

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Selections from Peak of Eloquence (Nahjul Balagha) Imam Ali (P)

Chapter 1

In Praise of God, His Oneness, and a description of His Divine Attributes.

Introduction to Chapter 1. Islam's concept of God is strictly monotheistic. According to a western orientalist, "Islam is a fanatically monotheistic religion." The concept of Oneness of God in Islam is derived from the revealed scripture, the Qur'an, and from the teachings of the prophet of Islam, the recipient of divine revelations. No other religion, dogma, or scripture comes close to the exacting standard of monotheistic Deity as held by Islam. This is, in part, responsible for people from varied backgrounds becoming interested in the religion of Islam. Imam Ali bin Abu Talib *(P) lived 1400 years ago at the advent of Islam in Arabia. He was a cousin of Prophet Muhammad (P), the Messenger of God. He was privileged to have the Prophet raise him and teach him. Additionally, he was a scholar of Arabic language and had deep knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. The following is a collection of his various sermons and discourses on the topic of God. The Sermons were delivered over several years. The excerpts are presented here in an abridged and topical format in modern English and re-phrased where necessary. It is hoped that the reader will find this presentation enjoyable as well as enlightening.

His Praising and Glorifying God.

Praise is due to God, Whose worth cannot be described by the describer, Whose bounties cannot be counted by enumerators and claim (to His obedience) cannot be fulfilled by those who attempt to do so. The height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate Him, and the divings of understanding cannot reach Him; for His description no limit has been laid down, no eulogy exists, no time is ordained and no duration is fixed. (Sermon 1)

Exalted is God, Whom the limits of endeavors cannot reach and intelligence cannot find. He is the First, having no limits, lest He would be confined within those limits. Nor does He have an end, such that He could cease (to exist). (Sermon 93)

He is not pre-occupied by (attending to) a matter. Passage of time does not bring any change in Him, He is not confined to any one place and the tongues are unable to describe Him. The number of the drops of water (in the ocean), the number of stars in the sky, or the (whereabouts of the) currents of winds are known to Him, so are the movements of ants on the rocks, or the resting place of grubs in a dark night. He possesses the knowledge of the place where the leaves falls, and He is aware of the stealthy movements of the eyes. (Sermon 177)

Praise be to God Who is praised by all His creation, Whose hosts are over-powering and Whose Exaltation is High. I praise Him for His successive favors and His abundant gifts. His forbearance is much, so that He forgives, and He is just in His decisions. He has knowledge of the present and the past. He designed the creation with knowledge, and brought it into existence with His unlimited intelligence, without need for learning, without following any previous example, without committing any mistake, and without any help. (Sermon 190)

* The abbreviation (P) represents "peace and blessings" as a token of respect

I praise God seeking completion of His Blessings, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from disobeying Him. I invoke His help and I depend on Him alone. He, whom He guides, does not go astray; He, with whom He is angry, loses His protection. He, whom He supports, gets his needs fulfilled. He is most weighty of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured. (Sermon 1)

Oneness (Unity) and uniqueness of God

Foremost in religion is the acknowledgement of Him; the perfection of acknowledging Him is to bear witness of Him, the perfection of bearing witness of Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure. The perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute.

Thus, whoever attempts a description of God, recognizes His like, and who recognizes His like, regards Him two; and who regards Him two, recognizes parts for Him; and who recognizes parts for Him mistook Him; and who mistook Him pointed at Him; and who pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him; and who admitted limitations for Him, enumerated Him (denied His unity).

Whoever said, "In what is He?" held that He is confined; and whoever said "on what is He?" held He is not on something else (confined Him). He is a Being, but not through phenomenon of coming into existence. He exists, but not from non-existence. He is with everything, but not in physical proximity. He is distinct from everything, but not separated (by distance). He acts, but without the need of movement or need of instruments. He sees, even when there is none to be looked at from among His creation. He is One, such that there is none with whom He may keep company or none whose company He may miss. (Sermon 1)

I stand witness that there is no god but God, the One (God). No one is like Him. (It is) a testimony that has been tested in its frankness and its essence is our belief. We shall cling to it as long as we remain (alive), shall store it, facing the tribulations that overtake us, because it is the firm determination of Belief, the first step towards good actions and Divine pleasure. It is the means to keep Satan away. (Sermon 2)

