



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

ALLAH IS THE BEST OF PLANNER – DO WE HAVE A HARSH GOD?

Things happened in our lives might not make sense...for now. We worked hard and we prayed sincerely, BUT our du'a did not get the answer from Allah. Then the worshippers are divided into several groups when they do not get what they wish for:

1. Some people started to question their faith;
2. Some people started to go downhill on their iman – started drinking, gambling, taking drugs, especially when mixed with bad company;
3. Many would compromise Islam in order to achieve what they want even though it may cost them dearly in the hereafter if they do not repent;
4. Some people started to blame Allah;
5. Some would remain patient and steadfast;
6. A tiny minority would actually Increase their faith, Increase their worship and Get Rewarded for their patience.

ALLAH IS THE BEST OF PLANNER

The Qur'an has many examples which serve as a guidance for those with understanding in relation to Allah's Plans:

"There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur'an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe. [Quran, Chapter 12, Verse 111]

1. Ibrahim (AS) was Commanded by Allah to leave his wife Hajjar and son Ismail in the middle of the desert
2. Story of the mother of Musa (AS) – 28: 7-13
3. Al Khidr's 3 examples in surah al Kahf (18) verses 65 - 82
4. The story of 1 person which was given gardens and wealth in surah al Kahf and another person who was given nothing. 18: 32 - 43
5. Musa (AS) accidentally killed a man and was driven out of Egypt to Madyan - 28: 15 - 32 . Good du'a in 28: 24

6. Story of Yusuf (AS) – surah 12
7. Story to Yunus (AS) – eaten by the whale but his was the only nation saved by Allah. 10: 98
8. Sacrifice of those who perform the Hijrah – people of the cave, the Muhajiroon, etc
9. Treaty of Hdaybiyah
10. Umm Salamah (radiallahu anha) thought no one could be better than Abu Salamah (radiallahu anhu)

“Umm Salamah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying, “When a person suffers from a calamity and utters: `Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji`un. Allahumma ujurni fi musibati, wakhlu li khairan minha (We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. O Allah! Compensate me in my affliction, recompense my loss and give me something better in exchange for it), then Allah surely compensates him with reward and better substitute.” Umm Salamah (ra) said: When Abu Salamah (ra) died, I repeated the same supplication as the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) had commanded me (to do), so Allah bestowed upon me a better substitute than him [Muslim].

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرُنِي
فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

LESSONS TO BE GATHERED

1. Qadr of Allah

There is no doubt that Allah has decreed everything that happens in the universe from the beginning of time to the end, and that Allah has written it all in al-Lawh al-Mahfooz (the Book of Decrees).

“Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfooz). Verily, that is easy for Allah” (Quran, al-Hajj 22:70)

In Saheeh Muslim (2653) it is narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: “Allah wrote down the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.”

Everything happens by the will of Allah. Whatever He wills happens, and whatever he does not will does not happen. However, as Sheikh Muhammad Saalih Al-Munajjid explains,

Belief in al-qadar does not contradict the idea that a person has free will with regard to actions in which he has free choice. Sharee'ah and real life both indicate that people have this will.

Allaah says concerning man's will (interpretation of the meaning):

"That is (without doubt) the True Day. So, whosoever wills, let him seek a place with (or a way to) His Lord (by obeying Him in this worldly life)!" [al-Naba' 78:39] (and other similar ayaat)

These verses confirm that man has a will and the ability to do what he wants and not to do what he does not want.

With regard to real life, everyone knows that he has a will and the ability to do what he wants and not to do what he does not want. And he can distinguish between the things that happen when he wants them to, such as walking, and those that happen without him wanting them to, such as shivering. But the will and ability of man are subject to the will and decree of Allaah.

Sheikh Al-Munajjid's last paragraph is the key to understanding Al-Qadar: walking (voluntary) versus shivering (involuntary). Other scholars have explained it as two types of Qadar, fixed and flexible. The fixed Qadar is that which happens to us from beyond our control. For example the time and place of our birth, any illnesses and natural disasters that befall us, etc. The flexible Qadar is that which is within the realm of our free will. Whether we do good or evil, and what we choose to believe and how we choose to live. Sheikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah wrote:

