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Bada'

The unknown author writes as the 2nd proof of Shi'as' Kufr:
"According to Shi'a belief, Allah is subject to Bada. That is to say that the knowledge of Allah changes from time to time because Allah is not fully aware of the causes and their consequences."

COMMENT: Again it is the manifestation of the author's ignorance. First let me make clear what Bada' means:

Every sane person knows that the knowledge of Allah can never be wrong. In other words, there can never be any change in the knowledge of Allah. In contrast to it is the knowledge given by Allah to the angels and the Prophets. Their knowledge, though the most complete and perfect of all creatures, is still incomplete when compared to the knowledge of Allah. Allah in His mercy constantly replenishes, perfects and completes their knowledge.

Also, we know that Allah often puts his servants to test and trial. Again, it appears from many stories in the Qur'an that sometimes Allah, in His mercy and wisdom, reveals only a part of His future plan to the angels or the Prophets concerned. They are informed of His plan to a certain stage, and the knowledge of the later stages is not revealed to them in advance.

Before going ahead, let me give here two examples from the Qur'an.

The Sacrifice Of Prophet Isma'il

Prophet Ibrahim was shown in a dream that he was sacrificing his only son for the pleasure of God. As it was a dream, he must have seen how he was killing Isma'il. He must have seen himself binding the hands and feet of the child, blind-folding himself and then putting the knife on the child's throat and pressing it down. Naturally, he could not have seen who or what was actually being killed as his eyes were covered. By seeing the dream he believed that he was required to kill his son Isma'il in that way. Therefore, he steeled his heart to sacrifice his only child.

The child heard it and prepared himself to be sacrificed in obedience to the command of God. The father and the son both were willing to sacrifice everything in the name of Allah. Prophet Ibrahim did as he had dreamed himself doing: he bound the hands and feet of the child and put him in the required position and, blindfolding himself, put the knife and cut the throat. After removing the blindfold from his eyes, he saw Isma'il smiling and a lamb slaughtered in his place.

Prophet Ibrahim thought that he had failed in his test. But he had clearly done what be had seen himself doing in the dream. Of course, Allah had not informed him of the events of the last stage. For if Ibrahim had known that Isma'il would be saved, or if Isma'il had known that he, would be saved, there would have been no meaning in that test; there would not have been any chance of showing their willingness to sacrifice everything in the name of Allah.

So God showed to Ibrahim in his dream the events to a certain stage but kept him unaware of the final stages; not informing him how the whole episode was going to end. As they did not know the result, Ibrahim and Isma'il were able to show how willing they were to obey the command of God even to the extent of sacrificing their lives and the lives of their dear ones in His name.

If they had known the result from the beginning, the test would have been meaningless.

Tawrah Given To Prophet Musa

Another example concerns Prophet Musa and the revelation of the Tawrah. Prophet Musa was ordered to go to Mount Sinai, fast there for thirty days in preparation for receiving the tablets of the Tawrah. On the thirtieth day he cleansed his teeth and went to Mount Sinai. There he was asked by God as to why did he cleanse his teeth. He explained that as he was coming to a holy place, he thought it proper to make himself neat and clean. God told him that the smell of the mouth of a fasting person was sweeter before God that the smell of musk and ambergris. And then he was told to return to his staying place, and fast for ten days more and then come to Mount Sinai without cleansing his teeth. Thus it was on the fortieth day that he was given the stone tablets of the Tawrah.

Allah knew from ever that Musa would come after cleansing his teeth, and would be asked to fast for ten days more. But neither Musa nor the Israelites had been told about it; nor was Musa told beforehand that he was not to cleanse his teeth on the thirtieth day.

When Allah refers to His knowledge, He describes the whole period of forty nights together:

When we made appointment with Musa for forty nights. Then you (***the Israelites***) ***took the*** (***image of***) ***calf*** (***for your god***) ***after he left you and thus you transgressed.*** [1]

And where He refers to the knowledge of Musa, He mentions thirty days and ten days separately:

And We made an appointment with Musa for thirty nights: and We completed with ten (***more***)***;***

thus was completed the term of his Lord forty nights. [2]

The reason of not giving the advance information is clear from the behavior of the Israelites who because of his ten days delay, discarded the worship of the only and true Allah and started worshipping the image of a calf. The story is given beautifully in the following verses of the Qur'an:

Said God to Musa: "Verily we have tested thy people in thy absence. and the Samiri had led them astray." So returned Musa unto his people angered and sorrowful. Said he, "O my People, did not your Lord promise you a good promise? Did then the promise seem long to you, or did you want the wrath from your Lord should light upon you, that you violated the promise with me?" Said they, "We violated not thy promise of our own accord ....." Then he (Samiri) brought forth for them a calf, a mere body with a lowing sound. Then they said, "This is your god and the god of Musa, but he (Musa) has forgotten" [3]

Just imagine a whole community of several thousand Companions of an ulu 'l–'azm Prophet, in the presence of his successor and vicegerent Harun, leaving the path of true religion and starting idol worship, just because Musa was delayed for a few days! This test of faith could not be conducted if Allah would had told Musa that he was supposed to stay for forty days; or if he had been told beforehand not to cleanse his teeth on the thirtieth day.

This is the meaning of Bada'.

Now where it says that "the knowledge of Allah changes because Allah is not fully aware of the causes and their consequences"?

The name Bada' and its meaning, both are derived from the Holy Qur'an. Allah Ta'ala says:

"and became plain to them from Allah what they had never thought" [4]

This is the meaning of Bada: and the term is applied when Allah Ta'ala makes something happen to the creatures which they had not expected.

The change occurs in the creatures' knowledge, not that of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala.

