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57. Near future, the Rise (Qiyam) of Al-Mahdi

In this chapter one does not read the writer's mind but sees his identity. With whatever weapon available to him, he assaults Shi'ism with a malicious intention. How sad it is to see one, such as him giving in to worldly advantages. However flagitious the intention we shall not despise him. An imperturbable soul gapes for understanding. We shall endure the writer, to pity him in his attempt to plot against Shi'ism.

In my good will I had considered him to be a Shia in the prelude of this treatise, however now I may censure off predilection towards him. He seems not to have any obligation or malevolent ends toward writing the book.

However he cannot be vindicated in not having one. I have met him briefly, and to me, he posed as an ardent believer in the Shia faith and a staunch adheres to the Shia school. I still think good of him and still entertain goodwill towards him. I am willing to conjecture that this man should have written the book in order to echo what the adversaries have said, or make his book popular with those who are researchers in Islam or in Middle Eastern studies so as to show himself disguised as a Muslim bigot.

I have nothing better to say of him. God alone knows; He is All knowing and He knows the secrets hidden in one's heart. Quite likely he wants to please many groups at the cost of the anguish of Shi'ism. We should regretfully admit that a strange and unearthly notion is in vogue and the vogue is effulging among new comers.

Of course, they hold themselves amenable to their conscience; and they only display their own derailment. If they wish to barrow their own faith it will be their own mistake in which they have chosen the smelly stench over the fresh, sweet fragrance of flowers.

The time too is encouraging, and books are being written which could propagate the vilification of a religion rather than a religion itself. To mock faith is to gain a furor. To negate, nullify, and invalidate, is the most befitting style that a writer may choose to follow. Unfortunately writers without a zeal to keep the faith in whatever they are born in or to maintain one at whichever they are, or to seek one instead of posing as nullifidians.

Under a membrane of religion they enter and rob the belief leaving behind traces of doubt. In such a hurricane stands firm the mansion of Shi'ism; the waves ever falling beat themselves upon the tower and return scattered and split, feeble and flaccid having had squandered their strength and lost their prowess.

Therefore, they like the books, which interrogate the essentiality or reality of a religion and debate it on the ground of visible and tangible matter rather than to prove its truth. They reward such a writer and regard such a book. The proof whether that of hearing or that of reason to them is not wholesome. They want doubt – to be said, to be read, and to be believed in. We have no dispute with the writer himself nor do we wish to quarrel him. We leave it to him to mend his mistakes. We have indicated in the proceeding discourses the way and method of analysis.

We face here two angles; One – the wrong conclusions, accusations and wrong allegations are made by a particular man; Two – the way of research that amounts to science or knowledge seems to us personal. So, we cannot take a seat of judgment nor do we like to pass one.

Now we draw the attention of our readers to his statements and afterwards to our answers. Partly his statement runs thus:

Some narrations (i.e. 'Hadith) like that of Abi Hamza he refers to; in which the appearance of the Imam was considered a relief and rescue. However the Imam did not appear which imputed the change of God's mind. At first God has made up His mind then later changed it. He says that it was 'Bada'.

'Bada' means first occurrence of a thing, that is, an 'occurrence' without precedent or without preknowledge or a pre-plan.

He says: "In the principal beliefs of a Shia it is permissible to think that God decides to do something but because of unforeseen circumstances which impede and becomes a hindrance, he of Shia either delays His plan or totally cancels it. The name of this theory is "Bada" means 'Occurrence' without a precedent. He continues that the doctrine of "Bada" was introduced by the earlier leaders of Shia. They brought forward this theory in order to justify or vindicate or extenuate their own defeats or failures in establishing an Islamic just government, which they had claimed to do. Their defeat again was justified to be for their own good. So the writer says similar things.

According to the writer Bada goes a long way to establish that the knowledge of the Imams was parochial and limited. He argues and in his words he seems quite certain that Ismaeel was appointed Imam by his father, Imam Sadiq (as), but died in his father's lifetime. Hence, the Imamate was switched to another son of Imam Sadiq (as) by the name of Kadim.

This was, says the writer a "Bada" which the Imam could not have been known earlier. He appointed his son Ismaeel as Imam but he was not aware that the Imam-hood was to go to Kadim his other son. The Divine decisions too change as the conditions do. The writer even questions the divine knowledge. God

is not omniscient, because at some times His calculations too go wrong.

