The Will of Allah and Our Destiny

Part II: Allah's knowledge and His decision sequence

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Abstract: *In this article, the chain of sequence that Allah creates for an action to take place in the world is explained. The different types of will and intention of Allah is addressed. The freedom of the will of human being in this connection is also discussed. The rational necessity of regarding Allah pure from any creation including the knowledge and the will that He created is another subject that is offered in this part. Some traditions of Shia Imams* (PBUT) *supported by the verse of the Quran are provided to verify the detailed discussions.*

Keywords: *Will, intention, planning, decree, knowledge, commandment.*

The meanings of Allah's Will and His decision sequence

According to the sayings of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*, for every action that takes place, be it our choice or not, Allah creates the following six steps:

1-Knowledge (*al-'Ilm*)
2- Will (*al-Mashiyya*)

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3- Intention (al-*Irada*)
4- Planning or measure (*al-Qadar*)
5- Decree (*al-Qadha*)
6- Signature or conclusion (*al-Imda*)

In some traditions, the first and the second steps are joint as one step calling the "will of knowledge".

Allah is the creator of the worlds and their rules and formulations. His creation is based on a created knowledge and then the created will, intention, planning, and decree. These steps of information has no similarity whatsoever with the Eternal Knowledge of Allah. Above all these created knowledges and wills, He knows eternally which is not discussable nor perceivable for creation as His Eternal Knowledge is Him, not a feature, attribute, or property of Him. Eternal (Azali) is that which free from start and end, and in other words, free from time and happening (Huduth). The Essence of Allah is free from any attribute, as He has created all attributes. The first thing He created is foreknowledge or will of knowledge.

A required step for the existence of anything or occurrence of any event is the creation of its will by Allah. The traditions (as noted below) state that Allah has created two types of will (Mashiyya) and two types of intention (Irada) for every action that takes place. More specifically, Allah has the following two kinds of will:

1- The will of knowledge (*Mashiyyat al-'Ilm*)

2- The will of commandment (*Mashiyyat al-Amr*)

The first type of "will" means Allah wills that no action happens by or to His creations except that He should have already made it known and already permitted that action to take place. In other words, Allah foreknows what we would choose if we were given a choice on a certain thing in a certain situation. He may then permit the happening of our would-be action, or He may reject it. In the latter case, we would lose our choice in that specific action, and Allah will not hold us accountable for not performing that action. We will be questioned only about our voluntary actions, not about the actions we "perform" without our choice. To be more precise, if an action is performed without our choice, then we cannot really call it "our" action. In this sense, "our" action is defined only as our voluntary action. Our actions include both the internal actions (i.e., the actions that we practice in our heart such as our choice of thoughts, belief and disbelief) as well as the external ones (i.e., our deeds). Once Allah permits the happening of our would-be choice, we have truly been granted will-power regarding that specific action although we will choose what Allah already knew and permitted its occurrence. Volition is granted or withheld moment by moment according to Allah's will.

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The very existence of this type of will of Allah (which enables us to choose while Allah foreknows our choice in His will of knowledge and permits us do what we will choose) immediately disproves the idea of independent freedom of will and the relinquishment of the authority by Allah to us (*Tafwi̲dh*) in our voluntary actions. Moreover, depending on our would-be action, this type of Allah's will may or may not be in line with His pleasure.

The second type of will regards Allah's commandments, orders, and prohibitions on our voluntary actions. The existence of this type of will refutes the idea of compulsion (*Jabr*) in our actions. This is because if it were really compulsion, His orders, prohibitions, glad tidings, warnings, rewards, and punishments would have been meaningless.

If an action is our choice, then the two wills may or may not match. More specifically, if we choose to follow the orders of Allah, it shows that the two types of "will" matched, and if we choose to disobey Him, it shows the two types of "will" did not match. However, it should be noted that the foreknowledge, will, or permission of Allah are not the cause for our action. In fact, there is no cause for any action with volition; otherwise, the word "volition" would become meaningless since the cause—with the meaning implied by the philosophers—would necessarily result in the effect (i.e., the action). Volition exists if one can choose either of the opposite sides of an action (to do or to refrain) assuming that Allah has given us permission to exercise our choice while He is aware of our would-be choice in a decreed situation. Omitting the notion of necessity and urgency that was originally induced by the philosophers in the cause and effect relationship, we will end up with the general meanings of cause, which are "reason" and "origin". The origin of an action is the one who performs it. Moreover, there may be reasons behind one's choice of action, but none of these reasons would compel human to make the action, otherwise there would be no volition. This, in turn, goes to prove that the foreknowledge of Allah and his will for the occurrence of human's choice of action does not compel him in his action.

