THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY

Part VI: The Will of Ahl al-Bait (PBUT)

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Abstract: In this article, several pieces of evidence from the holy Quran and Hadith are provided to show that the will of Allah is located in the heart of His vicegerent on the earth who has been assigned by Him as Imam, and that the Imam always volitionally accords his will with the will of Allah. Due to his reliance to Allah and his protection provided by Him, the Imam does not allow himself to will independently. Whether the information that Allah has not yet willed (i.e., the knowledge of the unseen) is observable for the Imam or not, is another issue that is addressed in the article.

Keywords: Will of Allah; the protected board; the knowledge of the unseen.

1 Introduction

As discussed in early parts, the will of Allah is a created entity and changes in time as Allah initiates a new will. According to several Hadith which are supported by some verses of the holy Quran, due to complete submission of the divinely-appointed Imam to the will and the command of Allah, the Imam always accords his will with the will of Allah, and thus his will is always equivalent to Allah's will. To put it in better words, Allah inspires His will in the Imam's heart, and he chooses to tolerate and bear

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that will as his own will without being compelled to that. This is one of the differences between them and other people who neither always follow the will of command of Allah nor do they tolerate His will of knowledge, i.e., what Allah decreed to happen on the universe.

2 The Vessel of the Will of Allah

Previously, we related a Hadith that had pointed to a subgroup of *Mufawwidha* who believed that Allah has relinquished authority specifically to the Imams *(PBUT)* and believed that the Imams' *(PBUH)* will is independent of Allah's will. In connection to this group, Kamil Ibn Ibrahim narrated:

دَخَلْتُ عَلَى سَيِّدِي أَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ ع ... ثُمَّ قَالَ وَجِئْتَ تَسْأَلُهُ عَنْ مَقَالَةِ الْمُفَوِّضَةِ كَذَبُوا بَلْ قُلُوبُنَا أَوْعِيَةٌ لِمَشِيَّةِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا شَاءَ شِئْنَا وَ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ وَ ما تَشاؤُنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشاءَ اللَّهُ.

I went to Imam Hasan al-Askari *(PBUH)*, and before posing the question that I had in mind, he *(PBUH)* said, "... You came here to verify the saying of *al-Mufawwidha*. They lied upon us. The fact is that our hearts are the vessel for the will of Allah. Thus, when He wills, we will. And Allah states, 'And you shall not will unless Allah wills.' (81:29)"[1]

Moreover, it is narrated that Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَ قُلُوبَ الْأَئِمَّةِ مَوْرِداً لِإِرَادَتِهِ فَإِذَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ شَيْئاً شَاءُوهُ وَ هُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ وَ ما تَشاؤُنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشاءَ اللَّهُ.

"Certainly Allah has made the hearts of the Imams *(PBUT)* the spring of His intention (*Irada*). Thus when He wills something, they will it. And this is the saying of Allah: 'And you shall not will unless Allah wills.' (81:29)"[2]

In the above traditions, the Imams *(PBUT)* pointed to one of the differences between them and other people, namely that the heart of the Proof of Allah (i.e., the greater spirit of Muhammad and his Ahl al-Bait, peace be upon them) is the vessel of the will of Allah. The Imam functions as the clear proof of Allah's existence, His mercy, His command, His satisfaction, His religion, and he is the treasurer of the created and the released knowledge by Allah. The will and intention of Allah manifests in the Imam's sayings and actions.

This follows that when, for example, the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* wanted to help someone, it would mean that Allah had wanted to help him. On the other hand, if one seeks help from Imam Ali *(PBUH)* while considering him as the vessel of the will of Allah, it means that he already accepted that Imam Ali *(PBUH)* would not help except by Allah's command and permission. Thus, to seek help from the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* is to seek help from Allah, to take him as the place of refuge is to seek refuge in Allah, and to acknowledge his sayings and commands is to acknowledge Allah's sayings and commands.

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3 The First Creation of Allah

Both the Shia and the Bakri traditionists have reported several Hadith that the spiritual light of the Prophet Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)* was the first creation of Allah. As for the Bakri's, the following Hadith can be found in their collections on the authority of Salman al-Farsi (RA) who narrated:

كُنْتُ أَنَا وَ عَلِيٌّ نُوراً بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ آدَمَ بِأَرْبَعَةَ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ عَامٍ.

