

Sermon 186: He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His Oneness....

About the Oneness of Allah. This sermon contains principles of knowledge which no other sermon contains

ومن خطبة له (عليه السلام)

في التوحيد

وتجمع هذه الخطبة من أصول العلوم ما لا تجمعه خطبة

He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His Oneness, nor does he who likens Him grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect (of a cause). He works but not with the help of instruments. He fixes measures but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition.

مَا وَحَدَّهُ مَنْ كَيْفَهُ، وَلَا حَقِيقَتَهُ أَصَابَ مَنْ مَثَلَهُ، وَلَا إِيَّاهُ عَنَى مَنْ شَبَّهَهُ، وَلَا صَمَدَهُ مَنْ أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ وَتَوَهَّمَهُ. كُلُّ مَعْرُوفٍ بِنَفْسِهِ مَصْنُوعٌ، وَكُلُّ قَائِمٍ فِي سِوَاهُ مَعْلُولٌ. فَاعِلٌ لَا بِاضْطِرَابِ آلَةٍ، مُقَدَّرٌ لَا بِجَوْلِ فِكْرَةٍ، غَنِيٌّ لَا بِاسْتِفَادَةٍ.

Times do not keep company with Him, and implements do not help Him. His Being precedes times. His Existence precedes non-existence and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses it is known that He has no senses. By the contraries in various matters it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture and heat that of cold.

لَا تَصْحَبُهُ الْأَوْقَاتُ، وَلَا تَرْفِدُهُ الْأَدَوَاتُ، سَبَقَ الْأَوْقَاتَ كَوْنُهُ، وَالْعَدَمَ وُجُودُهُ،
وَالْإِبْتِدَاءَ أَزْلُهُ. بِتَشْعِيرِهِ الْمَشَاعِرَ عُرِفَ أَنْ لَا مَشْعَرَ لَهُ، وَيَمْضَادَتِهِ بَيْنَ الْأُمُورِ
عُرِفَ أَنْ لَا ضِدَّ لَهُ، وَيَمُقَارَنَتِهِ بَيْنَ الْأَشْيَاءِ عُرِفَ أَنْ لَا قَرِينَ لَهُ. ضَادَّ النُّورَ
بِالظُّلْمَةِ، وَالْوُضُوحَ بِالْبُهْمَةِ، وَالْجُمُودَ بِالْبَلَلِ، وَالْحَرُورَ بِالصَّرْدِ.

He produces affection among inimical things. He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things and separates things which are joined together. He is not confined by limits, nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves.

The word 1 "mundhu" (i.e. since) disproves their eternity, the word "qad" (that denotes nearness of time of occurrence), disproves their being from ever and the word "lawla" (if it were not) keep them remote from perfection. Through them the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes.

مُؤَلَّفٌ بَيْنَ مُتَعَادِيَاتِهَا، مُقَارِنٌ بَيْنَ مُتَبَايِنَاتِهَا، مُقَرَّبٌ بَيْنَ مُتَبَاعِدَاتِهَا، مُفْرَقٌ بَيْنَ
مُتَدَانِيَاتِهَا. لَا يُشْمَلُ بِحَدٍّ، وَلَا يُحْسَبُ بَعْدٌ، وَإِنَّمَا تُحَدُّ الْأَدَوَاتُ أَنْفُسَهَا، وَتُشِيرُ
الْأَلَاتُ إِلَى نَظَائِرِهَا، مَنْعَتَهَا «مُنْذُ» الْقَدِّمَةِ، وَحَمَّتَهَا «قَدُّ» الْأَزَلِيَّةِ، وَجَنَّبَتْهَا
«لَوْلَا» التَّكْمِلَةَ. بِهَا تَجَلَّى صَانِعُهَا لِلْعُقُولِ، وَبِهَا امْتَنَعَ عَنِ نَظَرِ الْعُيُونِ.

Stillness and motion do not occur in Him, and how can that thing occur in Him which He has Himself made to occur, and how can a thing revert to Him which He first created, and how can a thing appear in Him which He first brought to appearance. If it had not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed Eternal.

If there was a front to Him there would have been a rear also for Him. He would need completing only if shortage befell Him. In that case signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of signs leading to Him. Through the might of His abstention (from

affectedness) He is far above being affected by things which affect others.

