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## **Hearing and Seeing**

One of the Attributes of the Praised One is hearing and seeing, and among His Names are: the Hearing, the Seeing. These two descriptions exist in the true Islamic Sharia. Describing the most Praised One as being Hearing and Seeing in the Quran and Sunnah is *mutawatir*, consecutively reported. But there have been differences in the reality of both of these descriptions according to statements the most significant of which are the following.

- 1. His (attributes of) hearing and vision, Praise belongs to Him, are not different from our describing Him as having knowledge. Rather, they are among the branches of His knowledge of what is heard and seen. Due to His knowledge of both of them, He is said to be Hearing, Seeing.
- 2. Both descriptions are senses-related that are different from the absolute comprehension of knowledge, but they are proper nouns that are relevant to what is beyond His absolute knowledge without a plurality of the self or a requirement for embodiment. This is so because He knows everything/every-one that hears and sees. Being aware of what can be heard is hearing, seeing what can be seen is vision, yet this is different from His absolute knowledge of general things that are not heard and not seen.1

If you become familiar with the statements, let us indicate an introduction here.

Hearing in the case of man takes place through natural equipment and tools. Voice waves reach the head, and from there to the material brain, then one realizes it.

Yet there must be an emphasis on something interesting here. Is the presence of these material tools a requirement for achieving vision and hearing in a special status such as for animal or man, or is it an intruder into their reality in the general sense? There is no doubt that these equipment and tools, which science explains in its own way, are only particularities relevant to material man who cannot hear or see without them.

If we suppose there is an existent that reaches the same thing which man reaches without these tools, it

would be more appropriate for him to be hearing and seeing because the goal anticipated from hearing and seeing is the arrival of the waves and images at the one that realizes them. Had the waves and images been present with an existent without a physical or chemical action, he, too, would be hearing and seeing because the goal is reached in a more perfect and in a higher way.

When researching the levels of His knowledge, it is proven that all worlds are present with Him, Praise belongs to Him. All things, what is heard and seen in particular, are absolutely His own actions and, at the same time, His own knowledge, the most Exalted One that He is. The world, in all its essences and manifestations, is present with Him. Thereupon, His knowledge of what is heard suffices to describe Him as Hearing. Likewise, His knowledge of what is seen suffices to describe Him as Seeing.

Yes, it is true, His knowledge of what is heard or seen is not the same like His knowledge, Praise belongs to Him, of totalities. Thus do you become familiar with the difference between the first statement and the second.

## **Answering a Question**

If the presence of what is heard and seen with Him, Praise belongs to Him, serves as correctly describing Him as Hearing and Seeing, can this by itself be correctly describe Him as having the ability to touch, taste, smell?

The answer to this question is clear after we become familiar with the fact that His Names, Praise belongs to Him, are subject to one's own *ijtihad*. This is so because what is smelled, tasted, touched, etc. are all present with Him, Praise belongs to Him, similarly to the presence of what is heard and seen. Since He is the Living, the self–Sustaining, i.e. the One Who needs nothing/nobody to sustain Him, while He sustains others, what can be existent, in all its levels, stands through Him, Praise belongs to Him.

Thereupon, there is no difference in as far as labeling something as belonging to Him or describing a statement as being correct. But, since it is said that His Names, the most Exalted One, hinge on closing the door of all this commotion and hoopla in defining Him, Praise belongs to Him, it is absolutely wrong to apply touching, tasting, smelling, etc. to Him.

## "The Hearing" and "The Seeing" in the Quran and Sunnah

He, the most Praised One, has described Himself as being the Hearing, the Seeing. The first is repeated 41 times and the second is repeated 42 times in the Holy Quran.

Among the objectives to which the Holy Quran guides us by way of His being described by these two names is to acquaint man with the fact that His Lord is all–Hearing; He hears whatever speech man utters; He sees whatever actions he does, so He will one Day hold him accountable for what He heard and saw. The most Praised One says,

"And in your oaths, do not make God's (name) an excuse for not doing good or acting rightly or making peace among others, for Allah is the all-Hearing, all-Knowing" (Qur'an, 2:224);

"Then fight in the cause of Allah and be informed that Allah hears and knows all things" (Qur'an, 2:244);

"And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do" (Qur'an, 57:4), and

"Allah (always) hears the arguments between both sides among you, for Allah hears and sees (all things)" (Qur'an, 58:1).

Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib, peace with him, has said, "And He is the Seeing but not through the distinguishing of a tool, the Witness but not through coming in contact with things." 2

He, peace with him, has also said, "One who speaks hears his articulation, and one who remains silent knows what he conceals."3

Imam Ali ibn Mousa al-Ridha, peace with him, has said, "Allah is and has always been, the most Exalted One, Able, Living, Timeless, Hearing and Seeing."4

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq, peace with him, has said, "He, the most Exalted One, is Hearing and Seeing. He hears without a faculty, sees without a tool. Rather, He hears by Himself, sees by Himself." 5

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace with him, has said, "He is Hearing, Seeing; He hears through what He sees, sees through what He hears."6

The previous tradition points out to the unity of His Attributes, Praise belongs to Him, with His own Self, and the unity of each with the other in the position of the Self. The fact of hearing in Himself, Praise belongs to Him, is not different from the fact of seeing. Rather, He hears through what He sees, sees through what He hears. His essence is all hearing and seeing.

- 1. Al-Asfar, Vol. 6, pp. 421-23.
- 2. Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 155.
- 3. Ibid., Sermon 182.
- 4. Al-Saduq, Tawhid, pp. 140, 144.
- 5. Ibid.
- 6. Ibid.

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