Introduction

A major article of faith, the concept of predetermination (al-qaḍā’ wa-al-qadar, henceforth: qadar) appears in every Islamic traditionalist creed and theological manual. Like other articles of faith, the concept of qadar has its origins in the Qur’ān and especially in Hadith material, but is also discussed in a rationalistic framework, regardless of scriptural proofs. As a key tenet of Islamic thought, it attracted the attention of both scholars and laymen, probably because it lies at the juncture of metaphysical notions, such as God’s attributes, and ethical notions, such as the human being’s responsibility for his actions, thus establishing a connection between the divine and the worldly. This very connection enables the Muslim theologian to address the discussion on qadar to the believer himself, as the person who is required to transcend from the highly philosophical debate into everyday religious practice. This transition from the metaphysical to the practical provides answers to the believer who seeks advice and comfort in his hour of need.

The problem of qadar constitutes a cluster of interrelated questions. Does God create the human action? Does God create in the human being the power to perform his action? Is the human being given a choice (ikhtiyār) whether to perform his action? Does God coerce the human being to perform an action, even a forbidden one? Does God know beforehand that an action is going to take place? These questions, which mostly fall under the category of “the creation of human actions” (khalq al-af‘āl), emphasize the affinity between God and the human being as established in the qadar sections of many theological works.¹
Some of these questions, such as “When exactly is the human being’s fate determined?”, or “How is the human being’s fate determined?”, are drawn exclusively from the Hadith, and are developed only by traditionalist thinkers. In kalām manuals, however, attention is mostly given to two issues: God’s attributes and God’s retribution. Therefore, the most frequent questions about predetermination in the theology of kalām are: “What is God’s foreknowledge of human actions?”, “What is the human being’s responsibility for his actions?”, and of course the cardinal question, “Is it fair to punish the human being or reward him for predetermined and foreknown actions?”. Although the last question is central to the Mu'tazili dogma of divine justice (al-'adl), it certainly preoccupies a great deal of the discourse of various thinkers, even those from the traditionalist wing of the Islamic theological spectrum.

Answers to these questions are usually treated in one of two ways. A solution based purely on the human intellect, associated with Mu'tazili rationalism, leads to the conclusion that the human being has the ability to choose his actions and is the sole creator of his actions. A solution based solely on Hadith, including the teachings of the salaf, usually leads to the conclusion that God is the sole creator of human actions and hence the human being has no ability to choose. These determinist answers are associated with the traditionalist trend of Sunni Islam. In between, Ash'arī theology aims at proving the traditionalist determinist dogma, which is based on Hadith, through the rational tools first developed by the Mu'tazila. In this way, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935) and later theologians attempted to reconcile the highly deterministic and even fatalistic Hadith material with the religious conviction of human moral responsibility. The Ash'arī solution is the kasb theory, which raises many difficulties, and is not focused on the interpretation of Hadith. In that respect, the Ash'arī method of dealing with the issue of human choice resembles the Mu'tazili one, even though it arrives at the opposite conclusion.

Like the Ash'arīs, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and his steadfast disciple, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), seek to defend the traditional interpretation of qadar. Their conclusions, however, are hardly similar to that of the Ash'arīs. Although drawing inspiration from Ash'arī thinkers like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 604/1209), Ibn Taymiyya and his student strive to mould formulae which are very
different, especially with regard to the nature and range of human choice. Ibn Taymiyya’s and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s doctrines, while relying on the largely deterministic Hadith material, negate the Ash’arī kasb solution and assert the existence of free will. The novelty in their approach is their application of rationalist methods of Hadith interpretation in a manner that goes against the literal, common sense reading of those sacred texts. Instead of preaching fatalistic acceptance of one’s destiny with humility and gratitude, they reinterpret the content of the traditions as an explicit command for the believers to take their fate in their own hands and acknowledge responsibility for their actions.

In this paper I present Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s understandings of one of the fitra traditions, the one which is most frequently quoted on the subject of predetermination. This tradition is the focus of a discussion in Ibn Taymiyya’s theological treatise Dar’ taʿāruḍ al-‘aql wa-al-naql (The preventing of contradiction between reason and revelation), which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya substantially copied in the thirtieth and final chapter of his magnum opus on predetermination, Shifā’ al-‘alīl fi masā’il al-qāḍāʾ wa-al-qadar wa-al-ḥikma wa-al-taʿlīl (Healing the person with wrong concepts about predetermination and causality; henceforth, Shifā’ al-‘alīl)).

Through a close reading of a text originally written by Ibn Taymiyya and copied and edited by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, I will argue that the fitra tradition is used by Ibn Taymiyya to assert the existence of human free will when it comes to the matter of belief and unbelief. Ibn Taymiyya refers to this concept as al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl (the right guidance and going astray), a concept which will be elaborated below. His goal is to interweave the belief in predetermination with the explicit assertion that matters of faith are entirely in the hands of the individual and his choice (ikhtiyār), a term not found in the Taymiyyan text, but nonetheless used by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s role here is twofold. First, he offers an almost necessary elucidation of the unwieldy Taymiyyan style, which on its own requires a high degree of cautious reading. A parallel text by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya almost always clarifies the meaning of Ibn Taymiyya’s texts. Second, apart from being an editor and an interpreter of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also acts as an independent scholar with his own contribution to make. In a sense, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya takes Ibn Taymiyya’s
interpretation of the *fitra* tradition a step further, and he offers not only a refinement of Ibn Taymiyya’s approach, but also a novel contribution of his own. A comparative reading of Ibn Taymiyya’s work and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s rendition of that text offers insights into Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s editorial choices, and explains his decision to conclude his otherwise nuanced and elaborate *Shifā’ al-‘alil* with what seems, at first sight, to be a mere reproduction.

**Hermeneutical Approaches to the *Fitra* Tradition**

The familiar and often quoted *fitra* tradition is attributed to the Companion Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678) who quoted the Prophet as saying:

> Every child is born with the *fitra* (*mā min mawlūdīn yūladu illā ‘alā al-fitrīti*); it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or Majūs, the same way as animals give birth to non-mutilated cubs. Do you think that they are mutilated before you mutilate their noses? [The Companions said]: Oh, Messenger of God, what do you think about those of them who die young? He said: God knows what they would have done [had they lived].

