

The Relationship Between Destiny (*Qadar*), Decree (*Qaḍā*) and *Badā* from ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s Perspective: An Analysis in Light of the Quran and Hadith

Aliyu Mustapha^{1✉}, Muhammad Javad Eskandarlou², Abubakar Maina Bukar³,
and Abbas Karimi⁴

1. Corresponding author, Ph.D. graduate in Islamic Theology (*Kalām*), Department of Theology and Islamic Denominations, Faculty of Wisdom and Religious Studies, Al-Mustafa International University, Abuja, Nigeria. Email: sajjadaliyu@miu.ac.ir

2. Professor, Quran and Hadith Higher Education Complex, Al-Mustafa International University, Qum, Iran. Email: mj-eskandarlo@miu.ac.ir

3. Ph.D. student in Islamic Theology (*Kalām*), Department of Theology and Islamic Denominations, Faculty of Wisdom and Religious Studies, Al-Mustafa International University, Abuja, Nigeria. Email: abumuhdmb@gmail.com

4. Member of the Association of the Quran and Orientalists, Qum Seminary, Qum, Iran. Email: abas_karim@mail.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Theology is a profound science that explores complex Divine actions, including destiny (*qadar*), decree (*qaḍā*), and *badā* (the theological concept of divine alteration). This paper employs a descriptive-analytic method to analyze these concepts through the perspective of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, comparing his views with the Holy Quran and hadith. ‘Allāmah bases his understanding on the principle of causality, defining *qaḍā* as the relationship between an object and its complete cause, and *qadar* as its relation to an incomplete cause. While the universe operates under causality, this system is itself subject to God’s supreme will, which can hasten or delay outcomes. This dual reality—natural causality and divine intervention—creates a balance in human experience between recognizing natural laws and divine power. Human beings, according to this view, are not passive recipients of fate. Free will and moral responsibility remain intact. Actions shape eternal outcomes, and divine decree and human action coexist harmoniously, like soul and body. Notably, certain divine decrees are subject to alteration—a phenomenon denoted in Islamic theology as *badā*—through acts of repentance, supplication, and righteous deeds, as underscored in authoritative Islamic sources. This is explained through the distinction between two tablets: the Preserved Tablet (*Lawḥ Mahfūz*) and the Tablet of Erasing and Affirming (*Lawḥ Maḥw wa Ithbāt*). Thus, fortune and misfortune are not fixed but can be transformed. ‘Allāmah’s interpretation aligns closely with Quranic and prophetic teachings, reinforcing a believer’s balance between fear and hope—an essential state for spiritual growth and closeness to God.

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Introduction

The concept of *badā'* inherently involves the possibility of altering *qaḍā* (Divine Decree) and *qadar* (destiny), making the close connection between these theological discussions readily apparent. Consequently, any exploration of *badā'* inevitably necessitates a discussion of *qaḍā* and *qadar*. This issue stands as one of the most profound and complex in both philosophy and theology. *Badā'* manifests only in non-definitive *qaḍā* and *qadar*; absolute and definitive *qaḍā* and *qadar* undergo no change or alteration. This distinction highlights the tight interrelationship between these two concepts. Moreover, Islamic philosophers consider *qaḍā* and *qadar* as levels of divine knowledge that are instrumental in bringing forth the essences of things. Thus, these three discussions —*Badā'*, *Qaḍā* and *Qadar*, and Divine Knowledge— are intricately interwoven.

Therefore, a correct understanding of *badā'* fundamentally depends on a precise grasp of *qaḍā* and *qadar*. It could be argued that a root cause of the criticisms leveled against the belief in *badā'* stems from a confused understanding of the true meaning of *qaḍā* and *qadar* and their associated hadiths. Clarifying this matter is crucial for comprehending the reality of *badā'*. Building upon prior discussions of *qaḍā* and *qadar*, this paper will now focus on 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's views concerning their relationship with *Badā'*, where 'Allāmah analyzes the issue based on complete and incomplete causes of an object (see Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2008, 1:263; Ṭabāṭabā'ī & Fayyāḍī 2008, 4:1140; Ṭabāṭabā'ī & Shiravānī 2008, 3:313; Ṭabāṭabā'ī et al. 2009, 486).

Furthermore, given that *qaḍā* and *qadar* ultimately revert to God's knowledge and will, it seems imperative to first address the relationship between *badā'* and divine knowledge and will when explicating the connection between *qaḍā* and *qadar* and *badā'*.

The central question guiding this study is: How does 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī explain the relationship between *Qaḍā*, *Qadar*, and *Badā'*,

and how does his perspective align with the themes found in the Quran and hadith?

