

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Class Notes – Lesson 58

وَالْإِيمَانُ بِالْقَدْرِ عَلَى دَرَجَتَيْنِ، كُلُّ دَرَجَةٍ تَتَضَمَّنُ شَيْئَيْنِ.
فَالدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الْإِيمَانُ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى عَلِيمٌ بِالْحَلْقِ، وَهُمْ عَامِلُونَ بِعِلْمِهِ الْقَدِيمِ الَّذِي هُوَ مَوْصُوفٌ
بِهِ أَزْلًا وَأَبَدًا، وَعَلِمَ جَمِيعَ أَحْوَالِهِمْ مِنَ الطَّاعَاتِ وَالْمَعَاصِي وَالْأَرْزَاقِ وَالْآجَالِ، ثُمَّ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ فِي
اللَّوْحِ الْمَحْفُوظِ مَقَادِيرَ الْحَلْقِ. فَأَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ قَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ. قَالَ: مَا أَكْتُبُ؟ قَالَ:
اَكْتُبْ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Belief in the Divine Decree comprises two categories and each category consists of two matters: The first category is to believe that Allah, Most High, knows what the creation will do. He knows this with His pre-eternal knowledge which He has been described with, unceasingly and unendingly.

He knows all their states: when they are obedient and disobedient, all their provisions and their life spans. Then Allah wrote the decrees of all creation in the Preserved Tablet. The first thing Allah created was the Pen and He said to it: 'Write! It said: 'What should I write?' He said: 'Write everything that will be until the Day of Rising.'

وَالْإِيمَانُ بِالْقَدْرِ عَلَى دَرَجَتَيْنِ، كُلُّ دَرَجَةٍ تَتَضَمَّنُ شَيْئَيْنِ

Belief in the Divine Decree comprises two categories and each category consists of two matters.

- The Sheikh divided the belief in *al-Qadar* into two categories, with each category consisting of two levels. The outcome of this classification is four levels, which are known as *Maraatibul Qadar* (The levels of *al-Qadar*).
- In the first category the first two levels are mentioned, namely Allah's eternal knowledge of all things and the writing of that in the *Lawhul Mahfooth* (Preserved Tablet). In the second category the other two levels are mentioned, namely Allah's *Mashee'ah* (Will) and His creation of all that was decreed.
- Referring to these levels as *Maratibul Qadar* (The levels of *al-Qadar*) or *Darajaatul Qadar* (The Degrees of *al-Qadar*) and dividing them into four levels or into two categories with four levels, is a matter of *istilaah* (terminology), however the intended meaning is the same.

فَالدَّرَجَةُ الْأُولَى: الْإِيمَانُ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى عَلِيمٌ بِالْخَلْقِ، وَهُمْ عَامِلُونَ بِعِلْمِهِ الْقَدِيمِ الَّذِي هُوَ مَوْصُوفٌ بِهِ أَزْلًا وَأَبَدًا

The first category is to believe that Allah, Most High, knows what the creation will do. He knows this with His pre-eternal knowledge which He has been described with, unceasingly and unendingly.

- (الْإِيمَانُ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى عَلِيمٌ بِالْخَلْقِ) – ‘To believe that Allah, Most High, knows what the creation will do.’ The Sheikh did not mention that Allah knows what He, Himself does, because there is no disagreement on this issue. He only mentioned the point of disagreement, which is whether Allah knows what the creation will do in advance, or if He only knows it after they have done it. The correct *madhab* is that of *Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama’ah* who believe that Allah knows what the creation will do before they do it. This is based on the evidences of the Quran and Sunnah.
- (وَهُمْ عَامِلُونَ بِعِلْمِهِ الْقَدِيمِ) – ‘He knows this with His pre-eternal knowledge’. When the *Salaf* refer to Allah’s knowledge as being *Qadeem* (eternal), it is referring to that which has no beginning. In other words, He has always known in the infinite past what the creation will do. This is different from the linguistic meaning of *qadeem* (old), which refers to something as relatively old depending on what comes after it.
- Therefore, Allah is described as knowing what the creation will do through His eternal knowledge, which has no beginning. He knows that a particular person will do a specific deed on a specific day in a specific place, through His eternal knowledge. Therefore, it is obligatory to believe in this.
- This is evidenced in both the Quran and the Sunnah. As for the Quran, there are many *ayaat* which mention the vastness of Allah’s knowledge. Allah says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

And Allah is Knowing of all things. [al-Baqarah: 282]

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا﴾

Indeed, Allah is, of all things, Knowing. [al-Nisaa’: 32]

As for the Sunnah, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ، وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ»

Allah wrote the decrees of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was upon water. [Muslim]

- (الَّذِي هُوَ مَوْصُوفٌ بِهِ أَزْلًا وَأَبَدًا) – ‘Which He has been described with, unceasingly and unendingly’. That Allah is described with it unceasingly or eternally (*azalan*), negates ignorance, while Him being described with it unendingly or forever (*abadan*) negates forgetfulness. This is why Allah’s knowledge is not preceded by ignorance nor followed by forgetfulness. Allah says:

﴿قَالَ عَلِمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى ﴿٥٣﴾﴾

[Musa] said: ‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets.

