The Will of Allah and Our Destiny

Part IV: Revisions to the Will of Allah (Bada)

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Abstract: *In this article, the phenomenon of changes in the will of Allah and His decisions, known as Bada, is discussed in the light of the tokens of the holy Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* (PBUH&HF) *and the divinely appointed members of his house. Some examples of this divine phenomenon as well as their significance are explained. Finally, a more intense form of this action, called Taraddud, is elucidated.*

Keywords: *Bada, Taraddud, knowledge of unseen, volition.*

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1 *Formation of a New Will* (Bada)

1.1 The meaning of *al-Bada* by Allah

From the time that Allah creates a "will" for a specific action—be it His action or ours—until the time that the action is executed, Allah may withdraw His permission for the occurrence of that action. He may cancel His will, intention, detailed planning, and what He has decreed to happen, and may initiate a new planning sequence. This concept is called *al-Bada*. These changes only occur in the created information (i.e., the five steps mentioned earlier) and do not imply any change in Allah's Eternal Knowledge, or equivalently His Essence. In other words, the novelty occurs in Allah's action—which is His creation—and not in Allah's Essence which is eternal.

However, *al-Bada* is not limited to what was explained above. The *Bada* originally means "origination or initiation of something new"[1]. Thus, creation of anything at any time has been due to Allah's *Bada* since neither the creation nor the will of Allah for it, was eternal, and Allah initiated to mention it in His will when nothing existed concerning it. Moreover, when Allah changes a will, it actually means He deletes or makes disappear (*Mahw*) the previous will, and then He originates a new will just as He originated the previous will. Hence, Allah's creation is entirely due to *al-Bada*. As stated in several Hadith[2], Allah has made *Bada* in everything.

1.2 Evidence from holy Quran and sacred Hadith

As the Bakri's consider the will of Allah eternal and claim it to be His Essence, they cannot admit any change in it. This is contrary to numerous tokens in the Quran that prove Allah's hands are open to originate or change anything in His creation. For instance:

وَ قالَتِ اَلْيَهُودُ يَدُ اَللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ لُعِنُوا بِما قالُوا بَلْ يَداهُ مَبْسُوطَتانِ

And The Jews said, "The hand of Allah is tied up." Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, His hands are wide open (to alter anything in His creation). (5:64)

يَمْحُوا اَللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ اَلْكِتابِ

Allah deletes whatever He wills (from the records) and establishes (likewise), and with Him is the Mother-Book. (13:39)

وَ رَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يَخْتارُ ما كانَ لَهُمُ اَلْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحانَ اَللَّهِ وَ تَعالى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Your Lord creates whatever He wills, and He chooses. No choice have they (in creation or in leadership as interpreted by the divinely assigned saints). Allah is pure and far above the partners they ascribe! (28:68)

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إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَ يَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ وَ ما ذلِكَ عَلَى اَللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

If He so wills, He removes you and brings in a new creation. Nor is that (at all) difficult for Allah. (14:19-20; 35:16-17)

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ

Every day His (decision) is concerned with a (originating a new) matter. (55:29)

Referring to the above token, it is reported that the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* said the following in one of his sermons:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لاَ يَمُوتُ وَ لاَ تَنْقَضِي عَجَائِبُهُ لأَنَّهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ فِي شَأْنٍ مِنْ إِحْدَاثِ بَدِيعٍ لَمْ يَكُن ...

"... Praise be to Allah who does not die and His wonders do not terminate, for, certainly, every day He is in the matter of originating an unprecedented thing that was not before..."[3]

In another token of the Quran, we recite:

يَزِيدُ فِي اَلْخَلْقِ ما يَشاءُ إِنَّ اَللَّهَ عَلى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

He increases in the creation what He wills, for Allah is powerful to do everything. (35:1)

In this connection, several traditionists narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِنَ الْقَضَاءَ وَ الْقَدَرَ خَلْقَانِ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ وَ اللَّهُ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ما يَشاءُ.

"*al-Qadhaa* (passing decree) and *al-Qadar* (Planning) are two creations among the creations of Allah, and Allah increases in the creation what He wills."[4]

Thus, whenever Allah plans a new thing, He has added something to His creation. No new thing happens unless Allah first creates a will for it.

Once, Ma'mun, the shrewd Abbasid Caliph, organized a debate between Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* and Sulaiman al-Maruzi, known then as the greatest dialectic theologian (*Mutakallim*) of the Eastern Iran (*Khurasan*). Sulaiman used to believe that the will of Allah and His intention are eternal (not created) and that Allah never initiates any change in His will. Below is but a small part of the interesting discussion between Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* and Sulaiman in the presence of Ma'mun. Al-Hasan Ibn Muhammad al-Nufili narrated:

قَالَ الرِّضَا ع لِسُلَيْمَانَ الْمَرْوَزِيِّ مَا أَنْكَرْتَ مِنَ الْبَدَاءِ يَا سُلَيْمَانُ وَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَقُولُ أَ وَ لا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْناهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ لَمْ يَكُ شَيْئاً وَ يَقُولُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَ يَقُولُ بَدِيعُ السَّماواتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ يَقُولُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ما يَشاءُ وَ يَقُولُ وَ بَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسانِ مِنْ طِينٍ وَ يَقُولُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ وَ آخَرُونَ مُرْجَوْنَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَ إِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ يَقُولُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ وَ ما يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَ لا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتابٍ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ هَلْ رُوِّيتَ فِيهِ عَنْ آبَائِكَ شَيْئاً قَالَ نَعَمْ رُوِّيتُ عَنْ أَبِي عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع أَنَّهُ قَالَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ عِلْمَيْنِ عِلْماً مَخْزُوناً مَكْنُوناً لَا يَعْلَمُهُ إِلَّا هُوَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ يَكُونُ الْبَدَاءُ وَ عِلْماً عَلَّمَهُ مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَ رُسُلَهُ فَالْعُلَمَاءُ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِ نَبِيِّكَ يَعْلَمُونَهُ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ أُحِبُّ أَنْ تَنْزِعَهُ لِي مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ قَالَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لِنَبِيِّهِ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَما أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ أَرَادَ إِهْلَاكَهُمْ ثُمَّ بَدَا فَقَالَ وَ ذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ زِدْنِي جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَالَ الرِّضَا ع لَقَدْ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبِي عَنْ آبَائِهِ أَنَّ

