

Lesson 2: The Ways of Knowing God

Before embarking on the discussion about the proofs of the existence of God and an examination of the Divine Attributes, it is necessary to answer this important and key question: can the human being know God or not? And in case he can, what is the way of doing so? This is because if the answer to this question is negative, any sort of discussion and discourse about theology is vain and useless.

Here, two general outlooks have been put forth, i.e. those of the affirmatives and the negatives. The rationalists and intuitionists regard God as knowable and the way of knowing Him as open to mankind. The sensationalists and literalists give a negative reply, however, to the above question and consider mankind incapable of knowing God. Now, we shall examine and elucidate these outlooks.

The Rationalists

The rationalists refer to the group of thinkers who have accepted the authority and credibility of reason or intellect (*'aql*) in knowledge [or the process of knowing], regarding the rational principles and fundamentals as the foundations of knowledge. They are of the opinion that without formally acknowledging the intellect and rational principles, no knowledge can be attained about the human being and even sensory and external pieces of knowledge are based on rational foundations, let alone empirical scientific pieces of knowledge and those pieces of information which are substantiated by the text and outward meanings of the revelation (*wahy*).

Aristotle¹ and his followers in Ancient Greece, Descartes² and his followers in the West, Farabi³, Ibn Sina⁴, and all Imamiyyah and Mu'tazilite theologians (*mutakallimūn*) have been proponents of this outlook. Reason also occupies a high position in Maturidiyyah theology. For the Ash'arites⁵ however, reason (*'aql*) is theoretically valid to some extent but not so in practice.⁶

At any rate, the philosophers and theologians in the Muslim world believe that God can be known through rational thinking, although there is a difference of opinions on the limit of the intellect's capability. For example, the proofs presented to prove the existence of God and the methods adopted to discuss the Attributes of God are not the same.

The proponents of this viewpoint have emphasized that adopting the rational way of attaining knowledge about God and understanding metaphysical truths is not an easy job and it requires special skill, talent and ability; otherwise, the desirable result will not be obtained and in many instances, it may even lead to deviation.

In this regard, *Shah* ^۴*d* Mu^۴ahhar^۴7 has said:

“The limitedness of the meanings of words and expressions, on one hand, and the minds’ familiarity with tangible and physical concepts, on the other hand, make it difficult to think and reflect on metaphysical issues. In order to be prepared for metaphysical reflections, the mind gradually undergoes certain processes... No doubt, when the meanings and concepts of the Divine wisdom want to manifest in the realm of philosophical intellects, it requires a particular mental acumen and intellectual capacity which is totally different from literary, technological, natural or mathematical acumen. The mind must develop in a particular dimension or aspect so as to acquire acumen for such ideas.”⁸

The Holy Qur’an and traditions (*aḥādīth*) endorse this method, and the proofs and pieces of evidence in criticizing the viewpoint of the literalists will be stated. Here, we suffice ourselves with quoting the following verse which regards reflection (*tafakkur*) on the system of creation as one of the characteristics of those who possess intellects (*‘ilī’-albab*) for which they are praised:

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ * الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا
وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾

“Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intellects. Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say] ‘Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You. Save us from the punishment of the Fire.’”⁹

The Intuitionists

The intuitionists are of the opinion that the existence of God and metaphysical realities are knowable by the human being, but not through the agency of reason and the method of reflection (*tafakkur*) and intellection (*ta‘aqqul*); rather, through the agency of the heart and the method of illumination (*ishraq*) and inner intuition or witnessing (*shuhūd-e dur‘an*).

Some intuitionists have regarded reason as totally incapable of knowing God, but other intuitionists do not consider it sufficient although they have stressed its being essential and they have also acknowledged its ability to some extent. Muslim and non-Muslim mystics advocate the method of mystical intuition (*shuhūd-e ‘irfan*) in knowing God. Some modern Western philosophers and religious

psychologists and psychoanalysts have also opted for this method.

Assessment

Although it is acceptable in knowing God and has an important function, this method still needs the rational method. Firstly, in intuitive perceptions, there is always the possibility of satanic tricks and insinuations, and to detect them would require rational principles and rules. Secondly, intuitive method is personal in nature and incapable of being proved to others, except through rational method and philosophical principles.

