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Thirty-Eighth Hadith: The Meaning Of God's Creation Of Adam In His Image

بِالسَّنَدِ المُتَّصِلِ إِلَى الشَّيْخِ الجَلِيلِ عِمَادِ الإِسْلامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ الكُلَيْنِي، رِضْوَانُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ، عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ بَحْرٍ عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ الخَزَّازِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ عَمَّا يَرْوُونَ أَنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ، فَقَالَ: هِيَ صُورَةٌ مُحْدَثَةٌ مَخْلُوقَةٌ. وَاصْطَفَاهَا اللهُ وَاخْتَارَهَا عَلَى سَائِرِ الصُّوَرِ المُخْتَلِفَةِ، فَأَضَافَهَا إِلَى نَفْسِهِ كَمَا أَضَافَ الكَعْبَةَ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ وَالرُّوحَ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: ﴿بَيْتِي﴾ ﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾.

With my chain of authorities reaching up to the august shaykh, the Pillar of Islam, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (R) from a group of our Companions, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, from his father, from 'Abd Allah ibn Bahr, from Abu Ayyub al-Khazzaz, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, who said: I asked Abu Ja'far (A) concerning that which is narrated, that God created Adam (A) in His form (surah literally, form, image). He replied, "It is a form that was originated and created. He elected it and chose it over all the other different forms and attributed it to Himself, in the same way that He has attributed the Ka'bah and the Spirit (ruh) to Himself, saying: 'My House (2:125, 22:26),' and 'I breathed into Him of My Spirit. (15:29, 38:72)'[1]

Exposition

The tradition mentioned in the first part of this noble tradition was one which has been well-known all along since the times of the Imams (A) to our own times, and its has been continually cited in the books of the Shi'ah and the Ahl al-*Sunnah*. Hadrat Baqir (A) has confirmed the authenticity of its origin while explaining its meaning.

However, there is a tradition reported by Shaykh Saduq in *'Uyun akhbar al-Rida* with his chain of authorities from the Eighth of the Imams (A) whose meaning is as follows:

Husayn ibn Khalid says, “I said to Hadrat Rida (A), ‘O Son of the Messenger of God, the people narrate that the Messenger of God (A) said, “God created Adam in His own image.” ‘The Imam said, ‘God damn them! They have omitted the first part of the tradition. The Messenger of God (S) passed by two men who were abusing each other. The Prophet heard one of them say to his companion, “May God disfigure your face and of everyone who looks like you!” Thereat the Messenger of God (S) said, “O servant of God! Don’t say that to your brother, for God, Almighty and Glorious, created Adam in his (His) image.”‘2

On this basis, *marhum* Majlisi has ascribed the tradition of Imam Baqir (A) to *taqiyyah* (dissemblance), and he has also suggested the probability that this statement of the Imam might be based on the presumption of acceptance [of the authenticity or the apparent import of the tradition]3 Such a probability is very remote. That which is probable is that the tradition of Hadrat Rida (A) refers to the first tradition, where the meaning of “Adam” in the last part of the tradition where it states:

إنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

Verily, God created Adam in His image.

may be that of the human species and the pronoun in على صورته refers to God, the Exalted. And Hadrat Rida (A) considering that the narrator was incapable of understanding the meaning of the *hadith*, related the opening part of the tradition so that that person may imagine that ‘Adam’– means the father of the human race, with the pronoun in على صورته referring to that man; so take note.

And perhaps both the traditions are genuine in their origin and import, and the Messenger of God (S) might have stated the noble tradition without any previous background–and that is the tradition whose explanation is given by Hadrat Baqir (A) and, on another occasion, he might have made the statement with that background and Imam Rida (A) diverted the discussion to the other *hadith* with a background due to the incapacity of the narrator in understanding its meaning. An evidence that supports this suggestion is that in some traditions there occur the word: على صورة الرحمان (in the image of the All–beneficent)4 instead of على صورته and This is not consistent with the tradition of the *‘Uyun*.

