



Question:

Preface of Nahjul Balaghah (Part: III)

By: Ali Naqi-un-Naqvi

Answer:

Even in regard to the Sermon of Camel's Foam (Khutba al-Shiqshiqiyya) which consists issues most militating against his feelings, he forcefully agrees that it is certainly the composition of Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) and refutes with arguments every conception against it. Under this sermon he has held that Allah has preferred the low over the high for some purpose.

Similarly in the various explanations under the Khutba al-Shiqshiqiyya and other he has expressed his beliefs and has held Amirul Momineen's words the outcome of (God forbid) human feelings. These points put a stop to the impression that in this book he has kept in view the pleasure of the Shia over-lord in whose name he dedicated this commentary.

Ibn Alqami was doubt less a Shia but he was a minister under the Abbasids and this book was written during his term as Minister before the downfall of the Abbasids. Firstly, if flattery were his aim it was necessary to pay regard to sentiments of the Caliph rather than the Minister.

Secondly, evidently being a minister of the Abbasid government, Ibn Alqami could not proceed against a person who wrote anything in favour of the religion of the Government of the day; nor did he openly declare such feelings. Further, if he intended flattery, why should Ibn Abil Hadeed in this very book refute Shiaism and why should he have from beginning to end tried to strengthen the Caliphate as much as possible.

This behaviour of his clearly shows that in this he has constantly adhered to own ideas and feelings. If he had expressed a small doubt or misgiving about Nahjul Balaghah that would not have been so painful to Ibn Alqami as the accusing Allah of such an evil act, that sometimes He prefers the low over the high, or to attribute Amirul Momineen's sayings to human frailty as he has written in the commentary on the Khutba al-Shiqshiqiyya.

In fact the rejection of these words as Amirul Momineen's utterance is not so painful to a Shia nor so derogatory to Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) as the view that he has, God forbid, used these words against reality and only in response to his personal animosity.

This makes it clear that Ibn Abil Hadeed did not aim at pleasing Ibn Alqami through expression of his views, and if Ibn Alqami gave any price for this book it is only due to his large heartedness, large sightedness and forbearance that he appreciated the literary production of a scholar of differing beliefs, mainly as a literary production which also contained points against his own religious beliefs and convictions.

In my view Ibn Abil Hadeed has, in this book, published his Sunnism so much more than needed that it is wrong to attribute any partiality or bias to him.

(3) Abus Saadat Mubarak Majiduddin Ibn Aseer Jozavi (d. 606 A.H.) has resolved the words

of Nahjul Balaghah in very many places in his reputed book Nihaya which is on the subject of explanations of words used in the books of traditions and "records".

Ibn Aseer's position is not of an ordinary lexicographer but he is a traditionalist as well. If it was necessary for him to resolve these words only because of literary importance, he would have included them only with the name of Nahjul Balagha.

Again, the fact is that if he did not regard it as the utterance of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) he would not have found place for them in a book written exclusively for traditions and records because technically "record" means only the words uttered by Companions or prominent post-Companions.

Words of a book of any later scholar are included neither in tradition nor record, his including these words is itself a proof that he regards them as the utterance of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and not of Sayyid Razi.

Then again, while recording these words in every place he clearly uses the words "Ali's tradition", such as under the word "Jawa" or `Fatq'ul-Ajwa' or `Shaqq-ul-arja', everywhere these words are mentioned with the epithet "Tradition of Ali".

At some places it is "Sermon of Ali" at such as under the word "Loot" the words "Khutabat Ali ....". In one place under the word "Aem" the words are "utterance of Ali ....". Similarly under the word "Asl" the words "Utterance of Ali" occur and the same is the case in one or two more places; in all the other places he has written "Tradition of Ali".

We have quoted all these places in extension in our book "The Authenticity of Nahjul Balaghah" which has been published by Imamia Mission, Lucknow.

(4) Allama Sadruddin Taftazani (d. 791 A.H.) writes in Sharh al-Maqasid, "He was the most eloquent of them as the book Nahjul Balaghah evidences".

(5) Jamaluddin Abul Fazl Muhammad bin Mokarram bin Ali Afriqi Misri (d. 711 A.H.) too has, like Nihaya, solved the words included in his celebrated book Lisan-ul-Arab by calling them "Words of Ali".

(6) Allama Alauddin Qarshaji (d. 875 A.H.) writes in his explanation of scholar Toosi's words "the most eloquent of them in speech" that this is evidenced by the book Nahjul Balaghah while rhetoricians have held that his utterances are below the words of the Creator but above the words of the created.

