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Chapter 1: Concerning the Creator, the most Sublime and Majestic

First, the question about the seeing of Allah, Glory be to Him, and His corporealism. Allah, Glory be to Him, says in His noble book: **"The eyes cannot perceive Him" (6: 103); "And there is nothing like Him" (42: 11);** And He says to Moses when he asked to see Him: **"You will never see Me" (7: 143).**

How can you accept traditions narrated in *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim that Allah, Glory be to Him, will manifest Himself to His creatures and that they will see Him as they see the moon on the night of a full moon and that He descends to the sky every night and He puts His foot in hell until it becomes filled and that He reveals his thighs so that the believers can recognize Him? He laughs and is pleased.

Other narrations make Him a body which moves and changes [positions]. [They report] He has two hands, two legs and five fingers. He puts the first of these on the skies, on the second finger the earth, the trees on the third, and on the fourth He puts water and milk and the rest of the creatures on the fifth finger. He has a house which he resides in and Muhammad seeks permission to enter into the house three times. God is above that, He is the Most Exalted and Great, Glory be to Your Lord, the Lord of power, far is He from how they describe Him.

The answer to this lies with the Imams of guidance and lights of those in darkness, i.e., the complete dissociation of Allah, Glory be to Him, the most Exalted from anthropomorphism, resemblance, forms and corporealism (*tajsim*), comparison, (*tashbih*) and limitations (*tahdid*).

Imam 'Ali (A.S.) says about it: "All praise be to Allah, whose praise cannot be described by those who speak, whose blessings cannot be enumerated by those who count, those who try to cannot give Him His due rights, the height of the intellects cannot reach Him, the depths of perception cannot comprehend Him; for His description, no limit has been laid down, no eulogy exists, no time counted and no duration fixed.

Whoever has described Allah has linked Him [with something]; whoever links Him [with something] has

seen Him as two; whoever has seen Him as two has apportioned Him [into parts]; whoever apportions Him is ignorant of Him; whoever is ignorant of Him has pointed at Him and whoever points at Him has limited Him [to a place]; whoever limits Him has numbered Him.

Whoever has said what is He in, has contained Him [in a place]; whoever says what He is on, believes that He is not on something else. He is a being but not through creation, He exists but not from non-existence. He is with everything but not [in the sense of] physical nearness; He is different from everything but not in a physical sense. He acts but not in the sense of movement and tools [of movement], He sees even when there is no creation of His to be seen.”

I draw attention of the young erudite researchers to the treasures which Imam 'Ali (A.S.) has left and which have been compiled in the *Nahj al-Balagha*, that invaluable journey which is excelled only by the Qur'an, and which has, unfortunately, remained unknown to the majority of the people due to the propaganda, threats and obstacles imposed by the Umayyads and 'Abbasids against whoever was connected to 'Ali b. Abi Talib.

I would not be exaggerating if I said that the *Nahj al-Balagha* contains many sciences and admonitions which the people require with the passing of time. The *Nahj al-Balagha* contains the science of ethics and sociology, economics and valuable indications to space and technology, in addition to philosophy and mode of conduct, politics, and wisdom.

I proved that personally in a doctoral thesis which I presented to the University of Sorbonne and which discussed four subjects which I chose from the *Nahj al-Balagha*. If only the Muslims were to accord the *Nahj al-Balagha* a special affection and were to research it in their thesis and theories, for it is a deep sea. Every time a researcher dwells into it he extracts pearls and corals from it.

Remarks

There is a clear difference between the two creeds. The views of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* which maintain [the belief in] corporealism and claim that Allah, Glory be to Him, has a body, form [which is] seen and His shape is in human form. He walks and descends, and He bends His body and does other abominable things. God is above and exalted over these things.

The beliefs of the Shi'as, who dissociate Allah from forms, bodily traits, and corporealism, maintaining the impossibility of seeing Him in this world and in the next, I personally believe that the traditions which the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* base their arguments upon are all [the result of] interpolation of Jews in the time of the companions because Ka'b al-Ahbar, the Jew who became a Muslim in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khattab, inserted these beliefs which the Jews maintain, using some naive companions like Abu Hurayra and Wahb b. Munabbih. Most of these are reported in al-Bukhari and Muslim by Abu Hurayra.

