

Home > Ain-Al Hayat, The Essence of Life > Chapter 2: The Fundamentals > The Tenth Fundamental:
The Omnipotent

Chapter 2: The Fundamentals

The First Fundamental: Knowledge of The Exalted Creator

The most important fundamental in all Prayer is the knowledge and understanding of the Creator. The understanding of the Creator is directly related to the degree of Faith the believer has in his Creator. Where there is no faith, all worship is futile. To the contrary, worship sans Faith is subject to Retribution.

What is faith?

Faith is the belief in the Existence of the Creator and His Attributes--- the Positive Attributes (*Sifat al-thubutiah*) and Negative Attributes (*Sifat al-Salbiah*). The other important components of the believer's faith are the Belief in Allah's Justice, His being One and Only God, the Belief that Muhammad (S) is the Last and Final of the line of the Prophets and acceptance of the Twelve Imams (as) from the Family as his Vicegerents; the belief in *Mi'ad Jismani* (The Hereafter- when people will be raised before the Day of Judgment for questioning). Belief in the existence of the Heaven and the Hell and the concept of Reward and Retribution too are important aspects of the Faith.

The Second Fundamental: The Faith

Faith is the Eternal Wealth for a believer. Loss of Faith can be the Eternal Curse for a believer. Satan is the veritable consumer of Faith and Actions because the thief always aims at the most precious object of his target. When he fails in that attempt, he contents himself with burgling less important things.

For example: Creating doubts about Belief in the Existence of Allah in the minds of the believers, Satan thus consigns them to the Hell. To save themselves from this eventuality, the believers should steadfastly adhere to the *Safina-tu-najat* (the Ship of Deliverance). Those who are dedicated to the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* will board this ship to find cure for all the ailments, it is the succor for the drowning and the guarantee against the machinations of the Satan. Unless a person gets a clear understanding of Allah, it may be difficult for him to understand the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as). For understanding of Allah

there are two definite requirements:

1. Knowledge of the Certainty of Existence

This is evidenced by examples. The knowledge of Certainty of Existence is in the nature. Therefore the unbelievers were not asked to believe in Allah, but they were asked not to believe in a comity of deities.

It is narrated that the Prophet asked an Arab as to how he identified Allah? He said, "I saw the droppings of the camel on the way and knew that some camels had passed by. I saw the foot- marks of men and knew that some men had used the path. We have such vast land, the sky the sun, the moon and the stars. Don't they indicate that there must be someone who has made them?"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that someone wanted him to give an explanation about the existence of Allah. The Imam (as) asked him, "Have you ever been on any voyage at sea?"

The man replied in the affirmative.

The Imam (as) rejoined, "Have you come across a storm while on board a ship?"

The man replied in affirmative.

The Imam (as) said, "Did you get a feeling at that time that there must be some power that could come to the rescue of the ship?"

The man replied in the affirmative.

The Imam (as) rejoined, "Yes! That Power is Allah!!"

But the atheists and agnostics who raise objections at every step and find fault with the creations of Allah are like the blind men who have been left in a palatial mansion to partake of the dainty food laid out for them. Some blind persons trample the bread, some other person puts his foot in the bowl of the soup. The blind persons

complain of the host being careless in spreading the food in a wrong place. They are, no doubt, blind to the fact that they have been provided with the best of food in the best of surroundings.

2. Idrak al-Kunha

The second type of Knowledge of the Existence of the Creator *Idrak Al-Kunha* (that means, Realization of the Reality) of His Person. This is impossible for the human intellect. When a human being is not capable of understanding its own personality, how could he delve into understanding the Personality of the Creator! But it is the human intellect that has created innumerable sects of various beliefs.

Some sects have concluded that Allah is a handsome youth and others believe that He is old with a

flowing white beard! Some others say that He is everywhere and everything is Him!! There are also those who believe that Allah has transmigrated or penetrated into the bodies of those excellent in piety!!!

Therefore, we have to bear in mind Allah's clear instruction in this matter, "Whatever the Prophet (S) gives, take it." The Prophet (S) has said, "I am leaving behind two weighty things amidst you; one is the Qur'an and the other my *Ahl-ul-Bayt*. Follow them and you shall find Deliverance." We have to follow these and should not use our intellect in this matter!

In short, the perfect in piety is one who says about the person of the Creator that he has not understood Him. Because understanding Him consists in knowing that no one has the faculty to understand Him. Therefore one who says that he has not understood his Creator, he is the one who has understood Him!