There are two types of provision and lifespan: the first type has already been decreed and is written in Umm al-kitaab, and cannot be changed or altered. The next type of qadar, Allah has informed His angels of His decrees. This is the type where provisions and lifespan may increase or decrease. Hence Allah the Almighty says what may be translated as, **"Allah blots out what he wills and confirms [what He wills]. And with Him is the Mother of the book."** (Surat Ar-Ra'ad, verse 39) The mother of the Book (Umm al-Kitaab) is Al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh, in which Allah has decreed all things as they will always be without change. However, the decrees contained in the books of the angels, such as lifespan and provisions, may increase or decrease according to various circumstances; thereafter, the angels will re-write a person's provision and lifespan. If a person upholds the ties of kinship, his provisions and lifespan will be extended, otherwise they will decrease." [See Majmoo'al-Fataawa 8/540]

2. Patience, and more patience

3. Names and Attributes of Allah – ar Rahman, ar Rahim, al Wadud, etc
4. Trust in Allah
5. Husnul Zon – positive thinking
6. Do NOT have any bad opinions of Allah
7. continue to worship Allah in times of happiness and in times of distress
8. The higher the iman, the bigger the test
9. Expiation of sins with patience
10. Increase humility
11. Seek refuge from shaytan
12. Understand who your awliya' are
13. Ask ONLY from Allah for help and patience – lots of du'a
14. Resolve the issues to the best of our abilities
15. Do Not compromise Islam

We also must remember several things:

1. Understand tawheed very well
2. our nafs prone to evil – 12:53
3. shaytan as our number one enemy
4. Dunya is a very short period – the hereafter is much longer and everlasting

“...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.” [2:216, al-Qur'an]

Following Allah's Plan

This is the hard part. Allah's plan for us is true to who we are at our core, in our very essence. It will not correlate to an artificial persona we have adopted, or our desire to be seen and recognized. Allah's plan may not bring us fame, fortune, or physical pleasure. It might mean giving up material comfort. So Allah's plan for us may not be what we would wish it to be.

Abu Hurayrah ^{رضي الله عنه}, the companion of the Messenger of Allah ^{صلى الله عليه وسلم}, was asked about Taqwa (God-consciousness). He said, “It is a road full of thorns. One who walks it needs to have extreme patience.”

In fact, Allah's plan may be so challenging that we may perceive it but decline to follow it.

I have a friend who says that Africa has been calling her all her life. She believes that her destiny is to go there and help the African people in some way. But she has not done it. Why?

I have another friend who believes that da'wah is his mission in life. He spent ten years studying Japanese at the university level, and he dreams of living in Japan and doing da'wah there. But he has no concrete plan to do so. Why?

I asked several brothers and sisters if they know what their mission in life might be. Some said yes. I asked them if they were carrying out their mission. Most said no, and gave these reasons:

- I feel that others are more qualified than me.
- It seems like a fantasy.
- It feels like a dream.
- I tried once and it didn't go my way.
- Right now I need to focus on financial security.
- I'm not ready yet.

Brothers and sisters, no one more qualified than you to fulfill the plan that Allah has for you! Allah's plan is not a fantasy, nor a dream. It may not go your way the first time, or the second, or the third. It may not make you rich, but there is no true financial security in this life – that's an illusion. No one expects you to let your family go hungry. Work hard and provide for them, but don't get caught in the trap of thinking that the accumulation of wealth will save you, because the only true security is with Allah. And last of all, no one is ever ready to walk fee-sabeel-illah (in the path of Allah). It is a road full of thorns. But it is also the road to fulfillment, happiness, barakah and success.

Fulfilling Allah's plan for us requires that we silence the voice of our own desire, open ourselves to Allah, and look within with total sincerity. It takes courage, patience and determination. It is the path to Jannah (Paradise), Insha'Allah.

DOES IT ALL MEAN THAT WE HAVE A HARSH, UNMERCIFUL AND INFLEXIBLE GOD?

- Iblis only disobeyed once
- Qabil couldn't have his own choice of wife
- Allah destroyed many nations before
- We only have one chance in hereafter – NO second chance

On the contrary

Allah had overlooked our mistakes and numerous sins:

And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving (living) creature on the surface of the earth, but He gives them respite to an appointed term, and when their term comes, then verily, Allah is Ever All-Seer of His slaves.
Surah Fatir 35: 45

And your Lord is Most Forgiving, Owner of Mercy. Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, then surely, He would have hastened their punishment.