1. Research Background

Theological debates in early Islam, particularly regarding divine decree (*qaḍā* and *qadar*), determinism, and free will, emerged as significant discussions in the first half of the first century AH. These topics, which relate to human destiny, were naturally of interest due to their intellectual and spiritual implications, and are repeatedly addressed in the Quran and Hadith, emphasizing both fate and human autonomy. Some European historians argue that these concepts were introduced later by Islamic theologians, while others, like the Ashʿarites, supported determinism, denying human freedom. In contrast, the Muʿtazilites emphasized human free will and autonomy, challenging deterministic views.

The concept of *badāʾ*—divine alteration of previously decreed events—has also been a major theological topic within the Imamiyyah (Shiʿa) tradition. This doctrine gained importance early on, with scholars like Ibn Abī ʿUmayr and Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān authoring works on it. Throughout history, figures like Kulaynī, Shaykh Ṣadūq, Shaykh Mufīd, and Shaykh Ṭūsī engaged with *badāʾ*, integrating it into broader theological and rational frameworks. Isfahān’s philosophical school, led by figures like Mīrdāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā, reframed *badāʾ* through metaphysical lenses, culminating in focused treatises such as *Nibrās al-Ḍiyāʾ*. Later, ʿAllāmah Majlisī’s *Risālah fī al-Badāʾ* rejected fixed divine decrees, affirming God’s continuous active will and power.

However, regarding divine decree (*qaḍā* and *qadar*) and *badāʾ* from the perspective of ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī, and their comparative analysis with Quranic verses and narrations, few independent studies have been

conducted.¹ Given that ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī is recognized as the foremost contemporary philosopher and exegete, it seems essential that this topic be examined in light of his views.

2. The Relationship Between *Qaḍā* and *Qadar* with *Badā*’ in ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s View

Qaḍā (divine decree) and *qadar* (destiny) are intrinsically interconnected with a range of theological concepts. The present study seeks to examine in particular their relationship with *badā*’ (the alteration of divine decree), a concept that constitutes the central focus of this study. As *qaḍā*, *qadar*, and *badā*’ are fundamentally religious constructs—analogue to the term *zakāt*—this discussion strives, to the greatest extent feasible, to situate the analysis within the framework of Quranic verses and prophetic traditions.

2.1. ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s Rational Elucidation of the *Qaḍā*, *Qadar*, and *Badā*’ Relationship

One of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s characteristic methodologies, as previously noted, is the rational elucidation and analysis of complex issues. In explaining the relationship between *qaḍā*’, *qadar*, and *badā*’, he offers a rational interpretation that we will briefly outline.

2.1.1. *Badā*’, Sufficient Causes, and Insufficient Causes

As previously mentioned, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī states: “Sometimes the incomplete causes of a matter, including its constituent parts, conditions, and impediments, may necessitate something, but it is contravened, and something else occurs. However, if the cause of a matter becomes complete and perfect, there is no contravention” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 2005, 11:381).

In the sixth volume of his collected works, Martyr Muṭahharī writes:

¹. Ḥusaynī Shāhrūdī, Sayyid Murtidā et al. (1394Sh/2015). Barrasi-yi Taḥlīlī-yi Nazar-i ‘Allāmiḥ Ṭabāṭabā’ī darbāriḥ-yi Qaḍā va Qadar bā Rūykard-i Tafsīrī-Riwāyī-Falsafī. *Islamic Philosophical Doctrines*, 10(16), 3-26.

The beings of the world are of two types: some, like the higher incorporeal beings, are incapable of existing in more than one specific manner. Others, namely material beings, are capable of existing in more than one specific manner... Natural matter has the potential to encounter various causes and factors, and consequently, under the influence of each of them, it acquires a state, quality, and effect different from what it could have acquired from another... For a natural substance, thousands of 'ifs' exist... In the case of incorporeal beings, which can only exist in one way and are not subject to the influence of various causes, *qaḍā* and *qadar* are definitive and unalterable, because they are only involved with one series of causes, and the destiny of an effect is in the hands of its cause. Since there is no possibility of one series of causes being replaced by another, their destiny is definitive. However, for non-incorporeal beings, which are capable of thousands of forms and colors, and are subject to the law of motion, constantly at crossroads, there exist non-definitive *qaḍā* and *qadar*. That is to say, a single type of *qaḍā* and *qadar* does not determine their destiny... Various destinies await them, and since for every series of causes we consider, there is a possibility of another series being substituted, their destiny is non-definitive. To the extent that 'if' applies to them, there are *qaḍā* and *qadar*, and the possibility of change and alteration exists. (Muṭahharī 2010, 6:1071)

Thus, the existence of things in relation to their complete causes is necessary and certain, whereas their existence in relation to their incomplete causes is merely possible and not necessary.