The writer has quoted a hadith from al–Kafi, from Imam 'Ali Ar–Ridha (a.s.) that: "Allah did not ever send a Prophet but that he should proclaim wine as forbidden, and that he should as well recognize that Allah is subject to Bada' (the proposition that if a new circumstance should intervene it may cause Allah to alter His determination):'

What the hadith in al–Kafi says is simply this:
"Never has Allah sent any prophet except with the prohibition of intoxicant and with the affirmation to Allah of bada'".[5]

The unknown author has given a totally wrong meaning of bad a' in brackets and has put it within the quotation marks to deceive the readers, who might think that the said meaning was a part of the hadith!!

It is for people like him that Allah says in the Qur'an:

Most surely there is a party among them who distort the Book with their tongue that you may consider it to be a part of the Book while it is not a part of the Book.. and they tell a lie against Allah whilst they know.6

If this unknown writer had really seen al-Kafi, he would have read the following ahadith which are recorded before the hadith he has "quoted":
"Abu 'Abdillah (peace be on him) said: 'No Bad a' occurs to Allah in anything but that it was in His knowledge before its occurrence."

"Abu 'Abdillah (a.s .) said: 'Verily, Bada' does not occur to Allah because of ignorance:'
"Mansur ibn Hazim says: 'I asked Abu 'Abdillah (peace be on him): "Can anything happen today which was not in the knowledge of Allah yesterday?" He said: "No. Whoever says it, may Allah humiliate him:' I said: "Tell me, is it not that what has already happened and what is to happen upto the day of resurrection, is all in the knowledge of Allah?" He said: "Certainly, even before He created the creatures."7

Incidentally, this is the belief of many of the Sunnis too, although they do not call it Bada'. It means that they too accept the meaning although they differ from us in the name. For example, look at the following quotations from three Sunni Tafseers:

1. Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi writes under the verse,

Allah erases out whatever He pleases and Writes* (*whatever He pleases*)*: and with Him is the mother of the book.8

"There are two sayings about this verse: First that it is general (encompassing) all things, as the apparent wording demands. They say that Allah erases the sustenance and increases it; and likewise is the case of death and sa'adah (felicity) and shaqawah (infelicity) and Iman and Kufr. This is (also) the belief of (the companion) 'Amr ibn Mas'ud; and (the companion) Jabir has narrated it from the Messenger of Allah (S)

Second: That it is restricted to some things, and there are many aspects of it:
(1) Erasing and writing refers to abrogation of a previous order and bringing another order in its place; ..... (8) It concerns sustenance, and misfortunes and calamities, that Allah writes it in the book and then removes it through invocation and sadaqah (alms), and this contains exhortation to attach oneself exclusively to Allah Ta'ala; .... (10) He erases whatever He pleases from His orders without informing anyone about it, because He has the absolute authority to order as He pleases; and He has the

independent authority to bring into being and to destroy, to give life and death, to make rich or poor, inasmuch as no one of His creatures is appraised of His ghayb."[9]

2. 'Allamah Az-Zamakhshari writes under the verse,

..and no one whose life is lengthened has his life lengthened, nor is anything diminished of his life, but it is all in a book; surely this is easy to Allah.[10]

"It means, we do not increase a man's life or decrease it, but it is written in a book. That is, it is written in the Lawh (Tablet) that: If that man performed hajj or participated in jihad then his life will be forty years; and if he did both, then his life will be sixty years. Now if he combined both and reached the age of sixty then his life was lengthened; and if he did only one (i.e. either hajj or jihad) and did not go beyond forty years, then it means that his life was shortened from the final limit of sixty. And it is this reality which the Messenger of Allah had pointed to in his saying: 'Verily sadaqah and good behaviour towards relatives keep the homes populated and increase the lives."[11]

3. Mufassir al-Qadi al-Baydawi writes under the same verse:
"It is said that increase and decrease in a person's life occurs because of various causes which have been written in the 'Tablet'. For example, it may be written in it that if 'Amr did hajj then his life will be sixty years; otherwise it will end at forty years."[12]

This unknown writer does not know his own religion nor the writings of his own 'Ulama. Leave aside the writings, he cannot even pronounce correctly the names of the books of the Sunni scholars, and he has taken upon himself to write about the Shi'as!

If this unknown author really desires to see what his co-religionists (Ahlul hadith al-Hashawiyyah) believe about the knowledge and decisions of Allah, he should read the report by Abul Fath Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Karim ash Shahristani (467-548 A.H.), quoted on p. 23:
"And a group of Ashabul-had ith al-Hashawiyyah have explicitly declared their belief of Tashbih (i.e. Allah is like His creatures)... So much so that they have said that once Allah's both eyes were ailing, so the angels went to see Him; and that He wept (grieving) on Noah's flood until his eyes were inflamed."[13]

Why did Allah weep on Noah's flood? Was He not aware of the Consequences when He had sent the flood? Should not this unknown writer offer his sympathies to his god as the angels had supposedly done?

1. Quran, 2:51.
2. Quran, 7:142.
3. Quran, 20:85-88.
4. Quran, 39:47.
5. al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, Al-Makatabah Al-Islamiyah. Tehran. 1388. Vol.I p.115.
6. Quran, 3:78.
7. Al-Kafi, p. 115.

8. Qur'an, 13:39.
9. Imam Ar-Razi, Tafsir Mafatihu 'l ghayb.
10. Qur'an, 35:11.
11. Az-Zamakhshari, Tafsir Al-Kashshaf.
12. al-Baydawi Tafsir.
13. Ash-Shahristani, al-Milal wan Nihal printed on the margin of Kitabul-Fasl of Ibn Hazm. p. 141.

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