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رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ص قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ أَوْحَى إِلَى نَبِيٍّ مِنْ أَنْبِيَائِهِ أَنْ أَخْبِرْ فُلَانَ الْمَلِكِ أَنِّي مُتَوَفِّيهِ إِلَى كَذَا وَ كَذَا فَأَتَاهُ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ فَأَخْبَرَهُ فَدَعَا اللَّهَ الْمَلِكُ وَ هُوَ عَلَى سَرِيرِهِ حَتَّى سَقَطَ مِنَ السَّرِيرِ وَ قَالَ يَا رَبِّ أَجِّلْنِي حَتَّى يَشِبَّ طِفْلِي وَ أَقْضِيَ أَمْرِي فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَى ذَلِكَ النَّبِيِّ أَنِ ائْتِ فُلَانَ الْمَلِكِ فَأَعْلِمْهُ أَنِّي قَدْ أَنْسَيْتُ أَجَلَهُ وَ زِدْتُ فِي عُمُرِهِ خَمْسَ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً فَقَالَ ذَلِكَ النَّبِيُّ يَا رَبِ إِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْذِبْ قَطُّ فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَيْهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ عَبْدٌ مَأْمُورٌ فَأَبْلِغْهُ ذَلِكَ وَ اللَّهُ لا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ ثُمَّ الْتَفَتَ إِلَى سُلَيْمَانَ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَحْسَبُكَ ضَاهَيْتَ الْيَهُودَ فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَ مَا قَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ قَالَ قَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ يَعْنُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ فَرَغَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَلَيْسَ يُحْدِثُ شَيْئاً فَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ لُعِنُوا بِما قالُوا وَ لَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ قَوْماً سَأَلُوا أَبِي مُوسَى بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ ع عَنِ الْبَدَاءِ فَقَالَ وَ مَا يُنْكِرُ النَّاسُ مِنَ الْبَدَاءِ وَ أَنْ يَقِفَ اللَّهُ قَوْماً يُرْجِئُهُمْ لِأَمْرِهِ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ أَ لَا تُخْبِرُنِي عَنْ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْناهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ أُنْزِلَتْ قَالَ يَا سُلَيْمَانُ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فِيهَا مَا يَكُونُ مِنَ السَّنَةِ إِلَى السَّنَةِ مِنْ حَيَاةٍ أَوْ مَوْتٍ أَوْ خَيْرٍ أَوْ شَرٍّ أَوْ رِزْقٍ فَمَا قَدَّرَهُ فِي تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ فَهُوَ مِنَ الْمَحْتُومِ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ الْآنَ قَدْ فَهِمْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ فَزِدْنِي قَالَ يَا سُلَيْمَانُ إِنَّ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ أُمُوراً مَوْقُوفَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى يُقَدِّمُ مِنْهَا مَا يَشَاءُ وَ يُؤَخِّرُ مَا يَشَاءُ...

... Imam Ridha *(PBUH)* said to Sulaiman, "Why do you deny *al-Bada*, O Sulaiman, while Allah, the mighty and the majestic, states, '***But does not man call to mind that We created him before, and he was nothing?'*** (19:67) and He, the Lord of might and majesty states, ***'It is He who initiates the creation, and then returns it***,' (30:27) and He states, '***The Originator of the heavens and the earth***,' (2:117; 6:101) and He, the Lord of might and majesty states, ***'He increases in the creation what He wills***.' (35:1) He says, '***And He began the creation of man from clay,***' (32:7) and also says, '***There are others, held in suspense for the command of Allah, whether He would punish them, or would turn to them in mercy.***' (9:106) He, the glorious, also states, '***Nor is an individual's life prolonged, nor does anything decrease from his life span, except that it is (made appear) in a book***.' (35:11)"

Sulaiman asked, "Do you have any narrations from your ancestors on this?" The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "Yes. It is narrated to me that Abu Abdillah (Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*) said, 'Surely for Allah, the mighty and the majestic, there are two (types of created) knowledge. One is the hidden and the reserved knowledge (i.e., the knowledge of *al-Ghaib*) that no one knows but He, and from that comes *al-Bada*. The other is the knowledge that He has taught it to His angels and His messengers, and thelearned individuals from the House of your Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* know it.'"

Sulaiman asked, "I would like you to further derive (*al-Bada*) from the Book of Allah, the mighty and the majestic." He *(PBUH)* replied, ***"Consider the saying of Allah to His Prophet* (PBUH&HF), *'So turn away from them, and you are not blameworthy'*** (51:54) (by which) He intended their destruction. Then, Allah made *Bada* (i.e., initiated a new will) and said, '***And remind, for reminding benefits the believers.'*** (51:55)"

Sulaiman said, "Increase my (knowledge),

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may I be sacrificed for you." Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* said, "Indeed my father informed me from his ancestors that the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* said, 'Certainly Allah, the Lord of might and majesty, revealed to one of His prophets (referring to Prophet Hizqil *(PBUH)* as per another Hadith) that he should inform a certain king that Allah would take his soul in such and such time. That Prophet went to him and informed him of that. (Out of anxiety) the king fell down from his throne and prayed to Allah, 'O Lord! Postpone my (death) so that I could raise my infant and I conclude my matter'. Next, Allah revealed to that Prophet to go back to the king and to inform him that Allah has caused his (previous) appointed time of death to be forgotten (i.e., He has made that information disappear) and extended his lifetime 15 years. That Prophet said to Allah, 'O Lord! You know that I have never been known as a liar.' Allah revealed to him that he is just an appointed servant, and should deliver (the message) to him, and that Allah '***is not questioned for what He does***.' (21:23)"

