

Miraculous Words of Ali-“Nahj al Balagha”

By: Qazi Dr. Shaikh Abbas Borhany

PhD (USA), NDI, Shahadat al A'alamiyah (Najaf, Iraq), M.A., LLM (Shariah)

Member, Ulama Council of Pakistan

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“Nahj al Balagha” is a collection of the sayings, speeches and correspondences of Amir al Mumenin Ali, which was compiled by Syed Razi; towards the close of the 4th Century A.H. This celebrated book comprises of 242 sermons, 79 letters and 498 selected sayings of divine wisdom of Amir al Mumeneen, Ali, which contains an ocean of ilm, from the creation to the eternity. Naturally, to collect all the wordings of Ali in single volume is beyond the power of single person, some sources, other then “Nahj al Balagha” are also worthy of mention in this regard, such as: “Ghurur al Hikam wa Durar al Kilam”, “Mustadrak Nahj al Balagha”. The words of Ali are rays of light of Hidayat and the fountainhead of Hikmat.

Ali was brought up in the lap of Nubuwwat, and was nurtured by sucking the saliva of Risalat. Every word of his sentence is an ocean of Hikmat and Treasure of Knowledge. He wears all the crowns of excellence. His garden is full with the flowers of achievements. Therefore, he magnanimously bestowed lustrous pearls of Hikmat. In fact he is the distributor of “Al Kawsar”, who showered “blessings of “ilmu Min’al Kit’ab”-Knowledge from the Book (Qur’an), to the seekers. It was Rasulullah (S) who directed the Ummah to learn ilm from Ali. 51st Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Taher Saifuddin (d.1385/1965, Mumbai, India) reminded the unique status of Ali, recorded in the Hadith, through a beautiful verse as follows:

“Rasulullahe Kana Madinat’al ilme;

Kana Laha Aliyun Khaira B’abe”

(Rasulullah(S) was the city of Knowledge; while Ali was its Gateway)

Ali spent his life in Ibadat, virtual, physical and spiritual, and attained Shahadat for the Sadat of the Ummat. Amir al Muminin, Ali occupies a place of greatness and grandeur in the world of literature among Arab and Ajam. Arabi prose and poetry achieved excellence due to him and he conferred a new manner of writing. Today, when prose and poetry have both accomplished tremendous progress, nothing can match the chaste style of Ali al Murtaza. The most prominent quality of his style is its similarity with the approach to the Qur’an, which is full of Haqaiq. Scholars of high caliber can find solution of each problem from the wordings of Ali. He is the pioneer Hakim-e-Rabbani, who has discussed Tawhid, and explained the Mudabbir from a logical point, and etches the first and last impression in ilm al ilahiy’aat. The learned knows well that topic of ilahiy’aat is one of the most difficult subjects; and they also agreed that it was Ali and Ali alone who solved the problems and difficulties of this subject. Tawhid, which contains the proof of the Mudabbir, and introduction and functions of the Uqul, Luh and Qalam, Akw’ar and Adw’ar, has all been explained by him, beautifully.

Philosophers have admitted that it is beyond the power of wisdom to even discuss mono-reality, which is called *Sirriyat*. The entire system of science is based on obvious objects, which in the terminology of Qur'an is called *A'alam al Shahadat*. Philosophy is the science, to explain the ultimate reality of *A'alam al Shahadat*, which belongs to *Ghaib*. Human intelligence is not enough, to touch the precincts of *Ghaib*, unless one is blessed with the blessings of *Al ilm al Laddunni*. In "*Nahj al Balagha*", whoever wishes to search out, he would find so much material about it that a sizeable book can be compiled from, out of it. It is not only a treasure of Arabi literature, but also an undying miracle of Hashmi oratory and the fountainhead of all qualities of meaning and expression. In it Ali had discussed non countable issues, which is not found even in Encyclopedias.

Famous commentator of "*Nahj al Balagha*", Allamah Ibn Abil Hadeed al Mutazali has rightly said:

"Ali's eloquence is such that he is the leader of the eloquent, and the chief of the rhetoricians. Ali's wordings are below the words of the Creator, but above the words of all the created ones, from him the world has learnt the art of oratory. Each time that I read "*Nahj al Balagha*", new points emerge into my mind, with the conclusion that if I read it throughout my whole life, even then I would be unable to comprehend it fully".