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) was once asked about the Unity and the Existence of Allah. He said, "Allah was aware that in times to come there will be people who will think and discuss about Him. Therefore He revealed the verses of *Ikhlas* and *Hadeed*. One should not go beyond these in interpreting the existence of Allah, lest they go astray."

It is narrated that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "The Twelve Infallible Imams (as) are the Chapters of Knowledge and Understanding of the Creator. By following them one can achieve the path of guidance and understanding. If they were not there, none would have understood Allah. Through them Allah has completed the *Hujjat* (Proof)." There are several traditions of the Prophet (S) and the Masoomeen in this regard.

But Satan has led astray many intellectuals who have used their thinking instead of depending on the dictates of Allah, the Prophet (S) and the other Infallible persons. With their fertile imagination they gave Allah several forms. The Platonic Mystics (*Ulema al-ashraqi?*) and Scholastic Philosophers (*Mutakallemeen*) differ very much in their concept of Allah. Some of the *Mutakallemeen* believe that Allah has a body and is like the radiant light.

The Sects of Sufis

Some Sunni sufis say the face of Allah is like a simple youth. Some others say that He is like an old man with flowing silvery beard. Some others say that Allah has a huge body and is sitting in the firmament. Some Sufis, Mutakallemeen and the Christians believe in the transmigration or penetration of God. While the Christians restrict the phenomenon of the penetration only to Jesus, the other two groups believe that Allah will penetrate into anyone who has reached the height of piety. Because of this belief Allah has termed the Christians unbelievers (*Kuffar*) in the Qur'an and Has cursed them.

There is another sect of the Sufis that is worst than the believers of transmigration. They believe in the Unity of Allah. They believe that Allah is everything and everywhere. He can come in different forms and shapes. Sometimes he is Zaid, at others he is Amr, sometimes He assumes the shape of a cat or a dog or anything else. Some Hindus too have a similar belief. The book of Brahmins, *Jog*, is on the same

subject.

The Sufis value this book very much. They think that this book is better than the theological works of the *Shi'as*. Even some *Shi'as* think that the Sufis are right. In their ignorance they are accepting these beliefs and rendering themselves unbelievers (*Kafirs*). Only those who remain steadfast in following the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* are on the Right Path.

Most of the Sufis are from the *Sunni Ashari* sect. But there is a lot of diversity in their beliefs and ways. If in some book it is said that *Abu Hanifa* advises praying in a particular way, then another says that *Sufian Suri* advises another method.

Kulaini narrates through an authentic source that one day *Sadeer* was on his way home from the mosque and Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) was proceeding towards the mosque. The Imam held *Sadeer's* hand and turning towards Kaaba said, "O *Sadeer!* People are required by Allah to come to his House, the Kaaba, circumambulate it and express their allegiance to the Imam (as) as Allah says in his Holy Book, 'I shall forgive one who repents, adopts the Faith, does good deeds and is guided'"

Then the Imam (as) pointed towards his chest and said, "O *Sadeer!* Getting guided means loving, obeying us. I shall show to you the pilferers of the Faith. Look there! (At that moment *Abu Hanifa* and *Sufian Suri* were sitting in the mosque. The Imam pointed his finger toward them.). These are the bandits of the Faith and have not received Guidance from Allah! If these persons stay at their homes and send the people to us, then we shall guide them on the path of the Faith and instruct to them the teachings of Allah and his Prophet (S)."

Another reliable source narrates that an inhabitant of Mecca said that one day *Sufian Suri* asked him to accompany him to the presence of Imam Muhammad bin Ja'far (as). We reached him at a time when the Imam was about to mount his steed. *Sufian* said, "Kindly repeat to us the Sermon delivered by the Prophet (S) in the Mosque of Kheef." The Imam (as) said, "I am now proceeding on some work. I shall relate to you the Sermon some other time." *Sufian* said, "In the name of your relationship with the Prophet (S), I implore you to relate the Sermon now."

The Imam (as) dismounted from the horse and related the Sermon and *Sufian Suri* started writing it down. *Sufian Suri* read back what he had noted. Then the Imam (as) mounted the horse and went on his way. Then the person asked *Sufian* to give him the manuscript that he wanted to see the contents.

After reading the contents, the person told to *Sufian Suri*, "By Allah! The Imam (as) has made something obligatory on you that the Prophet (S) has said, 'Anyone who has three qualities shall never be subject to malice and guilty of breach of trust: 1. Righteous deeds that are done in the way of Allah, 2. Being a well-wisher of the Imam (as) and the Believers. 3. Living amicably with the Muslims.'" He asked *Sufian Suri*, "Who are the Imams (as) whose obedience is obligatory?"