In the writer's opinion the Shia deans and speakers were having in Divinity the same belief as that held by Motazelis which included the theory of 'Bada' (occurrence). But the 'Occurrence' (the Bada) was regarded by the Motazelis as being true, because God does the best for his creatures. But Ash'aries have repelled and exorcised this theory on the ground that it shows the inability of God to foresee what is to happen. So, God is short of foresight and short of full knowledge. This contradicts the quality of God.

But that the Shias adopts this theory with a great mastery, so as to obviate the contrast of words and adjust this thing without contradicting their own advocacies. The writer here dwells on the theory of Sadduq in the interpretation of creation. The writer has also quoted a narration (Hadith) from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as): "Whoever says that God does a new thing without pre knowledge; I seek distance from him. And he who says that God sometimes does not like His own performance; he has denied God."

The writer has mentioned several other Hadiths, and narration quoted in the Quranic verses, which all prove that God's knowledge is absolute and circles everything and circumferences all. The Shias have always held this belief. It is a false accusation that the Shias regard God as not being firm in His determinations. We exorcise this allegation. The writer claims that the change of Imam-hood from Ismaeel to Kadim still remains an unsettled issue.

Ibn Babway has narrated the uneasiness of Imam Sadiq (as) with regards to the death of his son Ismaeel. He reports the Imam having had said: "Nothing has indicated God's will more evidently than what has happened by the death of my son." He adds: "perhaps he would have been the Imam after me had he lived." This appears as a mistake in translation. His actual words mean this: "Let people know that he is not the Imam after me.

Actually there is no any such word that confirms the Imam-hood of Ismaeel. The thing that is confirmed is his death and the Imamate of Mosa Al-Kadim."

Then the writer narrates the interpretation of 'Bada' from Sheikh Mufid, which is most accurate and conspicuous. Then he writes the statements of Sheikh Tusi. But the pity is, instead of reaching to a conclusion he remarks this; "All these things puts one into hesitation with regards to all the traditions pertaining to the appearance of the Imam."

He paces the paths that of Mufid, and that of Tusi, but did not reach the destination because his fate was to wander. He combines and says: "It seems that to appoint a day of the appearance of the Imam for Shia scholars was less than to appoint a year for this issue of dispute." He perhaps wants to say that they abstain from fixing a month and a day in order to guard themselves against the results. But he goes on further to which we draw our reader's careful attention.

Abi Hamza has narrated from Imam Bagir (as) that, Ali Bin Abi Talib has said that after seventy there will

be relief. Here the writer comments:

Because of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn it was delayed until the year 140. Then when the Shias did not keep it a secret, it was once more delayed. God did not keep the knowledge of its time with any of the Imams.

This narration is discrepant. In the books of 'Rijaal', that is the biography of the narrators, Abi Hamza died in the year 150. Hasan Bin Mahboob who has narrated on the authority of Abi Hamza died in the year 224 at the age of seventy–five. This shows that when Abi Hamza died Hasan Bin Mahboob was only a child of one year. So, this narration is invalid because a child of one cannot possibly tell what the writer wants to be told.

There should be someone else between him and Abi Hamza. Since it is unknown as to who he was we cannot credit this narration. As we said before, the source of news must be accepted and supported by authority. This news is quite vague because there is no support to it.

What appears to us is this; in spite of the innumerous sayings of the prophet (S) and the Imams (Hadith) all of them from reliable sources, and quite clear to us say that the appearance of the twelfth Imam will be unknown and an indefinite length of time will have to elapse. In the horizon near and close there would be no sign to see of his appearance.

There are lectures and speeches by Ali Bin Abi Talib, in which he has elucidly said that the Imam would appear at a time when time will be at the threshold of the end. He has also foretold the ordeals that the believers would have to undergo, and the sufferings they would have to endure. The writer pays no regard to these sayings but sticks to the utterance of one man!

The determination of God varies, differs and changes. If the translation be correct; we take refuge in God alone from this nonsense. Destiny is changeable but not the will of God. Does God make a decision in ignorance, and then turn it down at the time of cognizance and knowledge? Is God unknowing at sometimes and knowing at others? May God forbid. The writer believes such and such a belief suits the writer himself. Shias never believe in such a 'Kufr' pagan-hood.

