





Mulla Asghar Memorial Series

THE ROLE OF AHLUL BAIT

(A.S.)
IN PRESERVING THE
TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

Allamah
Syed Murtadha Askari

Translated from Arabic by
Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer

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By
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Mulla Asghar Memorial Series of Books - *The Legacy lives on.....*

*Jab tak mai' jiu', kihdmate qaum karta rahu' mai',
Maut aa'e to ya rab, esi khidmat me maru' mai'.*

Marhum Mulla Asghar has left an unforgettable mark on the entire Shii Community in this era. A multifaceted person of this caliber, with such an impact, only emerges but once in a lifetime. As a brilliant communicator, he eloquently presented the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) to the masses at large.

Acclaimed by his contemporary scholars, his deep insight into the subjects of Fiqh, theology, philosophy, theosophy as well as contemporary issues was legendary. As an educator par excellence, his ability to inform and educate his students on Islamic concepts was truly enlightening. Through his thought provoking writings and inspiring speeches countless minds have been set thinking, and many lives have been changed. His impact on our society is nothing short of phenomenal and one that has been instrumental in shifting paradigms.

I hope that this Commemorative series of books, marking the 25th Anniversary of the World Federation, will continue to radiate the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) to the world at large through the words of this great scholar. By supporting the *Mulla Asghar Memorial Fund*, which, amongst other educational projects, has made this series of publications possible, you will help ensure that his passion for disseminating the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) continues after him. Together, we can give reality to the many dreams he had and help the World Federation continue on the path of service that he blazed under his charismatic leadership. I ask you remember Marhum Mulla Saheb with a Sura e Fateha.

Hasnain Walji
President, The World Federation of KSI Muslim Communities
September 15 2002

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ALLAMAH SYED MURTADHA ASKARI

Allamah Syed Murtadha Askari is a recognised Shia scholar whose works in Islamic history, comparative studies of various sects within the fold of Islam and philosophy have left an indelible mark.

To his credit stand the monumental books like “Abdullah Ibn Saba,” “The 150 fictitious companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.)” and the “Characteristic traits of the two (Islamic) Schools.” Some of his original analysis and scientific investigations in the field of Islamic history have demolished the hitherto accepted notions and ideas, creating an unprecedented furore among the rigid and orthodox pedants of the Muslim world.

As a political activist, Allamah is well known for his firm views and struggle for Islamic revival. Most of his friends and associates have been martyred by the brutal regime of Iraq. Allamah towers high among the senior ulama who can draw upon the early reminiscence of concerted struggle against the heresy of Ba’thist upsurge. He is an impressive orator and an engaging conversationalist; and even as an octogenarian, he does not show any sign of ebbing zeal!

May Allah keep him!



INTRODUCTION (1)

THE EFFECT OF CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH BELIEFS ON MUSLIMS

The Christian and the Jewish beliefs, especially the Jewish culture, spread among the Muslims in two ways: firstly, through the efforts of the Christians and the Jews themselves, and secondly through certain Muslims.

Let us examine these two in detail.

A. The Spread of Christian and Jewish beliefs among the Muslims through the deliberate efforts of the Christians and the Jews

In the past, we have explained the role of the Christian and the Jewish scholars in fabricating the traditions. We know that while the Caliphs refused to allow the propagation of the Prophet's (S.A.W.) traditions, they graciously permitted the Christian and the Jewish scholars who had embraced Islam to spread their own notions among the Muslims. For example, Tamim Daree, a Christian monk before accepting Islam, was officially allowed by Caliph Omar to address the Muslims on Fridays, before the sermon of *Jumua'* prayers, right in the grand Mosque of the Prophet (S.A.W.). In the era of Caliph Uthman, he was officially allowed to do so twice a week.

Similarly Ka'b Al-Ahbar (whose first name was Mati') was a well-known rabbi before he embraced Islam. He was known as Ka'b al-Habr or Ka'b al-Ahbar, for *Habr* in Arabic means virtuous, learned man. In the days of Caliph Omar, Ka'b al-Ahbar was promoted

to the Court authority, and Caliph Uthman also continued to patronize him. Muslims referred to him in matters of fundamentals and the exegesis of the Qur'an.¹ Ka'b tried his best to spread the beliefs originating from the corrupt version of *Torah*, and other Jewish notions, among the Muslims. Some contemporaries who followed the Ahlul Bait (A.S.) were aware of his invidious ways, as evidenced in the following incident:-

Tabari in his chronicle narrates:

"Ibn Abbas was told: Ka'b says that on the Day of Judgement, the Sun and the Moon will be brought forth like two stupefied bulls and thrown into the Hell."

Upon hearing this, Ibn Abbas was enraged, and retorted three times:

"Ka'b is a liar! Ka'b is a liar! Ka'b is a liar! This is a Jewish notion, and Ka'b wants to introduce it into Islam. Allah is Free from the things they attribute to Him. He never punishes those who obey Him. Have you not heard what Allah says in the Qur'an: 'And He has made subject to you the Sun and the Moon, both diligently pursuing their course.'" (Ibrahim:33)

Ibn Abbas said:

"The word Daibain used in the verse denotes constant obedience to Allah."

Then he continued:

"How can He punish these two heavenly bodies Whom He Himself praises for their obedience? God curse this Jewish scholar and his learning! What a shameless audacity to attribute lies to Allah and to impute guilt to the two obedient creatures!"

Having said this, Ibn Abbas repeated three times:

"To Allah we belong, and unto Him shall we return."

Then Ibn Abbas went on to narrate what the Prophet (S.A.W.) had

¹ See *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* - 4/17.

actually said about the Sun and the Moon. The Prophet said:

“Allah created two sources of light. That which He named the Sun was like the earth, between the points of rising and setting. And that which He ordained to be lustreless at times, He called the Moon and made it smaller than the Sun. And both of them appear to be small because of their height in the sky and their distance from the earth.””

OBSERVATIONS BASED ON THE TWO TRADITIONS

From the two traditions, namely, the one from Ka'b and the other from Ibn Abbas, we observed that:

1. Ibn Abbas refuted and rejected what Ka'b had attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and quoted from the Qur'an:
“And He has made the Sun and the Moon subject to you, both diligently pursuing their course” (Ibrahim:33)
Arguing that the diligence was tantamount to total obedience to Allah. And Allah did not punish those who obey Him.
2. In further rejection of Ka'b's analogy, Ibn Abbas established that the Sun and the Moon were two large heavenly bodies like this earth, and he sought support from the Prophet's tradition which says:
“And both of them appear to be small because of their height in the sky and their distance from the earth.”

Obviously, these were the best inferences Ibn Abbas could make from the tradition. However, in this age, we are able to draw further conclusions from the tradition, namely:

1. Mention of the point of rising and setting for the sun in relation to earth, gives a hint about rotation and revolution of heavenly bodies.
2. It also indicates that the bodies ought to be spherical so as to have several points of setting and rising. This would not be possible if they were flat.

3. It is also evident from the way Ibn Abbas treated the narration reported from Ka'b that he was not inclined to accept Ka'b's authority.

Therefore, all such traditions which smack of Jewish beliefs and are conveniently attributed to Ibn Abbas as having heard from Ka'b, are baseless and untrue. These were fabricated during the days of the Abbasid regime because Abbasids gave much credence to their ancestor Ibn Abbas. People made up stories in the name of Ibn Abbas to gain popularity in the Abbasid courts. It became fashionable to ascribe false traditions to Ibn Abbas, which in turn formed an enormous part of the Jewish and Christian propaganda.

Ibn Abbas was able to draw certain conclusions from the Prophet's (S.A.W.) tradition. We are able to make additions to those conclusions, basing our observations on present day scientific facts. It is quite probable that in the future, when science has made further investigations, scholars may make new sensible deductions from the tradition. But Ka'b's narration is a Jewish nonsense, and grows all the more meaningless as time advances.

Later on in the discussion, we will portray Ka'b's extensive role to prove how he succeeded in his harmful attempts.

Sadly enough, this tradition from Ka'b regarding the sun and the moon appearing on the Day of Judgement as stupefied bulls, gained entry into the Islamic sources through Companions like Abu Huraira and others. This has happened in spite of the angry rejection by Ibn Abbas. In *Tafseer* by Ibn Katheer and in *Kanzul Ummal*, it is reported from Abu Huraira, that:

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

"On the Day of Judgement, the Sun and the Moon will be in hell in the form of two stupefied bulls."

Someone asked him:

"But what sin have they committed to deserve that?"

Abu Huraira retorted:

“I am reporting to you what the Prophet (S.A.W.) said, and you are asking me the nature of their sins?”

In another weak narration from Anas, Ibn Katheer quotes the following:

“The Sun and the Moon will be in the Hell as two stupefied bulls.”

OUR OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOREGOING

The traditions from Abu Huraira and Anas are in fact the same, which was originally concocted by Ka'b al-Ahbar. They have been falsely attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W.).

If we study the verse from the Qur'an, and also the authentic traditions from the Prophet (S.A.W.), we find that the narration from Ka'b is a figment of his own imagination, based on the Jewish notion. Having established that the tradition from Ka'b has been wrongly ascribed to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and with the support of Ibn Abbas who condemned it as a Jewish interpolation, there remains no doubt that the source of the tradition is Ka'b al-Ahbar himself and not these Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.).

This danger had been recognized by the early Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Ibn Abbas was among the first to have stood firm against the Jewish inroads, and Imam Ali (A.S.) also warned Caliph Omar about this.

Since Ka'b had not been among the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.), he could not attribute the substance of his Jewish beliefs directly to the Prophet (S.A.W.). The most convenient way for him was to organize a channel which would carry the reports in the name of certain Companions like Abu Huraira and others.

Though the narration from Anas has been qualified as weak, another tradition from Abu Huraira on the same subject was considered authentic, and thus it lent strength to the fabrication by Ka'b. As

days went by, with the help of some vested interests, traditions like this became acceptable without question. It was a joint effort, wittingly or otherwise, by the converted Christian and Jewish scholars, certain Companions and those who immediately followed the era of the Companions.

B. THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIAN AND THE JEWISH BELIEFS AMONG THE MUSLIMS THROUGH MUSLIMS THEMSELVES

To make our point clear, we give two examples of the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.), and also quote from one *Tafseer*:

1. Abu Huraira, One of the Companions of The Prophet (S.A.W.) History has recorded three different names of this Companion. However, he is famous by his *Kuniya* - Abu Huraira. He belonged to the clan of Dus which originated from Yemen. Abu Huraira lived there for thirty years, and arrived in Madinah after the Battle of Khaybar. According to Bukhari, Ibn Sa'd and others, he was with the Prophet (S.A.W.) during the last three years. But considering the fact that he left for Bahrain in 8th Hijri with the army led by Ala' Hadhrami, his total days with the Prophet (S.A.W.) were obviously lesser. He used to live with the poor Muslims on the transverse stone ledge known as *Suffah* in the Prophet's (S.A.W.) Mosque.

When Muawiya sent the infamous butcher Busr who was responsible for the genocide of thirty thousand innocent Muslims between Syria and Yemen, Abu Huraira was appointed the Governor of Madinah with the blessings of Busr.³ Again he continued to enjoy the same position for sometime during the reign of Muawiya.⁴

These were the days when Abu Huraira found the most opportune time for propagating his narrations. Some of the Companions of our Prophet (S.A.W.) were indeed well-versed in the art of reading and writing, but unfortunately, Abu Huraira was not among them. Bukhari reports him saying: "*Abdullah bin Amru Aas knew how to*

3 *Al-Gharaat* by Thaqafi and also *Sharhe Nahjul Balaghah* by Ibn Abil Hadid.

4 *Musnad* of Ahmad.

write, while I did not.” Among the people from whom he derived maximum benefit was Ka’b al-Ahbar who gave the following compliment to Abu Huraira:

*“Of all the men who have not read Torah and yet well-versed in it, Abu Huraira is the best.”*⁵

This is to say that besides the rabbi who had naturally read Torah, Abu Huraira eminently surpassed all others in his knowledge of Torah. Interestingly enough, Ibn Katheer in his chronicle, observes:

“Abu Huraira was fraudulent, mixing up deceitfully what he heard from Ka’b and what he heard from the Prophet (S.A.W.), not distinguishing one from the other.”

He goes on further to say:

“Our associates and friends have discarded some of the narrations by Abu Huraira.”

And also:

*“They would not accept very tradition reportedly by Abu Huraira.”*⁶

The most painful aspect is that Abu Huraira unabashedly reports two contradictory traditions from the Prophet (S.A.W.).

Bukhari in *Kitab al-Tib* reports the following from Abu Huraira: The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

“Diseases do not infect or spread.”

Then an Arab stood up to ask:

“O Prophet, we have beautiful camels in the desert. But when one of them develops ulcer sores, others are also infected.”

Then the Prophet (S.A.W.) contended:

“How was the first camel infected?”

After having quoted this narration, Bukhari goes on to quote another:

⁵ *Tadhkiratul-Huffaz* by Dhahabi.

⁶ *Tarikh Ibn Kathir* - 8/109.

Abu Huraira said:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) instructed that those who are ill and diseased should not visit healthy people.”

Abu Salmah, a cousin of Abu Huraira asked:

“O Abu Huraira, have you not reported that the Prophet (S.A.W.) did not believe in infection?”

In reply, Abu Huraira made certain comments in the language of Ethiopians! Then the cousin of Abu Huraira stood up to defend Abu Huraira by observing:

“I never found Abu Huraira being forgetful except in this instance.”

Obviously, Abu Salmah was trying to justify the contradiction in Abu Huraira's reports. However, a famous dictum runs: *“When one is like Abu Huraira, one tends to forget.”*

ABU HURAIRA CONFESSES

Strangely interesting is the admission of Abu Huraira himself that he had reported certain traditions from the Prophet (S.A.W.) without having heard from him.

Imam Ahmad Hanbal relates an incident in his *Musnad*:

“... and Abu Huraira reported a tradition and his listeners asked: ‘Is this from the Prophet (S.A.W.) or is it from your own pocket?’”

Abu Huraira said:

“This particular one is from my pocket.”