As for those actions that are the acts of Allah, the two kinds of "will" always agree. For instance, when Allah commands an angel to perform a task, He already made it known and permitted that such action takes place exactly in the way that He has commanded, and the actual outcome of that action is always be in accordance with what He has commanded. When Allah states in the glorious Qur̲an:

كَذٰلِكَ اَللّٰهُ يَفْعَلُ ما يَشاءُ

"This way Allah does what He wills,"

(The holy Quran,8:40)

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فَعَّالٌ لِما يُرِيدُ

"The doer of what He intends"

(The holy Quran:11:107; 85:16)

TheMost Glorious refers only to the will and intention of His own actions, and these verses do not apply to people's actions. Allah's action includes extraordinary events that happens without people's choice, such as the event described in the earlier part of the first verse (3:40), in which a barren woman, i.e., the wife of Prophet Zakariyya *(PBUH)* was enabled to give birth to a child, namely, Prophet John (the Baptist) *(PBUH)*.

To understand better what was discussed so far, let us consider a simple scenario. Assume a man whose name is George. One day, George goes to the store and sees a ripe, delicious apple. He has two choices: he can either buy the apple, or steal it. Allah has prohibited stealing the property of others. That day, George chooses to obey Allah's command and pays for the apple. Here, it is discovered that Allah's will of knowledge and His will command with regard to George's personal decision in that specific case were in line. On the next day, George sees another apple, but this time he chooses to steal it. In this case, the Allah's will of knowledge still preceded George's action, though it was against His will of command. Allah knew beforehand that George would steal the apple on the next day if he is granted choice, and Allah allowed George to manifest his own decision. Had Allah withdrawn His permission for the occurrence of that event, George could have never stolen the apple. However, granting volition to George while being fully aware that he will steal does not hold Allah accountable for George's misconduct. The action of George incurred Allah's displeasure because he violated His commands.

In another classification, Allah's will is divided into the following two subcategories:

1- The definite will (*Mashiyyat al-Hatm*)

2- The decided will (*Mashiyyat al-'Azm*)

The first subcategory of will is related to the actions that Allah intended not to change His permission on them. It can be either our action or Allah's action. All customs of Allah and His promises are in His definite will.

However, the second subcategory includes the wills about which Allah may change his decisions and may cancel or reform them.

According to the traditions, the next step after will for the occurrence of an action is Allah's intention (*Irada*), which is the determination and confirmation of will. Allah's will is more general than His intention. Similar to will, Allah has two kinds of intention:

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1- The intention of knowledge (*Iradat al-'Ilm*)

2- The intention of commandment (*Iradat al-Amr*)

Allah's intention is further divided into two subcategories:

1- The definite intention (*Iradat al-Hatm*)

2- The draft or decided intention (*Iradat al-Ikhtiyar/al-'Azm*)

The next step after intention in Allah's decision sequence, namely *al-Qadar*, is the measuring, apportioning, and detailed planning of the action with respect to time and place, as well as determining its relationship with other events. It also includes the synchronization of what happens to an individual without his choice as a byproduct of the voluntary act of another person.

For instance, consider the case where a wrongdoer oppresses a person. Allah knew this beforehand and permitted him to exercise his choice to oppress. Allah has also written the harm that the victim receives from the oppressor, and this could have various reasons. It might be that Allah wants to elevate the spiritual status of the oppressed by such hardship that he receives from the oppressor so that he becomes entitled to more reward in the Hereafter for exercising patience. It could also be that Allah intends to punish him by that oppressor because of his previous wrong deeds. Either way, Allah synchronizes the event in terms of time and place so that such a person becomes the target for the oppressor who has intended to wrong others voluntarily. This synchronization does not make Allah responsible for the wrongdoing of the oppressor. It rather shows Allah has not relinquished His authority on what will happen in His Kingdom. Neither did Allah leave the synchronization of the events to people, nor did He leave it to chance since both would have required *Tafwidh*.

Moreover, the reality of our voluntary action is just our final firm intention just before the physical manifestation of our action. However, the quality and quantity of the effects of our action and the duration of the effects in the physical world are all in the hands of Allah and is according to His detailed planning. For instance, an oppressor may intend harm to some people, but the amount of harm that each victim receives is according to Allah's measure. Thus, not only existence of the action, but also the quality and quantity of the effects are in accordance with Allah's planning and permission.