It was stated in a previous discussion how Abu Hurayra did not differentiate between the traditions of the

Prophet and the traditions of Ka'b al-Ahbar until 'Umar hit and banned him from reporting on the question of the creation of Allah and of the [creation of the] heavens and the earth in seven days. As long as the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* rely on al-Bukhari and Muslim and consider them as the most correct books, and as long as they depend on Abu Hurayra to the extent that he has become for the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* the chief narrator of Islam, it is not possible, given this situation, for the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* to alter their beliefs unless they free themselves from blind imitation and return to the Imams of guidance and the family of the chosen one (al-Mustafa) and to the door of the city of knowledge from which knowledge can be attained.

This invitation is not confined to the elders and the teachers but is also [extended to] the erudite youths from the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* and also to [one upon] whom it is incumbent to free himself from blind imitation and to follow proof, proper reasoning and evidence.

Second Question on the Justice of God and Predestination

Allah, Glory be to Him, says in His noble book: ***"And say the truth has come from your Lord, whosoever wishes, let him believe, whosoever wishes, let him disbelieve." "There is no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clearly from error" (2:256). "One who does an atom's weight of good will see it, one who does an atom's weight of evil will see it" (99:7-8). "You are only an admonisher, you do not watch over them" (88:22).***

How can you then accept traditions, reported in *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim, that Allah has preordained the actions of His slaves before He [even] created them? Al-Bukhari has reported in his *Sahih*: "Adam and Moses argued with each other. Moses said to Adam: 'O Adam! You are our father who disappointed us and turned us out of paradise'.

Then Adam said to him: 'O Moses! Allah favored you with His talk (talked to you directly) and He wrote [the Torah] for you with His Own Hand. Do you blame me for an act which Allah had written in my fate forty years before my creation?' So Adam confuted Moses, Adam confuted Moses, the Prophet added, repeating the statement three times."

Muslim reported a similar tradition in his *Sahih*. He reported the Prophet said: "The constituents of one of you are collected for forty days in his mother's womb, after which it becomes a clot of blood in another period of forty days. Then it becomes a lump of flesh, then Allah sends His angels to breath in it the spirit and with instructions concerning four things.

The angel writes down his livelihood, his death, his actions, his happiness and misfortunes. By Him, besides Whom there is no God, if one of you acts like the people of paradise to the extent that between him and paradise remains the distance of a cubit and then the book (of destiny) overcomes him, he begins to act like the people of hell until he enters it. Another one of you performs the acts of the people of hell to the extent that there remains between him and hell the distance of a cubit and then the book (of

destiny) overcomes him, he begins to act like the people of heaven and enters it".

Similarly, Muslim has narrated in his *Sahih* from 'A'isha, the mother of the believers. She said: "The Prophet of Allah was invited to a funeral of a child from the Ansar. I said to him: 'There is happiness for this child who is a bird from the birds of heaven, for it committed no sin nor did he reach the age (of committing sin)'. He said: 'The opposite is the case, O 'A'isha. Indeed Allah has created for paradise its people while they were in their father's loins and He created for hell its people while they were in their father's loins'".

Al-Bukhari has reported in his *Sahih* that a person asked: "O Prophet of God, can the people of paradise be known from the people of hell?" He replied: 'Yes'. He said: 'Even if he didn't work (for it)?' He replied: 'Everyone does what he is created for or what is decreed for him to do'".

Glory and praise be to You, O Our Lord, You are more sublime and more exalted than this tyranny. How can we believe these traditions [which] contradict your dear book in which You have stated, and Your words are true:

"Indeed, God does not do injustice to the people in any way, but the people do injustice to themselves" (10:44); "Indeed, Allah does not do an atom's weight of injustice" (4:40); "Your Lord does no injustice to anyone" (18:49); "God did not do any injustice to them, but they did injustice to themselves" (3:117); "It was not God who did injustice to them, but they did injustice to themselves" (9:70, 29: 40, 30:9); "We did no injustice to them but they did injustice to themselves" (43:76); "That is because of what their hands have brought forth, indeed, Allah does no injustice to the slaves" (8:51); "Whoever does good, does so for his own self, whoever does evil, [does so] against his (self), your Lord does not do injustice to the servants" (41:46).