For this reason, great mystics and philosophers have highlighted the mystical method's need for rational and philosophical method which has a higher and more perfect state. Regarding mysticism's need for intellection (*ta'addul*) and reasoning (*istidlāl*), **ʿakīm Lihāj** has said:

“The human being has two ways to [know] God, the Exalted. One is the outward way and the other is inward. The outward way is the path of reasoning (*istidlāl*) while the inward way is the path of spiritual wayfaring (*sulūk*). The path of reasoning takes precedence over the path of spiritual wayfaring, for as long as one does not know what spiritual station (*manzil*) is, he will not be able to seek the way leading to the spiritual station.”^{[10](#)}

Elsewhere, he has also said, “Prior to the stabilization of theosophy (*ʿikmah*) and scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*), Sufi claims are [nothing but] demagoguery and fraud.”^{[11](#)}

The Sensualists

The sensualists are those who regard the way of knowing realities as limited to sensory observation and experiment. Sensualism has a long precedence in the history of human thought. The Skeptics of Ancient Greece upheld the primacy of experience and opposed rational philosophy. The new form of empiricism can be traced to the 17th century.

Scholars and philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes,^{[12](#)} Pierre Gassendi^{[13](#)} and David Hume^{[14](#)} were among the prominent proponents of sensualism. The notion that sensory perception is the fountainhead and criterion for knowledge has been the ultimate product of their intellectual activity.^{[15](#)}

Since perception and sensory experience are only through the five senses, the existence and Attributes of God cannot be proved or disproved on the basis of the foundations of sensualism. As such, they oppose both the theists and materialists, because according to them, there is no way of proving or disproving for mankind the metaphysical world.

Assessment

Sensory empiricism (primacy of the sensory perception) is unacceptable because there is a set of

epistemological concepts and principles which cannot be understood by sensory perception and at the same time, they cannot be denied; that is, without them, sensory perceptions are also impossible. Of the concepts used in scientific and non-scientific discourses, the concepts of necessity or essential (*ḥaṣṣar*), refusal or abstention (*imtin*) and probable (*iḥtimāl*) play a vital role, and none of them can be perceived by the senses.

The law of causation (causality) is another principle which the sensualists have regarded as definite. This is so while the cause-and-effect relationship – as Hume has also acknowledged – is not something tangible or sensible. Causation means an existent's dependence on another existent, and not succession (*tawṣūṭ*) or symmetry (*taqṣun*) of phenomena.

The principle of non-contradiction¹⁶ is one of the most fundamental intellectual principles of man, and no idea or opinion, no matter how likely it may be, cannot be formulated without this principle. The said principle can never be perceived by the senses. Felicien Robert Challaye,¹⁷ who is himself a prominent empiricist, has regarded two principles as the basis of inducement of empirical sciences:

1. Nature has order and law, and accident or chance does not happen in them (law of causation), and
2. Every cause always brings about the same effect given a unified set of conditions (the principle of harmony in nature or harmony between the cause and the effect).¹⁸

Moreover, it is true that every experiment depends on the observation of particular steps, which is discussed by the likes of Francis Bacon¹⁹ and Stuart Mill²⁰ in a bid to know the real cause of every happening, but the element of experiment has not guaranteed the correctness or validity of those steps (methods). They thus have no option but to establish the correctness or validity of those steps through a sort of rational proof which they deny.²¹

The Literalists

A group of Muslim traditionists (*muḥaddithīn*) does not regard reason and rational thinking as authoritative and permissible bases in knowing the religion, and they are of the opinion that the only means of knowing religious facts – whether pertaining to the roots or branches of religion – are the scriptural texts.

The Ḥanbalīs and *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* from among the Sunnīs and the *Akhbarīs* from among the Shā'ah have subscribed to this idea, vehemently opposing rational (philosophical and theological) discussions of the issues on beliefs.