Bukhari narrates the incident as follows:

“Abu Huraira was asked: ‘Did you hear yourself from the Prophet (S.A.W.)?’”

He replied:

“No, this tradition is from my pocket.”

In another report narrated by Imam Ahmad Hanbal, we find:

“Abu Huraira reported a tradition as if he had heard it from the Prophet (S.A.W.), but in the end he admitted that it was from his own pocket.”

2. Abdullah bin Amru Aas, the exponent of Jewish Traditions

Abdullah bin Amru Aas (died 65 Hijra) is considered as one of the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.), and since he had inherited a treasure of Egyptian gold from his father, he was known as one of the affluence princes among the Companions. He knew Syriac (Suryani), the original language of the Torah.

In the Battle of Yarmuk, he led his father's army as the standard bearer and was able to lay hands on two camel-loads of Jewish and Christian books.⁷

Dhahabi says:

“Abdullah has narrated from the followers of the Books. He continuously studied their books, and displayed a special interest in them.”

Ibn Hajar in his commentary on *Sahih Bukhari*, says:

“Abdullah, in the conquest of Damascus, acquired a camel-load of Jewish and Christian texts as spoils of war. He read them meticulously and based his narrations upon them. Because of this, the eminent members of Tab'e'en (the people who belonged to the era immediately after that of the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.)) constrained from reporting from him.”

In *Musnad* of Ahmad Hanbal, we find:

“A man came to Abdullah and said: ‘Tell me what you have heard from the Prophet (S.A.W.) and do not relate to me the stories from Torah or Injeel.’”

In another report, we read:

“Abdullah was told: ‘Tell me what you heard from the Prophet

⁷ *Usud al-Ghabah* - 3/234 and *Fathul-Bari* - 1/166.

(S.A.W.) and do not relate from what you acquired from the camel-load at Yarmuk.”⁸

The Islamic scholars of the traditions have classified such reports as *Israiliyyat*, because of their origin in Torah or other Jewish sources.

In the bulk of traditions adopted by those Muslims who do not belong to the School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.), we find numerous traditions which speak of Allah having a bodily existence. These evidently come from Jewish sources, and we frequently find them reported from Ka'b al-Ahbar or Abu Huraira. We will discuss them in detail later on.

3. Maqatil Bin Sulayman Balkhi

He came from Balkh. He was freed by the *Azd* clan, and adopted the *Kuniya* of Abul Hassan. During his stay in Basra and Baghdad, he reported several traditions from the Prophet (S.A.W.), and was acknowledged as one of the eminent scholars of the Qur'anic sciences by the school opposed to the Ahlul Bait (A.S.).

Among the book authored by him are:

1. Tafseer Kabir - a handwritten copy of which exists in Egypt.
2. Nawadir of Tafseer.
3. al-Ayat al-Mutashabehat.
4. al-Nasikh wal-Mansukh.
5. al-Qiraat.
6. al-Ashbah wa al-Nazair fil-Qur'ani al-Karim.
7. al-Jawabat fil Qur'an.

Ibn Khaldun, in his biography of *Maqatil*, reports from Ibn Habban that:

“He used to accept elucidations of the Qur'an from the Jews and the Christians who interpreted it according to their own scriptures!”

And then he goes on to say:

“Maqatil was one among those who ascribed human characteristics

8 *Musnad Ahmad Hanbal* - 2/195, 202, 203, 209.

*and analogies to Allah, and moreover, he lied while reporting the traditions.”*⁹

Khateeb Baghdadi in his *Tarikh* of Baghdad, says:

“One day, Muhammad bin Said Kalbi (died 146 Hijra) happened to pass by Maqatil and heard him narrated certain traditions, attributing it to Kalbi himself. So he said: ‘O Maqatil! I am Muhammad bin Said Kalbi, and I have never narrated the traditions which you have just mentioned!’”

Maqatil said:

“We adorn our reports with the names of great narrators.”

Maqatil meant that he attached the names of renowned narrators to his own fabrication so that it acquired credibility!

Muhammad bin Said Kalbi is also reported to have said:

“Maqatil has falsely ascribed to me traditions I had never uttered and he has included them in his Tafseer.”

Khateeb Baghdadi in his discussion on Maqatil narrates an event reported by two men:

“We enquired from Maqatil about his source of a particular tradition, and he said: ‘I heard it from Dhahhak.’ After a few days when we enquired again about the same tradition he said: ‘I heard it from Ata.’ On another occasion, he ascribed it to Isa.

After relating the incident, Khateeb Baghdadi says that someone asked Maqatil whether he had ever seen Dhahhak, who he claimed to have heard. ‘O yes!’ said Maqatil, ‘There was a closed door between me and him!’”

Baghdadi explains that by the “closed door,” Maqatil meant the city gate of Madinah, as Dhahhak lived in Madinah and Maqatil had never been there.

⁹ *Wafatat al-A'yan.*

Ibn Khallikan says:

“Dhahhak bin Mazahim, from whom Maqatil reported traditions, died four years before Maqatil was born, and was buried in the graveyard in Madinah!”

Further he adds:

“Maqatil reported from Mujahid without ever having met him!”

Khateeb Baghdadi has recorded an interesting anecdote. He says:

“Someone asked Maqatil: ‘My friend wanted to know the colour of the dog of Ashab-e-Kahf. I did not have an answer.’”

Maqatil immediately volunteered and he said:

“Tell him the dog was speckled. No one will ever refute this!”

He further reports from Mansoor and Mahdi, the Abbasid kings, that Maqatil once offered to concoct a few traditions in praise of their ancestor Abbas, if they so desired. Both of them declined.¹⁰

Going through several books in which Maqatil’s life sketch has been drawn, we find many examples of fraud and deceit. To sum up, he was a staunch advocate of the notion that Allah had a human form. He learnt the exegesis of the Qur’an from his Jewish and Christian mentors and recorded their beliefs in his own work of *Tafseer*. In spite of this, it is indeed surprising to note that scholars from the school opposed to Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have showered a lot of praise on his *Tafseer*.

Ibn Khaidun says:

“In the art of Tafseer, all men are subservient to Maqatil bin Sulayman !!”

EXAMPLES OF MADE UP STORIES BY MAQATIL, IN SUPPORT OF THE CALIPHS

Khateeb Baghdadi in his extensive chronicle, *Tarikh-e Baghdad*,

¹⁰ *Tarikh-e Baghdad*.

reports through a continuous chain of narrators:

Maqatil said: "Dhahhak has reported to me from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (S.A.W.) was advised by his Companions to appoint his successor so that he would be known to the people, and the people would refer their affairs to him. 'We do not know what will happen after you have departed,' they said."

The Prophet (S.A.W.) replied:

"If I appointed someone who guided you to obey Allah, and you disobeyed him, then you would be disregarding my command and that of Allah. Alternatively, if such an appointed person directed you to commit sins and you obeyed him, you would be well placed to quote him as an authority on the Day of Judgement. Nay, I will never do such a thing - I would rather leave you in the care of Allah!"

EVALUATION OF THE ABOVE TRADITION

The above tradition was invented by Maqatil to support the Caliphs who claimed that the Prophet (S.A.W.) had appointed no successor, and the right of such an appointment belonged to the Muslim public.

It is interesting to notice that Khateeb has quoted the above tradition in his biography of Maqatil to prove his unreliability and deceit. He argues that Maqatil had the audacity to report from Dhahhak without ever having met him. Dhahhak lived in Madinah, while Maqatil had never travelled from Khorasan to Madinah. The fact is that Dhahhak died four years before Maqatil was born!

After the above example of Jewish and Christian infiltration into the Muslim beliefs, we consider it imperative to quote two anecdotes from Torah. These will be helpful to the evaluation of beliefs held by the school opposed to Ahlul Bait (A.S.), especially with regard to the Divine Attributes.

1. CREATION OF ADAM

In Genesis, Chapter One, Verse 27, we read as under:

“So God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female he created them.”

The story goes on to say that Adam and Hawwa (Eve) were placed in the garden of Eden. Then Allah “misguided” them:

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.¹¹ Then the serpent, who was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made, told them:

‘Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’

And he said, ‘I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ And he said, ‘Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?’

Then Adam explained what had transpired, so God cursed Adam, Eve and the serpent and condemned them and their species to the life of toil, sorrow and labour on the earth.

11 Genesis 2, Verse 17.

And the Lord God said, 'Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil! And now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever.'

So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."¹²

2. JACOB'S (YAQOOB) WRESTLING BOUT WITH GOD

One night, Jacob wrestled with God till daybreak, but God did not succeed in overpowering him!

"And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And he said, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' And he said, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'

And he said, 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.' And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."¹³

THE MEANING OF THESE ANECDOTES

Evidently, the God of Jews is frivolous and superficial. He lies, and like any selfish human being, he cheats and deceives!

He lied to Adam when he warned him not to eat from the tree because it would cause his death; and it was the serpent who revealed the bluff to Adam and enticed him to eat from the tree. Then Adam became like one of the gods, understanding good and evil, realizing that he was naked, he hid himself from God! All three, the serpent, Adam and Eve were then condemned to sufferings and labour on the earth!

According to Torah, God has a body, moves from one place to another, wrestles, and cannot find one who hides from Him!

¹² Quotations from Genesis 3.

¹³ Quotations from Genesis 32.

Such are the ridiculous stories of Torah.

THE GENERAL EFFECT OF TORAH

We may divide the people affected by such nonsense into the following distinct groups:

1. People who were appalled to find that the books supposed to have been revealed to the great Prophets like Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them), contained so many inaccuracies and immoral and unethical stories. As a result of their disenchantment, they abandoned all revealed religions and turned materialistic in their attitude.
2. There is another group who are steadfast on the religious path they have chosen, in spite of falling victims to these senseless notions.

They are in three groups:

A. THE JEWS

They are responsible for the corruption and interpolation in the Torah, and the corruption is reflected in their view point of life and their cultural tendencies. They train their children to adopt the same methods of trickery, lying and deception. They consider themselves to be the Children of Israel, the one who wrestled with God and prevailed. Most important of all, they look upon themselves as the chosen people, licensed to attain their goal by all means, including fraud and genocide. More so, because they believe in the plundering prophets who *"smote all the souls with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them, so there was not any life left to breathe."*¹⁴

B. THE CHRISTIANS

It can safely be surmised that the anthropomorphization of God, as preached by Torah, influenced the Christians to believe in God as father who begot the son. In Europe, where Christianity was professed by the majority and the Old Testament adopted as the first book in the Bible, the birth and the propagation of materialism could

¹⁴ Joshua 11.

be attributed to such irrational notions which failed to appeal to the intellectuals.

C. THE MUSLIMS

Amongst the Muslim, there were two schools of thoughts. One had leaning towards Ahlul Bait (A.S.), while the other was totally opposed to them. The latter one may be called the school of the rulers or the Caliphs. This school of the Caliphs believed in the physical existence of God, something akin to the human form. Obviously, the idea had been borrowed from the Jews, as we will establish in the following chapters, Inshallah.

When the true religion of God is tampered with profanity, we trace the deteriorating affect on the pure beliefs. The teachings of the Holy Qur'an were succinct, pure and clear, but since Muslim scholars began to accept the Jewish and the Christian storytellers as interpreters of the Qur'an, even the most cardinal tenet of *Tawheed* was reduced to a mere conjecture.

Before we proceed with our main subject, we think it necessary to discuss the actual and the metaphorical use of words.

INTRODUCTION (2)

THE ACTUAL AND THE METAPHORICAL

In Arabic or Persian, just as in any language, when a word is used to denote the meaning for which it was originally contrived, the usage is called actual. When we say: “the hands of a thief were chopped,” the word “hands” in this case has been used in its actual sense. But when a word is used as a figure of speech in which it is transferred to something it does not literally apply to, it is called figurative or metaphorical. For example, when the word “hand” is used to mean “power,” “authority” and so on.

It is sometimes said:

“There is a hand above every hand.”

In this case, the meaning is that there is a power over and above every power. Such a usage is to be found in every literary work, and it adds to the beauty style.

The Qur’an, in its inimitable and excellent style, resorts to such usage in many places. For example:

“Make not your hand tied unto your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach....” (al-Asra:29).

But it is quite evident that the words in this verse are not to be construed literally. The meaning of the verse is:

“Do not be niggardly, nor be lavish”

Another example is the word *Siraat* which in Arabic means “a road” or “a path.” In the Chapter of *al-Fatiha*, if we take the literal meaning of *Siraat*, the verses read:

“Show us the straight road. The road of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, or of those who have gone astray.” (al-Fatihah:6-7)

Surely, the verses do not speak of any roads. The verses speak of the way, the way of the Prophets, the way leading to Allah, which is the same as Islam. We are asking to show us the way of the blessed and guided ones and not of those with whom He is displeased.

CONCLUSION

Every scholar of Arabic language would testify that the “stretching forth of hand” in the Qur’anic verse does not refer to the human limbs. It implies lavish awards or gifts. Similarly, the word *Siraat* does not refer to the dusty roads, it refers to the spiritual and sublime way, Islam.

Even the scholars and the commentators from the school opposed to the Ahlul Bait (A.S.) concur with us in this interpretation. Yet, surprisingly enough, when the word denoting parts of the body like “hand,” “eye” or “ankle” are seen in the Qur’an in respect of Allah, they insist that they must be taken literally, and that they actually refer to the parts of His “body.” The School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) has taken these words to have a metaphorical meaning.

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to compare and weigh the arguments advanced by each school, and to study how each has sought support from the Qur’an and the traditions. This will enable us to understand the Divine Attributes in Islam.

THE CHOICE OF ONE BOOK ON *TAWHEED* FROM EACH SCHOOL

We have chosen one book from the school of Caliphs and one from the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.). Each deals with the subject of Unity of God.

Tawheed by Ibn Khuzaimah is from the school of the Caliphs, and *Tawheed* by Shaikh Sadooq represents the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.). Before we proceed to quote from each, we think it prudent to introduce the authors so that their eminence and positions are understood.

