

1. To Know God

- Concept of God, His Oneness, and His Divine Attributes
- God's Bounties and Blessings
- The Creation of Heaven, Earth, and Creation of Adam

[Concept of God, His Oneness and His Divine Attributes](#)

[Introduction](#)

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (p) lived 1,400 years ago, during the advent of Islam in Arabia. He was a cousin of Prophet Muhammad (s), the Messenger of God. He was privileged to have the Prophet raise him in his own household and teach him. Additionally, he was a scholar of the Arabic language and had deep knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an.

The following is a collection of his various sermons and discourses on the concept of God. The sermons were delivered over several years. The excerpts are presented here in an abridged and topical format in modern English and rephrased 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 Whose claim cannot be fulfilled by those who attempt to do so. The height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate Him, and the depths 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 beginning), 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)

Praise be to God, Who is praised by all His creation, Whose hosts are overpowering, and Whose Exaltation is High. I praise Him for His successive favors and His abundant gifts. His forbearance is great, 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 capacity, without need for learning, without following any previous example, without committing any mistake, and without any help.

(Sermon 190)

Praise God, seeking completion of His Blessings, submitting to His Glory, and hoping for amnesty for disobeying Him. I invoke His help and I depend on Him alone. He whom He guides does not go astray; he who evokes His anger has no protection. Whomever He supports, he gets the needs fulfilled. He is the weightiest of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured.

(Sermon 1)

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 all Your creation; a Praise that reaches You and a Praise that is everlasting.

(Sermon 159)

His Advice to the People to Praise and Thank God

I advise you, O people, to be God-conscious 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)

Oneness and Uniqueness of God

The foremost (duty) in religion is the acknowledgment of God; the perfection of acknowledging Him is to bear witness to Him; the perfection of bearing witness to Him is to believe in His Oneness; the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as pure; and the perfection of regarding Him as pure 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 creates His like; and whoever creates His like regards Him as two; and whoever regards Him as two recognizes parts for Him; and whoever recognizes parts for Him mistook Him; and whoever mistook Him faulted Him; and whoever faulted Him admitted limitations

for Him; and whoever admitted limitations for Him enumerated Him (i.e., denied His oneness and uniqueness).

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. He is a being, but not through the phenomenon of coming into existence. He exists, but not by coming out of nonexistence. He is near to 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 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. 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)

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 (someone) other than God. 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 in a numerical sense. He is everlasting, without a limit. He exists, but without 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

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 (all troubles). I depend upon Him, as He is the Sufficer and the Supporter.

(Sermon 82)

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 is (in fact) owned by Him.

Everyone knowledgeable other than God is a learner (student). Everyone with skills may lose those abilities, except for Him. Everyone 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.

Everything 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 some agitating peer, nor any 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 that it may 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 resolve. His verdict is certain, His wisdom is perfect, and His governance is overwhelming. He is sought at times of distress, and one needs to be God-conscious even when bounties abound.

(Sermon 64)

Praise be to God, who is High above all things, yet 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 compassionate generosity.

(Sermon 82)

Praise be to God, Who is not rich by withholding bounties, and Whose munificence and generosity do not make (Him) poor. Everyone who gives, loses (to that extent), except Him. He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts. The whole creation is dependent 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 other than Him. He prevents the eyes from seeing or perceiving Him. (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 (to another place).

He is so powerful that, when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extent of His power, when the mind tries to reach Him in the depths of His realm, when the hearts long to grasp the realities of His attributes, and when 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.

(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 a 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.

God speaks, but not through speech and without the need of a 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 or pain.

(Sermon 185)

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 He, 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 extent 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.

(Sermon 47)

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

(O God!) The eyes have not seen You, but You existed before Your describers were created. You did not create (the whole of creation) due to (any 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 everything unknown (to others) is known to You.

(Sermon 108)

If He (God) gives away all that the mines of the earth contain, the treasures in the mountains, the gold, the 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 for the demands of the creatures. He is such a generous being, Whom giving to the beseechers does not diminish (His bounties), nor does the persistent asking of beseechers makes Him frugal (tightfisted).

(Sermon 90)

This world and the next world have submitted to Him, and the skies and earth 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)

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 by virtue of belief, certainty, sincerity, and conviction.

(Sermon 197)

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)

Presence or lack of motion does not occur in Him; how can it? It is He who has caused motion to come 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 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 (those) other than Him.

(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 God) and would fear the punishment (for rejecting Him), but hearts are afflicted and eyes are closed. 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 their 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, and 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 creation was through His Word, "Be!" and it was.