Just as He has said in the *hadith qudsi*, (sacred tradition) "O My slaves, I have forbidden injustice for Myself, [as] I have also forbidden it upon you, so do not be unjust to yourselves". How can a Muslim who believes in God, His justice and mercy [also believe] that Allah, Glory be to Him, created the creation, and decreed upon some of them heaven and upon others the fire according to His wishes?

[How can a Muslim believe] that He [also] decreed their acts, everyone proceeding towards what he is created for? [How can he accept] these traditions which oppose the noble Qur'an, [and] the state of *fitra* (natural disposition) which God has created the people in, and which oppose sound reasoning and human intuition and basic human rights?

How can we believe in this religion which petrifies human reasoning, [teaching] the human being is a puppet which the hand of fate moves according to its wishes, only to put it into an oven later on? This belief which prevents the human mind from creation, discovery, invention, progress and competition which have brought about such wonderful things; and leaves a person stagnant and contented with the state he is in and with what he has, claiming that he is proceeding towards what has been decreed for him?

How can we accept these traditions which conflict with sound reason and portray a picture that Allah, Glory be to Him, is the Creator, Almighty, Strong and Overpowering and it is up to Him to create weak slaves so as to put them into the hell fire simply because He does what He wills? Do the intelligent beings call this Lord a wise, merciful or just God?

What would happen if we discuss this with non-Muslim erudite scholars and they know that our Lord has these attributes and that our religion has decreed misery upon the people before they were born, will they then accept Islam and enter into the religion in great numbers?

Glory be to You, O Lord, this is false speech which was imprinted by the Umayyads and recorded by them for their own interests, it is up to the researcher to know the secret of that. This is falsified speech because it contradicts Your speech. Far be it from You that Your Prophet should fabricate anything against You which would contradict Your revelation that You sent to him. It is established that he (S.A.W.) said: "If a tradition comes to you from me, then compare it with the book of God. Accept whatever agrees with the book of God and reject whatever contradicts it".

Traditions of this genre are many; they oppose the book of God and reason. They must be rejected, no attention should be paid to them even if al-Bukhari and Muslim have reported them, and they were not infallible persons.

One proof is sufficient for us to refute these invalid claims; this is the sending of the Prophets and Apostles from Allah to His creatures during the entire course of human history so as to rectify the misdeeds of the servants and to explain to them the right path. [It was also done] to teach them the book and wisdom and to give them the good tidings of heaven if they are upright and to warn them of the punishment of God in the fire if they are corrupt.

Amongst the justice and mercy of Allah, Glory be to Him, to His creatures is that He doesn't punish [anyone] until He sends to them a Prophet and establishes for them proofs. The most High has said: ***"One who is guided, is guided for His own self; one who goes astray does so for his own loss, no one bears the burden of another (soul); We do not punish anyone until we send a Prophet" (17:15).***

If the traditions which al-Bukhari and Muslim transmit indicate that Allah has prescribed the acts of His slaves before He created them and He decreed for some of them heaven and for others hell as we have previously indicated and as the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* believe, I say that, if this is true, then the sending of Messengers and the revealing of books is a futile exercise. Allah, the most High and Great, is above all that. They have not credited Allah with His due worth. We should not speak like this about Allah, Glory be to Him, this is a great accusation [against Him].

"Those are the signs of Allah We reveal to You with the truth, Allah does not wish injustice to the universe" (3:108). The answer to this lies with the Imams of guidance and lanterns of those in darkness and the light houses of the *umma*, i.e., the removal of injustice and futility from Allah, the most Glorious.

Let us hear from the door of knowledge, the commander of believers, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (A.S.). He explains to the people this belief which has remained a puzzle to some Muslims who have abandoned the door [of knowledge]. He said (when one of his companions asked him): "Is our journey to Syria by the decree of God and by predestination?"