I heard the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* saying: "I and Ali were one light in the hands of Allah fourteen thousand years before He created Adam *(PBUH)*."[3]

The early Shia traditionists have also narrated the above Hadith but with more details.[4] Moreover, Jabir Ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* said:

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ نُورِي فَفَتَقَ مِنْهُ نُورَ عَلِيٍّ ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الْعَرْشَ وَ اللَّوْحَ ...

"The first thing that Allah created was my light. He then split from it the light of Ali *(PBUH)*. Afterwards, He created the throne, the (protected) board, …"[5]

Ibn Salih al-Hirawi narrated an interesting Hadith about the superiority of the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and his Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* over all creations. Below is only a part of this long Hadith. Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* narrated from his father from his ancestors from the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* from the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* who said:

أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ خَلَقَ أَرْوَاحَنَا فَأَنْطَقَنَا بِتَوْحِيدِهِ وَ تَحْمِيدِهِ ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ فَلَمَّا شَاهَدُوا أَرْوَاحَنَا نُوراً وَاحِداً اسْتَعْظَمُوا أَمْرَنَا فَسَبَّحْنَا لِتَعْلَمَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَنَّا خَلْقٌ مَخْلُوقُونَ وَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّهٌ عَنْ صِفَاتِنَا فَسَبَّحَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بِتَسْبِيحِنَا وَ نَزَّهَتْهُ عَنْ صِفَاتِنَا ...

, "… The first thing that the Lord of might and majesty created was our souls. He then enabled us to profess His Unity and praise Him. Then He created the angels, and when they witnessed our souls in the form of one light, they exalted our status. Hence, we uttered the purity of Allah (from His creation) to teach the angels that we were of the creations of Allah and that He is free from our attributes. Then, the angels glorified (Allah) due to our glorifying (Allah) and they regarded Allah pure from our attributes…"[6]

On the other hand, we have several pieces of Hadith that show Allah created His primary will before the creation of other things. Sa'id Ibn Qammat narrated:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْمَشِيئَةَ قَبْلَ الْأَشْيَاءِ ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الْأَشْيَاءَ بِالْمَشِيئَةِ.

Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "Allah created the (primary) will before (the creation of) other things, and then created the other things by that will."[7]

Similarly, Umar Ibn Udhaina narrated:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْمَشِيئَةَ بِنَفْسِهَا ثُمَّ خَلَقَ الأَشْيَاءَ بِالْمَشِيئَةِ.

Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "Allah created the (primary) will according to itself (i.e., will), and then created the

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things by that will."[8]

The phrase "creating will according to itself" means that Allah willed to create will, but this initiation did not require a previous will since it would rationally lead to vicious infinite sequence of will. Rather, suddenly a will is initiated by Allah. This initiation is called *Badaa*, which was discussed earlier. This shows that the creation of will has no quality, but the creation of other things is based on quality, as they are created based on Allah's will, planning, and engineering.

The above pieces of evidence, among other similar narrations, imply that the light of Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* has been the vessel of the will of Allah since the creation of His first will for other things. In addition, they show that their light has order priority over all other existing creations.

4 The Holder of the Protected Board

"The Protected Board" (*al-Lawh al-Mahfudh*), which is made of light, is the place that Allah keeps His created knowledge and will. It is equivalently called, "The Mother-Book" (*Umm al-Kitab*). These two terms were mentioned in the holy Quran[9] and were used in several Hadith interchangeably.[10,11]

The holy Quran testifies that all the created knowledge is treasured in the heart of the Imams *(PBUT)*. In a very interesting Hadith, Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* narrated from his father *(PBUH)* who narrated from his ancestors *(PBUH)* that:

لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ *صلى الله عليه و آله* وَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمامٍ مُبِينٍ قَامَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَ عُمَرُ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِمَا فَقَالَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هُوَ التَّوْرَاةُ قَالَ لَا قَالَا فَهُوَ الْإِنْجِيلُ قَالَ لَا قَالَا فَهُوَ الْقُرْآنُ قَالَ لَا قَالَ فَأَقْبَلَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ *صلى الله عليه و آله* هُوَ هَذَا إِنَّهُ الْإِمَامُ الَّذِي أَحْصَى اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى فِيهِ عِلْمَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ.