(Sermon 185)

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 the great and mighty through His generosity. It is He who made His creation to populate the earth and sent His messengers to warn of pitfalls, to present good examples, to advise them (the people) of their shortcomings. The messengers came to warn (humanity) about what is lawful and what is unlawful, the reward and punishment (i.e., Heaven and Hell) of God for the obedient and the rebellious, respectively. I praise 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); it 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 of which keeps one away from associating partners with God, and a belief with conviction that removes all doubts.

(Sermon 113)

His knowledge is without learning from anyone, and He ordains all matters without (the need of) reflection upon it or pondering.

(Sermon 212)

He is not preoccupied by (attending to) any matter. The 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 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 the dark night. He possesses the knowledge of the place where the leaves fall, and He is aware of the stealthy movements of the eyes.

(Sermon 177)

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 doomed to Hell and who will be in the company of the Prophets in Paradise. The knowledge of the hidden things¹ is not known to anyone, save God, except the knowledge that God passed on to Prophet Muhammad (s).

[Note: Imam Ali also said that he had that knowledge that was transmitted to him by the Prophet (s).]

(Sermon 12)

God, the Glorified and 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 (even) when you are alone, He is with you.

(Sermon 198)

God Did Not Give Birth to a Son, nor was He Born of Anyone

He does not have a form, and thus there is no possibility of any change whatsoever. He did not beget, such that He would be considered to have been begotten. In that case, 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. One cannot 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)

God Will Bring an 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 nonexistent.

Bringing end to the world after its creation would not be anything strange (for Him) any more 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 would not be able to do so. They would 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, places, 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 things. The creation was not due to its own power, and prevention of its extinction is not in its power either. If any of the creation had the power to prevent its own 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 nothing, 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 in every moment. He is (at all times) with every human and jinn² kind. Giving does not cause diminution of His bounties.

(Sermon 194)

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 existed 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 nonexistence, 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.

(Sermon 185)

God's Bounties and Blessings

Introduction

Our bodies, the faculties of sight, speech, smell, and hearing, are a gift from God to us. Our bodily functions, the physiology, the chemistry, the circulation, etc. are gifts from God to us. Our intellect, knowledge, power of reasoning, and our faith are His gifts. Our parents, offspring, kin, friends, etc., are His gifts to us. Our environment, the ecosystem, the sun, the moon, the solar system, and everything that makes our little planet livable are His gifts. All of them, and many more beyond our knowledge, are bounties of God to humankind. We lack the ability to understand, count, or thank Him for all His bounties. What follows is Imam Ali's (p) unique perspective in acknowledging and seeking the bounties of God, while at the same time not overlooking our final abode, the Hereafter.

Reminding People of God's Bounties

God has made ears to (listen and) remember what is important, made eyes to see (the truth) instead of remaining blind (to the truth).

(Sermon 80)

He has provided you sustenance, surrounded you with His knowledge, promised rewards, and has bestowed upon you bounties and gifts.

(Sermon 82)

God, the Creator and Provider

Praise be to God, who is acknowledged but without being seen, Who creates without needing to ponder, and Who is Ever Existent. He was there when no sky or heaven existed, nor a gloomy night, nor a peaceful ocean, nor mountains with broad pathways, nor earth with plains and fields, nor any creatures. He is the Originator of all creation, its Master, Owner, and Provider. The sun and the moon move (obediently) according to His will (His laws).

He distributes sustenance, keeps count of the deeds, and keeps count (even) of breaths. He is aware of stealthy glances and what is hidden in the bosoms. He knows the places of stay (of His subjects) in the loins (of the fathers) and in the wombs (of the mothers), and when they reach life's end (the resting place

of the soul).

(Sermon 89)

[Share Your Bounties and Pray for More \(Advice to His Son\)](#)

If you find around you such poor, needy, and destitute people who are willing to carry your load (i.e., burden of your wealth) for you, as far as to the Day of Judgment, then consider this a blessing. Engage them and pass your burden on to them, i.e., distribute your wealth amongst the poor, destitute, and the needy. Help others to the best of your ability, and be kind and sympathetic to fellow human beings. Thus, relieve yourself from the heavy responsibility and liability of having to submit an account on the Day of Judgment of how you have made use of the bounties. Thus, you may arrive at the end of the journey (i.e., the afterlife) light and fresh, and have enough provision (in store) for you there (i.e., rewards for having done your duty to God and humanity in your worldly life).