IBN KHUZAIMAH AS VIEWED BY THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

The scholars have designated Ibn Khuzaimah as:

- Imam ul Aimmah (Imam of the Imams)
- al-Hafidh al-Kabeer (the great custodian of Islam's sciences or the great among those who know Qur'an by heart)
- al-Mujtahed al-Mutlaq (the absolute jurist)
- Bahrul Uloom (the ocean of sciences)
- Ra'sul Muhaddithin (the leader of the traditionists)
- Habr ul-Ulama al-Amileen (the mentor of the learned virtuous men)
- Ka'batul Ulama (the Ka'ba (focus) of the learned)

MUHAMMAD BIN ISHAQ KHUZAIMAH NISABURI

He was born in 213 Hijra and died in 311 Hijra. Many scholars have reported traditions from him, including the authors of *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. It is said that Ibn Khuzaimah reciprocally accepted the traditions reported by the latter two.

Apart from the small treatises written in reply to certain questions, Ibn Khuzaimah had authored 140 major works which include the famous *Sahih* of Ibn Khuzaimah. Some scholars consider his *Sahih* as better and superior to *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. He was of *Shafei* persuasion.

In this brief discussion, we have relied upon his book called *Tawheed*, critically revised by Muhammad Khaleel Haras of al-Azhar, Cairo and published by al-Azhar University Press, Cairo, in 1378 Hijra.

SHAIKH SADOOQ AS VIEWED BY THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

Sadooq is the title given to Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ali bin Husayn bin Babawayh Qummi. He died in 381 Hijra. He is a scholar of high repute, needing no introduction. Nearly 200 major works stand to his credit.

In this discussion, we have relied upon his book *Tawheed*, printed

in Tehran in 1381 Hijra, critically revised by Syed Hashim Husayni Tehrani.

These two books are our principle sources. In addition, we refer to other famous works also like the Chapter of *Tawheed* in *Sahih Bukhari*, the Chapter of *Iman* from *Sahih Muslim*. As for the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.), we will make reference to the Chapter of *Tawheed* from *Bihar ul-Anwar* by Majlisi (died 1111 Hijra).

CHAPTER 1

THE “IMAGE” OF ALLAH

(A) FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

Let us examine two traditions from this School.

1. Ibn Khuzaimah in his *Tawheed*, together with *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* report through Abu Huraira that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

“Allah created Adam in His Own image, sixty feet in height. Then He ordered him to go before a group of angels and greet them. ‘Listen to them carefully when they answer your greetings, for that will be the greeting you and your descendants shall adopt,’ Allah said.

So Adam obeyed and he greeted them thus: ‘Assalamu Alaikum’ (Peace be upon you). The angels replied: ‘Assalamu Alaika Wa Rahmatullah’ (Peace be upon you and Allah’s Mercy), adding ‘Wa Rahmatullah.’

So everyone who enters the heaven will be in the image of Adam. Human beings were gradually reduced in height as time lapsed, till the stature they have today.”

2. Abu Huraira reports that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said:
“Whenever one is involved in a quarrel or a fight against one’s brother, one should refrain from hitting him on the face. This is because Allah created Adam in His Own ‘image’.”¹

These are the reports from Abu Huraira. Let us now compare them with the tradition reported by the School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) so that the picture is complete.

1 *Sahih Muslim* - pp. 2016, 2017.

(B) AHLUL BAIT (A.S.) EXPLAIN THE ACTUAL FACT

1. Husayn bin Khalid says:

“I asked Imam Ridha (A.S.) about the famous tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.) that Allah created Adam in His Own image. He said: ‘Cursed be those fraudulent narrators who have omitted the first part of the tradition.’ Then he explained: Once the Prophet (S.A.W.) was passing by when he heard two men abuse each other. He heard one say: ‘May Allah foul and disgrace your face, and the face which resembles yours.’ At that time, the Prophet (S.A.W.) paused and admonished him by saying: ‘Do not utter such words for your brother. For Allah created Adam (also) in his image.’ (Meaning that Adam also resembled him).”

2. In another tradition reported by Abul Ward to Thamamah from Amirul Mu’mineen Ali bin Abu Talib (A.S.), we read:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) heard someone abuse another saying: ‘May Allah foul and disgrace your face, and the face that resembles yours.’ The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: ‘Be silent! Do not say that! For Allah has created Adam in his image’.”

3. Besides these two traditions, let us examine one more which would give us a general idea of how the Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) viewed the belief of anthropomorphism.

Shaikh Sadooq in his book *Tawheed*, says:

“Imam Musa bin Ja’far (A.S.) received a letter in which someone had sought clarification about the belief concerning the body and image of Allah. Imam (A.S.) replied: ‘Praised be Allah! There is nothing whatever like unto Him - no body, and no image’.”

(C) OBSERVATIONS AND COMPARISONS

When we ponder over these reports and compare, we find that Abu Huraira in his two narrations has made two additions and one omission.

1. THE OMISSION

When Abu Huraira reports from the Prophet (S.A.W.), he omits the incident in which the Prophet (S.A.W.) had an encounter with two men engaged in the slang of abuses, then he admonished one of them not to speak ill of the human face because it resembled that of Adam. This, indeed is an important omission, because Abu Huraira's version gives an impression that the pronoun 'his' refers to Allah, while actually it refers to the man himself.

Abu Huraira may have omitted the important part in the tradition because:

- a. He used to commit the traditions to memory, as he was unable to read or write. And even if he did, he would not be allowed by the Caliphs who had forbidden Muslims to maintain a written record of the Prophet's traditions, till the end of the first century Hijra.
- b. Abu Huraira was tremendously influenced by Ka'b al-Ahbar who spread the corrupted verses from Torah among Muslims. Obviously, the impression of what Ka'b related was fresh in the mind of Abu Huraira, because it came approximately 20 years after having heard from the Prophet (S.A.W.).
- c. Probably the error was on the part of the latter day traditionists who recorded Ka'b's report falsely ascribed to Abu Huraira. Whatever the case, the consequences remain unchanged.

2. TWO ADDITIONS

- a. In the first tradition, Abu Huraira attributes the following statement to the Prophet (S.A.W.):
"Whenever one is engaged in a fight against one's brother, one should refrain from hitting him on the face"

This is possibly a substitute fabricated by Abu Huraira, in place of the omission we have referred to above.

- b. In another tradition, Abu Huraira speaks of Adam's height:
"Allah created Adam in His Own image, sixty feet in height"

Obviously, such statements are not factual, nor do they tally with scientific investigations.

One can easily see that the stories quoted from Abu Huraira bear a striking similarity to the stories from Genesis in the Old Testament. By tampering with the actual tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.), inserting here and cutting there, Abu Huraira and his likes have succeeded to give credibility to the fiction from Torah. These, then, are the *Israiliyyat* which have made tragic inroads into Islamic traditions and beliefs.

The schools of the Caliphs have swallowed them hook, line and sinker because renowned names like that of Abu Huraira are attached to them.

The result was that whenever words like "face" occur in relation to Allah in the Qur'an, they have insisted upon the literal meaning. To them, all human characteristics, norms and forms can be applied to Allah! We will discuss the subject in the following chapters, Inshallah.

CHAPTER 2

THE “FACE” OF ALLAH

1. THE “FACE” OF ALLAH AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

Ibn Khuzaimah in his work entitled *Tawheed* writes on its tenth page. The chapter on confirming the face for Allah, which He Himself has described as full of majesty and honour in the following verses:

“And the face of Your Sustainer will abide, full of majesty and honour.” (Al-Rahman:27)

And He has also confirmed that His face will never perish:

“Everything that exists will perish except His Own face.”
(Al-Qassas:88)

Thereafter, Ibn Khuzaimah seeks further substantiation from other Qur’anic verses, and then says:

“So Allah has firmly established that He has a face, has described It as Majestic and Honourable, and has decreed that the face will endure for ever, never to perish”

In his concluding remarks, he adds:

“Whatever Allah has confirmed for Himself, we also confirm. But His face is not like the face of the creatures.”

On the eleventh page of the same book, Ibn Khuzaimah quotes 14 traditions from the Prophet (S.A.W.) in which the word ‘face’ has been mentioned, and bases his claim on them. For example, when the Prophet (S.A.W.) supplicates by saying:

“I seek refuge with Your Graceful Face”

Ibn Khuzaimah infers that the Prophet (S.A.W.) referred to the face in its literal sense. In other words, he insists that the ‘face’ is a part of God’s body, similar to that of man or any other animal.

Now, let us examine what Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have explained in their traditions:

2. THE “FACE” - AS EXPLAINED BY AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

As a prelude, let us deal with a tradition from Amirul Mu'mineen, Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) in which he laid down the laws for understanding the verses of the Qur'an, especially those concerned with the Divine Attributes.

A person referred his question to Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.), quoting several verses from the Qur'an, raising his objections. Among them we select the two following verses:

The literal meaning of these two verses are:

“(And on the Day of Judgement) your Lord comes, and the angels, rank upon rank” (Al-Fajr:22)

“Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them, or comes your Lord Himself or come some of the signs of your Lord?”
(Al-Ana'am:158)

The question raised was whether Allah Himself would appear on the Day of Judgement, as apparently conveyed in the verses. Imam Ali (A.S.) explained:

“Whatever Allah, the Most High, has revealed in the verses, is the absolute truth; except that His coming is not the same as coming of His creatures. I have advised you earlier that certain parts of the Qur'an must not be construed literally; instead you have to understand the metaphor. The word of Allah is not like a human word, and His act is not like a human act. In order to make my point clear, I will give you examples from the Qur'an, so that, Inshallah, your understanding of the Qur'an will be proper and correct. The Qur'an reports Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) saying: 'I will go to my Lord. He will surely guide me.' (Al-Saffat:99)

Here, “going to the Lord” does not mean walking to Him with the

help of limbs. It means to turn to Him, firmly and truly, through worship, and seek nearness to Him. Can you observe the difference between its literal sense and its actual meaning conveyed by the metaphor? Again, the literal translation of the following verses would be:

“... He sent down for you eight pairs of the cattle.” (Al-Zumar:6)

*“And We sent down iron, in which there is immense strength....”
(al-Hadid:25)*

Now if you were to rely on the literal sense, you would infer that the eight pairs of the cattle and the iron were ‘sent down’ from the heaven. But that is definitely not meant. The words here mean ‘We created,’ or ‘He created.’”¹

Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) has taught us two important rules for understanding the Divine Attributes and Works: First, the acts and deeds of Allah cannot be compared to our acts and deeds. When Allah in the Qur’an, says:

“Allah has indeed heard” (Mujadillah:1)

It does not compare with the hearing of man, animal or any creature. We hear with the help of our ears. Hearing by Allah denotes no such thing.

Allah in the Qur’an declares:

“... I have created with My hands.” (Sad:75)

Man may also say that he has created something with his hands. But both have different meanings. Allah has no limbs, needs no limbs.

Allah revealed to Prophet Musa (A.S.):

“Fear not! I am with both of you, I hear and I see.” (Taha:46)

To be with someone has a different meaning when applied to us. When Allah is “with” someone, it does not denote physical company or proximity.

¹ *Tawheed* by Sadooq, p. 265.

Secondly, Amirul Mu'mineen, Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) said that it was necessary to understand the literal as well as the metaphorical usage of words in the Qur'an, before one started commenting or elucidating. He cited two examples from the Qur'an to explain his point.

Actually, when we sit to read any classic or literary piece of work, in any language whatsoever, we are required to be fully conversant with the figures of speech, the different usage of the words and so on. Based on this universal principle, let us now see how the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) deals with the term the "face" of Allah.

Abu Hamza asked Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.) about the meaning of the verse:

"Everything that exists will perish except His Own face."

Imam (A.S.) replied:

"Do they presume that Allah has a face and that everyone will die and perish but His face? Allah is far above having a face! The actual meaning of the verse is that everything will perish except the religion of Allah, the direction and the way which leads to Allah."

In another tradition from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.), this verse has been further explained:

"Everything shall perish except the adoption of the right path."

Both the explanations point to one and the same thing, the right path or the religion of Allah. This is how the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) interprets the phrase "face" of Allah.

1. *Wajh* meaning "the beginning" or "the early part," as used in *Wajhun Nahar* - i.e., the morning.
2. *Wajh* meaning "the truth or essence of the matter" - as used in Arabic, *Asaba Wajhal Masa'lah* - i.e., he came upon the crux of the matter.
3. *Wajh* meaning "direction, aim," like *Ittajahat Tijarah* - i.e., he aimed at doing business.

Modern Arabic scholars have confirmed these meanings as well, like the authors of *Mu'jamu Alfaazil Qur'an al-Karim*, published from Egypt in 1390 A.H.

In view of the diverse meanings attached to the word *Wajh*, the school of the Caliphs had no plausible reason to adhere to one meaning which suggested that Allah had bodily parts the same way as we human beings have. It is quite clear that they were influenced by the Jewish interpolations and by such traditions, which were ascribed to Companions like Abu Huraira.

In this brief discussion, we realize that the two schools have totally divergent views about Allah. One believes in anthropomorphism, imagining Him to be like us, or like any other creature, possessing limbs and ligaments. The other believes in an Existence far above and exalted, in no way comparable to the creation.

There are verses in the Qur'an which requires divine assistance to comprehend, and that assistance comes through the Prophet (S.A.W.) or his pure, immaculate Ahlul Bait (A.S.). Allah says:

"... From it are verses of established meaning, they are the foundation of the Book. Others are allegorical, but those who have perverse hearts, they follow the allegorical parts, seeking discord and searching for its hidden meaning. But no one knows its hidden meaning except Allah." (Ale Imran:7)

Allah has entrusted His Prophet (S.A.W.) with the duty to explain all the meanings of the Qur'an:

"We have sent down to you the message that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them" (Al-Nahl:44)

And the Prophet (S.A.W.) imparted his knowledge to Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) who recorded it and faithfully committed it to memory. After the passing away of our Prophet (S.A.W.), Muslims referred to Ali (A.S.) whenever difficulty arose in respect of understanding the Qur'an; and he always supplied a satisfactory answer. The knowledge

with Ahlul Bait (A.S.) is divine. It does not in any way depend upon personal opinions or interpretations of the scholars who were in turn influenced by un-Islamic notions.