Sufian replied, "Muawiah, Yazeed and Marwan bin al Hakm!" The person also asked *Sufian*, "Which is

the group of Muslims with whom people are required to live amicably?” Sufian Suri replied, “The Sunnis of Marjia Sect (*Who say that a person who missed prayers and fasts, is not aware of the method of the Bath of Purification, demolishers of Kaba, have done incest with their own mothers, have a Faith equivalent to the Faith of angels Gabriel and Mekail*) or Sunnis of the Sect of Qadaria (*who say Allah cannot do everything that He wishes*) or the *Kharijites*, the Dissenters (*who call Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) an unbeliever and curse him*).”

Sufian added, “However what is the opinion of the Shi’as and their Imams (as) about this tradition?” The person said, “The Shi’as believe that it is obligatory to obey Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) and the Infallible Imams of the Ahl-ul-Bayt!” Hearing this Sufian Suri tore the paper on which he had noted the Sermon of the Prophet and said, “Don’t mention to anyone what transpired today!”

It is a truth that such hostility and denial of the Holy Imams (as) was practiced not only by Abu Hanifa but also by many who were from the earlier period. Mention of these will be made at appropriate places in this book

In the book, *Futuhah*, it is said, *Subhan min azhar al ashiya wa Huwa aina* (Pure is the Allah who has manifested things, and the things are Him.”

At another place in “*Khusoos al Hakm*” it says, “Prophet Noah (as) made a mistake as the Prophet. His people were righteous and were drowned in the sea of Piety”. The author writes at several places in the book that people should neither adhere to any particular religion nor deny any religion. They should not deny even the idols because they are the manifestations of god. God is present in everything. Allah had not given ascendancy to Harun (as) over the cow worshippers because He wanted to be worshipped in every manifestation. In the eyes of Allah there is nothing in the world that isn’t a deity. The author says that the Christians are termed unbelievers only because they believe in the Unity of God with the proviso that Jesus too is God.

Some people came to Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) and said that they considered him god because of his attributes. Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) was furious at this blasphemous thought and ordered them to be drowned in a deep well. Imagine, when calling such a revered personality god is blasphemy, then how grave it is to term dogs, cats and stones as gods. One will wonder when some people believe that god is in everything and everything is god!

Therefore some wrongly believe that a person who reaches a stage that he sees Allah in everything, he is exempt from offering prayer. The Verse in which Allah exhorts people to offer prayers, “*Wa aabudu Rabbaka hatta yatiakal eqeen*, and worship thy Lord till death catches up with you”, they interpret the following way to suit their belief, “and worship thy Lord till you have faith in His Unity”. Maulana Hilli says in his book, *Kashf al Haq wa Nahj al Sidq*, “Allah doesn’t penetrate into anything, because if this premise is accepted, then Allah will be bound to a place and His Attribute is that He is everywhere and not subject to any restriction of time or place.

Discussion On The Concept Of Transmigration Or Penetration

One sect of Sunni Sufis believes that Allah penetrates into the Sufis of high piety. Therefore people visit the mausoleums of saints. Sometimes Sufis claim that Allah and all things are united and at others they say that Allah has transmigrated or penetrated into things. The prayer of these sects is singing, clapping, whistling and dancing.

They do this, despite the fact that Allah has forbidden such activities. Allah addresses the unbelievers thus, "*Wa ma kaana salatuhum indal baithe illa makaan wa tasdeeyatan*– their (meaning the hypocrites) prayer and supplication is nothing more than whistling and clapping near the Kaaba." What more impunity one can expect from the people that when Allah expresses His displeasure at the actions of the hypocrites, they perpetrate them.

I have experienced once that some Sufis came to the mausoleum of Imam Husayn (as). at dusk. Everyone of them offered prayers excepting one who sat quietly. Similarly at the *Isha* prayer, everyone joined the congregation barring the one who sat quietly at the earlier prayer. I asked one of the Sufis as to why that person didn't join the prayers. He replied, "The person is not obliged to pray because he has reached Allah. For those who have reached Allah, there is no curtain between them and Him. Then why should they have the curtain of Prayer between them and Him. Prayer is the *Haajib* (the janitor or the door keeper) between the Creator and the Creation!"

O wise people! Evaluate their beliefs and way of worship! Imagine their excuse of foregoing the Obligatory Prayers! The height of their perfidy is that such persons are considered the *Abdals* (the saints)!

The Sufis write down their thoughts in verse and their followers read them, sing them, do clapping in unison, jump and dance! They term these acts as prayers. More about them later on!!