This conjecture is totally refuted, and rejected by the Shia. Shi'ism is clear, cogent, and candid; and a Shia is clean. God is almighty and far from being what His enemies attribute Him to be. The Shia knows Him that His qualities are perfect and they worship Him accordingly. Qualities of perfection and those, which complete the beauty, are His.

What happened is in the cronical of His cognizance. What occurs is in His knowledge and what will be is in His attention. Time has no province on His Being. He governs time. Everything is circumvented and circumferenced by His Absolute awareness. He knows what each womb hides. To say that He is partly ignorant and partly wise is wrong. Ignorance is for humans.

Whatever we know; was known before by Him. Knowledge is His tribute while to us it is an achievement; knowledge rests with Him whereas it is sought by us. What is sought can amount to more or less, because it depends upon the length of seeking. However God's knowledge is boundless and unlimited.

We need knowledge; we crawl from ignorance towards knowledge; so we leave one to gain another. We are in constant migration from want to need, from less to more, from short to perfection. But perfection is a tribute of God. He never stands needy to seek that which supplies and caters this is the outlook of the Shia towards his God.

Doctrine of "Occurrence without precedent" (Bada) is not a Shia invention nor is it his fancy. This has long ago been waired off and reputed by Shia scholars. If it is to be discussed; it is a factor that of Quranic and Islamic values as well as that of the Unity of God. First of all the Shia neither handled this element justify any defeat, nor to accommodate political end. This theory of "Bada" is a column in the science of divinity. It is not a tool so as to be tightened or loosened as needed. The Holy Quran says;

"If the people of the villages had believed and feared we would have opened over them blessings from heaven and the earth. But they lied and we punished them for what they were doing." (7:96)

Also:

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea by what the hands of the people have earned."(30:41)

"And told your Lord; 'Call me I answer to you." (40:60)

"Repent to your Lord. He is the Forgiver. He sends rains for you through the sky."(11:52)

"And, We promised thirty nights to Moses and completed them by ten." (7:142)

"It's Faith was its advantage had believed a village. But the nation of Yunus when they believed we waived off the punishment from that of shame in the world and left them for a while." (10:98)

"If you are thankful, I, indeed, will increase it for you."(14:7)

"And he who fears God, He makes a way out to him and provides him that he calculates not." (65:7)

"That God never changes His boundaries which He favored upon a nation unless they change what in themselves." (8:53)

And several other such verses. The Shia believes in the absolute power and all comprising knowledge of God. "Nothing is hidden from Him in the earth or in the sky. He is the knower of the conditions of His servants and His creatures – their past, their present and their future are at parity to Him. Nothing hides from Him and never poses a thing to Him from ignorance to knowledge."

These are what Shias believe of God. From the foregoing verses of the Quran this secure is known. Gratitude becomes reason for the increase of the bounties from God. Piety paves a way to come out of the difficulties, and God sends to him Provision from the quarters, which he cannot think of. He sends His rains. He attends the needs at supplication. Faith, repentance, and compunction. He wards off the punishment. His advantage of His bounties causes one to miss His bounties.

To support this there are traditions from both Sunni and Shia sources which abound much. Events too, there are in this respect. Religious programs, instructions, supplication, and dependents on Him. Compunction, alms, establishing link among family relations, gratitude, good hidings, warrant, negative and positive teachings, relieving ones soft and getting rid of self–purity and purgency all cannot be justified on the ground of Bada as the writer has interpreted it. "Bada" means the influence of the things on man's life and his good ending and likewise his bad ending; and not in the sense of ignorance of God.

Sometimes there are causes that result in a thing or reasons that cause a thing. Likewise the causes result in something not to happen, or impede an occurrence. Or its effects further go ahead in advancing negative influence or positive ones. So, the outcome of it comes out strange neither a calculation could anticipate nor could anticipation calculate.

It is an odd cycle of currency of events or the sudden anicut of impediments, obstacles, hindrances – a flux and reflux, a wave and a bed of sea, a vacuum and a tower of equitation, a total obviation and an apparent surprise; all this is a well–organized decree of Divine projected, planned, and programmed for man and man has no say in it.