(7) Muhammad bin Ali bin Taba Taba known as Ibn Taqtaqi writes on page 9 of his book Tarikh-ul-fakhri fil Adaabis-sultania wad-duwalil Islamia, published in Egypt: "Many people turned towards Nahjul Balaghah which comprises the utterances of Ali bin Abi Talib; because this is the book from which are learnt wisdom, precepts oneness of Allah, renunciation and

courageousness while its lowest advantage is eloquence and rhetoric."

(8) Allama Mohaddis Mulla Tahir Fitni Gujarati too has written *Mujmai Biharal Anwar*, like *Nihaya* in explanation of words appearing in traditions and records and he too has explained the words of *Nahjul Balaghah* recognising it as the composition of Amirul Momineen (a.s.).

(9) Allama Ahmad Bin Mansur Kazrooni writes in his book *Miftahul Futooh* under the account of Amir-ul-Momineen (a.s.): "Whoever casts a careful glance over his words, letters, speeches and writings will find that his knowledge was not like that of others or his distinctions, of the type of distinctions of others after the Prophet (S) (that is, they were far higher), and among them is the book *Nahjul Balaghah*."

(This implies that the writer bore this fact in mind that Ali's utterances were in existence in abundance beside *Nahjul Balaghah*, and that this book is only a part of that collection.) "And by Allah before his eloquence the eloquence of all the eloquent, rhetoric of all the rhetoricians and wisdom of the sages of the world become paralyzed and thwarted."

(10) Allama Yaqub Lahori writes in his book *Sharh al-Tahzib- ul-Kalam* under the explanation of the word "Afsah", "Whoever wishes to see his eloquence or enjoy hearing his rhetoric, must have a glance over *Nahjul Balaghah*; and to attribute such eloquent and rhetoric utterance to a Shia Scholar is totally misfit."

(11) Allama Sheikh Ahmad Mustafa known as Tashkeeri-zada writes in his book *Shaqaeq al-Nomania Fi Ulema al-Daulat al-Usmania*, under the list of writings of Qazi Qiwam-ud-Din Yusef: "The commentary on *Nahjul Balaghah* of Imam Ali Bin Abi Talib, Allah may honour his face."

(12) Mufti of Egypt Allama Sheikh Muhammad Abdoh (d.1323 A.H.): The success of whose beautiful effort cannot be denied, because he managed to acquaint the Sunni Centers of learning in Egypt and Beirut with the advantages of *Nahjul Balaghah*; and through whom the inhabitants of these areas were introduced to this eminent book. He got *Nahjul Balaghah* published in Egypt with his explanatory annotations and its numerous editions have so far been published.

In the preface which finds place in the beginning of the book, recounting the stupefaction and astonishment which the study of the truth bearing contents of *Nahjul Balaghah* caused in him. He writes: "At every place during its perusal I was getting the impression as though wars are being waged. Onslaughts are going on, rhetoric is in full swing and eloquence is in action with full force. Superstitions are getting defeated doubts and misgivings are retreating. The armies of public speaking are ready in array. Battalions of sharp-tongues are busy like swords and lances. Evil thoughts are being slain and the corpses of superstitions are falling

while all of a sudden it is felt as if truth has overcome. Falsehood has been defeated. The flame of doubt and misgiving has been extinguished and the reign of untruth has ended. And the credit for this victory goes to its Standard Bearer Asadullah-il-Ghalib Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.).

In fact as I proceeded in the perusal of this book from one place to the other, I felt the change of scenes and shifting of stands. Sometimes I found myself in a state where the sublime souls of meanings clad in the gowns of beautiful words rotate round pure creatures and approaching near clear hearted ones betoken them to tread on the right path, to kill the desires of the heart and making them hateful of slippery points lead them to tread on the path of greatness and perfection.

And sometimes such sentences appear before me that seem as though frowning and showing out their teeth they are advancing with fearful features. There are sprits in the shape of tigers with talons of birds of prey ready to attack and which do in an instance fall on their victim. They snatch away the hearts from the circles of ill-wishes desires, forcefully separate the conscience from low sentiments and destroy and the evil desires and false belief.

Sometimes I witnessed that a spiritual being which in no way resembled with corporal beings separated itself from Heavenly audience and coming close to human soul took it out from physical curtains and material screens took it up to the celestial surroundings, raised it to the centre of divine effulgence and seated it in the heavenly atmosphere.