As a side point, it is noteworthy that a believer who has firm intention to commit a good deed but his action does not manifest in the physical world due to Allah's will, is entitled to the reward. The action of such a person was his final firm intention even if he was unsuccessful in

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his outward attempt (i.e., the will of Allah did not permit it). On the other hand, a person who has a firm intention to perform a bad deed deserves Allah's punishment even though his action has become ineffective and has been neutralized in the physical world by Allah. However, out of His grace and generosity, Allah does not punish a believer who could not physically accomplish his evil intention. Sometimes, Allah, the most Merciful, may block the way for a believer who has intended to commit a sin, so as to save him from its consequences.

The next step is *al-Qada*, which is the decree and confirmation for a future event or a command (depending on the type of issue). As we will see in the traditions, Allah's decree has four different meanings in the holy Quran: the decrees of creation, judgment, command, and knowledge. If a specific action is our choice, then Allah's decree of creation on it means that He makes things physically ready for us to act, and the decree of Judgment means passing what would be the reward and the punishment for that specific act in this world and the Hereafter. The decree of command and knowledge are similar to what we explained about the will and the intention.

The last step is *al-Imda*. This is Allah's "signature" for the execution of an action, which means Allah's final permission for the occurrence of that action (be it our choice or not). Once the occurrence of a certain action is "signed", it becomes a definite matter ready for the execution in its appointed time. An action is categorized as "definite" (*Mahtum*) if the permission for its occurrence is not changed or is unlikely to be changed by Allah. In the domain of our volition, a signed or definite matter is not an imposed matter. Rather, it is Allah's firm permission for the occurrence of the action of our choice, which means it is unlikely that Allah will block us from exercising it. According to the traditions, the actions that are to take place in the span of one year are usually signed in "the Night of Apportionment" (*Laylat al-Qadr*) of the same year. This is the most crucial night of the year and the most propitious time to have one's supplications answered. This night is in the holy month of Ramadan when, according to the holy Quran and the traditions, Allah descends to His vice-regent the complete details of what He has decreed and permitted for the next year[1]. Nonetheless, Allah may postpone the signing of certain actions up to the moment of their execution. In that case, *al-Imda* could be exactly at the time that the action is carried out in this world. This is in agreement with the other lexical meaning of *Imda*, which is "execution."

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The purity of the Divine Eternal Knowledge from the created knowledge

It is worth noting that the mentioned steps of information are Allah's creations and do not provide any trace to His Essence (*Dhat*). They are the created (*Makhluq*) and the generated (*Muhdath*) information by Allah, and are at the level of creation. They do not have any similarity whatsoever with His Eternal Knowledge (that is, His Essence). Any imagination or perception of Allah's Eternal Knowledge by us is a creation of our mind and cannot be rationally attributed to Allah. Allah says in the glorious Quran:

وَ أَنَّ إِلى رَبِّكَ اَلْمُنْتَهى

"And that towards your Lord is the end limit (of talk)."

(the holy Quran,53:42)

As Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)* interpreted the verse, when a conversation reaches to the matter of the Essence of Allah one should desist from speaking about Him. In fact, this is just a rationally required matter and the verses of the holy Quran and the traditions remind this rational obligation. Our rational task will be just to regard Allah pure from resemblance (*Tashbih*) and non-existence (*Ta'til*).On the commentary of this blessed verse, several traditionists narrated from the Commander Faithful Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib *(PBUH)*, Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)*, and Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* who said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَقُولُ وَ أَنَّ إِلى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهى فَإِذَا انْتَهَى الْكَلَامُ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَأَمْسِكُوا.

*"Very The Lord of might and majesty states:**'And that towards thy Lord is the end limit.Thus, when conversation reaches to (the Essence of) Allah, desist."**[2]*

(the holy Quran,53:42)

Moreover, it is narrated the Leader of the Faithful, 'Ali *(PBUH)* said:

مَن أفكر في ذات اللَّه تزندق.

"Whosoever ponders on the Essence of Allah becomes an infidel (Zindiq)."[3]

In this connection, Sulayman Ibn Khalid narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إياكم و التفكر في اللَّه فإن التفكر في اللَّه لا يزيد إلا تيهاً إن اللَّه لا تدرِكه الأبصار و لا يوصف بمقدار.

"Avoid pondering over (the Essence of) Allah, because pondering over (the Essence of) Allah would only increase bewilderment and misguidance. Verily Allah cannot be reached by the sight (of minds) and cannot be described by a degree and quantity."[4]

Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari narrated:

عن أَبي الْحسن الرِضا ع قال سأَلْته عن اللَّه هل يوصف فقَال أَ ما تقرأُ الْقرآن قلْت بلَى قال أَ ما تقْرأُ قوْله تعالَى لا تدركه الأَبصار و هو يدرك الأبصار قلْت بلَى قال فتعرفون الأَبصار قلْت بلَى قال ما هي قلْت أَبصارالْعيون فقَال إِن أَوهام الْقلوب أَكبر من أَبصار الْعيون فهو لا تدركه الأَوهَام و هو يدرك الأَوهام.