The Imam *(PBUH)* again turned to Sulaiman and said, "Are you emulating the Jews on this issue?" He replied, "No! I seek refuge in Allah from (doing) that. What did the Jews say in this regard?" He *(PBUH)* said, "***They said, 'the hand of Allah is tied up***.' (5:64) They meant Allah has concluded the matter and therefore He no longer originates anything. Hence, Allah said, '***Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered.***' (5:64)" The Imam *(PBUH)* continued, "Indeed, I witnessed people asking my father, Musa Ibn Ja'far *(PBUH)*, about *al-Bada*, and he *(PBUH)* replied, 'Why should people deny *al-Bada* when Allah has held in suspense some people who wait for His command?'" (Referring to the token: '***There are others, held in suspense for the command of Allah, whether He would punish them, or would turn to them in mercy***.' (9:106))

Sulaiman asked, "Could you inform me about the token, '***We have indeed sent it down in the Night of Qadr'*** (97:1)? What was sent down?" Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* replied, "O Sulaiman! In the Night of *Qadr*, Allah makes the detailed planning of what He allows to happen until next year regarding any life, death, goodness (*Khair*), evil (*Sharr*), and sustenance. Whatever Allah measured and arranged on that night is of definite matters (*al-Mahtum*)." Sulaiman said, "Now I understand it. But, increase my (knowledge), may I be sacrificed for you." Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* said, "O Sulaiman! Surely among the matters are the pending issues (*Mawquf*) that are with Allah, the Glorious. Of them, He advances what He wills and delays what He wills..."[5]

The definite matters are matters about which either Allah has chosen not to change His permission or Allah changes His will very unlikely. Notice that when Allah makes *Bada* on a previously decreed

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matter that was announced by His Prophet *(PBUH)*, His previous message or His Prophet *(PBUH)* are not disproved or falsified. Rather, Allah supports His Prophet *(PBUH)* by some signs to prove for people that the previous decreed matter was a real matter that was supposed to happen, and was not a fake one, rather a new decree has taken the place of the previous one by will of Allah. These changes show Allah's volition on initiating a new decision on what he already knew of voluntary actions of people. Changes in Allah's decisions despite His knowledge, disproves compelling cause and effect relationship between people's and Allah's actions.

The following piece is a part of an interesting long discourse of the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* regarding *al-Bada*:

... وَ أَمَّا مَنْ أَنْكَرَ الْبَدَاءَ فَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ- فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَما أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ وَ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَهْلِكَ الْأَرْضَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتِ ثُمَّ تَدَارَكَهُمْ بِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبَدَا لَهُ فِي هَلَاكِهِمْ وَ أَنْزَلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ- وَ ذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ مِثْلُهُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى وَ ما كانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَ أَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَ ما كانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُ وَ ما لَهُمْ أَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَ هُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرامِ وَ كَقَوْلِهِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفاً مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُ تَعَالَى فَقَالَ الْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَ عَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفاً فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَ اللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ وَ هَكَذَا يَجْرِي الْأَمْرُ فِي النَّاسِخِ وَ الْمَنْسُوخِ وَ هُوَ يَدُلُّ عَلَى تَصْحِيحِ الْبَدَاءِ وَ قَوْلِهِ- يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ فَهَلْ يَمْحُو إِلَّا مَا كَانَ وَ هَلْ يُثْبِتُ إِلَّا مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ وَ مِثْلُ هَذَا كَثِيرٌ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ ...

"As for he who denies *al-Bada*, (it would suffice that) Allah said in His Book, ***'So turn away from them, and you are not blameworthy'*** (51:54) (by which) Allah, Who is pure (from imaginations), intended their destruction on earth at that time. Then, Allah rectified for them by His mercy, made *Bada* (i.e., changed decision) regarding their destruction, and revealed to His Messenger, '***And remind, for reminding benefits the believers***.' (51:55) A similar case is His saying, ***'But Allah is not to punish them while you are among them; nor is He to punish them while they ask for forgiveness***.' (8:33) Then Allah made *Bada* (by revealing): '***But what plea have they that Allah should not punish them when they keep out (believers) from the Sacred Mosque?'*** (8:34) Similarly, it is His saying, ***'If there exist twenty tolerant individuals among you, they will overcome two hundred, and if there are a hundred (like them) among you, they will overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve.'*** (8:65) He then made *Bada* and said, '***Now, Allah lightened your (burden) for He knew that there is a weakness in you. Thus, if there are a hundred tolerant people among you, they will overcome two hundred, and if there are a thousand (like them) among you, they will overcome two thousands by leave of Allah, and Allah is with those who are patient***.' (8:66) In this manner, the command of Allah is carried out on the abrogating (*Nasikh*) and the abrogated

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(*Mansukh*) issues. They sll show the reformation of *Bada*. Furthermore, it is His saying, '***Allah deletes whatever He wills (from the records) and establishes (likewise), and with Him is the Mother-Book***.' (13:39) Thus (tell me), does He delete (anything) except that which existed, and does He record (anything) except that which did not exist? And there are many examples (of *Bada*) like them in the Book of Allah, the mighty and the majestic..."[6]

1.3 Allah's canceling a sign

In the last part of the previous Hadith, the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* pointed to an important issue. When Allah erases, it means either the object or its will should have been existent so that Allah would eliminate it. Similarly, when Allah records, it means the object or its will should have been non-existent so that Allah establishes it and makes it a knowable reality. In this manner, Allah may modify what is to happening future (*Ma Yakun*) or what has happened in the past (*Ma Kan*). An example of the latter is the act of abrogation of a previously revealed commandment. Allah, the Glorious, says in the Quran:

ما نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنْسِها نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْها أَوْ مِثْلِها أَ لَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اَللَّهَ عَلى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Neither do We cancel any sign nor do We cause it to be forgotten, except that We bring better than it or similar to it. Don't you know that Allah has power over all things? (2:106)

To cause a sign to be forgotten means to make its knowledge disappear (*Ghaib*). Moreover, Allah states:

وَ لَئِنْ شِئْنا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنا وَكِيلاً

If willed so, We would take away that which We have revealed to you, and then you would find no support for yourself over Us in that matter. (17:86)

Once Allah decides to remove the knowledge of a certain matter, nothing can be found to testify to the early existence of what is now non-existent. Again, in another token, Allah states:

سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلا تَنْسى إِلاَّ ما شاءَ اَللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ اَلْجَهْرَ وَ ما يَخْفى