Think it over, that by simply granting you the privilege of praying to Him for favors and mercies, He has handed over to you the keys of His treasures. Whenever you are in need, you should pray, and He will confer His bounties and blessings.

(Letter 31)

Verily, it (death) will come to you as the most important and the greatest event of your life; it might carry blessings and rewards for you, or it might bring in its wake punishments and sufferings. It is for you to decide whether to proceed towards perpetual peace and blessings, i.e., Paradise, or towards eternal damnation, i.e., Hell.

(Letter 27)

[Prayers for God's Bounties](#)

Praise be to God, whose bounty never misses and whose favors cannot be repaid.

(Sermon 48)

They (the servants of God) are allowed time to seek deliverance, shown the right path, and allowed to live (on earth) and seek (His) **favors**. The darkness of doubts has been removed from them, and they are let free in this period of life as a training place in order to make preparation for the Day of Judgment, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to secure benefits and provision for the place of (everlasting) stay (the next world).

(Sermon 82)

Praise be to God to Whom is the return of all created beings and the end of all matters. We render Him praise for the greatness of His generosity, the charity of His proofs, the increase of His bounties and favors, a praise which may fulfill His rights, repay Him with thanks, take (us) near His rewards (of the Hereafter), and that will increase in His kindnesses.

(Sermon 181)

The Creation of Heaven, Earth, and Creation of Adam

Introduction

God brought forth His creation out of nothing. The animals, the flora, the fauna, the insects, the microbes, the elements of nature, all were created for our benefit. God says in the Scripture³ that He subjected the sun, the moon, and the cattle to us, and He instructs us to glorify and thank Him in return. Imam Ali (p) enumerates here some of the creations, examines them from his perspective, expresses wonderment, and sends praises and gratitude to God in beautiful words. It is truly amazing that Imam Ali (p) made statements regarding science, astronomy, biology, physics, and origin of life with details that were unknown to man 1400 years ago. Hundreds of years later science verified these statements.

God brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion, and made firm the shaking earth with mountains.

(Sermon 1)

The Creation of the Universe

He originated the creation most initially, without need of undergoing reflection, without use of any experiment, and without needing to make any movement. He allotted all created things their time limits, bestowed upon them their variations, features, and their properties. He possessed full knowledge of all of the creation before bringing it into existence, knew well their limits, confines, propensities, and intricacies.

When the Almighty created the openings in the atmosphere, the vastness of the firmament, and the strata of the winds, He made water to flow into it, whose waves were stormy and whose surges leapt one over the other. He loaded it on dashing winds and mighty typhoons, ordered them to shed it back (as rain), gave the winds control over the force of the rain, and designated its limitations. The wind blew under it while water flowed furiously over it. The Almighty God created the wind, designated its location, intensified its movement, and sent it everywhere. Then, He ordered the wind to raise up the deep waters and to intensify the waves of the oceans. Therefore, the wind churned it like the churning of curd, until its level was raised and the surface was covered with foam. Then the Almighty raised the foam up to the wind and the vast firmament, and made the seven heavens. He made the lower heaven a stationary surge and the upper heaven a protective ceiling without any pillars to support it or nails to hold it together. Then, He decorated the lowest heaven with stars and bright meteors, and then He suspended the shining sun and the shimmering moon, making the revolving heavens and rotating firmament.

(Sermon 1)

Greatness of God; the Creation of the Universe

It is through God's greatness and His unique power of innovation that He made solid, dry earth out of the

water of the fathomless, dashing ocean. Then He made it into layers and separated them into seven heavens. Then they were made stationary (fixed their position) by His command. They were obedient to Him and submitted in awe and fear of Him.

He also created stones, rocks, hills, and lofty mountains. He put them in their respective positions and made them firm and stationary. Their peaks rose high above the earth, while their roots remained deep. In this way, He raised the mountains above the plains and fixed their foundations in the vast expanse underneath, wherever they stood. He made their peaks high and their bodies lofty. He made them like pegs deep into the earth. Consequently, the earth became stable; otherwise, its surface would give in, sink with its inhabitants, or move and shake.

Therefore, glorified is He who stabilized the earth, restrained the flowing waters, and solidified it. In this way, He made the earth a cradle for His creatures and spread it for them in the form of flat plains over the deep ocean. He made it steady, so it may not move. He made strong winds move the water, and made the clouds to draw up water from it.