3. *Qaḍā* and *Qadar* in Verses and Hadiths and their Interpretation

Given that the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) are regarded as the authoritative interpreters of the Quran, recourse is made to their statements for a comprehensive understanding of the essence of *qaḍā*' (divine decree)

and *qadar* (destiny). Their explication will be presented under the following heading:

3.1. *Qaḍā and Qadar and Human Free Will in hadiths*

Some have mistakenly assumed that divine *Qaḍā* and *qadar* are incompatible with human free will. They imagine that divine destiny is something beyond laws and order, such that when it pertains to an event, it nullifies every law and disrupts every order. However, as we will see, without accepting divine *Qaḍā* and *qadar*, no order can be established, and no ground for voluntary action can emerge.

One day, Amir al-Mu'minīn Ali (a) was sitting with a group of his companions in the shade of a wall. Imam Ali (a) noticed the wall's crookedness and weakness. To prevent the wall from falling on him and his companions, he stood up and sat under the shade of another wall. One of his companions said to him, 'O Amir al-Mu'minīn, are you fleeing from God's divine decree (*qaḍā*)? The Imam replied, "I flee from God's divine decree to God's destiny (*qadar*)"² (Ibn Bābawayh 1977, 369).

The individual's misconception stemmed from the belief that if divine *qaḍā* had decreed a person's death, the wall—whether crooked and unstable or sturdy—would inevitably collapse, rendering death unavoidable. Consequently, any movement, change of position, or rational decision-making would be futile. In contrast, Imam 'Alī (a), through both his action and his statement, illustrated the correct understanding of *qaḍā* and *qadar*. He conveyed to that person (and to others) that faith in *qaḍā* and *qadar* does not negate human agency and effort but rather constitutes their necessary foundation and enabler. This

². حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْوَزَائِقِيُّ وَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ الْمَعْرُوفُ بِابْنِ مَقْبَرَةَ الْقَرْوِينِيِّ قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا سَعْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا الْهَيْثَمُ بْنُ أَبِي مَسْرُوقٍ التَّهْدِي عَنْ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلْوَانَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ طَرِيفٍ عَنِ الْأَصْبَغِ بْنِ نُبَاتَةَ قَالَ: «إِنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَدَلَ مِنْ عِنْدِ حَائِطٍ مَائِلٍ إِلَى حَائِطٍ آخَرَ فَقِيلَ لَهُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَتَفِرُّ مِنْ قَضَاءِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ أَفِرُّ مِنْ قَضَاءِ اللَّهِ إِلَى قَدَرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ».

is because the collapse of a crooked wall represents a divine decree (*qadā' ilāhī*) governed by specific conditions and the inherent qadar of that wall—namely, its instability. However, if the wall possesses a different attribute—stability—it will be subject to a different decree and qadar. An individual who comprehends these dual possibilities of qadar and the corresponding decrees will accordingly exercise judgment and select the more suitable course of action.

Imam 'Alī (a) thus moved from one aspect of divine *qadā'*—the potential harm or death resulting from remaining beneath an unstable wall—toward the qadar that is contingent upon human caution and relocation to safety. Consequently, one ought not adopt indifference toward matters of health or other affairs, for this very act of evasion and precaution constitutes part of God's ordained qadar. It follows, therefore, that individuals are obliged to exert effort in all virtuous endeavors and to exercise prudence in situations of potential danger.

3.2. Compatibility of Divine Destiny with Voluntary Action

The Quranic verses and hadiths from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a) strongly emphasize the compatibility of divine destiny (*qadar-i ilāhī*) with human voluntary actions. Some of the Quranic verses and hadiths are as follows:

3.2.1. Quranic Verses

1. "...Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls..."³ (Quran 13:11).
2. "and that nothing belongs to man except what he strives for"⁴ (Quran 53:39).
3. "...but if you revert, We [too] will revert..."⁵ (Quran 17:8).

³. «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ» (الرعد/١١)

⁴. «وَأَنْ لِّبَشَى الْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى» (النجم/٣٩)

⁵. «وَإِنْ عُدْتُمْ عُدْنَا» (الإسراء/٨)

4. "Every soul is hostage to what it has earned"⁶ (Quran 74:38).
5. "Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people's hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they may come back"⁷ (Quran 30:41).