The chapter to follow will put these differences in sharp focus.

CHAPTER 3

THE “EYES” OF ALLAH

1. THE “EYES” OF ALLAH AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

In the books of *Tafseer* and the traditions, scholars of the above school have reported from Abu Huraira, who said, when the Prophet (S.A.W.) recited the following verse:

“Allah commands you to render back the trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge among people, that you judge with justice; surely He gives you an excellent reaching. No doubt, Allah is He Who hears and sees all things.” (Al-Nisa:58)

“I saw that the Prophet (S.A.W.) used to demonstrate the hearing and the seeing of Allah by placing his thumb on his ear and his finger on his eye.”

When Abu Huraira narrated the above story, he repeated the demonstration by placing his own fingers on his ears and eyes. He did this to emphasize that Allah hears with the aid of ears and sees with the help of eyes.

Jahmiyyah used to be a sect which denounced and rejected such notions. In refutation to the *Jahmiyyah* school, Abu Dawood records in his famous *Sunan* as under:

“This tradition by Abu Huraira refutes the beliefs of Jahmiyyah (who believe that Allah has no limbs, no body!).”

Abu Huraira’s concoction led the scholars of the school of the Caliphs into believing that whenever the word *Ayn* appears in the Qur’an in relation to Allah, it should be understood as an actual eye - a part of the body which sees. Therefore we find Ibn Khuzaimah, the Imam of the Imams as acclaimed by their school, establishing

a separate chapter in his book of *Tawheed*, to prove that Allah, the Most High, has eyes. He writes:

“We reiterate what Allah Himself has said in His Book and what His venerable Prophet (S.A.W.) has confirmed regarding Allah having eyes.”

Thereafter he proceeds to quote the following verses:

1. God said to Prophet Nuh (A.S.):
“And construct an Ark under Our eyes” (Hud:37)
2. Referring to Nuh’s Ark:
“She floats under Our eyes” (al-Qamar:14)
3. Addressed to Prophet Musa (A.S.):
“And I lavished My love upon you and in order that you are reared under My eye.” (Taha:39)
4. Addressed to our Prophet (S.A.W.):
“And wait in patience for the command of your Lord, for surely you are in Our eyes” (Tur:48)

Ibn Khuzaimah says:

“In view of these verses from the Qur’an, it is incumbent upon every believer to confirm the belief that Allah has eyes, and so has He established for Himself. And whoever disbelieves what Allah has revealed in His Book, and what He has ascribed unto Himself, indeed is not a Muslim. The meaning of the Qur’an has been amply demonstrated by the Prophet (S.A.W.) himself, for Allah has commanded him in the Qur’an:

‘We have sent down to you the message, that you may explain to men what is sent for them.’ (al-Nahl:44)

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) in his interpretation has clearly stated that Allah has two eyes! His interpretation is in agreement with the text of the Qur’an, the same Qur’an which is in the shape of a book between two covers, and is being read in the mosques and the schools.”

Not satisfied with the argument, he resorts to the traditions, among them the one from Abu Huraira. Finally, he gives the following narration from Abdullah bin Omar:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: Allah is not blind in one eye, like Dajjal who does not have vision in his right eye. It floats like a grape seed.”

2. THE “EYE” AS EXPLAINED BY AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

The Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have given the true meaning of the verses. However, we must deal with the subject in some detail on those lines.

Ibn Khuzaimah has taken the words *Ayn* or *Ayunina* literally, to prove his claim that they denote Allah’s eyes. The fact is that the word *Ayn* and its derivatives have several meanings in Arabic. For details, one may refer to the famous lexicon, *Lisanul Arab*. In *Mu’jamul Udaba* (2/11) we find an eulogy by Ibn Faris Ahmed bin Zakariyya (died 369 Hijra) in which every couplet ends with the word *Ayn*, each with a different meaning. Syed Muhsin al-Ameen has a similar eulogy of sixty couplets.

The Holy Qur’an has used the word in both, actual as well as metaphorical sense. In twenty-one places, the Qur’an uses *Ayn* to mean a stream of water or a river.

But the important thing is that the verses quoted by Ibn Khuzaimah to substantiate his belief have all got the words used in a figurative sense. In English we say: *to keep an eye on*, meaning to supervise carefully; *in the eyes of the law*, meaning in the opinion or the judgement of the law; *the eye of a dome*, meaning its central part and so on. Obviously, such usages are not literal. Similarly, these words have been used to denote their metaphorical meanings.

In the famous *Majma Al-Lughat al-Arabiyyah* published in Egypt, we find:

“In the Qur’an the word Ayn has been used in both actual and metaphorical senses. For examples, in the verses:

(i) *“The wife of the Pharaoh said: (He is) a joy of the eye, for me and for you”* (al-Qassas:9)

(ii) *(To Maryam) “So eat and drink, and cool your eyes”*
(Maryam:26)

It is evident that here the phrases used with Aynan and Aynin both convey joy and satisfaction.”

History tells us that Allah commanded the mother of Prophet Musa (A.S.) to cast him into the river. Musa (A.S.) as an infant reached the palace of the Pharaoh on the waves of the river, to be reared up by him as a son. The full text of the verse is:

“The wife of the Pharaoh said: ‘(Here is) a joy of the eye, for me and for you; do not kill him, may be he will be of use to us, and we may adopt him as our son” (al-Qassas:9)

In the second instance, the verse relates to Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isa (A.S.). As she gave birth to Isa (A.S.) she was grieved because she knew people would not believe that she was chaste, and that Isa (A.S.) was born without a father, by divine command. So Allah said:

“Grieve not! For your Lord has provided a stream of water beneath you - and shake toward you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will let the ripe dates fall upon you. So eat and drink and cool your eyes.”
(Maryam:26)

Now the verse quoted by Ibn Khuzaimah need some analysis also. The first verse, addressed to Prophet Nuh (A.S.). The true meaning of it is:

“Construct an Ark under our care and protection.”

The second verse also means that Nuh’s Ark floats under Allah’s care and protection.

In the third verse, Allah reveals to Musa (A.S.), the correct

understanding of the verse is:

“And I lavished My love upon you in order that you are reared under My protection and care”

Finally, the fourth verse addressed to our Prophet (S.A.W.) means that:

“(O Prophet) - And wait in patience for the command of your Lord, for you are Our beloved and so protected.”

Lastly, the tradition reported from Abdullah bin Omar stresses the point that Allah is not blind as Daijal (anti-Christ). Well, this gives us a hint that he wants us to believe Allah has both His eyes, healthy and unharmed! In the light of our discussion above, we can imagine how credible this report could be! We have already pointed out how unreliable Abu Huraira and his legion were, and how they remained under the influence of the Jewish and Christian propagation. The pure Islamic creed was thus polluted by the corrupt reports based on interpolated Torah and other non-Islamic texts.

CHAPTER 4

THE “HANDS” OF ALLAH

1. THE “HANDS” OF ALLAH AS REPORTED BY THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

The scholars of the above school have reported in their books from Abu Huraira who reported from the Prophet (S.A.W.) as below:

“Adam and Musa had the following conversation:

Musa said: ‘O Adam! Allah created you with His Own hands but you brought down men from the Garden because of your sin.’

Adam replied: ‘O Musa! Allah indeed honoured you, and wrote Torah for you with His Own hands.’”

In another tradition reported from Abu Huraira, we find:

“Allah descends to the first heaven, and spreads His two hands and says”

THE “FINGERS”

There is no mention of the word “fingers” in the Qur’an in relation to Allah, therefore, Ibn Khuzaimah had to rely on the traditions alone in order to prove that Allah had fingers. These traditions can be found in the books of *Tawheed* by Ibn Khuzaimah, and in *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan* of Tirmidhi, *Sunan* of Ibn Majah, *Tafseers* of Tabari, Ibn Katheer and Suyuti. One of such tradition is: Abdullah narrates that a rabbi came to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and said:

“O Muhammad! We read in Torah that God keeps the heaven on one finger, the trees on one, the water on one, the earth on one and all the creatures on one! And then He says: ‘I am the King!’

The Prophet (S.A.W.) gave a grinning smile to confirm what the rabbi said, and in support of his statement, he recited the following verse:

They have not made just estimate of Allah, such as is due to Him. The whole of the earth, on the Day of Judgement, will be His handful, and the heavens will be rolled up to His right....”
(al-Zumar:67)

These reports from Abu Huraira and others persuaded the scholars from the school opposed to Ahlul Bait (A.S.) to adopt a literal meaning for the word *Yadullah* wherever it appears in the Qur'an. Ibn Khuzaimah has a chapter in his book on *Tawheed*, which says:

*“The proof that Allah, the Creator, the Most High, has a hand; Surely, Allah, the Most High has two hands, as we have learnt from the established verses of the Qur'an”*¹

Then he goes to quote the following verses in corroboration of his claim:

1. *And the Jews said: “Allah’s hand is tied up. Their hands be tied up and they be cursed for what they uttered! No! His hands are both outstretched, He spends as He pleases”* (al-Maedah:64).
2. *“So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things, and unto Him you will be brought back.”* (Yasin:83)
3. *“(O God!) You invest with honour whom You please, and You bring low whom You please. All good is in Your hand. Surely, You have power over all things.”* (Ale-Imran:26)

Let us now explain what the School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) has said.

THE ANSWERS FROM AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

- a. Muhammad bin Muslim asked Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.) about the following verse:²
“.... O Iblis! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to one Whom I have created with My Own hands” (Sad:75)

1 *Tawheed* by Ibn Khuzaimah - p. 53.

2 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - p. 153.

Imam Baqir (A.S.) replied:

“Yad (hand), in Arabic language is used to mean power and bounty.”

Then he went on giving further examples from the Qur'an and Arabic literature to demonstrate the figure of speech. We quote some of the examples he gave:

“(O Prophet!) And remember Our servant Dawood (David), the man of hands” (Sad:17)

Imam Baqir (A.S.) pointed out that in this verse, the reference to the hands is clearly metaphorical. What Allah wants to convey is that He had blessed Dawood with strength. He then enumerated examples of strength with which Dawood was blessed.

“We constructed the firmament with hands” (al-Dhariyat:47)

Imam Baqir (A.S.) said: *“Here the hands mean power.”*

“And gave them hand with a spirit from Himself..” (al-Mujadalah:22)

In this verse “hand” denotes strengthening or empowering.

Quoting from the Arabic literature, Imam Baqir (A.S.) said:

“They say: ‘So and so has many hands with me.’

This means that I have a debt of gratitude to him because of his obligations.

Again, Arabs have a saying: *‘He has a white hand upon me!’*

This means He has obliged me. The hand in this context means beneficence.”

b. Muhammad bin Ubaidah referred the same verse of Sura-e-Sad, to Imam Ridha (A.S.). The reply was:

“With My Own hands”, in this verse is purported to mean “with My potency and power.”³

3 Tawheed by Sadooq - pp. 153-154.

c. Suleiman bin Mahran says he asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) the meaning of the verse in which Allah declares:

"The whole of the earth, on the Day of Judgement, will be His handful" (al-Zumar:67)

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) replied:

"It means the absolute control and authority - shared by none."

Muhammad bin Ubaidah then went on to ask about the remaining part of the verse:

"... And the heavens will be rolled up to His right..."

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) explained:

"Allah has used the word Yameen which denotes 'hand,' and 'hand' means His potency and power. The heavens will be rolled by His power."

The words "handful" or "to His right" do not mean a fist or a right hand. They do not refer to any limb as supposed by the School of the Caliphs. To imagine limbs and bodily existence for Allah is to indulge in *shirk* - and that was the reason why Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) after answering the questions, insisted on completing the verse. He quoted:

"Glory to Allah! He is High and Above the partners they attribute to Him."⁴ (al-Zumar:67)

OBSERVATIONS

The Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have based their arguments on the true meaning of *Tawheed*, at the same time, relying heavily on the common usage of the word among the Arabs and in their literature. Raghib Isfahani in his famous book *Mufradatul Qur'an* says:

"Yad means 'hand' or 'limb.' But it has other meanings as well, like control, power and discretion."

Egyptian scholars have enumerated nine different meanings for the

⁴ *Tawheed* by Sadooq - pp. 160-161.

word *Yad*, other than a hand. For example, the following verse:

“In Whose hands is the dominion of all things” (Yasin:83) is translated as: *“In Whose absolute control is the dominion of all things.”*

The most intriguing thing is that these scholars who attributed hands and other limbs to Allah when interpreting the relevant verses, adopted a different attitude when the word was used for the Prophet (S.A.W.)

In the following verse, addressed to the Prophet (S.A.W.) all translators and commentators agreed that it means:

“And do not tie your hand to your neck in niggardliness.”
(Al- Asra:29)

No one among them has taken the word ‘hand’ literally. But when it came to the same word being applied for Allah, they have resorted to its literal sense, totally ignoring the metaphor.

This conveys the enormous influence wielded by the Jewish and Christian notions, which were remorselessly strengthened by some of the unscrupulous Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The story does not end here. There is an interesting discussion yet to follow.

CHAPTER 5

THE “FEET” OF ALLAH

THE “FEET” OF ALLAH AND HIS “SHIN AND SHANK”!!

In the book of *Tawheed* by Ibn Khuzaimah several traditions related to ‘the leg’ and ‘the feet’ of Allah have been mentioned, chiefly reported by Abu Huraira. And they can also be found in *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan* of Tirmidhi, *Musnad* of Ahmad and the *Tafseers* of Tabari, Ibn Katheer and Suyuti.

Abu Huraira reports from the Prophet (S.A.W.):

“The Paradise and the Hell had an altercation, each trying to prove its own superiority over the other.”

Then the Hell said:

“I have been privileged by the presence of the arrogant and mighty people within me.”

The Paradise said:

“I do not know why no one but the weak and meek have been admitted within me!”

So God addressed the Paradise:

“You are My Mercy, and through you I shower mercy upon any of My servants.”

And then He addressed to the Hell:

“You are My wrath, and through you I punish whoever I want to punish. Each of you will be full.”

“But the Hell will not be full, so Allah will insert His leg into it.”