The Third Fundamental: The Stages Of Understanding

There are several stages of the knowledge and understanding of the Creator. The Understanding progresses and reaches the next higher stage with the development of the degree of Faith in the person. Khawaja Naseeruddin Tusi says that the Stages of Understanding of the Almighty are like the stages of knowledge about fire.

The first stage of knowledge about the potentiality of the fire is through the word of mouth. We are told that fire is that which will burn anything it comes in contact with. Similarly, the knowledge about the Existence of the Creator is through the word of mouth. One hears from others that there is Allah, and he believes. This is the Faith through Emulation (*Taqleed*).

The second stage of knowledge about the fire is that when a person notices the smoke, he believes there is some fire in the neighborhood. Similarly, the second stage of the Knowledge of Existence of

Allah is through the signs one gets to confirm the Belief.

The third stage of knowledge about fire is when someone personally experiences nearness to the source of the fire. This Third Stage of the Knowledge about the Existence of the Creator is the privilege of those pious persons who derive contentment from the Light in their hearts about the Knowledge of the Existence of the Almighty Allah. They wonder at experiencing the Lord's creations around them and rivet their attention on Him.

The fourth stage of understanding about the fire is that a person dares to come in personal contact with the fire. This stage of Understanding Allah is when the pious persons whose dedication has reached such heights that they are ready to sacrifice themselves (*fanafillah*) in the way of the Creator. This stage is reached after achieving highest degree of Devotion.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (S):

“When a person offers optional Sunna prayers (*Nawafil and Awaqib*) after the Mandatory (*Faraed*) prayers, Allah says that He makes him such a friend that whosoever is the friend of that person will in turn be Allah's friend. Then the eyes of the person through which he sees will not remain his own, but they will be Allah's eyes. Similarly the ears through which he hears, will be Allah's ears. His tongue which he uses to express his thoughts will be Allah's tongue.”

Hearing this Holy Tradition, the Sufis have drawn wrong conclusions and thus sprang up several orders of these groups. If they had heard the interpretation of the Tradition from the Perfect in Knowledge (*Rasiqoon fil Ilm*) this confusion would not have resulted. The true purport of this Tradition is that when a pious person gets deeply engrossed in the thought and love of Allah, the Almighty becomes his tongue. He sees and hears what Allah approves of.

The Ranks Of The Knowledge Of The Creator

Perhaps the meaning of this Divine Tradition (*Hadith al-Qudsi*) is that when a devout person attains a high degree of piety, Allah becomes his eye. It would mean that whatever his eye sees, the person visualizes the attributes of Allah in that. The person doesn't focus his eyes on anything that Allah forbids to be seen. He doesn't hear anything that Allah does not want him to hear. The Tradition can also have the meaning that every person, by nature, prefers to use his limbs and senses as per his own wish, but a pious person subjects all his actions to the express wish of Allah. The love of Allah dominates all other thoughts in his psyche.

There is another very appropriate meaning of the Tradition. May Allah make those who have gone astray accept this interpretation and mend their ways.

Allah has created many instincts and faculties in the human beings. He, the Creator, has exhorted the people to use them the way He wants them to use. And then Allah promises:

﴿وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ﴾

“Whatever you spend in the Way of Allah- He gives you more in return” (34:39)

Or, He will give you such bounties that might not be similar to those given earlier. Therefore, wealth or property that might be lost by way of fire or theft, or is spent in charity or for a good cause, a person would get immense benefits in the Hereafter. These rewards would be unimaginably more than the satisfaction one would derive from acquiring and hoarding the transitory material things of this world. Here, a verse from the Holy Qur’an is quoted:

﴿يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ﴾

“They strive to spend in the way of Allah and are not afraid of taunts.” (5:54)

One must spend in the way of Allah. Those who are not worried about the concerns of the worldly people and boldly act in the way of Allah, shall be rewarded handsomely in the Hereafter.

Amir’ul-Mu’mineen and his companions used to spend their energies in the Obedience and Prayer of Allah. Allah endowed them with such energy that their strength was far more than usual for the humans. Therefore Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) has said, “I have not broken and lifted the gate of the fort of Khaiber with my human strength. It was the Divine Strength that helped me achieve the impossible.” This is such a strength that can bring together the earth and the sky without moving a hand. This strength or faculty does not vanish with the demise of the persons. Because they don’t do anything without the wish of Allah, they become subservient to the Wishes of Allah.,Who infuses His wishes in their hearts and all their actions are according to the plans of Allah.

