in predestination it must also be accepted that man has been given a choice to adopt either the path of righteousness or iniquity. The focus of man should be on exercising this choice correctly rather than the predetermination of Allah ﷻ, of which man has no knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ has instructed us to refrain from discussing predestination.</p>
--------------	--