The tradition, in its various versions, is a reference to Qur’ān 30:30 “So set thy face to the religion, a man of pure faith- the *fitra* of God with which He created humankind. There is no changing God’s creation (*lā tabdīla li-khalqi Allāhi*). That is the right religion; but most men know it not- turning to Him.” In one of the versions the link with the Qur’ān is made explicit, as Abū Hurayra quotes the verse after transmitting the tradition. Another version links the *fitra* with God’s predetermination of misery and happiness, which is said to occur either at the time of the creation of humankind or at the time of the creation of the embryo in its mother’s womb. This version of the tradition opens with the phrase “Every child is born” but continues with the variation “…and on his neck there is a piece of paper which says whether he is miserable or happy.”

The theological and legal discussion regarding *fitra* also refers to Qur’ān 7:172, “And when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord? ’ They said, ‘Yes, we testify’.”
Although the term *fitra* is not explicitly used, this verse also suggests that the monotheistic faith is the primordial state of humankind.

As is borne out of the title of the thirtieth chapter of *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl*, (“The first *fitra*, its meaning, the dispute among people about what is meant by it, and [asserting] that it does not contradict the predetermination of misery and going astray”), the *fitra* tradition poses some difficulty for deterministic doctrines. Going astray (*al-ḍalāl*), which is described in the Qur'ānic text as well as in deterministic traditions, is interpreted as conducting a life of apostasy. The *fitra* tradition, however, suggests that all members of humankind are born as believers—most likely as Muslims—and only the education they get from their immediate environment leads them astray or causes them to stray to other religions, as is specifically stated in the tradition.

Ibn Taymiyya approaches the *fitra* tradition on two levels, in line with earlier Muslim tradition. The first level is an exploration of the different possible meanings of the term *fitra*, in order to elucidate practical, and mainly legal, implications. While early Islamic thinkers rarely go beyond this traditional exegetic approach, for Ibn Taymiyya the traditional approach serves as a springboard to the second level, in which the Hadith material, including the *fitra* tradition, is used in order to define the terminology and boundaries of theological discussion. In Ibn Taymiyya’s hands, a terminology based on motifs and symbols drawn mainly from the Hadith material offers a theological alternative to the *kalām* lexicon.

On the first level, Ibn Taymiyya’s discussion of *fitra* revolves around the exact meaning of the word, and whether it indicates an inborn tendency towards monotheism, Islam, or the predetermined happiness or misery of the human being. Recent studies have already explored the various interpretations of the term as they appear in traditionalist and theological works, indicating the legal implications of the various meanings of *fitra*, and they need not be repeated here. In his discussion in *Darʾ al-taʿāruḍ* Ibn Taymiyya presents the familiar exegetical controversy between traditionists on the issue of *fitra*, whether it should be understood as the natural instinct of monotheism or specifically as Islam. Elsewhere he specifies the relevant legal aspects and tries to settle apparent contradictions between various scholars. His discussion revolves around the opinions attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the eponym of the Ḥanbalī school:
There are two reports attributed to Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal]. The first one states that [fiṭra is] recognizing [the existence] of God.... The second states that fiṭra is the creation of the foetus in its mother’s womb, since he (i.e. the foetus) is led to the pact which He obliged them to make, that is the recognition of His [existence], as fiṭra leads to Islam.¹⁴

Ibn Taymiyya’s conclusion is that fiṭra equals Islam:

Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] did not mention the first pact (i.e., the pact between humankind and God, taken at the time of the creation of humankind). He only said: “The first fiṭra according to which he created humankind is religion.” He said in several places: “when the parents or one parent of an apostate [child] are dead, it is decided that he should be a Muslim.” Then he mentioned this Hadith, and this proves that his interpretation of the Hadith is as follows: he [the child] is born in the state of the fiṭra of Islam.¹⁵

Ibn Taymiyya also examines a second opinion attributed to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, according to which fiṭra equals misery and happiness, and integrates it into the association between fiṭra and Islam. Thus he refutes those who argue that Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal gave contradictory opinions on fiṭra. Furthermore, he adds a novel dimension to Ibn Ḥanbal’s interpretation, an element of causality which could not have been brought up by Ibn Ḥanbal himself. He does so by giving the fiṭra tradition, which usually carries a deterministic meaning, an additional meaning that reminds us of Muʿtazili theodicy:

The things that he [Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal] said elsewhere, that this [fiṭra] means misery and happiness, do not contradict it [being equal to Islam], since God is the one who predetermined and ordained misery and happiness. [He] predetermined that they will be originated through means (asbāb), like the act of the parents, and that they will occur through these means. And so, the conversion of [the newborn] to Judaism, Christianity and Mazdaism by the parents is a part of what God has predetermined for the child.¹⁶

The use of the asbāb in this context indicates Ibn Taymiyya’s causative point of view. Ibn Taymiyya uses the two opinions attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal as a raw material and moulds them into a coherent statement, which probably goes far beyond the traditionalist, and hence early Ḥanbali, approach to this tradition.
He also refines the traditional approach to misery and happiness: while misery is straying from the route of Islam to apostasy, happiness is the convictions of Islam.

At the second level, Ibn Taymiyya draws theological conclusions from the *fitra* tradition, as demonstrated by the following formulation, which appears in one of Ibn Taymiyya’s epistles: “Every child [is born] with what is known according to God’s foreknowledge of what he is going to become [lit., that he goes to].” This formulation directly connects the term *fitra* with predetermination. It explicitly invokes divine knowledge (‘ilm Allāh), while the concept of *fitra* is suggested by the phrase “every child” (kull mawlūd), which is associated with the familiar version of the *fitra* tradition. The term *qadar* is not mentioned as such, but the phrase sā’ir ilayhi,”he goes to”, which should most certainly read ṣā’ir ilayhi,”he has reached his destination” is connected with the concept of maṣīr, preordained fate. This assertion reflects the affinity between three concepts: ‘ilm (Divine knowledge), *qadar* and *fitra*, as demonstrated below:

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   'ilm
  /   \
/     \  
fitra qadar
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This diagram presents the common traditionalist concept, according to which divine knowledge encompasses everything that happens, in the present, past, and future. God knows in advance everything that will happen, including the entire course of human actions, and all events have been determined by God’s foreknowledge. While human beings are created with *fitra* (or belief), some of them turn to apostasy, since that is the fate which was predetermined for them. Finally, God knows in advance that some human beings will turn to apostasy, even though they are created with *fitra*.