Then the Hell will exclaim:

“Enough! Enough!”

So this way the Hell will be full, for Allah does not wrong anyone. As for the Paradise, He will specially bring forth a new creation to make it full.

THE “SHIN” OR “SHANK”

In *Sahih Bukhari*, *Mustadrak* of Hakim, *Tafseers* of Tabari, Ibn Katheer and Suyuti, we find traditions dealing with the ‘lower leg’ of Allah. In the following verse:

“The day shin shall be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to prostrate, but they shall not be able to do so...” (al-Qalam:42)

Abu Saeed, a Companion of the Prophet says, he heard the Prophet (S.A.W.) say:

“Our Lord will lay bare His shin, then every believing man and woman will kneel before Him, except those who worshipped Him on earth to show off or to invite admiration from others - they will not be able to bend, and will stay erect.”

This tradition has been given a detailed treatment by Bukhari in the Chapter of *Tawheed*; we are quoting some excerpts:

“It will be announced on the Day of Judgement: ‘Everyone of you to line up behind the gods you worshipped.’ So people will run to form groups behind their deities, except the worshippers of Allah who will remain firm on the ground waiting for Him.

Then Allah will appear and will ask them: ‘Did you have any identifying token or symbol between Allah and yourselves which would enable you to recognize Him?’

‘Yes,’ they will say: ‘The Shin.’

Then Allah will reveal His shin, upon seeing which the believers will prostrate and will follow Him to the Paradise.”

Many interesting questions spring to our minds after reading the above tradition:

- a. What is the nature of this 'token' or 'symbol' of recognition represented by the so-called shin or shank of Allah?
- b. When had the scholars of the school of the Caliphs first seen the shin, so that they hope to recognize it on the Day of Judgement as a token?
- c. And if they had seen it here on earth, what was it like?
- d. What was its size?

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

Let us take the following verse:

"The day shin shall be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to prostrate, but they shall not be able to do so...." (al-Qalam:42)

Obaidah bin Zararah narrates.

"I asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) about this verse. He immediately placed his hand on his ankle, removing the cloth on it, and kept his hand on his head saying:

'Glory be to Allah Who is High and Above.'"

Shaikh Sadooq says that the purpose of doing so was to convey that Allah, the Most High, is above and beyond having a leg or a shin.

Another Companion of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) named Muhammad bin Ali Halabi asked about the baring of the shin. This time the Imam (A.S.) gave a detailed answer, he said:

"Blessed be the Almighty (Allah)!"

Then he recited the verse in full, together with the verse which immediately follows:

"... and they will be summoned to prostrate, but they will not be able to do so. Their eyes will be cast down, ignominy will cover them - surely, they had been summoned before to prostration, when they were whole and health" (al-Qalam:42-43)

The Imam (A.S.) said:

“The phrase is a metaphor applied to the most difficult and trying times. It describes how certain people on the Day of Judgement will be overwhelmed by shame and disgrace, having no excuse to make. The verses, when read together, explain the metaphor.”

Shaikh Sadooq in his book on *Tawheed* further elucidates:

“When the Imam (A.S.) said: ‘Blessed be the Almighty (Allah),’ and then removed the cover from his foreleg, it signified that Allah was above possessing any limb! The word ‘laying the shin bare’ should not be taken literally.”

“BARING OF THE SHIN” AS USED IN THE ARABIC LITERATURE

Abdullah Ibn Abbas, the Prophet’s (S.A.W.) cousin said:

“Whenever you are unable to understand the Qur’an, seek elucidation from the Arabic literature. There in their usage, you may find the meaning. Have you not heard the Arab poet who said: Qamatil Harbu Bina Ala Saqin - ‘The war has begun with all its intensity and difficulties’”

So ‘the laying bare of the shin’ in the verse described the intense fear, shame and distress which will prevail on that day.¹

Raghib Isfahani in his famous work *Mufradatul Qur’an* has given the same meaning to this verse, as explained by Ibn Abbas. Similarly, the Egyptian scholars have supported the interpretation in the *Mu’jam Alfadh Al-Qur’an Al-Karim*.

Obviously, the metaphor was well-known among the Arabs and their scholars for the last fourteen centuries. Sadly, the School of the Caliphs has chosen to accept the reports from Abu Huraira and his likes, ascribing limbs and ligaments to Allah.

The verb used in this verse is in passive voice: which means:

“Shall be laid bare....”

¹ *Tafseer* by Suyuti - 6/254.

Yet we find their scholars adopting the verb in its active voice, hence this version:

“Allah will bare His shin.”

To summarize, we say:

1. This school, which is alienated from Ahlul Bait (A.S.), has misinterpreted the Qur'an.
2. They have ascribed a fake tradition to the Prophet (S.A.W.).
3. They have introduced anthropomorphism among the Muslims.

We are ever indebted to the Ahlul Bait (A.S.), who have tried against all odds to preserve the purity of *Islam*, and also preserve the true meaning of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*.

All praise to Allah! We now know that Allah has no form, no body. He has no limbs, needs none of them. For if he had a body, He ought to have an abode! Let us now examine a further pitfall in which the school of the Caliphs has fallen!

CHAPTER 6

THE “THRONE” OF ALLAH.

The “Throne” (*Arsh*) and the “Chair” (*Kursiyy*) as viewed by the School of the Caliphs

Naturally, according to the School of the Caliphs, Allah must have an abode! When they have imagined Him as a person having a form, and limbs, then they ought to find Him a place which will accommodate the body. So, we find the leader of the anthropomorphists, Muhammad bin Uthman Darami (died 280 Hijra) writing in his book *Al-Radd ala al-Jahmiyyah* that:

“Surely Allah has a recognized and defined Throne above the seventh heaven, carried by the angels. Allah, as He has described Himself, does not compare with His creation.”

Then he proceeds in thirteenth chapter of the same book under the title:

“The Firm establishment of the Lord, Most High, on the Throne, His Elevation to the Heavens and His being different from the creation.”

Similarly, Ibn Khuzaimah has a chapter in his book of *Tawheed*, entitled:

“The Firm Establishment of our Creator, the Most High, the Efficacious, on his Throne, and being above it and above all.”

In an intriguing argument by Darami, we find him vehemently refuting those who believe that Allah is present everywhere. He quotes a tradition from the Prophet (S.A.W.):

“Semen remains in a womb for forty nights, and then an angel responsible for human souls ascends with it to the Lord and asks: ‘O God! Is this servant of Yours destined to be a man or a woman?’”

Then Darami says:

“If the truth was as you believe, then Allah would be present in the womb together with the semen. If so, what was the need for an angel to rise above with the semen?”

Further, he adds:

“Allah exists and lives separately from His creation. Why should He find an abode for Himself at dirty places, in the entrails of human beings, birds and animals? Why should every nook and corner contain Him?”

Darami, Ibn Khuzaimah and other scholars from the School of the Caliphs substantiate their beliefs about the actual “Throne” or “Chair” of Allah from numerous verses of the Qur’an and the traditions. Here are some examples:

“Arsh” and “Kursiyy” as understood by the School of the Caliphs Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ahmad Hanbal, Tabari, Ibn Katheer and Suyuti have recorded the following in their major works:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) was asked: ‘Where was Allah stationed before He created the universe?’

He answered: ‘He was among the dark, heavy clouds - with no wind under it, nor above. And there was no other creation. His ‘Throne’ was over the water.’”

These scholars have interpreted the following verse:

“And His Throne was over the water” (Hud:7)

as a material throne stationed over the water. In further elucidation, they proceed to quote the following obnoxious tradition:

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

“The distance between the earth and the heaven is seventy-one, seventy-two or seventy-three years. And same is the distance between the second and the third heavens, till the seventh. And over the seventh heaven is an ocean whose depth is the measure of distance between the two heavens. Over the ocean are eight

mountain goats, their hooves and knees are as wide apart as the distance between the two heavens. Upon their backs is the huge Throne of Allah (Arsh) whose height equals the distance between the two heavens. There, upon it is seated Allah, the Blessed, the Most High.”¹

THE CLATTERING “THRONE”

Read the following narration from Ibn Khuzaimah, Abu Dawood, Ibn Atheer and Aaloosi and smile!

The report says that once the Prophet (S.A.W.) joined his fingers to form a shape of the cupola and said:

“The ‘Throne’ (Arsh) of Allah, above the heavens is like this. And it rattles and clatters like the rattling of the saddle of a camel when one rides on it.”

Abu Dawood in his *Sunan*, reports from Ibn Basshar, the following tradition:

“Allah is seated on His ‘Throne’ (Arsh) and the ‘Throne’ is over the heavens. And the ‘Throne’ rattles under Him, the way a camel saddle rattles when one rides.”

Tabari, Ibn Katheer and Suyuti report the following in their *Tafseers* from Caliph Omar: A woman once came to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and implored:

“Pray that I may be among those who enter the Paradise.”

The Prophet (S.A.W.) exalted the name of Allah and then said:

“The ‘Chair’ of Allah is as extensive as the heavens and the earth; and it clatters under the weight like a new saddle under the weight of man. And He exceeds the ‘Chair’ from all sides by four fingers!!”

Well, here is Allah, so obese that He does not fit in His “Chair” - may Allah save us from such vexatious beliefs. Now let us examine its source.

1 *Sunan Abu Dawood* - 4/231; *Sunan Ibn Majah* - 1/69; *Musnad* of Ahmad Hanbal - 1/207.

KA‘B AL-AHBAR’S NARRATION

He says:

“Allah created the seven heavens, and also the earth like them; and then distanced the heavens from each other, the same measure as that between the earth and the heaven of this world, and made them dense. Then He raised His ‘Throne’ (Arsh) over them and stationed Himself upon it. So every heaven among the heavens rattles and clatters due to the weight of Almighty Allah, the same way as a new saddle of a camel rattles when a rider sits on it for the first time.”

This is the source. It was Ka‘b al-Ahbar, the former rabbi, who introduced this nonsense into the bulk of Islamic traditions and ascribe it falsely to the Prophet (S.A.W.).

WHAT IS “KURSIYY” AND WHO ARE THE PORTERS?

In his commentary, Maqatil discusses the following verse from the Qur’an:

“His ‘Throne’ extends over the heavens and the earth....”
(al-Baqarah:255)

He says:

“The ‘Throne’ (or the ‘Chair’) is carried by four angels:

One has a human face, and he prays for sustenance for human kind.

The second one has an animal’s face, like that of a bull. He seeks from Allah sustenance for the animals.

The third angel looks like an eagle, representing the birds. He prays for the birds.

The fourth one is like a lion, representing the wild animals and he prays for their sustenance.”²

2 Tafseer of Maqatil - 1/122.

The reports from the School of the Caliphs are fraught with such stories. More of it when we will discuss their beliefs about the bodily presence of Allah on the Day of Judgement.

Ibn Khuzaimah in his book on *Tawheed* has quoted the following verses to prove that Allah Himself has revealed to us His abode!

“Allah, Most Gracious, is firmly established on the ‘Throne’....”

(Taha:5)

“Then He firmly stationed Himself on the ‘Throne’....”

(al- Furqan:59)

“And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and His ‘Throne’ was over the water” (Hud:7)

Ibn Khuzaimah believes that these verses refer to a piece of furniture Allah uses as His seat! And he is not alone. Many scholars have followed his wake, forgetting that the terms have been used metaphorically to convey kingdom and authority.

The School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.)

Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (A.S.) was asked about the following verse:

“His ‘Kursiyy’ extends over the heavens and the earth.”

(al-Baqarah:255)

He said:

“‘Kursiyy’ denotes His knowledge and the verse means: ‘His knowledge encompasses the heavens and the earth.’”

In another tradition from Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (A.S.), we find the following words:

“The heavens and the earth are all in His ‘Kursiyy’,³ i.e., knowledge.”

Another man came to Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (A.S.), asking for the interpretation of *“the ‘Arsh’ over the water.”*

3 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - pp. 327, 328.

Imam (A.S.) asked:

“What do they say?”

The man said:

“They say that Allah’s Throne is over the water, and He is seated over it.”

Imam (A.S.) said:

“That indeed is a lie! Whoever believes that Allah is contained and carried, compares Him to the creatures! And that which supports or carries must be stronger than Him!”

The man was confounded into silence for a while and then asked:

“May I be your ransom! Let me learn from you the true meaning.”

Imam (A.S.) said:

“In various verses of the Qur’an, the word ‘Arsh’ has come in diverse contexts. The meaning in each case is either ‘the kingdom,’ ‘the authority,’ or ‘the knowledge.’”

Allah says:

“The Lord of Supreme ‘Arsh’.” (al-Taubah:129)

Here the grandeur of Allah is represented in ‘Arsh’ which is His Kingdom.

In another verse:

“Allah, the Gracious compassed the ‘Arsh’.” (Taha:5)

The meaning is that His Authority overwhelms His Kingdom.

And when Allah says:

“His ‘Arsh’ was over the water, He means that water was created before the heavens and the earth, and it was the first creation to submit to Allah.”

Actually, Ibn Khuzaimah and his likes have been misled by the word *Istawaa* which has appeared in the Qur'an together with the 'Arsh.' They have construed it literally as "seated" or "stationed." In the Qur'an, we find six verses where the word has been used. Raghīb Isfahani says in his commentary:

"Whenever the verb Istawaa is converted into transitive form with 'Ala,' it means Isteela - control, appropriation, conquest, power; like in the verse: "God, the Most Gracious, has a total control over the 'Arsh'."

Similarly, we find the word used in Arabic literature with the same connotation. A poet eulogizes Bushr bin Marwan, the brother of the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik in the following couplet:

"Bushr has conquered Iraq without wielding a sword or spilling any blood" (Qad Istawaa Alal Iraqi.. ..)

