

Part 1: Tawhid, Gods' Attributes, and the Aim of Creation

Sermon

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْعَمَ، وَلَهُ الشُّكْرُ عَلَى مَا أَلْهَمَ، وَالثَّنَاءُ بِمَا قَدَّمَ، مِنْ عُمُومِ نِعَمِ ابْتَدَآهَا، وَسُبُوحِ الْإِئْسَادِهَا، وَتَمَامِ
مِنْ أَوْلَاهَا، جَمَّ عَنِ الْإِحْصَاءِ عَدْدُهَا، وَتَأَى عَنِ الْجَزَاءِ أَمْدُهَا، وَتَفَاوَتْ عَنِ الْإِدْرَاكِ أَبْدُهَا، وَنَدَبَهُمْ لِاسْتِزَادَتِهَا
بِالشُّكْرِ لِتَصَالِهَا، وَاسْتَحْمَدَ إِلَى الْخَلَائِقِ بِاجْزَالِهَا، وَثَنَى بِالنَّدْبِ إِلَى أَمْثَالِهَا.

وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، كَلِمَةً جَعَلَ الْإِخْلَاصَ تَأْوِيلَهَا، وَضَمَّنَ الْقُلُوبَ مَوْصُولَهَا، وَانَارَ فِي
التَّفَكُّرِ مَعْقُولَهَا، الْمُتَمَتِّعُ عَنِ الْأَبْصَارِ رُؤْيَاهُ، وَ مِنَ الْأَلْسُنِ صِفَتُهُ، وَ مِنَ الْأَوْهَامِ كَيْفِيَّتُهُ.

ابْتَدَعَ الْأَشْيَاءَ لَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَانَ قَبْلَهَا، وَ أَنْشَأَهَا بِلَا احْتِدَاءٍ أَمْثَلَةً إِمْتَنَلَهَا، كَوَّنَهَا بِقُدْرَتِهِ وَ ذَرَأَهَا بِمَشِيئَتِهِ، مِنْ غَيْرِ حَاجَةٍ
مِنْهُ إِلَى تَكْوِينِهَا، وَ لَا فَائِدَةٍ لَهُ فِي تَصْوِيرِهَا، إِلَّا تَنْبِيْهُنَّ لِحِكْمَتِهِ وَ تَنْبِيْهُنَّ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، وَ إظهاراً لِقُدْرَتِهِ وَ تَعْبُدًا لِرَبِّيَّتِهِ، وَ
إِعْزَازًا لِدَعْوَتِهِ، ثُمَّ جَعَلَ الثَّوَابَ عَلَى طَاعَتِهِ، وَ وَضَعَ الْعِقَابَ عَلَى مَعْصِيَّتِهِ، زِيَادَةً لِعِبَادِهِ مِنْ نِقْمَتِهِ وَ حِيَاشَةً لَهُمْ إِلَى
جَنَّتِهِ.

English Rendering

English Rendering¹

I thank God because of His blessings, and I am grateful for His graces, and because of the gifts He has granted, I speak His Praise.

For the extensive blessings He has given us from the beginning. And for the countless gifts by which He has favored us.

And for the continuous gifts that always envelop us. Blessings that are out of the realm of number or statistics.

And because of their extent, are incapable of being compensated in the limits of time and their termination being out of the realm of Man's understanding. He has called his servants to his thanksgiving for the continuation and increase of these gifts.

And he has called creatures to his Praise, for their perfection.

And He has encouraged them to gain their like, and I give witness that there is no God except the one God.

He is without likeness, and has no partner or semblance.

This is a saying of which its' essence is sincerity in itself and the hearts of the eager are entangled with it. And its traces have radiated in contemplation.

A God whose beholdance is impossible with the eyes, and to speak of His qualities with this tongue, absurd.

And the perception of His holy being is impossible for the intellect and contemplation.

He innovated the being of the living world without anything having been existent before that.

And he originated all, without there previously having been existent a pattern or model.

He brought them into existence by His power, and created them by His will, without being needy of their creation, or any benefit returning to His pure being out of their conceivance.

Except that in this way He wished to make manifest His wisdom, call the people to His obedience, in this way, by showing His never ending power, leading the creature to His servitude.

He strengthened the invitation of His Prophets by way of harmony in creation and religious law.

Then ascertaining rewards for His obedience, and punishments for sin, in this way giving His servants deliverance from his anger, revenge and punishment, urging them towards the direction of the gardens of heaven and the heart of His mercy.