The following passage by Ibn Taymiyya, reproduced by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, summarizes this view:

The consensus (ijmā’) and traditions (al-āthār) transmitted by the *salaf* only prove the following idea, to which we gave preference: human beings [are created] with *fitra*, and they meet happiness and misery,
which were ordained according to God’s foreknowledge. That does not indicate that they are without a complete fiṭra at birth, [a fiṭra] which would have led to belief, were it not for the obstacle (that is, the conversion of newborns to Judaism and Christianity by their parents).  

Yet, while in the above passage Ibn Taymiyya merely affirms the traditional framework of ‘ilm—qadar- fiṭra, he then moves away from predetermination and interprets the fiṭra tradition in light of the Qur’ānic concept of divine guidance.

### Fiṭra and Divine Guidance

At the background of Ibn Taymiyya’s interpretation of the fiṭra tradition is the concept of al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl. The term al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl appears throughout the Qur’ān, always in the context of the right faith, to which God guides the believer, and the wrong faith, to which God leads the apostate. Yet al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl (and equivalent terms) are part of two different Qur’ānic approaches to predetermination. According to the first approach, every person has two opposite alternatives: to be rightly guided by God or to stray. God then guides him or leads him astray, according to the choice that the person had previously taken. Divine guidance or leading astray is not arbitrary, but rather comes as a result of human choice and human actions. The outcome of actions which indicate a person’s adherence to the right faith is necessarily divine guidance, whereas the outcome of actions which indicate apostasy is necessarily divine misguidance. This framework is expressed for instance in Qur’ān 2: 26 “Thereby He leads many astray, and thereby He guides many; and thereby He leads none astray save the ungodly.”

The second framework, on the other hand, parallels the traditional concept of qadar. Here the guided person walks in the right path whereas the person being led astray walks in the wrong path. In this framework, there is no one starting point from which there is a split into two alternatives, but rather two parallel lines of existence. This is expressed, for example, in Qur’ān 6: 125, “Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam;
whomsoever He desires to lead astray, He makes his breast narrow, tight.”

Although this verse can be also be taken to mean that divine guidance and leading astray are outcomes of human actions, it is usually cited in connection with the vast majority of the qadar traditions, in which humankind was being divided into two groups prior to its creation, before people had the chance to perform righteous or else sinful deeds.24 A representative qadar tradition is the following, often cited as ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab’s (d. 23/644) interpretation of Q 7:172, “And when thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord? ’ They said, ‘Yes, we testify’.” ‘Umar says that the Prophet was asked about this verse, and told his audience about an event which had occurred after the creation of Adam: “When God created Adam, He rubbed his (i.e. Adam’s) back with His right hand, and pulled out his offspring. And then He said: I have created these for Paradise. Then He rubbed his back again, and pulled out his offspring. And then He said: I have created these for Hell.”

Diagram A

Diagram B describes an unchangeable predetermined reality, whereas diagram A expresses a dynamic and changeable reality, in which human actions have an effect on the course of events. While the majority of the Hadith material fits in with the determinist model (Diagram B), the fitra tradition is unique in emphasizing the effects of human free will (Diagram A).
The Qur'ānic verses expressing the concept of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl* in various versions drew the attention of Mu'tazilī scholars. Verses expressing the idea of God sealing or imprinting (*khatama, ṭaba'a*) the hearts of some people, thus preventing them from receiving the divine deliverance, such as Q 2:7 (“God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes there is covering”) are central to Mu'tazilī discussions of divine guidance and leading astray. In Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari’s heresiographic treatise *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyin* there is a long account of Mu'tazilī scholars arguing about the interpretation of these verses. What comes out of this description is that the Mu'tazilī theologians saw the action of leading astray as a result of apostasy, not as a cause of it: “A few of [the Mu'tazila] claimed that the seal comes from God and that the imprint [which God puts] on the hearts of the apostates as a sign and a judgment that they do not believe [in God], and that [this imprint] does not prevent them from believing.”

The anonymous Mu'tazilī thinkers quoted in *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyin* believe that divine guidance, *al-hudā*, is actually a declaration that one is a believer, as much as divine leading astray, *al-ḍalāl* or *al-iḍāl*, is actually a declaration that one is an apostate. This typical Mu'tazilī view is meant to sterilize the traditional vocabulary of its deterministic approach. Thus, ‘leading astray’ is not to be taken literally, but as naming someone a strayer. Such a view reconciles the Qur'ānic text with the Mu'tazilī dogma of divine justice, since the unbeliever is not prevented from believing. God does not arbitrarily decree that someone should be an unbeliever, therefore He acts in a just manner and no evil or injustice can be ascribed to him.

The Mu'tazilī interpretation of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl* verses was harshly criticized by traditionalists. Abū Ya'lā (Ibn al-Farrā', d. 458/1066), a Ḥanbali scholar whose work is based on the assumptions and methods of the classical *kalām*, was one of the harshest:

God leads astray and guides. His leading astray the apostates means creating the apostasy, the deviation, and the acts of disobedience in them [the apostates], as well as [creating] the ability to perform the above in them. Guiding the believers means foreordaining faith in their hearts, as well as the ability [to believe], and granting them the ability to successfully perform the acts of obedience. God's guidance indeed can be an appeal addressed to the one, whom God guides, to believe. It can be [an appeal] to obey, addressed to he, who knows how to accept this appeal and obey it.
Abū Ya’lā also twice refutes the Mu’tazili view, that leading astray is merely calling one a strayer and guiding is merely calling one a believer, as an interpretation remote from the traditional use of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl*.28