In some moments it seemed as if a speaker on philosophy is challenging the holders of authority and power, calling them to tread on the right path, cautioning them on their mistakes, teaching them delicacies of politics and serious issues of administration and policy and perfecting them by creating in them the capability for governmental positions, administration and politics.”

Herein just as Allama Muhammad Abdoh has definitely acknowledged it as the word of Amirul Momineen; he has also admitted the truth of its subject matter and veracity of its contents. He says that the subjects of this book are a success of the truth, defeat of the untruth, death of doubts and misgivings and destruction of superstitions and evil thoughts, and that from beginning to end they bear for the human race sound instructions in spiritualism, purification, majesty and perfection.

Allama Muhammad Abdoh has so much veneration for Nahjul Balaghah that after Quran he regarded it as deserving of preference over every other book. He expressed his belief that the circulation of this book in the Islamic University to the maximum extent would be real service to Islam only because it is the utterance of a dignified world reformer like Amir-ul-

Momineen.

So he writes: "Among those who know Arabic, there is none who does not agree that after the word of Allah and the word of the Prophet the word of Amirul Momineen is more sublime, more meaningful and more beneficial than any other utterance. So for the seekers of the nice treasure of the Arabic language this book is the most deserving to be accorded an important position in their record and written acquisitions and at the same time they should try to appreciate the meanings and intents that lie hidden in its words."

It is a fact that this effort of Allama Muhammad Abdoh bore fruit fully. In an atmosphere of short-sightedness in which the deplorable behaviour of the literary world is such that those books of even Sunnis which concern the infallible Ahl al-bait or Ali bin Abi Talib have been mostly printed by Shia presses of Iran while the Academic Centres of Egypt, Beirut etc. have never regarded them fit for publication.

For example, Sibte Ibn Jauzi has been mentioned in books on biographies with full literary eminence. But his book Tazkera has not been deemed fit of attention among the great majority only because it mostly covers account of the family of the Prophet (S) with regard to Khasaes of Nisai and others.

But Nahjul Balaghah despite its contents with which the majority may differ enjoys popularity and centrality among the scholarly circles, its consecutive editions are published and it is prescribed in the curricula of schools and universities.

It is the confrontational atmosphere of India and Pakistan and its poisonous climate that in the educational institutions here this book is often meted out treatment which should be meted out to a purely Shia book. Allama Muhammad Abdoh not only wrote annotations on this book and got it printed, but he used to continually plead for it in his conversation.

The magazine Al-Hilal of Egypt in its issue No.1 of volume 35 for November 1926 A.D. on page 78 published four questions for the attention of the literary group in which the first question was this, namely: "What is the book or books which you studied in your youth and which benefited you and left impressions for your life?"

The reply given to this question by Professor Shaikh Mustafa Abd-ur-Razzaq was published on page 15 of issue No.2 for December 1926 A.D. Therein he wrote:

"At the instance of the late Professor Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh, I studied Anthology of Hamasa and Nahjul Balaghah." Abdul Masih Antakee whose opinion would be related later, has also stated that "Allama" Muhammad Abdoh told me that if you want to acquire eminence in writing you should take Amirul Momineen Ali as your teacher and regard his utterances as the guiding lamp."

The Professor's belief that Nahjul Balaghah was in its entirety the word of Amirul Momineen (a.s.) was so eminent that all his pupils who from after him till now have been among eminent teachers of Egypt knew this fact.

Thus Professor Muhammad Mohiuddin Abdul Hamid, reader in the faculty of Arabic language in the University of Al-Azhar, whose own ideas would be related later in his own words, wrote in the Preface to the Edition published by him:

"It is possible you may like to find out in this regard the opinion of Imam Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh who brought this book out from oblivion and no one can equal him in the extent of information and sharp-sightedness."

So the reply to this question would be that we can say with certainty that he regarded the whole of this book as the word of Imam Ali. The preface by Allama Muhammad Abdoh extracts from which have been quoted by us, itself enjoys great importance in the world of learning.

Thus Sayyid Ahmad Hashmi has quoted it in full in his book Jawahir-ul-Adab, Part 1, pp. 317-318, and has given it the title "Account of Nahjul Balaghah by the late Imam Shaikh Muhammad Abdoh" (d. 1323 A.H.).

TO BE CONTINUED.Reference:

Resource: [www.al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org)

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