Interpretation

In this opening section of the sermon we see matters that are all worthy of careful attention:

1) A regard to the fact that God's blessings encircle our entire existence, and we are submerged in them from head to toe. It is this very matter which brings to life our sense of thanksgiving, calling us to the

knowledge of his pure being. This is the very thing the scholars of scholastic theology rely on, and that is in the name of “the necessity of thanking Him for His bounties” in the matters of theism and the necessity of knowing God and thanking Him.

2) If God has called His Servants to thanksgiving for His blessings, it is not because of His need, but it is so that in this way they will gain greater worthiness, and become subject to more blessings (pay close attention).

3) His servants are unable to pay Him His due thanks, this being because the grace of offering Him thanks is in itself another blessing, and the instruments of His praise: mind, hand and tongue all are of His blessings. Therefore other than admitting inability, they can do nothing else. The Poet Says:

بنده همان به که ز تقصیر خویش عذر به درگاه خدای آورد

ورنه سزاوار خداوندیش کس نتواند که به حای آورد

"It is better for a person because of his short-coming, to apologize to God because no-one can perform what God is deserving of."[2](#)

4) The spirit of *Tawhid* is Sincerity, cleansing the Spirit of all other than God, and giving heart to the security of His love, accepting His commands, and in short forgetting all that is opposed to Him, forgetting all except Him.

5) In truth, *Tawhid* is hidden in man's nature from the very beginning, and this holy light shines in the depths of all human souls, and each person hears the cry of “*Allahu Akbar*” in his inner self.

For this very reason, when the severe storms of life rage, and when the veils of dereliction and ignorance are torn away it shines more clearly. Every person is involuntarily attracted by it saying « لا إله إلا هو » “*There is no god except Allah*”.

6) The essence of His being is not even perceptible by deep thought, that:

كُلَّمَا مَيَّزْتُمُوهُ بِأَوْهَامِكُمْ فِي أَدَقِّ الْمَعَانِي فَهُوَ مَخْلُوقٌ مَصْنُوعٌ مِثْلُكُمْ مَرْدُودٌ إِلَيْكُمْ

And no one can even find way to the essence of His attributes: Therefore, all of us must admit that: [3](#)

وَمَا عَرَفْنَاكَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِكَ

“We haven’t recognized you, such as you are worthy of recognition”. [4](#)

وَمَا عِبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ

“And we haven’t worshiped you in the way that is worthy of Your devotion”. [5](#)

7) One of the important things in the matter of creation is that in the beginning no material existed of which God could use, in order to create this world with pre-made materials.

Rather, the creation of this world was accomplished after mere non-existence. This creation is peculiar to the pure being of God, and even its imagination is difficult for most of us.

8) Another important matter of creation is this: Portraitists always get inspiration for the creation of paintings and drawings, from nature. Sometimes they blend different forms and innovate a new form. But God is a Creator who conceived and depicted a world without any previously-existing pattern or model.

9) Another important discussion brought up in this section of the Lady of Islam’s historical sermon, is God’s not needing anything. It is clear that a being that is in every respect unending and eternal can have no need in his pure being. This is because ‘need’ is reason for ‘Deficiency’, and deficiency is only conceivable in the ‘contingent being’ and not in the eternal being of God.

10) And lastly another important matter brought up in this section is the ‘Aim of creation’ of which the Lady of Islam (a.s) summed up in a few meaningful sentences:

A) Revealing the never-ending wisdom of God.

B) Calling of the servants to His subservience.

C) Showing His unlimited power.

D) Summoning His servants to worship of Him.

E) Giving strength to His Prophets.

These are the various aims for creation spoken of by Fatimah Zahra (s.a.). Here it is worthy to bring to our attention that these aims are interdependent of one another. When God’s servants see the traces of His wisdom and power in the confines of the living world, they are drawn to worship of Him; turn to His spiritual servitude; and traverse the degrees of perfection. Another point is that the harmony that the Prophets emphasize in their speeches about the order of the living world finds greater influence in the hearts of human beings. Thus, the matters of guidance become simplified and easier for them. (Pay close attention)

So, therefore, God did not create the world to receive some benefit, rather His aim was munificence to

His servants. He determined to advance them on the road of guidance, calling them to the vicinity of His esteem, to always continue in His way, and along with the acquisition of merits, obtain a greater portion of His never-ending graces.

- [1.](#) All English renderings of the text of this sermon were translated from the Persian text by the translator.
- [2.](#) Translation of the Persian Poem by Sa'adi. (Translator)
- [3.](#) اربعین شیخ بهائی و بحار الانوار Allamah Majlisi, Volume 69, Pg. 293
- [4.](#) اربعین شیخ بهائی و بحار الانوار Allamah Majlisi, Volume 69, Pg. 292
- [5.](#) محدث نوری مستدرک الوسائل Volume 1; Pg. 16

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