Ibn Taymiyya, on the other hand, uses the *fitra* tradition to support the non-deterministic interpretation of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl*. His goal in his discussion of *fitra* is to remove the question of faith and apostasy from the domain of *qadar*, or predetermination, in order to establish a clear framework of human choice. The concept of *fitra*, like that of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl*, deals exclusively with faith. The question of divine guidance poses the question whether true faith in one God can be affected by human choice or whether it is predetermined; likewise, the *fitra* tradition deals with the effect of the parents’ choice on the faith of their child. Therefore, both intellectual frameworks leave out the typical *kalām* discussion of the overall range of voluntary or involuntary human actions, whether neutral or having moral implications, and rather focus on a dichotomy of two “actions”: the action of faith and the action of apostasy.29 Unlike other *qadar* traditions, the *fitra* tradition is not one-dimensional: on the one hand, it describes a situation in which the initial variables are already determined. Faith is not a matter of choice, since the newborn is born with the *fitra* of Islam. On the other hand, the non-Muslim parents have no real choice, since they always choose the religion which is not Islam. The alternative of choosing faith may appear theoretical, but the tradition does raise the possibility of non-Muslim parents choosing Islam for their newborn, that is, choosing to leave him with the *fitra*, or in the state of *fitra*. Leaving the newborn as he or she is, in the state of pure belief, is an action of choice. This possibility, however, is not actually pursued within the framework of Ibn Taymiyya’s interpretation of the *fitra* tradition.

The non-deterministic interpretation of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl* applies to the third human agent in the *fitra* tradition, that is the child. As a child he does not have a choice at all. The child, says Ibn Taymiyya, follows his parents in their unbelief, “because of his need to survive. He must have someone who educates him, and only his parents had taken the task, so he follows them because he has to.”30 However, as an adult he might come across the dilemma whether to believe in the Prophet and follow his way, or not. The *fitra* tradition,
which presumably presents two choices, complements the adult’s dilemma in the following manner:

![Diagram](image.png)

The overall framework which combines both concepts is as follows: All humans are born as Muslims; the newborns of unbelievers become unbelievers because of the way their parents educate them; an adult who hears the divine message or command can accede to it and become a believer, or ignore it, and continue to stray. Such a non-deterministic framework is generally not supported by the main body of qadar traditions, with the exception of the one on fitra. The fitra tradition singularly describes human ability to change the newborn’s constitution, which is imprinted in every human being and whose essence is the belief in one God as the creator of humankind.

Ibn Taymiyya specifically rejects the notion that people are born tabula rasa, an approach attributed to the Mālikī scholar Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr of Cordoba (d. 463/1070). Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr interprets the concept of fitra not as Islam or faith, but rather as wholeness in creation, both physically and mentally. His approach severs the link between fitra and faith, because he assumes that faith is the outcome of an intellectual process: “It is inconceivable that the newborns understand what are unbelief and faith, because God has taken them out of the wombs of their mothers, when they know absolutely nothing.”31

Ibn Taymiyya, however, argues that faith must have superiority over unbelief and that the choice of Islam is not one of two equal alternatives.32 The fitra tradition gives precedence to Islam as it is the natural state of humanity, whereas other religions are deviations. He clarifies that the newborn could not be born without knowledge of the true faith:

Since if it were, then when it comes to the fitra, there would be no difference between knowing and denying, and all the differences between conversion to Judaism, Christianity or Islam would be merely circumstantial. According to this concept it would have been more
appropriate to say: his parents Islamize him, or Christianize him or convert him to Judaism or Mazdaism.33

Ibn Taymiyya thus argues that, were Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s interpretation correct, the text of the tradition would have been different. He also adds that to be born *tabula rasa* is neither praiseworthy nor condemnable, while Islam of course is worthy of every praise.34

Ibn Taymiyya then strives to establish his view that faith and unbelief are not predetermined but are rather a matter for human choice. The way in which he proves his point demonstrates the distinctiveness of his exegetical and critical approach, even towards the early traditionists of the Muslim community. Ibn Taymiyya begins his argument by citing the *salaf*’s interpretation of Q 30:30, “the *fitra* of God with which He created humankind. There is no changing God’s creation.” Ibn Taymiyya sees this verse as a positive sentence, describing a fact, that is, people are always created with the *fitra*, as Muslims. The *salaf*, however—and Abū Hurayra, the immediate transmitter of the *fitra* tradition is no exception—interpreted Q 30:30 and the *fitra* tradition in a manner which assumes that individuals were divided into believers and unbelievers at time of the creation of humankind. Their conclusion was that the *fitra* constitutes a predetermined dichotomy of faith and unbelief. Their view was supported by the corpus of traditions on *qadar*, expanding the domain of predetermination, until it covered every aspect in human life. The most familiar tradition is the following, attributed to ‘Ā’isha: “A child of the anṣār, whose parents were Muslims, has died. I said: ‘How happy he is, [being] one of the birds of Paradise!’ For that the Messenger of God replied: ‘Do you not know that God created Paradise and its dwellers, and created Hell and its dwellers?’”35 The immediate conclusion from this tradition is that faith and unbelief are implanted in men since the creation of humankind. This deterministic concept asserts that the arrival of an individual at either Paradise or Hell is predetermined, as much as his being guided or led astray. This tradition, or at least the approach it represents, inspired Abū Hurayra’s interpretation of Q 30:30: “[Abū Hurayra] said: There is no changing God’s creation (*khilqa*) with which He created all the children of Adam, that is, apostasy and faith, recognition [of the existence of God] and denial.”36 Accordingly, Abū Hurayra posits that faith and unbelief do not depend on divine guidance and leading astray, and certainly
not on human choice, but that they are—both—the fiṭra with which humans are created.