It is my belief that He is the First and He is the Manifest. I seek guidance from Him, as He is close (to me), and He is the Guide. I seek His help, as He is Mighty and He subdues. I depend upon Him, as He is the Sufficer and the Supporter. (Sermon 82)

He, who assigns to Him (different) states, does not believe in His oneness, or he, who likens Him (to any of His creation), has not grasped His reality. He, who pictures Him in his imagination, has meant (some one) other than Him. He works but not with the help of tools. He assigns measures but not with the need of deliberation. He is rich but not through acquisition (of wealth). (Sermon 185)

He is One, but not by in numerical sense. He is everlasting without a limit. He exists, but without a support. He is big, but not in a physical sense. He is big in position and great in authority. (Sermon 184)

Divinely Revealed Attributes of God

Praise be to God, for Whom one condition does not precede another condition, such that He may be considered "First or Last," or He may be considered Manifest before being Hidden. Everyone enjoying honor is humble before God, and everyone (considered) powerful is weak compared to Him. Every owner (individual) is (in fact) owned by Him.

Every one knowledgeable other than God is a learner (student). Every one with skills may lose the ability (at times), except for Him. Every one with hearing, except Him, is unable to hear faint and distant sounds, while loud sounds may make him deaf. Every seer, other than Him, is blind to hidden or tiny objects. Every thing that He made manifest is insignificant compared to Him, and everything hidden by Him is incapable of becoming manifest.

What He created was not to fortify His authority, nor for fear of the consequences of (passage of) time, nor fearing an agitating partner, nor a competing rival. Rather, all creatures are nourished by him and are humbled (before Him). He is not inside anything, so that it may be said that He exists therein, nor is He

separated from anything, so it be said that He is away from it. The act of creation did not fatigue Him and no disability afflicted Him. No misgiving ever occurred to Him in His resolves. His verdict is certain, His knowledge is definite, and His governance is overwhelming. He is sought at times of distress, and one needs to be God wary even when bounties abound. **(Sermon 64)**

Praise be to God, who is High above all things, and is near (to the creation) through His bounties. He is the Bestower of all rewards and distinctions, and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His increasing Mercy and His abundant Bounties. **(Sermon 82)**

Praise be to God whom withholding (bounties) does not make rich and Whom munificence and generosity does not make poor. Everyone who gives, loses (to that extent), except Him. He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts. The whole creation is dependant on Him (for sustenance). He has guaranteed their livelihood and ordained their sustenance. He has prepared the way (to success) for those who turn to Him and those who seek what is with Him. He generously grants the requests and bestows bounties freely even when not requested. He is the First, such that nothing existed prior to Him. He is the Last, such that nothing will remain after Him. He prevents the eyes from seeing or perceiving Him. (The passage of) Time does not affect Him whatsoever, nor cause any change in Him. He is not in one particular place, to require Him to move (from one place to another).

He is so powerful that, when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the limit of His power, the mind tries to reach Him in the depths of His realm, the hearts long to grasp realities of His Attributes, and intellect attempts to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the pitfalls of the unknown; they would all be turned back. They would return defeated, acknowledging that the reality of His essence cannot be grasped by such random efforts, nor can His sublimity be comprehended by the thinkers. **(Sermon 90)**

He is the Creator, but not through activity or toil; He is the Hearer, but not by means of any physical organ; He is the Seer, but not by raising the eyelids, He is the witness, but not by proximity; He is Distinct, but not by measurement, He is Manifest, but not by visualizing, and He is Hidden, but not in bodily sense. He is Distinct from things (created), because He overpowers them and dominates over them, while created things are distinct from Him because of their subjugation to Him and because they turn to Him.

He, who describes Him, limits Him. He, who limits Him, numbers Him. He, who numbers Him, denies that He is Eternal. He who said, "how" sought a description for Him. He who said "where" bounded him. He is the Knower, even though there be nothing to be known. He is the Sustainer, even Though there may be nothing to be sustained. He is the all Powerful even Though there may be nothing to be overpowered. **(Sermon 151)**

About His Might, Greatness, Sublimity and Omniscience

Praise be to God, Who pervades all hidden affairs, and towards Whom all manifest things point. He cannot be seen by the eye of a seer, but the eye, which does not see Him, cannot deny Him, while the mind that proves His existence cannot perceive Him. He is so high in sublimity that nothing can be more sublime than Him, while in nearness, He is so near that no one can be nearer than He. However, his sublimity does not distance Him from anything of His creation, nor does His nearness bring them on an equal level to Him. He has not informed the (human) intellect about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him. Therefore, he is such that all signs of existence bear proof of Him, until the denying mind also believes in Him. God is sublime beyond what is described by those who compare Him to things, or those who reject Him (His Godhood). **(Sermon 47)**

Everything submits to Him and everything exists because of Him. He is the wealth of the poor, honor of the lowly, energy for the weak, and shelter for the oppressed. Whoever speaks, He hears him, and he, who does not speak, He knows his secrets. The livelihood of everyone depends on Him, and to Him every one will return.