Soon shall We teach you (the Message), so you shall not forget unless what Allah willed (otherwise), for He knows what is manifest and what is hidden. (87:6-7)

1.4 Bada in the records of human actions

Another example of change in the knowledge of what existed (*Ilm Ma Kan*) is when Allah pardons a sinner on the Day of Judgment. When Allah covers (Ghafara) the sins of a sinner, it means that He made all the records of his sin disappear (becomes *Ghaib*). The previously counted sinner will enter

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Paradise while nothing will be found to testify against his sins. More amazing than this, Allah may replace his sins with good deeds so that in the view of the people of Paradise and even in the view of the prophets and the Imams, peace be upon them all, who have access to the knowledge of what existed, it will be as if such a person has really performed those good deeds. This is because the evident knowledge concerning his sins has been replaced with that of some good deeds. Allah states:

إِلاَّ مَنْ تابَ وَ آمَنَ وَ عَمِلَ عَمَلاً صالِحاً فَأُوْلئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اَللَّهُ سَيِّئاتِهِمْ حَسَناتٍ وَ كانَ اَللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً

Unless he repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil deeds of such persons into good deeds, and Allah is the perfect concealer and the most merciful. (25:70)

Notice that Allah does not say that He will only forgive him, or will just grant him the reward of the good deeds that he did not perform. He rather states He would change his bad deeds into good ones. This is a real change in the knowledge of what existed (*Ilm Ma Kan*). On the commentary of the above token, it is narrated that Imam Baqir *(PBUH)* said:

إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ حَاسَبَ اللَّهُ عَبْدَهُ الْمُؤْمِنَ أَوْقَفَهُ عَلَى ذُنُوبِهِ ذَنْباً ذَنْباً ثُمَّ غَفَرَهَا لَهُ لَا يُطْلِعُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ مَلَكاً مُقَرَّباً وَ لَا نَبِيّاً مُرْسَلًا قَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَنْ غَيْرِ وَاحِدٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ وَ يَسْتُرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ مَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُوقِفَهُ عَلَيْهَا قَالَ وَ يَقُولُ لِسَيِّئَاتِهِ كُونِي حَسَنَاتٍ قَالَ وَ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى فَأُوْلئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئاتِهِمْ حَسَناتٍ وَ كانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً.

Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* said, “When the Day of Judgment comes and Allah calls to account His faithful servant, He shall make him aware of all his sins and shall cover them for him so that no close angel and no sent prophet shall become aware of them... He shall then say to his bad deeds, ‘Be good deeds’. And this is the saying of Allah, Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high, ‘***Thus Allah will replace the evil deeds of such persons with good deeds, and Allah is the perfect concealer and the most merciful***.’ (25:70)”[7]

In another Hadith, Mu’awiya Ibn Wahab narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِذَا تَابَ الْعَبْدُ تَوْبَةً نَصُوحاً أَحَبَّهُ اللَّهُ فَسَتَرَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ فَقُلْتُ وَ كَيْفَ يَسْتُرُ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ يُنْسِي مَلَكَيْهِ مَا كَتَبَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ وَ يُوحِي إِلَى جَوَارِحِهِ اكْتُمِي عَلَيْهِ ذُنُوبَهُ وَ يُوحِي إِلَى بِقَاعِ الْأَرْضِ اكْتُمِي مَا كَانَ يَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكِ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ فَيَلْقَى اللَّهَ حِينَ يَلْقَاهُ وَ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ .

“When a servant repents a loyal repentance, Allah loves him and covers his (deficiencies) in this world and the Hereafter.” I asked, “How does He cover his sins?” He *(PBUH)* replied, “He causes the two angels to forget what they have recorded against him of the sins. He then reveals to the servant’s organs, ‘Conceal his sins’, and reveals to the places of the earth (where he committed sin), ‘Conceal what he acted on you of the sins’. Thus, he meets Allah while there is nothing to

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witness against him about any of the sins."[8]

It is narrated from the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* as well as many of our Imams *(PBUT)* that:

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لاَ ذَنْبَ لَهُ وَ الْمُقِيمُ عَلَى الذَّنْبِ وَ هُوَ مُسْتَغْفِرٌ مِنْهُ كَالْمُسْتَهْزِئِ.

"He who repents (his) sin is like the one who has not committed a sin at all. He who stays on sin and asks for forgiveness is like a mocker."[9]

Allah states in the Quran:

يا أَيُّهَا اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اِتَّقُوا اَللَّهَ وَ قُولُوا قَوْلاً سَدِيداً يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمالَكُمْ وَ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

O you who believe! Be mindful of Allah and state sound words so that He may fix for you your deeds, and cover you your sins. (33:70-71)

In fact, the Arabic word "*Ghafara,*" which is usually translated as "to forgive," originally means "to cover" or "to conceal". Thus, what is meant by "Allah's forgiveness" on the Day of Judgment is Allah's concealment of the evident knowledge concerning the servant's sin, which means transferring this information to the knowledge of unseen *Ilm al-Ghaib*).

1.5 *Bada* in life opportunities

Another case for which Allah may make *Bada* is when one acts upon good deeds. For instance, if one gives charity, then Allah *may* decide to delay the time of his death and brings for that person a new opportunity that was not decreed before the charity was given. Although Allah has the foreknowledge of our future tendency to give charity under certain permitted situations, He may decide not to make its worldly benefits effective until the occurrence of the action. The amounts and the types of the benefits are decreed according to Allah's choice and may involve *Bada* for each specific case. Hence, the fact that Allah has the foreknowledge of all our future actions under any circumstances, does not imply that Allah has concluded the matter. In an interesting token of the Quran, Allah states:

وَ ما يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَ لا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلاَّ فِي كِتابٍ إِنَّ ذلِكَ عَلَى اَللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

Nor is an individual's life prolonged, nor does anything decrease from his life span, except that it is (made appear) in a book. Verily, all that is easy for Allah. (35:11)

The above token clearly proves change in the death time, which implies a change in the previously decreed time of death. These changes in the will of Allah instantly appear in the book of creation, which is observed by the divinely appointed saints as well as the angels. Regarding the appointed time of death, Allah states:

