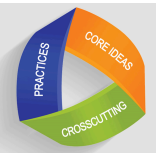


Islamic View on Free Will and Determinism

Are We Programmed or Do We have Free Will?



NGSS Instructional Outcomes

Next Generation Science Standards

Science and Engineering Practices

Asking Questions and Defining Problems: The lesson encourages students to ask questions about free will and determinism.

Engaging in Argument from Evidence: Discussing different theological and scientific perspectives involves evaluating evidence and forming arguments.



CCSS Instructional Outcomes

Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts Standards:

Reading: Informational Text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9–10.1 and RI.11–12.1: These standards involve citing strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis, which is relevant to the activities involving the Qur'anic verses and theological perspectives

English Language Arts Standards:

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9–10.1 and SL.11–12.1: These involve engaging effectively in discussions, which is a key component of this lesson plan.

English Language Arts Standards: Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9–10.1 and W.11–12.1: The lesson requires students to write arguments to support claims, which aligns with these standards.

Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11–12.1: This involves citing specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical subjects, which can be applied in the context of discussing genetic determinism.

Content Learning Outcomes:

- Describe an Islamic view on determinism and free will.
- Explain the basic dimensions of human life.
- Identify the meaning of man's accountability (mukallaf).

Materials:

- Instruction/Teacher Facilitation: Slides 5.1–5.22
- Triple-Entry Vocabulary Journal (Student responsibility)
- Lesson 5.1 Assessment

Instruction/Teacher Facilitation: Slides for Lesson 5.1

- **Slide 5.1.** Preliminary Questions
- **Slide 5.2.** Free Will
- **Slide 5.3.** Determinism
- **Slide 5.4.** Examples
- **Slide 5.5.** Pre-Determined Aspects of Life
- **Slide 5.6.** Wait a Minute!
- **Slide 5.7.** Human Nature
- **Slide 5.8.** Laws of the Physical World
- **Slide 5.9.** In This Dimension
- **Slide 5.10.** Natural Instincts
- **Slide 5.11.** Innate Instincts
- **Slide 5.12.** Optional Choices
- **Slide 5.13.** Mukallaf (Responsible)
- **Slide 5.14.** Accountability
- **Slide 5.15.** What is the Role of Guidance (hidāya)?
- **Slide 5.16.** Two Types of Divine Guidance
- **Slide 5.17.** qadā' and qadar
- **Slide 5.18.** Four Pillars of Divine Decree
- **Slide 5.19.** Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part I
- **Slide 5.20.** Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part II
- **Slide 5.21.** Are We Free or Programmed?
- **Slide 5.22.** Summary

Instruction/ Teacher Facilitation

Today we will engage in an age-old discourse of whether we human beings are programmed or we have free will. Usually, this is a topic that brings about a lot of questions. So let us start with questions that you might have about the concept of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*.



Entry Tickets

Ask the students, using the formal entry ticket (See p. 285), or an index card, or through an online survey tool, to respond to the question: “What do *you* think? Are we programmed or have free will? What are your thoughts and questions regarding free will?”

If using formal entry ticket template or index cards as the entry ticket, the teacher can collect them or allow students to keep them until the end of class. If using an index card, the back of it can be used as the exit ticket at the end of the lesson. If using an online survey tool, close the survey or stop the acceptance of any more responses (re-open for exit ticket question).

Slide 5.1: Preliminary Questions

Preliminary Questions

1. What does free will and determined mean?
2. Can we understand *qaḍā'* and *qadar*?
3. Is it true the entire human life and behavior are determined?
4. What is the role of Prophethood in human behavior?
5. Are Muslim theologians holding the same opinion about human free will?
6. What is the scientific perspective on genetic determinism?



These are some preliminary questions that I want you to think about and these will help guide our discussion today.

Ask students if any of these are among the questions they have, or have written on their entry ticket.