I asked Imam Rida (PBUH) if Allah could be

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described. He replied, "Haven't you recited His saying, 'Visions can not reach Him while He reaches to all visions' (6:103)?" I said, "Yes." He asked, "Do you know what visions are?" I said, "It is the visions of they eyes." Imam al-Ridha (PBUH) *said: "Verily the imagination of the mind is greater than the vision of the eyes. Thus (the verse means) minds can not reach Him, and He reaches to all minds."*[5]

The Imams *(PBUT)* draw the border of monotheism by confirming the following statement:

إن اللّٰه تبارك و تعالى واحد ليس كَمثله شيْء خارج من الْحدّين حد الْإبطال و حد التشبيه.

*"Certainly, Allah—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—is Unique. '**Nothing is like Him**.' (42:11) He is out of two extreme (rational) limits: The limit of non-existence, and the limit of likeness."*[6]

Therefore, although we never understand what He is, we cannot say He is non-existent. The meaning of the name "Allah" also refers to this fact. It comes from the root of "W-L-H", which means an entity about which everyone is bewildered and stunned.[7] His creations never understand His Essence. His signs prove that He is not non-existent, meaning that He cannot be denied. However, His existence has no similarity with the existence other things. He is not like other creations or have any of their attributes, otherwise His common concepts with others makes Him divided and partially meaningful and graspable by mind and created. By His existence, we *only* mean the rational proof of Him as being rationally undeniable and unique.

With regard to the Essence of Allah, we are not rationally allowed to talk because we have no way to understand Him. By "His Eternal Knowledge", we only mean "He is not ignorant." We regard His Essence (*Dhat*) pure (*Munazzah*) from any type of knowledge that we know (i.e., any generated knowledge even if it is extended towards infinity in terms of quality and quantity) just as we purify Him from ignorance. Any knowledge that can be possessed by human is not a part of Allah's Eternal Knowledge, otherwise it would imply His Essence has parts. Nothing is like Him. Maintaining a difference in the quality (*Kayfiyyah*) or the quantity (*Kammiyyah*) between His knowledge and ours is not enough to avoid resemblance, and we need to deny any concept, quality, and quantity for Him, which are all created. Allah is the creator of perfection which is a quality, and Allah is not described by the extensions of qualities and the concepts that we imagine. Allah knows, but not like how His creation know. Our understanding of His Eternal Knowledge is only limited regarding Him pure from any type of ignorance. This is called "purity-based recognition" (*Ma'rifat al-Tanzihiyya*)

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which the opposite of "similarity-based recognition" (*Ma'rifat al-Tashbihiyya*). The former is the only way to reach the correct recognition of Allah Who is not understandable, while the latter is common way to understand the created things whose essences can be understood and described by known properties.

The Eternal knowledge of Allah cannot be perceived by the creation because it is not created and has no concept. In Ahadith, it is referred to as "subject-free knowledge" (*'Elm-e-bila-Ma'lum*). We cannot imagine or comprehend knowledge without subject. Thus, what remains for us is to say Allah is not ignorant.

Unlike His Eternal knowledge, the created knowledge by Allah has always subject, and is called "subject-based knowledge" (*'Elm-e-bil-Ma'lum*). They are also called the knowledge of Allah or the divine knowledge. Allah is not them but He is their creator and processor. Based on the traditions, Allah has created two sets of subject-based knowledge, which have no similarity whatsoever with Him, i.e., Eternal knowledge. One of them is the knowledge-based on which His will manifests. This knowledge is released to His angels and messengers. The other one is the knowledge of unseen, which includes all combinations of the events that Allah has not currently willed to happen so that if He wanted to happen how it would happen.

Moreover, as we will quote later, the Imams *(PBUT)* stressed that anyone who thinks the will of Allah and His intention are eternal (i.e., claims that His will and intention are His Essence (*Dhat*)) is a disbeliever and a polytheist. This is because Allah's will and intention are the attributes of actions and refer to the intended things (i.e., His creations), which are neither unique nor eternal. Claiming that something or numerous things have been with Allah eternally would negate the oneness of Allah and His Eternity.

From the time a will for a specific action has been created until the moment of its execution (*Imda*), Allah may withdraw His permission for the occurrence of that action and may cancel the created will and change the sequence altogether. This concept is called *al-Bada* (the initiation or origination of a new will). This change only occurs in the created information (i.e., the above-mentioned steps), but there is no change in His Eternal Knowledge.