All these things, effects, reflections, action of the causes and their stagnancy are recorded in the gist of the Book. These things have bearing on the choice of man but occur by the will of God in accordance with the destiny He has dictated. So there is no coercion nor is it a delegated one, but it is in between the two. "Neither a compulsion nor an assignment but something between the two things." God has decreed that the fire burns; every creature thrives in its own line.

But the causes of annihilation and establishment, that is, the essentialities of 'being' for many incidents or many obstacles, which in some cases are materialistic humans, are adhibited to them; these are not called 'Bada'.

The term of Bada implies to the occurrences unusual and uncommon, like charity, supplication, links amidst relatives that influence or happenings or hinder the happenings, and man regards them by judging the visible material causes as a certainty, but occurs the opposite. Both the cases are the same. In one a man notices the flow of affairs and calculates thereon as to where they would end, and makes out the consequences in anticipation. In the second, the flow of affairs gives a man an impression on which he makes up the result in advance; but occurs quite the opposite of what was once a certainty.

Human is not acquainted because it is from an invisible atmosphere. Since man knows not, he tries to

establish arguments whereas from Him is everything. The synopsis of Bada in the sense gives this verse of the Holy Quran;

"And the Jews said that both hands of God are tied. Tied are their hands; they are cursed for what they said; for God's both hands are open." (5:64)

Like the belief of the Jews that Gods hands are tied, cannot do a thing; this is to negate 'Bada', while its correct meaning is that, God's hands are open; His Power is Absolute without stint and with Absolute knowledge.

In order to make it clear we would like to repeat our explanation: Supposingly, the correct meaning of 'Bada' is the sense in which God is taken for granted as being ignorant; and whit does not contradict the idea that God's power is limited, runs opposite to reason.

"He is powerful over everything and aware of everything" (3:29, 6:17, 65:12..)

This seems the best synopsis of 'Bada'. God has so designed things that they possess particular reasons for the being, which is, the How of events, likewise their effects. The hidden causes, which in thousands is the work of God either immediately or otherwise have a bearing on God's decree.

Fire burns – cause and effect is deposited in it; but the efficacy of it that is, the eventuality of it depends upon the will of God. In this respect the invisible causes and absence of matter, also play a part, their influence is effective and for stretching, such a dependency upon God and supplication and so forth. Now the factors among those of material and moral ones superseded the stranger. For example a general corollary of maintaining family links among relatives is longevity. 'Bada' does not depend on material causes.

Moral causes as for God's design are effective. Above all, what God intends – overruns all. Where effect work, it gets ground; where obviation eradicates the track of a thing, it is also due to reasons of its own. The rule of cause and effect is superseded by God's decree. Therefore, the unseen causes become a ground to be believed in.

"Every day He is in business" (55:29)

Which proves this. "To Him is the Command, order and creation. To God is the rule that of present and that the past"; and the continuity of His government and all the qualities of action which should be believed in.

Without His consent, intention, sanction and without His order nothing moves and nothing happens. Our inability to understand Divine affairs and the links therein and therefrom does not change anything. Human beings are unable to understand Divinity. Many have belief in God but they do not have knowledge about Him. God is a reality that remains remote from human. Understanding which gives sanctuary and sanctity to the entity of God.

Minds can not avail the conception although reason provides the proof. It is very knowledge that we are absolutely unable to conceive God. A delicate datum of mysticism it is. 'Bada' could mean obliteration of effect. The inter-links are corollary to God's plan. We see an incident that is saved from happening, a danger that is warned off; is due to causes invisible from us and from the unseen origin.

We can say briefly that it should mean that everything is under God's command. Certainties fail if not concomitant with His Will. This conception is supported by "And with Him is the gist of the Book."

Such interpretations are made by many scholars, which go to prove that Bada's logic and reason does not attribute to God's inability to conceive the haughtier. Shi'ism deals with the fact that man should never forget God, and should not depend on outer elements or visible causes. Man should believe in this verse:

"Say o, God you are the Possessor of things, give the things to whomever you like and take back the things from whomever you want and give respect and vilify, in your Hand is the good; You are powerful over everything." (3:26)

Without such a belief, which is the true reflection of 'Bada', man cannot cultivate wisdom nor can he pace the path of knowledge. To him the ladder of ascendancy to higher altitudes would not be available in which to attain the exalted anagogic that could bring to his sight the divine regions to enjoy.