3.2.2. Hadiths

a) The Role of Human Action in Determining One's Destiny (The Relationship of Soul and Body)

From *al-‘Ālim* (a) that he said: "Qadar (destiny) and action are like the soul and the body. The soul without the body does not move and is not seen, and the body without the soul is a form without movement. But when they are united, they become strong, sound, beautiful, and pleasing. Likewise, with *qadar* and action: if *qadar* were not applied to action, the Creator would not be known from the created, and if action were not in agreement with *qadar*, it would not proceed or be completed. But through their union, they become strong and sound, and God provides aid therein for His righteous servants. Then he recited this verse: 'But God has endeared to you faith and adorned it in your hearts...' (Quran 49:7). Then he (a) said: 'I found the son of Adam between God and Satan. If God, glorified be His Names, loves him, He purifies him and chooses him;⁸ otherwise, He leaves him alone with his enemy"⁹ (Majlisī 1982, 5:54-55).

⁶. «كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ» (المدرثر/ ٣٨)

⁷. «ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ» (الروم/ ٤١)

⁸. Through His grace, guidance, and support, and by not leaving him to himself, and directing the causes towards his desired good; otherwise, He leaves him to his own devices and does not aid him against his enemy. This is the meaning of divine grace (*tawfiq*) and abandonment (*khidhlān*), and guidance (*hidāyah*) and misguidance (*idlāl*).

⁹. وَ رُوِيَ عَنِ الْعَالِمِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: «الْقَدَرُ وَالْعَمَلُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الرُّوحِ وَالْجَسَدِ فَالرُّوحُ بغيرِ الْجَسَدِ لَا يَتَحَرَّكُ وَلَا يُرَى وَالْجَسَدُ بغيرِ الرُّوحِ صُورَةٌ لَا حِرَاكَ لَهُ فَإِذَا اجْتَمَعَا قَوِيًّا وَصَلَحًا وَحَسَنًا وَمُلَحًّا كَذَلِكَ الْقَدَرُ وَالْعَمَلُ فَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْقَدَرُ وَاقِعًا عَلَى الْعَمَلِ لَمْ يُعْرِفِ الْخَالِقُ مِنَ الْمَخْلُوقِ وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْعَمَلُ بِمُؤَافَقَةٍ مِنَ الْقَدَرِ لَمْ يَمُضِ وَلَمْ يَتِمَّ وَلَكِنْ

This hadith emphasizes that divine decree and destiny in no way lead to indolence. It explicitly states that action is the executive guarantee of destiny; without action, no destiny materializes. They are two sides of the same coin, like the relationship between the soul and the body. The soul does not exist without the body, and the body, without the soul, withers and perishes.

In explaining the phrase, “And God provides aid therein for His righteous servants,” we can refer to the words of Lady Fatima al-Zahra (a) on this matter: “...Whoever sends up to God his pure worship, God sends down to him His best interest...”¹⁰ (Majlisī 1982, 68:184).

b) The Non-Necessity of Divine Decree and Destiny Leading to Compulsion (Jabr)

...from Abī ‘Abd Allāh (a) who said: “There is no compulsion (*jabr*) and no absolute delegation (*tafwīd*), but rather an affair between two affairs. I said: ‘What is an affair between two affairs?’ He said: The likeness of that is a man whom you saw committing a sin, so you forbade him, but he did not desist, so you left him, and he committed that sin. Just because he did not accept from you and you left him, it does not mean that you were the one who commanded him to commit the sin”¹¹ (Kulaynī 1986, 1:160; Fayḍ Kāshānī 1985, 1:545; Ḥurr ‘Āmilī 1997, 1:240).

باجْتِمَاعِهِمَا قَوِيًّا وَصَلَحًا وَ لِلَّهِ فِيهِ الْعَوْنُ لِعِبَادِهِ الصَّالِحِينَ ثُمَّ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: ﴿وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبِيبُ الْإِيمَانِ وَ رَبُّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ﴾ (الحجرات/٧) الْآيَةَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَجَدْتُ ابْنَ آدَمَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَ بَيْنَ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنْ أَحَبَّهُ اللَّهُ تَقَدَّسَتْ أَسْمَاؤُهُ خَلَصَ وَ اسْتَخْلَصَهُ وَ إِلَّا خَلَا بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ عَذْوِهِ.

¹⁰. وَ قَالَتْ فَاطِمَةُ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ: «مَنْ أَعَدَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ خَالِصَ عِبَادَتِهِ أَهْبَطَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ أَفْضَلَ مَصْلَحَتِهِ».