- What does “free will” and “determined” mean? To talk about these, we need to define them.
- Can we understand *qaḍāʾ* and *qadar*? Again, what do these terms mean, and how do we define them?
- Is it true that all of human life and human behavior is determined?
- What is the role of Prophethood in human behavior? If everything is determined, and ordained, then what is the use or purpose of Prophets (because the purpose of Prophets is to guide people).
- Do Muslim theologians hold the same opinion about human free will? Is there one overarching definition of *qaḍāʾ* and *qadar*, or do they differ in their opinions?
- What is the scientific perspective on genetic determinism? (This will be covered in Lesson 5.2.)

In this discussion, the way we define these terms is essential. Whenever you want to discuss something, methodologically, always focus on the concept and the definition first (*taṣawwur*). If you have a proper definition, this will help you analyze the topic more systematically and provide answers to your students' questions.

So let us do exactly that and start with some definitions.

Slide 5.2: Free Will

Free Will

- The ability to freely and consciously make choices that are not externally determined.
- The capacity of human beings to choose a course of action from among various alternative.
- It also means: “*voluntary choice or decision*”





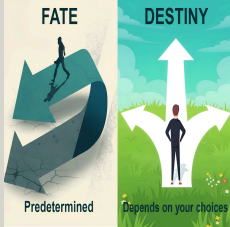
Definitions of Free Will (according to different Muslim scholars):

- The ability to freely and consciously make choices that are not externally determined. Freely, that is, not forced to do something; and consciously meaning that you are aware of, and understand what you are doing.
- The capacity of human beings to choose a course of action from among various alternatives/options/choices.
- It also means voluntary choice or decision.

Slide 5.3: Determinism

Determinism

- It implies “ordained in advance”.
- It is the belief that all events, including human actions, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will.
- This implies that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.






Definition of Determinism

- It implies that an act has been ordained in advance.
- It is the belief that all events, including human actions, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will.
- This implies that human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.

Slide 5.4: Examples

Examples

Looking into human life, one observes that every person can:

- Drive a car
- Choose to eat this food or that drinks
- Choose his or her spouse
- Act with kindness toward others
- Help someone in need
- Work and achieve certain goals in life
- Improve certain conditions of life






Let us look at these two concepts through some examples.

Looking into human life, one observes that every person can freely:

- Drive a car
- Choose to eat this food or that food/drinks
- Choose his/her spouse
- Act with kindness toward others
- Help someone in need
- Work to achieve certain goals in life
- Improve certain conditions of life

Slide 5.5: Pre-Determined Aspects of Life

Pre-Determined Aspects of Life

We can also see that certain aspects in life are pre-determined:

- Place of birth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Date of birth
- Sex
- The functions of body systems:
 - Respiratory system
 - Immune system
 - Cardiovascular system
 - Urinary system







But we also see that certain aspects of human life are predetermined.

In other words, we were not given any choice nor were we consulted on these matters:

- Place of birth
- Race/Ethnicity
- Date of birth
- Sex/Gender
- The function of body systems:
 - Respiratory system
 - Immune system
 - Cardiovascular system
 - Urinary system

Slide 5.6: Wait a Minute!

Wait A Minute!

Very interesting, right? It means that:

- There is an area of human life that we can make choices, that is, have free will.
- There are other aspects in our life that have been pre- determined.

Now:

Let us put that into perspective.



Wait a minute! (reflection). This is very interesting, because it means:

- There is an area of human life in which we can make choices, that is, have free will.
- AND, there are other aspects of our lives that have been pre-determined.

Now, let us put that into perspective. Let us see which areas of our human existence we have the ability to freely act and which areas we are determined.

Slide 5.7: Human Nature

Human Nature!?

The physiological and psychological characteristics shared by all humans.

There are three dimensions that form human nature/life;

- a) Laws of physical world (body)
- b) Natural instincts
- c) Optional choices



Human nature is the physiological and psychological characteristics shared by all humans.