Moreover, even if it be assumed that this noble tradition is not authentic (in its import), its meaning is implicit in the noble traditions, as will be explained, God willing. Now we shall turn to explaining the meanings of the words of the noble tradition.

As to the word *‘Adam,’* the *Sihah* states, “Originally it is with two *hamzah’s,* for it pertains to the form *af’al,* and the second *hamzah* has been altered into an *alif,* and when it is to be given a vowel sound it is changed into *waw,* whereat its plural is *awadim.”*

The reason that Adam, the father of the human race (*abu al–bashar*) wag given this name is perhaps because he was had a brown complexion (*asmar al–lawn*), as according to the lexicons *al–adama min al–nas* means someone who is brownish (*al–asmar*). And according to some traditions Adam was

named so because he came from the *adim* of the earth[5] *adim* being in the sense of 'face' and adim al-ard means the surface of the earth.

As to the expression *'ala Suratih, Surah* in the lexicon is in the sense of picture and form, and it may be said that it has a general meaning common to different notions in which the commonality consists of the thingness of a thing and its actuality (*fi'liyyat*). However, everything has an actuality in respect of which it is said to possess a form (*dhu al-Surah*) and that actuality is called form (*Surah*).

The application of the term 'form' in the terminology of the philosophers to matters that are inclusive of a thing's actuality and thingness is not contrary to its lexical meaning, and is not a technical or special term. Shaykh Abu 'Ali Sina, the chief of the Islamic philosophers, in the part on metaphysics of his book *al-Shifa',* says, "At times *Surah* is applied to any configuration and act that is in a single or composite recipient so that its movements and accidents are called *surah. Surah* (form) is also applied to something by virtue of which matter is sustained in actuality; hence, the intellectual substances (*jawahir 'aqliyyah*) and accidents cannot be called *suwar* (forms).

And *surah* is applied to something by means of which matter becomes perfect, though it should not be sustained by it in actuality, such as health and that towards which a thing moves by its own nature (*tab'*). Also, *surah* is applied to the species (*naw'*), genus, and differentia of a thing, or to all of them. And the universality of the universal in the particulars is also *surah."*

Reflection on all the instances of the usage of *surah* shows that in all of them the criterion is actuality and it is used univocally in all the cases of its use, to the extent that even God, the Exalted, is called *surat al-suwar* (the actuality of all actualities).

As to the word *istafaha, safwah* means something pure and purged from impurity (*kudurat*) and *istifa'* has the sense of taking that which is clear and pure (*safi*) and is implied in its meaning. However, Jawhari and others have considered it to mean *ikhtiyar* (choosing), and so they have also considered *ikhtiyar* to mean *isitifa'* in the lexicons. This is, however, an explanation in terms of that which is implied, as *ikhtiyar* also means taking that which is good (*khayr*) and meritorious, and in this respect coincides with *istifa'* in external reality, though it is not synonymous with it.

As to the word *al-Ka'bah,* it is the name of the House of the God. Some have said that it has been called Ka'bah due to its resemblance to a cube (*muka'ab*) or due to its square shape,[6] and *muka'ab* in the terminology of mathematicians is a body with six equal planes perpendicular to one another.

As to the word *al-ruh,* in the terminology of men of traditional medicine *ruh* (spirit) is described as "a subtle vapor formed in an animal's heart due to the heat of the blood." They state that "the heart has two sides. One of them is on the right, wherein blood is drawn from the lever and there it releases a vapor due to the heart's heat: Those vapors flow through the left side of the heart becoming refined there due to the actions of the heart, and from it the animal spirit is constituted."

Then it flows through the blood vessels due to the expansion and contraction of the heart, in the manner mentioned in the related works. Thus, the source of this animal spirit is the heart and its channels are the blood vessels. At times the term spirit (*ruh*) is applied to the blood centered in the lever, and its channels are the jugular veins, and that is called the 'natural spirit' (*ruh al-tabi'i*). So also, in the terminology of the philosophers 'spirit' is often applied to the psychic spirit (*ruh al-nafsani*), which originates in the brain and its channel are the nerves, and that is a manifestation and lower form of the immaterial spirit pertaining to [the realm of Divine] command (*amr*), which is a Divine mystery (*sir al-subhani*) and the 'spirit of God' (*ruhullah*), referred to in His words:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾

And I breathed into him (***i.e. Adam***) ***of My spirit.***[7]

Hereafter, God willing, we will explain that this spirit is the one breathed by the Divine breath and that it is that which is the chosen and elect (*mustafa wa mukhtar*) of the Real, Glorious and Exalted.