¹¹. مُحَمَّدٌ بْنُ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ حُسَيْنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: «لَا جَبْرَ وَ لَا تَقْوِيضَ وَ لَكِنْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ قَالَ قُلْتُ وَ مَا أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ قَالَ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ رَجُلٌ رَأَيْتُهُ عَلَى مَعْصِيَةٍ فَتَهَيَّئَتْهُ فَلَمْ يَنْتَهُ فَتَرَكْتُهُ فَفَعَلَ بِلَاكِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ - فَلَيْسَ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَقْبَلْ مِنْكَ فَتَرَكْتَهُ كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الَّذِي أَمَرْتَهُ بِالْمَعْصِيَةِ».

3.3. Possibility of *Badā'* in Appointed Term

Human deaths due to sins are more numerous than their deaths due to the appointed term. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) said: “Those who die due to sins are more numerous than those who die upon reaching their appointed terms, and those who live through righteous deeds are more numerous than those who live merely by the span of their natural lifespans”¹² (Majlisī 1982, 5:140). These and other similar hadiths indicate that *badā'* frequently occurs in the appointed term (*ajal*). The majority of people experience a change and *badā'* in their appointed term (its increase or decrease) due to their actions (obedience and disobedience).

4. Applied Analysis of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's View on the Relationship Between *Qaḍā*, *Qadar*, and *Badā'* in Light of the Quran and Hadith

It is important to note that most of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's views on this matter align with the Quranic verses and hadiths, with the exception of a few points that we will address later.

4.1. Similarities Between 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's View and the Quran and hadiths

Apart from the specific points that will be highlighted, the remaining aspects of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's perspective appear to be in harmony with the Quran and Sunnah. For the sake of brevity, we will mention some of these congruences:

4.1.1. The Influence of Human Voluntary Actions on Changing Destiny

Contrary to the belief of determinists, another undeniable and firmly established principle in divine knowledge is that humans, through the

¹². قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ هَمَّامٍ فَذَكَرْتُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ لِأَحْمَدَ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ حَمَزَةَ مَوْلَى الطَّالِبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ زَاوِيَةً لِلْحَدِيثِ فَحَدَّثَنِي عَنْ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ أَسَدٍ الطُّفَاوِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْقَاسِمِ عَنْ فَضِيلِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ عَنْ رَجُلٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: «مَنْ يَمُوتُ بِالذُّنُوبِ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يَمُوتُ بِالْأَجَالِ وَ مَنْ يَبِيشُ بِالْإِحْسَانِ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يَبِيشُ بِالْأَعْمَارِ».

will and free choice embedded in their very nature, can alter their own destiny. Through the power of choice, they can attain eternal bliss or perpetual wretchedness.

Undoubtedly, those who think otherwise stray from the path and are far from reality. The late ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī states in this regard: “Among all types of beings, humankind is a type of existence whose affair is not completed and does not reach perfection except through a series of voluntary and willed actions” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 2002, 276; see Etratdoost et al. 2023, 135).

As for the impact of human action, ‘Allāmah believes that there is a complete relationship between human deeds and external events, whether good or evil. God alludes to this truth in two verses: “*If the people of the towns had been faithful and God wary, We would have opened to them blessings from the heaven and the earth. But they denied; so We seized them because of what they used to earn*”¹³ (Quran 7:96); and the verse: “*Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned...*”¹⁴ (Quran 42:30).

According to ‘Allāmah, the connection between human actions and natural occurrences is one of the profound insights of the Quran, attested to by numerous verses, including the two below: “*Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people's hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they may come back*”¹⁵ (Quran 30:41); “*...If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing], but if you are ungrateful, My*

¹³. ﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ...﴾ (الاعراف / ٩٦)

¹⁴. ﴿وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ...﴾ (الشورى / ٣٠)

¹⁵. ﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾ (الروم / ٤١)

punishment is indeed severe”¹⁶ (Quran 14:7); “And that nothing belongs to man except what he strives for”¹⁷ (Quran 53:39).

4.1.2. God’s Absolute Knowledge and Power and the Non-Independent View of Action

Human actions and deeds play a significant role in altering and shaping an individual’s destiny. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that this role is not autonomous. Human agency is necessary, yet insufficient in itself. Likewise, the laws governing the universe fulfill their function, but paramount above all is the Creator of humanity and the cosmic order—He who is the Self-Subsisting and Absolutely Powerful, and the Most Just of Judges.

According to the Twelver Shi‘i (*Imāmīyyah*) theological tradition, God’s knowledge (*‘ilm*) and power (*qudrah*) are infinite and absolute, encompassing every aspect of existence without exception or limitation. Nothing in the created order—whether manifest or concealed, past, present, or future—is hidden from the Divine Essence, nor does anything lie beyond the scope of divine authority and volition. The entirety of the cosmos falls under the comprehensive sway of God’s knowledge and power, such that whatever the divine will ordains can invariably come to pass.