هُوَ اَلَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضى أَجَلاً وَ أَجَلٌ مُسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ

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He is who created you from clay, and then decreed (Qadhaa) an appointed time (of death) and a definite appointed time (which is) with Him (6:2)

The above token proves that Allah's decree (*Qadhaa*) is His creation (not eternal) due to the phrase "then" used in the sequence of actions. Furthermore, the above token states that there are two types of appointed death time. Mas'ada Ibn Sadaqa and Hamran both narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي قَوْلِهِ ثُمَّ قَضى أَجَلًا وَ أَجَلٌ مُسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ قَالَ الْأَجَلُ الَّذِي غَيْرُ مُسَمًّى مَوْقُوفٌ يُقَدِّمُ مِنْهُ مَا شَاءَ وَ يُؤَخِّرُ مِنْهُ مَا شَاءَ وَ أَمَّا الْأَجَلُ الْمُسَمَّى فَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنْزَلُ مِمَّا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ إِلَى مِثْلِهَا مِنْ قَابِلٍ فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ فَإِذا جاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ساعَةً وَ لا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ.

About the token, "***He then passed decrees (Qadhaa) on an appointed time (of death) and a definite appointed time (that is) with Him,***" (6:2) Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "The non-definite appointed time is the one that is pending (*Mawquf*), of which He advances as He wills and postpones as He wills. However, the definite time is the one that is sent down among the things He intended to happen from a night of divine arrangement and planning (*Lailat al-Qadr*) until a similar night in the next year. And that is the saying of Allah, ***'(He gives them respite towards a definite appointed time.) But, when their appointed time comes, they would be able to neither postpone (it) for a single moment, nor advance (it).***' (16:61)"[10]

It is narrated that Imam Baqir *(PBUH)* said:

الْبِرُّ وَ الصَّدَقَةُ يَنْفِيَانِ الْفَقْرَ وَ يَزِيدَانِ فِي الْعُمُرِ وَ يَدْفَعَانِ تِسْعِينَ مِيتَةَ السَّوْءِ.

"Beneficence and charity dismiss poverty, increase lifespan, and avert seventy bad and unpleasant (types of) death (by will of Allah)."[11]

1.6 Bada due to imploring Allah

Another example that changes in Allah's decision may occur is when we pray to Him. If Allah chooses to respond to our supplication, He initiates real change in the world and may re-plan our future. Allah, the Glorious, states in the Quran:

اُدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ.

Call on Me so that I answer you. (40:60)

قُلْ ما يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْ لا دُعاؤُكُمْ.

My Lord would have not concerned Himself with you if it were not for your call (upon Him). (25:77)

There are sayings from the Imams *(PBUT)* indicating that Allah may cancel a decisive and confirmed decree (*Qadhaa al-Mubram*) regarding a worldly punishment that is about to take place, merely due to the supplication (*Du'aa*) of His servant. For instance, it is narrated that Imam Musa al-Kadhim *(PBUH)* said:

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالدُّعَاءِ فَإِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ وَ الطَّلَبَ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَرُدُّ الْبَلَاءَ وَ قَدْ قُدِّرَ وَ قُضِيَ فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا إِمْضَاؤُهُ فَإِذَا

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دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَ سُئِلَ صَرَفَ الْبَلَاءَ صَرْفاً.

"I advise you to supplication (towards Allah as instructed only by His appointed saints). Certainly, prayer and request towards the Lord of might and majesty drive away an affliction that was planned and passed, and all that was remaining of it was its execution (*Imdhaa*). When Allah is called upon and is implored, He (may) avert the affliction in an amazing way."[12]

Although Bakri scholars claim that *al-Bada* is impossible for Allah, we find many Hadith in their collections that suggest otherwise. For instance, the following is a widely narrated Hadith, which is authentic (*Sahih*) according to the Bakri's criteria of authenticity:

قال النبي ص: الدعاء يرد القضاء، وإن البر يزيد في الرزق، وإن العبد ليحرم الرزق بالذنب يصيبه

The Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* said, "Supplication (to Allah) averts the decree (*al-Qadhaa*), and doing good (to others) increases the sustenance. Verily the sustenance of a servant may be shortened due to committing sin."[13]

Besides, Allah reveals in the Quran:

فَلَوْ لا كانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَها إِيمانُها إِلاَّ قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنا عَنْهُمْ عَذابَ اَلْخِزْيِ فِي اَلْحَياةِ اَلدُّنْيا وَ مَتَّعْناهُمْ إِلى حِينٍ

Why had not there been a single township (among those We decreed to destroy) whose people would accept faith so that their faith should have profited them (before Our decree is carried out), except for the People of Jonah (Yunus)? When they believed, We lifted the chastisement of ignominy from them in the life of this world, and permitted them to enjoy (their life) for a while. (10:98)

The above token points to a clear example of *al-Bada* that took place for the people of Prophet Yunus *(PBUH)* whose calamity was kept off and prevented. Due to their rejections of the messenger of Allah and disbelief to Allah's commandments, they became subject to a severe wrath of Allah in this world. At the time that the punishment was about to manifest, Prophet Yunus *(PBUH)* distanced himself from them and went far away. Upon his departure and appearance of some signs of the heavenly punishment, people came to their senses and suddenly changed their behavior and became mindful of Allah. They pleaded for mercy to the almighty Allah from the depth of their hearts. Subsequently, Allah decided to avert the calamity that was about to inflict them all just as His Prophet had informed them earlier. Allah, the mighty and the majestic, revealed:

وَ لَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ اَلْقُرى آمَنُوا وَ اِتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكاتٍ مِنَ اَلسَّماءِ وَ اَلأَرْضِ وَ لكِنْ كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْناهُمْ بِما كانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

I***f the people of the towns had faith and were mindful (of Allah concerning His commandments and prohibitions), We would indeed have opened out to them the doors of blessings from the heaven***

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and the earth; but they rejected (the Prophets and their sayings), and thus We caught them for what they earned (of evil deeds). (7:96)

