

Seeing Allah

We should know that there is difference of opinion regarding the seeing of the Almighty. Ahlul Sunnat say that Allah can show Himself to His creatures in a way the moon is visible on a moonlit night. That is the people will be able to see Allah with the eyes just as they can see the moon at night.¹ The same is the belief of the commentator, Qaushiji, Haji Izuddin, Sayyid Sharif, Amadi and Shafei.

People of the Nusairi sect were also following this belief. The Motazela and the Imamite sects do not believe in seeing Allah with the physical eyes, whether in this world or in the Hereafter. The eyes are given to human beings and the animals to see material objects. It has no effect in the sphere of spirituality. Thus, how can he see a God, Who is, according to the Sharh Aqaide Nasafi² neither has body, elements, shape or form? He can neither be measured nor divided into parts. He is neither restricted to space nor is a compound. He is neither limited nor has material qualities. He has neither change in condition, nor is restricted in time. He is neither a partner nor anyone or anything is His partner.

The above qualities are material things, which are within the sphere of visibility. Thus, when Allah is beyond material existence, He is also beyond the sphere of visibility. The eye can neither see such a thing in the world nor in the Hereafter.

When Bani Israel said to Moosa (a.s.): We would definitely not believe till we do not see Allah with our own eyes. Moosa (a.s.) conveyed the request of his people to Allah. Allah ordered them to come to Mt. Toor. Moosa (a.s.) selected seventy persons from Bani Israel and went to Mt. Toor. At the foot of the mountain, they said to Moosa (a.s.): “You question Allah so that we can hear His voice.” On the request of Moosa (a.s.), a cloud came and shaded the questioners. At that time Moosa (a.s.) ordered them to fall down in prostration. When Moosa (a.s.) used to converse, the divine light was visible on his holy face. On that point, Allah told Bani Israel that He has liberated them from Firon and settled them in Egypt. “You must worship Me and except for Me you must not be worship anyone else.”

But Bani Israel were not satisfied with this divine voice. They demanded Moosa (a.s.) to see Allah with their own eyes. The result of this demand was that suddenly lightning struck Mt. Toor and all those who were present there died. Moosa (a.s.) himself fell down in a swoon and regained consciousness only

after a long time. Later, Moosa (a.s.) began to weep and said how he could go back to Bani Israel? “They would blame me for the death of their elders. If You had killed them before this incident, I would have been free from this blame. Now the Bani Israel will try to kill me. I committed this foolish act of asking to see You with the eyes. O my God, please raise them alive again, so that they can testify the seeing.”³

The writer says that the incident of Moosa (a.s.) shows that neither Moosa (a.s.) saw Allah nor the people did. They all saw only the lightning, which is a sign of Allah’s power. Staff, Shining arm, the flood etc. and all the miracles are visible, but Allah can never be seen, because he is beyond vision.

Some Ahlul Sunnat scholars say that though Allah cannot be seen in the world, people would be able to see Him in the Hereafter, and Muhiyuddin Arabi also has the same view.⁴ Obviously, just as Allah cannot be seen in the world, the same condition will apply for the Hereafter. Though Moosa (a.s.) did not see Allah with physical eyes, he saw the lightning, which is the sign of Allah and he swooned due to it. Now the question is, whether the Holy Prophet (S) saw Allah on the night of Ascension or not? In view of the writer, the Prophet did not see Allah with this organ of sight, which is the eye. No one can say what he saw and with which eye.

Anyway, in Sahih Muslim⁵ there are traditions from Shaibani and Abdullah that the Holy Prophet (S) saw only Jibraeel (a.s.) with these eyes, he did not see Allah. Ibn Abbas says that the Holy Prophet (S) saw Allah, but with the eye of his heart.

The writer says that this tradition of Ibn Abbas is in accordance with reason. According to the tradition of Shobi, ‘A’ysha says: “The Messenger of Allah (S) saw Jibraeel, he did not see Allah.” The same tradition is present in the 10th volume of Sahih Bukhari.⁶ And on page no. 98, according to a report of Masruq, ‘A’ysha said: “The Holy Prophet (S) did not see Allah. When I hear this, my hair stand on their ends.”

In the same way, on Page 99 of Sahih Bukhari, we see the following tradition of Abu Dharr that the Holy Prophet (S) said: “On the night of Ascension, I saw only a radiance.” But he didn’t say that, that radiance was Allah Himself. From the aspect of commentaries also, the seeing of Allah by the Prophet on the night of Ascension is not proved.

In the Tafseer of Surah Najm, on page 33, Baidhawi says that the Holy Prophet (S) saw Allah with the eye of his heart and not with these ordinary eyes. Seeing Allah on the night of Ascension, denotes the various powers of Allah and the world of angels etc. Muhiyuddin Arabi says on page 271 of the second volume of his Tafseer that the Holy Prophet (S) saw Jibraeel in his true form.

Then on the same page, he says, eyes cannot see Allah. This is also the belief of the Imamiyah and Motazela and there is no doubt that it is logical and therefore acceptable. The writer says that when man cannot see the air with the physical eyes, how can he see Allah? Air is a material thing but it is beyond the scope of vision. But Allah is even beyond physical perception, so He cannot be seen through physical eyes.

- [1.](#) Ref. Sharhe Mawaqif, Pg. 503.
- [2.](#) Pg. 27
- [3.](#) Ref. Tafseer Maalimut Tanzeel, Baghawi, Pg. 38.
- [4.](#) Tafseer Surah Anam, Pg. 317.
- [5.](#) Vol. 1, Pg. 97.
- [6.](#) Pg. 296

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