



***Qadr* is a complex area. I feel I may go crazy thinking about it. It also scares me to think that I may have evil actions already written.**

There is no need to think about it all too much. There is no need to go *crazy*. Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم has warned us about delving too deeply into this area. The matter and knowledge of *qadr* lies with Allāh alone.

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه reports, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came to us as we had been arguing with each other about *al qadr*. He was so annoyed that his face became red as if there had been squeezed on his cheeks the flesh of pomegranates. He said: "Is this what you have been commanded to do? Is it this with which I have been sent to you? Those who had gone before you were destroyed because they disputed about it."

Tirmidhi

Simply think about your actions, day to day. Try your best to maximise your good deeds and eliminate your bad deeds. Aim simply to please Allāh and achieve *Jannah*.

'Ali bin Abi Talib رضى الله عنه said, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "There is no one amongst you except that his seat in the Fire or in Paradise is written." So a man said: "O Messenger of Allāh! Should we not depend upon it (i.e. do nothing)?" He said: "No! Perform good deeds and that which is created for him will be easy for him to do."

Muslim

Read the following small stories all relating to *qadr*. Think about how you should behave or respond in these scenarios? Consider what your attitude should be in these circumstances?



Story one - You are a manager in a large company. You learn that someone is talking behind your back and acting aggressively against you. This is all unknown to you and has been told to you by others. He may well be trying to unseat you and get your job.



Story two - An earthquake hits your city. You lose your home and possessions.



Story three - You arrive with your friend into a supermarket car park. She refuses to lock her car, saying "*In the Name of Allāh, I put my trust in Him.*"



Story four - You are travelling to London from Mumbai. On arrival, you discover that your luggage has mistakenly been sent to Bangkok and will now only arrive after a week. The other passengers are furious with airline staff.



Story five - A friend's father suddenly dies in a car crash.



Story six - You and your friends are discussing which day to play cricket on. Should it be Saturday or Sunday? You all decide on Sunday. As it happened, Saturday turned out to be a beautiful sunny day. On Sunday, it rained all day. Your match was cancelled and you all stayed indoors. One of your friends says, "*If only we had played on Saturday!*"



Story seven – Your granddad is not feeling well. Your mum is trying to persuade him to see a doctor, or at least to take some medicine. However, he refuses saying that, as a believer, he must put his trust in Allāh alone.



Story eight – One morning your brother mentions to you that his ‘horoscope’ in the newspaper, indicates a bad day for him that day. Later, whilst walking with him down the street, you both walk under a ladder, and paint from above accidentally drips down onto your heads. Your brother complains, “*I knew my horoscope was bad for today, I should never have left my house. I knew that walking under ladders brings bad luck. I shouldn’t have done that also.*”



Story nine

Your friend: *studying is for wimps! I ain’t never gonna work either.*

You: *How do you propose getting by in life with such an attitude. How will you feed yourself?*

Your friend: *I’m not worried because all my rizq¹ is from Allāh.*



Story ten - Since embracing Islām, Othmān, had always longed that his parents follow him into his new religion. *Alhamdulillah*, his father eventually uttered the *shahādah* on his deathbed. His mother, however, died a *kāfir*. This distresses Othmān. He simply cannot understand why his father, who was the more stubborn of the two, embraced Islām, while his mother, who was always open minded and inquisitive, did not.

So, what went through your mind? Did you judge wisely?



Story one - You are a manager in a large company. You learn that someone is talking behind your back and acting aggressively against you. This is all unknown to you and has been told to you by others. He may well be trying to unseat you and get your job.

You should carry on doing the job to the very best of your abilities regardless of events around you. Of course, don’t be silly and close your eyes to what is happening. Be cautious of this person, but not overly suspicious, as undue suspicion itself could be a sin.

You should know that no one can harm you or help you in life, other than Allāh – no one! If this man wanted to do something to you, he couldn’t, unless it was decreed by Allāh, سبحانه وتعالى Himself. This example mentions only one man. Even if all the nations of the world were out to get you, they could not get you unless the matter was decreed by Allāh.

Allāh’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said to Ibn Abbās رضي الله عنه “... and know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allāh had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allāh had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.”

Tirmidhi

¹ Livelihood, bounty, means of sustenance, provision

And we are told in the Qur'ān,

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Say: "Never will we be struck except by what Allāh has decreed for us; He is our Protector."

And upon Allāh let the Believers put their trust.

Sūrah at Tawbah, 5:51



Story two - An earthquake hits your city. You lose your home and possessions.

You should have *sabr* because *sabr* is rewarded by Allāh, especially in severe circumstances, like the one mentioned. You must accept that whatever bad happened was ordained by the One in whose Hands is your entire life, Allāh, the Most High. The beloved slave of Allāh is the one who agrees to endure whatever Allāh has decreed for him.

Have *sabr* and slowly try to rebuild your life, turning to Allāh at every juncture. Of course, this is easier said than done. However, if you can maintain such an attitude in such appalling circumstances, your reward will be paradise Insha'Allāh.



So even when things are bad for me, I am a still a winner?

