

Yaqīn in al-Qadr

Certainty in the Divine Decree

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

"Indeed, We have created all things according to a precise decree (Qadar)."

(Qur'an 54:49)

In our previous reflection, the Qur'an called believers to strive for iḥsān, describing those whom Allah loves as people of generosity, forgiveness, repentance and steadfast striving in His cause. It concluded with one of the most reassuring promises in the Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"As for those who strive for Us, We shall surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the muḥsinīn."

(Qur'an 29:69)

Yet every believer who sincerely strives eventually encounters a question that lies beyond human effort.

Why do sincere plans sometimes fail?

Why does hardship visit the righteous and ease come to others?

How should the believer understand success, loss, provision, illness, life and death in light of Allah's perfect wisdom?

The Qur'an returns us to the final article of faith.

Belief in al-Qadr is not presented as an invitation to speculation about matters hidden from mankind. Rather, it nurtures certainty that Allah's knowledge is complete, His wisdom is perfect, His decree is just, and His servants remain accountable for the choices they make.

Throughout this reflection, we therefore seek to listen carefully to the Qur'an itself. Where Allah's Messenger ﷺ explained these realities, his authentic Sunnah will accompany the Divine revelation. Where the recognised classical mufasssīrūn have spoken with broad agreement, their shared understanding will be presented, allowing the Qur'an to illuminate itself through the explanations of those who dedicated their lives to its understanding.

Our purpose is neither to explore every theological discussion surrounding al-Qadr, nor to resolve questions that Allah has left among the unseen. Rather, it is to

strengthen our certainty that every decree proceeds from the One whose knowledge is perfect, whose wisdom encompasses all things and whose justice never fails.

Allah's Knowledge Encompasses All Things

The Qur'an introduces Divine decree by first establishing something even more fundamental: the absolute and perfect knowledge of Allah.

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَةٍ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. He knows whatever is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry except that it is recorded in a Clear Book."

(Qur'an 6:59)

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلٍ أَن نَّبْرِأَهَا ۚ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

"No calamity befalls on the earth or within yourselves except that it is inscribed in a Book before We bring it into existence. Indeed, that is easy for Allah."

(Qur'an 57:22)

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا

"Allah is He Who created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof. His command descends among them so that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah has encompassed everything in knowledge."

(Qur'an 65:12)

These verses begin not with human destiny but with Allah Himself.

His knowledge is unrestricted by time or place.

Nothing escapes Him.

Nothing surpasses Him.

Nothing occurs beyond His knowledge.

The recognised classical mufasssirrūn, including al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī and Ibn ʿĀshūr, consistently understand these verses as affirming Allah's complete and eternal knowledge of all creation. His knowledge is not acquired through observation, nor increased by events as they unfold. Rather, everything that exists,

has existed or will exist is known perfectly to Him before its occurrence. This shared understanding forms the foundation upon which the Qur'anic doctrine of al-Qadr rests.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ further illuminated this reality.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (RA) reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allah wrote the decrees of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth."

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

Imām al-Nawawī, in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, explains that this narration affirms the completeness of Allah's prior knowledge and decree while reminding believers that His knowledge is eternal and not subject to change or limitation.

Thus, the Qur'an first directs the believer's attention away from himself and towards the perfection of Allah. Before asking what has been decreed for us, the Qur'an teaches us to know the One who decrees.

Allah's Decree Encompasses All Things

Having established that Allah's knowledge encompasses all things, the Qur'an next turns to His decree (*al-Qadr*). Knowledge alone does not complete the picture. The Qur'an repeatedly affirms that Allah not only knows His creation perfectly but that all creation unfolds according to His precise measure, wisdom and command.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

"Indeed, We have created all things according to a precise decree (Qadar)."

(Qur'an 54:49)

وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

"He created everything and determined it with precise determination."

(Qur'an 25:2)

قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

"Certainly Allah has already set for everything a decree."

(Qur'an 65:3)

Elsewhere, Allah reminds us:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

"Verily His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is."

(Qur'an 36:82)

Taken together, these verses consistently affirm that creation is neither random nor independent of its Creator. Everything exists by His will, within His knowledge and according to His decree.

The recognised classical mufasssīrūn—including **al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī and Ibn ʿĀshūr**—understand these verses as affirming Allah's absolute sovereignty over His creation. They explain that *Qadar* signifies not arbitrary determination but Allah's perfect knowledge, wisdom, measure and governance. Nothing occurs accidentally, nor does anything escape His command. At the same time, these verses do not negate the responsibility that Allah has placed upon human beings, a reality that the Qur'an itself will soon clarify.

The Prophet ﷺ further illuminated this reality.

ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"The first thing Allah created was the Pen. He said to it, 'Write.' It said, 'My Lord, what shall I write?' He said, 'Write the decree of everything until the Hour is established.'"

(Sunan Abū Dāwūd; Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī. Graded Ṣaḥīḥ by a number of later scholars, including al-Albānī.)