But they have their appointed time, beyond which they will find no escape.
Surah al Kahf 18: 58

Allah Promised us His Mercy

“Declare (O Muhammad) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful. And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment.” [15:49-50]

His Mercy encompasses all things. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“... and My Mercy embraces all things.” [7:156]

In Saheeh Muslim it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah has one hundred parts of mercy, of which He sent down one between the jinn, mankind, the animals and the insects, by means of which they are compassionate and merciful to one another, and by means of which wild animals are kind to their offspring. And Allah has kept back ninety-nine parts of mercy with which to be merciful to His slaves of the Day of Resurrection.” (Muslim, al-Tawbah, 6908)

It was narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Some prisoners were brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there was a woman among the prisoners who was searching (for her child). When she found her child she embraced him and put him to her breast. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to us, ‘Do you think that this woman would throw her child in the fire?’ We said, ‘No, by Allah, not if she is able not to.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘Allah is more merciful to His slaves than this woman is to her child.’” (Agreed upon)

One aspect of the Mercy of Allah to His slaves is that He sent the Messengers and revealed the Books and laws to organize their lives according to the ways of wisdom, far removed from hardship and difficulty. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the ‘alameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists).” [21:107]

The Mercy of Allah is what will admit His believing slaves to Paradise on the Day of Resurrection. No one will ever enter Paradise because of his deeds alone, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No one’s deeds will ever admit him to Paradise.” They said, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He said, “No, not even me, unless Allah showers me with His Mercy. So try to be near to perfection. And no one should wish for death; he is either doing good so he will do more of that, or he is doing wrong so he may repent.”

[al-Bukhari, Muslim]

Allah's Beautiful Names

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allaah, so call on Him by them..." [al-A'raaf 7:180] - so one might say "Yaa Rahman arhamni (O Most Merciful, have mercy on me)," "Yaa Ghafoor ighfir li (O All-Forgiving, forgive me)," "Yaa Tawwaab, tubb 'alayya (O Acceptor of Repentance, turn towards me in forgiveness)," and so on.

- Ar Rahman (The Compassionate) – 2: 163
- Ar Rahim (The Merciful) – 1: 1
- Al Ghaffar (The Great Forgiver, Often-Forgiving) – 71: 10

The Arabic word “Ghafara” linguistically means “to cover or hide”, hence God is “Al-Ghaffar” in the sense that He keeps your innermost thoughts and intentions hidden from other fellow humans. Therefore, your innermost feelings, intentions, thoughts and ambitions are well-protected and well-covered.

Another meaning of God’s name “Al-Ghaffar” is that He covers man’s ugly inner body with a nice-looking skin. Without an outer skin man’s body would look very ugly. In other words, man’s inner muscles and innermost parts would look horrible if they were on the surface of his body. But by Allah’s Grace, the outer skin makes man’s face and body look beautiful.

By “ugly” He means a man’s evil thoughts as lots of ugly thoughts visit his mind: thoughts of evil things, thoughts of committing sins.

- Al Ghaffoor (The All-Forgiving) – 35: 28
- Al-Ghafir (The Forgiver) – 40: 3
- At Tawwab (The Acceptor of Repentance) 40: 3
- Al – Afuw (The Pardoner, Oft=Pardoning) – 4: 169
- Al Haleem (Clement) – 17:44, 2: 235, 2: 263

Ibn Jareer said in his *Tafseer* (4/144): “This means that He gives respite and does not hasten to punish the one who disobeys Him or goes against His command.”

Al-Khattaabi said in *Sha'n al-Du'a'* (63): “He is forgiving and grants respite, the One Whose anger does not overwhelm Him and Who is not provoked by the ignorance of the ignorant or the disobedience of the disobedient. One who forgives when he is not able to punish does not deserve to be called Haleem (forbearing); rather the one who is al-Haleem is the One Who forgives when He is able to punish and Who gives respite and does not hasten the punishment.”

Qiyaam al-Sunnah al-Asbahaani said in *al-Hujjah fi Bayaan al-Mahajjah* (1/144): “Forbearing towards the one who disobeys Him, because if He wanted to punish him at the time of the sin, He could do so, but He grants him respite until the appointed time. Even though this is a name that may be applied to a person, the forbearance of a person is not a quality with which a person is born and which then develops when he grows older; it may change at times of sickness or anger, or because of events that happen. His attribute dies when he dies, but the forbearance of Allaah abides and never disappears. A person may forgive one thing but not another; he may forgive those against whom he is powerless to exact revenge, but Allaah forgives even though He is able to punish.”