There are three dimensions that form the human nature:

1. Natural instincts
2. Laws of the physical world (body)
3. Optional choices

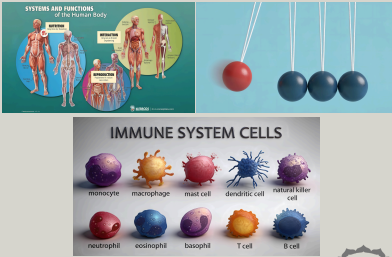
In the picture, we see that the person and the apple are both being acted on by gravity.

Slide 5.8: Laws of the Physical World

Laws of the Physical World

Examples:

1. Laws of motion
2. Gravitation force
3. Laws of reproduction
4. Functions of the human anatomy



Our bodies, like everything else in the universe, are controlled by the laws of the physical world. In this case, we are referring to the physiological functioning. For example, these laws govern our physical life:

- Laws of Motion
- Gravitation force
- Laws of reproduction
- Functions of the human anatomy

Slide 5.9: In This Dimension

In This Dimension:

- Man's life functions according to laws of nature.
- Mankind is programmed and determined
- Man and woman have no free choice.
- Man is therefore not accountable for the events and incidents of this area of life.

1. • Chapter 54, verse 49
2. • Chapter 25, verse 2
3. • Chapter 3, verse 6
4. • Chapter 42, verse 49



Therefore, in this dimension:

- Human life functions according to laws of nature, for example, we cannot fly on our own, no matter how much we will.
- Mankind is programmed and determined.
- Men and women have no free choice in these aspects.
- Man is, therefore, not accountable for the events and incidents of this dimensions.
- Textual evidence that the natural order of human life is already set:



Ask students to look up the following verses on their electronic devices, one by one, as the teacher mentions them; competition style to see who can find it first. Use **Qur'an.com**. The first student to find it can read the translation of the verse out loud to the class. This will be done for all the verses mentioned in the four following sections.

1. Sūrah al-Qamar 54:49

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

“Indeed, We have created everything, perfectly preordained.”

- Everything is created following measures that Allah (swt) has set/fixed.

2. Sūrah al-Furqān 25:2

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

“Allah is the One to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, Who has never had any offspring, nor does He have a partner in governing the kingdom. He has created everything, ordaining it precisely.”

- Everything is well-measured, things happen in due time with perfect measurements.

3. Sūrah al-Imrān 3:6

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He is the One Who shapes you in the wombs of your mothers as He wills. There is no god worthy of worship except Him—the Almighty, All-Wise.”





4. Sūrah al-Shu'arā' 42:49

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ يَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذَّكَوَرِ

“To Allah alone belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wills. He blesses whoever He wills with daughters, and blesses whoever He wills with sons,”

- The conclusion here is that, this bodily, physical aspect of the human life has been pre-determined by God.

Slide 5.10: Natural Instincts

Natural Instincts

الْجِبْلَةُ أَوْ الْغَرَائِزُ الطَّبِيعِيَّةُ

Inborn desires of the human psyche, or the ways of behaving: feelings that are not learned but inborn and common to all.

Examples:

- a) Creativity
- b) Reflection
- c) Activity
- d) Sexuality
- e) Hunger
- f) Ownership



Natural Instincts: الْجِبْلَةُ أَوْ الْغَرَائِزُ الطَّبِيعِيَّةُ (Al-Jibillah aw al-Gharā'iz at-Ṭabī'iyah)

Inborn desires of the human psyche, or the ways of behaving: feelings that are not learned but inborn and common to all are called). For example:

- Creativity
- Reflection
- Activity
- Sexual Desires
- Hunger
- Ownership

Slide 5.11: Innate Instincts

Innate Instincts

Innate Instincts are inborn, not acquired, hence:

- a) The fulfillment of these innate instincts are acquired
- b) Man is not accountable for having such instincts, that is, *these instincts are gifted*.
- c) Man has the choice to guide his/her desires to the right way.
- d) Man is accountable for directing the fulfillment of his/her inborn desires
 - (Q.7: 30)
 - (Q.17:32)
 - (Q.3:134)



Innate instincts are inborn, not acquired, hence:

- The fulfillment of these innate instincts is acquired. We did not create these desires, but we were born with these desires/needs.