"Woe to you, Perhaps you take the decree as inevitable and unavoidable destiny. If this was so, then reward and punishment would be in vain, promises and warnings would be meaningless. Indeed, Allah, Glory be to Him, ordered His servants to act according to their free will and prohibited them through warnings. He has made obligations easy, not difficult for them.

For a few good [works], he gives much [reward]. If he is disobeyed, it is not by being overpowered; if he is obeyed, it is not by force. He did not send Prophets for sport; neither did he reveal the book without purpose. He did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain, ***'that is the thinking of those who disbelieve, woe to those who disbelieve due to the fire' (38:27)***. The Imam (A.S.) has spoken the truth, woe to those who ascribe futility and injustice to Allah, [we seek refuge] from His painful chastisement.

It is noteworthy, and the truth dictates, that the *ahl al-sunna wal-Jama'a* should dissociate Allah from futility and injustice. If you were to ask one of them he will never attribute injustice to the Majesty of Allah, Glory be to Him. However, he will find himself at a loss to reject the traditions reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim. So he believes at the same time that they are correct.

Because of that, you will find that when you argue with them logically, he will claim that this is not called injustice on God's part since He is the creator. The creator has the right to do as He wishes to His creatures. He is not asked what He does; [on the contrary] they are to be questioned. If you ask him: "How can God decree on a slave the hell fire before creating him because He has prescribed a wretched state for him, and how can He decree on another heaven before creating him since He has prescribed happiness for him?"

Isn't that injustice on the two of them? [This is] because the one who enters heaven does not do so by his deeds but because of Allah choosing it for him, similarly, the one entering hell, he does not enter it because of the sins he committed but because of what Allah has decreed. Isn't this injustice, does it not contradict the Qur'an?" He will answer you: "Indeed God does what He wishes". You do not understand the contradiction in his position.

This is clear since he has raised al-Bukhari and Muslim to the level of the Qur'an and he says the most correct books after the book of God are al-Bukhari and Muslim. In al-Bukhari and Muslim are [to be found] astonishing, strange and unfortunate things through which the Muslims have been confused.

The Umayyads, and after them the 'Abbasids, have greatly succeeded in spreading their innovations and beliefs, which were in agreement with their barren politics. Their effects remain until today since the Muslims believe that it is the best and greatest legacy they have got because, according to their

understanding, it is the collection of the correct traditions of the Prophet.

If only the Muslims know the extent to which they lied against the Prophet (S.A.W.) due to their political goals, they (the Muslims) will not believe the traditions especially those which contradict the book of God.

As Allah has guaranteed the protection of the noble Qur'an and as it was preserved by the companions who would present it to the Prophet (for checking), they (the Umayyads) could not change or alter it so they turned to the pure *sunna* and they fabricated what they wished and [attributed] to whoever they wished. As they were the enemies of the *ahl al-bayt* [who were] the protectors of the Qur'an and the *sunna*, they invented, for every event, a tradition which they attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W.).

They presented these to the Muslims, maintaining that these traditions are the most correct, to the exclusion of others, so the people accepted them with confidence. They transmitted these, generation after generation inheriting them.

To be impartial, I admit that the Shi'as too became victims of interpolation and misrepresentation of many traditions which are attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W.) or to one of the pure Imams (A.S.), and with the passing of time, the Muslims, whether Sunnis or Shi'as, were not safe from this interpolation and fabrication. However, the Shi'as are to be distinguished from the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* by three things which also distinguish them from other Islamic sects. Their beliefs remain sound and are in agreement with the Qur'an and the *sunna* and reasoning. These three things are:

Firstly: Their devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet. They do not prefer anyone to them and we all know who are the *ahl al-bayt*. [They are those] from whom Allah has removed all filth and purified them completely.

Secondly: The number of Imams of the *ahl al-bayt*. They are twelve in number, their lives and influences remained for three centuries. They agree with each other in all the rulings and traditions. They do not differ in anything which they have transmitted to their partisans and learned followers in all fields of knowledge and information. [They have done so] with proper clarification and with no contradiction in beliefs or in other fields.