There is an oft- repeated tradition that says, “The heart of a pious person is held in the two fingers of Allah.” It means that the heart of the person is in the control of Allah and He turns the subject whichever way He wants. The verse of *Ad-dahr*, “*Wa ma tashaoona illa ainyasha Allah*, which has been revealed in the praise of the *Ahl al-Bayt* also means that they don’t intend to do anything unless Allah wishes them to do it.

Therefore, the pious cry for long hours in fear of Allah and spend the whole nights in prayers without any concern of losing their eyesight with such heavy stress. They care only for their subservience to their Friend, that is, Almighty Allah. Therefore, Allah endows them with a special light that never fades and they are able to witness things that are beyond the ken of the mortal eyes!

Here we quote another Tradition, “Be aware of the intellect of the *Mu’min* that he sees with the light provided by Allah. Allah opens the springs of eloquence to him without his knowledge. He benefits

others from these springs as he derives benefit for himself. The springs have no end.”

“Reaching this stage, he hears, sees, moves and speaks only with My strength.”

It is evident therefore that this august status is reserved for those who are the Closest to Allah and not for all and sundry. The meaning of the Tradition *Taqilaqu baqlaq Allah* too means that one should endeavor to acquire manners like those of Allah Almighty. It will be like tempering the iron in the fire. The iron becomes red hot like the fire, although it is not fire itself but has acquired the colour and effect of the fire.

Similarly Allah endows some of His attributes to men in lesser or higher degree. But the knowledge of men is infinitesimal when compared to the Knowledge of Allah. When one acquires this meagre knowledge, he becomes vainglorious. When Allah bestows some power to an individual and he becomes a king, he proudly proclaims, *lemanil malak al youm!*– ‘*who is the king today!!* There are two sides to the human excellence. One is positive and the other is negative. The positive excellence of a person is from and with the Consent of Allah and the negative excellence is an aberration of the person’s own thinking process.

May Allah protect the *Shi’as of Muhammad’s Progeny* from the machinations of Jinn and men and they keep steadfast on the Right Path.

When one becomes a true bondsman of Allah, his heart will be the Abode of Allah, then all machinations of the evil against him will go in vain. A true lover of Allah like Abu Dharr shall always be remembered with respect. However much Yazid felt that he had subdued Husayn; Husayn will be eulogized from the pulpits and Yazid cursed till the end of this world.

The Fourth Fundamental: Transitory Nature Of The World

The previous tradition also is indicative of the fact that this material world is transitory and only Allah the Creator is Immortal. He was there when there was nothing, He shall always be there when nothing will remain of the world. The people of all the faiths who believe in the coming of the Prophets, subscribe to the belief that everything in this world is transitory and only God (*Allah*) is immortal.

But some philosophers, who hold the view that all the living things will perish and the universe with the land and the skies shall remain forever, are unbelievers in the eyes of the Faith of Islam. All the Revealed Books have asserted again and again about the Day of Reckoning when the earth, the sky, the mountains and the stars would break into smithereens and fly around like shreds of paper. Barring God (*Allah*) *nothing will remain in the universe.*

The Fifth Fundamental: About The Individuality Of The Creator

Faradiat or the Individuality of Allah means that He is One, Incomparable and Unique. He is *Wahdahu la Shareek*, that is, He is Alone and Has no Equals. If there was any other god, he would certainly have introduced himself, and would send his laws and assertions through messengers. Further there would have been conflict in the Universe. One god would order something and the other god would ask for the contrary. If both the gods issued the same edicts then what would be the need for having more than one!

“He has always been there and shall always be there.” This expression does not mean that Allah is there ever since the Universe has come about. But it means that even when the Universe was not there, Allah was there and He will be there even after the Universe is destroyed.

There are several traditions of Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) and Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as), which can be summarized as follows:

“The beginning of Faith consists in knowledge about Allah and its height is in the belief that Allah is incomparable. The claim of incomparability of Allah is at its height when the person accepts the Attributes and the Individuality of Allah as one. Because if the Individuality and the Attributes are different, then there can be a doubt of duality and it is impossible that the Creator will have an equal.”

The Attributes Of Allah

Reliable traditions indicate that on the ninth day of the demise of the Holy Prophet (S), Amir’ul-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (as) delivered a sermon, the initial part of it was as follows:

“Praise be to Allah who has rendered the wisdom incapable of finding about His Individuality and Attributes. Allah is One, Is not of many and Is Incomparable. He is away from everything. This distance is not because of location but is because of Excellence and Purity. He is Omnipotent and in Control. These Attributes are not such that they are there in the things but with His own Knowledge and Potentiality, He knows about everything. He does not have to physically look at anything. It is believed that He has always been there. But this doesn’t mean that His always having been there is time bound. He is in fact since the beginning and shall always be there. His not being there is impossible.”

