

## Lesson 5: God's Traits

Any quality that bestows dignity and grandeur to its owner and eliminates deficiency or shortcoming from him is called a great quality. For instance, take knowledge and enlightenment which remove ignorance from its owner and wipe out this shortcoming in him. Similarly, someone who is not strong and powerful is incomplete and the quality of strength or power will eliminate his defects.

The Creator of the world possesses all the great qualities and is free from shortcomings and defects. Because God is the one that fulfills the needs of the world and bestows all the blessings and benefits, therefore He should possess all the great qualities. It could never be assumed that one who does not possess a great quality could bestow it upon someone else. For instance, an illiterate person cannot do away with another's illiteracy. Now, read this argument in a more extended way.

### God Is Wise, Capable And Living

We could appreciate God's qualities by examining the creatures He has created. Because the vast universe whose every part has been created with precision and order and whose every creature has been fashioned with special features and certain calculations, is the strongest evidence that its Creator possesses knowledge, competence and power. The astonishing order of the universe (some of instances were studied in the preceding lessons) attests to the fact that its Creator is aware of every creature's secrets as well as the causes of their survival or destruction.

Every creature has been created with all-out knowledge and perfect deliberation. Having realized the qualities of knowledge and power in God, we can appreciate another quality of His, that is, life or the quality of being alive, because knowledge and power presuppose life. Anyone who enjoys knowledge and power must be alive.

God, the Exalted, has adorned Himself with every great quality (including knowledge, power and life) in His scripture [Qur'an]. Furthermore, He has introduced Himself as free from and innocent of any blemish or shortcoming.

***"God is aware of everything."***<sup>1</sup>

***“Indeed, God has power over everything.”<sup>2</sup>***

***“He (God) is alive, and there is no god save Him.”<sup>3</sup>***

Of course, as it was stated earlier, the universe with all its wonders and riddles clearly proves the knowledge, competence and life of its Creator. But the state of these qualities is not clear to us, because our thought and wisdom are limited and cannot have access to the true essence of the qualities of God. Indeed, no thought, however, high it might soar, can fly over this tall and boundless summit, and we cannot and are not obliged to appreciate the true nature of God and His qualities. The only thing we are capable of and obliged to do is to believe in the “existence” of God and His qualities by carefully examining the world and the traces of the divine grandeur. But the true nature of God and His qualities has never been known and will never be! And we should never imagine that because as our religious leaders have observed, “Anything that we might imagine, that is not God but the figment of our imagination, and it will return to ourselves.”

## **God is All-Hearing and All-Seeing**

“Sami’ and Basir” are equivalents of capable of hearing and seeing. It means that He is aware of the things that could be seen or heard, just as He is aware of the creatures and all of them are present before Him. Of course, humans see and hear by means of eyes and ears, but when it is said that God is All-hearing and All-seeing it does not mean that he has eyes and ears. But it means that God, the Exalted, is cognizant of all that could be seen or heard and everything is manifest before Him and it is evident that His awareness of all these does not necessitate eyes or ears.

Regarding this, Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) has said, “When it is said that God is All-hearing and All-seeing, it does not mean that He, like us, has eyes and ears but He can see without eyes and hear without ears.”<sup>4</sup>

Now you might ask, why should God be All-hearing and All-seeing? The answer to this question is very simple, because as we earlier noted God enjoys limitless knowledge and is aware of “everything.” And this knowledge and awareness presuppose cognizance of anything that could be seen or heard.

Therefore, to establish these two qualities (All-hearing and All-seeing) we don’t need two distinct set of reasons. Furthermore, as was noted earlier, the Creator should possess the great qualities and be free from any shortcoming and seeing and hearing, in the sense that was explained are great qualities whose absence would accordingly constitute an imperfection.

<sup>1</sup>. Surah al-Baqara 2: 231.

<sup>2</sup>. Surah al-Baqarah 2: 148.

<sup>3</sup>. Surah Ghafir 40: 65.

<sup>4</sup>. ‘Usul al-Kafi, vol. 1, Akhundi, p. 109.

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