Man is not accountable for having such instincts, that is, these instincts are gifted. However the way in which we fulfill this instinct is something we will be accountable for.



1. Sūrah al-Arāf 7:31

يَبْنَى عَادَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, eat and drink, but be not excessive.”

Allah (swt) is telling us, when you feel hungry, eat and drink. This feeling is not in your control, it is instinctive, but how you react is within your control. Allah (swt) is not telling you to not feel hunger, He is saying when you fulfill that need, do it within limits. Qur'an is guiding you to not overeat. Do not have wasteful behavior. And this is the choice you have.



2. Sūrah al-Isrā' 17:32

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

“Do not go near adultery. It is truly a shameful deed and an evil way.”

- Human beings have a natural sexual desire instinct, Here again, Allah is not denying human sexual instinct, but He is guiding us to fulfill our desire in the right way by avoiding zinā' (and resorting to a lawful marriage). This is within our control.



3. Sūrah al-Īmrān 3:134

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظُمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“They are those who donate in prosperity and adversity, control their anger, and pardon others. And Allah loves the good-doers.”

- Anger is a natural feeling and response when we face insult or mistreatment. Here Allah is not denying anger, but He is guiding us how to manage and control it. Whether we do that or not is within our choice and control.

- Through these verses, we see that Allah (swt) guides us to manage those instincts, direct them, and fulfill them in the right way. Our decision and action with regards to those natural instincts are within our control; this is what we are held accountable for.

Slide 5.12: Optional Choices

Optional choices الخيارات المكتسبة

This means:

- a) Left to one's choice: the ability to make a choice from given options.
- b) It is the quest for the best of given options, with the will and ability to do the matter.
- c) Accountable for making given choices - reward and punishment follow accordingly.

→ (Q.76:3)
→ (Q.90:10)
→ (Q.74:38)




Optional Choices: الخيارات المكتسبة

These are elements that are completely within our choice.

This means:

- Left to one's choice; the ability to make a choice from given options.
- It is the quest for the best of given options, with the will and ability to do the matter.
- Accountable for making given choices—reward and punishment follow accordingly.

For example to pray or not to pray, both options are there; to fast or not to fast; to work hard, whom to marry, and the like. So we can decide, but we have to be ready to accept the consequences of our choices; accountability follows.

1. Sūrah al-Insān 76:3

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

“We already showed them the Way, whether they chose to be grateful or ungrateful.”

- There is no predisposition here, purely our choice of how we view things, we have the intellect to think about it, and whether we are grateful or not grateful is our choice.





2. Sūrah al-Balad 90:10

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

“And shown them the two ways of right and wrong”

- Both paths are open in front of every human being, and it is up to us to choose. (The previous verse in Sūrah al-Balad can also be discussed here further to advance this point.)

3. Sūrah al-Muddaththir 74:38

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ

“Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained.”

- For every decision we make (freely and consciously), there are consequences.

The ability to make choices and decisions that are tied to accountability makes us humans. In Islamic tradition, this is known as *mukallaf*.

Slide 5.13: Mukallaf (Responsible)

Mukallaf (Responsible)

- A mature and mentally sound person who can make a choice between given options:
 - a) right or wrong
 - b) good or bad
- Accountable for the consequences of his/her actions.
 - (Q.91:8)




Mukallaf (morally accountable): here we can see that humans are not responsible for some aspects of life (such as natural laws and natural instincts). But they are responsible for the choices they make while fulfilling those instincts. This freedom to choose and act comes with a responsibility and accountability; this constitutes the concept of “*mukallaf*.”

Not everyone is able to make choices on their own. As we know, children are not punishable for their deeds because they are not able to make consequential decisions. So the next question is: Who is *mukallaf*?