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, “Allah is Ancient (*Qadeem*), One (*Wahed*) and Eternal (*Samad*). His Attributes are Unique and there cannot be another equal of His.”

The narrator asked the Imam (as), “In Iraq there is a sect of people who believe that the Attribute with which Allah listens and that with which He sees are different.”

The Imam (as) replied, “They are liars and apostates that they compare the Attributes of Allah with human attributes. Allah has His own way of hearing and looking at things.”

It is said that Imam Ar-Ridha' observed that one who has such beliefs is a polytheist and not our Shi'a. Allah is Omniscient and Omnipotent; He sees and He hears.

Explanation of A Point

It is said that during the battle of the Camel (*jamal*), an Arab approached Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and asked him, "What is the meaning of Allah being One?"

The companions of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) chided him for coming to ask a question when they were in the midst of a battle.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) calmed them down and said that the very purpose of the conflict was on the point of accepting the Unity of Allah.

Then he addressed the questioner thus, "O person! You have said that Allah is one. It has four meanings. Out of those four meanings, two are impossible for the Individuality of Allah and the other two are definite. The first two that are impossible are that we call Allah the First because if we call Him the First then there must be another like Him and that would be heresy; as the Christians say that God is the third of the three gods.

The meaning of the second impossibility is considering Allah as an object. For example Zaid is called one of the men. If anyone calls Allah as one of several gods, it would be heresy. The other two meanings are definite. The first is that He is Unique in His Excellence and there is none other equal to Him or His partner. The other definite meaning is that Allah has no definite physical personality."

Here it is worth mentioning that philosophers and thinkers deliberated for thousands of years to arrive at the truth but our Imams (as) have provided much clearer explanation of the facts in their traditions. However people don't give serious thought to this matter.

The Sixth Fundamental: The Immortality Or Eternity Of Allah

Allah is Immortal and Eternal. Some people think that since Heaven and Hell shall always be there, therefore immortality does not remain the Unique Attribute of Allah because the inmates of the Heaven and the Hell too will remain there eternally. This is not true, because the Immortality of Allah is attributed to His own wish while the longevity of the inmates of the Heaven and the Hell is not of their own choosing. The Immortality of Allah is His Attribute and cannot be changed and the common creatures have had different shapes at different times- they had been dust, water, flesh, bones etc. They never remained in one physical condition, while Allah is the same for ever, as ever!

The Seventh Fundamental: The Creator Of The Universe

This tradition also points towards the fact that Allah is the Creator of the land and the sky and everything that is found on them. Some philosophers believe that the *Uqool al-Ashara* are the creators of these. Some *Ghaali* (exaggerating) Shi'as too believe that the creators of the land and the sky are the Holy Infallibles. But according to the traditions of the Imams (as), such belief is absolutely wrong.

Yasir asked Imam Ar-Ridha' (as), "O son of the Prophet! What is your opinion about *Tafweed* (delegation)?" The Imam replied, "Follow the precepts communicated by Allah through the Prophet. The other attributes of Creation and Sustenance, He has not delegated to anyone."

Abu Hashim Jafferi narrates that Imam 'Ali ar Ar-Ridha' (as) was asked by the people his opinion about the belief of the *Ghillat* (the exaggerators) and the *Uquool al-Ashara*. The Imam replied, "Believing anyone other than Allah as capable of creating the land and the sky is sheer heresy. Friendship with such persons, eating with them and having marital relations with them is strictly forbidden."

In the book, *Ehtejajaat*, 'Ali bin Ahmed Qummi writes that some Shi'as had a difference of opinion that some said that Allah has given to the Imam the power to create and provide sustenance. Others were denying this. Muhammad bin Othman Umri, who was a deputy of the Twelfth Imam (as), wrote a submission (*Areeza*) seeking the Imam's clarification. The Imam's reply was that it is only Allah who creates and provides sustenance. It is another matter that in response to the supplications of the Holy Imams he creates and provides sustenance as per their wishes."

The Eighth Fundamental: Creation of The Firmament

Reliable traditions indicate that the skies are not close to each other and the distance between two skies could be the equivalent to travelling for a period of five hundred years. All the skies are replete with angels. The angels possess light bodies. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said that if an angel descends to the earth, there won't be any space left there for anything else. The number of the angels is more than all the living creatures put together, and in size there is no creature larger than some them.

Some angels are so huge that the distance between their ears and the shoulders is equivalent to the distance that can be traveled in seven hundred years. It is mentioned in the Traditions that there are seven skies and also there are seven earths in the firmament. There are so many creations in these skies and the earths that it would be impossible to have a count of them.