لَا يَجْرِي عَلَيْهِ السُّكُونُ وَالْحَرَكَةُ، وَكَيْفَ يَجْرِي عَلَيْهِ مَا هُوَ أَجْرَاهُ، وَيَعُودُ فِيهِ مَا هُوَ أَبْدَاهُ، وَيَحْدُثُ فِيهِ مَا هُوَ أَحْدَثُهُ؟! إِذَا لَتَفَاوَتَتْ ذَاتُهُ، وَلَتَجَزَّأَ كُنْهَهُ، وَلَا مَتْنَعَ مِنَ الْأَزْلِ مَعْنَاهُ، وَلَكَانَ لَهُ وَرَاءَ إِذْ وَجِدَ لَهُ أَمَامَ، وَلَا لَتَمَسَ التَّمَامَ إِذْ لَزِمَهُ النُّقْصَانُ. وَإِذَا لَقَامَتْ آيَةُ الْمَصْنُوعِ فِيهِ، وَلَتَحَوَّلَ دَلِيلًا بَعْدَ أَنْ كَانَ مَدْلُولًا عَلَيْهِ، وَخَرَجَ بِسُلْطَانِ الْأَمْتِنَاعِ مِنْ أَنْ يُؤَثَّرَ فِيهِ مَا يُؤَثَّرُ فِي غَيْرِهِ.

He is that which does not change or vanish. The process of setting does not behove Him. He has not begotten any one lest He be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten otherwise He would be contained within limits. He is too High to have sons. He is too purified to contact women. Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity. Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter Him.

الَّذِي لَا يَحُولُ وَلَا يَزُولُ، وَلَا يَجُوزُ عَلَيْهِ الْأَفْوَلُ لَمْ يَلِدْ فَيَكُونَ مَوْلُودًا، وَلَمْ يُولَدْ فَيَصِيرَ مَحْدُودًا، جَلَّ عَنِ اتِّخَاذِ الْإِبْنَاءِ، وَطَهَّرَ عَنِ مُلَامَسَةِ النِّسَاءِ. لَا تَنَالُهُ الْأَوْهَامُ فَتُقَدَّرُهُ، وَلَا تَتَوَهَّمُهُ الْفِطْنُ فَتُصَوِّرُهُ، وَلَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْحَوَاسُ فَتُحَسِّسُهُ، وَلَا تَلْمِسُهُ الْأَيْدِي فَتَمْسُهُ. وَلَا يَتَغَيَّرُ بِحَالٍ، وَلَا يَتَبَدَّلُ فِي الْأَحْوَالِ، وَلَا تُبْلِيهِ اللَّيَالِي وَالْأَيَّامُ، وَلَا يُغَيِّرُهُ الضِّيَاءُ وَالظُّلَامُ،

He cannot be described through (the possession of) parts, or through limbs and organs, or by an accidental quality or alteration or portions. It cannot be said that He has a limit or extremity, or end or termination; nor do things control Him so as to raise Him or lower Him, nor does anything carry Him so as to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things or outside them. He conveys news, but not with the tongue or voice. He listens, but not with the holes of the ears or the organs of hearing. He says, but does not utter words.

He remembers, but does not memorise. He determines, but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without any sentimentality (of heart). He hates and feels angry without any painstaking. When He intends to create something He says *"..Be" and it is'* (2:117), but not through a voice that strikes (the ears) is that call heard. His speech is an act of His creation. His like never existed before this. If it had been eternal it would have been a second god.