There is a well known story that someone asked Mūlik ibn Anas (93–179 AH) about the meaning of “Allah's settlement on the Throne” as mentioned in this verse:

“The All-beneficent, settled on the Throne.”²²

In reply, Ibn Anas said:

الْأَسْتَوَاءُ مَعْلُومٌ وَالْكَيفِيَّةُ مَجْهُولَةٌ وَالْإِيمَانُ بِهِ وَاجِبٌ وَالسُّؤَالُ عَنْهُ بِدْعَةٌ.

“The settlement is known; how God settles on the Throne is unknown; to believe in it is obligatory and to ask about it is *bid‘ah* (innovation in religion).”²³

Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah²⁴ (died 198 AH) is reported to have said that the Attributes of God mentioned in the Qur’an must not be interpreted and a study about their meanings must not be done. Instead, they must be recited and one must keep silent about their meanings.

A group of the Akhbārīs from among the Shā‘ah who lived during the 10th and 11th centuries AH were also of the same belief. In his introduction to *Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah*, ‘Adr al-Muta’allihīn (Mullā ‘Adrā’)²⁵ expressed extreme regret for the way of thinking of these people, saying:

“Indeed we are afflicted by a group whose viewpoint fails to perceive the lights and secrets of wisdom. They have regarded as heresy to reflect on celestial matters, divine knowledge and the glorious verses [of the Qur’an]. They treat as deviation any opposition to common beliefs. It is as if they were traditionalist ‘anbalīs for whom the questions of obligatory (*wājib*) and possible (*mumkin*), eternal (*qadīm*) and contingent (*‘ādith*) are dubious. Their thinking does not go beyond what is tangible.”²⁶

After stating the beliefs of the *Ahl al-‘Adāth* and ‘anbalīs, Professor Mu‘ahhar has said:

“The view of ‘anbalī and the *Ahl al-‘Adāth* has still gained following, and some Shā‘ah ‘adāth scholars in the latter periods have explicitly stated that even the question of the Oneness of God is totally a heavenly (devotional) issue and intellectually, there is no sufficient proof for it, and it is only through obedience to the dictate of religion that we are bound to believe that God is One.”²⁷

Assessment

Firstly, even assuming that heavenly truths must be known through “heavenly means and power”, this principle has no contradiction with knowing these truths by means of reason because it (reason) is also a “heavenly element”. As mentioned in traditions (*‘adāth*), reason or intellect (*‘aql*) is inward proof (*‘ujjat-e bā‘īn*) of God for mankind while the prophets are His outward proofs (*‘ujaj-e ‘āhir*).²⁸

It is true that reason cannot discern all religious truths, but it is not totally incapable of knowing religious truths. In this regard, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) says:

لَمْ يُطْلِعِ الْعُقُولَ عَلَى تَحْدِيدِ صِفَتِهِ، وَلَمْ يَحْجُبْهَا عَنْ وَاجِبِ مَعْرِفَتِهِ.

“He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him.”²⁹

Secondly, by denying rational knowledge and its validity, there is no way of proving the [reality of] *shar‘ah*. In such a case, there is no room for the Qur’an and Sunnah through which we could know the principles and branches of religion.

Thirdly, rational thinking has been encouraged and emphasized in the Holy Qur’an. The Qur’an has described those who do not use their minds as the worst of beasts:

﴿إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“Indeed the worst of beasts in Allah’s sight are the deaf and the dumb who do not apply reason.”³⁰

﴿وَيَجْعَلُ الرَّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“And He lays defilement on those who do not apply reason.”³¹

In many instances, the Holy Qur’an has made use of rational thinking, engaging in intellectual discussion and argumentation. For example, by means of two rational arguments, it has proved the Oneness of God, saying:

﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا﴾

“Had there been gods in them other than Allah, they would surely have fallen apart.”³²

﴿وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ﴾

“Neither is there any god besides Him, for then each god would take away what he created, and some of them would surely rise up against others.”³³

In refuting the notion of those who think that God has a son, it is thus stated:

﴿وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ * بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا

﴿ قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴾

“And they say, ‘Allah has taken a son.’ Immaculate is He! Rather to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him, the Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decides on a matter, He just says to it, ‘Be!’ and it is.”³⁴