Ibn Taymiyya, however, considers this rigid deterministic approach as misguided. The salaf meant well, says Ibn Taymiyya, as they did not want the Mu'tazila to use the fiṭra tradition to negate predetermination. However, they wrongly concluded that humankind was divided into believers and apostates at the moment of its creation.\(^{37}\) It is while discussing the salaf’s interpretation of Qur’an 7:172 that Ibn Taymiyya reaches his axial point. As mentioned previously, this verse has inspired several versions of the ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb tradition about the division of humankind from the time of creation to believers and unbelievers. Ibn Taymiyya refutes the common understanding of the verse, and by doing so ignores the entire corpus of deterministic traditions.\(^{38}\) Rather, he views Q 7:172 as being unrelated to the tradition of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. According to him, during the making of the covenant between God and humankind, God already knew who would become a believer and who would become an unbeliever. That is the divine knowledge. But at the moment of their creation it was only a sense of recognition and faith in God, that is, the fiṭra, which existed in people’s hearts. Ibn Taymiyya is willing to interpret the sayings of the salaf in the following manner:

As for what they (the salaf) have said that God created them [humankind] with unbelief, faith, recognition [of His existence] and denial [of it]. If what they meant was, that God knew beforehand and predetermined that they will believe or not, recognize Him or deny Him, and that all exists through the will of God, His predetermination and creation, then that is the truth, which the Mu’tazila deny, since the exaggerators amongst them deny the existence of divine knowledge, and all of them deny His creation, will and omnipotence altogether. But if they [the salaf] meant, that the recognition [of God] and the denial [of God] existed while the covenant was made, then there are two [possibilities] regarding this [interpretation]: the first one is that during that time, their knowledge [of God] and belief existed in them [humankind], and this is what many of the salaf say.... This does not contradict what is said in the Hadith, that he [the child] is born with a religion, and that God has created His creation as monotheists (ḥunafā’). Moreover, it corroborates it. As of the view that while acknowledging [the existence of God], they [humankind] were actually divided into obedient and reluctant (ṭā‘i’ wa-kārīh), then according to my knowledge, there is no report about it, which was transmitted by any of the salaf.\(^{39}\)
What Ibn Taymiyya effectively says is that if the *salaf* meant that humankind is divided into unbelievers and believers at the time of creation, they were mistaken. As he subtly puts it: “The Qur’an and the Hadith should be interpreted according to the original intention of God and His messenger.” In order to exonerate the *salaf* as a whole from this interpretation, he claims that only the exegete al-Suddī (d. 127/745) was guilty of making this incorrect assertion. Ibn Taymiyya then condemns the way al-Suddī utilizes Hadith in his exegesis, specifically his use of a tradition which expresses a clear-cut division of humankind into unbelievers and believers at the time of creation. Rather, he suggests, divine knowledge has no causal effect on human choice in matters of faith and disbelief. Divine knowledge does not predetermine who would be a believer and who would be an unbeliever. It is only the divine will which has a causal effect on the course of events.

By using the *fitra* tradition Ibn Taymiyya promotes the non-deterministic concept of *al-hudā wa-al-ḍalāl*. He emphasizes the ability of man to transform himself from an unbeliever to a believer and vice versa:

God has given all human beings the ability to change that in which He has created them, through His power and will.... As for the opinion of he who says: There is no changing God’s creation (*khilqa*) with which He created all the children of Adam, that is, apostasy and faith. If he means that since apostasy and faith are predetermined, and their opposite cannot materialize, then he is right. However, this [view] does not necessarily mean that it is impossible to substitute unbelief with belief and vice versa. Nor does it necessarily mean that this is beyond human power. On the contrary, the human being has the ability to accept the faith that God has ordered him to accept, and to abandon unbelief He has prohibited him to embrace. He (i.e., the human being) can also substitute his good deeds with his bad ones and vice versa, according to the words of the Lord ‘save him who has done evil, then, after evil, has changed into good’ (Q 27:11), since all this substitution (*tabdīl*) is predetermined by God.

In other words, Ibn Taymiyya says that the human being is ordered to embrace faith and to abandon unbelief, and that the power to do both is granted to him by God. On the other hand, the actual materialization of both opposing human acts, that is embracing faith or unbelief, is predetermined by God. What echoes in this
paragraph is the difference between God’s normative or religious will, as expressed by His commands and prohibitions, and God’s creative will, whose outcome—the created beings—may disobey the divine command. This dichotomous view allows Ibn Taymiyya to reconcile the supposed contradiction between the injunction of Q 30:30 as an explicit divine command not to change what God has created, and the reality, in which changes indeed take place, and are, as Ibn Taymiyya says, an outcome of God’s predetermination, hence God’s (creative) will.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya on Fitra and Human Choice

The text that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya copied from Dar’ al-ta’āruḍ is one of the most elaborate texts written about the fitra, certainly when compared with Ibn Taymiyya’s three other works dealing with the subject.46 As opposed to the indirect manner which brings Ibn Taymiyya to the fitra tradition, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya devotes a separate chapter to it, and rightly so. Ibn Taymiyya begins his discussion by citing views attributed to Abū Ya’lā, and then refuting them at length. In the course of this refutation, Ibn Taymiyya attributes to Abū Ya’lā the position that the recognition of the existence of God (al-iqrār bi-ma‘rifat Allāh) is imprinted in humankind since creation, which then prompts Ibn Taymiyya to offer his interpretation of the fitra tradition.47 The beginning of this refutation is not quoted in Shifā’ al-‘alī.48 Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya seems to have omitted this part since it relates to Ibn Taymiyya’s use of the term fitra in his discourse on epistemology. Fitra in this Taymiyyan context is “the faculty of natural intelligence”,49 which has affinity with the term “necessary knowledge” (‘ilm ẓarūrī).50 The omitted part deals with ways of gaining the knowledge of God, and does not contribute to the discussion on fitra and predetermination.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya similarly omits the discussion of the legal implications of the fitra tradition with regard to the fate of the children of apostates. Ibn Taymiyya breaks this question into sub-questions: Should those children be treated as Muslims, if their parents are dead? Is it allowed to convert the child of an infidel to Islam? Is it allowed to kill a child of an infidel at wartime? For Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, this discussion is largely irrelevant to the main
theme of *Shifā’ al-‘alīl* as a theological work. The question of converting the child of infidels, which is thoroughly discussed in *Dar’ al-ta’ārud*, does not appear at all in *Shifā’ al-‘alīl*. These omissions are evident throughout the chapter, and suggest Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s well calculated action of editing.