Ibn al-Qayyim said in *al-Nooniyyah* (3278):

“He is the Forbearing and does not hasten the punishment for His slave, (granting him respite) so that he may repent from his sin.”

Al-Sa’di said in his *Tafseer* (19): “Al-Haleem is the One Who keeps bestowing blessings, both visible and hidden, on His creation, even though they disobey Him and make many mistakes. So He forgives and does not give the sinners the punishment they deserve; He encourages them to repent and gives them time to turn to Him.”

- Ar Rauf (The Compassionate, the Kind) – 24: 20

Forgiveness of sins - opportunities given by Allah:

MAJOR SINS

- sincere repentance
- hajj
- shahadah - new Muslim
- hijrah

MINOR SINS

- from one Ramadan to another
- from one prayer to another
- from one Friday to another
- during Ramadan
- last third of the night
- dhikr

Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “*And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the Aalameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists)*” [al-Anbiya’ 21:107]. The scholars differed concerning the ‘Aalameen (translated here as “mankind, jinns and all that exists”; also often translated as “the worlds”) to whom the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was sent as a mercy.

Ibn Jibreel (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Here Allah, may He be exalted, says to His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): We have not sent you, O Muhammad, to Our creation except as a mercy to those to whom We have sent you of Our creation.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas said: As far as the one who believes in Allah and the Last Day is concerned, mercy will be decreed for him (by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) in this world and the Hereafter; as for the one who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, he will be saved (by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) from the punishments that befell the previous landslides and being pelted with stones from heaven.

Others said that what is meant is he is a mercy to the believers only, to the exclusion of the disbelievers.

The more correct of the two opinions is that which was narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas, which says that Allah sent His Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) as a mercy to all the world, both believers and disbelievers. As for the believers, Allah guided them through him and caused them, through their belief in him and their acting upon what he brought from Allah, to enter Paradise. As for the disbelievers, by virtue of him He warded off from them the hastening of the punishment that came upon the nations who disbelieved in their Messengers before him.

End quote from *Tafseer at-Tabari*, 18/551-552. See also *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, 5/385; *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, p. 532

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In the sending of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) there is mercy even for his enemies, in that the punishment will not be hastened for them.

End quote from *Fataawa al-Hadeethiyyah*, p. 34

"And (remember) when they said: 'O Allah! If this (the Qur'an) is indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then rain down stones on us from the sky or bring on us a painful torment.'

And Allah would not punish them while you (Muhammad) are amongst them, nor will He punish them while they seek (Allah's) Forgiveness."

[*al-Anfaal* 8:32-33].

Al-Bukhaari (3231) and Muslim (1795) narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): Was there ever a day that was worse for you than the day of Uhud? He said: "I suffered at the hands of your people, and the worst that I suffered from them was the day of al-'Aqabah, when I presented myself to Ibn 'Abd Yaleel ibn 'Abd Kulaal, and he did not respond to what I wanted. So I went, with signs of distress on my face, and I did not recover until I was in Qarn al-Tha'aalib, where I lifted my head and saw that a cloud was shading me. I looked and saw therein Jibraa'eel (peace be upon him), who called me

and said: Allaah has heard what your people said to you, and how they have rejected you. He has sent to you the angel of the mountains, so that you can tell him to do whatever you want to them. Then he called the angel of the mountains to me and he greeted me with salaam, then said: O Muhammad, Allaah has heard what your people have said to you, and I am the angel of the mountains. Your Lord has sent me so that you can tell me what to do. What do you want? If you wish I will bring together the two mountains of Makkah to crush them. The Messenger of Allaah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to him: "Rather I hope that Allaah will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allaah alone, not associating anything with Him."

Allah sent us the Qur'an

This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are *Al-Muttaqun*. 2: 2

And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the *Zalimun* (polytheists and wrong-doers) nothing but loss. 17: 82

Even when the Qur'an was revealed – revealed in stages:

First 13 years – only on tawheed in Makkah – to strengthen the heart

Next 10 years – then the commands in Madinah

"Verily, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad (S)) the Book (this Quran) for mankind in truth. So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for his own self, and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his (own) loss. And you (O Muhammad (S)) are not a Wakeel (trustee or disposer of affairs, or keeper) over them." 39: 41