“Verily in this there is a lesson for him who fears (God).” (Qur’an 79:26)

(Sermon 210)

More on the Creation of the Universe

In creation, the big, the delicate, the heavy, the light, the strong, and the weak are all equally important. Similarly, the sky, the air, the winds, and the water are equally important. Therefore, look at the sun, the moon, the vegetation, the plants, the night, and the day. Observe the springing of the streams, the gigantic mountains, their high peaks, the diversity in nature, and the variety of languages. Then, woe be to him who disbelieves in the Creator. He who believes that there are fields but no cultivator, and there is no maker of the diverse shapes in creation, does not possess a logical argument for what he believes. Can a building be constructed without a builder?

(Sermon 184)

About Creation

God originated creation without any prior example. He showed us the realm of His Might and demonstrated wonders that speak of His Wisdom. The proof of His creative power and His wisdom is in the wonderful things we see. His creation is an argument in His favor, and it guides us towards Him. Even an inanimate creation guides us towards Him, as though it “speaks” in its silence.

(O God), I stand witness that he who imagines You with having limbs or a body does not have any knowledge of You, and his heart does not show conviction that You have no partner. Those who liken You to their idols and imagine you to wear apparel like creatures, they are in manifest error. I stand witness that whoever compares You with anything from Your creation makes an equal for You, and whoever does that is an unbeliever according to unambiguous verses and clear arguments in Your Book

(The Qur'an). (I stand witness that) You are God, Who cannot be comprehended by the limit of (human) intelligence, nor do You suffer any change of condition or alteration of state by any stretch of the imagination.

(Sermon 90)

The Magnificence of Creation

Praise be to God, the Creator of humankind. He spread the earth, He makes streams to flow, and He makes vegetation to grow. His primal existence has no beginning, nor does His eternity have an end. Foreheads bow to him and lips proclaim His Oneness. He set the limits of things at the time He created them. He kept Himself separate from any likeness (to His creation).

(Sermon 162)

Among the proofs of His creation is the creation of the heavens that are suspended without pillars and are stable without support. He beckoned them and they responded obediently and humbly with promptness. If they had not acknowledged His Godhood and obeyed His command, He would not have chosen them to be the place for His throne, the abode of His angels, and the destination for the pure words and the righteous deeds of His creatures.

He has made the stars in the skies as signposts by which the travelers on the earth are guided. The gloom of the dark curtains of night does not block their light, nor do the veils of the dark night have the power to block the light of the moon when it spreads. Glory be to God, from Whom is not hidden low regions of the earth or the high mountains, even when the gloom of the dark night shrouds them. The thundering of clouds on the horizons of the skies, or the sparks of lightning in the clouds, or the falling of leaves blown away from their places by strong winds, or the downpour from the sky, they are not hidden from Him. He knows where the raindrops fall and where they collect, where the grubs leave behind their trails, or where they drag themselves. He knows what livelihood would suffice a mosquito, and what a female bears in the womb.

(Sermon 181)

About the Perfection in Creation

God has fixed limits for everything He has created and made the limits firm, and He has fixed its working and made the working delicate. He has fixed its direction, and it does not transgress the limits of its position nor fall short of reaching the end of its aim. It did not disobey when commanded; how could it, since all matters are governed by His Will? He is the Creator of varieties of things without the use of imagination, without the urge of an impulse, without (the benefit of) any experiment, and without needing a partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.

Thus, creation was perfected by His order; it bowed in His obedience and responded to His call. The laziness of a slug (insect) or the inertness of an excuse-finder did not prevent it from responding to His

call. Therefore, He straightened the things and fixed their limits. With His power, He created coherence in their contradictory aspects and joined those that were similar. Then, He separated them into varieties that differ in sizes, quantities, properties, and shapes. He made them firm and gave them shape as He willed.

(Sermon 90)

[A Description of the Creation of Adam](#)

God collected clay from hard, soft, sweet, and sour types of earth. Then He dipped it in water to purify it, and then kneaded it, adding moisture until it became gluey. From it, He carved an image with curves, joints, limbs, and segments. He solidified it until it dried up for a fixed time and a known duration. Then He blew into it of His Spirit, whereupon it took the form of a human being with a mind that governs him, an intellect that he makes use of, and limbs that serve him to change his position. He gave him wisdom that differentiates between truth and falsehood, and senses of taste and smell. He is a mixture of clays of different colors, cohesive materials, and differing properties like heat, cold, softness, and hardness.