Adam Is The Complete Manifestation Of God And The Greatest Name Of God

It should be known that the people of gnosis (*ma'rifah*) and the companions of the heart say that for each of the Divine Names there is a Form (*farah*) at the plane of *wahidiyyah,* which is subject to the *tajalli* (revelation) pertaining to the Most Sacred Effusion (*al-fayd al-aqdas*) at the plane of Divine knowledge (*hadrat al-'ilmiyyah*), by virtue of the Divine Self-love and seeking the Keys of the Hidden, which no one knows except Him.[8]

And that Form is called the preexisting essence (*'ayn al-thabit*) in the terminology of the People of God (*ahl Allah*). And with this *tajalli,* by virtue of the Most Sacred Effusion are realized, first, the *ta'ayyunat* (determinations) of the Names, and, by virtue of this very *ta'yyun* of the Names are realized the Forms of the Names, which are the essences (*a'yan al-thabitah*).

The first Name manifested with the *tajaili* of *ahadiyyah* and the Most Sacred Effusion at the epistemic plane of *wahidiyyah* (*hadrat al-'ilmiyyah-ye wahidiyyah*) and which becomes the mirror of that *tajalli,* is the Greatest All-inclusive Divine Name (*ism al-a'zam al-jami' al-ilahi*) and the station of the named of 'Allah,' which, from the aspect of the Hidden, is the very *tajalli* through the Most Sacred Effusion, and in the *tajalli* of manifestation of perfect clarity and luminosity is the same as the all-inclusive station of *wahidiyyah* from one viewpoint, and the plurality of Names from another viewpoint. The *ta'ayyun* of the all-inclusive Name and its Form consists of the essence of the Perfect Man and the Muhammadan Reality, *haqiqat al-Muhammadiyyah* (S).

Hence the Sacred Effusion is the manifestation of the objectifying *tajalli* of the Most Sacred Effusion, and

the station of Divinity is the manifestation of the *tajalli* of the station of *wahidiyyah,* and the Greatest Spirit (*ruh al-azam*) is the manifestation of the *tajalli* of the ideal essence of the Perfect Man, and all other existents pertaining to the Names, Knowledge and objective reality are the universal and particular manifestations of these realities and subtleties, in accordance with an exquisite explanation that cannot be contained in this brief discourse and whose details we have mentioned in the treatise *Misbah al-hidayah.*[9]

From here, it is known that the Perfect Man is the manifestation of the all-inclusive Name and the mirror of *tajalli* of the Greatest Name, and to this matter these are many references in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. God, Exalted, has said:

﴿.وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا﴾

And He taught Adam the Names, all of them. (***2:31***)

This Divine instruction took place in respect to the inmost being of Adam through his Hidden, all-inclusive fashioning with the Hands of Beauty and Majesty (*jamal wa jalal*) at the plane of *wahidiyyah.* Similarly, the fashioning of his form and appearance in the visible world (*'alam al-shahadat*) took place through the manifestation of the Hands of Majesty and Beauty in the mirror of physical nature (*tabi'at*). And God, the Exalted, has said:

﴿...إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth. (***33:72***)

and the 'Trust' (*amanah*) in the creed of the gnostics is the absolute *wilayah,* of which no being except man is worthy. This absolute *wilayah* is the same as the station of Sacred Effusion to which reference is made in the Noble Scripture in His statement:

﴿.كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ﴾

Everything is fated to perish save His Face. (***28:88***)

And in a tradition of the noble *al-Kafi,* Imam Muhammad Baqir (A) is cited as having said:

.نَحْنُ وَجْهُ اللهِ

We are the face of God.[10]

And it is mentioned is the *Du'a al-nudbah:*

أَيْنَ وَجْهُ اللهِ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ يَتَوَجَّهُ الأَوْلِيَاءُ؟

Where is the Face of God towards which the friends of God turn?