A mature and mentally sound person who can make a choice between given options:

- right or wrong
- good or bad

Accountable for the consequences of his/her actions:

In Sūrah al-Shams, we said that Allah (swt) gave us a soul and proportioned our bodies, and here Allah (swt) is saying that after this:

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا



He “inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness.”

(Surāh Ash-Shams 91:8)

This means that Allah (swt) gives us the ability to judge and differentiate between right and wrong. We are accountable for our decision and choice. If we select the right path, we will be guided. If we select the wrong path, we bear the burden of going astray.

Slide 5.14: Accountability

Accountability

- Man is accountable only for what he is capable of and able to do; physically and mentally.
- The presence of the faculty of the mind makes the person accountable for their choices (*mukallaḥ*).
- Options and actions are by God, yet human beings has the ability of acquisition (*kasb*).
- Without the ability, due to mental immaturity (child, insane), sleep, and the like.
 - absence of *taklif*.
- (Q.2:286)
- Based on the well-known Prophetic narration- three types of people are not accountable for their deeds; “insane, the child and sleeping person”.



Man is accountable only for what he is capable of and able to do; physically and mentally. The presence of the faculty of the mind makes the person accountable for their choices.

Options and actions are created by God, yet human beings have the ability to acquire (*kasb*). The opportunities presented in our life and the outcomes are all within Allah (swt)’s power, but it is within our capacity to strive to yield the desired result.



Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:286

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

“Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned.”

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “The pen is lifted from three people: a sleeping person until he awakens, a child until he becomes an adult, and an insane person until he regains his sanity.” (Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1423). Hence some people and some people in certain states are NOT accountable for their deeds.

So for a *Mukallaf* to choose a way, the options have to be present and presented; this is where *hidāya* comes in.

Slide 5.15: What is the Role of Guidance (hidāya)?

What is the role of guidance (*hidāya*)?

This means:

- a) An advice or an information provided to someone to do right or choose the best option.
- b) Prophethood and Revelation are given to us, to aid the mind to choose the best of available options in life.

→ (Q.7:68 and 79)

hidāya is advice or information provided to someone to do right or choose the best option.

Only in areas in which you have a choice because that is the area of accountability.

Prophethood and revelation are given to us, to aid the mind to choose the best of available options in life.

Sūrah al-Aʿrāf 7:68

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ

“I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser.” (Statement of Hud (pbuh).)





And Sūrah al-Arāf 7:79

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَاقَوْمُ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَتَصَحَّتْ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُجِيبُونَ
التَّصْحِيحَ

“And he Salih [A] turned away from them and said, “O my people, I had certainly conveyed to you the message of my Lord and advised you, but you do not like the advisors.”

Slide 5.16: Two Types of Divine Guidance

Two Types of Divine Guidance

- a) Guidance in the sense of showing the good way (*hidāya al-dilāla*)
→ (Q.7:68 and 79)
- b) Guidance in the sense of actual support to achieve the goals (*hidāya al-tamkīn*)
→ (Q.28:56)
→ (Q.24:46)



Two Methods of Divine Guidance: Use the example of giving directions to someone.

1. Guidance in the sense of showing the good way (*hidāya al-dilāla*)—generally guiding.

Sūrah Fuṣṣilat 41:17

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“And as for the Thamūd tribe, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them for what they used to earn.”

The Thamūd was given guidance, but they chose not to take that guidance/chose to not follow it.

When giving directions and guiding someone to some place, you can generally say, “Go north, not south.”





2. Guidance in the sense of actual support to achieve the goals (*hidāya al-tamkīn*)—actual assistance, practical application of the guidance given.

Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ 28:56

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Indeed, [O Muḥammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided.”

Sūrah an-Nūr 24:46

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“We have certainly sent down distinct/clear verses. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.”

When giving directions, it is like using the GPS to get someone to his destination, or taking the person physically there yourself.