(Sermon 90)

[Creation of Man \(continued\)](#)

Look at man, whom God has created in the dark wombs, behind layers of curtains (inside the abdomen of the mother), from a tiny sperm.⁴ Then, He made it into a shapeless clot, then into an embryo, then a suckling infant, then a child, and finally a man. He gave him a heart, a tongue to talk, and eyes to see with, so that he may take lesson (from whatever is around him) and reflect upon it, and pay heed to warning, and thereby abstain from evil.

(Sermon 90)

[More on Man's Creation](#)

O creature, who has been fairly created and who has been nurtured and cared for in the darkness of the womb! You were originated with the essence of clay and deposited in a quiet place for a known length and a fixed term.¹⁵ You moved within the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then, you were taken out from your place of stay to a place you had not been, and you did not have knowledge of the awaiting benefits. You were not aware as to who guided you to obtain nourishment from the breast of your mother. He who is unable to comprehend the intricacies of a physical being certainly cannot comprehend the (sublime) nature of the Creator.

(Sermon 162)

On the Creation of the First Man and the Deputation of the Prophets

When God had spread out the earth and enforced His commands, He chose Adam (peace be upon him) as the best of all of His creation. He made him to reside in Paradise and arranged for his sustenance, and He informed him of what was prohibited. He warned Adam that approaching the prohibited would be considered disobedience to God, and would jeopardize his status.

However, Adam disobeyed, and God knew it beforehand. Consequently, God sent him down to earth after (accepting) his repentance, in order to populate the earth with his (Adam's) progeny, and for him to serve as a prophet among His creatures.[6](#)

When God made Adam to die, He did not leave humankind without another person, who would serve as His proof and plea for His Godhood and be a link between humankind and God.

He ordained livelihoods, both plentiful and scarce. He distributed bounties sparingly as well as abundantly. He tested whomever He chose, with prosperity or with poverty, to know who was grateful and who was patient. He coupled affluence with destitution, safety with calamity, and pleasure with grief. He fixed their ages; some were long and others were short. He has ordained death for all.

He did not create from preexisting matter, [27](#) or from existing examples. He created whatever He intended and then He fixed its limits, and He shaped whatever He shaped and gave it the best shape. Obedience to Him is ordained; however, it is of no benefit to Him. He has knowledge of the past, the knowledge of the present, knowledge of what is in the high heavens, and what is (deep) in the earth.

(Sermon 90)

About Those who are Misguided

When a human being attains adulthood, he/she falls victim to self-conceit and becomes perplexed. He (a human) satisfies his desires, gets busy in fulfilling his wishes, and seeks the pleasures of the world. He does not fear the consequences of his deeds. He spends his short life in vain pursuits. He earns no rewards for the afterlife, nor does he fulfill obligations. Fatal illness overtakes him while he is still immersed in enjoyments, and he becomes perplexed. He passes the night in wakefulness due to grief and pain from the ailment. His relatives watch helplessly as he suffers the pangs of death. He dies burdened with his vices.

(Sermon 82)

About the Creation of the Ant

Do they not see the tiny beings He has created; how He designed their systems, gave them hearing, sight, and made for them body parts? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form; how it moves about and secures its livelihood. It carries the food grain to its hole in the earth and deposits it in place. It collects its sustenance during summer for use in winter. God has guaranteed its livelihood. God, Kind is

He, does not overlook its needs and does not deprive it of its sustenance. If you ponder over its anatomy and physiology, and its eyes on its head, you would be amazed at its creation.

Exalted is God, Who made it stand on its legs. No one helped Him in its origination and no one assisted Him in its creation. The reaches of your imagination will not grasp knowledge about Him, except that you will realize that the Originator of the ant is the same as the Originator of the date palm. God created everything with intricate details, and all living beings have a similar origin.

(Sermon 184)

About the Creation of the Bat

An example of His delicate and wonderful creation and great wisdom is seen in bats. They stay hidden in the daylight, although daylight reveals everything else. They are active in the night, whereas other creatures rest at night. Their eyes are dazed by the daylight. God has confined them to their places of hiding instead of going out in the daytime. Consequently, they shut their eyes in the day, treat night as a lamp, and forage in search of their livelihood. The darkness of night does not hinder their eyesight, nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from flight.

They obtain their sustenance at night. Glorified is He who has made the night as “day” for bats to seek livelihood and made the day for them to rest and sleep. He has given them wings without feathers. You can see the veins in the wings quite distinctly. The two wings are delicate yet sturdy, and just right for them to fly. When they fly, their young ones hang on to them for protection. The young stays with the parent wherever it goes, and does not leave until it becomes strong enough for flying. Glorified is God, Who creates everything (unique) without any precedent.