Famous pupil of Syedna al Moayyad al Shirazi (d.470/1078, Qahera, Egypt), known among the Orientals as 'Ruby of Badakhsahan', Hujjat of Khurasan, Syedna Abu Moinuddin Nasir Khusraw (d.481, A.H. Yamgan) says:

*"Khatibani Huma Aa'jiz Andar Khitabish;
Hizar'brani Huma Ruba Andar Ghubarish"*

(Prominent orators of the world are helpless before the commanding ability of oration of Ali; and all the braves of the world are like a fox when compared to the heroic courage of Ali).

*"Huma ilm Ast Ba Taede Ezad;
Yaki Qatrah Khurad Bud Az Baharish"*

(With the Ta'ed of the Ezad (Allah) the collective Knowledge of the entire Ummah in comparison to Ali's ocean of Knowledge, is like a drop).

Doubtlessly, "*Nahj al Balagha*" is a collection of such miraculous wordings where bird of intellect have no access, because scissor of helplessness cuts off its wings. To prove its reality, we must examine the conclusion of top world intellectuals, orators, and of those who express their opinion on philosophy and wisdom, poetry, courtesy and civilized behavior, sermon and advice, science, and all existing things, it would be obvious that the Creator has conferred zest according to one's capabilities. Some have been endowed with the quality of description of places in their treasure of ability. Some have been blessed with the best capability of writing. Some were enriched with the distinction of poetry writing in their intellectual lap. It is an undeniable fact that when even the best poet steps into the field of writing, the light of his perfection is dimmed. When a mournful writer turns his attention to humor, the flow of his pen slows down

considerably. However, in “Nahj al Balagha” everyone can judge easily that Ali is a conqueror of all the branches of literature.

The wordings of Ali are a rosary of pearls from the beginning to the end; each pearl is similar in luster and perfection. Even prejudiced, who do not accept the “Nahj al Balagha” as wordings of Ali, are compelled to admit that it is a unique miracle of literature. Some short sighted and so called intellectuals think that the teaching of “Nahj al Balagha” is an impediment in the way of progress. No doubt Amir al Mumeneen, Ali was not in favor of colouring the teaching of Islam in the manner of Roman emperors or the Ceaser. It is also note worthy that he also did not promote teaching of Ruhbaniyat-celibacy. Rather he taught to build Duniya and Akhirat, which is much mire difficult than celibacy. Qur’an extended the teaching of “*Amarat al Duniya wal Akhirah*”-Progress in the world with the preparation of hereafter. Likewise “Nahj al Balagha” deals this topic with others. It contains new meanings, deep and humorous points as well.

Many sermons-wordings of Ali are still behind the curtain, researchers have no access to theirs; they are preserved in the manuscripts, available in different private collections, known as Khazain (plural, Khazana). During the long course of history, one who discussed first- sayings of Ali ibn Abi Talib, with the meaning of Tawhid, and very well explained it was the celebrated author of the ‘Rasael’ “Ikhwan us Safa”. Its writer is known as “Al Shakhs al Fazil-Sahib al Rasael”, whose name is Imam Ahmad al Mastur (d. Salamiyah, Syria). In these ‘Rasael’, amazing facts and wonders are discussed with philosophical approach, opening many vistas of learning, for the seeker of science of Tawhid. Numbers of books have been written on the ‘Rasael’, yet no one can counter the rational discussion of Tawhid proved by the ‘Learned Author’. These ‘Rasael’ were compiled specifically to counter anti-Islam approach and to explain the real meaning of Tawhid and its Faiz, which explained by Ali. 8th Ithna Ashari Imam, Ali al Raza (d.29th Safar 203A.H) poisoned by Abbasid emperor Mamoon (786-833 A.D), prior to the distribution of the “Rasail Ikhwaan as Safa”. Mamun Abbasi not only adopted but propagated Aqidah of Mutazaliyah, founded by Wasil bin Ata (d.2nd Century A.H). Government Agencies enforced and imposed this anti-Islam Aqidah upon the Muslims. Even after the death of Mamun, the succeeding Abbasid monarchs extensively promulgated Mutazaliyah’s Aqidah. During this awful repugnant to Shariyat state of affairs, Imam Ahmad al Mastur came in the field with force and demonstrated the divine wisdom, in colour of philosophy to establish the necessity of the Shariat. He compiled 52 volumes; each discussed different branches of Knowledge, based on a few words of Ali.

During the era of Fatemi Imam Abdullah al Mahdi (d.322/934, Mahdiyah, Tunisia), a native of Nakhshab, in the region of Mavara-al-Nehar, Syedna Abu Abdullah al Nasafi (d.331 A.H.) has written a famous treatise: “Al Mahsul”. He was “Hujjat al Jazirah” of Khurasan (according to the Ismail Dawah setup, world is divided in to 12 Jazair-continents, head of the each continents entitled: ‘Hujjat’), with additional charge of Turkistan and Bukhara, on behalf of the Fatemi Imam. He discussed the topic of Tawhid,

with especial reference of the eternal world. His arguments based on the wordings of Amir al Muminin, Ali.