أَيْنَ السَّبَبُ المُتَّصِلُ بَيْنَ الأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاءِ؟

Where is the link that connects the Earth's people with the Heaven?11

And in the *Ziyarat al-jami'ah* they are referred to as theوالمَثَلُ الأعلى, (the highest similitude, or metaphor)." This similitude and the attribute of being the Face is the same as the image (*surah*) mentioned in this Noble tradition:

إنَّ اللهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.

Indeed, God created Adam in His image.12

That is, Adam is the highest similitude (*al-mathal al-a'la*) of God, His greatest sign, and the most complete manifestation and mirror of the *tajalliyat* of the Names and the Attributes, the Face of God (*wajh Allah*), the Eye of God (*'ayn Allah*), the Hand of God (*yad Allah*) and the side or proximity of God (*janb Allah*).

هُوَ يَسْمَعُ وَيُبْصِرُ وَيَبْطِشُ بِاللهِ؛ وَاللهُ يُبْصِرُ وَيَسْمَعُ وَيَبْطِشُ بِهِ.

He hears, sees, and holds by God, and God sees, hears and holds by him.13

This *wajh Allah* is the same 'Light' mentioned in the noble verse:

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾.

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (***24:35***)

And Imam Baqir (A) said to Abu Khalid Kabuli in a tradition of the noble *Kafi:*

هُمْ (أيْ الأَئِمَّةَ) وَاللهِ نُورُ اللهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ، وَهُمْ وَاللهِ نُورُ اللهِ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ.

They (i.e. the Imams) are, by God, the Light that He has sent down (64:8; 61:8;

39:69), and they, by God, are the Light of God in the heavens and the earth (24:36).[14]

And the noble *Kafi* narrates a tradition of Imam Baqir—may my soul be sacrificed for the dust of his feet that while expounding the noble verse:

﴿عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ. عَنْ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾.

Of what do they question? Of the great tiding? (***78: 1-2***)

he said,

هِيَ فِي أَمِيرِ المُؤْمِنِينَ. كَانَ أَمِيرُ المُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ يَقُولُ: مَا للهِ تَعَالَى آيَةٌ هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنِّي وَلا للهِ مِنْ نَبَإٍ أَعْظَمُ مِنِّي.

It refers to the Commander of the Faithful (‘Ali). And the Commander of the Faithful (A) used to say: “There isn’t a greater sign of God than me, and there isn’t a greater tiding of God than me![15]

Hence, the Perfect Man, one of whose instances is Adam, the father of Men, is the greatest sign, manifestation, Name and Attribute of the Real, and he is the metaphor and sign of God, the Exalted. God, the Blessed and the Exalted, is above having a like (*mithl*) and a peer, but one should not negate the existence of a metaphor for His sacred Essence, as:

﴿وَلَهُ المَثَلُ الأَعْلَى﴾.

And to Him belongs the highest metaphor (***mathal***).[16]

All the particles of the realm of being are the signs and mirrors of the revelations (*tajalliyat*) of the Beauty of the Beautiful One, Almighty and Exalted, though each one of them is such only to the extent of it existential capacity. But none of them is the sign of the greatest all-inclusive Name, that is, ‘Allah,’ except the all-inclusive being (*kawn al-jami’*) and the sacred station of the greatest mediation (*maqam al-muqaddas al-barzakhiyyat al-kubra*), glorious is his greatness with the Greatness of his Maker (جَلَّتْ عَظَمَتُهُ بِعَظَمَةِ بَارِيهِ.).