وَلَا يُوصَفُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْأَجْزَاءِ، وَلَا بِالْجَوَارِحِ وَالْأَعْضَاءِ، وَلَا بَعَرَضٍ مِنَ الْأَعْرَاضِ، وَلَا بِالْغَيْرِيَّةِ وَالْأَبْعَاضِ. وَلَا يُقَالُ: لَهُ حَدٌّ وَلَا نِهَآيَةٌ، وَلَا انْقِطَاعٌ وَلَا غَايَةٌ، وَلَا أَنَّ الْأَشْيَاءَ تَحْوِيهِ فَتُقَلِّهُ أَوْ تُهْوِيهِ، أَوْ أَنَّ شَيْئًا يَحْمِلُهُ، فَيُمِيلُهُ أَوْ يُعَدِّلُهُ. لَيْسَ فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ بَوَالِجٍ، وَلَا عَنْهَا بَخَارِجٌ. يُخْبِرُ لَا بِلِسَانٍ وَلِهَوَاتٍ، وَيَسْمَعُ لَا بِخُرُوقٍ وَأَدْوَاتٍ، يَقُولُ وَلَا يَلْفِظُ، يَحْفَظُ وَلَا تَحْفَظُ، وَيُرِيدُ وَلَا يُضْمِرُ. يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى مِنْ غَيْرِ رِقَّةٍ، وَيُبْغِضُ وَيَغْضَبُ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَشَقَّةٍ. يَقُولُ لِمَا أَرَادَ كَوْنَهُ: (كُنْ فَيَكُونُ)، لَا بِصَوْتٍ يَفْرَعُ، وَلَا بِنِدَاءٍ يُسْمَعُ، وَإِنَّمَا كَلَامُهُ سُبْحَانَهُ فَعَلَّ مِنْهُ أَنْشَاءً وَمِثْلَهُ، لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ قَبْلِ ذَلِكَ كَائِنًا، لَوْ كَانَ قَدِيمًا لَكَانَ إِلَهًا ثَانِيًا.

It cannot be said that He came into being after He had not been in existence because in that case the attributes of the created things would be assigned to Him and there would remain no difference between them and Him, and He would have no distinction over them. Thus, the Creator and the created would become equal and the initiator and the initiated would be on the same level. He created (the whole of) creation without any example made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of any one out of His creation for creating it.

لَا يُقَالُ: كَانَ بَعْدَ أَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ، فَتَجْرِي عَلَيْهِ الصِّفَاتُ الْمُحَدَّثَاتُ، وَلَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ فَصْلٌ، وَلَا لَهُ عَلَيْهَا فَضْلٌ، فَيَسْتَوِي الصَّانِعُ وَالْمَصْنُوعُ، وَيَتَكَافَأُ الْمُبْتَدِعُ وَالْبَدِيعُ. خَلَقَ الْخَلَائِقَ عَلَى غَيْرِ مِثَالٍ خَلَا مِنْ غَيْرِهِ، وَلَمْ يَسْتَعِنْ عَلَى خَلْقِهَا بِأَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ.

He created the earth and suspended it without being busy, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars, protected it against bendings and curvings and defended it against crumbling and splitting (into parts). He fixed mountains on it like stumps, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow and opened wide its valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer from any frailty, and whatever He strengthened did not show any weakness.

وَأَنْشَأَ الْأَرْضَ فَأَمْسَكَهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ اسْتِغَالٍ، وَأَرْسَاهَا عَلَى غَيْرِ قَرَارٍ، وَأَقَامَهَا بِغَيْرِ قَوَائِمٍ، وَرَفَعَهَا بِغَيْرِ دَعَائِمٍ، وَحَصَّنَهَا مِنَ الْأَوْدِ وَالْأَعْوِجَاجِ، وَمَنَعَهَا مِنَ التَّهَافُتِ وَالْإِنْفِرَاجِ، أَرْسَى أَوْتَادَهَا، وَضَرَبَ أَسْدَادَهَا، وَاسْتَفَاضَ عُيُونَهَا، وَخَدَّ أَوْدِيَّتَهَا، فَلَمْ يَهِنْ مَا بَنَاهُ، وَلَا ضَعُفَ مَا قَوَّاهُ.

He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through his knowledge and understanding. He has power over every thing in the earth by virtue of His sublimity and dignity. Nothing from the earth that he may ask for defies Him, nor does it oppose Him so as to overpower Him. No swift-footed creature can run away from Him so as to surpass Him. He is not needy towards any possessing person so that he should feed Him. All things bow to Him and are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or His harm. There is no parallel for Him who may match Him and no one like Him so as to equal Him.

هُوَ الظَّاهِرُ عَلَيْهَا بِسُلْطَانِهِ وَعَظَمَتِهِ، وَهُوَ الْبَاطِنُ لَهَا بِعِلْمِهِ وَمَعْرِفَتِهِ، وَالْعَالِي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا بِجَلَالِهِ وَعِزَّتِهِ. لَا يُعْجِزُهُ شَيْءٌ مِنْهَا طَلَبُهُ، وَلَا يَمْتَنِعُ عَلَيْهِ فَيُغْلِبُهُ، وَلَا يَفُوتُهُ السَّرِيعُ مِنْهَا فَيَسْبِقُهُ، وَلَا يَحْتَاجُ إِلَى ذِي مَالٍ فَيَرْزُقُهُ. خَضَعَتِ الْأَشْيَاءُ لَهُ، وَذَلَّتْ مُسْتَكِينَةً لِعَظَمَتِهِ، لَا تَسْتَطِيعُ الْهَرَبَ مِنْ سُلْطَانِهِ إِلَى غَيْرِهِ فَتَمْتَنِعَ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ وَضَرِّهِ، وَلَا كُفُوًا لَهُ فَيُكَافِئُهُ، وَلَا نَظِيرًا لَهُ فَيُسَاوِيهِ.