(O' God!) The eyes have not seen You, but You existed before Your describers were created. You did not create due to (feeling of) loneliness, nor did You make them for any gain. He, whom You apprehend cannot escape You. He, who disobeys You, does not decrease Your authority, and he, who obeys You does not add to Your authority, he, who disagrees with Your judgment cannot change it, and he, who

turns away from Your command, cannot do without You. Every secret is manifest to You, and every unknown (to others) is known to You. (Sermon 108)

Praise be to God who is the proof of His existence and His eternity through His creation, and the similarities in the creation are the proof that there is nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot approach Him, because of the (gulf) that lies between the Maker and what is made, the Limiter and what is limited, and the Sustainer and what sustained. (Sermon 151)

Praise be to God, who is such that it is not possible to know His reality, because His greatness is beyond the intellect. Therefore, intellects cannot find the way to approach His realm. He is God, the True and the revealer of Truth. Intellect cannot comprehend Him by assuming limits for Him, since in that case shape would be attributed to Him. Imagination cannot fathom Him by fixing quantities for Him, for in that case body would be attributed to Him. He created without any example, without the advice of a counsel, or the assistance of a helper. His creation was completed by His command, and it complied obediently. (Sermon 154)

One cannot imagine Him subjected to movements, or of having limbs or possessing (human like) faculties. It cannot be said about Him "whence (from where?); and no time limit can be set for Him by saying "till". He is apparent, but it cannot be said "from what". He is hidden, but it cannot be said "in what". He has no (physical) body that can perish, nor is He veiled (in the sense) to be enclosed or behind something. He is not near to things by way of physical nearness, nor is He away from them by way of physical separation.

The gazes of the eyes are not hidden from Him, nor the repetition of words, nor the view of hillocks, nor the (sound of the) tread of a footstep in a dark night, nor in the deep gloom that has the shining moon casting its light upon it, or the effulgent sun that comes in its wake. (Sermon 162)

If He gives away all that the mines of the earth and the treasures in the mountains, (including) gold, silver, pearls and coral from the oceans; it would not affect his munificence, nor diminish what He possesses. He has such treasures and bounties, which will not decrease by providing the demands of the creatures. He is such a generous Being, Whom giving to the beseechers does diminish (His bounties), nor the persistent asking of beseechers makes Him tight fisted. (Sermon 90)

This world and the next world have submitted to Him, and the skies and earths have surrendered to Him as well. The trees worship Him (unknown to man) in the morning and evening, fire is produced from them (by His Will), and they produce ripe fruits (by His Will). (Sermon 132)

He is not pre-occupied by (attending to) a matter. Passage of time does not bring any change in Him, He is not confined to any one place, and the tongues are unable to describe Him. The number of the drops of water (in the ocean), the number of stars in the sky, or the (whereabouts of the) currents of winds are all known to Him; so are the movements of ants on rocks, or the resting places of grubs in a dark night. He possesses the knowledge of the place where the leaves falls, and He is aware of the stealthy movements of the eyes. (Sermon 177)

Praise be to God, He is such that human senses cannot perceive Him, no place can contain Him; the eyes cannot see Him and veils cannot cover Him. The proof of His eternity is His act of originating and bringing His creation into existence. There are similarities among His creation, but there is no similarity between Him and any of His creation. He is true in His promise. He is too exalted to be unjust to His creation. The creation (itself) provides evidence of Him. The limits of the capabilities and occurrence of mishaps among the creation are in contrast to the Eternity of the Creator. (Sermon 184)

God speaks, but no through speech and without the need of tongue. He hears, but without the need of ears or listening aids. He remembers, but does not need to memorize. He determines, but without the need of mental faculties. He loves but without suffering sentimentally. He entertains dislikes and gets angry without experiencing emotion of pain. (Sermon 185)