Likewise Syedna Abi Yaqub al Sijistani (d.331 A.H. /942 C.E.) was one of the paramount intellects of his time. He was pupil of Syedna Nasafi and had written a number of books, on ilahiy'at, elaborating the wordings of Amir al Muminin, Ali ibn Abi Talib. He completed his education in Yemen and began to spread the Science of Islam from the mountainous region of Hir'az, Yemen. He differed in interpretation, discussed by the learned author of "Kit'ab al Zinat", Syedna Abu Hatim al Razi (d.322 A.H.), another "Hujjat al Jazirah", earlier than him. Syedna Abi Yaqub al Sijistani seconded his mentor, by writing "Kit'ab al Nusrat". This difference of approach was later concluded by his pupil, Syedna Hamiduddin al Kirmani (d. in between 411-427 A.H.), "Baab al Abw'ab" (the highest spiritual status, after the Mansoos of the Imam, in the Fatemi Dawat hierarchy), through "Kit'ab al Riyaz", during the era of Fatemi Imam al Hakim (d.411/1021, Qahera, Egypt).

"Bab Madinat al ilm", Ali had informed the esoteric meaning of the following Hadith:

"Innaha Lav Wuzi'at Fee Kaffate Mizan Wa Wuziat al Samae Wal Arze Wama Baena'huma Fil Kaffat'il Ukhra La Rajahat Kalimat'il Ikhlas"-

If on a scale, if the skies and earth and what is in between them is placed on one side, and on the other side, "Kalimat al Ikhlas" the side having Kalimah will be heavier.

Syedna Hamiduddin al Kirmani written Tafsir-interpretation of the above saying of Ali and created his work of genius: "Rahat al Aqal"- 'Peace of intellect', in the final phase of his life, around 410 (A.H).

"Jahiz" had criticized a few wordings of Amir al Muminin. Syedna Hamiduddin al Kirmani very nicely encountered him in length in another work: "Masim al Huda". It is also worthwhile to discuss the contribution of Syedna Al Qazi al Nauman (d.363/974 C.E. Qahera, Egypt). He had written a book under the instruction of the Fatemi Imam al Moiz (d.365/975, Qahera, Egypt), which is known as: "Kit'ab al Tawhid Wal Imamah Min Khutub Amir al Muminin, Ali ibn Abi Talib". Twelve sermons, which are available in the above treatise, are absent in the collection of "Nahj al Balagha". Likewise, in his celebrated work: "Daem al Islam", we find a few valuable sermons of Ali, which are also absent in "Nahj al Balagha". One more book, which he had written on the above subject, is "Isb'at al Haqaiq Fee Marifat Tawhid al Khaliq".

Afterwards, Syedna al Moayyad al Shirazi (d.470/1078, Qahera, Egypt) interpreted the sayings of Ali ibn Abi Talib in his famous "Majalis", which is available in eight volumes. Each volume contains one-hundred Majalis. Like his predecessor, Syedna Hamiduddin, he was also "B'ab al Abw'ab". He played a significant role of a bridge, to transfer the sacred science for coming generations to come, in Satar-seclusion, under the instructions of the 19th Fatemi Imam al Mustansir (d.487/1094, Qahera, Egypt).

The hidden science available in the wordings of Amir al Muminin Ali was later on discussed in length on the mountainous region of Yemen by a number of Fatemi Ismaili Scholars, and Syedna Ibrahim al Hamedi (d.557/1162, Ghayl Bani Hamid, Yemen) was one of them. His son, Syedna Hatim Mohiyuddin (d.596/1199, al Hutaib, Yemen) spent his entire life to interpret and explain the Haqaiq, hidden in the wordings of Ali. "Al Shumus al Zahirah" is one of his celebrated works. "Mafatih al Kunuz" is another well known work of the learned author, in which he discussed the meanings of the wordings of Ali, behind the lines. His successors continued this tradition of learning and produced numerous 'Rasael', discussing the topic of Haqaiq-divine realities.