According to the traditions, all of this dynamic information is placed in a record called "The Protected Board or Panel" (*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*), or equivalently, "The Mother-Book" (*Umm al-Kitab*). These terms were mentioned in the holy Quran and were used in our traditions interchangeably.[8] This record is made of light and is witnessed by those who are close (*al-Muqarrabun*) to Allah.[9] They are

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the angels, the prophets, the messengers, and the Imams, peace be upon them all. The traditions further state that the heart of the supreme soul that is with the living Proof of Allah (i.e., the current messenger or his vice-regent (*Khalifa*)) is the vessel of the will of Allah for both His will of knowledge and command. All the above-mentioned information will be visible for them in the form of a pillar of light any time Allah let them to access that sanctified soul (*Ruh al-Qudus*). The will of Allah is Allah's creation in the heart of the Imams *(PBUT)*. Consequently, their knowledge is the (created) divine knowledge, and their command and satisfaction is the command and satisfaction of Allah.

Some traditions on divine decision sequences

Let us now study some of the traditions from the heritage of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)* regarding these subjects. Here, I only present some of the strongest traditions so that the interested readers may have the necessary base to pursue this topic. The best place to study this and the surrounding issues in detail is volumes four and five of *Bihar al-Anwār*, which is the greatest Hadith encyclopedia of Shia, compiled by al-Majlisi *(RA)*.

In the following Hadith, all the mentioned steps from will to conclusion are considered as a subcategory of the created knowledge. Mu'alla Ibn Muhammad narrates that it was asked from the seventh Imam, Musa Ibn Ja'far al-Kadim *(PBUH)* that how is the divine (created) knowledge. The Imam *(PBUH)* answered:

علم و شاء و أَراد و قدّر و قضى و أمضى فأمضى ما قضى و قضى ما قدر و قدر ما أراد فبعلمه كانت الْمشيئة و بمشيئته كانت الْإرادة و بإرادته كان التقدير و بتقديرِه كَان القضاء و بقضائه كَان الْإمضاء و العلم متقدم على المَشِيئة و المَشِيئة ثانيَة و الْإرادة ثَالثة و التقدير واقع على القضاء بالْإمضَاء فللَّه تبارك و تعالى البداء فِيما علم متى شَاء و فيما أَراد لتقدير الْأشياء فإذا وقع القضَاء بالإمضاء فلا بداء...

*Allah knew (i.e., created subject-based knowledge), willed, intended, planned, decreed, and then signed and concluded. Thus, He concludes what He decrees, and decrees what He plans, and plans what He intends. Thus, the will was based on His knowledge, the intention was based on His will, the planning was based on His intention, and the decree was based on His planning, and the conclusion was based on His decree. Thus, the knowledge precedes the will, and the second one is will, the third is intention, and planning happens for the (initiation of the) decree with conclusion. For Allah—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—is a new initiation (*al-Bada*) in what He knows until He wills, and in what He intended for the planning of the things. But when conclusion follows the decree, there will be no* Bada.[10]

As it can be seen, the Imam *(PBUH)* places the knowledge besides the will,

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enumerates it among the rest of sequence of decision making by Allah; therefore, this compared knowledge is created and it cannot be the Eternal knowledge, i.e., His Essence, Who is Unique and cannot be compared with the created things.

Moreover, the above tradition gives a subtle indication that distinguishes the school of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)* from the heretical schools including the philosophical and mystical circles. As stressed in the above tradition, in the view of school of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*, Allah's planning precedes the decree, while in other schools it is vice versa. This is one of the codes by which one can examine the originality of different religious views.

Referring to the verses of the glorious Quran where Allah states:

وَ لا يَرْضى لِعِبادِهِ اَلْكُفْرَ،لَقَدْ كَفَرَ اَلَّذِينَ قالُوا إِنَّ اَللَّهَ ثالِثُ ثَلاثَةٍ،

"(Allah) is not satisfied with disbelief for His servants (39:7), and Surely they disbelieved who said, "Allah is the third of the three (in a Trinity)" (5:73)

Fudayl Ibn Yasar and Abu Basir both narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

شاء و أَراد و لَم يحب و لَم يرض شاء أَن لاَ يكُون شيء إلا بعلمه و أَراد مثل ذلك و لَمْ يحبّ أَن يقال ثالث ثلاثة و لَم يرض لعبَادهالكفر .