Praise be to God who has displayed His Authority, Glory, Sublimity and Might through the wonders of His creation, that dazzle the eyes and the minds, that are far removed from appreciating the reality of His Attributes. I stand witness that there is no god but God, (I do so) by virtue of belief, certainty, sincerity and conviction (Sermon 197)

Praise be to God who is (high) above any similarity to His creatures, He is beyond the words of those who attempt to describe Him. He displays the wonders of the management of His affairs and He is shielded from the imagination of people by His Glory and Honor. He is such, that gloom does not affect Him, nor does He seek illumination from light. Night does not overtake Him, nor does the day pass over Him (to affect Him in any manner). His comprehension is not through sight, and His knowledge is not through acquiring. **(Sermon 212)**

He joins diverse things and separates things that are joined together. He is not confined by any limits (of time and space). He is far beyond the sight of the seers. **(Sermon 185)**

God is aware of the calls of the beasts in the forests, the sins that people commit in privacy, the movement of the fish in the depths of ocean, and the rising of the water by tempestuous winds **(Sermon 197)**

Had they pondered over the greatness of His power and the vastness of His bounties, they would have returned to the right path (of acknowledging Him as the Deity) and would fear the punishment (for rejecting Him); but (some) hearts are afflicted and (some) eyes are stained. Do they not see the tiny creatures He brought into existence? How He strengthened their bodily functions, gave them hearing, sight, made their body parts, and tiny and delicate bodies? **(Sermon 184)**

He brought into existence His creation without (following) any example and He did not need any assistance.

He created the earth and suspended it without effort, held it in position without support, raised it without pillars, protected it against destruction. He fixed mountains on it like pegs, solidified the rocks, caused streams to flow and opened wide valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer from any flaw.

When He intends to create something, He says to it, "Be" and "it is", but this is not through a voice that strikes (the ears). The act of act of creation (of the universe) was through His "Word," "Be" and it was. **(Sermon 185)**

He brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion, and made firm the shaking earth with rocks (mountains). **(Sermon 1)**

Praise be to God Who is recognized without being seen and Who creates without experiencing any difficulty. The monarchs submit to Him, acknowledging His Might.

He exercises superiority over great and mighty through His generosity. It is He, who made His creation to populate the earth and sent His messengers to warn of the pitfalls, to present to good examples, to advise them of their shortcomings. The messengers came to warn the (humanity) about what is lawful and what is unlawful, the reward and punishment (Paradise and Hell) with God for the obedient and the rebellious respectively. I Praise to Him, for He likes His creation to Praise Him. He has fixed for everything a measure, for every measure set a time limit, and for every time limit there is documentation. **(Sermon 182)**

About God's Knowledge

His knowledge does not leave anything (outside His realm), that is (preserved) in a document, which does not omit anything. We believe in Him, like the belief of one who has seen Him (through eyes of the heart) and has secured the promised rewards (of the hereafter); a belief, the purity whereof keeps one away from associating partners with God, and a belief with conviction that removes all doubts. **(Sermon 113)**

God has knowledge of hidden things

The knowledge of hidden things means, the knowledge of the Day of Judgment, as explained in this verse.

Verily, God is He, with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour... (Qur'an, 31:34)

Therefore, God alone knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, generous or miserly, mischievous or pious, and who will be the doomed to Hell and who will be in the company of the Prophets in Paradise. The knowledge of the hidden things is not known to anyone, save God, except the knowledge that God passed on to Prophet Muhammad (P). (Imam Ali said that he was privy to that knowledge, transmitted to him by the Prophet). (Sermon 127)

His own limbs will be witness against man

God, the Glorified, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. He knows all the details, and His knowledge covers them. Your limbs are a witness, the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to witness your wrongdoings), and when you are alone, He is with you. (Sermon 198)

God's Knowledge

His knowledge is without learning from any one, and He ordains all matters (without the need to) reflect upon it or to ponder. (Sermon 212)

God did not give birth to a son, nor was He born of any one

He does not have a form, and thus there is no possibility of any change whatsoever. He did not beget, lest He be regarded as having been begotten. He is not begotten; otherwise, He would be subject to limitations. He is too exalted to have a son. He is too sublime to have consorts. Human imagination, perception and senses cannot reach His essence to assign Him a numerical quantity. He is beyond understanding and beyond imagination. He does not pass from one state to another. Passage of nights and days do not cause Him to age. Light and darkness do not affect Him. (Sermon 185)