The Holy Quran repeatedly affirms this absolute divine knowledge in numerous verses, such as: “Nothing is indeed hidden from Allah in the earth or in the sky”¹⁸ (Quran 3:5); and the verse: “Whether you disclose anything or hide it, Allah indeed knows all things”¹⁹ (Quran 33:54).

¹⁶. «... لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ» (إبراهيم/٧)

¹⁷. «وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى» (النجم/٣٩)

¹⁸. «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ» (آل عمران/٥)

¹⁹. «إِنْ تُبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا» (الأحزاب/٥٤)

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, commenting on God’s infinite knowledge on verse 59 of *Sūrat al-An‘ām*, writes: “The phrase, ‘*He knows whatever there is in land and sea*’ (*Quran 6:59*), indicates the universality of God’s knowledge. It implies that whatever beings can be the object of others’ knowledge—and even if some do not know it, it can be known to others—all of it is known to God” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 2002, 278). Also, about verse 22 of *Sūrat al-Ḥashr*, he states:

The word ‘*shahādah*’ (witnessed) means something that is observed and present to the perceiver, just as ‘*ghayb*’ (unseen) denotes its opposite. These two meanings are relational and relative; meaning, something can be unseen for one person or thing, and witnessed for another person or thing. In witnessing, the matter revolves around a type of comprehension by the witness over the witnessed entity; either sensory, imaginative, intellectual, or existential comprehension. In the unseen, it revolves around the absence of such comprehension. And whatever is unseen or witnessed for us, since it is encompassed by God Almighty and God encompasses it, it is necessarily known to Him, and He is All-Knowing of it. Thus, God Almighty is both the Knower of the unseen and the Knower of the witnessed, and no one else besides Him is like that. This is because whoever is other than God, their existence is limited. (ibid)

The Quran speaks about God’s absolute power in numerous verses, such as: “Say, ‘*Travel over the land and then observe how He has originated the creation.*’ Then Allah shall bring about the genesis of the Hereafter. Indeed Allah has power over all things”²⁰ (*Quran 29:20*). ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in his exegesis on this verse, states: “This verse, up to three verses later, instructs the Messenger of God (s) to address

²⁰. «قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ» (العنكبوت/ ٢٠)

the polytheists and complete his argument against them, and to guide them to travel through the earth to understand how the creation and origination of human beings—with their differing natures, colors, and forms—came to be, and how God created them without a prior pattern or plan, without a determined number or count, or without similar power. This way of thinking is a conclusive proof that His power has no calculation or measure [and is absolute and boundless]” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 2002, 279).

Considering what has been presented, it is understood that nothing is outside the scope of God’s knowledge and power, and nothing can hinder the execution of God’s will and desire. Therefore, God is capable, in some instances and due to certain causes—including supplication—of bringing about changes in non-definite divine decrees (*qaḍā ghayr ḥatmī*), and changing the destiny of an individual or individuals. This itself is a type of *qaḍā* and *qadar* that falls within the divine tradition (ibid).

4.1.3. The Scope of *Badā*’s Occurrence

4.1.3.1. Occurrence of *Badā*’ in *Qadar* (Destiny)

The possibility of *badā*’ occurring in *qadar* and divine destinies regarding sustenance, bliss, wretchedness, and other matters is one of the points alluded to by both ‘Allāmah and the Quranic verses and hadiths. Furthermore, it is understood from ‘Allāmah’s words that both *badā*’ and *qadar* occur in possible and compound temporal beings. This clarifies the relationship between *Badā*’ and *qadar*. Therefore, *badā*’ is not applicable to non-temporal beings.

4.1.3.2. Occurrence of *Badā*’ in the Non-Specified Appointed Term (*Ajal Ghayr Musammā*)

There are two types of appointed terms: specified (*ajal musammā*) and non-specified (*ajal ghayr musammā*). *Badā*’ occurs in the non-specified appointed term, contrary to the specified appointed term. The non-

specified appointed term is written in the Tablet of Erasing and Affirming (*Lawḥ Maḥw wa Ithbāt*), while the specified appointed term is in the Mother Book (*Umm al-Kitāb*). This is a point that ‘Allāmah also refers to: “...that the specified appointed term is that which is placed in the Mother Book, and the non-specified appointed term is what is written in what we call the Tablet of Erasing and Affirming” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 2005, 7:9).