When the token "And We have kept the account of everything in an evident Imam" (36:12) was revealed to the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)*, Abu Bakr and Umar stood up and asked, "O the Messenger of Allah! Is it the Torah?" He *(PBUH&HF)* replied, "No". They further said, "Is it the Gospels?" He replied, "No". They finally said, "Thus it should be the Quran." The Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* replied, "No". Then he *(PBUH&HF)* approached the Leader of the Faithful, Ali *(PBUH)*, and said, "He is the Imam whom Allah, the glorious, has kept in him the knowledge of everything."[12]

In addition, Abu Dhar (RA) and Salman (RA) narrated that the Commander of the Believers (Ali *(PBUH)*) said:

... وَ أَنَا صَاحِبُ اللَّوْحِ الْمَحْفُوظِ أَلْهَمَنِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ عِلْمَ مَا فِيهِ ...

"I am the holder of the protected board. Allah has inspired me with the knowledge of what is (visible) in it."[13]

Referring to chapter 13, token 39 of the Quran, Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* taught us to address all the Imams *(PBUT)* by saying:

بِكُمْ فَتَحَ اللَّهُ وَ بِكُمْ يَخْتِمُ اللَّهُ وَ بِكُمْ يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ بِكُمْ يُثْبِت

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... إِرَادَةُ الرَّبِّ فِي مَقَادِيرِ أُمُورِهِ تَهْبِطُ إِلَيْكُمْ وَ تَصْدُرُ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ.

"By you Allah opened (the account of creation), and by you Allah will close, and by you Allah erases whatever He wills, and by you He records... The intention of the Lord on the measures of His affairs descends to you and comes out from your places (for execution) ..."[14]

However, He is Allah who initiates *al-Badaa*, and Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* only carry out these changes according to Allah's will. Since such changes are not known to the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and his Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* beforehand, some of what the Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* see about the past and future are subject to change. Zurara narrated from Imam Baqir *(PBUH)* who narrated from his father Ali Ibn al-Husain *(PBUH)* saying:

لَوْ لَا آيَةٌ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لَحَدَّثْتُكُمْ بِمَا يَكُونُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. فَقُلْتُ أَيَّةُ آيَةٍ؟ قَالَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ: يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ.

"If a certain token were not in the Book of Allah, I would have informed you what will happen until the Day of Judgment. It is this token: 'Allah removes what He wills and establishes what He wills, and with Him is the Mother-Book.' (13:39)"[15]

Asbagh Ibn Nabata has narrated a similar Hadith from the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* with an extra phrase:

لَوْ لَا آيَةٌ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لَأَخْبَرْتُكُمْ به ما كَانَ وَ به ما يَكُونُ وَ به ما هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ هِيَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ «يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ».

Imam Ali *(PBUH)* said, "If a certain token were not in the Book of Allah, I would have informed you whatever existed and whatever is now existent and whatever will exist until the Day of Judgment. And it is this token: 'Allah removes what He wills and establishes what He wills, and with Him is the Mother-Book.' (13:39)"[16]

This extra phrase is another proof for the possibility of instantaneous changes in what is happening as well as changes in the record of what has already happened. The above traditions show that although the Imams *(PBUT)* see the past and future, their information is subject to change due to Allah's new decisions on erasing (hiding) or recording (making appear) some will.

5 The Two Types of Divinely-Created knowledge

Based on numerous Hadith, Allah created two types of knowledge:

1- The willed and apparent knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of what existed (*Ilm Ma Kan*) and the knowledge of what will exist (*Ilm Ma Yakun*).

2- The unwilled, suspended, or unseen knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of what was not allowed to exist (*Ilm Ma Lam Yakon*) and the knowledge of what is not supposed to exist and will not exist (*Ma La Yakun*) as well as the knowledge of what is partially planned and suspended (*Ilm al-Mawquf*). This type of knowledge is also called the unseen or unwitnessed

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knowledge (*Ilm al-Ghaib*).

Both types of the above data are stored in "The Protected Board", or equivalently, "The Mother-Book". The first type of data is visible in the record while the second type is invisible. The visibility, here, is defined as what is observable by the angels, prophets, messengers, and Imams, peace be upon them all. Allah may make *Badaa* in some parts of this record, and may make visible something that was formerly invisible in the record and vice versa.