Another word which has caused a problem, for the anthropomorphic school of the Caliphs, is *Kursiyy*. They have taken it literally meaning, a stool or a chair. Tabari in his *Tafseer* says that *Kursiyy* means knowledge also, and it is for this reason that the books of knowledge are called *Kurrasah*, and the learned-men are called *Kurasiyy*. The Holy Qur'an has substituted the word *Kursiyy* with *Ilm* in several verses which speak in the same vein. For examples:

"My Lord encompasses all things in His knowledge."
(al-Anam:80)

"Our Lord encompasses all things by His knowledge."
(al-Aaraf:89)

"Our Lord! You encompass all things in Mercy and knowledge."
(Al-Ghafir:7)

"But the God of you all, is the One God, there is no god but He, all things He encompasses in His knowledge."
(Taha:98)

In the foregoing verse, the verb *Wasea* is used with *Ilm*. Even in the sole verse where *Kursiyy* has been used, it is interesting to note that the preceding part of the verse speaks of Allah's comprehensive and encompassing knowledge. Let us examine the verse as it begins:

"He knows what is before, after and behind them - nor shall they encompass anything of His knowledge except as He wishes. His Kursiyy (knowledge) extends over the heavens and the earth..."

(Al-Baqarah:225)

THE SUMMARY

According to the school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.), therefore, *Arsh* and *Kursiyy* denote kingdom, authority and knowledge. The use of the words is metaphoric. This is in sharp contrast to what the opposite school was led to believe because of Jewish influence.

CHAPTER 7

THE ABODE OF ALLAH

THE ANTHROPOMORPHISTS AMONG THE MUSLIMS

This sect, though ancient, has a strong hold over many orthodox Muslims, especially the *Wahabis*. It is important to make a brief study of their beliefs and then compare them with the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.).

Since they attributed all human characteristics to Allah, they were consequently forced to devise a place for Him. And later, they evolved a concept which visualized movements, transfers and translocation of Allah.

(i) ABU HURAIRA REPORTS FROM THE HOLY PROPHET (S.A.W.)

*“In a part of the night, or probably in the last one-third of the night, Allah climbs down to the first heaven and announces: ‘Is there anyone who will call on me so that I may answer his prayers, ask of me so that I may give? Who is there to give a loan to One Who is Sufficient and Just?’”*¹

(ii) IN ANOTHER NARRATION FROM ABU HURAIRA, HAROON BIN SAID HAS ADDED

*“Then Allah spreads His hands and says: ‘Who will advance a loan to the One Who is neither in need nor is an oppressor?’”*²

Bukhari has also reported such traditions from Abu Huraira in his chapter on *Tawheed*, *Da'awaat* and *Tahajjud*. Again, he is not alone. He has been joined by Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood who have all quoted the reports meant to prove that Allah physically climbs up and down the skies!

1 *Sahih Muslim* - p. 522.

2 *Sahih Muslim* - p. 522.

(iii) IBN KHUZAIMAH REPORTS FROM ABU HURAIRA

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: Angels assemble during the morning and the evening prayers. Those of the night ascend and those of the day stay behind. And then the night angels are asked by Allah: ‘In what state were my servants when you parted from them?’ The angels say: ‘We came upon them when they were praying, and we parted from them when they were praying.’”

Commenting on this report Ibn Khuzaimah adds:

“This tradition clearly conveys that Allah is in the heavens, and therefore the angels travel from the earth upwards unto Him. Those (Jahmiyyah) who believe Allah is in the heaven as well as the earth are liars, because if that was the case, the angels would have gone to Him on earth or somewhere in the lower layers of the earth. May Allah curse the Jahmiyyah forever!”

Darami supports the same notion, basing his argument on the word *Nazala* (literally ‘sent down’) used for the Qur’an. He says:

“Verses like this can be found in the Qur’an in many places. All of them clearly state that Allah sent down the Holy Qur’an from the heavens above. Had it been the way they believe that Allah is everywhere, on earth and below, then He would have said: ‘We brought out,’ or ‘We brought up’ the Qur’an. The verses are explicit in asserting the elevated location of Allah, and need no interpretation!”³

Darami seems to have been obsessed with his belief that Allah is confined to His location in the sky. Discussing the ascension of our Prophet (S.A.W.) (*Me’raj*), he observes:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) related to the believers his experience during the ascension, how he was taken from one heaven to another, till the remotest one near Sidratul Muntaha (literally ‘the farthest lote tree’). If what the opponents believe is true, that Allah is everywhere, then what need was there for Buraq and the ascension? Why was the Prophet (S.A.W.) taken to the heavens, and to whom? You hold

3 Darami’s *al-Radd ala al-Jahmiyyah* - pp. 24, 26, 27.

that Allah is everywhere, even in the Prophet (S.A.W.) house, with no veil in between. So why go up?”

THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL BAIT (A.S.) EXPLAINS

The question of relocation, translocation, changing places or climbing up and down, in relation to Allah, is absolutely irrelevant. The school of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) says these qualities belong to the one who is created and not the Creator, Who is Omnipotent.

Imam Ridha (A.S.) made it explicitly clear when he was asked about the following verse:

“And your Lord will come, and His angels, rank upon rank. ...”
(Al-Fajr:22)

Imam Ridha (A.S.) said:

“Allah cannot be described in terms of movements, arrival, departure, appearance or absence. He is above and beyond such occurrences. The verse in question signifies the order of Allah and His command which will be then revealed.”⁴

Seyyid Abdul-Azeem al-Hasani reports from Abu Ibrahim bin Abi Mahmood that he asked Imam Ridha (A.S.) about the popular tradition which speaks about the climbing down of Allah every night to the lowest heaven. Imam (A.S.) said:

“May Allah curse those who displace the sacred words from their rightful places! By Allah! The Prophet (S.A.W.) did not say the way they report. What he said was that: ‘Allah, the Most High, commands an angel to climb down to the lowest heaven in the last one-third of every night, and on Friday nights, in its first one-third. He then orders the angel to announce:

‘Is there anyone who beseeches so that I may give?

Anyone who repents so that I may pardon?

Anyone who prays for forgiveness so that I may forgive?

O he who seeks good, come forward,

O he who seeks evil, desist.’

⁴ Tawheed by Sadooq - p. 162.

The angel continues to announce till daybreak, and when the day dawns, he returns to the heavenly domain. This is the correct version received from my forefathers who reported from the Prophet (S.A.W.).”⁵

THE ASCENSION OF THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

Yunus bin Abd al-Rahman says that he asked Imam Musa bin Ja‘far al-Kadhim (A.S.):

“Why did Allah raise His Prophet (S.A.W.) unto the heavens, and from there up to the farthest station Sidratul Muntaha, and then unto the veils of light, when He addressed and spoke to him, when Allah is not described in terms of an abode or place?”

Imam (A.S.) answered:

“Surely, no place or location is attributed to Allah, nor is He subservient to time! He raised His Prophet (S.A.W.) to honour the angels and those who live in the heavens and to exalt them with his presence among them. Also to show him the wonders of His great creation so that he may recount what he saw to the people on the earth. It was not at all in the manner these people who ascribe human attributes to Allah! Glory be to Allah! He is far above the partners they ascribe to Him.”⁶

In a tradition reported by Abu Baseer, Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (A.S.) gave a comprehensive and conclusive statement explaining the stand of the School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) on the subject of *Tawheed*:

“Allah, the Most High, cannot be described in terms of abode or location. No movement, inertia, translocation, relocation or transfer is attributed to Him, because He is the Creator of time, space, movement, inertia. He is far above what they say about Him.”⁷

Imam Zayn al-Abideen (A.S.), in a detailed answer to his son Zaid, has given true meaning of certain verses, which if construed literally,

5 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - p. 176.

6 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - p. 175.

7 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - pp. 183-184.

would confirm a station or an abode for Allah. Let us examine those verses:

Prophet Musa (A.S.) has said:

“O Allah! I hastened unto You so that You may be pleased.”
(Taha:84)

“So, hasten unto Allah.” (Al-Dhariyat:50)

Imam (A.S.) said:

“These verses do not signify any location to which Musa (A.S.) went to meet his Lord, or to which we are commanded to run. These are figures of speech which mean advancing towards the pleasure of Allah and His guidance.”

Then he gave the following examples:

“The spirit and the angels ascend unto Him.” (Al-Maarij:4)

“Unto Him rise the words of purity and He raises the good deed.”
(Fatir:10)

*“In both the above instances, Allah speaks of certain elevated stations in the heavenly domain. Reaching out for those elevated stations is tantamount to advancing in the way of Allah...”*⁸

In the Holy Qur'an, there are numerous cases of genitive constructions in which the opposed noun is omitted. In *Al-Burhan fi-Uloom al-Qur'an*, Zarkashi says:

“They say there are nearly one thousand instances in the Qur'an where the subjoined noun is omitted from the genitive construction. And this has been acknowledged as a common figure of speech by the scholars.”

As an example, we will consider the following verse:

“And ask the town where we have been....” (Yusuf:82)

8 Tawheed by Sadooq.

The word omitted is *Ahl* meaning “people.” What Allah actually wishes to convey is:

“And ask the (people) of the town”

But this omission is implied and any sensible reader can immediately understand the implication. Based on this manner of speech, Imam Ridha (A.S.) explained the following verse:

“And your Lord will come”

The hidden noun or the implied word is *Amr*, which means “decree” or “command.” and thus the verse means:

“And (the command of) your Lord will come”

Clearly Imam (A.S.) based his elucidation on the following verses from the Qur’an where the *Amr* has been mentioned together with the “Coming of the Lord.”

- i. *“O Ibrahim! Seek not this! The decree of your Lord has come - there will come a penalty for them that cannot be turned back.”* (Hud:76)
- ii. *“And We did not wrong them; it was they who wronged their own souls. And when the decree of your Lord came, their deities whom they invoked profited them nothing, nor did they add to their lot but perdition.”* (Hud:101)

In both the above verses, the verb “came” is accompanied by the genitive construction *Amru Rabbika*, the “decree of your Lord.” This conveys the intended meaning of “the coming of the Lord,” here on the earth or on the Day of Reckoning.

The School of the Caliphs proposed a chair or a throne for Allah, and later on contrived a curtain or veil behind which He lives!! This and much more will form the subject of our following discussions.

CHAPTER 8

ALLAH BEHIND THE VEIL!

Darami in his refutation of the *Jahmiyyah*, has a chapter called *Al-Ihtijab*, and he quotes the following three traditions attributed to the Prophet (S.A.W.).

(i) JABIR ANSARI SAYS

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) said that Allah never spoke to anyone except from behind the veil.”

Obviously, this tradition refers to the following verse:

“And it is not for man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or ‘from behind a veil’ ...” (Ash-Shura:51)

They have accepted the literal meaning of the *veil* - a piece of cloth, a curtain hiding away Allah from the people; and have proceeded to concoct many fascinating pieces of nonsense. Here is another tradition:

(ii) ABU MUSA ASHARI REPORTS FROM THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

“The veil of Allah is ‘Fire!’”

(iii) ZURARAH BIN AWFA REPORTS

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) asked Jibrael if he had seen his Lord. Jibrael replied: ‘O Muhammad! Between Him and myself are seventy veils of light; and if I try to draw close to the first one, I will burn’.”

Besides these three traditions, there is an additional one from Abdullah bin Omar, who said:

“Allah is hidden away from His slaves by the veils of Fire, Darkness and Light.”

At the end Darami concludes that:

“The tradition of Jibraeel clearly indicates that Allah is behind the veil, and is thus seperated from His creation. So, if it were true that He was Omnipresent, everywhere, then the existence of the veil would be meaningless!”

The scholars from the School of the Caliphs have relied upon the literal meaning of the word *Hijab*, which appears in some verses of the Qur’an.

For example, in the verse quoted above from ash-Shura:51, the phrase “from behind a veil” is a metaphor implying that Allah speaks unto man in a manner that the voice is heard without the speaker being seen. There is no material veil there to separate Allah from the Prophets, for in that case, Allah will be confined to a location - an idea totally foreign to the pristine concept of God in Islam.

Another verse is:

“Nay on that Day, they will be veiled from their Lord.”
(Al-Mutaffifeen:15)

Imam Fakhruddin Razi in his *Tafseer* (31/96 Egyptian publication), says:

“It is important that we interpret this verse to mean that the disbelievers will be prevented from seeing Allah, by the veil.”

And then he seeks substantiation from Maqatil who said:

“The veil explains that after the Resurrection and the Reckoning, the disbelievers will not see Allah. Of course the believers will see Him.”

The Imam of Maliki school, Malik bin Anas says:

“Since Allah will be behind a veil, concealed from His enemies, He will manifest His glory unto His friends so that they see Him.”

And Muhammad bin Idrees, famously called Imam Shafee, explains the verse:

“Since Allah will conceal Himself from His enemies to manifest His

anger, it is evident that He will reveal His Person to those who are His friends as a mark of His Pleasure.”

Ibn Katheer, in his *Tafseer*, has adopted the interpretation by Imam Shafee! Let us now turn to what Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have explained.

IS THERE A VEIL?

1. Shaikh Sadooq in his *Tawheed* relates an interesting anecdote from Haarith Al-Aawar. He says once when Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) entered the market place, he heard a man who was standing with his back towards him, say the following words:
“By Him Who is behind the veil beyond the seven skies!”

Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) hit him on the back and asked:
“And who is veiled beyond the seven skies?”

The man said:
“O Amirul Mu’mineen, I meant ‘Allah’ was behind the veil.”

Ali (A.S.) said:
“That indeed is a grave error. There is no veil or curtain separating Allah from His creatures. He is everywhere!”

The man asked Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.) if there was any act of repentance necessary to expiate the sin he had committed.

Ali (A.S.) said:
“The expiation is to understand clearly and unequivocally that He is with you wherever you are!”

The man asked again:
“Do I have to feed the poor for expiation?”

Ali (A.S.) said:
“That is also not applicable here, because you have sworn by the name of one who is not your Lord.”

Observations

- i. In the above anecdote, we find a man has taken an oath which is heretic. Imam Ali (A.S.) guides him to compensate the lapse by understanding *Tawheed* in its true form. He impresses him with the fact that there are no veils, no concealments - and Allah is Omnipresent.
 - ii. When the same man asks if he has to expiate for the oath he has taken, Imam Ali (A.S.) reiterates by telling him that the subject of his oath was not Allah - and therefore the oath had no validity whatsoever.
2. Shaikh Sadooq in his *Tawheed* reports that Imam Ridha (A.S.) was asked to explain the following verse:
“*Nay on that Day, they will be veiled from their Lord....*”
(Al-Mutaffifeen:15)

He said:

“No particular place can be exclusively attributed to Allah in a sense that He occupies it, and from there assumes a veil to separate Himself from His creatures. The true meaning of the verse is that: ‘... they will be deprived of the blessings of their Lord’.”