Allah (swt) gives us both types of guidance. Allah (swt) shows us the general direction, and then also assists us in reaching that destination. The same goes to this life; Allah (swt) sends us His messengers and we can choose to follow or not to follow their guidance. If we do, we then seek Allah (swt)’s help to assist us in reaching our destination.

When a person does not accept your directions, that means he/she is not interested in your assistance.

Slide 5.17: *qaḍā’* and *qadar*

qaḍā’* and *qadar

- a) *qaḍā’* refers the knowledge of God, whose knowledge covers the past, present and future.
- b) The events and conditions of the entire universe are covered by His eternal knowledge before things and event take place.
- c) The divine measurement or *qadar* reflects another level of divine destiny, which allows particular events and conditions to happen at a specific time and place.
- d) *qaḍā’* means God’s knowledge of all the events in life, while *qadar* refers to bringing events according to his knowledge in its specific condition, time and place.



This leads us to the concept of *qaḍā’* and *qadar*.

qaḍā’ refers to the knowledge of God, whose knowledge covers the past, present, and future.





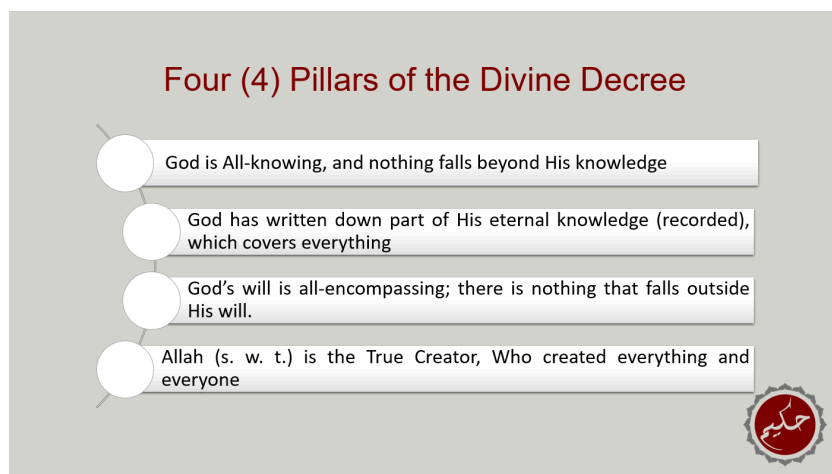
The events and conditions of the entire universe are covered by His eternal knowledge before things and events take place.

The divine measurement, or **qadar**, reflects another level of divine destiny, which allows particular events and conditions to happen at a specific time and place.

qaḍā' means God's knowledge of all the events in life, while *qadar* refers to bringing events according to His knowledge in their specific condition, time, and place.

- The first level is *qaḍā'*, Allah (swt) possessing knowledge of everything and every time.
- The second level is *qadar*, the actual occurrence of the event at its specific time and place.

Slide 5.18: Four Pillars of Divine Decree



1. God is All-knowing, and nothing falls beyond His knowledge.
2. God has written down part of His eternal knowledge (recorded), which covers everything.
3. God's will is all-encompassing; there is nothing that falls outside His will (mashī'a). Nothing happens in this world without the will of Allah (swt).
4. Allah (swt) is the True Creator, Who created everything and everyone.

Slide 5.19: Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part I

Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part I

There are four pillars of the belief in the divine decree

a) The Divine Knowledge; God is All-knowing, and nothing falls beyond His knowledge.

→ (Q.29:42)

→ (Q.22:70)

→ (Q.72:28)

b) God has written down part of His eternal knowledge in recorded, which covers everything regardless of how big or small the thing or event might be.

→ (Q.6:59)

→ (Q.57:22)



First, **The Divine Knowledge:** God is All-Knowing, and nothing falls beyond His knowledge.

Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt 29:42

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Surely, Allah knows whatever thing they invoke besides Allah, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

Sūrah al-Ḥajj 22:70

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

“Do you not know that Allah knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a Record. Indeed that, for Allah, is easy.”

