

[Home](#) > [The Emendation of A Shi'ite Creed](#) > 13. The interpretation of the reports concerning Al-Qada' and Al-Qadar

---

## 13. The interpretation of the reports concerning Al-Qada' and Al-Qadar

As for the reports which Abu Ja'far, may Allah have mercy upon him, relates concerning the prohibition of discussion of qada' and qadar, they can bear two meanings: first, that the prohibition is restricted to those people whose discussions result in corrupt doctrine and divert them from the faith; for they will not keep their religion intact unless they refrain from discussion and abstain from indulging in it.

Thus, the prohibition does not necessarily apply to all those who have reached years of discretion (mukallafin), since what is good for some might prove to be bad for others<sup>1</sup>, \*and, on the contrary, what is evil for some might be good for others<sup>2</sup>, and this demonstrates why the Imams, peace be upon them, endeavored to direct their followers in religion in accordance with what they knew to be in their best interest.

Secondly, discussion \*of qada' and qadar\*<sup>3</sup> is probably prohibited, regarding the reasons and causes of what Allah has created; and what He commands; and the religious duties He imposes; since the inquiry into, and asking for the causes and reasons of, creation and religious obligations are prohibited, because Allah, the Exalted, has veiled these questions from the great majority of mankind.

Do you not realize that no one is permitted to seek for the cause of the creation of all that has been created, in detail? And to ask, 'Why has He created this thing and that? Until he has enumerated all created things and accounted for them. Nor is anyone permitted to ask, 'Why did He command this? And impose that? And forbid the other?'

For His imposing this, and commanding that, is because He knows the best interests of His creation. Allah, the Almighty, has not disclosed to any of His creatures the particular causes for what He has created or commanded or imposed, notwithstanding that He has stated a priori that He did not create His creation lightly ('abath), but He did – indeed– create them with a wise purpose (li hikmah).

Yet, both reason and scripture (sam') support this. Allah says:

***We created not the heaven and the earth, and whatsoever between them is, as though (we were) playing [21: 16].***

And He says:

***Do you think that We created you only for sport [23: 115].***

And He says:

***Surely We have created everything in measure [54:49],***

that is, justly and fittingly. And He says:

***And I have created jinn and men, only that they might serve Me [51:56].***

And He says, concerning what He enjoins on us:

***The flesh of them shall not reach Allah, neither blood, but piety shall reach Him from you [22:37].***

Thus, it is likely that Allah, the Almighty, might create one particular animal to the end that it will cause some unbelievers (to believe); or it might lead some fornicators to repent; or that it might benefit some of the faithful; or that some evil-doers might take heed from it; or for the sheer benefit or the animal itself; or that it might serve as a warning to someone, whether in the earth or in the heavens, the aspects of which are all beyond our grasp and far from our comprehension, though we have to believe a priori that all that Allah has created is for a wise purpose and not for mere sport.

It is also possible that its purpose is to draw us near to obedience to Him and to keep us from rebelliousness, and that service through prayer stands as a Divine favour either to all the worshipers, or to a few. Since all these hidden aspects of the Divine ordinances have been veiled from us, and since no authority exists for inquiring into it or asking for detailed explanation; though it is obligatory to believe that as a whole they have been created for a Divine purpose, hence it is forbidden to discuss qada' and qadar in the context mentioned above.

At any rate, the foregoing argument is necessary only if the reports related by Abu Ja'far, may Allah have mercy upon him, are approved sound; otherwise, if they are untrustworthy, then we are relieved of the duty of refuting it. As for the tradition which he related on the authority of Zurarah<sup>4</sup>, it is the only sound one of them all, and its meaning is obvious, and it is not difficult for the intelligent to comprehend.

It confirms the soundness of the doctrine of the People of Justice (ahlu 'l-'adl), and demonstrates the falsity of the doctrine of the Predestinarians. Have you not understood and comprehended the tradition we related from Abu 'Abdillah, peace be upon him, "When Allah will collect or (assemble) men (creation) on the Day of Resurrection, He will ask them concerning what He had enjoined on them and will not question them concerning what He had des- tined for them?"

Moreover, the Qur'an declares emphatically that men are responsible for their actions, so if their actions were decreed from Allah, then He never would ask them about it, which demonstrates that the eternal decree means the 'creation of their things', and what this entails is that Allah the Almighty will ask them only concerning what He enjoined on them in commanding them to do good deeds and to abstain from evil. Thus, according to this reasoning the tradition mentioned above is an illustration supporting the foregoing explanation of qada' and qadar which is comprehensible.

1. N reads: la yasluhu bihi akharun.

2. \* \* Not found in N.

3. \* \* Not found in N.

4. Zurarah ibn A'yan ash-Shaybani (d. 150 AH): It is said that his real name was 'Abdu Rabbih, whereas Zurarah was his laqab. His kunyah was Abu 'l-Hasan. He was one of the earliest distinguished Shi'ah divines and a remarkable theologian, jurist and traditionist. His father, Sunsun, is said to have been a Roman slave who was freed for his knowledge of the Qur'an, and his grandfather is said to have become a Christian Monk. He was highly honoured by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.), who said of him: "Had it not been for Zurarah, the traditions of my father would have been forgotten". The biographers ascribe to him, among other works, a theological tract called al Jabr wa 'l-istita'ah. See Ibnu 'n-Nadim, al-Fihrist, p.220; at-Tusi, Rijali 'sh-Shi'ah, p.123; al-Kishshi, ar-Rijal, p.88; an-Najashi, al-Fihrist, p.125, adh-Dhahabi, Mizanu 'l-i'tidal, vol.2, p.69, no.2853; al-Mamaqani, Tanqihu 'l-maqal, vol.I, p.438, no.4213.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/emendation-shiite-creed-shaykh-al-mufid/13-interpretation-reports-concerning-al-qada-and-al-qadar#comment-0>