These two verses speak about two rational proofs in refuting the belief in God having an offspring. One is based on the essence of *tawḥīd* and God’s immunity from any similitude or partner, and the other is based on God’s immunity from change (*taghyr*) and quantization (*tadrīj*).³⁵

Fourthly, in the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and the sayings and conduct of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a), the credibility and authority of reason has been emphasized and actually utilized by them. By taking a glance at *Nahj al-Balaghah*,³⁶ *Usul al-Kafi*,³⁷ *Al-Ḥawā'id* by Shaykh al-Ḥadāḍī,³⁸ *Al-I'tijāj* by Ḥabars,³⁹ and other Shī‘ah sources, one will clearly find out this fact. As we have said earlier, in the school of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) reason has been recognized as the inward proof of God. Imām al-Ḥadiq (‘a) has regarded reason as the human being’s guide in knowing God as well as in knowing the principles of what is good and what is evil:

...فَبِالْعَقْلِ عَرَفَ الْعِبَادُ خَالِقَهُمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ مَخْلُوقُونَ، وَأَنَّهُ الْمُدَبِّرُ لَهُمْ وَأَنَّهُمُ الْمُدَبَّرُونَ... وَعَرَفُوا بِهِ الْحَسَنَ مِنَ الْقَبِيحِ

“By means of reason, the servants recognize their Creator and that they are creatures and that He is their Governor and that they are governed... and they distinguished the good from the evil...”⁴⁰

According to Imām ‘Alī (‘a), one of the goals of the mission of the prophets is “to unveil before them (people) the hidden virtues of wisdom”: ⁴¹

لِيُثِيرُوا لَهُمْ دَفَائِنَ الْعُقُولِ

Fifthly, the Holy Qur’an and traditions (*aḥādīth*) have a set of sublime knowledge which is beyond sensory perception and common understanding and comprehension. For example, God is the Dominant One (*al-Ghālib*). He is the First and the Last (*al-Awwal wa ’l-Ākhir*). He is the Inward and the Outward (*al-Bā‘in wa ’l-Ẓāhir*).

He encompasses everything (*al-Muḥīṭ*). His Unity is not numerical oneness. He is with everything without being parallel with it in time and space. He is outside everything but not in the sense of detachment and separation (*infīl*). Everything comes from Him and shall return to Him. His Word is identical with His Action, and so on and so forth.

Now, this question is raised: what is the reason behind mentioning these facts in the Book (Qur’an) and

the *Sunnah*? Is it to lay down a set of lessons for reflection, intellection, understanding, and inspiration and to guide the minds while swimming in the boundless ocean of divine knowledge? Or, is it to present issues and problems without solution and beyond comprehension so as to persuade the minds to submission, silence and blind following?!

These pieces of knowledge are not instructions, commands or orders. There is no point in reasoning out, therefore, that “Our duty is to obey what is commanded and nothing else!” They are a set of theoretical issues. If they are beyond comprehension and understanding, what is the benefit in mentioning them? It is like a Grade One teacher who teaches a college level subject [such as calculus or statistics] to his pupils and tells them to accept whatever she tells them although they could not comprehend it!

God could be known, therefore, and at the same time, man can know Him through reason and reflection on the signs in the horizon and in himself, although

(1) his knowledge of the Divine Essence and Attributes is limited and his understanding of the Divine Essence and Attributes (as they are) is beyond the power of the human mind or intellect – “He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities”⁴² – and

(2) to follow this path is not that easy and simple as it needs special intellectual agility and efforts.

This is not to suggest, however, that it is possible for everybody to understand all levels of rational and philosophical discussions about all issues related to theology. Definitely, this is not so. And there are many limitations, prerequisites and impediments along the way. The point is that this way is open for the human being, and there have always been people who have been able to examine metaphysical issues pertaining to theology through the correct use of reason and rational thinking.

In conclusion, let us state once again that the point is not to limit the way of knowing God to the rational means and method, because one can also know God through mystical intuition (*shuhūd*). And after proving [the genuineness of] revelation (*waḥyī*), one can also know issues pertaining to the Unseen through revelation. But even these two are based on rational knowledge, and denial of reason and rational knowledge is tantamount to the denial of both intuition and revelation.