This belief is natal to him and innate with him. His conscience cannot deny that which his ignorance rejects. In times of dread one remembers God and calls Him by His exalted nouns – Provider (Razzaq), Curer (Shafi), Sufficer (Kafi), and Protector (Hafiz) all these have a bearing on "Bada" "Nothing worships God like Al-Bada"; shows the importance of Bada. The compendium of Bada comes out that it does not limit the power of God, and does not contradict the absolute knowledge of God.

The sense of Bada is misrepresented. It is imputed to the limit of God's knowledge. It is not so. It has been confused with the saying of the Jews. There appear to be two confusions:

First: The compulsion; whatever occurs is with and in the knowledge of God, however the knowledge comes to Him later. Of course, this is not permissible for God's tributes. Everyday occurrences happen that are in His knowledge;

He creates, provides, and create obstacles. All are His performances. Nothing would nor will happen beyond the province of His knowledge and nothing He could do is beyond the limit of His knowledge. This shows, where He has no knowledge, He is ignorant, and where He is ignorant He can do nor create anything. But the qualities of God do not accept such specifications. God is above all these things. His knowledge cannot be limited or His Power.

This is quite a worthy logic that negates the omnipotence of God, and as a result invalidates the very Divinity. We are judging God on our own capacities, which are, of course, limited in knowledge and in

practice – this is a repelled conjecture. The conscience of man knows whether he is bound or free. It is just like when one doubts the heat even though he sees the fire.

Second is; God creates and God annihilates. There is no complexion on the part of God. To obviate the effect or to create a cause is God's will. Whether we agree or not will not be of any difference. Divine's performance is not of His Mercy. God's knowledge is not an obstruction to the flow of events. God knows, and His knowing has no negative effect on the occurrences. Similarly God knows His creation. His knowledge does not stop man from taking choice, or deprive him of the power to choose. This sense is reflected in the following couplet, which is said in reply to Khyam: "Because Divine knowledge is disobedience; Reason rejects this portentous ignorance."

This question comes to mind even while the philosophy of 'Bada' exists and that is; how was it that news and events of the future were related to the prophets and our Prophet (S) as well?

'Bada' has no bearing. The unseen, foretold by the prophets or the Imams is due to the knowledge vested in them by the Divine. It is an accusation on the honesty of the prophets or Imams because what they have foretold came true. Their knowledge of the unseen is the knowledge of God given to them. They saw what they forecast to happen.

What God has informed or taught the prophets, and authorized them to tell, 'Bada' has no province in it. The prophet (S) had informed Ammar that he would be a killed at the hands of tyrants. The Prophet (S) had also foretold of Ali Bin Abi Talib's assassination, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and the events that would ensue. The Prophet (S) had said in advance that Fatimah, his daughter would be the first one to meet him after his death. The Prophet (S) had given predictions of Mahdi and his appearance.

Ali Bin Abi Talib also predicted some future happenings. Sunni authorities have all accepted these predictions given by the Prophet (S) himself, as well as those given by Ali Bin Talib. We cannot say that they said something and something else happened. There are reports and all of them untrue just like one narrated by Abi Hamza. Such fake and false reports abound in History. They cannot be trusted because they are told by one person only. Had it been true others too would have reported it as they could not have remained blind to an event or deaf to a word?

For instance, there was another claim reported by Omar Bin Homaq to this effect, that he had visited Ali Bin Abi Talib and that Ali (as) had been wounded by Ibn Muljim. He told him that he would soon leave him and that in the year seventy there would be havoc and calamity. The narrator proceeds and says that he asked Ali (as) as to whether after the havoc there would be ease and comfort, but Ali (as) condition worsened and he did not reply, Umm Kulsoom cried.

The Imam asked Umm Kulsoom not to cry which was torture to him, and that she did not see what he had been seeing then – Angels that were in the skies, and behind them the prophets and apostles who had come to receive him. And that, the Prophet had held his hands and told him to come, for it was a better place. The narrator adds that hence once more repeated his question which Ali (as) replied that

every calamity is followed by comfort and that there is ease after every havoc. He said: "God eradicates what He desires and establishes what He wants and with Him is the gist of the Book."