"(It may be that) Allah willed and intended while He does not like and is not satisfied. Allah willed that nothing (no action or anything) exists except according to His knowledge (of what he has permitted), and He intended the same thing, but He does not like to be told 'He is the third of the three' and He is not satisfied with disbelief for His servants."[11]

When the Imam *(PBUH)* states: "Allah willed that nothing come to existence except according to His knowledge" He refers to the will of knowledge which might be different that His will of commandments.

The Leader of the Faithful (i.e., Imam 'Ali *(PBUH)*) was asked about the will (*Mashiyya*) of Allah and His intention (*Irada*). He *(PBUH)* said:

إن لله مشيين مشية حتمٍ و مشية عزم و كذلك إن لله إرادتين إرادة حتم و إرادة عزم إرادة حتم لا تُخطئ و إرادة عزم تُخطئ و تصيب و لَه مشيَّتان مشية يشاء و مشيَّةٌ لَا يشاء ينْهى و هو يشَاء و يَأْمر و هُو لا يشاء معناه أَراد من الْعباد و شاء و لَمْ يرِد الْمعصيَةَ و شَاء و كُل شيءٍ بقضَائِه و قدرِه و الْأمور تَجْرِي ما بَينهما ... و الْقضاء على أَربعة أَوجه في كتاب الله جل و عَز الناطق على لسان سفيره الصَّادق ص منها قضاء الْخلق وَ هُو قوله تعالَى فقضاهن سبع سماوات في يومين معناه خلقهنو الثَّاني قضاء الْحكم و هو قوله و قضي بينهم بالْحق معناه حكم و الثالث قضاء الْأمر و هو قوله و قضى ربك أَلَا تعبدوا إِلَّا إِيَّاه معناه أَمر ربُّك وَ الرابِع قضاء الْعلم و هُو قوله و قضينا إِلى بَنِي إِسرائِيل فِي الكتاب لتفسدنَّ فِي الأَرض مرتيْن معناه علمنا من بنِي إِسرائِيل قد شاء اللَّهُ مِن عبَاده المعصية وما أراد و شاء الطاعة و أَراد منهم لِأَن المَشيَّة مشيَّة الأمر و مشيَّة العلم و إرادته إِرادَة الرِّضَا و إِرادة الأَمر أَمر بالطَّاعة و رضي بهَا و شَاء المَعصية يعنِي علم من عبَاده المَعْصِيَة و لَمْ يأْمرهُم بِها فَهَذا من عدل الله تبارك و تعالَى في عبَاده جلَّ جلاله و عظم شأْنه.

"Certainly, there are two (types of) wills and two (types of) intentions for Allah. They are the definite will and the decided will, and similarly, the definite intention

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*and decided intention. The definite intention never misses (what finally intend to happen); however, the decided intention sometimes misses (what He will finally intend due to change in His desicion) and sometime hits. And (in another classification), He has two wills: the will of what He wills to happen and the will of what He does not will to happen: He (may) forbid (an action) while He wills (its ocurrence due people's choice) and He (may) order (an action) while He does not will (its ocurrence due people's choice). It means that He wanted obedience and He willed (people's choice to take place), and He did not want disobedience yet He willed (and allowed people's choice). And everything is according to His decree (*Qada*) and His planning (*Qadar*) and the events (or commands) runs between the two ..."*

"The decree is used with four meanings in the Book of Allah. The first one is the decree of creation when He, Whose name is high, said: ***'And He decreed them (in the form of) seven heavens in two days,' (41:12)****which means He created them. The second one is the decree of Judgment and it is in His saying:* ***'And (on the Day of Judgment) it is decreed/passed among them (based) on the truth,' (39:69)****which means it is judged. The third one is the decree of commandment and it is in His saying:* ***'And your Lord decreed that you should not worship but Him,' (17:23)*** *which means your Lord commanded. And the forth one is the decree of knowledge, and it is in His saying:* ***'And We decreed/passed for the children of Israel (and revealed) in the scripture that most certainly you will make mischief on the earth twice.' (17:4)*** *It means We knew (beforehand) about the (mischief of the) children of Israel (and let it to happen)."*

"*Verily Allah willed (i.e., permitted the occurrence of some of the) disobedience of His servants while He did not want it. And He willed (i.e., knew their choice and permitted) obedience and wanted it from them. It is because His will consists of the will of commandment and the will of knowledge, and His intention consists of the intention of satisfaction and the intention of commandment. He commanded obedience and is pleased with it, and He willed disobedience, which means He knew disobedience of some of His servants but He did not command them to do it. This is due to the justice of Allah—Whose name is holy Whose remembrance is high—among His servants."*[12]