Even with regard to the theological aspects of *fitra*, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya does not merely reproduce the text from *Dar’ al-ta’ārud*, even if he remains very faithful to the original. He applies his typical method of presentation, which is to describe a difficulty arising from the interpretation of a certain Qur’ānic verse or Prophetic tradition, and then to unravel the exegetical controversy about it. In this case, he also parcels the original text and shuffles its paragraphs. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya takes his master’s text, which was part of a very long argument in *Dar’ al-ta’ārud*, and adjusts it so that it would introduce the discussion of *fitra* in his *Shifā’ al-‘alīl*. When necessary, he also borrows sentences from other parts of Ibn Taymiyya’s work. As an example of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s method of editing, the opening part of the chapter on *fitra* in *Shifā’ al-‘alīl* begins with a full citation of the relevant Qur’ānic verse (Q 30: 30) and two versions of the *fitra* tradition. The scriptural foundation is followed by the teachings of the next authority, i.e. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal. This order of authorities (Qur’ān—Hadith—salaf) undoubtedly meant for didactic purposes, does not appear in the original section of Ibn Taymiyya’s *Dar’*.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also contributes an occasional insight that seeks to clarify the original text. For example, Ibn Taymiyya compares *fitra* to milk, which is healthy to the body, and for which the newborn yearns. God, says Ibn Taymiyya, creates the newborn, human as well as animal, with instincts that protect it from potential harm. Only later in life does a human being corrupt his taste, and so he yearns for what may harm his body. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya then develops this metaphor further, and integrates it to the equation of *fitra* with Islam:

> When milk and wine were presented to the Prophet in his nocturnal journey (*al-isrā’*), he took the milk. Then he was told: ‘You have taken the *fitra*. Had you taken the wine, your people would have strayed. Milk befits the body and benefits it like nothing else, just as the *fitra* befits the heart and benefits man like nothing else.
Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s additions are sometimes more than mere elucidations of the Taymiyyan text. After establishing the connection between *fitra* and *qadar*, Ibn Taymiyya continues with a discussion of Qurʾān 7: 29–30 “...As He created you so will you return; a part guided, and a part justly disposed to error...”. But, unlike Ibn Taymiyya who quotes a sequence of deterministic *qadar* traditions, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya ignores this familiar cycle in favour of five Qurʾānic verses whose theme is the creation of humankind. He then uses these verses in order to interpret Qurʾān 7: 29–30. His analysis relates in fact to the first part of verse 29, “Say, my Lord has commanded justice (*qisṭ*)”, which is not quoted at all by Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya states:

In this verse, God has commanded justice (*qisṭ*), which is the true meaning of His laws and religion. Justice includes the concept of *tawḥīd* (unity), which is the most just form of justice: justice when it comes to the right way to treat your fellow humans and justice when it comes to the worship of God. That is the golden mean of the *Sunna*.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya goes here beyond the traditionalist framework of ‘ilm—*qadar*—*fitra*, and by doing so he reveals his ambitious aim of reconciling the concept of predetermining belief and disbelief with the principle of divine Justice. The question that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya poses here is as follows: Is the punishment, which God gives the infidel after He Himself predetermined the latter’s apostasy and led him astray, just? Although Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya draws this question, in which the old Muʿtazilī approach to the question of *qadar* echoes, from Ibn Taymiyya’s text, he formulates it differently and in an original way.

Finally, how then can we explain Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s decision to close his monumental *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl* with a derivative quotation from Ibn Taymiyya’s work? One can put forth both aesthetic and substantive reasons. First, in terms of structure, *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl* opens with an analysis of a tradition which bears a very clear deterministic message, that of Adam and Moses. In the tradition, Adam, whose destiny was determined years before his creation, wins an argument by using an explanation based on *qadar*: “Do you blame me for something God has predetermined forty years before He created me?” Set against this initial deterministic message, the closing chapter of *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl*, on the *fitra* tradition, acts as an anti-
deterministic rejoinder, also based on an interpretation of tradition. *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl* comes full circle in its discussion of *qadar*, starting with a deterministic concept and ending with a clear statement of freedom of choice coming from Ibn Taymiyya.

The second, substantive reason relates to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s actual interpretation of the *fitra* tradition. While Ibn Taymiyya strives to prove that the human being is responsible for his choices, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya goes a step further: he uses the word “choice” (*ikhtiyār*). The use of this term is not unusual in *Shifāʾ al-ʿalīl*, and is applied to Pharaoh who brings up Moses “of his own choice” (*bi-ikhtiyārihi*). Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also argues that human action, while motivated by divine power, is still within the domain of choice (*ikhtiyār*) and not within the domain of compulsion (*jabr*). Regarding the *fitra* tradition, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya adds to Ibn Taymiyya’s text another passage in which he claims that a child of unbelievers who chooses unbelief upon reaching adulthood does so “of his own choice” (*bi-ikhtiyārihi*). This is not merely an interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya, but in fact an expansion of the domain of free will, at least in terminology.

**Conclusion**

Unlike Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn Taymiyya does not use the word “choice” (*ikhtiyār*) but the word “substitution” (*tabdīl*). Yet he is evidently preoccupied by the concept of free choice and seeks a mode of expressing it. The essence of choice is very clear. The *fitra* tradition completes this model, by describing the primordial state of humankind:

![Diagram](image)

We must bear in mind that the whole process represented in this diagram is orchestrated by God’s predetermination. Hence, the choice of belief or unbelief is included in God’s foreknowledge, leaving the meaning of human choice somewhat vague. Nevertheless,
as a whole, Ibn Taymiyya almost embraces the Mu'ātazī interpretation of this tradition. With this exception of God’s foreknowledge, Ibn Taymiyya’s interpretation of the fiṭra tradition is a vigorous invitation to believe in the existence of human will, power, and choice.

Ibn Taymiyya’s argument in favour of freedom of choice stands in contrast to the way the fiṭra tradition was interpreted by the early generations. This tradition presents two basic assumptions. One is that human beings are created with the fiṭra; the other is that human beings can also change or corrupt the fiṭra. For Ibn Taymiyya, the fiṭra is the pure and right way, in which humankind is created. Nevertheless, the fiṭra tradition itself, through several examples (parents converting the newborn child into their own religion; people mutilating their cubs’ noses), states that people have the ability to change the fiṭra, that is to contaminate the pure state in which human beings and other creatures are created. The starting point of the fiṭra tradition, as opposed to other qadar traditions, is that human existence is dynamic. Ibn Taymiyya expresses this dynamism through an emphasis on the human ability to affect change, focusing on the journey from unbelief to faith and vice versa.