4.1.3.3. Occurrence of *Badā’* in Actual Divine Decree (*Qaḍā Fi l’ī*)

In one classification, ‘Allāmah divides divine decree (*qaḍā*) into actual (*fi l’ī*) and essential (*dhātī*). In the language of hadiths, we can consider this essential divine decree as referring to God’s essential, concealed, and stored knowledge, in which *badā’* does not occur. However, outside of that—meaning in effective knowledge and effective divine decree—*badā’* is possible. Therefore, in this regard too, it can be said that ‘Allāmah’s discourse aligns with the Quranic verses and hadiths.

4.1.4. ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s view about the Generality of Divine Decree (*Qaḍā*)

In his exposition of divine decree (*qaḍā*) and destiny (*qadar*), ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī departs from the dominant philosophical tradition, which confines *qaḍā* to the realm of incorporeal beings. Rather, he extends its scope to encompass the corporeal and manifest world. Through this innovative framework, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī inaugurates a novel phase in the discourse, thereby achieving enhanced congruence between the prevailing philosophical paradigm and the worldview articulated in Quranic verses and hadiths.

4.1.5. *Badā’* and Compound Beings

Badā’ is specific to compound and temporal beings. However, in beings that do not admit composition, such as the realm of angels and separate intellects, which are pure incorporeal entities, *badā’* does not occur.

4.1.5.1. Examination of 'Allāmah's Quranic Argument Regarding the Restriction of *Qadar* to the Material World (Quran 15:21)

'Allāmah states that the term "*inzāl*" (sending down/bringing down) in Quranic verses is always used concerning material beings. He uses this as a supportive argument, citing two verses as examples (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2005, 12:143): "...and We sent down iron..."²¹ (Quran 57:25); "...and He has sent down for you eight mates of the cattle..."²² (Quran 39:6).

Based on the verse, "*That which is with you will be spent but what is with Allah shall last...*"²³ (Quran 16:96), he infers a kind of stability and permanence in the meaning of the verse, using the method of Quranic exegesis by the Quran itself, where the phrase "*indahū*" (with Him) is employed (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2005, 12:145). This is because the preceding verse aims to convey the principle that what is with God ("*indahū*") is not perishable, whereas what is with humans ("*indakum*") is perishable. In the 19th volume of *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 2005, 19:91), 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī interprets verses containing the phrase "*kull shay*" (every/all thing) to mean all beings in the material world and nature. To support this claim, he relies on a hadith from Imam Riḍā (a) as narrated by Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān in Barqī's *Al-Maḥāsīn*, where *qadar* is defined as the measure, length, and width of a thing²⁴ (Barqī 1952, 1:244). In essence, he considers this hadith and similar ones as contextual evidence against the absolute and general meaning of the phrase "*kull shay*" in Quranic verses related to *qadar*.

²¹. ﴿...وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ...﴾ (الحديد / ٢٥)

²². ﴿...وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ...﴾ (الزمر / ٦)

²³. ﴿مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ...﴾ (النحل / ٩٦)

²⁴. عَنْهُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ يُونُسَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: «...قلت: فما معنى قدر؟ قال: تقدير الشيء من طوله و عرضه...».

In the noble verse, “...and everything is by [precise] measure with Him”²⁵ (Quran 13:8), God Almighty’s *qadar* is attributed to beings described by the phrase “*indahū*.” This clearly indicates that *qadar* in the Quran has a general application and is employed even with respect to imperishable entities. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the divine treasuries (*khazā’in*) are entirely devoid of existential degree, and that only the entities that have descended from those treasuries possess a specific measure and determination. Furthermore, ‘Allāmah’s assertion that the Quranic term “*inzāl*” (causing to descend) is used exclusively for material entities does not appear to be correct. For in several verses, “*inzāl*” is predicated of things that cannot be considered material—such as “the sending down of the angels” (*nuzūl al-malā’ikah*) or similar expressions occurring in the Quran, as well as other instances, some of which will be mentioned below:

a) “And they say, ‘Why has not an angel been sent down to him?’ Were We to send down an angel, the matter would surely be decided, and then they would not be granted any respite”²⁶ (Quran 6:8).

b) “The day when the sky with its clouds will split open, and the angels will be sent down [in a majestic] descent”²⁷ (Quran 25:25).

c) “Then He sent down to you safety after grief a drowsiness...”²⁸ (Quran 3:154).

d) “Then Allah sent down His composure upon His Messenger and upon the faithful, and He sent down hosts you did not see, and He

²⁵. ﴿... وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ﴾ (الرعد/٨)

²⁶. ﴿وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْظَرُونَ﴾ (الأنعام/٨)

²⁷. ﴿وَيَوْمَ تَشْقُقُ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا﴾ (الفرقان/٢٥)

²⁸. ﴿ثُمَّ أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنٌ نُعَاسًا...﴾ (آل عمران/١٥٤)

punished the faithless, and that is the requital of the faithless”²⁹ (Quran 9:26).