Praise be to God, He is the First before every first and the Last (Eternal) after every last. His being the First necessitates that there is no (other) first before Him and His being the Last necessitates that there could be no other last after Him (He and only He is Eternal). I do stand witness that there is no god but God, both openly as well as secretly, with my tongue and with my heart. (Sermon 100)

He does not share in His Glory with any one else. He did not beget anyone to inherit from Him. Time did not precede Him. Any increase and decrease do not occur in Him. However, He has manifested Himself to our understanding through our having observed His firm control and strong decree (over His creation). (Sermon 181)

God will bring end to this world, and then resurrect as He wills

He will end the earth, as it presently exists, so that everything on it will become non-existent. Bringing end to the world after its creation would not be anything strange (for Him), than was its initial construction. How could it be? Even if all His creation, including all humanity using their intellect, were to join forces to create (even) a single mosquito, they will not be able to do so. They will be bewildered and frustrated. Their plans and powers would fail, and they would end up disappointed and tired, acknowledging their failure, admitting their inability to accomplish it, and realizing that they were too weak (even) to destroy it (the mosquito, against God's will).

Surely, after the end of the world, God, the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else except Him. He will remain after the extinction of the world, just as He was before its creation... At that moment time, periods, place and intervals would cease to exist. There will remain absolutely nothing except God, the One, and the All-powerful. To Him is the return of all matters. The creation was not due to its own power; and prevention of their extinction was not in its power either. If any of the creation had the power to prevent its destruction, then it would have continued to exist indefinitely.

When He made a thing, the creation of it did not cause Him any difficulty, and the act of creation did not fatigue Him. He did not create in order to increase His authority nor for any fear of loss or harm, nor to seek help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any adversary, nor to extend His domain, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek company.

He will end all the creation, not because of any worry that has overcome Him in regards to its upkeep and administration, nor because He will derive any pleasure from it. The (long) duration of earth's existence does not make Him weary. However, God, the Glorified, has nurtured it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command, and perfected it with His power. Then after its destruction, He will resurrect it, but not because He needed it, nor to attain any honor or power. (Sermon 185)

God's Mercy, Forgiveness and bounties

Praise is due to God in Whose Mercy no one loses hope, of Whose Bounty no one is deprived, in Whose Forgiveness, no one is overlooked and for Whose worship no one is too great. His Mercy never ceases and His Bounty is never exhausted. (Sermon 45)

Know, O' creatures of God, that He has not created you for naught and has not left you (completely) free. He knows the extent of His favors and the amount of His bounties to you. Therefore, ask Him for success and for the attainment of your desires. Beseech Him and invoke His generosity. No curtain hides you from Him, nor is any door (of communication) closed between you and Him. He is present at every place, at all times, and every moment. He is (at all times) with every human and jinn kind. Giving does not cause diminution of His bounties. (Sermon 194)

God's verdict is judicious and full of wisdom. Gaining His pleasure achieves His protection and Mercy. His decision is based on knowledge and His forgiveness is with forbearance.

O' my God! Praise be to You for what You take and what You bestow; what You cure; or with what You afflict; a Praise that is most acceptable to You, the most liked by You and that is most dignified; a Praise which is equal to Your all Your creation; a Praise that reaches You; and a Praise that is everlasting. (Sermon 159)

Time, space and motion do not affect God

Presence or lack of motion do not occur in Him; how can it occur? It is He, who has caused motion to come into existence (thereby time came into existence). How could He be subjected to something that He himself set in motion? How could something appear in Him that He himself created? Had it been so, He, Himself would be subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible (into parts), and His reality would have been prevented from being Eternal. If He had a front, then He would also have a back. He is far above being affected by things that affect other than Him. (Sermon 185)

God is far above human intellect and far above what people ascribe to Him

I stand witness that he, who likens You (O' God) with the separateness of the limbs, or with the joining of them to the body, did not acquaint his inner self with knowledge about You, and his heart did not secure conviction to the effect that, "You have no partner." Those who liken You to their idols, and attribute apparel for You in their imagination, and (those who) attribute to You parts of body in their own imagination, are wrong and misguided. I stand witness that whoever equated you with anything from among Your creation, erected an equal to You, and whoever does that is an unbeliever according to the unambiguous verses in (the scripture Qur'an). You are beyond the confines of human intellect and imagination. (Sermon 90)