Notes

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HUMAN CHOICE, DIVINE GUIDANCE AND THE FITRA


8. Translations of Qur’ānic verses in this paper are taken from A. J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). The phrase “lā tabdila...
li-khalqi Allāhi” can also be taken as a prohibition, and translated as “Do not change God’s creation”. Both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya reject this alternative reading. See Dar’ (Beirut), 4:309; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:245; Shifā’ (1994), 630; Shifā’ (1903), 295.


10. This title does not appear in Dar’ al-ta’āruḍ, and is penned by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. In the beginning of Shifā’ al-‘alīl, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya gives this chapter a slightly different title: “The first fiṭra, with which God has created His servants, and a clarification that it does not contradict the Divine decree and justice, rather agrees with them” (Shifā’ [1994], 16; Shifā’ [1903], 6). The use of the terms qadā’ (divine Decree) on the one hand and ‘adl (justice), on the other, suggests the eclectic nature of the work, which appeals to both the traditionalist doctrine of predetermination and the rationalist doctrine of divine justice.

11. G. Gobillot, La fiṭra. La conception originelle- ses interprétations et fonctions chez les penseurs musulmans (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2000), sums up the views of traditionalists as well as rationalists. Gobillot also discusses the thirtieth chapter of Shifā’ al-‘alīl, although she attributes the text solely to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. See also Y. Mohamed, Fitrah: the Islamic Concept of Human Nature (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1996), 41–44, 63; C. Adang, “Islam as the Inborn Religion of Mankind”. The complexity of the term fiṭra is demonstrated by the various ways in which it was translated into European languages. MacDonald, for example, understands this term as “Allah’s kind or way of creating” (“Fiṭra”, Encyclopedia of Islam, new ed.). Wensinck alternates between “the natural basis of the true religion” (The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development [London: Frank Cass, 1965], 42), a “predisposition towards Islam” (ibid., 43) and “man’s nature” (ibid., 214). Finally van Ess regards fiṭra as a status of religious innocence (“Stande der religiösen ‘Unschuld’”, in Zwischen Ḥadīt und Theologie, 101, 103), and Gardet as the inborn religion (Les grands problèmes de la théologie musulmane, 301). For legal implications of fiṭra see Gobillot, La fiṭra, 18–31; Adang, “Islam as the Inborn Religion of Mankind”, 403ff.


13. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:286–287; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:377–379; Shifā’ (1994), 615–616; Shifā’ (1903), 287.


15. Shifā’ (1994), 608–609; Shifā’ (1903), 284; Dar’ (Beirut), 4:279; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:361–362. Against this position, Abū Ya’lā (Ibn al-Farrā’, d. 458/1066) argues that if fiṭra equals Islam, then the child of the apostates has no right to inherit his parents. Shifā’ (1994), 608; Shifā’ (1903), 284 Dar’ (Beirut), 4:278; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:360.

16. Shifā’ (1994), 609; Shifā’ (1903), 284 Dar’ (Beirut), 4:279; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:361.

17. Ibn Taymiyya, Majmūʿat al-fatāwā, 4:149 (untitled epistle).

18. The phrase sāʾir ilayhi appears in the same context in Dar’ (Beirut), 4: 291; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:387, where Ibn Taymiyya interprets a saying attributed to ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭalīb: “The true meaning of this saying [of ‘Ali] is that every child is born according to God’s foreknowledge of the destination he is going to reach (Kullu mawlūdīn ‘alā mā sabaqua lahu ftīlmi Allāhi annahu sāʾirun ilayhi)”. See also
al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation of Q 17:13 (“And every man- We have fastened to him his bird of omen upon his neck; and We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he shall find spread wide open”). According to al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation, “And every man, we have forced upon him what had been predetermined that he would perform and the destination he was going to reach (ṣā‘irun ilayhi), whether misery or sadness.” Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 320/923), Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an ta‘wil āy al-Qur‘ān, ed. ‘Abdallah ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo, 1422/2001), 14: 518.

19. Shifā’ (1994), 625; Shifā’ (1903), 292; Dar’ (Beirut), 4:302; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:410. The version in Dar’ al-ta‘āruḍ begins with “the traditions” (al-āthār) and does not mention “the consensus” (al-ijmā’).


21. Such as hidāya, ni‘ma, tawfīq and khidhklān (Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, 32–33, 139–147).

22. Note Watt’s indication that the leading astray is a punishment for lack of belief (Predestination, 15; see also H. A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Kalam [Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1976], 602).

23. See also Wensinck, Muslim Creed, 51; Watt, Predestination, 14–15; Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Kalam, 601; Shifā’ (1994), 192–194; Shifā’ (1903), 80–82.

24. The division of humankind into righteous and unrighteous at the time of creation is reflected in a number of traditions, most of which are found in all the major Hadith compilations. For a nice variety, see Abū Bakr al-Ājurrī (a Ḥanbalī scholar, d. 390/971), Kitāb al-Sharī‘a (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Rayyān, 1421/2000), 153ff.

25. The Hadith interprets the event described in Q 7: 172 as a one-time event, which took place during the creation of Adam. Ibn Kathīr relates the fiṭra tradition to Q 7:172, and indicates that this is an event which takes place “every hundred years, a generation after a generation”. Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al- karīm (n.p.: Dār al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), 2:264. According to Ibn Kathīr, exegetes who restrict Q 7:172 to a one-time event were wrong. The above tradition also has a second part (see Al-Ājurrī, Kitāb al-Sharī‘a, 174–175), in which someone asks the prophet what is the purpose of human deeds, i.e., if the lot of humankind is predetermined, what is the value of human actions? See van Ess, Zwischen Ḥadīt und Theologie, 32–36; and E. Kohlberg, “Muwāfāt Doctrines in Muslim Theology”, Studia Islamica 57 (1983):47–66.


29. The Sunni definition of faith actually breaks it down into several components (speech, acceptance, performing works, etc.), but for the sake of convenience I refer to belief as one action.