[Taha: 53]

- This is in contrast to the creation whose knowledge is preceded by ignorance and followed by forgetfulness. Therefore, we must believe that Allah is knowledgeable with what the creation will do, with prior knowledge, which He has been described with eternally and forever.

وَعَلِمَ جَمِيعَ آخْوَاهِمِ مِنَ الطَّاعَاتِ وَالْمَعَاصِي وَالْأَرْزَاقِ وَالْآجَالِ

He knows all their states: when they are obedient and disobedient, all their provisions and their life spans.

- This is evidenced in the famous *hadith* in which the Prophet ﷺ mentioned the stages of the foetus in the mother's womb. After four months, Allah sends an angel:

ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ مَلَكًا، فَيُؤَمِّرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ، وَيُقَالُ لَهُ: أَكْتُبْ عَمَلَهُ، وَرِزْقَهُ، وَأَجَلَهُ، وَشَقِيٌّ أَوْ سَعِيدٌ، ثُمَّ يُنْفَخُ فِيهِ الرُّوحُ»

Then Allah sends an angel who is commanded to write four things: his deeds, his provision, his lifespan, and whether he will be wretched or blessed. Then the soul is breathed into him.

[Bukhari, Muslim]

- Therefore, Allah knows all of this about the person before they were created. In his explanation of this part of the treatise, Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen said: *'Our acts of obedience are known to Allah, our sins are known to Allah, our provisions are known to Him, and our lifespans are known to Him. Whether a person dies due to a known cause or without a known cause, it is known to Allah and not hidden from Him. This is unlike a human's knowledge of their own death; a person does not know their lifespan, so they do not know where they will die, when they will die, by what cause they will die, or in what state they will die. We ask Allah, the Exalted, for a good end.'*

ثُمَّ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ فِي اللَّوْحِ الْمَحْفُوظِ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلْقِ

Then Allah wrote the decrees of all creation in the Preserved Tablet.

- This is the second level from the first category, which is that Allah wrote the decrees (*maqadeer*) of the creation in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawhul Mahfooth*). Only Allah knows the true essence of the Preserved Tablet, we only believe that there is a *Lawh* (Tablet) in which Allah has written the decrees of everything, and we have no right to question beyond that; except what is present in the Quran and Sunnah regarding its nature.
- It was described as being Preserved (*Mahfooth*) for two reasons:
 1. It is preserved from the hands of the creation. No one can add to it or alter it.
 2. It is preserved from change. Allah does not change anything in it, because He recorded it from His Knowledge.
- The evidences from the Quran and Sunnah which mention the recording of the decrees of the creation in the *Lawhul Mahfooth* are general and universal to all the creations. This includes the decrees of the humans, the animals and the remainder of the creation.

فَأَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ قَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ. قَالَ: مَا أَكْتُبُ؟ قَالَ: اكْتُبْ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

The first thing Allah created was the Pen and He said to it: 'Write! It said: 'What should I write?' He said: 'Write everything that will be until the Day of Rising.'

- This statement by the Sheikh is based on the *hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ:

«إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ، قَالَ: مَا أَكْتُبُ؟ قَالَ: اكْتُبْ مَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ»

Indeed, the first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it: 'Write.' The pen asked: 'What should I write?' He said: 'Write what will happen until the Day of Resurrection.'

[Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi - Sahih]

- Therefore, we believe that Allah commanded the pen to write, and the pen complied. However, the pen was uncertain about what to write, as the command from Allah was general so it asked: '*What should I write?*', meaning what exactly should I write?

Allah then ordered it to write all that will happen until the Day of Judgement. So, by Allah's command, the Pen wrote everything that will occur until the Day of Judgement. The Pen came to know what will happen until the Day of Judgement and wrote it, because Allah's command cannot be refused.

Review questions

1. How did the Sheikh divide belief in *al-Qadar* into categories and levels?
2. What is meant by Allah's eternal knowledge (*qadeem*) as per the first level of *al-Qadar*?
3. Allah's eternal knowledge is described as being *azalan* and *abadan*. What do these two terms mean and what do they negate?
4. What is the significance of the Preserved Tablet (Lawhul Mahfooth) in relation to the second level of *al-Qadar*?
5. What was the first thing Allah created, and what did He command it to do?