You are everlasting, without an end. You are the highest aim (of the seekers), there is no escape from Your (governance), and You are the promised (point of return). In Your control is the forelock of every creature, and to You is the return of every living thing. Glory be to You! How magnificent is Your creation that we see, but how insignificant is this compared to Your Might. How awe striking is Your realm that we perceive, but how humble this is compared to what is hidden (and unknown) to us. How abundant are Your bounties of this world, but how insignificant are they compared to the bounties of the next world. (Sermon 108)

Eyes cannot see Him, but hearts can perceive Him through belief. He is near to things but not physically. He is far from things but not in a physical sense. He intends, but without any prior preparation. He molds things, but without the help of limbs. He is subtle, but not due to being hidden. He is great but without

haughtiness. He sees, but it cannot be attributed due to eyesight. He is Merciful, but at the same time, He is free of any infirmity. Faces bow low before His greatness and hearts tremble out of awe of Him. (Sermon 178)

One individual cannot distract Him from paying attention to others, one voice does not distract Him from listening to other voices, and granting of one favor does not prevent Him from granting other favors. Anger does not prevent Him from His Mercy, Mercy does not prevent Him from (just) punishment; His concealment does not prevent Him from being manifest and His being manifest does not prevent Him from being concealed. He is near and at the same time far. He is high (above) and at the same time low (near). He is manifest and at the same time concealed. He is concealed yet well recognized. He lends out, but no one lends Him anything. He has created (the things of) creation without devising. (Sermon 194)

He manifests Himself by means of His authority and greatness. He is (all) aware by virtue of His knowledge and understanding. He has power over every thing in the earth by virtue of His sublimity and greatness. None defies Him, opposes Him, or overpowers Him. No swift-footed creature can outstrip Him. He does not need any sustenance. Everything (in creation) bows to Him and is humble before His greatness. None can flee away or escape from His authority. He has no peer and no equal. (Sermon 185)

About God's Eternity

I stand witness that there is no god but God, He is One, and He has no partner, He is the First, such that nothing existed before Him. He is the Last (Eternal), such that there is no End to His existence. Division or splitting into parts of His entity is not possible. Hearts cannot comprehend His nature. Eyes cannot envision Him. (Sermon 84)

Praise be to God, Who exists from before the coming into existence of the seat of His throne (the universe), the sky, the earth, the jinn or the human beings. He cannot be perceived by imagination nor measured by understanding. He, who begs from Him does not divert His attention (from others), nor does giving away cause Him diminution (in His bounties.) He does not see by means of an eye, nor can He be confined to a particular place. He cannot be said to have companions. He does not create with (the help of) limbs. He cannot be perceived by senses. His being is beyond the estimation of humans. (Sermon 181)

His Being preceded (the creation of) time. He existed (when) nothing existed (whatsoever); this is an indication that He is above them all. By His creating the sense organs, it is clear that He has no need of such sense organs. By the (existence of) opposites in His creation, it becomes known that He does not have an opposite, and by the existence of similarities among the created things, it becomes known that there is nothing in His creation that is similar to Him. He has made the light opposite of the darkness; the brightness opposite of the gloom; the dryness opposite of the moisture, and the heat opposite of the cold. He causes affinity among antagonistic things.

It cannot be said that He came into being after He had been in non-existence, because in that case the attributes of the created things would be assigned to Him; there would then, remain no difference between Him and His creation, and He would then have no clear distinction over His creation. Thus, the Creator and the created would be on an equal footing, and the initiator and the initiated would be considered at the same level. (God is High, above these conjectures). (Sermon 185)

God spoke to Prophet Moses

It is He, Who spoke to Prophet Moses with clarity, and showed him His great signs without the use of limbs or the organs of speech. O' you who exert yourself in describing God, if you are serious, then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael, or the host of angels who are close (to Him) in the receptacles of sublimity; their heads are bowed down (before Him), and their wits are perplexed as to the limits (if any) of the Creator, the most High. These qualities belong to one having a form, limbs, and that succumbs to death after reaching its end. There is no god but He. He has lighted every darkness with His effulgence and has covered every light with darkness. (Sermon 181)

His advice to Praise and thank God for His favors

I advise you, O' people, to be God wary and to praise Him abundantly for His favors, bounties and trials upon you. See, how He chose you for His favors and dealt with you with Mercy. You committed sins openly, but He kept them hidden. You behaved in a way to incur His punishment, but He allowed you more time (to repent). (**Sermon 187**)

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Syed Akhtar