

Discussion of Monotheism (Tawhid)

"He is inside the things through His power, but He is not like something which is inside something. He is outside the things but He is not like something which comes out of something."

Question 1

Q.I: Please explain the above tradition. What do those who believe in unity of existence (*Wahdatul Wujud*) say and how to contradict them?

A: The object of this question is a sentence from the tradition of Amirul Momineen's (a.s.) mentioned in Usu/ Kafi. It explains that the Almighty Allah is free from all physical qualities. The complete tradition is as follows:

Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was asked, "How did you recognize your Lord?"

He replied:

"Through that with which He has introduced His self."

"How has He introduced Himself?" asked the inquirer.

Imam (a.s.) replied: "He is not alike any form and neither is he perceived by the senses. Nor can He be compared to anything. In spite of being far, He is near and despite being near, He is far. He is above everything and nothing is above Him. He is ahead of everything and nothing is ahead of Him. He is inside the things through His power, but He is not like something, which is inside something. He is outside the things but He is not like something, which comes out of something. Purified is one Who is such and other than Him is not like this and He is the beginning of everything." [1](#)

'He is inside the things' means that nothing and no part of a thing is empty of Him in the sense of His control over them· and His knowledge and His grace on them. '

But He is not like something, which is inside something' means that His being in them is not like entering of something or someone into a place, for example sitting on a throne, nor it is like the entrance of warmth or heat in water, because each of these is among the qualities of a body.

'He is outside the things ' means that He is beyond being near or close to anything. He is beyond anything that can be imagined and His attributes are dissimilar to all qualities of anything or anyone.

'He is not like something, which comes out of something', means that his being out is not the getting out of anything from anything; either from the viewpoint of being distant in space, area or environment. Thus divine existence and lordship over everything and tenseness of His nearness and the overwhelmingness of His coverage has no example. So also no there is no example of His separation from things.

Although to make it understandable instance can be given of the spirit and the rational soul of man. It is agreed that spirit is not a part of the body, but the body is under the control, and coverage of the soul which does not inhabit any particular part of the body. Thus it is both in the body as well as out of it. At the same time, it's being in and out is not like the entrance and exit of a thing as mentioned earlier.

Also the soul is nearer to the body from the viewpoint of control and coverage. So also 1t is away from the body from the angle of actual existence in a place. It is independent and clear of physical ailments.

It would be clear that the nearness and remoteness of the Almighty Allah concerning the entire universe is above the nearness and remoteness of the soul from the body as mentioned.

Since man is unable to perceive the nearness and remoteness of the soul from the body it is all the more impossible for him to understand the form of nearness and remoteness of God from anything.

"(So glorified be Allah) Whom the height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate, and the divings of understanding cannot reach..." [2](#)

As for the question of the unity of existence, those who believe in it are of various sorts. Some say that there is only a Single Existence and that all other numerous existences are mere manifestation and illuminations of Him. They give the example of the sea and its waves. However this is illogical in the view of intelligent people. How can a sensible person believe that all these existences, having have their own specialties are all only imaginations and that they are no more than a single existence?

The example of the sea and its waves etc. are blatantly against the dictum of: "He is not like anything and He is above all that they attribute to Him." Moreover such belief leads to going out of the pale of faith. That is why Agha Sayyid Mohsin Hakim (t.s.), one of the Maraja Taqlid (a religious authority), writes in the commentary on Urwathul Wuthqa, regarding the believers in oneness of existence (Wahdatul Wujud)[3](#):

"Since religion wants us to have a good opinion about everyone who is a Muslim, we are also required to have a good opinion of their words and deeds. Therefore we may say that the aim of those who believe

in oneness of existence (Wahdatul Wujud) is not what their words apparently show, which results in corruption including denial of the laws of Shariat although their real intention is correct. Otherwise the apparent words are against Shariat as mentioned earlier that:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِنْفُونَ

"*Glory be to your Lord, the Lord of Honor, above what they describe.*" (As-Saffat,37: 180)

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ

"*And they do not assign to Allah the attributes due to Him ...*" [4](#)(Al Anam 6:91)

Question 2: Refutation of Daur (dependence) and Tasalsul (postponement)

Q.2: Describe 'Daur' (dependence) and 'Tasalsul' (postponement) and please tell us how to reject them?