Yes. Just imagine that. A believer gets tons of rewards, even from misfortune.

Allāh's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said, How wonderful for the believer! All his affairs are full of good, not for anyone, but only for the believer in Allāh - If something good happens, he thanks Allāh and he is rewarded for that; and if he suffers from some misfortune, he is patient and he is rewarded for it.

Muslim and Ahmed, also Riyādh as Sālihīn



Story three - You arrive with your friend into a supermarket car park. She refuses to lock her car, saying, "In the Name of Allāh, I put my trust in Him."

You should advise her to first lock her car and *then* trust in Allāh. As a Muslim, she should not behave foolishly or recklessly in her affairs. Yes, it is true that the whether the car is stolen or not, is a matter preordained. However, you are still given freedom of choice in your actions and you must exercise that freedom wisely.

Anas ibn Ma'lik رضي الله عنه reported that one day a Bedouin riding a camel came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and asked him: "Can I leave the camel alone and trust in Allāh?" The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: "Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allāh."

Tirmidhi

Story four - You are travelling to London from Mumbai. On arrival, you discover that your luggage has mistakenly been sent to Bangkok and will now only arrive after a week. The other passengers are furious with airline staff.



You should stay calm and patient. You can of course put in a formal complaint to the airline. Insha'Allāh that will help improve their service and assist future passengers. However, the main focus is to remember Allāh and peacefully accept that something has happened here outside of your control. Stay calm, patient and try and make do until the luggage arrives. Maybe there was some reason for this mishap. Maybe it contains some fantastic hidden benefit, which you will only come to know about later, or which you may never know about.



Story five – A friend's father suddenly dies in a car crash.

You should encourage him to have *sabr*, as mentioned before. Remind him of the need for patience and fortitude. Remind him gently that all the events of his father's life, good or bad, and including his death, were already ordained to happen by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Your friend could not extend his father's life by even one second more than had already been decreed.

Remind him that he should now remember Allāh and make sure that he is a *saleh* (righteous) son, upholding his father's good name amongst family and friends. He should remember that *bir* (dutifulness) towards parents even continues after death,

Malik bin Rabi'ah As Sā'di رضي الله عنه said, while I was sitting with the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, a man from the Ansār came to him and asked, "O Messenger of Allāh! After my parents die, is there any type of *bir* that I can perform towards them?" The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied: "Yes, there are four qualities to perform:

- Pray (to Allāh to grant mercy) and invoke (Him) for forgiveness for them;
- Fulfil their promises;²
- Be generous to their friends;
- Keep relations with the Kindred, which are your kindred through your parents.

This is what remains of the *bir* that you could perform towards them after they die."

Ahmed, Abu Dawūd and Ibn Mājah



Story six - You and your friends are discussing which day to play cricket on. Should it be Saturday or Sunday? You all decide on Sunday. As it happened, Saturday turned out to be a beautiful sunny day. On Sunday, it rained all day. Your match was cancelled and you all stayed indoors. One of your friends says, "*If only we had played on Saturday!*"

You should let it be known that this was all by the *qadr* of Allāh. There was no match on Saturday or Sunday and there was never going to be one. We must avoid saying 'if' in such situations e.g. 'If only I had done such and such' or 'if only such and such hadn't happened.' This is wrong in Islām and opens the door for futile thinking. We, as Muslims, must happily accept whatever Allāh has ordained for us with no 'ifs' and no 'buts.'

² Including the proper execution of any wills they leave and the settlement of their debts.

"The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: 'The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allāh than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive for that which will benefit you, seek the help of Allāh, and do not feel helpless. If anything befalls you, do not say, "if only I had done such and such" rather say "Qaddara Allahu wa ma sha'a fa'ala (Allāh has decreed and whatever He wills, He does)." For (saying) 'If' opens (the door) to the deeds of Satan.

Muslim and Ibn Mājah

Story seven – Your granddad is not feeling well. Your mum is trying to persuade him to see a doctor, or at least to take some medicine. However, he refuses saying that, as a believer, he must put his trust in Allāh alone.



Usama Bnu Shareek رضي الله عنه narrated that he came to Allāh's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم and his companions were sitting as if they had birds on their heads. The desert Arabs then came from here and there, and they asked, "Messenger of Allāh, should we make use of medical treatment?" He replied: "Make use of medical treatment, for Allāh has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, old age."

Reported by the four *Muhaddithain*



Story eight – One morning your brother mentions to you that his 'horoscope' in the newspaper, indicates a bad day for him that day. Later, whilst walking with him down the street, you both walk under a ladder, and paint from above accidentally drips down onto your heads. Your brother complains, "I knew my horoscope was bad for today, I should never have left my house. I knew that walking under ladders brings bad luck. I shouldn't have done that also."