1.7 The significance of *al-Bada*

As we have seen, there are massive pieces of evidence in the Quran that clearly disprove the Bakri doctrine which states "the pen has dried up having written down all future events". In contrast, the followers of Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* do not emulate the Jews who considered that Allah had concluded the matter. We believe Allah's hands are open to do as He wills. Nevertheless, Allah does not act without purpose. The changes in decree have educational purposes for people including the prophets and the Imams, peace be upon them all. Although people may usually be unaware of the details of all such changes in the world, by realizing the general concept of *al-Bada*, one will truly understand that everything is in the hands of Allah and He is able to do all things at any time, and that it is never too late for Him to do anything He wills. It demonstrates the independent freedom of the will of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, in all His actions and that He is never restricted by His own creations, including His Own previous will. Moreover, it removes the sense of compulsion and irrevocable predestination, giving sinners hope that Allah may totally revise their past and future. It encourages them to strive hard, supplicate to Allah, and act upon good deeds with the hope that Allah may fix their deeds and may change their fate. Zurara Ibn A'ayun and Hisham Ibn Salim narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنِ الْحَجَّالِ عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ ثَعْلَبَةَ عَنْ زُرَارَةَ بْنِ أَعْيَنَ عَنْ أَحَدِهِمَا ع قَالَ مَا عُبِدَ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِثْلِ الْبَدَاءِ وَ فِي رِوَايَةِ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ سَالِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع مَا عُظِّمَ اللَّهُ بِمِثْلِ الْبَدَاءِ

"Allah was not worshipped to the extent that He was worshipped due to *al-Bada*. Allah was not glorified as much as He was glorified due to *al-Bada*."[14]

1.8 Invariancy of Allah's Eternal Knowledge

It should, however, be noted that, according to several pieces of Hadith, Allah knew (in His Eternal knowledge) what He would change later, keeping in mind that by His Eternal knowledge, we only mean He is purified from ignorance. Thus, the change happens only to the created information. Abdullah Ibn Sanan narrated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُقَدِّمُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ يُؤَخِّرُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ يَمْحُو مَا يَشَاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ وَ قَالَ فَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ يُرِيدُهُ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ فِي عِلْمِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَصْنَعَهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يَبْدُو لَهُ إِلَّا وَ قَدْ كَانَ فِي عِلْمِهِ إِنَ اللَّهَ لَا يَبْدُو لَهُ مِنْ جَهْلٍ.

Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "Certainly Allah advances what He wills, postpones what He wills, erases what He wills,

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confirms what He wills, and with Him is the Mother-Book. Whatever Allah intends was in His knowledge before He makes and creates it. No new decision appears (by) Allah except that it was certainly in His knowledge. Verily, no new decision appears (by) Allah out of ignorance."[15]

Abu Basir narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَبْدُو لَهُ فِي شَيْءٍ لَمْ يَعْلَمْهُ أَمْسِ فَابْرَءُوا مِنْهُ.

"Keep aloof from a person who maintains that a new decision appears (by) Allah today that He did not know yesterday."[16]

Another aspect and interpretation of this issue is that all possible changes in the sequence of decisions of Allah have been created and exist in His knowledge of unseen (*Ilm al-Ghaib*), and Allah knows about all His unseen creations which are not allowed to manifest yet.

2. Frequent Change of Decision (Taraddud)

2.1.The meaning of *Taraddud* by Allah

Taraddud means hesitation in concluding a will and frequent change of decision. It can be viewed as the continual *Bada* on an issue. Both the Shia and the Bakri's have reported multiple frequent (*Mutawatir*) and authentic (*Sahih*) Hadith that state Allah makes *Taraddud* in some of His actions.

Change of decision or hesitation may occur for human being due to other influencing powers or because of ignorance. Allah is free from all attributes of His creation. *Taraddud* for Allah only shows His absolute volition. This phenomenon is the greatest manifestation of exercising independent freedom of choice by Allah. It clearly demonstrates the fact that Allah, the Sublime, is not compelled by His previous decisions and actions, and that He does as He chooses, and may change His decision as He wills new things. The *Taraddud* and *Bada* also have educational purposes for His believing servants, which develops in them supreme levels of faith, submission and trust in Allah and relinquishing all their affairs to Him.

2.2.The Shia and Bakri Hadith on *Taraddud*

Both the Shia and the Bakri narrators have reported independent multiple (*Mutawatir*) and authentic (*Sahih*) Hadith that state Allah makes *Taraddud* in some of His actions. As for the Shia, Ibn Abi Ya'fur narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ مِنْ عَبِيدِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَيُذْنِبُ الذَّنْبَ الْعَظِيمَ مِمَّا يَسْتَوْجِبُ بِهِ عُقُوبَتِي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْأُخْرَةِ فَأَنْظُرُ لَهُ فِيمَا فِيهِ صَلاَحُهُ فِي آخِرَتِهِ فَأُعَجِّلُ لَهُ الْعُقُوبَةَ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا لأُجَازِيَهُ بِذَلِكَ الذَّنْبِ وَ أُقَدِّرُ عُقُوبَةَ ذَلِكَ الذَّنْبِ وَ أَقْضِيهِ وَ أَتْرُكُهُ عَلَيْهِ مَوْقُوفاً غَيْرَ مُمْضًى وَ لِي فِي إِمْضَائِهِ الْمَشِيئَةُ وَ مَا يَعْلَمُ عَبْدِي بِهِ فَأَتَرَدَّدُ فِي ذَلِكَ مِرَاراً عَلَى إِمْضَائِهِ ثُمَّ أُمْسِكُ عَنْهُ فَلاَ أُمْضِيهِ كَرَاهَةً

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لِمَسَاءَتِهِ وَ حَيْداً عَنْ إِدْخَالِ الْمَكْرُوهِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَتَطَوَّلُ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَفْوِ عَنْهُ وَ الصَّفْحِ مَحَبَّةً لِمُكَافَاتِهِ لِكَثِيرِ نَوَافِلِهِ الَّتِي يَتَقَرَّبُ بِهَا إِلَيَّ فِي لَيْلِهِ وَ نَهَارِهِ فَأَصْرِفُ ذَلِكَ الْبَلاَءَ عَنْهُ وَ قَدْ قَدَّرْتُهُ وَ قَضَيْتُهُ وَ تَرَكْتُهُ مَوْقُوفاً وَ لِي فِي إِمْضَائِهِ الْمَشِيئَةُ ثُمَّ أَكْتُبُ لَهُ عَظِيمَ أَجْرِ نُزُولِ ذَلِكَ الْبَلاَءِ وَ أَدَّخِرُهُ وَ أُوَفِّرُ لَهُ أَجْرَهُ وَ لَمْ يَشْعُرْ بِهِ وَ لَمْ يَصِلْ إِلَيْهِ أَذَاهُ وَ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْكَرِيمُ الرَّءُوفُ الرَّحِيمُ