About The Angels

The philosophers say that the angels are the figment of imagination of the present level of intellect and the psychic condition of the humans. But endorsing this opinion of the philosophers would be tantamount to denying the phenomenon supported by Divine Revelations and would go in the realm of *Kufr*.

There is no other creation in the universe larger in number than the angels and their bodies too are larger than those of any other creatures excepting the souls (*Rooḥ*). Bin Babawiya narrates through reliable sources that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) was asked about the Omnipotence of Allah.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), after praising the Beneficent and Merciful Allah, said that Allah has created an angel who, when it descended on the earth, would find the entire area of the planet insufficient for itself. Certain other angels are so large that they occupy the entire space of the sky. There are also angels that are so large that the sky comes up to their waist. Some others are standing in the atmosphere and the earth is near their ankles.

Then the people asked Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) about the curtains that are over the skies. He replied that the First Curtain (*Hijab al-Awwal*) has seven strata. Every curtain has the width equivalent to the distance traveled in 500 years and the intermediate distance between any two curtains is the same as mentioned above. In the space between any two curtains there are 70,000 angels and the strength of every individual angel is more than that of all the men and *Jinns* put together.

Above the curtains there is *Sirr al-Awqat al-Jalal*. These are seventy thousand curtains and each curtain has 70,000 angels and there is a distance of 500 years of travel time between any two curtains. Then there is the *Saradaq al-Izzat*, *Saradaq al-Kibria*, *Saradaq al-Azmat*, *Saradaq al-Quds* and *Saradaq al-Jabroot*. After these there are the *Saradaqs of Noor al-Abyad*, *Saradaq al-Wahdaniyat*. After all these, there is *Hijab al-Aala*, the Superior Curtain.

'Ali bin Ibrahim narrates from Jafer al-As-Sadiq (as) that the Imam has said that Allah has created the angels differently. The Prophet of Allah has seen that the Angel Gabriel had six hundred arms and on his calf there are pearls as if they were drops of moisture on the green verdure. When the Prophet saw Gabriel he found him positioned between the sky and the earth. When Allah orders the Angel Mekail to come to the earth, he will have one of his feet on the Seventh Sky and the other he puts on the earth.

Then Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, Allah has created such angels that half their bodies are made of ice and the other half of fire. The supplication of these angels is, 'O Almighty Allah, Who has created compatibility between the fire and the ice! Keep us steadfast in our prayer!'

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) also said, "The angels do not eat or drink nor do they mate for procreation. Their lives are like the breeze of the Firmament. There are certain angels who will remain in the position of *Ruku* (Obe'Isance) for ever. Some others are in the state of *Sajda* (Prostration).

Every night 70,000 angels descend to the earth and circumambulate the *Kaaba*, offer their respects to the Prophet (S), to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and then visit the Mausoleum of Imam Husayn (as) and circumambulate there. Early in the morning they ascend into the Firmament. Thus every morning a fresh batch of angels descends to the earth and this practice goes on an on.

There is a reliable tradition that someone asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "Are the angels more in

numbers than the humans?”

The Imam replied, “By Allah who has the authority over my life, only the angels that are on the sky are more in number than the particles of dust on the earth. There is no place in the sky where there are no angels. They are all engrossed in the worship of Allah. There is no plant or a clod on the land where the angels are not there who have been appointed as guardian angels (*Muwakkil*) for that spot. They report to Allah every day about the goings on there. It is true that Allah knows everything but the angels, through the love for the *Ahl alBayt*, wish to have the opportunity of going closer to the Almighty.

Bin Babawiyah narrates through a reliable source that Zainab Attarah went one day to the Holy Prophet (S) and inquired about the excellence of Allah’s creations.

The Prophet (S) replied, “The earth, with all its contents, and in relation to the one below it, is like a ring or a bangle lying in a forest. These two, in relation to the third, are also looking the same way. The situation is similar till the seventh earth”

Then the Prophet (S) recited the following verse:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ﴾

“Allah created seven skies and similarly the earths.” (65: 12)

These seven strata of the earth, on the back of a fowl, with their contents look like the rings lying in the forest. One side of the fowl is in the east and the other in the west. This fowl is located over a wide rock that in relation to the earths, with all their contents, appear like rings lying in a forest. The wide rock is lying on back of a fish, and in relation to its width, all the things lying on it look like rings in a forest. The fish is located in a dark sea and in relation to its width, the things lying on it seem like rings in a forest. And below this sea is the *Sara* (The Nether Region). In relation to the Nether Region all other things look like rings lying on the floor of a forest.