Thirdly: Their acknowledgment and acceptance that their books could contain mistakes and correct [things], they do not have a *sahih* book except the book of God which cannot be afflicted by falsehood from any side. It is sufficient for you to know, for example, that the greatest book for them is the "*Usul al-Kafi*".

They say that in it are thousands of false traditions. Due to that, you will find that their scholars and researchers are devoted to research and criticism, they do not accept [anything] except that which is proven by the text and the chain of narrators (*isnad*) and that which does not oppose the Qur'an and reasoning.

As for the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a*, they have restricted themselves to books which they call the *Sihah Sitta* (the six correct books). They argue on the basis that whatever is in them is correct; most of them hereditarily transmit this view without discussing or examining it. If they did so, most of the traditions reported in these books do not stand up to academic inquiry, for in (some) of them is clear blasphemy as they contradict the Qur'an, the etiquettes and actions of the Prophet and degrade his nobility.

For a researcher, it is sufficient for him to read the book of the Egyptian scholar al-Shaykh Mahmud Abu Ra'y "Light on the Muhammadan *Sunna*" to discern the value of the six *Sihah*. Praise be to Allah that many young researchers today are freed from those shackles, they have begun to sift between the thick and thin.

Even many zealous teachers of the *Sihah* today have come to deny them, not because they are sure of the weaknesses of some traditions but because they find in the [books] arguments which the Shi'as present whether it be in the jurisprudential rulings or in the belief in the unseen. There is no ruling or belief which the Shi'as maintain except it being actually present in one of the six *Sihahs* which belong to the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a*.

According to this, some zealous person told me that as long as you believe that the traditions of al-Bukhari are not correct, why do you argue against us by using these traditions? I said: "Not everything in al-Bukhari is correct, neither is everything in it forged, for the truth is true and falsehood is false, it is up to us to sift and choose."

He said: "Do you have a special microscope to distinguish between the correct and false [traditions]?" I said: "I do not have [anything] more than what you have, however, what both the Sunnis and Shi'is agree upon is correct since its authenticity is established by both sides and we make them abide by it as they have accepted it themselves. That which they differ upon, even if it is considered correct by one side, cannot be imposed on the opposite party. The neutral researcher is not expected to accept it and argue based on it since this would be a circular [argument]."

I cite one example so that no problem can remain on this subject and so that the same criticism is not levelled through different means.

The Shi'as claim that the Prophet of God (S.A.W.) appointed 'Ali as the *khalifa* of the Muslims at Ghadir Khum on the 18th day of *Dhu'l hijja* after the farewell pilgrimage. He said at that occasion: "Of whomsoever I am the master, this 'Ali is the master.

O God, befriend one who befriends him, and be an enemy to one who shows enmity towards him." This tradition has been narrated by many scholars of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* in their *Sihah* and *Masanid* and historical works. It is possible for the Shi'as to argue, based on this, with the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a*.

The *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* claim that the Messenger of God (S.A.W.) appointed Abu Bakr to lead the

people in prayers during the sickness [which led] to his death. He said on that occasion: "God and His Prophet and the believers refuse [anyone to lead] except Abu Bakr."

This tradition is not to be found in the Shi'a books. They merely relate that the Prophet of Allah sent for 'Ali, whereupon 'A'isha sent for her father. When the Prophet of God came to know that, he said to 'A'isha: "You are among the females [who tempted] Joseph." He came out to lead the prayer and moved Abu Bakr.

It is neither possible nor fair that the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-Jama'a* argue against the Shi'as based on what only they accept, especially if the traditions are contradictory and distort reality and history. This is because the Prophet (S.A.W.) appointed Abu Bakr to be amongst the army of Usama and to be under his command and leadership. It is well known that the commander of the army in an expedition is the leader of the prayer. It has been historically established that Abu Bakr was not present in Medina at the time of the death of the Prophet.