Review Questions

1. Who are the rationalists? Write their viewpoint about knowing God.
2. Write the statement of Professor Muḥahhar about knowing God through the intellect.
3. As far as knowing God through the intellect is concerned, state the pieces of evidence about this from the Holy Qur’an.
4. Write the view of the intuitionists about knowing God and the objection to it.

5. Write the view of the sensualists about knowing God and the objection to it.

6. Write the summary of the sensualists' view about knowing God and the objection to it.

1. Aristotle (384–322 BCE): a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote on many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology, and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most important founding figures in Western philosophy. [Trans.]

2. René Descartes (1596–1650): French mathematician and the founding father of modern philosophy. His theory of knowledge starts with the quest for certainty, for an indubitable starting-point or foundation on the basis alone of which progress is possible. This is eventually found in his celebrated 'Cogito ergo sum' which means "I think therefore I am." His main writings are Discourse on Method, The Meditations, Principles of Philosophy, The Passions of the Soul and Rules for the Direction of the Mind. [Trans.]

3. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (known in the West as Alfarabius) (c. 872–950/951 CE): a Muslim polymath (in the fields of cosmology, logic, music, psychology, and sociology) and one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of the world during his time. [Trans.]

4. Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā Balkhī, known as Abū 'Alī Sīnā Balkhī or Ibn Sīnā and commonly known in English by his Latinized name "Avicenna" (c. 980–1037) was a Persian polymath and the foremost physician and philosopher of his time. He was also an astronomer, chemist, geologist, logician, paleontologist, mathematician, physicist, poet, psychologist, scientist, and teacher. His important works include Al-Shifā' (an encyclopedic work covering, among other things, logic, physics and metaphysics), Al-Najāt (a summary of Al-Shifā'), and Al-Ishārāt or in full, Al-Ishārāt wa 't-Tanbihāt (a latter work consisting of four parts, viz. logic, physics, metaphysics, and mysticism). [Trans.]

5. Ash'arites ('ash'irah): followers of Abū 'Āsan al-Ash'arī (died 330 AH).

6. For further information in this regard, see the book Darḥmad bar 'Ilm-e Kalām (An Introduction to Scholastic Theology) by the author.

7. Murtada Mutahhari (1920–79) was a leading theoretician of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. As an accomplished scholar of Islamic sciences, he played a pivotal role in forming the modern Islamic discourse which served as the foundation of the revolution. With close to ninety works on different subjects to his credit, he is considered one of the leading thinkers of the global Islamic movement in the twentieth century.

8. Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. 5, pp. 33–34 (Introduction).

9. Sūrat al-Imrān 3:190–191.

10. Fakām Lahzā, Gawhar-e Murīd, p. 34.

11. Ibid., p. 38. In this regard, see Fayatullāh Jawādī 'Amulī, Shinākht dar Qur'ān (Knowledge in the Qur'an), pp. 379–380.

12. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679): English philosopher, mathematician and linguist who was one of the main philosophers that founded materialism. [Trans.]

13. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655): French Catholic priest, philosopher and astronomer. [Trans.]

14. David Hume (1711–1776), Scottish historian and philosopher, who influenced the development of skepticism and empiricism, is considered one of the greatest skeptics in the history of philosophy. Hume thought that one's subjective perceptions never provide true knowledge of reality and one can know nothing outside of experience. Accordingly, even the law of cause and effect was an unjustified belief. [Trans.]

15. Paul Foulkes, Falsafeh-ye 'Umūmī (General Philosophy), trans. Ya'qūb Mahdawī, pp. 130–131; Hans Reichenbach, Pid'yesh-ye Falsafeh-ye 'Ilmī (The Rise of Scientific Philosophy), trans. Mī'sī Akramī, pp. 106–107.

16. Principle or law of non-contradiction: the law of logic that it is not the case that p and not-p. Contradiction is the final logical stopping point in that if a contradiction can be derived from a set of premises, then at least one of them is false. [Trans.]