30. Shifā’ (1994), 634; Shifā’ (1903), 296; Dar’ (Beirut), 4:311–312; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:430.

mothers’ wombs.” On Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s views on the subject, see Adang, “Islam as the Inborn Religion of Mankind”, 408, n52, and Mohamed, Fitrah, 38–41.

32. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:319; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:443; Shifā’ (1994), 639; Shifā’ (1903), 299.

33. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:319; Dār’ (Cairo), 8:443; Shifā’ (1994), 639; Shifā’ (1903), 299.

34. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:319; Dār’ (Cairo), 8:443; Shifā’ (1994), 639; Shifā’ (1903), 299–300.

35. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:304; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:417; Shifā’ (1994), 628–629; Shifā’ (1903), 294. The tradition has several versions. See Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), Muslim bi-Shārḥ al-Nawawī, ed. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Baqī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1421/2000), 16, 173.

36. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:304; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:414; Shifā’ (1994), 628; Shifā’ (1903), 293.

37. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:305; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:417; Shifā’ (1994), 629; Shifā’ (1903), 294.

38. For a collection of the deterministic traditions connected with Q 7:172, see al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation of the verse. Al-Ṭabarī himself accepts these traditions, and has no problem with their deterministic content. Ṭabarī, al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation of the verse. Al-Ṭabarī himself accepts these traditions, and has no problem with their deterministic content. Ṭabarī, Tafsīr, 10:547–565.

39. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:307; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:422; Shifā’ (1994), 629; Shifā’ (1903), 294.

40. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:307; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:422; Shifā’ (1994), 629; Shifā’ (1903), 294.

41. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:307; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:422; Shifā’ (1994), 629; Shifā’ (1903), 294.

42. Al-Suddī and others discuss the following tradition: “And when God took Adam out of Paradise, before He threw him down from Heaven, He wiped the right side of his back and pulled out of it pearly-white offspring, tiny as seeds, and He said to them: Come into Heaven with my mercy. Then He wiped the left side of Adam’s back and pulled out black offspring, tiny as seeds, and He said to them: Come into Hell, for I do not care.” Al-Suddī explains that God made a pact with those worthy of Him only after humankind had been divided into the People of Paradise and the People of Hell. The tradition is used by al-Suddī to interpret Q 7:172, “And when thy Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify touching themselves.” See Dar’ (Beirut), 4:307–308; Dar’ (Cairo, 8:422–423; Shifā’ (1994), 629–630; Shifā’ (1903), 294. Al-Suddī’s interpretation is quoted in Tabarî, Bayân, 10:560.

43. I omit here Ibn Taymiyya’s discussion of the semantics of tabdīl (substitution), a term which appears in Q 30:30. In brief, Ibn Taymiyya rejects the possibility that taḥyūr (change) is a synonym for tabdīl. See Dar’ (Beirut), 4:309; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:425; Shifā’ (1994), 631; Shifā’ (1903), 295.

44. This view is attributed to Abū Ḥurayra. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:304; Dar’ ed. Sālim, 8:414; Shifā’ (1994), 628; Shifā’ (1903), 293.

45. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:309; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:425; Shifā’ (1994), 631; Shifā’ (1903), 295.


47. Dar’ (Beirut), 4:277; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:357. This statement does not appear in Abū Ya’lā’s published works. A modern editor of Abū Ya’lā’s works, ‘Abdallāh ibn Salmān al-Aḥmadi, notes that Abū Ya’lā discusses fitra in a manuscript of Kitāb al-riwāyatayn wa al-wajhayn that was unavailable to me (Abū Ya’lā, al-Masā’il wa

48. However, it is quoted in Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma, 2:529–534; Dar' (Beirut), 4:272–281; Dar' (Cairo), 8:348–365.


51. Shifā' (1994), 607–608; Shifā' (1903), 283. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s interpretation of fitra appears in Dar’ (Beirut), 4: 277; Dar’ (Cairo), 8: 359–360, while the Qur'ānic verse and the fitra tradition appear in Dar’ (Beirut), 4: 281; Dar’ (Cairo), 8: 365.

52. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya declares that he will not deal with the legal status of the orphan child of infidels, since he dealt with it thoroughly in his Aḥkām ahl al-milal, surely referring here to his Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma. Shifā’ (1994), 637; Shifā’ (1903), 299. Thus he omits a major part of Ibn Taymiyya’s discussion, which appears in Dar’ (Beirut), 4:315–318; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:436–442.

53. The same method is used in the corresponding passage of Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma, where Ibn al-Qayyim also adds his own preface (Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma, 2:523–528), and then continues with citation from Dar’ al-ta’āruḍ.

54. Shifā’ (1994), 618; Shifā’ (1903), 289; Dar’ (Beirut), 4:289; Dar’ (Cairo), 8:383–384.


56. Shifā’ (1994), 626–627; Shifā’ (1903), 292–293. The verses are: “If you are in doubt as to the Uprising, surely We created you of dust” (Q 22:5); “And he has struck for Us a similitude and forgotten his creation” (Q 36:78); “What, does man reckon he shall be left to roam at will? Was he not a sperm-drop spilled? Then he was a blood-clot, and He created and formed” (Q 75:36–38), “Cannot He bring the dead to life?” (Q 75:40, my translation), “So let man consider of what he was created; he was created of gushing water issuing between the loins and the breast-bones. Surely He is able to bring him back” (Q 86:5–8).

57. Shifā’ (1994), 626–627; Shifā’ (1903), 293.


59. Shifā’ (1994), 35; Shifā’ (1903), 13. The tradition of Adam and Moses, which appears in all major Hadith compilations, posits two diametrically opposite views on the human being’s responsibility for his actions. Moses apparently conveys the Qadari view, while Adam adheres to the traditional concept. See van Ess, Zwischen Hadith und Theologie, 161–167. The role of this tradition in the thought of Ibn Taymiyya is mentioned by Fazlur Rahman, Revival and Reform in

63. *Shifā’* (1994), 341; *Shifā’* (1903), 151–152.


65. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s concept of ḯikṭiyār in this context needs a further investigation, especially since it appears in other works, such as *Miftāh dār al-sa’āda*.