(Sermon 154)

About the Creation of the Peacock and Creation of Birds

God has accomplished wonderful creations, including the living, the lifeless, the stationary, and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His fine creative power and His Might that minds submit to Him in acknowledgment. His creation is proof of His Oneness. He has created birds of various colors and shapes that live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes, and on the peaks of mountains. They fly by God’s permission. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the open atmosphere. God brought them into existence from nonexistence. (He gave some of them) exotic shapes, and fashioned their bones and joints and covered them with flesh. He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colors by His Might and exquisite creative power.

The most amazing among them is the creation of the peacock. God created its male in the most symmetrical shape, gave it a variety of hues, and set them in attractive design. Its tail is (unusually) long. When it is close to the female, it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up to cast a shade over its head,

as if it were the sail of a boat. It feels proud of its colorful tail and swaggers with its movements.

I am telling you all this from (my own) observation. You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silver and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped design thereon to be of pure gold and of green emerald. They resemble a bouquet of flowers. If you likened them to ornaments, then they would be like gems of different color, studded in silver.

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings, self-admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. On the crown of its head, there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and the stretch up to its belly is as the hair dye of Yemen in color, or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror that looks as if it has been covered with a black veil. Because of its excessive luster and extreme brightness, it appears that a lush green color has been mixed with it. Along the openings of its ears, there is a line of shining bright daisy color like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background. There is hardly a hue that it does not have, its surface is polished, and its appearance is bright and silken. It is therefore like scattered blossoms that have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the sunshine of summer. However, when it casts its glance at its legs, it bemoans, displaying grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian crossbred cocks. At the end of its shin, there is a thorn (-like projection).

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away but grow again. They fall away like the falling of leaves from twigs, and then they begin to grow until they return to the state that existed before their shedding. The new hues match the previous ones, and all the colors are restored like the original. If you carefully examine its feather, it would appear like a red rose, surrounded by emerald green and then golden yellow in color.

(Sermon 164)

A Description of the Locust

God gave the locust two red eyes with two moonlike pupils, gave it tiny ears, fashioned for it a mouth, gave it two teeth for cutting, and two sickle like feet to grip with them. The farmers are afraid of locusts for their crops, because when they attack the fields (usually in large numbers); they gobble up the crop, despite the tiny size of the insect. The farmers are usually unable to drive them away.

(Sermon 184)

1. The knowledge of hidden things means 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)

2. 1 Creatures made of fire, hidden from humans. Satan belongs to this type of being.

3. 1 God says:

“He created the heavens and the earth with truth; exalted is He above what they associate (with Him). He created man (human) from a drop of sperm, and behold, he is an open disputer. He created cattle for you, wherein is warmth and many gains, and you eat thereof. There is comeliness in them for you when you drive them (home) and when you lead them forth

(to pasture). They bear your loads to lands, which you could not otherwise reach but with distress; verily, your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful. (He made) horses, mules, and donkeys that you may ride upon them and as a finery (adornment); and He creates what you do not know. It rests upon God to make (show) the straightway, and among them (people) are deviating ones; if He pleases, he would certainly guide you all aright. He it is who sends down water from the heavens for you; from it you drink, and by it trees (and vegetations) grow on which you pasture your cattle. With this (rain) He produces corn, olives, palm, grapes, and all (types of) fruits for you; verily there is a sign in this for people who reflect. He made the night, the day, the sun, and the moon (that are) of use to you; and the stars have been made of service (to you) by His decree; verily, there are signs in this for people who understand” (Qur’an 16:3–12).

“He is (the One) Who made the sun a radiation (shining bright) and moon a light, and measured stations for it that you might know the number of years and the reckoning (of time)...” (Qur’an, 10:5).

“He it is Who made the stars for you that you may be rightly guided (in travel) in the land and the sea...” (Qur’an 6:97).

4. 1 “He (God) creates you in the wombs of your mothers, one creation after another, in triple (layers of) darkness (abdominal wall, placenta, amniotic membrane)” (Qur’an 39:6).

5. 1 “Did We not create you of a despicable fluid (semen)? Then placed it in a safe place (uterus) till the appointed term (of pregnancy)” (Qur’an 77:20–22).

6. 2 God forgave Adam and Eve. God bestowed on them His Grace and pleasure before they were sent down to earth.

7. 2 God originated creation from nothing. He brought matter into existence from Non-existence.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/what-true-success-excerpts-peak-eloquence-nahjul-balagha/1-know-god#comment-0>