He was at al-Sanh, preparing to leave with his commander and leader Usama b. Zayd who was hardly 17 years old. Given this situation, how can we believe that the Prophet of God (S.A.W.) appointed him to be the leader of the prayer? Unless we believe the saying of 'Umar b. Khattab that the Prophet was crazy and did not know what he did or said. There is no solution to this impossible [issue]; neither do the Shi'as accept it.

Here the researcher should fear God in his research and should not let his sentiments overcome him so as to deviate from the truth and to follow his desires thereby being led astray from the path of God. It is obligatory for him to accept the truth, even if the truth lies with somebody else. He has to free himself from sediments [of feelings], sentiments and egoism.

He should be among those for whom Allah, the most Powerful and Glorious, has praised in His saying: ***"Give glad tidings to My slaves who listen to the speech and follow the best of it. These are the ones whom Allah has guided; these are the people of understanding" (39: 18).***

It is not correct for the Jew to say that we have the truth and the Christians to claim that the truth lies with us and for the Muslims also to say that the truth is with us whilst they differ in beliefs and practices. It is necessary for a researcher to examine the claims of the three religions and to compare them with each other until the truth becomes clear to him.

It is not proper either for the *ahl al-sunna* to say that the truth lies with them and the Shi'as to claim that the truth is with them alone, whereas they differ in some concepts and rulings. The truth is one and is not divisible.

It is also essential for the researcher to isolate and examine the claims of the two sides and to compare one against the other and for him to rely on his reasoning so that the truth should become clear for him. That is the call of Allah, Glory be to Him, to every sect which lays claim to the truth, for He says: ***"Say,***

bring your proof if you are truthful" (2: 111).

Being in a majority [status] is not an indication of the truth; on the contrary, the opposite is the case. The Most High says: ***"If you obey most of those who are on earth, they will mislead you from the path of God" (6: 116).*** He also said: ***"Most of the people will not have faith, however hard you try" (12: 103).***

Just as the advancement of civilization and technology and wealth is not a proof for the west to be on the truth and the east to be on falsehood, the Most High has said: ***"Do not let their wealth and children dazzle you, for through these, Allah wishes to punish them in this life so that their souls may perish whilst they deny God" (9:55).***

The belief of the ahl al-dhikr about Allah, the Most High

Imam 'Ali says: "Praise be to Allah who knows the hidden secrets of things, and clear signs point to Him. He cannot be seen by the eye of an onlooker, yet the eye of one who does not see Him does not deny Him. The mind that proves His existence cannot perceive Him. He has preceded everything in sublimity; nothing is more sublime than He.

He is so close nothing is closer than Him. His sublimity does not alienate Him from His creation nor does His closeness bring them on an equal level to Him. He has not informed the intellect about the restrictions to His attributes, and He has not prevented it from knowing what is essential to know about Him. The signs of existence bear testimony to Him to the extent that the mind which denies Him also believes in Him. Allah is beyond what those who liken Him to other things or those who deny Him, say about Him.

Praise be to Allah, for whom one condition does not precede another so that He may be the first before being the Last or that He may be manifest before being hidden. Apart from Him, everything called unique is [actually] little. Apart from Him, everything honorable is meek, everything powerful is weak, and every owner is a slave.

Apart from Him, every scholar is a student, everyone with ability is disabled and weak, every listener other than Him is deaf to light voices while loud voices make him deaf and distant voices are remote from him.

Apart from him, everyone that sees is blind to hidden colors and delicate bodies. Apart from Him, every manifest thing is hidden; every inner thing apart from Him is manifest. He did not create what He did to strengthen His authority nor due to fear of time nor to seek help against an equally aggressive partner or hateful opponent. Rather, all creatures are nurtured by Him and are His humble slaves.

He does not enter into anything so that it can be said that He exists therein, nor is He separated from anything so that it can be said that He is away from it. The creation that He created or the administration

of what He controls did not tire Him. No disability overtook Him for what He created. No misgivings ever occurred to Him in what He ordained and resolved. His verdict is certain, His knowledge definite, His governance overwhelming. Even in distress, He is the centre of Hope and, despite all the bounties, He is to be feared.”

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