17. Felicien Robert Challaye (1875–1967): an anti-colonialist French philosopher and journalist. [Trans.]

18. Felicien Robert Challaye, Shinākht-e Rawishh-ye 'Ulūm (Knowledge of the Scientific Methods), trans. Ya'qūb Mahdawī, p. 116.

- [19.](#) Francis Bacon (1561–1626): an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author who established and popularized an inductive methodology for scientific inquiry, often called the Baconian method or simply, the scientific method. [Trans.]
- [20.](#) John Stuart Mill (1806–73): a British philosopher, civil servant and an influential contributor to social theory, political theory, and political economy. [Trans.]
- [21.](#) Murtaḥḥ Muḥahhar, Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism (The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), vol. 2, p. 97.
- [22.](#) Sṭrat Ḥ 20:5.
- [23.](#) Shahrīstānī, Al-Mīlāl wa n-Nihāl, vol. 1, p. 93.
- [24.](#) Abū Muḥammad Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah ibn Maymūn al-Hilālī al-Kāfī (725–815 CE): a prominent Sunnī religious scholar in Makkah from the third generation of Muslims referred to as the Ṭabī‘u al-Ṭabī‘īn (the Followers of the Followers). [Trans.]
- [25.](#) ‘Adr al-Dīn Shīrīzī (1572–1641), better known as Mullā ‘Adr or Sīadr al-Muta’allih: the foremost representative of the Illuminationist (ishrāqī) School of Islamic philosophy whose magnum opus is Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah (The Four Journeys). [Trans.]
- [26.](#) ‘Adr al-Muta’allih, Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. 1, introduction.
- [27.](#) Murtaḥḥ Muḥahhar, Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. 5, p. 11.
- [28.](#) Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. 1, “Kitāb al-‘Aql wa ‘l-Jahl,” ‘Adh 12.
- [29.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 49.
- [30.](#) Sṭrat al-Anfāl 8:22.
- [31.](#) Sṭrat Yūnus 10: 100.
- [32.](#) Sṭrat al-Anbiyā’ 21:22.
- [33.](#) Sṭrat al-Mu‘minīn 23:91.
- [34.](#) Sṭrat al-Baqarah 2: 116–117.
- [35.](#) See Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Usayn al-‘Ababābī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. 11, p. 361.
- [36.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah (The Peak of Eloquence) is a collection of speeches, sayings and letters of the Commander of the Faithful, Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb (‘a) compiled by Sharīf al-Raḥī Muḥammad ibn al-‘Usayn (d. 406 AH/1016). Its contents concern the three essential topics of God, man and the universe, and include comments on scientific, literary, social, ethical, and political issues. [Trans.]
- [37.](#) Al-Kāfī: more fully, Al-Kāfī fī ‘l-Hadīth, one of the most important Shī‘ah collections of hadīth, compiled by Shaykh Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 AH/941 CE) and divided into three sections: Uṣūl al-Kāfī, Furū‘ al-Kāfī and Rawḍah al-Kāfī consisting of 34 books, 326 sections, and over 16,000 ahādīth that can be traced back to the Prophet and his family by an unbroken chain of transmission. [Trans.]
- [38.](#) Shaykh aḥ-Ḥadīq: also known as Ibn Babūyah, one of the most important of the early Shī‘ah scholars who died in 381 AH/991 CE. For his short biography and works, see the introduction of Shaykh aḥ-Ḥadīq, l’Itiqādāt al-Imāmiyyah: A Shī‘ite Creed, 3rd Ed., trans. Asaf A. A. Fyze (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1999), pp. 6–23. [Trans.]
- [39.](#) Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb al-‘Abarsī (d. circa 620 AH): a great Shī‘ah scholar, jurisprudent, traditionist (mu‘addith), and historian of the sixth and early seventh century AH. Among his works are Al-Itijāj, Al-Kāfī fī ‘l-Fiqh, Ṭarīkh al-A‘immah and Kitāb al-‘Alāh. [Trans.]
- [40.](#) Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. 1, “Kitāb al-‘Aql wa ‘l-Jahl,” ‘Adh 35.
- [41.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 1.
- [42.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 49. [Trans.]

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