Syedna Idris Imaduddin (d.872/1468, Shib'am, Yemen) was the great preserver of the Fatimi literature and culture. He had written number of books, like "Zahr al M'ani", and "Ziya al Basair" which deals the faculty of Tawhid, and explained the esoteric meanings of Ali's sayings. Syedi Hasan bin Nuh al Bharunchi (d.11th Zilqadah, 945 A.H. = 1538 A.D. Masar, Yaman), an Indian high repute scholar, migrated Yemen and wrote with pain "Kitaab al Azhaar", consisting seven volumes. Through his valuable work, expressions of Amir al Muminin preserved, which are not published yet. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the vast contribution of a number of the Fatemi dignitaries, who discussed Haqaiq, and have written numerous books. These paramount scholars throw light on how Ali ibn Abi Talib presented the difficult subject of Tawhid in a few words. In short, in each era, intellectuals have written many 'Rasael' to explain the wordings of Ali. A careful study of this literature provides an opportunity of refreshing the study of Fatemi literature. Scholar of high repute and master of Arabi literature at India, Syedi Abde Ali Imaduddin (d.1271 A.H.) said in praise of super natural abilities of oration, sermons and spontaneous sentences of wisdoms and Haqaiq of Ali ibn Abi Talib as follows:

*"Ahbebta Iz Kana Estava Khateban;
Lav Asbahal Arsho Lahu Minbara"*

(When he delivers sermons one feels Throne of Allah is his pulpit).

*"Ya Ley Kalamin Minho Fi Khutubin;
Haqqa Aaaihe Addurro Un Tunsara"*

(How amazing are his words in sermons that it befits to shower pearls on it.)

*"Ya Be Abi Ma Fihe Min Asarin;
Lav Saba Sakhran Kana Jalda Jara"*

(How effective are his sayings that if they touch a hardened heart like a boulder it will meltdown and flow).

*"Bassaratel Ama Akaleemohu;
Va ba' Sarat Min Qabrehil Muqbara"*

(His short sayings bring back light to the eyes of blind and resurrect the dead from their graves).

The excellent and basic topics dealt with in "Nahj al Balagha" are as follow:

1. ilahiy'aat, Aiteqad'at; Hikmat. religion
2. Morals and etiquettes, learning and understanding, psychology.

3. *Injunctions, modes of Ibadat, Jih'ad, "Amar Bil Maruf wa Nahe Anil Munkir"-instructions of good-deeds and restrain from the evil-deeds.*
4. *History, biography of the Anbiya, Sirat al Nabawi. Role of the previous nations in the history and causes of their downfall along with warning to the coming Muslim generation*
5. *Political awareness and collective matters, Muslim Government, Muamlaat-dealing, Economic and finance management*

A constrictive reading of the "Nahj al Balagha" would open up the vision of understanding, similar to the poet of the East, Shaikh Saadi. He has expressed his sentiments as follows:

*"Abid'u Zahid'u Sufi Hama Tiflaan Dahand;
Mard Agar Hast Bahe Juz 'A'alime Rabbani' Neest"*

(Abid, Zahid and Sufi all are kids; if there is a young, then alone he is "Al A'alim al Rabbani"-Divine Teacher)

A Hadith guided us in this regard more clearly:

"Ali is Rabbani-Teacher of the Ummah".

How to rule and conduct the government has largely been discussed in the letters. Topic of Muslim Governance and politics has been described in greater detail than other topics. Ali Ibn Abi Talib is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam. His great services in spreading, propagating, interpreting, clarifying and explaining the sciences of Islam are recognized and admitted by all. Most of the letters, sermons and orders available in the "Nahj al Balagha" are related to the period when power and command of the 'Zahiri Khilafat' Power & Command of the Muslim Government was in the hands of Amir al Mumeneen Ali. In these sermons and letters he has expressed his opinions on various topics. However, collectively, the total subject matter and theme of the compilations in "Nahj al Balagha" is the appreciation of the Shariat in the daily practical life of a human being, and the various ways in which these religious principles can be applied.

There is both, logic and philosophy, in these sermons. It is a source of history as well. History does not preserve any human being like him, who is the centre of so many virtues and attributes.

There are divine instructions. These truth and divine instructions can only be seen and heard with an insight.

Literature can not produce a better specimen of literary and metaphysical production as available in the form of the collection of "Nahj al Balagha".

The former Mufti of Egypt, Mohammad Abdullah has also written a commentary on "Nahj al Balagha". Expressing his opinion about the writings of Ali he says:

"Every one of the great scholars of Arabi is of view that except the Wahi of the Qur'an and the wordings of Rasulullah (S), the discourses of Ali are the most sublime, and consist of the greatest purity of language and eloquence of speech. In modern age also,

the writings and speeches of Ali form a valuable part of Arabi Literature, and the wise person of the present day obtains benefits out of it. Even nearly after fourteen centuries, "Nahj al Balagha" has retained the same attraction, freshness, charm and beauty for the present day audience which it has possessed for the people of earlier days.