He will destroy the earth after its existence, till all that exists on it will become non-existent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is no more marvelous than its first formation and invention. How could it be otherwise? Even if all the animals of the earth, whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men -- all jointly try to create (even) a mosquito they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and return dazzled and weary, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realising that they are too weak (even) to destroy it!

هُوَ الْمُفْنِي لَهَا بَعْدَ وُجُودِهَا، حَتَّى يَصِيرَ مَوْجُودُهَا كَمَفْقُودِهَا. وَلَيْسَ فَنَاءُ الدُّنْيَا بَعْدَ ابْتِدَاعِهَا بِأَعْجَبَ مِنْ إِنْشَائِهَا وَاخْتِرَاعِهَا، وَكَيْفَ وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعَ جَمِيعُ حَيَوَانِهَا مِنْ طَيْرِهَا وَبِهَائِمِهَا، وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ مُرَاحِهَا وَسَائِمِهَا، وَأَصْنَافِ أَسْنَاخِهَا وَأَجْنَاسِهَا، وَمُتَبَلِّدَةِ أُمَّمِهَا وَأَكْيَاسِهَا، عَلَى إِحْدَاثِ بَعُوضَةٍ، مَا قَدَرَتْ عَلَى إِحْدَاثِهَا، وَلَا عَرَفَتْ كَيْفَ السَّبِيلِ إِلَى إِيجَادِهَا، وَلَتَحَيَّرَتْ عُقُولُهَا فِي عِلْمِ ذَلِكَ وَتَاهَتْ، وَعَجِزَتْ قُوَاهَا وَتَنَاهَتْ، وَرَجَعَتْ خَاسِئَةً حَسِيرَةً، عَارِفَةً بِأَنَّهَا مَقْهُورَةٌ، مُقَرَّةٌ بِالْعَجْزِ عَنِ إِنْشَائِهَا، مُذْعِنَةٌ بِالضَّعْفِ عَنِ إِفْنَائِهَا!

Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allah the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else beside

Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before its production: without time or place or moment or period. At this moment, period and time will not exist, and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allah, the One, the All-powerful. To Him is the return of all matters. Its initial creation was not in its power; and the prevention of its extinction was (also) not in its power. If it had the power to prevent it, it would have existed for ever.

وَأِنَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ، يَعُودُ بَعْدَ فَنَاءِ الدُّنْيَا وَحَدَهُ لَا شَيْءَ مَعَهُ، كَمَا كَانَ قَبْلَ ابْتِدَائِهَا، كَذَلِكَ يَكُونُ بَعْدَ فَنَائِهَا، بِلَا وَقْتٍ وَلَا مَكَانٍ، وَلَا حِينَ وَلَا زَمَانَ، عُدِمَتْ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ الْأَجَالُ وَالْأَوْقَاتُ، وَزَالَتِ السَّنُونَ وَالسَّاعَاتُ، فَلَا شَيْءَ إِلَّا الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ مَصِيرُ جَمِيعِ الْأُمُورِ، بِلَا قُدْرَةٍ مِنْهَا كَانَ ابْتِدَاءُ خَلْقِهَا، وَبِغَيْرِ امْتِنَاعٍ مِنْهَا كَانَ فَنَائُهَا، وَلَوْ قَدَرَتْ عَلَى الْامْتِنَاعِ لِدَامَ بَقَاؤُهَا.

When He made anything of the world, the making of it did not cause Him any difficulty, and the creation of anything which He created and formed did not fatigue Him. He did not create it to heighten His authority nor for fear of loss or harm, nor to seek its help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent with its help, nor for the extension of His domain by its help, nor for boasting (over largeness of His possession) against a partner, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek its company.