Then he was asked about the following verse:

“Are they waiting until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds with the angels” (Al-Baqarah:210)

Imam (A.S.) said:

“This does not have to be construed literally. The thing which will come out of the dark clouds will be His Order, His Penalty. It is a metaphor in which the opposite noun has been omitted in the genitive construction.”

One tends to imagine that the scholars from the opposite school, after having alienated themselves from the Ahlul Bait (A.S.), have fallen a willing prey to the Jewish and the Christian interpolations,

with a total disregard to what the Holy Qur'an itself teaches. In the chapter al-Nisa, verse 108, Allah says:

"They hide from men, but they cannot hide from Allah, Who is in their midst when they plot by night, by words which He does not approve. And Allah compasses round all that they do."

There is another verse in the chapter of Al-Mujadillah, verse 7, which says:

"Do you not see that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and on the earth? There is not a secret consultation between three, but He is the fourth among them, not between five but He makes the sixth. Nor between the fewer or more but He is in their midst, wherever they may be! Then He will tell them the truth of their conduct on the Day of Judgement. Surely Allah has full knowledge of all things."

So where is the veil? Where is the idea of separation from the creatures? It was this notion which in the end led them to believe that Allah will be seen physically, by the believers, on the Day of Judgement!

CHAPTER 9

SIGHTING OF ALLAH

The School of the Caliphs has discussed the sighting of Allah in three ways, they are:

- i. Allah seen by our Prophet (S.A.W.) during his lifetime;
- ii. Allah seen by the believers on the Day of Judgement, before they enter the Paradise;
- iii. Allah seen by the believers during their stay in the Paradise.

Ibn Khuzaimah in his *Tawheed* reports from Ibn Abbas, Abu Dhar and Anas traditions supporting the belief that our Prophet (S.A.W.) saw Allah. For example, from Ibn Abbas he reports that Allah blessed Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) by taking him as a friend, Prophet Musa (A.S.) by speaking to him, and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) by showing Himself to him. In most of such traditions, Ikramah, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas, has been mentioned. Ikramah is well-known for attributing false traditions to Ibn Abbas.

On the other hand, we know that Ibn Abbas was among the closest Companions and students of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (A.S.). It is unthinkable that Ibn Abbas would state anything which went against the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.). The fact is that Ibn Khuzaimah has been under the influence of Ka'b al-Ahbar whom he quotes as follows:

*“Allah has divided His two special blessings between Musa and Muhammad - the gift of direct communication and the gift of seeing Allah. So, Muhammad (S.A.W.) saw Him twice, and Musa spoke with Him twice.”*¹

It must be mentioned that certain scholars and Companions opposed

1 *Tawheed* by Ibn Khuzaimah - p. 202.

to the School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have vehemently refused to believe that our Prophet (S.A.W.) ever saw Allah. Among them is Ayesha, the Prophet's wife. But Ibn Khuzaimah insists on the veracity of the tradition from Ka'b al-Ahbar and refutes Ayesha.

In the following lengthy tradition from Abu Huraira, quoted by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Suyuti, we come across a strange drama which is supposed to unfold itself on the Day of Judgement.

Abu Huraira says:

"Some people said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Shall we see our Lord on the Day of Judgement?'"

The Prophet (S.A.W.) answered: 'Do you doubt seeing the sun on a clear day?'"

They said: 'Not at all, O Prophet!'"

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: 'Do you doubt seeing the full moon on a clear night?'"

They said: 'Not at all, O Prophet!'"

The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: 'So shall you see Him on the Day of Judgement! Allah will gather all the people and then announce: 'Everyone to follow the deity he or she worshipped.' Some will follow the sun, and other the moon, a few will go behind the devils. Then the people of my Ummah, together with the hypocrites will remain steadfast. Allah will then show Himself, with a face which will be strange to them, and say: 'Here I am, your Lord!'"

They will exclaim: 'We seek refuge with our Lord from you. We will stay here till our Lord comes. And when He comes, we will recognize Him.'

Then Allah will turn up with the familiar countenance and say: 'Here I am, your Lord!'

They will say: 'Yes, You are our Lord, indeed.'

Then they will follow Him, and Allah will put in place the bridge over the Hell."

Then Abu Huraira proceeded further to give details about the Hellfire, and to explain how the believers will be finally saved from chastisement. Then he says:

"A man will be left behind with his face towards the raging fire. He will say: 'O Lord! The bad odour of Hell has poisoned me, and its flames have scorched me. Turn my face away from the Hell.'

He will repeat his entreaty several times, till Allah will say: 'If I grant your desire, will you ask for more?'

The man will say: 'By Your Honour, I will not beseech any more.'

Allah will turn his face away from the Hellfire. Immediately, the man will say: 'O Lord, take me near the gates of heaven.'

Allah will say: 'Did you not promise that you would not ask for anything else? Woe to you, O son of Adam! You are deceitful.'

But the man will persist. So Allah will say: 'Will you ask for anything else, if I granted you that?'

The man will say: 'No, by Your Honour, I will not.'

And he will make a solemn pledge; and Allah will take him to the gates of Paradise. When he will see the blessings abound in the Paradise, he will maintain silence and stand in awe for a while, and then entreat: 'O Lord, allow me to enter into the heavens.'

Allah will say: 'Did you not pledge to seek nothing more? Woe to you O son of Adam! You indeed are deceitful.' But the man will persistently pray and beseech till Allah will laugh - and the laughter will imply His permission. When the man will finally step into the heaven, he will be granted all his desires, till there will be nothing to desire.

Then Allah will say: 'All this, and twice over is for you'."

Abu Huraira added:

"That man will be the last one to enter the Paradise."

This is an example from the authentic sources of the School of the Caliphs. Now let us examine what the Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have said.

ALLAH CAN NOT BE SEEN

The Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have consistently taught us that the question of visibility and sighting does not apply to Allah. He will not be seen on the Day of Judgement, and He cannot be seen here on the earth either.

1. Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) narrates that:

"One of the learned men from the People of the Books came to Imam Ali (A.S.) and asked: 'O Ali, have you ever seen your Lord during your worship?'"

Imam Ali (A.S.) replied: 'I have never worshipped the One I have not seen!'

The learned man asked: 'And how did you see Him?'

*Imam Ali (A.S.) replied: 'Remember, the physical eye cannot grasp Him. It is the heart which sees Him with true faith.'"*²

2. Safwan bin Yahya says that Abu Qurrah, one of the narrators of

2 Tawheed by Sadooq - p. 109.

the School of the Caliphs, sought permission to see Imam Ridha (A.S.). After being admitted to Imam's presence, he submitted several questions related to Islamic jurisprudence. Then he said: *"We have a tradition which says that Allah divided His blessings between Musa (A.S.) and Muhammad (S.A.W.). With the former He spoke, and to the latter, He showed Himself."*

Upon hearing this Imam Ridha (A.S.) said:

"If that was so, then who relayed the following messages from Allah:

a. *"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision."*
(al-Anaam:103)

b. *"And they shall not compass Him with their knowledge."*
(Taha:110)

c. *"There is nothing whatever like unto Him."* (Ash-Shura:11)

Was it not Muhammad (S.A.W.) who relayed the divine message?"

Abu Qurrah said:

"Yes, indeed, it was Muhammad (S.A.W.) who conveyed."

Imam Ridha (A.S.) said:

"How can one who has taught mankind that Allah cannot be seen, encompassed, likened or compared, suddenly turn back and say: 'I have seen Him, grasped Him, and that He has a human resemblance?' Do you feel no shame or scruple to impute to the Prophet (S.A.W.) things which even the disbelievers did not ascribe?"

Abu Qurrah said:

"But the Qur'an says that on the night of Ascension the Prophet (S.A.W.) saw Him."

Then he recited the following verse:

"For indeed he saw it at a second descent." (Al-Najm:13)

(Abu Qurrah maintained that the pronoun 'it' should mean 'Him,' i.e. Allah.)

Imam Ridha (A.S.) said:

*"You must read the later verse which explains what the Prophet (S.A.W.) saw. In verse 18 of the same chapter, you find:
'For truly did he see some of the greatest signs of His Lord.'
(Al-Najm:18)*

The signs of Allah are not Allah. Allah cannot be seen - for no vision can grasp Him and no knowledge can compass Him."

Abu Qurrah protested:

"So do you consider our traditions as lies?"

Imam Ridha (A.S.) said:

"Any tradition that goes against the Qur'an is a lie, and has been falsely ascribed to the Prophet (S.A.W.), I give no credence to it."

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT FROM ABU HURAIRA

- a. That Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgement, as radiant and distinct as the sun or the moon in a clear sky;
- b. That Allah will appear first with an unfamiliar face, with the result that Muslims will not be able to recognize Him. He will reappear with a familiar countenance and then gain acknowledgement from the believers;
- c. That a man facing the hellfire will go on deceiving Allah three times;
- d. That Allah will laugh, the way we mortals do.

Abu Huraira seems inclined to describe Allah as a clown who changes his face to entertain. One wonders what particular features

3 *Tawheed* by Sadooq - pp. 110-112.

of His face will the Muslims recognize? Had they seen Him before? If so, when? Was it when He was Young, Old, or totally wrecked by age?!

Even the Old and the New Testaments do not have such a fanciful story. It is an old woman's tale told to the child during the long wintry nights! But the effect of these concoctions have been tremendous. The Wahabis and many other scholars from the School of the Caliphs still maintain that Allah will be seen physically on the Day of Judgement.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ELUCIDATION FROM THE AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

- a. That vision can grasp only those things which have a body or matter;
- b. Any existence which does not have a body, (e.g. soul, light, electricity, etc.) cannot be seen. In fact, the question of sighting such an existence is irrelevant;
- c. Allah is not a body or matter. He is the Creator of matter. One can 'see' Him through His creation;
- d. There is nothing whatsoever like Him, so He cannot be compared to any form;
- e. Any report which goes against the Holy Qur'an must be discarded as false.

CHAPTER 10

MEETING WITH ALLAH

THE COMPANY OF ALLAH IN THE PARADISE

In spite of the foregoing, it is sad and intriguing to find that the School of the Caliphs has let its imagination run wild about meeting Allah in the markets of *Jannah*!

1. Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi have quoted the following conversation in their *Sunan*. Abu Huraira once said to Saeed bin al-Musayyab: *"I pray that we may both meet each other at the market of Paradise."*

Saeed queried:

"Is there a market in Paradise?"

Abu Huraira said:

"Of course, there is! The Prophet (S.A.W.) informed me that when the people of Paradise will enter it, they will be stationed according to the degree of excellence in their deeds. Then they will be permitted to visit Allah for a duration of time equal to a Friday on earth. So they will visit Him, and He will show them His Throne, and manifest Himself in one of the gardens of Paradise.

Then He will set up for them platforms or pulpits of light, pearls, sapphires, chrysolite and gold. The lowliest among them will be seated on the mounds of musk and camphor, not at all feeling that people on the pulpits are better positioned!"

Abu Huraira then continued:

"Then I asked the Prophet (S.A.W.): 'O Messenger of Allah! Shall we see our Lord?'

He said: 'Do you doubt viewing the sun or the full moon?'

We said: 'No, we do not.'

He said: 'So shall you no doubt see your Lord, the Most High. Everyone will be admitted to His Presence individually, and then to one He will say: O so and so! Do you remember the day you committed such and such act?'

He will say: 'O Lord, did You not forgive me?'

Allah will say: 'Of course, I did. It is the expanse of My Mercy which has brought you to this station!'

Then a cloud from above will overwhelm them, and there will be an incessant rain of perfume, the fragrance of which they will have never experienced before.

Allah will say: 'Rise to enjoy My blessings and take whatever you wish.'

Then we will come to a market teeming with the angels. In it will be things the like of which we have never seen or heard or imagined. We will pick up whatever we want - no buying, no selling! The people will visit each other, the high meeting with the low, and indeed there will be no lowliness, for each will be best clad, and in the best disposition. There will be nothing to grieve about.

Then we will go back to our places, where we will be met by our own spouses. They will say: 'Welcome, you have returned more handsome and sweeter than you were when you left us!'

We will say: 'We deserve to return with these blessings because we have sat today with our Lord.'"

The origin of this tale can be found in the following report from Ka'b al-Ahbar, quoted by Darami in his book refuting the *Jahmiyyah* sect: Ka'b says:

“Allah will not survey the heaven except to say: ‘Be fragrant for your inmates.’ Then there will be an increase in sweet smell all around. And for a time equal in measure to Idd day on the earth they will hang about in the gardens of Paradise. Allah will then appear, and they will see Him. A strong wind laden with the aroma of perfume and musk will blow, and their Lord will grant them their wishes. Then they will repair to their families, where their beauty and handsomeness will have augmented seventy folds.”¹

Abu Huraira managed to make this narration more colourful by using his own fertile mind. Apart from such traditions, we find that the scholars from the School of the Caliphs have taken great liberties in interpreting certain verses of the Qur’an in a manner to suit their fancy.

2. The Holy Qur’an says:

“To those who do right is a good reward and more; no darkness or shame will cover their faces! They are the people of the Paradise, in which they will abide forever.” (Yunus:26)

In this verse, the phrase “and more” mentioned after the reward, has been taken to mean the privilege of physical encounter with Allah! Tabari quotes from four Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.), while Suyuti manages to quote from nine, that the Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

“‘The more’ promised by Allah in this verse means that Allah will show Himself to them.”²

Further Abu Musa Ash’ari narrates the following from the Prophet (S.A.W.):

“On the Day of Judgement, Allah will send a herald to the people of the Paradise, proclaiming in a voice loud enough to reach the ears of all inmates: ‘Allah has promised you good and more ...’ The good is the Paradise which you have occupied - and the more is to view the glorious face of the Merciful.”