Therefore, following a detailed examination of ‘Allāmah’s discourse alongside the relevant Quranic verses and hadiths, it becomes evident that he advanced a novel perspective on the question of divine decree (*qaḍā*). In contrast to the dominant philosophical tradition, he did not restrict *qaḍā* exclusively to the realm of incorporeal entities but extended its application to the material world as well. In doing so, he inaugurated a significant development in this domain, thereby achieving greater harmony between the prevailing philosophical framework and the outlook presented in the Quranic verses and hadiths.

However, with respect to “*qadar*” (divine measure or destiny), ‘Allāmah has departed from this inclusive approach and limited the stage of *qadar* exclusively to the material realm. Nevertheless, on the basis of the Quranic verses and hadiths discussed above, it may be concluded that *qadar*, like *qaḍā*, is not confined to any particular level of existence but applies universally across all levels of being. Consequently, by restricting “*qadar*” to the material world, the doctrine of “*badā*” (divine abrogation or alteration) is likewise necessarily confined to that realm.

4.1.5.2. Justification of ‘Allāmah’s Statement Regarding the Restriction of *Qadar* to the Material World

‘Allāmah’s position may perhaps be defended on the grounds that, in the realm of incorporeal beings, divine decree (*qaḍā*) and divine measure/destiny (*qadar*) occur simultaneously. Furthermore, upon closer scrutiny of ‘Allāmah’s statements, his denial of *qadar* with respect to incorporeal entities likely indicates the rejection of a *qadar* that is distinct or separate from *qaḍā*.

²⁹ «ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ» (التوبة / ٢٦)

In response to the counter-arguments, which invoke Quranic verses and hadiths attributing “*inzāl*” (descent) to angels, “*sakīnah*” (tranquility), and similar entities, it must be observed that even the descent of angels—when it involves physical manifestation, as in the case of the Prophet Lot (a)—pertains to the material world rather than the realm of incorporeal beings. Likewise, “*sakīnah*” and analogous concepts relate to material affairs, specifically to human souls, and are thus material in nature. Notwithstanding these considerations, ‘Allāmah’s position regarding the restriction of *qadar* to the material world remains undoubtedly worthy of further reflection and examination.

Conclusion

The issue of divine decree (*qaḍā*) and destiny (*qadar*) stands as one of the most pivotal doctrinal discussions in Islam. Efforts to ascertain its true nature have consistently been a source of significant disagreement, yet a correct articulation profoundly impacts other theological tenets. *Badā*, frequently emphasized in Shi‘i hadiths, is closely linked to the discourse on divine decree and destiny, highlighting their mutual interdependence.

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā‘ī posits that *qaḍā* signifies an object’s relation to its complete cause. Once a complete cause is established, the object transcends the state of possibility and equipoise, attaining necessity and definiteness. He defines *qadar* as an object’s relation to its incomplete causes, a stage characterized by possibility and predisposition.

Some scholars have interpreted ‘Allāmah’s explanation of *qadar*—contrary to the consensus of verses and narrations—as restricting it solely to the material realm. Their reasoning is that composite causes and their material effects are only relevant in the physical world, not in the realm of intellects and incorporeal beings. They have critiqued ‘Allāmah’s arguments on this point, though it is possible to reconcile

his statement by suggesting that in the case of incorporeal entities, *qaḍā* and *qadar* occur simultaneously. Perhaps, the intended negation in his statement was merely the negation of *qadar* separate from *Qaḍā*.

Badā' occurs in certain divine destinies, where one destiny supersedes another, as exemplified by prayer. This concept is underscored in verses and hadiths through the distinction between the Preserved Tablet (*Lawḥ Maḥfūẓ*) and the Tablet of Erasing and Affirming (*Lawḥ Maḥw wa Ithbāt*), a distinction that presents no contradiction.

One of the spheres where *badā'* can occur is *qadar*, not *qaḍā*. However, *qaḍā* itself is divided into essential (*dhātī*) and actual (*fi'li*). Essential *qaḍā* refers to God's essential knowledge, and since any change in God's essential knowledge would imply imperfection, *badā'* cannot occur in essential *qaḍā*. Nevertheless, in the case of actual *qaḍā*—which is analogous to actual knowledge—the occurrence of *badā'* is entirely possible and presents no impediment. Therefore, the points articulated by 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī concerning *qaḍā* and *qadar*, especially his explanation of their relationship with *badā'*, demonstrate the utmost compatibility with the Quranic verses and hadiths.

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