The Late Mufti of Egypt, Shaikh Mohammad Abduh, who was introduced to "Nahj al Balagha" because of his exile from his home, while writing a detailed commentary on "Nahj al Balagha" states, in its introduction:

"There is not a person in the whole of Arabia who can deny that after Qur'an and Ahadith, the writings of Ali are the most comprehensive, and full of oratory and meaning".

Head of the Department of Knowledge, Qahera University (Egypt), Ali al Jundi, has written in the introduction of his book: "Ali ibn Abi Talib, Sherau wa Hikau" about the prose of Ali as under:

"There is a special stream of music in the writings of Ali, which sets its foot in the depths of sensibilities. It is so poetic that it should be called poetic prose".

People are unable to understand those mysterious points; discussed by Ali in "Nahj al Balagha", because they do not seek to comprehend the meaning, as in each and every sentence of Ali the spirit of Qur'an and Hadith is absorbed. No doubt, the writings of Amir al Mumeneen, Ali, are lustrous pearls. Selection of words and the beauty of expression and liveliness are available in his sentences with full force. We can learn the history and know about the civilization and culture of that period from his sermons. He is rightly the first Sirat-Biographer, who discussed, collected and narrated the life of Rasullullah (S) in his sermons, with detail.

On account of the beauty and loveliness of his language, and the grace of his writings, pious thoughts engulf the mind of the reader. The purpose of Ali's prose is constructive-criticism, which enable every practitioner to attain success here and hereafter. His letters in "Nahj al Balagha" are a mirror of the history, culture, social conditions, civilization, political and social atmosphere, difficulties, terms and conditions. The beauty of language, the correctness of metaphors, the grace of Tashbih and metaphors create such a beauty that one is never tired while reading.

This knack of his pen is a great miracle for the world of letters. It is not possible for words to serve anybody else in the same manner as they have served Amir al Mumeneen, Ali. On whatever subject he discussed, he perfected it thoroughly. Not only in the history of the Arabs but in the history of the entire humanity, his writings are a valuable asset of our Aqidah, and a heritage. He introduced a new style of oratory, full of eloquence, use of beautiful unique terms and phrases, which history has recorded forever. The novelty of his expression, significance of his writings and the magnificence of his sentences has extended its influence to the utmost limits of belief and religion. True meaning of Islam

and philosophy of Qur'an understand only when a person can take benefits from the wordings of Ali, in depth.

Sirat & History literature provide us much details regarding the contribution of Ali towards Tajwiz, Tafsir, Ahadith, Theology, Astronomy, Grammar, Poetry, and even esoteric sciences are attributed to him, and he is accepted as the original expounder. Muslim as well as non-Muslim historians, scholars and eminent Orientals have already written more than 8,000 (eight thousand) books in Arabi, Farsi, English and Urdu, on the "Nahj al Balagha". In this modern age, the wordings of Ali are the suburb fount of Arabi Literature, and the wise person of the present day obtains benefits out of it. Even nearly after fourteen centuries, "Nahj al Balagha" has retained the same attraction, freshness, charm and beauty for the present day audience that it possessed for the people of earlier days.

Prince of the galaxy of scholars, 51st Al Dai al Fatemi, Syedna Taher Saifuddin (d.1385/1965, Mumbai, India) discussed the miraculous merits of Ali in Manqabat as follows:

*"Wa Kam Khutabin Lahu Gharra'a Tazhu
Balaghatuhun'na M'a Faslil Khit'abi"*

(All his sermons are shimmering; which are not only on the peak of eloquence, but final words with perfection).

*"Wa Amma ilmuhu Fahuwas Sharabut'
Tahuru wa ma Siwahu Kas'Sar'abi"*

(His knowledge is pure, sweet water, which have power to infuse life; other than this source of Knowledge-Al ilm al Ladunni, all so called springs of learning are fraud, similar to that sands, which from the distance looks like a water).

As patient in a critical condition, need emergency treatment, likewise, a sick human soul can required spiritual healing, for recovery from spiritual disease, which is available in "Nahj al Balagha". It is that fountain of Knowledge which introduction is beyond the power of a single person; even a team of high caliber scholars can not describe its merits fully. This humble student has discussed the topic only as per the Arabi phrase:

"Ma La Yad'raku Kul'lahu La Yat'raku Kul'lahu"-Those who can not achieve fully should not leave totally.

The Writer is Attorney at Law & Religious Scholar

Email:qazishkborhany@hotmail.com

Website: www.durrenajaf.com

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