Allah, the Lord of might and majesty said, "(It may happen that) a faithful servant of Mine commits a great sin, for which he deserves retribution in this world and in the Hereafter. I am concerned about his interest and his benefit in the Hereafter, and hence, I advance his punishment to this world so that I penalize him for that sin. I plan the (worldly) punishment for his sin and pass it but I leave it suspended without carrying it out, and there is a will for Me in its execution (*Imdhaa*) while My servant is not aware of it. Then I repeatedly change My decision (*Ataraddudu Mirara*) on allowing its execution, and I may finally refrain from it and may not carry it out due to My reluctance on his dislike (of such retaliation) and My withdrawal from putting him into trouble. I give him respite by excusing and forgiving him because I would like to recompense for his numerous supererogatory deeds by which he tries to draw himself near to Me in the nights and days of his life. Thus, I avert from him the affliction that I had planned and passed it, but left it in suspense (*Mawquf*), and had had a will in its execution (*Imdhaa*) previously. However, (sometimes, I do not yet consider it sufficient and), I write for him the great reward of (tolerating) the affliction that was to be sent down. I reserve that for his (Hereafter) and increase his rewards while he did not become aware of it, nor did its harm reach him. And I am Allah, the generous, the compassionate, the merciful."[17]

The above Hadith, besides all interesting aspects that contains, demonstrates the importance of acting upon the supererogatory deeds. Such acts bring the pleasure of Allah, and He *may* decide to waive the punishment that a servant truly deserves.

In a widespread Hadith through multiple independent authorities (*Mutawatir*), it is narrated from Imam Ali Ibn al-Husain *(PBUH)*, Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)*, and Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* who all said who all narrated from the Messenger of Allah that the Lord of might and majesty said:

مَنْ أَهَانَ لِي وَلِيّاً فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي بِالْمُحَارَبَةِ وَ أَنَا أَسْرَعُ شَيْءٍ إِلَى نُصْرَةِ أَوْلِيَائِي وَ مَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ كَتَرَدُّدِي عَنْ وَفَاةِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَ أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ ...

"He who belittles My faithful servant has indeed challenged Me to combat, and I am the quickest to aid My friends. And I did not frequently change My decision (*Taraddud*) on the things that I do as much as I changed My decision (*Taraddud*) on taking the soul of My faithful servant who

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dislikes death and I dislike his dislike …"[18]

In fact, a faithful servant enjoys such a great status in the eyes of Allah that Allah does not take his soul without his satisfaction, and will let him die by his choice. Allah says in the holy Quran:

يا أَيَّتُهَا اَلنَّفْسُ اَلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ اِرْجِعِي إِلى رَبِّكِ راضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً

O confident soul! Return to your Lord well pleased and well pleasing. (89:27-28)

The believer mentioned in the above Hadith is just a regular believer who may have some fear from death due to his previous sins. Even for an unwavering believer who does not fear death at all, he still loves his faithful dependents (i.e., his believing wife and children) for the sake of Allah, and it is hard for him to leave those with whom he is acquainted. He may also have some unfinished sacred activities that he wants to accomplish before death. The above Hadith points to such natural reluctance and dislike.

Imam Sadiq *(PBUH)* narrates from Imam Sajjad *(PBUH)* who said:

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَتَرَدَّدُ عَنْهُ تَرَدُّدِي عَنْ قَبْضِ رُوحِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَ أَنَا أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ فَإِذَا حَضَرَهُ أَجَلُهُ الَّذِي لَا يُؤَخَّرُ فِيهِ بَعَثْتُ إِلَيْهِ بِرَيْحَانَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ تُسَمَّى إِحْدَاهُمَا الْمُسْخِيَةُ وَ الْأُخْرَى الْمُنْسِيَةُ فَأَمَّا الْمُسْخِيَةُ فَتُسْخِيهِ عَنْ مَالِهِ وَ أَمَّا الْمُنْسِيَةُ فَتُنْسِيهِ أَمْرَ الدُّنْيَا.

Allah, the Lord of might and majesty said, "And I did not frequently change My decision (*Taraddud*) on the things that I do as much as I changed My decision (*Taraddud*) on taking the soul of My faithful servant who dislikes death and I dislike his dislike. Thus, when his (final) appointed time that is not (further) postponed comes, I shall dispatch to him two sweet basils from Paradise, one is called *Muskhiya* (transformer) and the other one is called *Munsiya* (amnesic). The *Muskhiya* liberates him from his belongings, and the *Munsiya* causes him to forget the affairs of the world."[19]

Moreover, Imam Sadiq *(PBUH)* narrates from the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* who said:

لَوْ أَنَّ مُؤْمِناً أَقْسَمَ عَلَى رَبِّهِ أَنْ لاَ يُمِيتَهُ مَا أَمَاتَهُ أَبَداً وَ لَكِنْ إِذَا كَانَ ذَلِكَ أَوْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَجَلُهُ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَيْهِ رِيحَيْنِ رِيحاً يُقَالُ لَهَا الْمُنْسِيَةُ وَ رِيحاً يُقَالُ لَهَا الْمُسَخِّيَةُ فَأَمَّا الْمُنْسِيَةُ فَإِنَّهَا تُنْسِيهِ أَهْلَهُ وَ مَالَهُ وَ أَمَّا الْمُسَخِّيَةُ فَإِنَّهَا تُسَخِّي نَفْسَهُ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى يَخْتَارَ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

"If a believer swears by his Lord that He never impose death on him, He will not cause him die (in such a state) at all. However, if he does (swear that he does not wish to die) and his appointed time of death arrives, the Lord of might and majesty shall dispatch to him two types of scented breath (from Paradise), one breeze is called *Munsiya* and the other one is called *Muskhiya*. The *Munsiya* shall cause him to forget his family and his properties, and *Muskhiya* shall liberate him from the

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world, so that he shall finally choose what is with Allah (i.e., the Hereafter).[20]

It is quite amazing that the Bakri's have reported numerous narrations that are authentic based on their own criteria testifying the fact that Allah makes hesitation and frequently changes His decision in some of His actions, and yet they continue to believe that Allah's will and decision are eternal! Abu Hurayra, Aisha, Maimuna, Anas Ibn Malik, Ibn Abbas, among others narrated that Allah's Messenger *(PBUH&HF)* said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعِيذَنَّهُ وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ تَرَدُّدِي عَنْ نَفْسِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَنَا أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ.