Fath Ibn Yazid al-Jurjani narrated that Imam al-Rida*(PBUH)* said:

إِن للَّه إرادتين و مشيتين إِرادة حتم و إرادة عزم ينهى وَ هُو يشاء و يأْمر و هو لَا يشاء أَ و ما رأَيت أَنَّه نهى آدم و زوجتَه عَن أَن يأْكلا من الشّجَرة و هُو شَاء ذلك و لَو لَم يشأْ لَم يأْكلا و لَو أَكلَا لغلَبتْ مشيَتهما مشيّةَ اللَّه و أَمر إِبراهيم بذبح ابنه إسماعيل و شَاء أَن لَا يذبحه و لَو لَم يشَأْ أَن لَا يذبحه لغلَبت مشيَّة إِبراهيم مشيَّةَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ و جل.

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"Certainly, two intentions and wills belongs to Allah: the definite intention and decided intention. He (may) forbid (an action) while He wills (its ocurrence due people's choice) and He (may) order (an action) while He does not will (its ocurrence due people's choice). Don't you see that Allah forbade Adam and his wife to eat from the tree while He willed it (i.e., knew their choice and permitted it to happen)? Had He not willed so, they would not have eaten, and had they eaten it in that case, their will would have overcome the will of Allah (i.e., the knowledge of what He permitted to happen). He also ordered Abraham (PBUH) to slaughter his son, Ishmael (PBUH), while He willed that he would not slaughter him (i.e., He did not give permission for that action to manifest and to become effective), and had He not willed that he would not slaughter him, then verily Abraham's will would have overcome the will of the Lord of might and majesty."[13]

'Abdullah Ibn Sanan narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) said:

أَمر اللَّهُ و لَم يشَأ و شاء و لم يأْمر أَمر إِبليس أَن يسجد لآدم و شاء أَن لا يسجد و لَو شَاء لسجد و نهى آدم عن أَكل الشجرة و شاء أَن يأْكل منها و لو لم يشأ لم يأكل .

"Allah commanded and did not will (accordingly) (i.e., knew that He will be disobeyed and He permitted the sinner to manifest his choice), and He willed and did not command (accordingly). Allah commanded Satan to prostrate Adam (PBUH) and willed that he shall not prostrate. Had He willed otherwise, he would have certainly prostrated. Moreover, Allah forbade Adam (PBUH) to eat from that tree, and willed he shall eat from it. Had He not willed so, he would not have eaten."[14]

The saying of the Imam (PBUH), "had He willed otherwise, Satan would have certainly prostrated", means if the knowledge of voluntary prostration by Satan had been in the will of Allah, Satan would have prostrated. It is, again, important to remember that the foreknowledge of Allah is not the cause for the Satan's action, and the will that is mentioned here is not an imposed will, rather it is the will of knowledge of what will happen. The Imam (PBUH) was emphasizing the full accordance of what will happen with what Allah knew and permitted to happen without any compulsion in human's choice.

When the Commander of Believers, Imam Ali (PBUH) was asked, "How is it that we are not compelled in our actions if all our actions are according to the Allah's planning and decree?" the Imam (PBUH) replied:

تظن أَنّه كان قضاء حتما و قدرا لازما إِنه لَو كان كذلك لبطل الثواب و العقاب و الأمر و النهي و الزجر من اللَّه و سقط معنى الوعد و الوعيد فلم تكن لائمَةٌ للمذنب و لا مَحمدة للمحسن و لكَان المُذنب أَولى بالإحسان من الْمحسن و لكَان المُحسن أَولى بالعقوبة من المُذنب تلك مقالة إِخوان عبدة الأوثان و خصماءِ الرَّحْمَن و حزب الشّيطَان و قَدريَّة هذه الأُمة و مَجوسها إِن اللَّه تبارك و تعالَى كلف تَخييراً و نهى تَحذيراً و أعطى عَلى القلِيل كثيرا و لم يعص مغلوبا و لَم يطع

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مكرها و لم يملك مفوِضا و لم يخلق السماواتو الأرض و ما بينهما باطلا و لَم يبعث النَّبيِّين مبشرين و منذرين عبثاذلك ظن الذين كفروا فويل للّذين كفروا من النَّار.