1 Darami’s *al-Radd ala al-Jahmiyyah* - p. 53.

2 Tabari’s *Tafseer* - 11/73, 76; Suyuti’s *Tafseer* - 3/305, 306.

Tayalasi, Ahmad Hanbal, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Tabari, Suyuti and other commentators and tradition reporters have quoted the following from Shuayb:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) recited the verse: ‘To those who do right is a good reward and more’ and then said:

When the people of the Paradise will have flocked in the gardens and when others will have been consigned to the eternal Hellfire, a herald will announce: ‘O people of the Paradise, there is yet an unfulfilled promise which Allah will now fulfil!’

The people of the Paradise will ask: ‘And what is the remaining promise? Has not Allah made our Balances heavy, our faces bright? Has he not distanced us from the Hell?’

Upon hearing this, Allah will lift up the veil, and lo! they will see Him. By Allah! Of all the blessings given by Allah, there is nothing more blissful and joyful than the privilege of seeing His face.”³

Ibn Katheer in his *Tafseer* of the same verse says:

“Besides the good reward given to the virtuous, they will have the blessing of seeing His glorious face. And this has been supported by Abu Bakr Siddiq and others”

Here he gives a list of fifteen, among whom some are the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.), and others are of a latter era. Even Fakhruddin Razi tends to subscribe to the same notion when he discusses this verse. He says:

“We have made it clear that the words in this verse clearly indicate that ‘the more’ refers to the sighting of Allah.”⁴

3. There are some traditions ascribed to the Prophet (S.A.W.) in relation to the following verse:

“Some faces. that Day, will beam, ‘looking’ towards their Lord.”
(al-Qiyamah:22-23)

3 *Sahih Muslim* - p. 163; *Sunan* of Ibn Majah - 1/67; *Musnad* of Ahmad - 4/332, 333; *Tafseer* of Tabari - 11/75; *Tafseer* of Suyuti - 3/305.

4 *Tafseer Kabeer* - 17/78, 79.

Anas bin Malik reports from the Prophet (S.A.W.):

“On the Resurrection, the male believers shall see Allah every Friday, and the female believers shall see Him on the Idd days of Fitr and Adha.”

In another tradition reported by Anas bin Malik we find him say:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) recited the verse and then explained: ‘By Allah! This verse has not been abrogated. They will indeed see Allah. They will be given enough provision to eat and drink, and an ample supply of perfume and adornment. And the veil between them and their Lord will be raised so that they see their Lord and the Lord sees them. This is what Allah meant when He said:

‘And they will have their sustenance therein, morning and evening’.”
(Maryam:62)

Suyuti has recorded the following from Jabir who says:

“The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: ‘Allah will grant public viewing to all men, but for Abu Bakr Siddiq there will be a special manifestation’.”⁵

Abdullah bin Omar ascribes the following to the Prophet (S.A.W.):

“The lowest station in the Paradise will enable the believer to receive the blessings of Allah from the distance of one thousand years. And the highest station will be where they will see the face of Allah at every dawn and dusk.”

Tabari has reiterated the same belief in his *Tafseer* and Fakhruddin Razi in his *Tafseer Kabeer* says:

“There can be no other meaning of this verse except the physical sighting.”

Even the recent commentator and scholar from the School of the Caliphs, Sayyid Qutub (died 1386 A.H.), insists in his *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* that there will be a physical encounter with Allah on the Day of Judgement, and then proceeds to exalt the experience with all the grandiose. He writes:

5 *al-Durr al-Manthoor* - 6/292.

“This verse makes a brief mention of an experience which words cannot explain, and minds fail to comprehend. That will be when the virtuous will enter an unprecedented state of spiritual elevation, and the Paradise itself with all its bounties and joys will seem immaterial and small. The beaming faces will be looking straight into the glorious face of Allah! What an elevation? What a level of Majesty!

When a man views the wonders of creation, around himself and also within; a moonlit night or pitch darkness, or a breaking dawn, he is overwhelmed with joy and inspiration! What will be his state, then, when he will see, not the wonders of Allah, but the splendour and beauty of Allah Himself? Why should his face not beam with brightness when he sees Him?

Man cannot reach that state unless he has purified himself from all the impediments, a state so sublime that it has to be devoid of all doubt and blemish - with no desire but to see Allah, the Most High.

Why do some people deny themselves this overwhelming light, this inexplicable pleasure? Why do they entangle themselves in scholastic exercises and rational debates to decide on a subject which is beyond human reason?

Let us then rise to receive this overwhelming ecstasy and pure delight and allow our imagination to compass the true state as much as possible. This aspiration itself is a great bounty, to be supersede by nothing but the actual sighting of the Glorious Face.”⁶

We will now present the teachings of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) in respect of the subject discussed above.

THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

1. Abd us Salaam bin Swaleh reports through Abu al-Swalt al-Hirawi from Imam Ridha (A.S.). He says: I asked Ali bin Musa

6 *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutub - 1st Edition from Cairo - 29/208-210.

al-Ridha (A.S.):

“What do you say about the idea propagated by certain people of Hadith that the believers will visit their Lord in their heavenly abode?”

Imam (A.S.) said:

“O Aba al-Swalt, Allah blessed His Prophet (S.A.W.) with excellence over all His creation, including the prophets and angels; and has put the obedience of the Prophet (S.A.W.) on the same footing as His Own obedience, and the sighting of the Prophet (S.A.W.) here and in the hereafter as His Own sighting.”

Allah says in the Qur'an:

“He who obeys the Prophet (S.A.W.), obeys Allah.” (al-Nisa:80)

And again He says:

“Surely, those who pledge allegiance to you actually pledge allegiance to Allah - the hand of Allah is over their hands” (al-Fath:10)

And the Prophet himself said:

“Whosoever visits me during my lifetime or after my death, has the reward of visiting Allah.”

“The status of the Prophet (S.A.W.) in the heavens will be the highest, and this is why seeing him or visiting him will be tantamount to visiting Allah, the Most High.”

Abu al-Swalt says:

“O son of the Prophet (S.A.W.). how shall we interpret the tradition which says: ‘Whosoever professes that there is no God but Allah, shall see the face of Allah?’”

Imam (A.S.) said:

“O Aba al-Swalt, whoever ascribes a physical face to Allah, commits blasphemy. The face denotes His Prophets and Apostles, peace be upon them - because they lead us to the direction of Allah, His faith,

His way and His cognition. This is the meaning when Allah says in the Qur'an:

'All that is on the earth shall perish, but the face of your Lord will abide ...' (al-Rahman:26-27)

'Everything shall perish, except His face.' (al-Qassas:88)

The greatest and most gratifying reward for the believers will be to meet with the Prophets and Apostles of Allah on the Day of Judgement. The the Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

"Those who hate my Ahlul Bait (the inmates of my house) and my descendants, shall not meet me, nor shall I meet them on the Day of Judgement."

He also said addressing his Companions:

"There are some among you who will never see me after they have parted from me on the earth."

"O Aba al-Swalt! Allah, the Most High is not described in terms of place or space. Nor can He be grasped by vision or imagination!"⁷

2. Ibrahim bin Abu Mahmood reports that Imam Ridha (A.S.) was asked about the following verse:

"Some faces, that day, will beam, looking towards their Lord." (al-Qiyamah:22-23)

Imam (A.S.) said:

"The meaning is that their faces will beam with brightness, in expectation of divine reward."⁸

3. As for the following verse:

"To those who do right is a good reward and more ..." (Yunus:26)

We have three traditions from the Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.), each giving the same explanation as the other.

7 Tawheed by Sadooq - p. 117-118.

8 Tawheed by Sadooq - p. 116.

- a. Amir ul-Mu'mineen, Imam Ali (A.S.) said:
"The good reward in this verse refers to the Paradise, and 'the more' refers to the extra return on the earth."
- b. Imam al-Baqir (A.S.) said:
"The verse talks of an additional measure, meaning that which Allah will give during the lifetime on earth; not accounted for on the Day of Judgement."
- c. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.) said:
"The more' will be from this world, that with which Allah blesses the believers during their lifetime and is not deducted from the eternal reward hereinafter. So, Allah conjoins for them both rewards, because of their good deeds."

It is surprising that the scholars from the School of Caliphs have always chosen to interpret the verses of Qur'an according to the Jewish or the Christian notion of God. Let us take an example of the word *Nadhirah* that has been translated by them as 'looking'.

Raghib in his *Mufradat al-Qur'an* says that *Nadhirah* has two meanings:

- i. The onlooker;
- ii. The expectant; the one who waits.

And the Holy Qur'an itself has used the word to denote "expectation." In the Chapter of *al-Naml*, verse 35, we read:

"And I am going to send him a gift and wait to find with what the ambassadors return."

The Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have made it clear that the verse does not speak of physical sighting of Allah. It is giving a graphic description of how the believers will beam with expectation for their rewards.

Similarly, when they have elucidated the word *Ziyada*, "the more" used by Allah, they have based their interpretation on the Quran itself.

Allah says:

“For those who do good, there is good in this world; and the House of the hereafter is even better. And excellent indeed is the House of the righteous.” (al-Nahl:30)

To interpret ‘the more’ as sighting of Allah was a far-fetched thing. In the next chapter, which is a concluding one, we will present a brief comparison of the two schools, and prove that purest Islamic teaching, unsullied and untainted, comes from Ahlul Bait (A.S.).

CONCLUSION

***Tawheed* - the Principle and Fundamental Article of Islamic Faith**

ALLAH AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SCHOOL OF THE CALIPHS

- i. He has a human face, and limbs and organs!
- ii. He occupies the Throne, and His body exceeds the chair by four fingers from all sides!
- iii. The Throne is placed on eight mountain goats!
- iv. The Throne clatters under the weight of Allah, like a new saddle which rattles under the weight of a rider!
- v. At times, he descends to the lower heaven and invites His creatures to pray and beseech!
- vi. He will present Himself on the Day of Judgement, first in a strange face and then with a familiar countenance!
- vii. Some of the believers will recognize their Lord when they will see His shin!
- viii. Allah will visit the believers individually, meet with them and also converse with them in the Paradise!

They call it *Tawheed*

Ibn Khuzaimah, a leading scholar in this group, compiles traditions supporting the above mentioned notions, and names the book as *The Book of Tawheed*!

Bukhari in his *Sahih* has a chapter in which he quotes the above-mentioned traditions and then names the chapter as *Chapter of Tawheed*!

So does Muslim in his *Sahih*, and calls the chapter as *Chapter of Iman*!

These traditions mainly emanate from Abu Huraira and his Jewish Master, Ka'b al-Ahbar, and smack of Jewish idea of godhead. Therefore, we classify such traditions as interpolations from *Israiliyyat*. As a result, the School of the Caliphs subscribes to the anthropomorphic notions, and gives literal meaning to most of the verses of the Qur'an regardless of its metaphoric connotations.

FROM THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL BAIT (A.S.)

The School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) has taught us that Allah has no likeness unto Him. His is an Absolute Unity, and no limbs or organs, no space or limitation can be ascribed to Him. In so doing, the Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have given us the true meaning of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W.) eradicating all the erroneous notions which made their inroads from the Jewish and the Christian quarters.

The scholars of this school have reported from Ahlul Bait (A.S.), in their important works like *Tafseer* and the Book of Traditions. As a result, the pristine form of Islamic tenet has remained unprofaned.

It is now abundantly clear that had it not been for the untiring efforts of the Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) and their followers, the cardinal belief of *Tawheed* in Islam would have been totally lost. As opposed to Ahlul Bait (A.S.), there exists, sadly though, a group of Muslim scholars who have fallen a prey to the un-Islamic concept of *Tawheed*.

How fortunate are we to have adhered to the path of the Ahlul Bait (A.S.). They have indeed saved us from polytheism. So we offer our tribute to them by quoting from the *Ziyarat-e Jamea*.

"Salaam upon you, the Inmates of the House of Prophethood, and the treasure holders of knowledge!"

Salaam upon the leaders unto true guidance, and the glowing light in darkness,

Salaam upon the stations of divine cognition!

Salaam upon those who call unto Allah, and those who are pure in His Tawheed,

Allah chose you as helpers in His Way, interpreters of His Revelation, and pillars of His Tawheed,

You invited people to His Way with wisdom and beautiful preaching,

May Allah ever keep me steadfast, as long as I live, on your friendship, your love and your religion,

And put me among those who follow in your wake, walk on your path and benefit from your guidance.”

* * *

NOTES:

1. References given in this book are from the original Arabic texts. Readers wishing to check the references should therefore refer to the Arabic texts and not to their translations.
2. This book is twelfth in the same series. Earlier tracts have not yet been translated. The Author prepared the series in the form of lessons for advanced students of Islamic history and comparative studies.
3. The term *School of the Caliphs* appearing in this book refers to the school of thought other than that of the Imams of Ahlul Bait (A.S.).
4. This book gives a glimpse into the characteristic traits of the two great schools in Islam, discussing the first and most important article of faith, *Tawheed*.

The upshot of this effort is to prove that the role of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) in preserving the purity of Islamic teachings has been noteworthy. Muslims cannot help remain beholden to them forever.



"I don't pray for His acceptance of my amaal as much as I pray for the opportunity to serve. And the day He grants me a new opportunity to serve, I believe the previous ones have been accepted. And I hope till my last breath the opportunities are there and when the Almighty calls me back, I will be able to tell my Lord, Thank You for giving me life, Thank You for giving me life."

The School of Ahlul Bait (A.S.) has taught us that Allah has no likeness unto Him. His is an Absolute Unity, and no limbs or organs, no space or limitation can be ascribed to Him. In so doing, the Ahlul Bait (A.S.) have given us the true meaning of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W.) eradicating all the erroneous notions which made their inroads from the Jewish and the Christian quarters.

As opposed to Ahlul Bait (A.S.), there exists, sadly though, a group of Muslim scholars who have fallen a prey to the un-Islamic concept of *Tawheed*. In this English translation of two chapters regarding *Tawheed*, from the seminal work on the subject by Allamah Askari, all such anthropomorphist concepts appearing in Hadith literature have been brilliantly refuted.



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