لَمْ يَتَكَأَدَهُ صُنْعُ شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا إِذْ صَنَعَهُ، وَلَمْ يُوَدِّهِ مِنْهَا خَلْقُ مَا بَرَأَهُ وَخَلَقَهُ، وَلَمْ يَكُونْهَا لِتَشْدِيدِ سُلْطَانٍ، وَلَا لِخَوْفٍ مِنْ زَوَالٍ وَنُقْصَانٍ، وَلَا لِلِاسْتِعَانَةِ بِهَا عَلَى نِدِّ مَكَاثِرٍ، وَلَا لِلِاحْتِرَازِ بِهَا مِنْ ضِدِّ مُتَاوِرٍ، وَلَا لِلِازْدِيَادِ بِهَا فِي مُلْكِهِ، وَلَا لِلْمُكَاتَرَةِ شَرِيكَ فِي شَرِكِهِ، وَلَا لِوَحْشَةٍ كَانَتْ مِنْهُ، فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَسْتَأْنِسَ إِلَيْهَا.

Then after its creation He will destroy it, but not because any worry has overcome Him in its upkeep and administration, or for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, or for the cumbrousness of anything over Him. The length of its life does not weary Him so as to induce Him to its quick destruction.

But Allah, the Glorified, has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command and perfected it with His power. Then after its destruction, He will resuscitate it, but not for any need of His own towards it, nor to seek the assistance of any of its things against it, nor to change over from the condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from the condition of ignorance and blindness to that of knowledge and search, nor from paucity and need towards needlessness and plenty, nor from disgrace and lowliness towards honour and prestige.

ثُمَّ هُوَ يُفْنِيهَا بَعْدَ تَكْوِينِهَا، لَا لِسَامٍ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ فِي تَصْرِيفِهَا وَتَدْبِيرِهَا، وَلَا لِرَاحَةِ
وَاصِلَةٍ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَا لِثِقَلِ شَيْءٍ مِنْهَا عَلَيْهِ. لَا يُمَلُّهُ طُولُ بَقَائِهَا فَيَدْعُوهُ إِلَى سُرْعَةٍ
إِفْنَائِهَا، لَكِنَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ دَبَّرَهَا بِلُطْفِهِ، وَأَمْسَكَهَا بِأَمْرِهِ، وَأَتَقَنَهَا بِقُدْرَتِهِ. ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهَا بَعْدَ
الْفَنَاءِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَاجَةٍ مِنْهُ إِلَيْهَا، وَلَا اسْتِعَانَةَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْهَا عَلَيْهَا، وَلَا لِانصِرَافِ مَنْ
حَالَ وَحُشَّةٍ إِلَى حَالِ اسْتِنْسَاسٍ، وَلَا مِنْ حَالِ جَهْلِ وَعَمَى إِلَى [حَالِ] عِلْمٍ
وَالْتِمَاسٍ، وَلَا مِنْ فَقْرٍ وَحَاجَةٍ إِلَى غِنَى وَكَثْرَةٍ، وَلَا مِنْ ذُلٍّ وَضَعَةٍ إِلَى عِزٍّ وَقُدْرَةٍ.

Alternative Sources for Sermon 186

- (1) Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, I, 138;
- (2) al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid*, 96, 320, 324;
- (3) al-Saduq, *al-Amali*, 205;
- (4) al-Mufid, *al-Irshad*, 131;
- (5) al-Mufid, *al-Ikhtisas*, 236;
- (6) Sibte ibn al-Jawzi, *Tadhkirah*, 157;
- (7) al-Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijaj*, I, 299;
- (8) al-Murtada, *al-Amali*, I, 103.

1. The meaning is that the sense for which the words "mundhu", "qad" and "lawla" have been formed is opposed to the attributes of "Ever", "Eternal" and "Perfect". Therefore, their application to anything would prove that they have come into existence from non-existence and are imperfect. For example, "mundhu" is used to denote time as is "qad wujida mundu kadha" (this thing is found since so-and-so). Here a time limit has been stated, and anything for which a limit of time can be described cannot exist from ever or for ever. The word "qad" shows (indicating the present perfect tense) the immediate past. This sense also can apply to a thing which is limited in time. The word "lawla" is used to denote the negation of something in another thing, as "ma ahsanahu wa akmalahu lawla annahu kadha" (how handsome and perfect it would be if it were so-and-so). Therefore, the thing for which this word is used would be in need of others in handsomeness and perfection, and would remain deficient by itself.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-186-he-who-assigns-him-different->

conditions-does-not-believe