

Lesson 17: AL-QADR: THE POWER OF ALLAH **سبحانه وتعالى** , CAN A PERSON CHOOSE TO DO GOOD OR BAD?

Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has made humans different from animals. Can you think of ways in which we are different from horses, cows, birds, fish, and insects?

Humans are different in several ways. Firstly, humans have intelligence. We have a brain to understand many things. Humans can think and plan. Secondly, humans can speak and put their thoughts and ideas into words. They have the ability to read and write. They can read in books the thoughts of men who lived long ago and far away. Thirdly, every human being has a mind and heart, allowing him to feel the difference between what is good, and what is bad.

Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has given us all intelligence and understanding so that we can recognize Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** as the One Who has created all the wonderful things in the heavens and the earth. He has allowed humans to understand the difference between good and bad. Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has full power to control all of His creations, including Man. However, He has given us the power to choose between good and bad.

Suppose a mother asks her children to help her at home. Knowing that helping her would make her happy, some children choose to obey her request. However, some children refuse to obey, making their mothers sad and angry with them.

From this example, you can see that Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has given he people the freedom to choose good or bad. He loves those who do good and is angered by those who do wrong.

The Qur'an says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن
زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

And (by) the soul and Him Who perfected it, and inspired it (with conscious of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. Indeed, he succeeds, who purifies it (his soul) and he is indeed a failure who corrupts it)

(Ash-hams 91: 7-10)

Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has given humans the gift of His guidance. He has promised to help those who ask Him and sincerely try to obey Him. Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** has also given humans the freedom to turn away from His guidance. Some people choose not to be guided by Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** and they try to guide themselves. Such people go astray and will never be happy in this world or in the next.

It is important to understand that our conscience, the voice of our soul, is the most valuable possessions we have. A child is born with a pure soul. As long as he believes in Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** and tries to do good, his soul will stay pure and bright, like a mirror. But if he chooses to ignore Allah's guidance and behaves in a manner that his conscience knows is wrong, his soul will remember a mirror that has been covered with dirt. He will have lost sight of Allah's guiding light and will be left in eternal darkness. It is for this reason that Allah **سبحانه وتعالى** commands us to pray to Him every day. Consider the words of *Surah al-Fatihah (1:6-7)*:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ

*Guide us the right path: the path of those to whom You have given Your blessings.
Not the path of those who earn Your anger, nor of those who go astray.*

(*Surah al-Fatihah 1:67*)