As can be observed in this narration the information is watery. Nothing is said directly. The Holy Quran says;

"Indeed, after every hardship there is ease." (94:6)

This report has nothing to do with the appearance of Mahdi. To take this narration for something else is an exaggeration. Here 'Bada' has no part.

There are many such narrations.

I would like to apologize from all dear reader in having dwelt over this subject too long. If anyone would like to learn more about 'Bada' he can refer to my book 'Sir Al- Bada' (Secret of Bada), in which I have gone into much detail – there are other books too useful in this field. What my intention was from this discourse; was to bring to the attention of the writer and the readers that the subject of Bada is not a simple one.

Such a complicated matter cannot so easily be understood, and when a thing is not fully understood it is not wise to give or pass a judgment. Likewise, without proper knowledge information and proofs it would be far from justice to accuse and attack Shia'sm, and it's school of Imamate. My point was just to make the writer understand that he has gone astray.

The material advantage or political end has tempted one to say what he himself knows is untrue, to write what he himself well knows is false, to reject where acknowledgement is due and to acknowledge where it should be repelled, to create doubts if not he himself doubts in the Divinity, in the unseen causes and the invisible universe, in the purity of Imams and the perfectness of their office, in the Absolute tributes of the Almighty shows the shallowness which is in itself a proof that there is no fish because there is no depth.

The mysticism, Islamic issues and the Mahdism all should be whirl off because there is delay in the appearance of Mahdi. The writer should ponder a little and think as to where he stands in relation to his own conscience.

A researcher cannot believe the faith of a sect, or a religion of a multitude or trifles and superfluous 'hear–says'. He should turn that heavy rock which is kept as a door to hide the truth, instead of sweeping the ground only to be blinded by the dust, and to say he sees only dust. This is his own failure not the religion's shortage.

In the end the writer has dwelt on the 'Raj'at' or 'the return' based very much on the narration of Mufazzal Bin Omar. Here we only suffice on three points and will not add to the length of this article.

- 1. The belief in the Imamate of the twelfth Imam, Mahdi, and in his reappearance is not concomitant with the belief in the return (Raj'at) of all dead ones. May be one has belief in Mahdism and not in the 'Raj'at' (the return of the dead ones). On the other hand both these beliefs have a Quranic ground and the Prophet's (S) words. The Imamate of the twelve Imams and the salutary of Mahdism is a thing particular and especial that constitutes a fundamental, and forms a pillar in the principles of the religion. The two matters Mahdism, Imamate and the 'Raj'at' have no interwoven course, nor does one depend on the other for support.
- 2. 'Raj'at' that is the return of the dead back to this world is not a Shia belief or a Shia fundamental; but it is purely an Islamic issue common to Shias and Sunnis as well. The Quranic verses predict it and in this, both sects, Shia and Sunni, equally share.

"And the day we resurrect from every nation groups from those who belied our signs while they despise." (27:83)

"And we will resurrect them not letting an anyone go." (18:47)

That the details of 'Raj'at' was not based on authentic narration are void.

3. The narration of Muffazzal, the base for the writer, is not trusted by many scholars and researchers in the science of traditions 'Hadith', that is, traditionists. Whatever the narrator has said by way of details is unfounded. The book, which the writer is depending on is a book scarcely known among Muslims. It is rarely read by any and seldom could be of use except to only a few, and those few belong to a category, which have no acquaintance with the Shia belief, ideology or Shia logic.

If the writer had read the bottom of page 53 in the first volume of 'Bihar', where this narration is mentioned, he would never have trusted that narration and would never have made it the base and mentioned in his book.

I pray to God the Almighty to bless the researchers and the writers in the toil of their task, and to provide them with a correct outlook, so that deliberation may not blind them nor bigotry persuade them. Indeed, to err is human. But to avoid is also in human power. We should not allow ourselves to impute others' mistakes, deliberations or to attribute to any intention.

We must follow and trust reason and not go astray, we should believe in the decency of reason and truth, to see myself very much in want in this field, I take refuge in God, seeking His help and His guidance. I should here like to offer my apologies, in case, I have been short of politeness. I bank on the funds of their understanding and their forgiveness.

Saafi Golpayegani

Qum, IRAN

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