Asbagh Ibn Nabata narrated: I heard the Leader of the Faithful saying:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عِلْمَيْنِ عِلْمٌ اسْتَأْثَرَ بِهِ فِي غَيْبِهِ فَلَمْ يُطْلِعْ عَلَيْهِ نَبِيّاً مِنْ أَنْبِيَائِهِ وَ لَا مَلَكاً مِنْ مَلَائِكَتِهِ وَ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى «إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَ يَعْلَمُ ما فِي الْأَرْحامِ وَ ما تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ ما ذا تَكْسِبُ غَداً وَ ما تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ» وَ لَهُ عِلْمٌ قَدْ أَطْلَعَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَتَهُ فَمَا أَطْلَعَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَتَهُ فَقَدْ أَطْلَعَ عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّداً وَ آلَهُ وَ مَا أَطْلَعَ عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّداً وَ آلَهُ فَقَدْ أَطْلَعَنِي عَلَيْهِ يَعْلَمُهُ الْكَبِيرُ مِنَّا وَ الصَّغِيرُ إِلَى أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّاعَة.

"Verily there are two (sets of created) knowledge belongs to Allah. A knowledge that He exclusively possesses in His *Ghaib* (i.e., what is invisible), and thus, He has neither made it transparent to any of His prophets nor to any of His angels, and such is the saying of Allah: 'Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). He is who sends down rain and knows what is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn tomorrow. Nor does anyone know in what land he is to die.' (31:34) However, for Him is another knowledge that He has (entirely) made transparent to His angels. And whatever He made known to His angels, He has certainly made known to Muhammad and his family (peace be upon them). Whatever He made known to Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)*, He has certainly made known to me, and all old and young members of us (Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)*) know it up to the establishment of the Hour (of resurrection)."[17]

Similarly, different traditionists narrated:

عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ شَمُّونٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْقَاسِمِ عَنْ سَمَاعَةَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى عِلْمَيْنِ عِلْماً أَظْهَرَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ وَ رُسُلَهُ فَمَا أَظْهَرَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَ رُسُلَهُ وَ أَنْبِيَاءَهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْنَاهُ وَ عِلْماً اسْتَأْثَرَ بِهِ فَإِذَا بَدَا لِلَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ أَعْلَمَنَا ذَلِكَ وَ عَرَضَ عَلَى الْأَئِمَّةِ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِنَا.

Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "Certainly there are two (sets of created) knowledge for Allah, the glorious. There is a knowledge that He disclosed to His angels, messengers, and the prophets, and whatever He disclosed to His angels, messengers, and the prophets we know it. He made the other knowledge exclusive to Himself, but when Allah makes *Badaa* in something of that (knowledge), He makes it known to us and also presents it to the Imams who were before us."[18]

Moreover, Dhurais narrated:

عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ السِّنْدِيِّ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنْ ضُرَيْسٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ ع يَقُولُ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ عِلْمَيْنِ عِلْمٌ مَبْذُولٌ وَ عِلْمٌ مَكْفُوفٌ فَأَمَّا الْمَبْذُولُ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ تَعْلَمُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَ الرُّسُلُ إِلاَّ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُ وَ أَمَّا الْمَكْفُوفُ فَهُوَ الَّذِي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ إِذَا خَرَجَ نَفَذَ.

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Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* said, "Indeed, for the Lord of might and majesty are two (sets of) knowledge: the granted, and the withheld. As for the granted knowledge, there is nothing of what the angels and the messengers know except that we also know. And as for the withheld knowledge, it is with the Lord of might and majesty in the Mother-Book, and when anything comes out (i.e., becomes visible), it becomes effective."[19]

In the language of holy Quran and Hadith, when referring to the first type of knowledge (i.e., the willed knowledge) the knowledge of the past and the knowledge of future are sometimes combined and are both mentioned as the knowledge of the past (*Ilm Ma Kan*). See, for instance, the Quranic news about the future, especially about the Day of Judgment, where Allah employs the past tense as if it has already happened. This is because, in Allah's record, what is intended to happen later is just like what has already happened. Although the future actions have not yet taken place, their will has already been created. This type of knowledge is the knowledge of the things that Allah permitted, and Allah's will on them currently exists.

