



BADĀ'

BADĀ' (Ar. appearance, emergence), as a theological term denotes a change of a divine decision or ruling in response to the emergence of new circumstances. It is upheld in Imami Shi'ite doctrine and rejected by most other Shi'ite and Sunni schools. The notion of *badā'* is said to have been put forward first by Moktār b. Abī 'Obayd Ṭaqafī when he predicted the victory of his supporters in a battle against Moṣ'ab b. Zobayr in 67/686-87, claiming to have received a promise of God to that effect and, after their defeat, explained that God had changed His decision (*badā lahū*). In support of this explanation he quoted Qur'ān 13:39: "God deletes whatever He wishes and confirms" (Ṭabarī, II, p. 732). *Badā'* became a theological doctrine of the Kaysāniya, the followers of Moktār, and was then, like other Kaysānī doctrines, adopted by the nascent Emāmīya. The religious importance of the doctrine was emphasized in various traditions transmitted from the imams, especially Moḥammad al-Bāqer and Ja'far al-Šādeq. They affirmed that "God is not worshipped (*'abada*), or glorified (*'aẓẓama*), through anything as He is through (belief in) *badā'*," and that "if people knew what a reward there is for upholding *badā'* they would never tire of speaking about it." Imam 'Alī al-Reżā is quoted as stating that "God has never sent a prophet without the prohibition of wine and without his affirming *badā'* of God." A practical application of *badā'* was given by Imam al-Šādeq when his son Esmā'īl, who had been expected to succeed him, died before him. He is reported to have said: "God has never changed his decision (*mā badā le'llāh*) as in the case of my son Esmā'īl." A variant of this tradition substituted "my father (*abī*)" for "my son (*ebnī*) Esmā'īl," thus referring to Abraham's son Ishmael whom God decided to



save after having commanded his father to sacrifice him. (See Majlesī, p. 107; Ebn Bābawayh, p. 275.)

Such traditions of the imams ensured that *badā'* remained a permanent Imami dogma though its precise significance has been subject to varying interpretations. *Badā'* was fully consistent with the early Imami *kalām* theology represented by Hešām b. Ḥakam (d. 179/795-96) and others who held that nothing could become subject to knowledge, either human or divine, before its existence. The emergence of new circumstances for God was thus reasonable, especially in respect to human acts. Constantly adjusting His decisions to the free choice of man, God, in their view, controlled the course of the world at any time without having predetermined it. *Badā'* became theologically problematical when divine foreknowledge of all future events was accepted. Some traditions of the imams affirmed that *badā'*, too, was known to God before it occurred. Imam al-Šādeq was quoted as stating: "God has never changed a decision (*mā badā le'llāh*) about anything but that it was in His knowledge before He changed it" (Kolaynī). There was now the disturbing question whether God could inform man of a decision knowing that He would change it. Some traditions denied this suggesting that *badā'* could happen only in the hidden part of God's knowledge. To Imam al-Bāqer is attributed the statement: "(God's) knowledge is of two kinds: A knowledge that is stored (*maḳzūn*) with God of which He does not inform anyone of His creation, and a knowledge which He teaches His angels and Messengers (*rosol*). Whatever He teaches His angels and Messengers will happen; He will not turn Himself, His angels, and His Messengers into liars. But of the knowledge which is stored with Him, He may advance, postpone, and confirm whatever He wishes" (Kolaynī). This position was backed by a few Imami theologians. However, the prevalent position, upheld by Shaikh Abu Ja'far Tūsī (d. 460/1067), was that any information about future events given by God to His prophets and imams was conditional (*moštaraṭ*) unless it was stated to be definitely ordained (*maḥtūm*). This position was reflected in a tradition ascribed to Imam al-Šādeq: "God informed Moḥammad of everything that was since the existence of the world and that will be until the end of the world. He informed him of what is definitely ordained and declared everything else conditional (*estatnā 'alayhe fīmā sewāho*)" (Kolaynī). On that basis Imami doctrine holds some of the signs announcing the advent of the Mahdī to be inevitable and others as subject to cancellation by God. A Koranic verse (6:2): "He fixed a (life's) term (*qazā ajalan*) and a term is stated (*mosamman*) in His keeping" was interpreted as distinguishing between a definitely ordained and



a deferrable (*mawqūf*) life span: Traditions described God as keeping a book of future events in which He deletes and confirms in response to prayers. Whatever is recorded in the Omm al-Ketāb (Qur'ān 13:39), however, can never be changed. In the Night of *al-Qadr* in Ramaẓān, the imam is annually informed of all of God's definite decisions for the coming year which had previously been conditional. (See Majlesī, pp. 102, 116-19.)