"Do you think that this is an indispensable decree and an imposed planning (as the cause of our actions)? If it were so, then reward, punishment, commandment, and prohibition would have become invalid, and glad tiding and admonition would have been meaningless! In that case, there could not be any blame for the sinner and any admiration for the righteous; rather, the sinner would be more deserving of kindness than the righteous (as he had to play the role of a wicked), and the righteous would be more deserving of punishment than the sinner would. This is the belief and the saying of the brothers for idol worshippers, the enemies of Allah, and the Party of Satan (who are) the Qadariyya[15] *and the* Majus[16] *of this nation."*

"Allah—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—has charged the servants while they were granted choice, and forbade them through warnings. He has given for a small amount of good deeds a great reward. He is never disobeyed through being defeated (with respect to His will), and He is not obeyed through coercion and compulsion (due to His will). He does not invest possession by relinquishing it. He did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever is in between wrong and trivial. He has not sent prophets with warnings and glad-tidings futile. ***'This is the suspicion of the disbelievers. Thus, woe unto the disbelievers from Hellfire.'*** (38:27)"[17]

It is narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِن اللَّهَ أَرحم بعباده من أَن يجبرهم عَلَى الْمعاصي ثُم يعاقبهم عليهَا و هو أَيضاً أَجل و أَعز و أَرفع و أَجدر و أَعلم من أَن يرِيد أَمراً فيكون في استطَاعة الْعباد غيره علَى معنى الْكره و الْغلبة بل سبق علْمه في خلْقهو نفذ تقْديره في بريَته و قضاه في عبادهِ قبل أَن يخلُقهم كيف يخلقهم و علم ما هم عاملُون و إِلَى ما هم صائرون و علم من أَطاعه ممَن عصَاه فخلقهم علَى ذلك ليثيبهم على الطّاعة و يعاقبهم عَلَى الْمعصية و ليس يعاقب عَزَّ و جل علَى علْمه و لَا قضائه و لَا قدره بل يعاقب علَى الْمعاصي و يثيب علَى الطَّاعة.

"Certainly, Allah is more merciful to His servant than compelling them to disobedience and then punishing them for that. He is also more magnificent, mighty, exalted, meritorious, and aware than He intends a command that is not in the capability of the servants yet coerces them due to His domination. Rather, His knowledge preceded in His creation, and His planning and His decree were put into effect for His servants on how He would create them before He creates them. He knew what they would do and towards which end they would turn. He knew those who would obey Him from those would disobey Him. Thus, He created them accordingly in order to reward them for obedience and punish them for disobedience. But, the Lord of might and majesty shall never punish them because of His knowledge, decree, or planning,

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rather, He shall punish for disobedience and shall reward for obedience."[18]

Conclusion

In this article, we discussed in detail, the decision steps that are formed before a real event comes to existence in the world. We also discussed the notion of subject-based knowledge and subject-free knowledge, and explained that the former is created while the latter is Eternal and cannot be imagined. We also provided some traditions of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)* regarding the divine decision sequence. In the next parts of this article, we will further probe into the details of this subject, by will of Allah!

[1] See Chapter 97 of the holy Quran and the corresponding commentaries of the Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*.

[2] Kulayni, *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 92, Hadith #2; *al-Tafsir*, 'Ali Ibn Ibrahim *al-Qumi*, vol. 1, pp 25-26; *Kitab al-Tawhid*, p. 456, Hadith #9; p. 457, Hadith #18; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 3, p. 259, Hadith #6; vol. 3, p. 264, Hadith #22; vol. 90, p. 90 (from the Commander of Believers, Imam 'Ali *(PBUH)*).

[3] Kulayni, *Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 22; Ḥarāni, *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, p. 196; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 74, p. 287.

[4] *Kitab al-Tawhid*, p. 457, Hadith #14; *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 16, p. 197, Hadith #21334; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 3, p. 259, Hadith #4.

[5] Kulayni, *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 98, Hadith #10; *Kitab al-Tawhid*, p. 112, Hadith #11; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 4, p. 39, Hadith #16.

[6] *al-Tawhid*, p. 81, Hadith 27; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 3, p. 268, Hadith 3; Similar narrations exist in *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 82, Hadith 2; p. 85, Hadith 7.

[7] See the narration from The Commander of Believers, Imam 'Ali *(PBUH)* quoted in *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 3, p. 222.

[8] See verses 85:22 and 13:39 of the Quran.

[9] See Quran 83:21, and *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 318.

[10] *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 148, Hadith 16.

[11] *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 151, Hadith 5.

[12] *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 5, p. 124, Hadith 73, from *Fiqh al-Rida(PBUH)*.

[13] *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 4, p. 292, Hadith 21, from *al-Tawhid*.

[14] *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 150, Hadith 3.

[15] Here *Qadariyya* refers those who believe in compulsion.

[16] The followers of a certain cult with heretical beliefs concerning the origin of good and evil.

[17] *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 155.

[18] *Majmu'a al-Warram*, vol. 2, p. 268.

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