Referring to the first type of knowledge, we read in supplication of *al-Nudba*:

وَ أَوْدَعْتَهُ عِلْمَ مَا كَانَ وَ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى انْقِضَاءِ خَلْقِكَ ... أَيْنَ أَعْلَامُ الدِّينِ وَ قَوَاعِدُ الْعِلْمِ.

"(O Allah!) You have entrusted him (i.e., the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*) with the knowledge of what existed (*Ilm Ma Kan*) and what will exist (*Ma Yakun*) until the expiration of the creation."[20]

The second set of information includes the knowledge of what Allah has not currently permitted to happen (*Ilm Ma Lam Yakon*), and thus the will of Allah on them does not exist. It also includes the knowledge of the things that Allah willed in general but Allah has not concluded their planning (*Qadar*), and suspended them (*Mawquf*) and has not yet decreed them. An example of the latter is the time of the rising of Imam al-Mahdi *(PBUH)*. Although the rising of al-Mahdi *(PBUH)* is in Allah's will, the time of his rising has not yet been decreed.

This type of knowledge is much more mysterious than the first one, and its span is not at all comparable to the former by any scale. It includes all the possible choices and all the resulting outcomes of the actions that have not currently been permitted to take place (i.e., their will or at least their decree is non-existent). In a very interesting Hadith *al-Qudsi*[21], Allah states:

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ عَالِمُ الْغُيُوبِ وَ مُضْمَرَاتِ الْقُلُوبِ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ مِمَّا يَكُونُ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ وَ مَا لَا يَكُونُ لَوْ كَانَ كَيْفَ يَكُونَ.

"Verily, I am Allah. There is no god but Me, the beneficent, the merciful, the mighty, and the wise. I am the knower of

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the unwitnessed/invisible (*Ghaib*), the hidden changes, and the secrets of the hearts. I know what did not exist no less than what is existing (such that I know if it is going to exist) how would exist. I know what is not supposed to exist if exists how would exist."[22]

Notice that *al-Badaa* by Allah operates between these two sets of knowledge on the protected board. When Allah makes *Badaa* on something, He removes His will, intention, or planning, etc., about it and makes it *al-Ghaib* (invisible) on the protected board. He then makes one of the countless other choices (that were previously not permitted) visible on the board by willing it and making it transparent as the first set of knowledge. In other words, anything on which Allah makes *Badaa* has been and will be on the protected board. They only turn visible or invisible due to *Badaa* by Allah. This is because all possible actions as well as all their consequences that are not permitted to happen, exist as the knowledge of unseen on this board but in an invisible form. Abdullah Ibn Sanan narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ مَا بَدَا لِلَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ كَانَ فِي عِلْمِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَبْدُوَ لَهُ .

Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "No new decision appeared (by) Allah except that it was in His knowledge before it appears (by) Him."[23]

Thus, the created knowledge is much more general than His will. The knowledge includes the knowledge of what He willed (*Ilm Ma Kan wa Ma Yakun*) and the knowledge of what He did not will (*Ilm al-Ghaib*), and by *al-Badaa*, He switches between the two. Bakr Ibn A'ayun narrated:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ عَنْ بَكْرِ بْنِ صَالِحٍ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَسْبَاطٍ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ الْجَهْمِ عَنْ بُكَيْرِ بْنِ أَعْيَنَ قَالَ قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع عِلْمُ اللَّهِ وَ مَشِيئَتُهُ هُمَا مُخْتَلِفَانِ أَوْ مُتَّفِقَانِ فَقَالَ الْعِلْمُ لَيْسَ هُوَ الْمَشِيئَةَ أَ لاَ تَرَى أَنَّكَ تَقُولُ سَأَفْعَلُ كَذَا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَ لاَ تَقُولُ سَأَفْعَلُ كَذَا إِنْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فَقَوْلُكَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ دَلِيلٌ عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَشَأْ فَإِذَا شَاءَ كَانَ الَّذِي شَاءَ كَمَا شَاءَ وَ عِلْمُ اللَّهِ السَّابِقُ لِلْمَشِيئَةِ.