The Holy Qur’an says:

﴿لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى﴾

“It is for Him what all is in the skies and on the earth and what all is in between them and what is in the Nether Region.” (20:6)

All these things, in relation to the first sky, are like circles or rings that are lying in a forest. This

sequence repeats itself till the seventh sky. And all these earths and skies, in relation to the *Dariya al-Makfoof*, are like circles and the *Dariya al-Makfoof* in relation to *Koh al-Tagrak* too is like a circular ring. Then all these strata, in relation to the *Hijab al-Noor* are also like rings. There are seventy *Hijab al-Noor* that are so bright that one cannot look at them with the eyes. All these things are like circles in front of the *Kursi* (The Chair).

The Qur'an says:

﴿وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ﴾

“His Chair is more extensive than the skies and the earth.” (2:255)

The Ninth Fundamental: The Meanings Of Tender And Omniscient

The word *lateef* (tender) is used in four contexts:

Lateef could be a thing that is very thin and not visible to the eyes. This word can be an attribute for Allah that the human eyes cannot see Him.

The art'Isan who manufactures delicate things too is referred to in the Arabic lexicon as *lateef*. Because Allah is the Creator of all the things, the smallest like the mosquito and the largest like the mountains, and is not visible to the humans, He is referred to as *Lateef*.

The one who has profuse knowledge of *lateef* (delicate) and *dageeq* (minute) things is called *lateef*.

The word *lateef* has its root in the word *lutf* that means kindness. Therefore, one who is kind is referred to as *Lateef*.

The word *Khabeer* is used in two contexts:

1. *Khabeer*, the pronoun, that means one who is aware of everything.
2. *Khabeer*, in the sense of one who informs or gives information.

The attributes of Allah, including those of *Lateef and Khabeer*, are not ancient that they existed before Allah. Otherwise Allah would not be the Creator of all these attributes. All these Attributes are specifically His and He has selected them at His own pleasure. His creatures, in times of need, call Him with his Attributes, like, *Sami* (One Who Hears), *Baseer* (One Who Sees), *Qadir* (One Who is Empowered), *Hai O Qayyum* (One Who is and shall Be), *Lateef O Khabeer* (The Delicate and the Omniscient) etc.

Some misguided critics say that the human beings too use these names, and therefore they become sharers in these attributes with Allah. This is a misnomer, because despite men being called with these names, the meaning and context is absolutely different. For example, Allah is addressed with the name *Aalim* (meaning the learned).

In the case of Allah the learning is not acquired learning. In the case of humans, learning is acquired. When a man is called *aalim*, he would have gone through the hard process of acquiring knowledge starting from the stage when he was *jaahil* (unlettered) to the stage when he is accepted as a learned person (*the aalim*). And, if for some reason he loses his learning, he might revert to the status of being called a *Jaahil*.

The Tenth Fundamental: The Omnipotent

Every thing in the Universe, small, big, elementary or complex owes its existence to Allah. There is nothing about which Allah has no knowledge. All the philosophers and thinkers agree on one point that Allah has knowledge of and control over everything. He has control over the Universe and Has the Power to create any number of such entities.

But, because he is the Ultimate Philosopher–Thinker, He, perhaps, thought to create the only existing Universe. He could have created the human being with more than two arms, but His Expedience was that provision of only two arms to man was sufficient for his physical existence. In any of Allah’s creations there is no pronounced defect. Allah, Who has created the Universe with the utterance of the monosyllable, *Kun* (let there be!), and the Universe came about.

Imam Ja’far As–Sadiq (as) narrated that when prophet Musa (as) went to the Mount of Toor he requested Allah to show to him His treasures.

Allah said, “O Musa! My treasure is in the fact that I ask for anything to happen, saying *Kun*, and that thing happens instantaneously.

Doubting Allah’s Omnipotence is heresy for a believer. The Prophet of Allah (S) has said,

“O Abu Dharr! After understanding Allah and acquiring Faith in His Attributes, one has to bear witness that I am the Prophet of Allah (S) sent by Him to give to the people the Message about the Bounties in store for the believers and extreme retribution for the unbelievers and heretics.

“Allah has given to me the beacon with which I guide people away from the darkness of ungodly ways and heresy.”

One of the most important pillars of Islamic Faith is bearing witness that Muhammad Sal Allaho wa Alaihi wa Sallam is the Prophet of Allah. This shall be discussed at some length in the next chapter.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/ain-al-hayat-essence-life-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/chapter-2-fundamentals>