"Allah said, 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My servant comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him. My servant continues to come closer to Me by performing *Nawafil* (supererogatory prayer or any other good actions beyond obligations) until I love him. When I love him, I become (i.e., I assign My created spirit to become) his sense of hearing by which he hears, and his sense of sight by which he sees, and his hand by which he grips, and his leg by which he walks. If he requests from Me, I shall grant him, and if he asks My protection and seeks refuge to Me, I shall protect him and shall give him refuge. And I do not hesitate (*Taraddud*) to do anything as much as I hesitate (*Taraddud*) to take the soul of a believer who dislikes death and I dislike his dislike."[21]

Notice that in all traditions only the term *Taraddud* is attributed to the action of Allah, not *Tardid*. The meaning of *Taraddud* is slightly different from *Tardid*. *Tardid* or indecision of a believer might be due to ignorance or fear. On the other hand, *Taraddud* of Allah is due to knowledge of the shaky situation of the servant. In Arabic language, *Taraddud* is the accepting to act according to *Tardid*. Thus, *Taraddud* is the action of changing decision by Allah when Allah sees the *Tardid* or perplexity of the believer, for instance, concerning death.

Conclusion

In this article, we provided some evidence to prove that the Creator of the worlds has power to cancel His previous will, intention, planning, and decree, making a total new revision on His decision. Moreover, He may frequently revise His will on a certain matter. As we discussed in the article, unlike the changes in the decision of human beings, such an action of Allah is not due to ignorance, rather it shows the absolute freed of the will of

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Allah. Moreover, knowing the general notions of *Bada* and *Taraddud* serves as educating His servants to understand that it is never late to implore Allah for better future. This issue also proves that the will of Allah is the creation of Allah and is not eternal.

END NOTES:

[1] The word *al-Bada* (البداء) that we discuss here is an infinitive and has a Hamza at the end. The root of *al-Bada* is B-D-Hamza (بدأ) with the past and present tense in the form of (بَدَأَ - يَبْدَأُ), which means: to begin, to start, to originate, and to initiate. It is commonly confused with another root B-D-W (بدو) with the past and present tense in the form of (بَدا - يَبْدُو), which means: to appear. As the root of the former suggests, *al-Bada* implies a new decision by Allah, which follows a *real change* in His creation. We can say that by *al-Bada* Allah makes a new decision as to which one of the invisible (*Ghaib*) things that had not willed to happen, wills to appear. In this sense, *al-Bada* inherits the meanings of both roots.

[2] Hadith refers to sayings of the divinely assigned saints who are either the prophets or their successors and executors that Allah assigned as the spiritual leaders and the authorized interpreters of the holy scriptures, and made their statements His statements as they only utter what Allah pleases and commands them to say.

[3] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 141, Hadith 7.

[4] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 111, Hadith 36, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

[5] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, pp 95-96, Hadith 2, cited from *'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (PBUH)*.

[6] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 90, pp 83-84, cited from *Tafsir*, al-Nu'mani.

[7] *Bihar al-Anwar*, v 7, p. 260, Hadith 5, cited from *al-Zuhd*; A similar narration from the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* is found in *'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (PBUH)*, v 2, p. 33, Hadith 57.

[8] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 430, Hadith 1; p. 436, Hadith 12.

[9] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 435, Hadith 10.

[10] *Tafsir*, al-'Ayyashi, vol. 1, pp 354-355, Hadiths 5, 6, & 7; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 116, Hadith 44.

[11] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 2, Hadith 2.

[12] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 90, p. 296, cited from *Makarim al-Akhlaq*.

[13] *Jami' al-Saghir*, al-Suyuti, vol. 3, section "A-D", Hadith 4262 (He said this Hadith is Sahih); *al-Mustadrak Ala al-Sahihain*, al-Hakim, narrated from Thawban; Similar multiple Hadith are narrated in *Sahih*, al-Tirmidhi, vol. 3, Chapter on "*Qadar* is not averted except by *Du'a*", Hadith 2225 (Al-Tirmidhi said the Hadith is Hasan); *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vol. 2, Hadith 3118 & 3148.

[14] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 146, Hadith 1.

[15] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 121, Hadith 63, cited from *Tafsir*, al-'Ayyashi.

[16] *Kamal al-Din*, p. 69; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 111, Hadith 30.

[17] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 449, Hadith 1.

[18] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, pp 352-354, Hadith 7, 8, & 11; p. 246, Hadith 6 with slightly various wordings; The Margin of *Mafatih al-Jinan*, Under supplication for longevity.

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[19]*Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 152, Hadith 5, cited from *al-Amali*, al-Tusi.

[20]*Al-Kafi*, vol. 3, p. 127, Hadith 1; *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, p. 142, Hadith 1; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 6, p. 153, Hadith 7.

[21]*Sahih*, al-Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 76, Hadith 509; *Musnad*, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. 6, Chapter of the Ahadith of 'Aisha; *Jami' al-Saghir*, al-Suyuti, vol. 2, Chapter of the complement of letter Alif, Hadith 1752 (He said the Hadith is authentic); *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vol. 1, Part 3 in the Complementary of the Book of Faith, Hadith 1156, 1157, 1160, 1161, & 1680; Other Bakri traditionists such as Tabarani, Ibn Asakir, Ibn Mardawaih, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, Abu Nu'aim have reported this Hadith as well.

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