You should gently scold him and advise him well because he has said something very wrong. Advise him that **all** good and bad comes **only from Allāh**. We, as Muslims holding on to *tawhīd*, do not believe in stupid superstitions, or lucky charms or horoscopes. We do not believe in actions which give us good luck or bad luck. We do not believe those who say they can see into the unseen e.g. using crystal balls, tea leaves and so on. **All good and bad is from Allāh alone.**



Story nine

Your friend: *studying is for wimps! I ain't never gonna work either.*

You: *How do you propose getting by in life with such an attitude. How will you feed yourself?*

Your friend: *I'm not worried because all my rizq is from Allāh.*

You should remind him of his obligations and responsibilities. It is true that Allāh has preordained our livelihood. How much you will earn and where and when you will earn it, are all matters fixed already by Him. He says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ طُوما تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَازَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا طُوما
تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Indeed, Allāh (alone) has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Acquainted
Sūrah Luqmān, 31:34

However, this does not mean that we sit back and expect the *rizq* to come to us of its own accord. Everything is preordained, but we are *still* required to take necessary actions regardless.

- A commander of an army of *mujahidīn*, (Muslim fighters in a war) cannot tell his men to put down their weapons simply because he believes, whether they win or lose, it is *QadrAllāh* anyway. They must struggle, as the *sahābah* did, to uphold Islām;
- A student of Islāmīc knowledge cannot simply sit at home with his books closed, waiting for knowledge to enter his brain. He must struggle to acquire the knowledge that has been decreed for him;
- A chicken *shawarma* maybe in your *rizq* for lunch today, but you still have to drive to the restaurant, pay the money and eat it!



Story ten - Since embracing Islām, Othmān, had always longed that his parents follow him into his new religion. *Alhamdulillah*, his father eventually uttered the *shahādah* on his deathbed. His mother, however, died a *kāfir*. This distresses Othmān. He simply cannot understand why his father, who was the more stubborn of the two, embraced islām, while his mother, who was always open minded and inquisitive, did not.

You should remind Othmān that Allāh guides whom He wills and sends astray whom He wills. It is His decision, and His decision alone. He says,

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِيٌّ ۖ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

Whoever Allāh guides – he is the (rightly) guided; and whoever He sends astray – it is those who are the losers.

Sūrah al A'rāf, 7:178

مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ ۗ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

Whoever Allāh sends astray – there is no guide for him. And He leaves them in their transgression wandering blindly

Sūrah al A'rāf, 7:186



If a person has already been 'sent astray' by Allāh, how can that person then be punished?

Remember. Allāh is not unjust. He will never punish a person without reason. He only punishes those who bring punishment upon themselves. Similarly, he will only send astray those who, by their words and deeds, demonstrate that they care not for remaining on the straight path anyway. They bring Allāh's lack of Guidance upon themselves.



How can they bring 'lack of guidance' upon themselves?

If their hearts are not inclined towards Islām in the first place, Allāh may well let them continue blindly upon the path of error. If their hearts are inclined to gross disobedience to Allāh, in the first place, Allāh may well seal their hearts altogether. Allāh’s Guidance (*Hidayah*) will not be available to those who, despite all the signs, arrogantly choose to deny Him, and persist in that denial,

ط إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ
وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Indeed, those who disbelieve³ – it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe. Allāh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil; And for them is a great punishment.

Sūrah al Baqarah, 2:6,7

The veil mentioned here is a covering preventing them from discerning guidance. This condition is a direct result of their arrogance and persistence in sin. Notice above that before Allāh mentions setting the seal, He says that *they* are the ones who rejected faith. They are the ones who made the first serious mistake of *kufir*. It is only after that, that Allāh confounds them further.



If Allāh cuts His Guidance to disbelievers, how is it that some among them end up embracing Islām?

For those who show even the slightest inclination towards Islām, *tawhīd* and obedience to Allāh, if He Wills, He can smooth their path towards Islām. He says,

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ ۖ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَعُدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

So, whoever Allāh wants to guide - He expands his breast to (contain) Islām; and whoever He wants to misguide - He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allāh place defilement upon those who do not believe.

Sūrah Al An’ām, 6:125

Such *kāfir* only embrace Islām, because Allāh gives them *hidayah*



Even the stubborn and hard-hearted ones?

Only Allāh knows the state of someone’s heart. A non-Muslim may appear on the surface stubborn and rude, whilst harbouring a desire for the truth in some deep, distant, light-filled corner of their heart. As long as that desire and light is there, if He wills, Allāh will give them *Hidayah*.



If it is possible that a disbeliever, through Allāh’s Guidance, can be guided towards Islām, is it also possible that a Muslim, through Allāh’s lack of Guidance, could be guided towards disbelief?

This is a frightening but entirely real possibility. Just because many of us were born Muslim, we should never take this gift for granted. We should always seek to strengthen our *ēmān*, always be wary of the tricks of *shaytān*, and always pray to Allāh that He lets us die as Muslims. He mentions a *du’a* in the Qur’ān,

³ Literally ‘cover’ or ‘conceal’ faith or truth.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ
لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, You are the Bestower. Our Lord! Surely, You will gather the people for a Day about which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allāh does not fail in His promise.
Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:8,9

Learn this du'a in Arabic and try to remember it daily. We ask Allāh to grant it for all of us, Amīn.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

That concludes Book 1 of Can I ask about Islām?



Cambridge central Mosque, Cambridge, England