



Question:

How do we refute the allegations that the book "Nahj al-Balaghah" is not completely the utterances of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)?

Answer:

No scholar of any denomination questioned the genuineness of Nahj al-Balaghah? For more than two centuries until Ibn Khallikan (d. 681/1282) raised doubts about its attribution of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) without referring to any author or source. Later Sunni Scholars were content to repeat Ibn Khallikan's conjecture without bothering to substantiate it, which in the course of time, continues to be blindly parroted as a matter of fact. The allegation made is that it has been, to some extent, composed by either of the two brothers, Sayyed Razi or Sayyed Murtaza. Firstly a contemporary, namely Najaashi (d. 450/ 1058), mentions it among the compiled works of Sayyed Razi. And Shaykh Tusi (d. 460/1067-68) who was a student of Sayyed Murtaza does not mention Nahj al-Balaghah as his teacher's work. Secondly, Sayyed Razi has referred to Nahj al-Balaghah as his own compilation of Hazrat Ali (a.s.)'s sermons, letters and sayings in two of his books, namely, "Haqiq al-Tanzil" and "Majazaat al-At'har". Thirdly the Indian Sunni scholar, Imtiyaz Ali Khan Arshi refers to the earlier sources of 106 sermons, 37 letters and 79 sayings of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), including that of the disputed sermon called "Al-Shiqshiqiyya" which is critical of the first two Caliphs. Similarly, Kazim Muhammadi and Muhammad Dashti have prepared a comprehensive bibliography with a detailed item-by-item list of sources in "AI-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfaaz Nahj al-Balaghah". Lastly, the Sunni scholar, Safadi in his "Waafi bil Wafayaaf" [1], writes: "People are of the view that "Nahj al-Balaghah' is not Sayyed Razi's product. Sayyed Mohammed Musawi

[1] Vol. 2, p. 375

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