I asked Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* whether or not the knowledge of Allah and His will are the same thing. The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "The knowledge is not the same as the will. Don't you see that you say, 'I will soon do such and such if Allah wills (*In-Shaa-Allah*)' and you do not say, 'I will soon do such and such if Allah knew'? Your saying, 'if Allah wills' is an indication for the fact that He may not will. Once He wills, that which He wills would exist as He wills. However, His knowledge was prior to His will (i.e., that which He permitted to occur)."[24]

6 Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* and the Knowledge of the Unseen

The complexity of the second set of knowledge is far beyond our perception. This is the knowledge that Allah did not make transparent for the prophets *(PBUT)* and the Imams *(PBUT)*, and is also referred to as the inevident, unwitnessed, and invisible knowledge (*Ilm al-Ghaib*). It is

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narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي قَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «عالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهادَةِ» فَقَالَ الْغَيْبُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ وَ الشَّهَادَةُ مَا قَدْ كَانَ.

On the commentary of the token, "(He is) the knower of the unwitnessed (al-Ghaib) and the witnessed (al-Shahada)," (13:9) Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "The unwitnessed (*al-Ghaib*) is that which (its will) did not exist (*Ma Lam Yakon*), and the witnessed is that which (its will) existed (*Ma Kan*)."[25]

Muhammad Ibn Muslim narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع فِي قَوْلِهِ ما نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنْسِها نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْها أَوْ مِثْلِها قَالَ النَّاسِخُ مَا حُوِّلَ وَ مَا يُنْسِيهَا مِثْلُ الْغَيْبِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدُ كَقَوْلِهِ يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ وَ يُثْبِتُ وَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتابِ قَالَ فَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَ يُحَوِّلُ مَا يَشَاءُ.

On the commentary of the token, "Neither do We abolish any sign nor do We cause it to be forgotten, except that We bring better than it or similar to it," (2:106) Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* said, "The abolishing thing is what it turns into, and the forgotten thing is like the invisible (*al-Ghaib*) that will not exist afterwards, as it is in His saying, 'Allah causes to vanish what He wills and confirms (what He wills), and with Him is the Mother-Book.' (13:39) Thus Allah does what He wills, and alters and revolves what He wills."[26]

On the Commentary of the token of the Chair (*Ayat al-Kursi*):

يَعْلَمُ ما بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ ما خَلْفَهُمْ وَ لا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلاَّ بِما شاءَ.

He knows what is between their (i.e., the prophets') hands and what is behind them, and they do not compass anything of His knowledge except what He willed. (2:255)

Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* said:

... يَعْلَمُ ما بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ ما خَلْفَهُمْ قَالَ ما بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَأُمُورُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَ مَا كَانَ وَ ما خَلْفَهُمْ أَيْ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدُ قَوْلُهُ إِلَّا بِما شاءَ أَيْ بِمَا يُوحِي إِلَيْهِم.

… "His saying, 'He knows what is between their hands' refers to the affairs of the prophets and that which (its will) existed (*Ma Kan*). 'What is behind them' means that which (its will) did not exist (*Ma Lam Yakon*). 'They do not compass anything of His knowledge except what He willed' (2:255) means except what He inspired them."[27]

Therefore, what Allah wills is inspired in the heart of the prophets and Imams, peace be upon them all.

Moreover, Allah states in the holy Quran:

عالِمُ اَلْغَيْبِ فَلا يُظْهِرُ عَلى غَيْبِهِ أَحَداً إِلاَّ مَنِ اِرْتَضى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَداً .

(He is) the knower of the unseen, and He does not manifest His secrets to anyone except to whom He has chosen of messengers, for surely He makes a guard to protect what is within their hands (of knowledge) what is behind them (and not disclosed to them). (72:26-27)

Once something is made visible and is disclosed of the knowledge of *al-Ghaib*, it will no longer be *al-Ghaib* and will appear on the knowledge of what existed, exists, or will exist, and witnessed by the Prophet

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(PBUH&HF) and his Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)*. Such disclosed information, which is also known as the news of *al-Ghaib* (*Anbaa al-Ghaib*), is no longer *Ghaib*.