Sūrah al-Jinn 72:28

لِّيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَخَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَخَصَّنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدْدًا

“so that He knows that they (angels) have conveyed the messages of their Lord. And He has encompassed all that is with them, and has comprehensive knowledge of everything by numbers.”

Second, **The Divine Record:** God has written down part of His eternal knowledge in a record, which covers everything, regardless of how big or small the thing or event might be.



Sūrah al-An‘ām 6:59

وَعِنْدَهُ مِفْتَاحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ
وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظِلْمَتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ
مُّبِينٍ



“And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkensses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.”

Sūrah al-Ḥadīd 57:22

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ



“No calamity befalls the earth or your own selves, but it is (pre-destined) in a Book before We bring it into being, Indeed it is easy for Allah.”

Slide 5.20: Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part II

Readings for the Four Pillars of Divine Decree: Part II

c) The Divine Will - God's Will is All-encompassing; there is nothing that falls outside His Will. Whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

→ (Q.36:82)

→ (Q.76:30)

d) Allah (swt) is the True Creator, Who created everything and everyone, including human actions and handiworks.

→ (Q.40:62)

→ (Q.25:2)

→ (Q.35:3)



Third, **The Divine Will:** God's Will is All-Encompassing; there is nothing that falls outside His Will. Whatever He wills, happens, and whatever He does not will, does not happen.

Sūrah Yāsīn 36:82

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ



“His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

Sūrah al-Insān 76:30

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

“And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.”

Fourth, **The Divine Creator:** Allah (swt) is the True Creator, Who created everything and everyone, including human actions and handiworks.

Sūrah Ghāfir 40:62

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَانْتِ تُوَفَّكُونَ

“That is Allah, your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?”

Sūrah al-Furqān 25:2

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ
وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

“The One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and who did neither have a son, nor is there any partner to Him in the kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in a perfect measure.”

Sūrah Fāṭir 35:3

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَانْتِ تُوَفَّكُونَ

“O mankind, remember the favor of Allah upon you. Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the heaven and earth? There is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?”

Slide 5.21: Are We Free or Programmed?



This is a summary of responses from Muslim schools of theology that have particular views on *qadā'* and *qadar*. There are three main schools of thought on this topic:

1. Pro-deterministic school of theology: *Jabriyyah* says that we do not have any free will, we are completely programmed.
2. Pro-free will school of theology: *Muʿtazilī* (Rationalist) says we create options for ourselves, and from those options/ choices, we have free will to choose.
3. The Sunni school of theology: Denies that human actions are completely pre-determined, or that humans have complete free will in all aspects of life. The Sunni school takes a middle path; some aspects of the human life are pre-determined, some aspects are subjected to free will.

Slide 5.22: Summary

SUMMARY

- Humans have the ability to choose within the power of Allah (swt).
- We are held accountable only in matters in which we have free choice.



Humans have the ability to choose within the power of Allah (swt).

We are held accountable only in matters in which we have free choice. (If we do not have a choice in something, we are not held accountable for it.)

Exit ticket



Using the formal exit ticket (See [p. 285](#)) , or the other side of the index card “entry ticket,” or the online survey tool, have the students answer the following questions:

- What questions from among the preliminary questions do you still have? Have they all been answered?
- What questions arise or do you still have about the concept of *qadā'* and *qadar*?

Entry/Exit
Ticket



Name: _____

Date: _____

Entry Ticket

Do you think we are programmed or have free will? What are your thoughts and questions regarding Qada and Qadar?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Exit Ticket

What questions from among the preliminary questions do you still have? Have they all been answered?

What questions do you still have about the concept of qada and qadar?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Entry Ticket

Do you think we are programmed or have free will? What are your thoughts and questions regarding Qada and Qadar?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Exit Ticket

What questions from among the preliminary questions do you still have? Have they all been answered?

What questions do you still have about the concept of qada and qadar?