فَاللهُ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ الإنْسَانَ الكَامِلَ وَالآدَمَ الأوَّلَ عَلى صُورَتِهِ الجَامِعَةِ وَجَعَلَهُ مِرْآةَ أسْمائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ. قَالَ الشَّيخُ الكَبيرُ: فَظَهرَ جَميعُ ما في الصُّورةِ الإلهيَّةِ مِن الأسماءِ في هذِهِ النَّشأةِ الإنسانيَّةِ، فَحازَتْ رُتبةَ الإحاطَةِ وَالجَمعِ بِهذا الوُجودِ وبِهِ قَامَتِ الحُجَّةُ للهِ على المَلائكَةِ.

Hence, God, the Exalted, created the Perfect Man and the First Man in His all-inclusive Image, and He made him the mirror of His Names and Attributes. The Great Shaykh (Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi) has said, "Hence all that which was in the Divine Form of the Names was manifested in this human existent, and so it acquired the station of all-inclusiveness (al-ihatah wa al-jam') with this existence and with it was established God's argument against the angels:'

From this discussion is known the reason for God's choosing and electing the all-inclusive human form from among the various forms of other entities, and the secret of God's giving precedence to Adam (A) over the angels and His giving him a dignity over all other existents and His attributing his spirit to Himself, in the Noble verse:

﴿وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾.

And I breathed into him (i.e. Adam) of My spirit. (***15:29, 38:72***)

As our intent in these pages is observance of brevity, we shall refrain from explaining the reality of the Divine breath and its character in Adam, and His singling him out for it from among all the existents. And all Praise belongs to God, firstly and lastly.

وَالحَمْدُ للهِ أَوَّلاً وَآخِراً.

1. Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi i, 134 "kitab al-tawhid," "bab al-ruh," hadith 4.
2. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida, i, 119, bab 11, hadith 12. The text of the tradition is as follows:
عَنِ الحُسَيْنِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِلرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ: يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: إنَّ النَّاسَ يَرْوُونَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ: (إنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.) فَقَالَ: قَاتَلَهُمُ اللهُ! لَقَدْ حَذَفُوا أَوَّلَ الحَدِيثِ: إنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مَرَّ بِرَجُلَيْنِ يَتَسَابَّانِ، فَسَمِعَ أَحَدَهُمَا يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ: قَبَّحَ اللهُ وَجْهَكَ وَوَجْهَ مَنْ يُشْبِهُكَ. فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لَهُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللهِ، لا تَقُلْ هَذَا لأَخِيكَ فَإنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ.
3. Al-Majlisi, Mirat al-'uqul, ii, 84, "kitab al-tawhid," bab al-ruh, hadith 4.
4. Sadr al-Muta'allihin, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim, ii, 235; Ibn 'Arabi, Futuhat al-Makkiyyah, ed.'Uthman Yahya, i, 78.
5. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Ilal al-sharayi', i, 26. The text of the tradition is as follows:
عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِاللهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامُ قَالَ: إنَّمَا سُمِّيَ آدَمُ آدَمَ لأَنَّهُ خُلِقَ مِنْ أَدِيمِ الأَرْضِ.
6. Al-Tabrisi, Majma' al-bayan, exegesis of 5:97; Qamus al-lughah, under k-'-b, Ka'bah.
7. 15:29, 38:72.
8. A reference to verse 6:59.
﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ﴾.
And with Him are the keys of the Unseen, none knows them but He. (6:59)
9. Imam Khumayni, Misbah al-hidayah ila al-khilafah wa al-wilayah, pp. 28-42, 54-56.
10. Al-Saduq, Kitab al-tawhid, 150.
11. Zad al-ma'ad, bab 11, p. 399; Mafatih al-janan, 537.
12. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Man la yahduruh al-faqih, ii, 370, "bab al-ziyarat al-jami'ah;" 'Uyun akhbar al Rida, bab 68, hadith 1.
13. Usul al-Kafi, "kitab al-iman wa al-kufr," "bab man adha al-muslimin," hadith 7.
14. Usul al-Kafi, i, 194, "kitab al-hujjah," "bab anna al-a'immah nur Allah," hadith 1.
15. Usul al-Kafi, i, 207, "kitab al-hujjah," "bab anna al-ayat al-lati dhakaraha Allahu fi kitabih..." hadith 3.

16. 30:27

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