It is worthmentioning that the term "*Ghaib*" has sometimes been used in our traditions as a relative term. Many issues are *Ghaib* for us, but are not *Ghaib* for the Imams *(PBUT)*. The first type of knowledge (that is given to the Imams *(PBUT)*) is hidden (*Ghaib*) for us, but it is witnessed (*Shahada*) for the Imams *(PBUT)*. Therefore, an issue being *Ghaib* or not is relative to the individuals. If in some traditions, the Imams *(PBUT)* stated that they know *Ghaib* and they receive the news of *Ghaib*, they were referring to the first type of knowledge. (See, for instance, the following tradition). In other words, the Imams *(PBUT)* know whatever is knowable. On the other hand, if in other traditions they stated they do not know *al-Ghaib*, they were referring to the second type of knowledge that is invisible for them.

The first type of knowledge that is visible for the Imams *(PBUT)*, is invisible for us. Thus, we should not think that what is invisible for us is the *Ghaib* mentioned in the Quran and Hadith. In one of his debates, Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* informed one of his opponents, namely Ibn Haddab, that certain afflictions would befall him sometime later. Ibn Haddab replied that only Allah knows the knowledge of *Ghaib*. He was ignorant of the fact that the knowledge of what Allah willed to happen is not of the knowledge of *Ghaib*. Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* then said:

أَ وَ لَيْسَ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ عالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلا يُظْهِرُ عَلى غَيْبِهِ أَحَداً إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مُرْتَضًى وَ نَحْنُ وَرَثَةُ ذَلِكَ الرَّسُولِ الَّذِي أَطْلَعَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَا شَاءَ مِنْ غَيْبِهِ فَعَلِمْنَا مَا كَانَ وَ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"Does not Allah say, '(He is) the knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His secrets to anyone except whom He has chosen of messenger' (72:26-27)? The Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* is a chosen one by Allah, and we are the inheritors of such a messenger whom Allah informed of what He willed from His *Ghaib*. Then he *(PBUH&HF)* taught us what existed and what will exist until the Day of Judgment."[28]

7 Online restriction of expansion of the knowledge of Imam

Although Allah has placed His willed and unwilled knowledge in the light of the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and his Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* and has made them holders of the protected board, we should make a clear distinction between placing the knowledge in them by Allah and accessing that knowledge. Even for the first type of knowledge that is certainly given to them, the Imams *(PBUT)* choose to look into it only to the extent that Allah pleases at any time. Sometimes, Allah wills to block the Imam's access to these divine information, and at those times, they become like other human beings who should react according

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their normal senses of the environment. Such behaviors prove beyond doubt the Imam's dependence and reliance to Allah and that Allah has not relinquished His authority to anyone.

Ammar al-Sabati relates that:

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع عَنِ الْإِمَامِ يَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ فَقَالَ لَا وَ لَكِنْ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ الشَّيْءَ أَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ.

I asked Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* if he knows *al-Ghaib*? The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "No! But when he intends to know something, Allah makes known to him."[29]

Moreover, Dhuraith narrated:

كُنْتُ مَعَ أَبِي بَصِيرٍ عِنْدَ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ به ما يَعْلَمُ عَالِمُكُمْ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَالَ يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ إِنَّ عَالِمَنَا لَا يَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَ لَوْ وَكَلَ اللَّهُ عَالِمَنَا إِلَى نَفْسِهِ كَانَ كَبَعْضِكُمْ وَ لَكِنْ يَحْدُثُ إِلَيْهِ سَاعَةً بَعْدَ سَاعَةٍ.

Once Abu Basir and me were in the presence of Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)*, and Abu Basir asked: "May I be sacrificed for you! By which means, the learned of your family (i.e., the Imam) knows? The Imam *(PBUH)* answered: "Certainly, the learned among us does not know *al-Ghaib*, and if Allah leaves our learned to his own soul, he becomes like you. However, (the required information and commands) are conveyed to him moment by moment."[30]

In addition, I'sa Ibn Hamza mentioned:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ أَحْيَاناً فَتُسْرِعُ فِي الْجَوَابِ وَ أَحْيَاناً تَطْرُقُ ثُمَّ تُجِيبُنَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ نَعَمْ يُنْقَرُ وَ يُنْكَتُ فِي آذَانِنَا وَ قُلُوبِنَا فَإِذَا نُكِتَ أَوْ نُقِرَ نَطَقْنَا وَ إِذَا أُمْسِكَ عَنَّا أَمْسَكْنَا.