A: Daur means dependence of inquiring about a thing which also depends on knowing the former thing either directly or indirectly.[5](#) Like dependence of A on B in the meaning that B is the cause of A and vice versa. Thus everything is both a cause and effect of the other, which is obviously wrong and illogical, because it makes one to believe in the falsehood that a thing is at a time both existing and non-existing. For example, A as an effect of B makes it both absent and non-existent, because B is also its effect.

Tasalsul means postponement of the inquiry about a thing on unending matters and the evitable consequence of which is that at no point in time that thing and all matters related to it do not exist, because it is impossible for a thing to exist before the existence of its cause. So when the chain of the cause and effect continues without break, we will have to believe that neither of them becomes non-existent. Therefore, we say quite logically that all existent things must end at an existence that exists by itself, because everything needs it for its existence. Hence the chain of existence must end with the cause of causes, which is self-existent.[6](#)

Question 3: Impossible to see the Almighty Allah

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ لَنْ تَرَانِي وَلَكِنْ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنْ اسْتَقَرَ مَكَانَهُ نَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاً وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا ﴿٦﴾ فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ ثُبُّتْ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And when Musa came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: My Lord! show me (Thyself), so that I may look upon Thee. He said: You cannot (bear to) see Me but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me ..."
(Al A'araaf, 7: 143)

Question 3

Q.3: With reference to the above verse of the Holy Quran, Mamun Abbasid asked Imam Ridha' (a.s.): Prophet Musa (a.s.) was a prophet and he knew that God cannot be seen. Then how did he ask for the same? Please narrate the summary of the reply given by the Imam to Abbasid to convince him.

A: The summary of the reply given by the Imam, as mentioned in Uyun Akhbar ar-Ridha' is that he said: Prophet Musa (a.s.) did know that Allah cannot be seen by an eye as He is pure from being seen by an eye. But as he had informed his community that Almighty Allah had spoken to him, they said:

'We will not believe you unless we also hear the Word of God., So Musa (a.s.) took seventy persons and placed them at the foot of Mount Tur. He went up the hill and requested Allah to speak with him and make those people hear His words. So they heard the Word of God from six directions as He had created voice from the tree. But they insisted that would not trust him and testify that it was the Word of God unless and until they see God clearly. When they uttered this audacity, He sent down a thunderbolt on them, which killed them.

Musa (a.s.) said: 'My Lord, what shall I say when I return to Bani Israel? They will tell me: You took seventy men with you and got them killed.' God made them alive again. After being revived, they asked Musa (a.s.): 'O Musa, ask God to make Himself visible to you. Then tell us how is He? Then we would recognize Him as recognition deserves.

Musa (a.s.) replied: 'O people, Allah cannot be seen by a physical eye and He has no shape or likeness. He cannot be recognized with signs and examples.' But they insisted: 'We will not believe in you unless and until you ask God what we told you to. ' Musa (a.s.) said: 'My Lord, You have heard these people and only You know what is good for them, Then Musa (a.s.) got a revelation: 'Well, ask what they want You to ask. 'Musa (a.s.) said: 'O Lord, make Yourself

visible to me.' The Almighty Allah said:

'You can never see Me, but just look at the mountain. If it remains intact you may see Me. ' When God made His majesty descend on the mountain, it shattered the mountain into particles; Musa (a.s.) fainted. When he recovered, he said: 'O Lord, You are above being visible. I repent for the ignorance of my people and I do know by the knowledge bestowed by You that You can never be seen and really I am the first of those who believe that You cannot be seen.'