Imām al-Tirmidhī records this narration in his *Sunan*, while later scholars regarded it as authentic. Together with the narration in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that Allah wrote the decrees before creating the heavens and the earth, these reports consistently affirm that Divine decree precedes creation itself.

Thus, the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah direct the believer towards certainty that nothing lies outside Allah's knowledge, measure and command. Yet they also prepare us for an equally important truth: belief in Divine decree does not remove human responsibility.

Human Responsibility Within Allah's Decree

One of the most remarkable features of the Qur'an is that, while affirming Allah's complete decree, it repeatedly calls human beings to believe, choose, obey and repent. It never presents belief in *al-Qadr* as an excuse for abandoning responsibility.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

"And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills—let him believe; and whoever wills—let him disbelieve.'"

(Qur'an 18:29)

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

"Indeed, We guided him to the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful."

(Qur'an 76:3)

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا هُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

"By the soul and the One who proportioned it, then inspired it with its wickedness and its righteousness. Successful indeed is the one who purifies it and failed indeed is the one who corrupts it."

(Qur'an 91:7–10)

Al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn ʿĀshūr all explain these verses as affirming human accountability while remaining entirely consistent with Allah's comprehensive decree. They neither support the notion that mankind acts independently of Allah nor suggest that human beings are compelled without responsibility. Rather, the Qur'an affirms both realities: Allah's decree is perfect, and mankind remains morally accountable before Him.

This balance was beautifully explained by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA) narrated that while attending a funeral, the Prophet ﷺ informed the Companions that every person's place in Paradise or Hell had already been written.

The Companions asked:

"Should we not then rely upon what has been written and abandon our deeds?"

The Prophet ﷺ replied:

"Work, for everyone will be facilitated towards that for which he was created."

He then recited:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

"As for the one who gives and fears Allah..."

(Qur'an 92:5)

This narration is recorded in both **Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī** and **Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim**.

Imām Ibn Ḥajar, in *Fath al-Bārī*, explains that this Prophetic guidance rejects fatalism. Belief in Divine decree is not intended to discourage effort but to encourage obedience, since Allah facilitates each servant according to the path he sincerely pursues.

The Sunnah therefore explains what the Qur'an itself demonstrates: belief in *al-Qadr* strengthens responsibility rather than diminishing it.

The Believer's Response to the Divine Decree

Having established that Allah's knowledge encompasses all things, that His decree is perfect, and that mankind remains accountable for the choices entrusted to them, the Qur'an now directs the believer's attention to the condition of the heart. Belief in **al-Qadr** is not merely an intellectual conviction; it is a source of tranquillity, patience and complete reliance upon Allah.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

"No calamity befalls except by the permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah—He guides his heart. And Allah is Knowing of all things."

(Qur'an 64:11)

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا ۚ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ٢٢
لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ٢٣

"No calamity strikes upon the earth or within yourselves except that it is inscribed in a Book before We bring it into existence. Indeed, that is easy for Allah. So that you may not grieve over what has escaped you, nor exult over what He has given you. And Allah does not love every self-deluded boaster."

(Qur'an 57:22–23)

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ٢١٦

"...Perhaps you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows, while you do not know."

(Qur'an 2:216)

Regarding **Qur'an 64:11**, **al-Ṭabarī** explains that when a believer recognises that every affliction occurs only by Allah's permission, Allah grants that person's heart certainty, contentment and acceptance of His decree. **Al-Baghawī** similarly states that Allah guides the heart of the believer to patience and submission upon recognising that every trial comes from Him. **Ibn Kathīr** explains that such faith enables the believer to know that what has befallen him could never have missed him, and what has missed him could never have reached him. **Al-Qurṭubī** likewise emphasises that true belief in Allah's decree produces tranquillity rather than despair, while **Ibn 'Āshūr** observes that this Divine guidance is an inward reassurance bestowed upon the believer in moments of hardship.

Concerning **Qur'an 57:22–23**, **al-Ṭabarī** explains that Allah reminds His servants that every calamity was already known and written before its occurrence, thereby teaching them not to despair excessively over loss nor become arrogant through worldly success. **Ibn Kathīr** similarly states that recognising Allah's prior decree protects the believer from destructive grief and pride. **Al-Qurṭubī** adds that the verse cultivates moderation in both adversity and prosperity, while **Ibn 'Āshūr** explains that this knowledge nurtures emotional balance by directing the heart towards Allah's wisdom rather than the changing circumstances of worldly life.

Regarding **Qur'an 2:216**, **al-Ṭabarī**, **Ibn Kathīr**, **al-Qurṭubī** and **Ibn 'Āshūr** all explain that Allah alone possesses complete knowledge of the consequences that lie beyond human perception. What people naturally desire may ultimately harm them, while what they initially dislike may become a means of immense goodness through Allah's wisdom. The verse therefore calls believers to humility before the knowledge of Allah, recognising the limitations of their own understanding.

