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DESTINY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE QURAN

Ismail KURT

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ANKARA 2021

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PREFACE

In this book, destiny (qadar) from the Quranic perspective is examined by way of a comparison with the opinions of Theological Creeds. Then, man's responsibility in terms of the relationship between God and man is discussed. Lastly, the reasons for man's responsibility and God's justice are analysed according to the Quranic philosophy. The study aims to present an accurate understanding of destiny from the Quranic perspective; how the meaning of destiny has changed; and to also present man's responsibilities in the context of destiny according to the Quranic worldview. In both analysis of destiny and responsibility in the Quran, the context of the verse and general Quranic context are considered as part of this research.

This book is based on my MA Dissertation "Destiny and Responsibility in the Quran" which was completed under the supervision of Dr M.A.S. Abdel Haleem at the University of London (SOAS) in 2013. I would like to thank Dr Abdel Haleem, for his support and insightful guidance through the course of my

thesis. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey for the scholarship that funded both my Pre-Master Course and MA Degree, enabling me to pursue my studies.

INTRODUCTION

The Quran is the most instrumental factor for the guidance of Muslims' life from the period of the revelation to modern times. However, interpretations of the Quran have differentiated between Muslims such as literal understandings, contextual understandings of the Quran. Because of the different approaches to the Quran, some lexical meanings of the Quranic words have changed or differentiated in time by means of terminological and other effects upon the Quran. One of the best examples of the matter is differentiation of the meaning of qadar between the Quran and outside of the Quranic usage.

The language and style of the Quran is unique, being shaped with the language of seventh century Arabia. Therefore, knowing the Arabic language of the seventh century is a vital necessity for researchers of the Quran. On the other hand, contexts of verses in both their own context and general Quranic context and original meanings of the Quranic words must be considered to reach the true meaning of verses. This research will examine the original meanings of qadar

and man's responsibilities within the context of the Quran to understand what exactly destiny and responsibility in the Quran is. Of course, the related verses in their own contexts as well as the general Quranic context relating to this matter will also be considered during the research.

In this research, a special dictionary which presents all the Quranic words in a book systematically will be utilized for the literal meaning of qadar and other words of the Quran. Furthermore, both the meanings of related Quranic words and the Quranic usages of qadar will be checked mainly in the Tafsirs of al-Razi, al-Zamharsari and al-Tabari from <http://www.altafsir.com> along with using published Tafsir Books and Books which are written in this academic field, as well as translations such as that of M. Assad and M. Abdel Haleem. Generally, a number of verses and some instructions will be referred in the footnotes and other references using the Harvard reference system for sake of fluidity.

Two sets of quotations labelled the predestination view in the history of Islam come from the Quran and Tradition. According to Watt, there is contradiction between the Quran and Tradition regarding predestination. When they are analysed with little detail and carefully, it is clear that a remarkable difference be-

tween them draws attention to destiny. Although the Quran underlined the majesty and omnipotence of God, the Tradition remarked the predetermined character of man's life in the view of destiny (Watt 1948). On the other hand, theological groups also have not found agreement on the matter of qadar and so the concept of qadar in Muslims' mind differentiates. No doubt, there are some political, theological, and other reasons in the differentiation of qadar between the Quranic usages and other usages, but the current research will not mention the reasons. This paper aims to research and then present the more accurate meanings of qadar which exists in the Quranic usage and presents man's responsibilities in terms of related qadar. The main purpose of the research is to present what the Quran says and underlines about the concept of destiny and responsibility to believers in the Quranic philosophy itself.

In the first chapter, destiny in the Quran will be examined in terms of theological and lexical meanings to indicate two differentiations and then asserted written sources of qadar such as the 'Preserved Tablet' will be analyzed to understand what exactly they are and their relations with qadar. In the second chapter, responsibilities of human being in the Quran will be discussed in terms of responsibility towards God and

beyond, as well as discussions on man's free will and God's determination upon man's acts to understand connections between responsibility and freedom. The third chapter will evaluate the matter in terms of presenting man's difference from other creatures and divine justice and its relations with man's responsibilities according to the Quranic philosophy.