1. Usul Kafi, Vol. I , Pg. 86
2. Nahjul Balagha. Subh i Salih. Sermon no.1. (We should know that the understanding of anything is a kind of coverage and superiority over that thing. It is obvious that a creation can never be superior to or above the Lord Creator whereby one may be able to know fully about Him. If a man thinks of tracing God he should know that he is after impossibility. "Mind can perceive God if a straw can reach the bottom of the sea."

In fact the maximum knowledge about God is to know the inability of ourselves to understand the Infallible One. Imam Baqir (a.s.) has said in Usul Kafi:

"You talk about God but never talk about His Self, because discussion about God 's Self results only in confusion."

It is mentioned in another tradition: "One who thinks how is God, has destroyed himself."

Therefore, instead of thinking about His Self and about nearness to Him, which cannot result except in confusion, you should ponder over the limitless powers and wisdoms of Almighty God, which are concealed in all the particles of the universe.

"In the eyes of the wise, the leaves of green trees are all like a whole file describing the Lord's introduction".

Man must also keep in mind his littleness, powerlessness and ignorance and he should compare himself with the vast universe of existence and then recognize his inferiority and valuelessness so that he may not fall in the fallacy of trying to know the everlasting Self of the Great Creator of the cosmos.

"In an assembly wherein the sun is like an atom, to consider oneself the centre is a kind of indiscipline indeed ."

And about what some unwise people say that how can one believe in a God who cannot be seen and whose howness cannot be understood by anyone we say in reply that is it correct to deny the existence of life, because man is unable to know about its truth. In this case also only its signs are understood by man. Similar is the case of lightning and the soul of man; their existence is obvious, though there is no way to find out their reality. We also ask such people: Do you have the intellect? If they reply positively, we may ask them: How do you believe in the existence of intelligence, which cannot be touched or seen and when you are unable to know about its howness? If they say: We don't have any intelligence, the matter is over and that is all.

The whole world is unanimous about His Divinity though it is unable to know anything about His self. Intelligence cannot reach His Howness (How He is). Nature cannot reach the knowledge of His attributes. Neither flight of imagination reach the height whereby it can now have the know-how of His qualities. All are absolutely incapable to encompass Him by any faculty of intelligence.

3. Musrumsik. Vol. 1, Pg. 391
4. Some of Islamic scholars have opined that oneness of existence (Wahdatul Wujud) means the unity of the owner of ranks like Light (Noor) which is a true fact but it has different levels from the angle of high and low power. Likewise, existence is one truth and that He is necessarily Eternal and Everlasting by Himself and All-knowing and All-powerful by Himself and the ranks of other existences are having local and limited powers and such existences are innumerable.

Some have explained oneness of existence (Wahdatul Wujud) in various other ways and quoting them is unnecessary and would also be very lengthy.

5. (Daur in the terminology of philosophers and intellectuals means dependence of two things on one another. Daur is of two kinds:

1 – Daur e Masrah which is dependence of two things on one another in such a way that each one is dependent on the other like the example of text.

2 – Daur e Muzmir which means rotation which necessitates the dependence of a thing on itself through the medium of a third thing –
(Asfaar , Vol. I , p. 31).

6. To explain Daur and Tasalsul we can say that since wheat cultivation depends on wheat and similarly the production of a fowl depends on a existence of an egg and the production of the egg, in turn, depends on a fowl and the production of every living thing depends on the existence of the sperm in the womb of its mother and again the production of sperm depends on a being in whom the sperm must be there.

Thus you can see in these examples that the production of wheat depends on the production of wheat and the birth of an animal depends on the birth of an animal and this i s obviously a Daur.

And if this dependence is taken backward, we see a similar continuity (Tasalsu{}). For example we may say that the production of wheat next year is dependan t on i ts cultivation in the last year and that cultivation on the cultivation two years back and again that three years ago and thus on that of a thousand years and so on. Likewise, the bird before us depends on the egg of an earlier bird and that from before that and thus it goes unendi ngly, which is impossible. So necessarily we must say that in the beginning the Lord creator created an animal along wi th the arrangement of the production of seed and sperm for reproduction destined by Him.

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