Imami theologians influenced by the Mu'tazilite concept of an immutable divine essence found it most difficult to accommodate the doctrine of *badā'*. They tended to associate it closely with *nask*, abrogation of divine legislation, which was accepted by all Muslim theologians because of its foundation in the Qur'ān. Ebn Bābawayh (d. 381/991) stresses that *badā'* did not imply a repentance (*nadāma*) of God. Anyone who admitted that God abrogated some of His laws in the best interest of His creatures and that He advanced or deferred the creation and annihilation of anything as He wished affirmed in fact *badā'*. Similarly Abū 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Mofīd (d. 413/1022) identified *badā'* largely with *nask* and maintained that any difference between his doctrine and that of all Muslims in this regard was only verbal. Admitting the ambiguity of the term *badā'* he emphasized that he used it only because it occurred in accepted traditions of the imams, just as he used the anthropomorphic expressions occurring there. Like the latter *badā'* was to be understood metaphorically in consonance with reason. In so far as *badā'* implied the appearance of something unexpected, it meant an event unexpected by man rather than God. It applied to the conditional (*moštaraṭ*) in God's preordination. Šarīf Abū'l-Qāsem 'Alī Mortaẓā (d. 436/1044) considered the *badā'* recognized by the Emāmīya as identical with *nask* and repudiated any other concept of it. Later *kalām* works by Imami scholars inclining to Mu'tazilism generally ignored *badā'*.

The discussion of *badā'* was, however, resumed by the philosophical school of Isfahan in the Safavid age which tended to remove *badā'* from the essence of God locating its causes in the lower levels of the spiritual world. Mīr(-e) Dāmād (d. 1040/1630) held that *badā'* had the same function in temporal creation (*takwīn*) as had *nask* in legislation (*tašrī'*). *Badā'* does not occur in the realm of Ordainment (*qazā'*) nor does it affect God, the pure spiritual beings (*mofāreqāt*), and the backside of the aeon (*matn al-dahr*) which envelops the whole world of existence. Rather it arises in the realm of Premeasurement (*qadar*) and affects the physical world of time and space. Just as *nask* does not signify a cancellation (*raf'*), but rather a discontinuity, in the legislative



process, *badā'* is a discontinuity in the creational process, not a cancellation or annulment. Mīr Dāmād's view was partly adopted and developed by his disciple Mollā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1641), who also confined *badā'* to the realm of *qadar* where, in contrast to the realm of *qazā'*, substantive change, an indeterminacy of God's will, and possibility versus necessity prevail. More specifically *badā'* could result from the imperfect reflection of the divine omniscience in the lower heavenly soul from which the mind of prophets and imams receives its images. These images might change as a result of either changed conditions of the world or the rise of a new idea in the world soul. The resulting *badā'* or *nask* could be loosely ascribed to God since the heavenly souls are servants perfectly obedient to Him (F. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, Albany, 1975, pp. 180-84). Imami scholars have continued to deal with the subject of *badā'* in special treatises until recent times (see *al-Darī'a* III, pp. 51-57).

Imami apologists of *badā'* generally held that Sunni Hadith and theology supported belief in it in substance and merely rejected the term. The Jews, however, were criticized for repudiating the notion of *badā'* itself and for considering *nask*, the abrogation of divine laws, as a form of it. Traditions of the imams interpreted Qur'ān 5:62: "The Jews say: The hand of God is fettered" as referring to their denial of *badā'* and their belief that God had finished with creation (*qad faraḡa men al-amr*) at the beginning of the world and does not bring forth anything new (see Majlesī).

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