I said to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*, "When we ask you something, sometimes you quickly respond and sometimes you lower your head for a while and then respond. The Imam *(PBUH)* said: "Yes! In our hearing and our heart is tapped (as an indication of the pleasure of Allah to access the divine information) and (the knowledge) induced. When it is tapped and induced (in our heart and hearing) we speak, and when it is withheld and abstained from us we also withhold."[31]

The divine knowledge is Allah's trust, and the Imams *(PBUT)* are the treasurers of the generated knowledge by Allah as conveyed in so many traditions and *Ziyarat* (The prescribed statements addressing the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and the Imams *(PBUT)* when visiting their grave of intending them from far), and therefore, they only look at it according to Allah's will.

8 Conclusion

In this article, we provided some evidence to prove that Allah placed His willed knowledge in the heart of His proof on earth, but access to it at any moment requires Allah's permission. The Imam is so submissive to Allah's will that he only wills what Allah wills once appears to him, so much so that the will of Imam is not viewed as a separate thing and his will is the manifestation of the will of Allah. Moreover, we discussed that the knowledge of unseen is also placed in the

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protected board in the heart of Imam but in hidden form. When Allah makes *Badda*, some of the hidden information shows up and become observable for the Imam, and some previously observable information disappears.

[1] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 25, p. 337, Hadith 16, cited from *al-Ghaybah*, al-Tusi.
[2] Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 372, Hadith 23, cited from *Basa'ir al-Darajat*.
[3] *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. 2, p. 663, Hadith 1130; *al-Riyadh al-Nadhira*, Muhib al-Din al-Tabari, vol. 2, p. 164; vol. 3, p. 154; *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 9, p. 171.
[4] See Kitab Sulaim Ibn Qais al-Hilali, p. 640; Kamal al-Din, p. 275, Hadith 25; Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 31, p. 409.
[5] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 54, p. 170, Hadith 117.
[6] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, v 26, p. 335, Hadith 1, cited from *Kamal al-Din*.
[7] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 145, Hadith 19, cited *al-Tawhid*.
[8] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 110, Hadith 4.
[9] See the holy Quran 85:22 and 13:39.
[10] See for instance, Kitab Sulaim bin Qais al-Hilali, vol. 2, p. 708; Bihar al-Anwar, vo.l 38, p52, cited from Fadha'il of ibn Shazan.
[11] *Umm al-Kitab* has also been used to refer to Chapter 1 of Quran, namely *Sural al-Hamd*.
[12] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 35, p. 427, Hadith 2, cited from *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*.
[13] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 26, p. 4, Hadith 1.
[14] *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, pp. 199-200, Hadith 2; *al-Kafi*, vol. 4, pp 576-577, Hadith 2; *Mafatih al-Jinan*, the first *Ziyarat* of Imam al-Husain *(PBUH)*, p. 422.
[15] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 118, Hadith 52, cited from *Tafsir* al-Ayyashi.
[16] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 97, Hadith 4, cited from *al-Ihtijaj*.
[17] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 26, p. 102, Hadith 3, cited from *Basa'ir al-Darajat*.
[18] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 255, Hadith 1.
[19] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, pp 255-256, Hadith 3.
[20] *Mafatih al-Jinan*, Supplication of al-*Nudba*, p. 532; *Iqbal al-A'amal*, p. 295.
[21] The scholars named a Hadith that is formally spoken by Allah and is conveyed through Angel Gabriel as "Hadith *al-Qudsi*". Notice that other Ahaadith are indirect speech of Allah, and are Allah's inspiration in the heart of the prophets and the Imams, peace be upon them all. Thus, there is no difference between the two types of Hadith in terms originality and sanctity.
[22] *Iqbal al-A'amal*, p. 507; Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 313, Hadith 77.
[23] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 148, Hadith 9.
[24] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 109, Hadith 2.
[25] Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 79, Hadith 3, cited from *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*.
[26] Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 4, p. 116, Hadith 42, cited from *Tafsir* al-Ayyashi.
[27] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 89, p. 263, Hadith 6, cited from *Tafsir* Ali Ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi.
[28] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 49, p. 75, Hadith 1, cited from *al-Khara'ij*.
[29] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 257, Hadith 4.
[30] *Basa'ir al-Darajat*, vol. 1, p325, Hadith 2.
[31] *Basa'ir al-Darajat*, vol. 1, p316, Hadith 3.

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