Taken together, these explanations show that belief in **al-Qadr** is intended to transform the believer's heart. It nurtures patience during hardship, gratitude during ease, humility before Allah's wisdom and serenity in the knowledge that nothing occurs outside His perfect decree.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ beautifully summarised this reality.

Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān (RA) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"How wonderful is the affair of the believer! Indeed, all of his affairs are good, and this is for no one except the believer. If something pleasing happens to him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. If hardship befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

Imām al-Nawawī explains that this ḥadīth illustrates one of the greatest fruits of belief in Allah's decree. The believer views both ease and hardship through the lens of faith,

recognising that each circumstance is an opportunity to draw nearer to Allah—through gratitude in times of blessing and through patience in times of trial.

This understanding was embodied by the Companions of the Messenger ﷺ.

‘**Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RA)**, when confronted with severe trials during his caliphate, repeatedly reminded the believers that every matter unfolds according to Allah's decree and that true success lies in responding with patience, justice and trust in Him.

Likewise, ‘**Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA)** counselled that reliance upon Allah should never become an excuse for abandoning effort, but rather a source of strength while fulfilling one's responsibilities. Their words reflected the balance taught by the Qur'an and the Sunnah: complete trust in Allah coupled with sincere striving in obedience to Him.

Thus, belief in **al-Qadr** does not produce resignation or passivity. Rather, it liberates the believer from anxiety over matters beyond human control while inspiring steadfast effort in matters for which Allah has made mankind responsible. The heart finds peace not because every question has been answered, but because it has learned to trust the wisdom of the One who answers every question.

Our journey began with the greatest of all certainties: **Yaqīn in Allah**. The Qur'an called mankind to know their Creator through His names, His attributes, His signs within creation and His countless favours. Every subsequent article has rested upon that first certainty, for faith cannot flourish without first knowing the Lord in whom one believes.

From there, the journey directed us to **belief in the angels**, those noble servants who never disobey Allah and faithfully carry out His commands. Though unseen by human eyes, their existence reminds believers that the unseen world is no less real than the world we perceive.

The journey then continued to **belief in Allah's revealed books**, through which Divine guidance was conveyed to mankind. The Qur'an confirmed the truth of the revelations that preceded it while remaining the final, complete and preserved guidance for all humanity.

Thereafter, the topic of discussion shifted towards **Allah's messengers**, whom He chose to convey His revelation, exemplify His guidance and call humanity to the worship of Allah alone. They were neither divine nor independent of their Lord, but honoured servants entrusted with the greatest responsibility bestowed upon mankind.

Our reflections then turned towards **belief in the Last Day**, reminding us that every soul will stand before Allah, every deed will be brought forth, and perfect justice will be established. This certainty gives meaning to every act of obedience, every sacrifice and every moment of patience endured in this worldly life.

Finally, we turn to **belief in al-Qadr**, affirming that Allah's knowledge encompasses all things, His wisdom never errs and His decree unfolds with absolute justice and perfect measure. Though mankind may not comprehend every aspect of His decree, believers find tranquillity in knowing that the One who governs all affairs is Most Wise, Most Just and Most Merciful.

These six articles of faith are not isolated beliefs. The Qur'an presents them as a single, integrated foundation upon which the believer's entire life is built. Each article strengthens the next, until together they cultivate a heart that knows Allah, trusts His revelation, follows His messengers, prepares for the Hereafter and submits with certainty to His perfect decree.

﴿ ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ۖ وَكُتُبِهِ ۖ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ لَا يُمَيِّزُونَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ۚ ۲۸۵ ﴾

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and so have the believers. All of them have believed in Allah, His angels, His books and His messengers, saying, 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the final return.'"

(Qur'an 2:285)

This verse has quietly accompanied our entire journey. It gathers the essential articles of faith, culminating in humble obedience before Allah and recognition that every soul shall ultimately return to Him.

﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۖ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ ۖ وَالْكِتَابِ ۖ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۖ ﴾

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but true righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the prophets..."

(Qur'an 2:177)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ summarised these foundations when he answered Jibrīl (AS) concerning īmān:

"Īmān is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree, both its good and what is perceived as its hardship."

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

This Prophetic explanation completes what the Qur'an established. Together, the Book of Allah and the Authentic Sunnah define the foundations of Islamic faith upon which every believer builds his or her life.

May Allah (SWT) make these reflections a means of strengthening certainty within our hearts, increasing us in beneficial knowledge, sincere worship and steadfast obedience. May He forgive every mistake found within these pages, accept whatever accords with His Book and the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and make this humble effort a source of benefit for all who read it. Indeed, all perfection belongs to Allah alone, while every shortcoming belongs to us.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ۝٨

"Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from Yourself. Indeed, You are the Ever-Giving."

(Qur'an 3:8)

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ۝٨٨

"My success is only through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I continually return."

(Qur'an 11:88)